

MANAGEMENT UNIT 13: YENTNA-SUSITNA

MANAGEMENT INTENT

The land between the Yentna and Susitna Rivers is highly valued for a wide range of resources. There are large blocks of soils with good agricultural potential (class II and III soils in USDA's classification) and productive forests suitable for commercial management. Two land disposals have occurred in the unit, and there is potential for new sales. In addition, the rivers and lakes in the region receive intensive public use for hunting, fishing, and boating. Winter habitat in the area is critical to several moose populations and several of the lakes provide nesting habitat for trumpeter swans. Brown bears concentrate seasonally along the Susitna River. The lakes and rivers make this a very attractive area for settlement. Finally, the southern part of the unit has moderate potential for coal development. In short, values in this unit are among the highest in the study area for a variety of uses. The Yentna-Susitna area will be managed to provide for a variety of public and private uses. Management Unit 13 will remain open to mineral location and available for coal leasing except for the existing and proposed disposal areas (subunits 13a, 13c and 13g) and the habitat area recommended for legislative designation (13d). All public lands in this unit are available for oil and gas leasing.

This area is presently inaccessible by road, but resource development to the east in the Willow Subbasin and to the north in the Petersville Road subregion may eventually encourage construction of a Susitna River bridge and roads from the north and south that would make the region much more accessible (see also discussion of transportation in Management Unit 12). See the Transportation section of Chapter 4 for more information on routes proposed for consideration for future road construction.

The management unit is divided into seven subunits: the existing Yentna and Lockwood disposals (13a); a wedge of public land between these disposals on the east side of Fish Creek (13b); Lockwood East, a proposed settlement area adjacent to the Lockwood disposal (13c); Kroto Slough (13d); the Yentna River (13e); borough lands around Lockwood and Witsoe Lakes (13f); and agricultural homesteads within and near the Yentna disposal (13g). See the maps at the end of this section for boundaries of these areas, and the accompanying chart for a summary of land uses for each subunit.

In **subunit 13a**, settlement is the primary use. This subunit includes the existing Lockwood subdivision and the Lockwood and Yentna homestead areas that

were offered for disposal in the summer of 1984. Un-sold surveyed parcels in the subdivision will remain available for sale over-the-counter.

Subunit 13b will remain in public ownership. It will provide open space, wildlife habitat, and opportunities for camping and other recreational activities along Fish Creek between the Yentna and Lockwood disposals in 13a.

Subunit 13c is a new settlement area adjacent to the Lockwood disposals. It offers opportunities for recreational/seasonal settlement with floatplane access.

Subunit 13d includes state land around Kroto Slough and in the Susitna floodplain, and borough lands adjacent to Whitsol Lake. The lands in subunit 13d are extremely important for trumpeter swan nesting and are in the heart of the most important moose winter range in the study area. The land also supports commercially valuable timber, and there is fishing and hunting along the Yentna and Susitna Rivers that border the unit. It will be kept in public ownership and recommended for legislative designation with habitat protection and management the major objective for the unit. Because of the sensitivity of swans to disturbance, forestry is a secondary use in subunit 13d. Timber harvesting will be allowed when consistent with the habitat objectives.

Subunit 13e is the Yentna River corridor. The riparian habitat along the Yentna is very important moose winter range, and portions of it are trumpeter swan nesting habitat. The Yentna serves as a transportation route and is used for recreational boating as well. This subunit will be retained in public ownership and managed for habitat and public recreation. In addition, it will be recommended for legislative designation in recognition of its importance for habitat and recreation.

Subunit 13f consists of borough land around Witsoe and Lockwood Lakes. This subunit will be designated borough land bank. The land may be available for settlement in the long term, but there are no plans for sale in the immediate future. In addition to settlement potential, the Lockwood-Witsoe Lake area has high value for moose winter range and potential for public recreation.

Subunit 13g: Three blocks of land within the existing Yentna homestead area and just southeast of the existing Lockwood Lake disposal are included in subunit 13g. These areas will be offered for private use as agricultural homesteads.

LAND USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

SUBREGION Susitna LowlandsMANAGEMENT UNIT 13 — Yentna-Susitna

SUBUNIT	LAND OWNERSHIP (GENERALIZED)	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS				PROHIBITED SURFACE USE(S)*	COMMENTS
		SURFACE		SUBSURFACE			
		PRIMARY USE(S)	SECONDARY USE(S)	LOCATABLE MINERALS	LEASEABLE MINERALS		
13a Yentna & Lockwood disposals	State/ Private	Settlement (existing homestead areas & subdivision)	Forestry (personal use) Public Rec. Wildlife Habitat	Closed	Not available for coal leasing or prospecting	Grazing	Estimated net offerings in new disposal area = 2,200 acres; approximately 10 unsold surveyed lots remain available over-the-counter in existing subdivision
13b Fish Creek East	State	Forestry Public Recreation Wildlife Habitat	—	Open	Available for leasing	Remote Cabins Trapper Cabins Land Disposals	—
13c Lockwood East	State	Settlement	Forestry Public Rec. Wildlife Habitat	Closed prior to disposal	Not available for coal leasing or prospecting	Grazing	Estimated net disposal area = 600 acres

*Other uses such as material sales, land leases, remote cabin permits, etc., that are not specifically prohibited may be allowed. Such uses will be allowed if consistent with the management intent statement and management guidelines of this unit, and with the relevant management guidelines in chapter 2.

LAND USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

SUBREGION Susitna Lowlands

MANAGEMENT UNIT 13 -- Yentna-Susitna

SUBUNIT	LAND OWNERSHIP (GENERALIZED)	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS				PROHIBITED SURFACE USE(S)*	COMMENTS
		SURFACE		SUBSURFACE			
		PRIMARY USE(S)	SECONDARY USE(S)	LOCATABLE MINERALS	LEASEABLE MINERALS		
13d Kroto Slough	State/ Borough	Water Resources Wildlife Habitat	Public Rec. Forestry	Closed	Not available for coal leasing or prospecting	Grazing Land Disposals	Recommended for legislative designation
13e Yentna River	State/ Borough	Public Recreation Water Resources Wildlife Habitat	Forestry	Open	Available for leasing	Grazing Land Disposals	Recommended for legislative designation
13f Lockwood L./ Witsoe Lake	Borough	Borough Land Bank Values: Public Recreation, Settlement, Wildlife Habitat, Forestry		Open	Available for leasing	Closed to grazing in Witsoe Lake block (see mgmt. guidelines)	—
13g Yentna Uplands	State/ Private	Agriculture (homesteads) (part past disposal)	Forestry Public Rec. Wildlife Hab.	Closed prior to disposal	Not available for coal leasing or prospecting	Remote Cabins Trapper Cabins	Estimated net disposal area = 3,840 acres

*Other uses such as material sales, land leases, remote cabin permits, etc., that are not specifically prohibited may be allowed. Such uses will be allowed if consistent with the management intent statement and management guidelines of this unit, and with the relevant management guidelines in chapter 2.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

The complete set of areawide management guidelines is presented in Chapter 2 of this plan. All of the guidelines potentially apply to uses within this management unit; however, those that are most likely to be applicable are indicated with asterisks in the list below.

- *Agriculture
- *Fish & Wildlife Habitat
- *Forestry
- *Recreation
- *Settlement
- Subsurface
- *Transportation
- Instream Flow
- *Lakeshore Management
- *Public Access
- Remote Cabin Permits
- *Stream Corridors
- *Trail Management
- *Wetlands Management

Management guidelines that apply to this management unit only are presented below by subunit.

Subunits 13a, 13c, & 13f (Yentna-Lockwood, Lockwood East, and Lockwood Lake-Witsoe Lake)

Protection of Transportation Routes

Chapter 4 of this plan identifies a system of possible improvements to the regional and local transportation system. Two of these routes pass through these subunits. The precise location of these routes has not been determined, although a general location is shown on the maps in Chapter 4. Land use authorizations in this unit such as land sales, leases, or others actions should be located so as not to preclude the option to build these roads along feasible and efficient routes.

Subunits 13a, 13c & 13g (Yentna-Lockwood, Lockwood East, & agricultural homesteads)

Stream Corridors

The management intent for land adjacent to the streams referenced below is to permit uses such as fishing, camping and other active uses and to protect water quality and riparian habitat. Consequently, this land should be retained in public ownership. Corridor widths will be set on a case-by-case basis using policies in Chapter 2. The standard minimum buffer width (200' on each side of the river) should be used on unnamed streams that appear on the USGS 1:63,360 scale topographic maps. The corridors on Fish Creek and the Yentna River should be 300' and 400' (on each

side of the river) respectively. The wider corridors on Fish Creek and the Yentna are intended to provide for hunting, to protect visual quality, and to maintain opportunities for camping in a more natural setting than that ensured by narrower buffers.

Subunits 13a & 13g (Yentna disposal & Yentna Uplands)

Agriculture and Settlement

Recent soil survey information indicates that some of the soils with the best potential for agricultural use in unit 13 are presently within the area open to fee simple homesteads rather than agricultural homesteads. In order to make homestead offerings consistent with soil quality, the boundaries of the agricultural and fee simple homestead areas in the portions of subunits 13a and 13g within the past Yentna remote parcel area boundary will be redesigned following the close of the FY85 staking period. Total acreage offered in this area under each of the homestead programs will not be substantially changed when the boundaries are adjusted.

Subunits 13d & 13e (Kroto Slough & Yentna River)

Management Plans and Remote Cabins

It is recommended that a management plan be prepared for subunits 13d and 13e. The management plan will determine, among other things, whether or not remote cabins will be permitted in these subunits. Remote cabin permits will not be offered until and unless areas open to remote cabins are designated by a management plan.

Subunit 13a (Yentna-Lockwood Sales)

Grazing

Grazing is prohibited within the portions of subunit 13a in T19N R7W and T19N R8W.

Subunit 13d (Kroto Slough)

Swan Habitat

This subunit is recommended for legislative or administrative designation to protect swans. Until designation takes place, the following guidelines are intended to provide sufficient protection and will be applied by the Department.

1. Restricted Activities. Activities that potentially will damage swan nesting habitat or cause visual or noise disturbance should be prohibited from April 1 through August 31 within at least one-quarter mile

of current or potential swan nesting or staging ponds, marshes or lakes. Particular activities may be restricted in a wider area if their potential level of damage or disturbance warrants doing so. Activities that may be restricted include, but are not limited to, use of off-road vehicles, airplanes and motorboats. However, some traditional access routes and sites will be designated that will remain open to motorized access. [Note: This guideline will result in the restriction of the activities described above on most ponds, marshes and lakes other than those that have been identified as traditional access points.]

2. At a minimum, permits should not be issued for those types of off-road vehicle use requiring permits in the areas and during the period described in 1. above.
3. Aircraft. At a minimum, landing of aircraft should be prohibited in the areas and during the period described in 1. above unless at designated access sites.