

Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Management Plan

Public Review Draft

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Alaska Department of Natural Resources
Division of Mining, Land & Water
Resource Assessment & Development Section

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Chapter 1

Introduction & Background

Summary of Purpose

The Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Management Plan describes how the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) will manage state land and water along six rivers including: the Little Susitna River, Deshka River, Talkeetna River, Lake Creek, Talachulitna River, and Alexander Creek. The plan determines how these six rivers will be managed over the long-term including providing management intent for each river segment, regulations for recreation and commercial use, and guidelines for leases and permits on state land.

How to Use This Plan

Although this plan is lengthy, it is organized for ease of use. The plan has two main sections:

Chapter 2 includes land management policies that apply throughout the Recreation Rivers. It is organized by types of land uses or resources, such as fish and wildlife, recreation, and commercial use.

Chapter 3 describes the management intent for each of the 31 subunits in the planning area. It is organized by river. Chapter 4 describes recommendations that will assist plan implementation.

Examples of How to Use the Plan are Shown Below

If you want to know how the plan affects a particular **land use or resource** – for example, recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, or commercial use – turn to **Chapter 2** for general policies that apply to the entire planning area.

For example, under *Commercial Use*, policies are described for commercial use permits, commercial camps, and lodges.

If you want to know how the plan affects a particular **place** – for example, the lower Deshka River – turn to **Chapter 3**.

The planning area is divided into six management units reflecting the six Recreation Rivers. To find the map on which the lower Deshka River is shown, look at the index map at the beginning of the chapter. This map shows the page numbers where maps of each river section

can be found. To find the text describing this area, see the chapter divider at the beginning of Chapter 3 for an index to the subunit page numbers.

How This Document is Organized

Chapter 1 describes why this plan was developed, the planning area, the purpose of the plan, and the process used to develop the plan. It includes a summary of how the plan will be implemented and the process for modifying the plan after it is adopted.

Chapter 2 presents policies that guide state land management throughout the planning area. These policies are consistent with the Recreation Rivers Act. Because this plan was developed under the legislation, and because it is based on more detailed information and public comments on the area, the guidance in this plan relating to the river corridors supersedes and amends the two area plans that surround the Recreation Rivers: the 2008 Southeast Susitna Area Plan (SSAP) and the 2011 Susitna Matanuska Area Plan (SMAP).

Chapter 3 contains detailed descriptions of the plan's land and water use decisions. The Recreation Rivers are divided into six management units and 31 subunits. Each subunit contains background information, a statement of management intent, guidelines and proposed regulations specific to the subunit, and a list of public use sites.

Chapter 4 discusses specific actions needed to implement the plan: funding, field staff, research, enforcement authority, proposed additions to the Recreation Rivers, procedures for plan modification, mineral orders, classifications, recommendations to other agencies and recommended legislative actions.

Appendices

Appendix A is a glossary of terms used in the plan.

Appendix B includes a copy of the Recreation Rivers Act.

Appendix C includes a list of regulations necessary to implement the plan.

Location Map

MAP 1.1



Management Units

1. Little Susitna River
2. Deshka River (Kroto Creek / Moose Creek)
3. Talkeetna River
4. Lake Creek
5. Talachulitna River
6. Alexander Creek



Description of the Planning Area

The planning area lies entirely within the Susitna Basin and includes mile-wide corridors along the six rivers. The Recreation Rivers include about 460 miles of river and many lakes including Chelatna, Alexander, and Judd lakes. The total area is about 261,000 acres. Land ownership is as follows:

State Owned	241,000 acres
Borough Owned	16,300 acres
Private	3,400 acres

The water column and land under rivers and lakes are entirely state-owned. Approximately 430 private parcels of land are scattered throughout the corridors. Uses of state land in the planning area are administered by the Department of Natural Resources. Uses of borough land in the planning area are administered by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

Why This Plan Was Developed

The Concern

Much has changed since the original Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Management Plan was adopted in 1991. The original planning effort sought to mitigate the effects of increasing use within the corridors. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game had estimated that the sport fishing effort on these six rivers increased over 300 percent between 1977 and 1988 due to an increase in the state population, a booming tourist economy in the area, and additional road and boat access along the Susitna and Little Susitna Rivers. The 1991 plan helped to mitigate negative effects such as accumulations of litter and human waste, crowding at fishing holes, the establishment of long-term camps in popular areas where space is limited, and conflicts between users. Visitor use projections indicated that these trends would continue well into the 1990's. However, fisheries have declined, and with them many of the recreational uses that occurred within the corridors have also reduced. Although many uses have experienced declines, an upward trend in use is still happening for some activities, such as use in the winter months. With more than 30 years since the original plan was completed, an update to this plan is necessary.

The Mandate

The six rivers' high public values and need for active management have long been recognized. In 1985, the Susitna Area Plan recommended legislative designation for five of the rivers, because of their high public values. During the following sessions, the legislature considered this recommendation and added the Little Susitna River to the proposal.

In Spring 1988, the legislature passed the Recreation Rivers Act and assigned management to the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. The Act directed the department to prepare a

management plan to include long-range guidelines and management practices consistent with the Act. The Act directed the department to submit the plan to the legislature for review. The legislature completed its review and the commissioner adopted the original plan as department policy in spring, 1991.

How This Plan Was Developed

The plan is the product of over two years of work by the state, the borough, the Recreation Rivers Advisory Board, and the public.

The planning process reviewed resource information and public concerns before making long-range land and water use decisions. The process is a way to resolve differences among possible uses. Through planning, people who use the area helped choose how the Recreation Rivers will be managed. The planning process also informs the public of what choices are made and why.

Public scoping meetings were held in Talkeetna, Wasilla, Anchorage, and virtually. The Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Advisory Board held regularly scheduled meetings, one special meeting, and four board workshops from 2021 to 2023.

The Recreation Rivers Planning Process

Step 1 - Issues are identified through public meetings to learn about interests and problems in the planning area.

Step 2 - Information is collected on natural resources, present land and water use, land ownership, public use, and important public use sites.

Step 3 - Land Use Alternatives are prepared and evaluated.

Step 4 - Draft Plan is prepared and reviewed by the Recreation Rivers planning team and advisory board.

Step 5 - Public Review Draft is reviewed by the public.

Step 6 - Final Plan is prepared.

Step 7 - Plan is Approved by the Commissioner.

Step 8 - Legislature Reviews Plan.

Step 9 - Adopt and Implement Plan.

What This Plan Covers & Does Not Cover

The authority of the plan only applies to the state land and water established as a Recreation River by the Recreation Rivers Act. The plan does not apply to federal, borough, university, or private land. ADNR management decisions for authorizations, such as permits, leases, and cooperative agreements, in the Recreation Rivers will follow the plan. This plan amends and supersedes the 2008 Southeast Susitna Area Plan and the 2011 Susitna Matanuska Area Plan, where these plans overlap with the Recreation Rivers described under AS 41.22.500. Private landowners in the planning area may choose to use this plan as a guide for managing their lands.

Although the plan addresses fish and wildlife habitat issues, it does not cover fish and wildlife harvest regulations. Under AS 41.23.420 the plan cannot affect the authority of ADF&G, ADEC, other agencies, municipalities, the Board of Fisheries, the Board of Game, or the Guide Licensing Board. ADF&G, the Board of Fisheries, and the Board of Game manage use of fish and wildlife resources. Needs for cooperative fish and wildlife resource planning, monitoring, and research are addressed in Chapter 4.

1
2

Chapter 2

Areawide Land & Water Management Policies

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Chapter 2

Areawide Land & Water Management Policies

Introduction

Summary

This chapter includes goals, management intent, management guidelines, and proposed regulations that apply to state lands in the Recreation Rivers. The policies in this chapter consist of goals and management guidelines. Goals are the general conditions the department is trying to achieve, and guidelines are specific directions that will be applied to land and water management decisions as resource use and development occur. For management intent on borough lands, contact the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

Definitions

Throughout the plan, the terms *Recreation River*, *rivers*, and *corridors* are used. Recreation Rivers includes all land and water (including the uplands, shorelands, and water columns) designated under the Recreation Rivers Act (AS 41.23.500(1-6)). *River(s)* includes the water column designated under the act. *River corridor(s)* or *corridor(s)* includes the uplands designated under the act. *Uplands* are defined as lands above ordinary high water. *Shorelands* include land belonging to the state that is covered by navigable water up to the ordinary high water mark. For further definitions see the glossary in Appendix A.

Goals

The Recreation Rivers Act states that the primary purpose for the establishment of the six Recreation Rivers is the maintenance and enhancement of the land and water for recreation. The act states that the primary purpose for the management of the six Recreation Rivers is for a variety of resources and uses including fish and wildlife, recreation, economic use, the enjoyment of the public, multiple use of the uplands, and the accommodation of access.

To meet these goals, state land and water in the Recreation Rivers will be managed for¹:

Public Ownership. Retain the Recreation Rivers in public ownership for public use.

¹ The order of the goals listed throughout this chapter are not listed in order of priority.

1 **Recreation.** Maintain and enhance the Recreation Rivers for recreation.

2
3 **Fish and Wildlife.** Manage, protect, and maintain the fish and wildlife populations and
4 habitat on a sustained-yield basis.

5
6 **Public Use.** Protect and enhance public use and enjoyment of the Recreation Rivers,
7 including ensuring the availability of public use sites to meet the needs of all users.

8
9 **Economic Use.** Allow continued economic uses.

10
11 **Mitigation Measures.** Manage upland activities for multiple use within the Recreation
12 Rivers using mitigation measures to alleviate potential adverse effects on water quality and
13 stream flow.

14
15 **Access.** Accommodate access for resource uses including recreation and tourism within or
16 adjacent to the Recreation Rivers.

17
18 **Spectrum of Opportunities.** Provide for a spectrum of recreation opportunities on the six
19 Recreation Rivers.

20
21 **Monitoring.** Monitor conditions to ensure that the desired recreation opportunities are
22 maintained through time.

23
24 **Education.** Promote public understanding and appreciation of the resource and public
25 values.

26
27 **Management.** Formulate policies and specific guidelines for short- and long-term
28 management.

31 **Management Intent**

32
33 The goals listed above will be met by managing state land through management intent
34 statements. Management intent describes the future condition that is desired. Three general
35 classes of management intent were developed to provide diverse recreation opportunities to
36 satisfy the public's varying preferences. The class assigned to each area is similar to current
37 use patterns. Management intent classes range along a recreation opportunity spectrum that
38 includes Class I, Class II, and Class III areas: Class I areas provide primitive recreation
39 opportunities; Class II areas provide semi-primitive recreation opportunities; Class III areas
40 provide recreational opportunities in a more developed setting. Management decisions on
41 whether proposed land uses are compatible and which guidelines apply will be based on
42 these general management intent statements, guidelines, and specific management intent for
43 the subunit. The management intent class for each subunit is shown in Map 2.1 on the
44 following page and described in Table 3.1 in Chapter 3.

SUSITNA BASIN RECREATION RIVERS MANAGEMENT PLAN

MANAGEMENT INTENT FOR SUBUNITS

MAP 2.1



MANAGEMENT UNITS & SUBUNITS

1. Little Susitna River

- 1a. Lower Little Susitna River
- 1b. Middle Little Susitna River
- 1c. Upper Little Susitna River

Land Use Designations only apply to land owned by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, as indicated by the management units on the map. And due to size, some management units may not display on the map. There may be some private parcels contained within management units, but designations do not apply to non-state lands. This map is for graphic representation only and intended only to be used as a guide.

2. Deshka River

- 2a. Mouth Of Deshka River
- 2b. Lower Deshka River
- 2c. Middle Deshka River
- 2d. Neil Lak
- 2e. The Forks
- 2f. Kroto Creek
- 2g. Lower Moose Creek
- 2h. Oilwell Road
- 2i. Upper Moose Creek

3. Talkeetna River

- 3a. Lower Talkeetna River
- 3b. Middle Talkeetna River
- 3c. Clear (Chunilna) Creek
- 3d. Talkeetna Canyon

4. Lake Creek

- 4a. Lake Creek Mouth
- 4b. Lower Lake Creek
- 4c. Middle Lake Creek
- 4d. Upper Lake Creek
- 4e. Chelatna Lake

5. Talachulitna River

- 5a. Mouth of Talachulitna River
- 5b. Talachulitna Canyon
- 5c. Middle Talachulitna River
- 5d. Talachulitna Creek
- 5e. Judd Lake
- 5f. Upper Talachulitna River

6. Alexander Creek

- 6a. Lower Alexander Creek
- 6b. Upper Alexander Creek
- 6c. Alexander Lake
- 6d. Sucker Creek

Regulations

The 1991 plan proposed regulations necessary to implement the area-wide and unit-specific management policies for the Recreation Rivers. In May of 1991 these regulations (11 AAC 09.005-900) went in effect. Because the management policies in the 1991 plan were adopted by reference, the regulations (11 AAC 09.005) will be amended as appropriate to conform with this plan revision. Specifically, this plan proposes changes to management guidelines related to shoreline development to conform with best management practices which affects 11 AAC 09.030. Potentially, changes may be needed to 11 AAC 09.900 to further clarify definitions. All regulations, whether or not specifically indicated, apply only to state land and water in the Recreation Rivers.

Guidelines

The following guidelines are specific directives that will be applied to management decisions. ADNR will use criteria included in the guidelines when considering permit or lease applications on state land. All Chapter 2 guidelines, whether or not specifically indicated, apply to all state land in the Recreation Rivers. For additional guidelines, see *Management Guidelines* for each unit and subunit in Chapter 3.

Public Use Sites

Goals

Public Use. Protect and enhance public recreation use and enjoyment of public use sites.

Protect Values. Protect the public recreation value of these sites.

Management Guidelines

Public use sites are sites on state land and water that have been identified as particularly important for public access, fishing, camping, or other recreation or public use. The management intent is to protect the opportunity for the public to use these sites, and to protect the public value of the sites. Sixty-nine (69) public use sites have been identified in the Recreation Rivers. When uplands are in borough or private ownership, the public use site and its guidelines apply only to the land below ordinary high water. See the unit maps in Chapter 3 that show these sites.

Several guidelines in Chapter 2 apply to these sites. For example, commercial camps are not allowed in public use sites. Improvements such as public facilities, docks, boat ramps, and public airstrips may be allowed. Camping may be restricted to identified sites if a campground is constructed or if designated campsites are identified. Public use sites, because of their high value for public use, will receive higher levels of management attention than other less heavily used areas.

The list of sites is based on the best available information. As use patterns change and more information becomes available, new sites are likely to be identified and existing sites deleted. ADNRR should work with the Recreation Rivers Advisory Board and the Alaska Department of Fish & Game to identify additional sites. Additions or deletions from the list of the public use sites requires a “Minor Change” to the plan. See *Procedures for Plan Review, Modification, and Amendment* in Chapter 4. Also see *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2.

Special Management Areas

Goals

Access. Accommodate reasonable access improvements to support uses on private and state lands located in these areas.

Improvements on Private Land. Allow reasonable improvements on state lands to support uses of private lands.

Management Guidelines

Special management areas are areas on state land and water where specific developments are proposed or where clusters of private land are located. Their designation as special management areas acknowledges these circumstances, and the need for a different management intent for levels of development and recreation experiences than surrounding public land. There are thirteen (13) special management areas shown in the unit maps in Chapter 3. Special management areas are located in Class I areas. Special management areas will be managed as Class II areas. Motorized access is allowed in these areas even when they are located along non-motorized river segments. When uplands are in private or borough ownership, the special management area only includes the land below ordinary high water and the water column. Additions to or deletions from the list of special management areas require a “Plan Amendment.” See *Procedures for Plan Review, Modification, and Amendment* in Chapter 4. Also see *Special Management Areas* in Chapter 3.

Riparian Management Areas

Goals

Opportunities for Development. Accommodate opportunities for small-scale developments and access improvements for public, commercial, and agency use.

Shoreline Vegetation. Maximize the amount of shoreline remaining in a natural timbered or vegetated state.

Habitat. Maintain the functional integrity of fish and wildlife habitat at no less than existing levels of productive capability.

Scenery. Protect and maintain the scenic qualities of rivers, lakes, and their viewsheds.

Shorelands. Minimize disturbance of lands below ordinary high water and associated with wetlands and floodplains.

Uplands. Minimize the degradation of the land adjacent to the rivers and lakes which may have deleterious effects on water quality, stream flow, and hydrology.

Public Use. Protect and maintain public uses of the rivers, shorelines, and associated riparian areas.

Safety. Protect the public from hazardous structures or channel modifications in or over the river, or along the shoreline.

Structures. Ensure the long-term public use of the Recreation Rivers by minimizing the construction of long-term habitable private facilities on state lands. These include cabins for private use, trapping cabins, remote cabins, and unauthorized cabins.

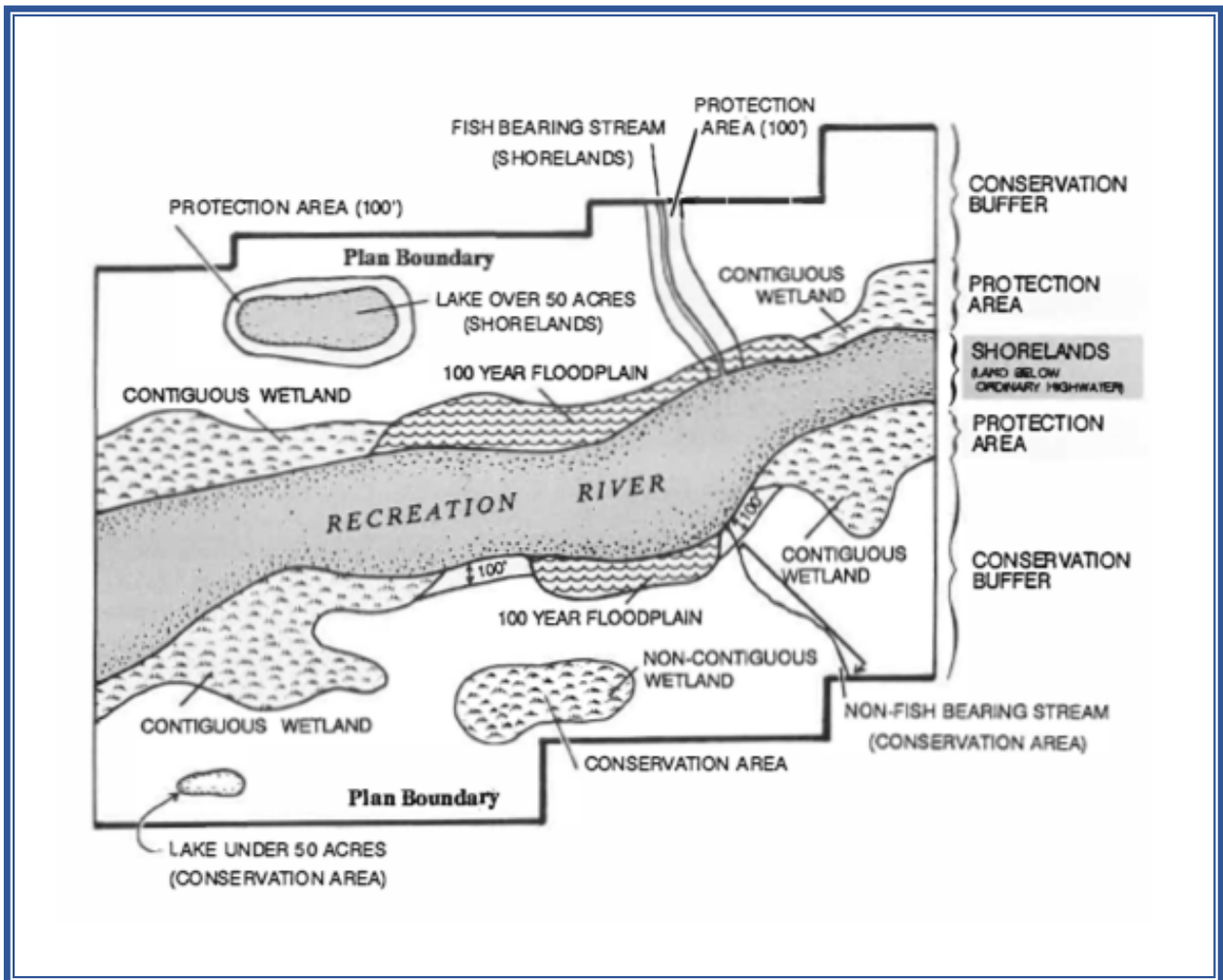
Water Quality and Quantity. Protect riparian zones to maintain high water quality. Riparian zones filter runoff; reduce nutrient and sediment loads; regulate water flow; retain floodwaters; and provide shade and temperature refugia for aquatic life.

Consolidate Improvements. Consolidate permanent structures, when feasible and prudent, to areas where there are already significant improvements on both public and private lands.

Management Guidelines

Riparian Management Areas. Riparian management areas include three areas: land and water below ordinary high water, protection areas, and conservation areas. Special guidelines

1
2 **Figure 2.1: Riparian Management Areas**



3

1 apply to these areas. Activities in riparian management areas shall be authorized consistent
2 with the Clean Water Act Section 404 process where it applies.
3
4

5 **Land and Water Below Ordinary High Water**

6

7 *Description:* This includes water and land-below-ordinary-high-water on navigable river
8 channels, lakes over 50 acres, and fish-bearing streams. Ordinary high water is the mark
9 along the bank or shore up to which the presence and action of the nontidal water are so
10 common and usual, and so long continued in all ordinary years, as to leave a natural line
11 impressed on the bank or shore, indicated by erosion, shelving, changes in soil
12 characteristics, destruction of terrestrial vegetation, or other distinctive physical
13 characteristics [from 11 AAC 53.900(23)].
14

15 *Intent:* The management intent for the land below ordinary high water or in the waterbody is
16 to protect the water quality and quantity, fish and wildlife habitat, hydrologic regime, riparian
17 ecosystem, and recreation uses of the river. In general, only those activities that are water-
18 dependent should be allowed below or within 100 feet of ordinary high water. These
19 activities are defined as those that must have direct access or proximity to, or be located in,
20 the water to fulfill their purpose.
21
22

23 **Protection Area**

24

25 *Description:* The protection area includes contiguous wetlands, the 100-year floodplain, or
26 100 feet from the ordinary high-water mark, whichever is greater (see *Figure 2.1*).
27 Contiguous wetlands are defined as wetlands which have visible evidence of a surface water
28 connection with the six Recreation Rivers or their tributaries. The 100-year floodplain is the
29 point to which the six rivers or their tributaries will flood, on average, once every 100 years
30 or that area that has a one-percent chance of being flooded in any given year. The minimum
31 100-foot width of the protection area applies to all navigable or fish-bearing waterbodies and
32 to lakes over 50 acres.
33

34 There are some guidelines in the plan that apply only to development within one-hundred-
35 foot buffers along waterbodies. They apply to activities such as commercial camps, storage
36 of large volumes of petroleum products, and material sales. A 75-foot, rather than one-
37 hundred-foot, setback ordinance applies to all borough and private lands.
38

39 For this management plan, wetlands are further divided into two classes. Contiguous
40 wetlands have a visible surface water connection with the Recreation Rivers or their
41 tributaries. Non-contiguous wetlands have no apparent surface-water connection.
42

43 There may be exceptions where the minimum protection area is wider (e.g, high banks with
44 low soil stability or forest susceptibility to windthrow). The minimum width of the protection

area along navigable waters, fish-bearing streams, and lakes over 50 acres should be expanded in sloping areas as follows:

<u>Average Side Slope</u>	<u>Minimum Buffer Width</u>
20-40%	125'
40% or greater	150'

In forested areas, the minimum protection area should be widened as necessary to increase resistance to windthrow in areas subject to strong winds.

Intent: The primary intent of guidelines applying to the protection area is to minimize disturbance to rivers and their associated ecosystems so that they may maintain their function in a dynamic natural state, thus enabling the fish and wildlife resources to maintain critical life functions and productivity.

In the protection area, few activities which would degrade the integrity or function of the riparian zone, floodplain, contiguous wetlands, or the adjacent waterbodies will be allowed. Only those uses which are water-dependent should be allowed within 100 feet of or below ordinary-highwater. Uses may also include bridges, roads, and utilities that must cross rivers as long as they are constructed consistent with the *Upland Access* guidelines. Water-dependent uses are defined as those that must have direct access or proximity to, or be located in, the water to fulfill their purpose. When located in the floodplain, uses and structures must also comply with the borough flood damage prevention ordinance.

Conservation Buffer

Description: The conservation buffer includes all the land in the Recreation Rivers that is located outside the protection area and above ordinary-high-water mark. This also includes non-contiguous wetlands that are not directly connected by surface waters with the Recreation Rivers or their tributaries and located outside the 100-year floodplain. Also included in this area are lakes under 50 acres and non-navigable, non-fish bearing streams.

Intent: The purpose of the conservation area is to provide a vegetative shield for critical resources in the protection area. Removal of natural vegetation in this area should be minimized. Without the pollution dissipation function provided by the conservation buffer, the inner protection area would be vulnerable to degradation.

Upland Development

Management Guidelines

General Guidelines. The following general guidelines should be applied to development one hundred feet or more landward from ordinary high water in the Recreation Rivers:

1. *Vegetation.* Removal of vegetation shall be limited to the minimum necessary to accomplish the allowed use.
2. *Disturbance.* Surface disturbance, particularly in the protection areas, shall be minimized.
3. *Fill.* Fill shall be limited to only that needed for the project's structural integrity.
4. *Revegetation.* Disturbed soil areas shall be revegetated as soon as feasible and prudent after disturbance and no later than the next growing season. Natural revegetation is acceptable if the site is suitable and will revegetate itself within the next growing season.
5. *Contours.* Pre-existing contours should be maintained when feasible and prudent.
6. *Consolidation.* Joint use and consolidation of facilities will be encouraged wherever it is feasible and prudent to do so. Facilities shall be designed and sited to accommodate future development and avoid unnecessary duplication of facilities. The feasibility of using an existing facility shall be evaluated before the construction of a new facility is authorized.
7. *Ordinances.* Projects in the floodplain shall comply with the borough floodplain hazard protection ordinance, which requires engineering plans prior to construction.

Resource Management Camps. Resource management camps are facilities established for resource or recreation management, or for scientific study. They are generally constructed by natural resource agencies such as ADNIR or ADF&G, the borough, universities, or non-profit groups such as the Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association. Resource management camps must be authorized by a land use permit.

These facilities benefit a wide range of river users and therefore may be authorized in any subunit. The following guidelines should be followed where feasible and prudent:

1. To avoid contributing to crowding at public use sites, camps unrelated to the management or protection of the resources in these sites should not be located in or near these sites unless the location of the camp at the site complements the public use of the site.
2. To avoid damaging new sites and for more efficient management of the rivers by different agencies, new camps should be located near existing resource management

1 camps, such as the ADF&G camps on the Lower Deshka River, Lake Creek, and
2 Talachulitna River.

- 3 3. Camps should be located at least 100 feet from the rivers and should be sited to
4 minimize evidence of human use as seen from the river. This may not always be
5 possible for water-dependent structures such as weirs, sonar sites, fish counting
6 stations, or fish trap devices. If such facilities must be located on the river, they
7 should be rustic in nature, and constructed of materials that visually blend into the
8 surroundings.
9

10 **Remote Cabins and Trapping Cabins.** Construction of private cabins on state lands is not
11 compatible with the management intent for these rivers. Remote cabins and trapping cabin
12 permits will not be authorized in the corridors. Existing trapping cabin permits may be
13 renewed if they do not create conflicts with fish or wildlife, habitat, recreation, or other uses
14 in the subunit.
15

16 **Unauthorized Cabins.** ADNR should remove unauthorized cabins on state land from the
17 corridors. Actions should first focus on unauthorized cabins in Class I subunits (particularly
18 where cabins are visible from the river), where they represent a significant liability, or are
19 located in important habitat areas.
20

21 **Communication Towers, Antennae, and Long Wires.** These should be sited to avoid or
22 minimize visibility from the river and conflicts with air traffic patterns for airports and
23 landing areas.
24

25 **Utilities** (including powerlines, telephone lines, and pipelines). Oil and gas gathering and
26 feeding lines will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Also see *Fish and Wildlife Habitat*,
27 *Trumpeter Swans*, and *Bald Eagles* and *Subsurface Resources*, *Oil and Gas* in this chapter.
28

29 Guidelines for construction of these are listed below:
30

- 31 • Utilities shall be designed so as not to be a hazard to river or air navigation or public
32 safety.
- 33 • Utilities shall be designed using best management practices and extra effort should be
34 made to minimize required maintenance.
- 35 • Utilities shall be designed to minimize the width of clearing corridors.
- 36 • Utilities shall be designed to cross the river and the corridors at 90 degrees or as near
37 perpendicular as possible.
- 38 • Construction of utility projects below ordinary high water or in the airspace above
39 waterbodies may be allowed if the project is in the best public interest. Utilities which
40 serve only a few users and cross waterbodies that receive high public use shall be
41 discouraged.

- All construction below ordinary high water shall normally occur between May 15 and July 15 when there is the least potential for damage to fish or migratory birds. This period may vary depending on the ADF&G Title 16 Permit.
- Utilities must only encourage use for public access where appropriate along easements. If the public is using an easement in a damaging way, more appropriate access should be encouraged nearby.

Other Guidelines Affecting Upland Development. Several other guidelines may affect upland development. See the following sections of this chapter.

Shoreline Development
Recreation
Fish & Wildlife Habitat
Commercial

Shoreline Development

Management Guidelines

The following guidelines should be used for all types of shoreline development below or within 100 feet of ordinary high water.

1. *Title 16 Permit.* A fish habitat (Title 16) permit is required from ADF&G for all in-water and shoreline construction work, including the placement of docks in the Recreation Rivers. This permit will specify measures required of the applicant to protect fish habitat. The ADF&G Habitat Division will evaluate proposed project design for effects on river flows, hydraulics, and fish habitat before construction begins.
2. *Ordinary High Water.* Only water-dependent uses may be allowed below or within 100 feet of ordinary high water. Water-dependent uses are those that can be carried out only on, in, or adjacent to water areas because the use requires access to the waterbody.
3. *Storage of Petroleum Products.* To help protect waterbodies from oil spills, no more than 55 gallons of fuel, oil, or other liquid petroleum products may be stored on state land, water, or associated structures within 100 feet of a waterbody. Fifty-five gallon drums stored within 100 feet of the river must be within an impermeable-diked area with a capacity of 110 percent of the largest amount of fuel stored. Underground storage of petroleum products in the Recreation River is prohibited. Additional best practices include: storing as little fuel as practical near surface waters; having secondary containment; protecting storage containers from snow and ice damage; and conducting regular inspections to ensure pipes, connections, and structures supporting the fuel are all in good condition. Any spill to water, and any spill over one gallon on soil, must be reported immediately to ADEC.
4. *Bank Disturbance.* Bank disturbance shall be minimized. Trees and shrubs shall be preserved as much as possible to support bank stabilization.
5. *Water Circulation.* Projects below ordinary high water or along the banks of a waterbody shall be located, designed, and maintained so that natural water circulation patterns are not significantly interrupted, unless the changes are an integral part of the project purpose.
6. *Engineering.* The project will be reviewed through applicable agency review processes, including the Clean Water Act Section 404 process. Within ADNR, DGGS should have the opportunity to review project designs to assess their potential effects on the river's hydrology and shoreline change potential. Projects in floodplains shall comply with the borough flood damage protection ordinance, which requires engineering plans. A structure will not be allowed if there is little likelihood of success or the project is not sufficient to withstand a 100-year flood event.

- 1 7. *Temporary Fills*. Temporary fill shall be completely removed after the completion of
2 a project requiring fill.
- 3 8. *Use of Shorelands Where Uplands are in Private Ownership*. ADNR will consult
4 with the private upland landowner and use its best professional judgement to
5 determine if a proposed use occurs on state-owned shorelands. ADNR will retain the
6 right to issue a permit or lease for uses that are not prohibited over the objection of
7 adjacent landowners. However, ADNR will carefully consider comments from the
8 private landowners and others when making a decision.
9 Applications for shoreland uses that require use of private uplands will not be
10 considered until there is a written agreement between the applicant and the upland
11 owner(s) approving the necessary use. The term of the lease or permit should not be
12 longer than the term of agreement between the applicant and the upland owner. If the
13 applicant has not applied for the use of adjacent uplands, the application must show
14 how all the necessary associated uses will be accommodated on the shorelands.
- 15 9. *Construction Season*. All in-water construction shall occur in the shortest practical
16 time.
- 17 10. *Revegetation*. Disturbed soils shall be revegetated as soon as feasible and prudent
18 after disturbance and no later than the next growing season. Natural revegetation is
19 acceptable if the site is suitable and will revegetate itself within the next growing
20 season. Plants selected to be used for revegetation should be native species that may
21 be currently found within the habitat. Additionally, to prevent the introduction of
22 invasive species, seed used in revegetation projects should be certified weed-free.
- 23 11. *Domestic Waste*. Facilities that collect, transport, or treat domestic waste must meet
24 all separation distances outlined in 18 AAC 72 or are required to obtain a waiver prior
25 to construction from ADEC.

28 Types of Development

30 **Erosion Control & Streambank Rehabilitation Projects.** Requests for permits for erosion
31 control and streambank rehabilitation projects on the Recreation Rivers will be evaluated on
32 a case-by-case basis by DMLW and other appropriate agencies. Depending on the type of
33 project, riprap, gabions, drop structures, coir logs, brush layers, trenched willows, rootwad
34 revetments, cabled spruce trees, and the planting of native vegetation may all be approved
35 methods for bank stabilization. However, as technologies and materials improve, other
36 techniques may be approved. General criteria that will be used to evaluate a proposed project
37 include whether the project is in the best public interest, effects the hydrology of the river,
38 impacts fish and wildlife habitat, and is a hazard to navigation.

40 Human-caused erosion can be slowed by maintaining and promoting a healthy riparian
41 corridor, decreasing foot traffic along the shoreline, decreasing boat speeds, and by parking
42 boats along floating docks, walkways, and stairways into the river rather than on banks.

Many techniques found in ADF&G's *Streambank Revegetation and Protection Guide* can be used to help slow the rate of human-caused erosion.

1. *Structures to Protect Private Property.* Building erosion control structures to prevent the erosion of private property is generally discouraged because of its detrimental effects on the river and adjacent property. Before a project is approved, the applicant shall demonstrate that there is no feasible or prudent alternative to constructing an erosion control structure. Bank protection may be allowed as part of bridge construction.
2. *Reclamation.* Structures or improvements designed to reclaim land from the river will not be allowed, except when determined to be in the best public interest. Structures will not be authorized to create additional private property by filling in a river.
3. *Maintenance.* Erosion control and streambank rehabilitation projects should be designed to minimize the need for maintenance. Bank erosion control and streambank rehabilitation measures shall be limited to the areas where erosion is excessive and should not create further bank disturbance.
4. *Materials.* No materials shall be removed from below ordinary high water except to create a flat base for the toe of a structure.
5. *Removal of Vegetation.* Removal of vegetation shall be limited to that which is necessary to accomplish the allowed use. Organic materials such as trees, brush, or soil shall not be deposited in the waterbody unless specifically authorized. The structure will be revegetated above ordinary high water by spreading overburden and planting native species such as grasses and woody vegetation such as willows and alders. The materials used shall be free of loose dirt or gravel below ordinary high water. For some types of structures, materials may be required to be placed on filter fabric.
6. *Construction Period.* All in-water construction and maintenance shall normally occur between May 15 and July 15 when there is the least potential damage to fish or migratory birds. This period may vary depending on the ADF&G Title 16 permit.
7. *Design.* The structure shall be designed so as not to be a hazard to river navigation.

Cabled Trees. Trees cabled to the bank for bank protection may be allowed. In some areas this method has proven to be cost-effective, successful in reducing erosion, and in providing fish habitat. Cabled trees provide temporary protection until vegetation has been established, or a more permanent bioengineering solution can be developed. Using trees already in the river or which are moved from another area where they were a hazard to navigation are preferred but not required. If cut from banks, trees should be taken from sufficiently far away so as not to accelerate bank erosion. Trees shall be firmly cabled to the bank to withstand a 100-year flood event. More information can be found in ADF&G's *Streambank Revegetation and Protection Guide*.

Drop Structures. These are structures that are placed on the bed of the river to redirect flows. Drop structures have proven effective in controlling bank erosion and have less

1 potential to damage fish habitat than many other erosion control methods. However, they can
2 be a hazard to navigation unless properly designed, constructed, and maintained. Drop
3 structures may be considered on streams not used by boats. On navigable rivers, they must be
4 designed, constructed, and operated to maintain or enhance navigation before they will be
5 authorized.

6
7 **Dolphins, Groins, Bulkheads, and Jetties.** Because these structures cause adverse effects
8 on river hydrology, such as increasing sedimentation and loss of fish habitat, they are
9 prohibited in the Recreation Rivers. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis for
10 bulkheads and other in-water structures associated with approved bridge construction. See
11 *Stream Crossing* in this section.

12
13 **Diversion Channels, Navigation Channels, Canals, Boat Slips, and Boat Harbors.** These
14 types of improvements significantly alter stream banks, bank vegetation, river flow
15 characteristics, and fish habitat. They are prohibited on the Recreation Rivers, except where
16 channelization is necessary adjacent to public bridges.

17
18 **Flood Control Levees.** Flood control levees are prohibited in the Recreation Rivers unless
19 found to be in the best public interest. They may be authorized in areas adjacent to
20 communities such as Talkeetna, with numerous public and private improvements subject to
21 flooding. Temporary sandbagging during a flood may be allowed.

22
23 **Dams.** Under Section 41.23.440(2), the plan will develop long-range guidelines and
24 management priorities to “protect, maintain, or enhance the free-flowing nature of the river.”
25 Dams are prohibited on the main stem of the six rivers and their major tributaries. Major
26 tributaries include those that are either boatable, have high value fish runs, or are frequently
27 used for bank fishing. These include: Nancy Lake Creek and Government Creek (Little
28 Susitna River); Kroto Creek, Moose Creek, Trapper Creek, No-name Creek (RM 14), Cabin
29 Creek, Amber Lake Creek, and Gate Creek (Deshka River); Clear Creek, Larson Creek,
30 Sheep River, Disappointment Creek, Iron Creek, Fish Creek, Prairie Creek, Cache Creek
31 (Talkeetna River); Yenlo Creek, Camp Creek, Home Creek, Sunflower Creek, Coffee Creek,
32 Friday Creek, Talachulitna Creek, Upper Talachulitna River, and Wolf Lake Creek
33 (Talachulitna River); Sucker Creek, Pierce Creek, and Trail Creek (Alexander Creek). These
34 guidelines apply only to these portions of the above-listed streams that are in the Recreation
35 River designated boundaries.

36
37 Dams may be allowed on minor tributaries approved by ADF&G including for fisheries
38 enhancement programs. Dams on minor tributaries containing fish must allow for fish
39 passage.

40
41 **Trams and Cables.** Trams may be authorized under permit if there is a demonstrated public
42 need, and the structure is not a hazard to river or air navigation.

43
44 **Anchor Buoys and Anchor Markers.** Because the rivers are generally too narrow to safely
45 accommodate anchor buoys and markers and these devices are often used to reserve prime

1 fishing spots or other high value areas, they are prohibited with a few exceptions. They may
2 be allowed at the mouth of Lake Creek under the conditions listed below. They are also
3 generally allowed on lakes if they are not a hazard to boat or float plane navigation, and they
4 are clearly marked with the owner's name. These guidelines will be established by
5 regulation.

6
7 Although the confluence area of Lake Creek and the Yentna River is wide enough to safely
8 accommodate anchor buoys and markers, the public has expressed concern that these have
9 been used in the past to reserve fishing spots. However, buoys are needed to safely fish in the
10 fast-flowing water of the Yentna River. To address this concern, at the mouth of Lake Creek
11 the following guidelines apply to anchor buoys and anchor marker buoys:

- 12
13 1. *Navigation.* Buoys shall not block the primary navigation channel to Lake Creek.
- 14 2. *Time.* Buoys and markers shall not remain in place for more than six hours after
15 which they must be pulled and cannot be reset for one hour in the same vicinity from
16 which they were removed.
- 17 3. *Unattended Buoys.* Buoys shall not remain unattached to boats for more than 30
18 minutes after which they will be subject to removal. Unoccupied boats shall not be
19 attached to buoys for any length of time.
- 20 4. *Switching Occupants.* Boats may not switch off using the same buoy in the same
21 location unless the buoy is pulled.
22 The buoy cannot be reset in the same location for one hour.
- 23 5. *Marking Buoys.* Buoys shall have the name of the business or name of the individual
24 using the buoy. If an individual or company has more than one buoy, each buoy shall
25 have a different number to ensure that they can be monitored.

26
27 **Other Types of Buoys.** Buoys or signs on floats may be allowed by permit to mark
28 floatplane landing areas and no-wake areas or placed by agencies for resource or recreation
29 management purposes. They may also be authorized for non-profit or other groups serving a
30 public purpose if the use is consistent with the management intent for the subunit. Also see
31 *Anchor Buoys and Anchor Markers* in this section and *Signs* in the General Education section
32 under Management Guidelines near the end of this chapter.

33
34 **Boat Storage.** Boat storage is defined as keeping a boat in one place more than four days in
35 summer (from May 15 to August 31) and more than 14 days in winter (from September 1 to
36 May 14). This includes boats attached to the bank by a line, pulled up on the shorelands, or
37 placed on the uplands. Boat storage does not include boats tied to anchor or marker buoys,
38 anchored to the bottom, or attached to docks. See guidelines for *Docks*, *Buoys* and *Marinas*
39 in this section. Keeping a boat in one spot for less than 4 days in summer and up to 14 days
40 in winter does not require a permit. Storage of boats may be allowed for longer than these
41 periods consistent with the following guidelines:
42

1. *Winter.* To avoid boats being washed away during spring break-up, during the period when waterbodies are frozen, boats may not be kept below ordinary high water.
2. *Private Land.* Boats may be stored on state shorelands or tied to the bank immediately adjacent to private land by the landowner without a permit during the ice-free season.
3. *Camps.* Boats may be stored by the permittee when the boats are adjacent to authorized commercial or resource management camps.
4. *Designated Storage Areas.* Any other boat storage shall be authorized by permit in designated areas. Any boat owner or agency may apply to designate an area for boat storage. Approved areas should be located so that boats: do not hinder navigation, are not likely to wash away, are consolidated as much as possible to avoid a proliferation of sites, do not block public access, and do not result in damage to the banks of waterbodies.

Boats that are not stored consistent with these guidelines may be impounded. The need for a designated boat storage areas has been identified in Chapter 3 by subunit for Neil Lake, the mouth of the Deshka, Chelatna Lake airstrip, and the middle Talachulitna River.

Boat Ramps. Boat ramps are prohibited in Class I areas. Ramps may be authorized in Class II areas, Class III areas, and special management areas. Boat ramps shall be designed and constructed consistent with the following guidelines:

1. No material shall be removed from the affected waterbody except that which is necessary for placement of the boat ramp.
2. Ramps will not be located in important fish spawning or rearing areas.
3. Ramps shall be designed so that little or no maintenance is required.
4. In-water construction work shall be completed in the shortest practicable time.
5. Ramps will be designed so as not to increase erosion or significantly alter hydraulic characteristics either upstream or downstream of the project.

Also see *Recreation, Public Facilities* in this chapter.

Floating Docks. Community docks, marinas, and docks located in public use sites may be authorized by permit if they meet the guidelines listed below. All other floating docks are generally allowed and do not need an ADNR permit as long as they meet the guidelines listed below. All docks require an ADF&G Title 16 Permit if they are in waters containing anadromous fish.

Floating docks shall be removed prior to ice forming on the waterbody. During winter, docks and associated boats and equipment must be stored consistent with the boat storage guidelines in this section. It is the responsibility of the boat owner to retrieve docks or parts of docks if they break loose from the site where they were stored.

The total surface area of the dock may not exceed 100 square feet. Docks shall not extend more than 15 feet from the edge of the water of a lake or river at any water level. However, in limited circumstances on lakes only, docks may extend further than 15 feet from the edge of a lake if specific conditions such as low water levels warrant, and it is determined that it would not be a hazard to public access and navigation. If deviating from the 15-foot limit, docks shall only extend the minimum distance necessary to achieve the purpose. Walkways or ladders extending beyond the ordinary-high-water for purposes of connecting docks with the shoreline shall not exceed four feet in width. Docks and access ramps should use light penetrating materials to the extent practicable along streambanks and lakeshores to protect riparian vegetation (board spacing of ½ inch or more is preferred over water).

Docks shall be designed and the boats tied to them in a manner that they do not create a hazard to, or impede, or restrict water or air navigation. Boats tied to any docks in the water do not require a boat storage permit.

To avoid contaminating waterbodies, non-treated or pressure-treated construction materials are preferred over surface-treated materials that do not hold toxic preservatives well. Floating docks shall be constructed using materials that will not become waterlogged or sink when punctured. Styrofoam shall not be used for floatation unless fully commercially encapsulated in plastic or other means of containment. Wood used for dock construction shall be pressure-treated and shall not be treated with any preservative containing pentachlorophenol or creosote. Wood preservatives shall not be applied using surface applications such as painting or spraying.

Docks are prohibited on rivers in Class I areas. Docks are generally allowed or may be authorized by permit on lakes in Class I areas and in Special Management Areas as long as they are consistent with the dock guidelines. Docks in public use sites require a permit and will only be authorized if they are consistent with the dock guidelines and management intent for the public use site and are either located immediately adjacent to privately owned uplands or will be used for public purposes such as for a public campground. Also see *Floating Facilities, Commercial Marinas, and Floating Mobile Docks* in this section.

Stationary Docks. Cantilevered docks, and docks supported by fill, rocks, log cribbing, or other materials affixed to the shorelands are prohibited. Pile-supported docks may be allowed on lakes consistent with applicable floating dock guidelines.

Floating Facilities. The public was generally opposed to allowing floating facilities that provided overnight accommodation on the six rivers. They also opposed commercial operations that sold goods and food in the six rivers, particularly when these activities occurred in public use sites. The public thought that this type of activity was incompatible with the public use of state waterways and their recreation values. They also thought that there were already ample opportunities for this type of activity on private lands. Use or storage of floating facilities will not be authorized in the planning area. Floating facilities include floathomes, floating stores, floating food vendors, floatcamps, floating lodges, and floating residential or commercial facilities located on state waters or grounded on state

shorelands. Floating facilities may, however, temporarily pass through the Recreation Rivers when enroute to other areas along the Susitna, Yentna, and Skwentna Rivers. Engaging in soliciting, selling, or peddling liquids or edibles for human consumption, or distributing circulars, or hawking, peddling, or vending goods, wares, services, or merchandise from floating facilities or boats is generally prohibited. There are some exceptions for marinas. Also see *Marinas* (below) and *Commercial, Prohibited Commercial Activities* elsewhere in this chapter.

Marinas and Community Docks. Marinas include docks used for commercial or public purposes, such as those associated with lodges or campgrounds. Marinas used for commercial purposes may provide limited services such as boat moorage, boat rentals, fuel, and oil which may be required by the public for access to the Recreation Rivers, particularly in those areas furthest from the railbelt. Community docks are docks built and maintained by more than one landowner. Adjoining property owners are encouraged to cooperatively design and construct community floating docks instead of building one dock for each landowner. All guidelines for floating docks, stationary docks, and floating facilities described in the previous sections apply. However, the minimum size of the dock may be larger than 100 square feet to serve more users. Also see *Commercial*, in this chapter.

Floating Mobile Docks. These are self-propelled floating, mobile docks which are often used for fishing. Their use is allowed if they have U.S. Coast Guard numbers and comply with ADNR boating and commercial use regulations (if they are used for commercial use).

Ladders, Ramps, Walkways and Steps. These structures require ADNR land use permits. Below ordinary high water the following guidelines apply. They are prohibited during the ice-free season and in Class I areas year-round. Surface-treated or creosote-treated materials shall not be used in contact with bodies of water. Their width shall not exceed 4 feet. They shall not block, impede, or be a hazard to public access and navigation. They require an ADF&G Title 16 Permit. They shall not be authorized if they cause significant disturbance to banks of waterbodies. Structures located in public use sites should be consistent with the management intent for those sites.

Stream Crossings. The findings and intent section of the Recreation Rivers Act states, “The designation of the six rivers and their corridors is not intended to become an undue impediment to the development of access within, across, and around the rivers and their corridors.” The following guidelines are to accommodate stream crossings while mitigating effects on recreation, water quality, and fish and wildlife habitat. (Also see *Trails Action Plan* in Chapter 4 and *Upland Access, Roads* in this chapter).

Preferred Type of Stream Crossing. In areas where there is frequent vehicle traffic, bridges are the preferred method for crossing streams, rather than fording. Fordings should be avoided in spawning areas when spawning fish or eggs are present. If culverts are used, bottomless-arch culverts are preferred over round or elliptical culverts in fish spawning habitat. Any crossing of streams containing anadromous fish must be in compliance with an ADF&G Title 16 permit.

1 *Habitat.* Road and trail crossings must provide for fish passage and habitat protection. All
2 water crossings should be engineered to avoid interference with spawning areas.

3 *Hydrology.* At a minimum, bridges and culverts shall be designed to pass a 50-year flood
4 event without damage to the structure or road. Any anticipated impact of bridge or
5 culvert construction affecting stream volume, velocity, backwater, direction, sediment
6 transport, or substrate characteristics shall be evaluated for significance and shall not
7 cause a rise in upstream flood elevation or increase in erosion. Bridges and culverts shall
8 be designed to comply with all federal, state, and borough permit requirements. Where a
9 regulatory floodway has been designated or where studies are underway to establish a
10 regulatory floodway, the design of bridges and culverts shall be consistent with standards
11 established by federal, state, and local government agencies for the administration of the
12 National Flood Insurance Program. Freeboard shall be provided, where practicable, to
13 protect bridge structures from debris and scour-related failure. Road drainage should be
14 discharged per the guidelines and requirements of the Alaska Department of
15 Environmental Conservation (See ADEC's *Alaska Stormwater Guide*).

16 *Clearance.* Bridges and culverts shall provide adequate clearance for boat, pedestrian,
17 horseback, and large game passage whenever these uses occur or are anticipated. All
18 bridges shall be designed to provide adequate clearance for all watercraft that normally
19 use the river during normal annual high water.

20 *Construction Period.* All in-water construction and maintenance shall occur normally
21 between May 15 and July 15 when there is the least potential to damage fish habitat. This
22 period may vary depending on the ADF&G Title 16 Permit.

23 *Season.* In-water construction work shall be completed in the shortest practicable time.

24 *Materials and Fill.* Only the minimum amount of material necessary to form the base for
25 a bridge or culvert shall be removed from below the ordinary high-water level in the
26 immediate vicinity of the structure. All fill materials shall be obtained from upland
27 sources. Fine sediments shall be prevented from entering the river by using clean fill,
28 geotextile barriers, or other measures where necessary. Any waste material shall be
29 disposed of outside the protection area.

30 *Bank Disturbance.* Bank protection measures may be allowed in areas where engineers
31 have determined that erosion is excessive for that particular river.

32 *Consolidation of Access.* Where feasible and prudent, stream crossings shall be
33 consolidated.

34 *Bank Protection.* Bank protection measures should be considered for all areas where
35 disturbance has occurred. All exposed areas should be protected or revegetated.

36 *Spawning and Rearing Areas.* When feasible and prudent, crossings of waterbodies
37 should be located outside of important spawning and rearing areas.

38
39 **Priority for Bridge Sites.** Where feasible and prudent, the following criteria for
40 consideration of alternate bridge crossing sites should be used (listed below in descending
41 order of priority).

1. Crossing outside rather than inside the Recreation Rivers.
2. Crossing in Class II or III areas or in special management areas.
3. Crossing in Class I areas where there are no restrictions on motorized transport.
4. Crossing in Class I areas where there are restrictions on motorized transport.

Private Bridges. Private bridges are prohibited across the following main stems of rivers frequently used for boating unless they are determined to be in the public interest. This guideline applies only to the portions of the below-listed streams that are in the Recreation River boundaries.

1. Little Susitna River - Downstream from the Shushana Road bridge and upriver from the Edgerton-Parks Road bridge
2. Deshka - Downstream of Amber Lake Creek on Kroto Creek and downstream from the Oilwell Road crossing on Moose Creek
3. Talkeetna River - Entire river
4. Lake Creek - Chelatna Lake downstream to the Yentna River
5. Talachulitna River - Forks downstream to the mouth
6. Talachulitna Creek - Judd Lake downstream to the Forks
7. Alexander Creek - Alexander Lake downstream to the Susitna River

Ice Bridges. Ice bridges may be authorized on a case-by-case basis and must be consistent with Title 16 guidelines. Ice bridges should be located in areas that require little or no disturbance to riverbanks.

Other Guidelines Affecting Shoreline Development. Several other guidelines may affect shoreline development. See the following sections of this chapter.

- Upland Development
- Commercial
- Upland Access
- Water & Solid Waste
- Materials
- Education

Recreation

Goals

Quality Experience. Protect and enhance public use and enjoyment of the Recreation Rivers.

Areawide Opportunities. Provide for a spectrum of recreation opportunities on the six Recreation Rivers.

River-segment Opportunities. Provide specific recreation opportunities on river segments.

Signs of use. Minimize overcrowding, litter, and human waste conditions in heavily used areas.

Scenic Qualities. Maintain and enhance for viewing the existing characteristic natural landscape within the Recreation Rivers.

Public Use Sites. Ensure the availability of public use sites to meet the needs of all users.

Public Facilities. Provide public facilities for the protection of the natural resources, and to provide for public access, convenience, and safety.

Challenge and Risk. Encourage self-reliance and maintain the opportunity for users to encounter challenges and risks inherent in the natural environment, particularly on the more remote rivers.

Health and Safety. Minimize human-caused risks resulting from developments or particular activities which may endanger the public.

Education. Promote public understanding and appreciation of the resource values in the Recreation Rivers.

Monitoring. Monitor conditions to ensure that the desired recreation opportunities are maintained through time.

Management Guidelines

Recreation River Permits. *Recreation Rivers Permits* (11 AAC 09.200) may be issued for activities that are generally allowed activities on other state lands but are restricted in the Recreation Rivers. Recreation River permits may also be issued for activities that are not consistent with the Recreation Rivers *Generally allowed uses* (11 AAC 09.030). This type of

1 permit may be issued for activities such as large events or for large assemblies. Existing
2 types of authorizations such as land use permits and rights-of-way may be used whenever
3 possible.
4

5 **Primitive Tent Camps.** Examples of primitive tent camps include portable camps such as
6 pup tents, tarps supported by poles, and other similar designs. They require no authorization
7 on state land throughout the Recreation Rivers under the following conditions. Between May
8 15 and August 31, primitive camps may remain in one place for up to 96 hours (four nights)
9 before they must be disassembled and moved to another location at least one-mile away.
10 Between September 1 and May 14, primitive camps may remain in one site for up to 14 days
11 before they must be moved. Exceptions to this limit may be made for camping in developed
12 public facilities (see next section). Campers may also seek a permit to camp for longer
13 periods. Also see *Commercial, Commercial Camps* in this chapter.
14

15 **Storing Equipment and Vehicles.** Storing equipment or parking vehicles is generally
16 allowed in the Recreation Rivers under the following conditions. Between May 15 and
17 August 31, vehicles and equipment may remain in one place for up to 96 hours (4 nights)
18 before they must be moved to another location at least one-mile away unless authorized.
19 Between September 1 and May 14, there is no limit on the time that these may be stored on
20 state land. Storage of boats is addressed under *Shoreline Development, Boat Storage* in this
21 chapter.
22

23 **Public Facilities.** Under Section 41.23.470(d), “To enhance public use and enjoyment of a
24 recreation river corridor under a management plan adopted under AS 41.23.440, the
25 commissioner may provide for the construction and operation of commercial facilities such
26 as lodges, campgrounds, and boat launches.”
27

28 The public generally opposed building developed public facilities in the Recreation Rivers.
29 However, public facilities may be necessary for certain river mouths and road accessible
30 areas where public use increases to the extent where degradation of the natural environment,
31 public health, and the recreation experience may result without management actions.
32

33 *Primitive Public Facilities.* These include improvements such as privies, fire rings, log
34 benches, and minimally developed campsites. These facilities are compatible in heavily
35 used public use sites. The highest priority sites for primitive facilities are those where
36 there is excessive site destruction including the proliferation of campsites, multiple fire
37 rings, compaction of soil, or damage to vegetation. Additional consideration should be
38 given to separation distance requirements between privies and rivers. However, each
39 public use site should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

40 *Developed Public Facilities.* These include significant improvements such as hardened
41 campsites, parking areas (in road accessible areas), toilets, and caretaker facilities. Public
42 docks and boat ramps are discussed elsewhere in this chapter.
43

44 Improved campsites in both primitive and developed public facilities shall not be constructed
45 in a manner that blocks bank access along the river. When designing public facilities, the

department will consider access for the handicapped. Public facilities shall be built consistent with general guidelines for upland development in this chapter. Also see *Commercial, Commercial Campgrounds* in this chapter and *Other Recommendations, Commercial Facilities* in Chapter 4.

Public Use Cabins. ADNR will manage public-use cabins only if there are adequate funds to upgrade unauthorized cabins or build, maintain, and operate new cabins. Public use cabins may be constructed or rehabilitated to provide the public with recreational opportunities in the Recreation Rivers. Public use cabins are prohibited in Class I areas. Existing unauthorized cabins in Class II, III and special management areas will be evaluated for their conversion to public use cabins on a case-by-case basis. See *Upland Development, Unauthorized Cabins* in this chapter.

To minimize vandalism, cabins should not be located near the road system except where they are designed to provide opportunities for use by the handicapped. Cabins should be sited so they are not visually obtrusive from the river. However, some cabins may be visible from the river or lake, particularly unauthorized cabins which have been converted to public use cabins. Cabins should not be located in moose concentration areas identified by ADF&G, in public use sites, or in areas of intensive public use. Additional consideration should be given to separation distance requirements between privies supporting public use cabins and the rivers. On-site analysis by ADNR in consultation with ADF&G will be required prior to construction or conversion. If a cabin becomes difficult to manage, the state maintains the option to remove it.

The department limits occupation of public use cabins to those who have reserved and paid for their use (11 AAC 09.020). Agreements may be made with recreational groups for construction, maintenance, and operation of public use cabins. Groups who construct cabins under such an agreement may reserve the cabin at certain times for exclusive use by the group but will not have exclusive year-round use.

Camp Fires. Dead and down wood may be used for a cooking or warming fire, unless the department has closed the area to fires during the fire season (11 AAC 09.030 (3)(C)).

Use of Weapons. Under Section AS 41.23.420, ADNR may not restrict the use of weapons, including firearms, within the Recreation Rivers except in sites of high public use, such as picnic areas, boat ramps, campgrounds, and parking areas when it is determined that the use of weapons constitutes a threat to public safety. Under state law, discharge of firearms is prohibited from or across a highway or developed trail [AS 11.61.210(a)(2) and 11.81.900(a)(24)].

The most heavily used area in the Recreation Rivers is the mouth of the Deshka River. This area has intense fishing pressure, high public use, private residences, and public facilities. Between May 15 and August 31, discharge of weapons is prohibited within one-quarter mile of the Deshka River on state land and water between the mouth and the ADF&G camp at

1 approximately river mile 2 (11 AAC 09.030 (5)(C)). During restricted periods, weapons may
2 be used in defense of life and property, or as a signaling device in emergencies.

3
4 **Fireworks.** Fireworks are prohibited unless authorized by a permit.

5
6 **Assemblies and Events.** Assemblies of more than 15 people in Class I areas and more than
7 50 people in all other areas are generally allowed (11 AAC 09.030 (4)(A-B)) between May
8 15 and August 31. A permit will also be required for any promotional event or entertainment
9 event, including an organized athletic event, race, fishing derby, or spectator event, whether
10 or not an admission fee is charged, that occurs between May 15 and August 31 [11 AAC
11 09.030 (4)(C)]. Bonding may be required at the discretion of the department. This will ensure
12 that concerns such as public safety, natural resource protection, sanitation, and compatibility
13 of events with the management intent for the river, including crowding during peak use
14 periods, are addressed when large assemblies or events are planned. Permittees may be
15 required to provide sanitation facilities, litter receptacles, fireplace, or other temporary
16 improvements to accommodate participants.

17
18 **Marking Natural Objects.** Several trees and rocks in and along the Recreation Rivers have
19 been spray-painted to mark mining locations, rocks, and trails. Natural objects such as trees
20 and rocks within 100 feet of the river may not be painted, blazed, or similarly marked. When
21 marking is necessary, flagging is encouraged, rather than marking natural objects, as long as
22 it is removed at the end of the season.

23
24 **Closures and Use Management.** The department should develop regulations that allow
25 closures and other management actions to ensure that:

- 26
27 1. Upon a determination that the action is necessary for the maintenance of public health
28 and safety, protection of environmental or scenic values, protection of natural or
29 cultural resources, aid to scientific research, implementation of management
30 responsibilities, equitable allocation and use of facilities, or the avoidance of conflict
31 among visitor use activities, the director may:
- 32 A. Establish, for all or a portion of the Recreation Rivers, a reasonable schedule of
33 visiting hours, impose public use limits, or close all or a portion of a Recreation
34 River to all public use or to a specific area or activity;
 - 35 B. Designate areas for a specific use or activity, or impose conditions or restrictions
36 on a use or activity; or
 - 37 C. Terminate a restriction, limit, closure, designation, condition, or visiting hour
38 restriction imposed under (1) or (2) of this subsection.
- 39 2. A closure, designation, use or activity restriction or condition, or the termination or
40 relaxation of one, which is of a nature, magnitude and duration that will result in a
41 significant alteration in the public use pattern of the Recreation River, will adversely
42 affect the Recreation Rivers natural, aesthetic, scenic, or cultural values, or will

require a long-term or significant modification in the resource management objectives of the unit, must be adopted as a regulation.

3. Except in emergency situations, before implementing or terminating a restriction, condition, public use limit or closure, the director shall prepare a written determination justifying the action. That determination must set out the reasons the restriction, condition, public use limit, or closure authorized under paragraph (l) of this section has been established, and an explanation of why less restrictive measures will not suffice, or in the case of a termination of a restriction, condition, public use limit, or closure previously established under paragraph (l) of this section, a determination why the restriction is no longer necessary and a finding that the termination will not adversely impact Recreation River resources. This determination will be available to the public upon request.
4. To implement a public use limit, the director may establish a permit, registration, or reservation system.
5. No person may violate a closure, designation, use or activity restriction or condition, schedule of visiting hours, or public use limit. When a permit is used to implement a public use limit, violation of the terms and conditions of the permit is prohibited and may result in the suspension or revocation of the permit.

Volunteers. If funding and staffing allow, ADNR should designate a coordinator for volunteers to assist recreation rivers staff. The coordinator would recruit volunteers and organize work projects. If volunteers or groups offer to construct public improvements in the corridor, ADNR should work with them to develop a work plan with project standards, timeliness, and plans for long-term management of the improvements. Volunteers could serve as Camp Hosts, help to clean up refuse, and conduct use counts. Volunteers could also assist in educating users on the management plan and policies unique to the area. Volunteers should never be used in conjunction with any enforcement actions.

Crowding and Use Limits. Crowding and overuse were identified as problems by users on some river segments during the 1991 planning process. At the time, users reported more camping competition, fishing competition, or encounters with other groups than they desired. Since the 1991 plan process, use of the river corridors has decreased significantly. The questionnaire responses related to this plan revision indicated that users share similar crowding concerns and therefore wanted guidance relating to limiting use levels to remain in the plan in case use increases in the future. While the planning process has provided substantial information about users' standards for various impacts, there is less information about relationships between use levels and impacts.

There are several different methods of reducing "interaction" impacts in order to meet users' tolerances or standards. One of the most direct methods is to limit use (develop a permit system). Use limits should only be implemented when the impacts from overuse cannot be mitigated in any other way, if the relationship between use and impacts are known, and if there is strong public support.

While use limits are one alternative for addressing crowding issues in the future, they are not proposed for any segment of the Recreation Rivers at this time. However, the following programs to reduce these conflicts are proposed:

Monitoring of Whitewater Stretches. Three of the Recreation Rivers offer wilderness-oriented whitewater opportunities: the Talkeetna River Canyon, stretches of the Talachulitna River, and Lake Creek. On these reaches there is a strong consensus among users about the type of experience desired, acceptable levels of impacts for types of experiences, and the appropriateness of use limits if use and impacts continue to increase. For these river segments, specific “impact standards” have been prescribed (see *Chapter 3. Talkeetna, Lake Creek, and Talachulitna* subunits). These standards are the targets for evaluating the need for a permit system. A monitoring program could be proposed if a need develops to observe changes in impact levels (see *Chapter 4, Monitoring*). If impact levels become greater than the prescribed standards, and mitigation efforts have been unsuccessful at reducing those impacts, a use limit system may be implemented.

Other River Segments. Standards for interaction impacts in other subunits are not proposed in this plan. No need for use limits is anticipated in the near future. However, a monitoring program could be proposed in the future to gauge use and impact levels if appropriate. In addition, future planning efforts should set standards for these other subunits. Standards focus attention on recreation experience quality, allow managers to define the type of experience to be provided, guide monitoring programs, and provide a way to measure the effectiveness of management alternatives. However, throughout the Recreation Rivers planning process, users emphasized addressing litter and resource damage impacts first. These impacts are less directly tied to use levels.

Use Allocation. If use limits are adopted, a use allocation or permit system will need to be developed. Developing a fair and workable permit system will require a number of decisions to be made, many of which depend upon the proposed use limit level, access characteristics, the type of use on the segment, and legal constraints. Extensive discussions with interested groups and the public will be needed. This plan defers specific decisions on any allocation to the time when a permit system is needed. Also see *Commercial, Allocation* in this chapter.

Any use allocation system for the Recreation Rivers should attempt to meet the following objectives:

1. Be simple and easy to understand and use;
2. Minimize “no shows” and make unused permits available to other users;
3. Be flexible (allow for reasonable changes in users’ plans, group composition, weather, water levels, etc.);
4. Provide stability for guide businesses;
5. Give no preference based solely upon past use of a river.

6. Be responsive to the relative amount of use demanded by the private and commercial sectors; and

7. Be the same procedure for all users.

Other Guidelines Affecting Recreation. Several other guidelines may affect recreational activities. See the following sections of this chapter.

Shoreline Development

Commercial

Upland Access

Water & Solid Waste

Heritage Resources

Education

Enforcement

Fish & Wildlife Habitat

Goals

Sustained Yield. Manage, protect, and maintain fish and wildlife populations and habitat on a sustained-yield basis.

Recreation and Economic Use. Ensure continued recreation and economic use of and enjoyment by the public including activities such as fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing, and trapping.

Ensure Access to State Lands and Waters. Ensure access to state lands and waters where appropriate to promote or enhance responsible public use and enjoyment of fish and wildlife resources.

Mitigate Habitat Loss. Avoid or minimize reduction in quality of fish and wildlife habitat where resource development projects occur.

Functional Integrity of Lands. Maintain the functional integrity of land supporting crucial life cycle stages of important fish and wildlife indicator species.

Management Guidelines

Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (‘Eagle Act’) prohibits the take of bald and golden eagles, their parts, nests, and eggs either directly (such as by shooting or collecting parts) or indirectly (such as by disturbance or visual changes to the landscape). Under the Eagle Act, “disturb” means to agitate or bother an eagle to a degree that causes or is likely to cause injury, a decrease in productivity, or nest abandonment. Eagles are found in almost all landscapes across Alaska, including grasslands and tundra, and should be considered early in the project planning stage.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has developed spatial and temporal buffers to assist with planning activities and siting facilities to avoid take of eagles. The recommended practices are designed to prevent human disturbance to eagles and their nests, particularly during the nesting season, when eagles are most sensitive to disturbance. If activities cannot be conducted outside the eagle nesting season or the recommended spatial buffers around eagle nests cannot be implemented, an Eagle Take or Eagle Nest Take permit may be needed.

Contact the Alaska Region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to obtain the most current information on nest locations; technical guidance for project activities near eagle nests, including buffer recommendations; and assistance with any necessary permits.

Eagles and Timber Harvesting. Under the Forest Resources Practices Act, timber harvesting is prohibited within 330 feet of eagle nesting trees. The Susitna Forestry Guidelines also prohibits forestry activities from March 15 through August 31 within 660 feet of known eagle nesting trees. If a nesting tree is not occupied by June 15, operations can occur between June 15 and August 31 between 330 feet and 660 feet from the nest tree.

ADNR, ADF&G, and the USFWS periodically review existing eagle policies and may develop new statewide guidelines. If new guidelines are adopted by ADNR, they can be applied to the Recreation Rivers areas without an amendment to the plan.

USFWS Authority over Eagles. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has authority for managing bald eagle populations. To protect bald eagle populations in the Recreation Rivers, USFWS will be notified of all planned timber harvests. Notification will occur through interagency notification of the five-year timber sale schedule and Forest Management Reports for individual sales. Where timber sales contain eagle nesting trees, the Division of Forestry & Fire Protection will design the sale in consultation with ADF&G and USFWS. Nesting sites were mapped by USFWS from their bald eagle surveys and provided to ADNR during the development of the plan.

Bears and Garbage. Management efforts will emphasize the prevention of bear/human conflicts.

Bear encounters should be minimized by:

1. Increasing public education on bear behavior, and how to deal with bears and garbage in the wild. This includes brochures, signs, and interpretive displays;
2. Increasing public information about areas of high bear density;
3. Recommending high density bear areas be avoided;
4. Notifying the public on a temporary basis when there is a high likelihood of bear/human conflicts; and monitoring those areas to determine when it is appropriate to remove the warning signs;
5. Providing food caches, sealable drums, or bear wires to elevate food in high-use camping areas where there is a history of bear encounters.

Bear/human encounters are most common where bears regularly acquire human food or garbage. Once bears become habituated to human food or garbage, options for management become limited, expensive, ineffective, and unacceptable to some members of the public. To avoid this:

1. State and municipal policies and regulations regarding food storage and garbage disposal should be rigorously enforced. If staff become aware of violations, they should notify the offender and the appropriate enforcement agency. Improper storage of food, disposal of garbage, or a similar attractive nuisance [5 AAC 42.10(a)(1)] will

- 1 not be considered as a justifiable defense of life or property. Persons who kill a bear
2 that was attracted to improperly stored food or garbage may be subject to prosecution.
- 3 2. Large volumes of organic products generated by camps or other facilities that may
4 attract bears shall be incinerated in a facility that meets ADEC standards for
5 combustion residue (less than 5 percent unburned combustibles).
- 6 3. Existing unauthorized open pit waste disposal sites on state land in the Recreation
7 Rivers shall be closed. Solid waste disposal on state lands in the Recreation Rivers is
8 prohibited.
- 9 4. Disposal of garbage from authorized facilities on state lands should be by incineration
10 (daily preferred). Alternatively, garbage can be transported to an ADEC-approved
11 regional disposal site or borough waste transfer station. Temporary storage of garbage
12 prior to incineration or backhaul should be in a bear-proof enclosure (building,
13 container, or fence).

14
15 State regulations prohibit the feeding of bears and other large predators or intentionally
16 leaving human food or garbage in a manner that attracts animals (5 AAC 92.230). Another
17 state regulation defines a person's rights and responsibilities in defending himself or his
18 property from wild animals (5 AAC 92.410). These regulations give the individual
19 responsibility, guidance, and authority to deal with unavoidable bear/human conflicts.
20 Problem bears can often be shot under normal hunting regulations.

21
22 **Trumpeter Swan Nesting Areas.** In trumpeter swan nesting areas, all land uses that would
23 disturb nesting swans or detrimentally alter nesting habitat will be prohibited from April 1
24 through August 31 within at least one-quarter mile of waterbodies identified as trumpeter
25 swan nesting sites. The area where seasonal restrictions apply may be increased or decreased
26 if the potential level of damage or disturbance warrants change. This determination will be
27 made by ADNR in consultation with ADF&G and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. If a
28 waterbody that has been used for nesting is not occupied by June 15, potentially disturbing
29 activities may be allowed within the one-quarter mile zone after June 15.

30
31 Construction of transmission lines in swan nesting habitat should be avoided. If transmission
32 lines are constructed, they should be sited in forested areas and kept close to treetop level.
33 Wires crossing rivers, marshes, and other open spaces should be marked so that they are
34 visible to swans. Wires should be strung in one horizontal plane rather than in multiple,
35 vertical stacks.

36
37 **Habitat Enhancement.** Habitat enhancement activities for fish or wildlife species may occur
38 when biological or population data indicate improvements in survival, reproduction, or
39 population numbers can and need to be increased through habitat enhancement or
40 rehabilitation activities. Enhancement projects will be described in a habitat enhancement
41 plan prepared by ADF&G and approved by DMLW. Also see Chapter 4, *Other*
42 *Recommendations, Fisheries Enhancement on Lake Creek.*
43

Moose Habitat Enhancement. Moose habitat enhancement activities may only occur in vegetation types where regrowth of preferred moose browse species, including hardwood types is likely. ADF&G should first enhance areas outside the Recreation Rivers where these conditions can be met. If these conditions cannot be met outside the Recreation Rivers, enhancement may be considered for Class II and III areas and special management areas. If these conditions cannot be met in these areas, enhancement may be considered for Class I areas. Habitat enhancement in the Recreation Rivers shall be done in a manner that enough undisturbed vegetation is left along the rivers to provide visual screening from enhanced areas. Techniques may include hydroaxing, crushing, burning, and timber harvest, and shall be described in a moose habitat enhancement plan.

Invasive Species Concerns.

Elodea

Elodea is the first known aquatic invasive plant to establish populations in Alaska. The original introduction of *Elodea* was likely from aquarium stocks, but the plant has since spread to several different areas throughout the state, including Alexander and Sucker Lakes within the Recreation River corridors. Only a small fragment of the plant is needed to establish a population and can be transported via flowing water, by wildlife or through anthropogenic sources such as boats, floatplanes or gear. The submerged aquatic plant thrives in cold, shallow, slow-moving water and can grow rapidly enabling the aggressive development of monocultures and the displacement of native species. The thick mats of vegetation decrease water flow leading to higher rates of sedimentation and potentially great impacts to the productivity of aquatic ecosystems. To prevent future introductions, ADNR established a quarantine that prohibits the import, transport, purchase, or distribution of the plant or plant parts within the state of Alaska.

The Division of Agriculture will work towards eradication within impacted waterbodies. Additionally, the division will coordinate outreach and education efforts to prevent the future spread of *Elodea*. Please see the Division of Agriculture's *Invasive Plants and Agricultural Pest Management Program* for more information.

Northern Pike

Northern pike are a native fish species found throughout much of Alaska but do not occur naturally south and east of the Alaska Range. Pike were illegally introduced by anglers to Bulchitna Lake in the Yentna River drainage in the 1950's and subsequently spread throughout the Susitna River Basin through flood events and additional illegal introductions. The Alexander Creek drainage has been particularly impacted by pike after intentional illegal stocking of Alexander Lake in the 1960's. Over the next several decades, pike began to spread downstream until they were believed to occupy all available habitat in Alexander Creek by the 1990's. The Alexander Creek drainage is considered to be the highest invasive northern pike control priority by ADF&G. Northern pike are an apex predator and can have

large impacts to the fish community in waterbodies they occupy. ADF&G will continue an aggressive approach for removal of northern pike from impacted waterbodies within the Susitna Basin.

Mitigation. When issuing permits or leases, or otherwise authorizing the use or development of state lands, ADNR will recognize the requirements of the activity or development and the benefits it may have to habitat when determining stipulations or measures needed to protect fish and wildlife or their habitats. The costs of mitigation relative to the benefits to be gained will be considered in the implementation of this policy.

All land use activities will be conducted with appropriate planning and implementation to avoid or minimize adverse effects on fish and wildlife or their habitats.

The department will enforce stipulations and measures, and will require the responsible party to remedy any significant damage to fish and wildlife, or their habitats, that may occur as a direct result of the party's failure to comply with applicable law, regulations, or the conditions of the permit or lease.

When determining appropriate stipulations and measures, the departments will apply, in order of priority, the following steps. Mitigation requirements listed in other guidelines in this plan will also follow these steps.

1. Avoid anticipated, significant adverse effects on fish and wildlife or their habitats through siting, timing, or other management options.
2. When significant adverse effects cannot be avoided by design, siting, timing, or other management options, the adverse effect of the use or development will be minimized.
3. If significant loss of fish or wildlife habitat occurs, the loss will be rectified, to the extent feasible and prudent, by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected area to a useful state.
4. ADNR will consider requiring replacement with or enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat when steps 1 through 3 cannot avoid substantial and irreversible loss of habitat. ADF&G will clearly identify the species affected, the need for replacement or enhancement, and the suggested method for addressing the impact. Replacement or enhancement of similar habitats of the affected species in the same region is preferable. ADNR will consider only those replacement and enhancement techniques that have either been proven to be, or are likely to be effective and that will result in a benefit to the species impacted by the development. Replacement or enhancement will only be required by ADNR if it is determined to be in the best interest of the state either through AS 38.05.035(e) or the permit the review process. Replacement may include structural solutions, such as creating spawning or rearing ponds for salmon, creating wetlands for waterfowl; or non-structural measures, such as research or management of the species affected, legislative or administrative allocation of lands to a long-term level of habitat protection that is sufficiently greater than that which they would otherwise receive, or fire management to increase habitat productivity.

Other Guidelines Affecting Fish and Wildlife Habitat. Other guidelines may affect fish and wildlife issues. See the following sections of this chapter.

- Upland Development
- Shoreline Development
- Commercial
- Upland Access
- Water and Solid Waste
- Forestry
- Subsurface Resources
- Materials
- Enforcement

Commercial

Goals

Opportunities. Provide a mix of commercial and noncommercial public use opportunities.

Economy. Contribute to the local, regional, and statewide economy.

Generate Revenue. Generate revenue to help manage the rivers.

Standards. Develop standards for commercial operators in order to protect public safety and natural resources.

Conflicts. Reduce apparent conflicts between user groups.

Management Guidelines

Commercial Use Permits. A commercial-use permit (11 AAC 09.300) shall be required for commercial recreational use of state-owned land, water, or resources in the Recreation Rivers. Permits will be issued annually. Commercial recreation includes guiding, outfitting, flight, boat shuttle, and rental services or engaging in soliciting, selling, or peddling liquids or edibles for human consumption, or distributing circulars, or hawking, peddling, or vending goods, wares, services, or merchandise within the Recreation Rivers. This includes recreation businesses that may be based on private lands inside the corridors, such as lodges, that use state land or water in the Recreation Rivers. The permit system is intended to meet Recreation Rivers management objectives for protecting and enhancing recreational and natural values, and compensating the state for the commercial use of its land and resources. Possession of a commercial permit does not grant a preference right for obtaining future commercial permits nor for obtaining land use permits, leases, or other types of authorization. Permits are non-transferrable. All recreation-related businesses operating in the Recreation Rivers, no matter how small, are required to have a commercial-use permit. There are exceptions for businesses operating exclusively on borough or private land (e.g., cottage industries), non-recreation related businesses (e.g., commercial trapping, mining, oil and gas exploration), or businesses that briefly cross the Recreation Rivers enroute to other areas such as businesses traveling up the Yentna, Skwentna, or Susitna rivers to areas outside the Recreation Rivers. The borough should be contacted for information on commercial permits required for use of borough lands.

Standards. The following standards are required of owners and employees of all recreation-related businesses operating in the Recreation Rivers:

1. Liability insurance: Insurance must be held (by owner with binder for employees). The level of insurance required will be established by ADNR, may vary from year-to-year (depending on levels of insurance offered by commercial carriers), and the amount required will appear on the permit application.
2. First aid training: Current CPR and basic first aid certification, or equivalent. This requirement does not apply to employees who do not accompany clients in the Recreation Rivers.
3. Possession of applicable licenses (e.g., state business license, fishing or guiding license, U.S. Coast Guard license, FAA license where required).
4. Possession of appropriate safety gear in the vessel (e.g., personal floatation devices, first aid kit).
5. Vessels must clearly display ADNR commercial permit registration numbers and their business name.
6. Keep a log of the number of clients served.
7. Payment of commercial-use permit fees.
8. Physical address in the event the company must be contacted in an emergency.

Fees. Fees for commercial use permits for the Recreation Rivers are established in 11 AAC 05.210. Fees should be reasonable and consistent with those used by other state agencies for similar purposes. The costs of managing the Recreation Rivers should not rely entirely on revenues from commercial-use permits. The cost of the permit is based on the following:

1. *Annual Fee.* Each business must pay an annual fee.
2. *Drop-off and Pick-up Fee.* For clients that are not accompanied by an employee of the business after they are dropped off or before they are picked up, a drop-off and pick-up fee will be charged. The fee will be generally based on a percent of the total gross revenue from the trip, rather than the number of people transported. This will ensure that short-inexpensive trips do not pay a disproportionate percentage of revenues compared with longer and more costly trips.
3. *Per-client-day Fee.* Businesses will pay a per-client-day fee when clients are accompanied by an employee of the business.
4. *Boat Rentals.* Rental boats include all boats that are used for commercial operations in the Recreation Rivers that are operated primarily by clients, guests, or customers in exchange for payment or other compensation for use of the boat. Businesses renting boats for use on the Recreation Rivers must have a commercial use permit and pay an additional charge for each rental vessel used in the Recreation Rivers, even if the business is located outside the Recreation Rivers. The commercial-use permit shall require that rental boats be in a safe condition and the boat rented with basic safety equipment such as life vests, oars, and lines. Boats shall also be equipped to conform with all applicable U.S. Coast Guard and state laws and regulations. Each boat shall be clearly marked with a company name and ADNR boat registration number.

Criteria for Issuing Commercial Use Permits. ADNR will consider the following criteria before issuing a commercial-use permit.

1. Recreational, natural, or heritage resources will not be adversely affected;
2. Public use values in the Recreation Rivers will be maintained and protected;
3. Public safety, health, and welfare will not be adversely affected, and
4. The activity is consistent with the goals and management intent in the plan.

Prohibited Commercial Activities. Commercial-use permits will generally not be authorized for engaging in soliciting, selling, or peddling liquids or edibles for human consumption; or distributing circulars, or hawking, peddling, or vending goods, wares, services, or merchandise to the general public in the Recreation Rivers. The intent of this guideline is based on concerns that these types of activities can significantly detract from the recreation experience, particularly when they occur in heavily used public use sites during the peak-use season. This guideline does not apply to businesses providing goods or services to clients who have made prior arrangements to purchase the goods or services with the business prior to entering the Recreation Rivers or who have made arrangements on private lands. Renting boats or providing limited services from marinas necessary for accessing the river in remote areas (such as providing boat moorage and selling fuel and oil) may be authorized. (See *Shoreline Development, Marinas* in this chapter.)

Grounds for Suspension or Revocation. The following are listed by two levels of violations of state laws, regulations, or permit stipulations which may result in permit revocation or suspension. These conditions will be implemented through regulations. Also see *Chapter 4, Other Recommendations, Denying Permits and Leases*.

Type I. The following will result in automatic suspension and may result in revocation of a commercial-use permit.

1. Loss of required level of liability insurance.
2. Loss or expiration of U.S. Coast Guard license, if required.
3. For commercial-use permit holders:
 - A. Loss of Alaska sport fishing license or hunting guide license by court action; or
 - B. Conviction of a violation of state or federal fish or game regulations resulting in a fine of \$350 or greater. Convictions include violation of laws prohibiting transportation of illegally harvested fish or game.
4. Conviction of gross public safety violation related to applicable activity (for example, a fish guide convicted for operating a boat or aircraft while intoxicated or reckless endangerment).
5. Failure to pay the commercial use permit fee.

6. Gross violation within the Recreation Rivers of laws or regulations protecting public safety and peace.
7. Repeated or willful non-compliance with permit stipulations.
8. Conviction for violation of two regulations established for the Recreation Rivers within a one-year period, or three convictions in a five-year period.

Type II. The following may result in suspension or revocation of a commercial-use permit.

1. Convictions for violation within the Recreation Rivers of laws protecting public safety or peace.
2. Conviction for violation of any state or federal fish or game law e.g., exceeding fish or game limits, allowing clients to exceed take-limits, wanton waste, fishing during a closed season, retaining protected species, using illegal gear or methods, or transporting illegally harvested fish or game.
3. Allowing a non-permitted guide to operate a permitted vessel for commercial activities without a permitted operator aboard, except in an emergency.
4. Conviction for violation of regulations established for the Recreation Rivers.
5. Non-compliance with permit stipulations.

Allocation. Until the effects of a commercial-use permit program, boating regulations, and camping limitations have been assessed, the department will not limit the number of commercial-use permits issued. ADNR should continue to monitor commercial use to determine if a limitation may be appropriate in the future. Criteria for determining unacceptably high levels of use may include standards such as numbers of encounters at campsites and number of encounters on the rivers. If use threatens to exceed standards, limits on the number of permits issued may be required. If limitations are required, only those types of commercial operations directly related to overcrowding or resource damage may be limited. Limitations should apply only to peak use periods. Also see *Recreation, Use Allocation* in this chapter.

Lodges. Additional lodges on state land within the corridors are prohibited for the following reasons:

1. *Compatibility.* Lodges are not compatible with management intent for Class I areas, which is to maintain a primitive setting.
2. *Crowding.* Class II, Class III, and Special Management Areas contain an abundance of private land. Only a handful of the 30 lodges that were operating during the development of the original plan are still in operation. While crowding is not as much of a concern as during the previous planning effort, because of the approximately 460 private parcels, the potential for more lodges to be developed in the future exists should current river use increase. Building additional lodges on state lands could result in significant overcrowding.

- 1 3. *Public Input.* Responses to the user questionnaire during the scoping process
2 demonstrated opposition to new lodges on state lands.
3

4 **Commercial Camps.** Unlike primitive tent camps, commercial camps remain in one site for
5 longer than 4 days and require a land use permit (11 AAC 09.330). They generally serve as a
6 center for commercial operations, providing overnight accommodation for guests, guides,
7 and employees. They generally include tents for sleeping, a cook tent or shelter, a storage
8 area, and human waste and gray-water disposal systems. Commercial camps do not include
9 resource management camps or mining camps. See *Recreation, Primitive Tent Camps;*
10 *Upland Development, Resource Management Camps; and Subsurface Resources, Siting of*
11 *Structures* in this chapter.

12 The following guidelines apply to commercial camps on state land.
13

- 14
- 15 1. *Peak Season.* During the peak season, May 15 to August 31, the number of permits
16 authorized for commercial camps on state lands in the Recreation Rivers will be
17 limited to nine. This limitation is intended to provide for continued economic uses of
18 the rivers, while addressing public concerns about over-crowding and a proliferation
19 of development of long-term camps on state lands within the Recreation Rivers. Sites
20 will be restricted to the following subunits: two on the Lower Deshka (2b), two on the
21 Middle Deshka (2c), two on Neil Lake (2d) (subunit, not on the lake) and three on the
22 Lower Alexander (6a). No more than one permit per river will be issued to a business.
23 During the off-season period, from September 1 to May 14, a land use permit is
24 required for commercial camps remaining at one site for longer than 14 days. An
25 unlimited number of off-season camps may be allowed in all subunits.
- 26 2. *Term of Use.* A land use permit for a commercial camp will be issued for the term of
27 actual use of the camp for the authorized activity, or the minimum length of time
28 required by the applicant to carry out the intended use. Permits will not be authorized
29 for use exceeding one year.
- 30 3. *Commercial Use.* Commercial camps will not be authorized for private camps.
31 Permits may only be issued to commercial operations that have a Recreation Rivers
32 commercial use permit.
- 33 4. *Siting Criteria.* Camps will be sited consistent with the management intent for the
34 subunit and applicable guidelines. Camps should be sited with adequate physical
35 separation from common uses such as other commercial camps, trails, and private
36 land. In order to protect public safety, minimize the negative impacts on water quality
37 and public access, and to protect heritage sites, commercial camps will not be
38 authorized:
- 39 A. in public use sites;
40 B. below ordinary high water;
41 C. within 100 feet of a waterbody or in a wetland;
42 D. near identified heritage sites;

- E. if they do not minimize evidence of human activity as seen from the river; or
- F. if they block public easements, heavily used trails, or seismic lines.

5. *Levels of Use.* The permit applicant shall be required to specify the estimated number of clients, guests, and employees that will occupy the camp at any one time and over the term of use. Following a review of the application by ADNR, ADF&G, ADEC, and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, limitations on the number of clients using the camp may be attached to the permit, if in the opinion of the agencies, the number of clients represents a threat to the resource which cannot be adequately mitigated through standard stipulations. A decision to limit the number of clients must describe the reason for the limitation.
6. *Fees.* Fees for commercial camps are established under 11 AAC 05.210. During the peak season, when the number of permitted commercial camps is limited, fees for camps should provide a fair return to the state. Fees should not be so high that small operators cannot afford them. If demand for permits exceeds supply, ADNR may consider a lottery.

Commercial Campgrounds. Privately built and operated campgrounds may be authorized under the following conditions (also see *Recreation, Public Facilities* in this chapter):

1. *Class I Areas.* They are prohibited in Class I areas and public use sites in Class I areas.
2. *Construction Guidelines.* They must be constructed consistent with *Upland Development, Management Guidelines* listed in this chapter.
3. *Competition.* If leased under AS 38.05.070 or 38.05.073, campgrounds must be consistent with AS 41.23.470(d) which does not allow leasing of a campground if the facility is in competition with a private facility or enterprise. Competition is defined by this plan to include competition within (not between) each Recreation River. Also see *Other Recommendations, Commercial Facilities* in Chapter 4.
4. *Public Need.* The decision to authorize this type of facility shall include the availability of similar facilities nearby, the availability of private parcels nearby that could meet this need, existing levels of public use and crowding, and the public need for such a facility.
5. *Public Use.* Such facilities shall be open to the public although fees for use of improvements and services may be required.
6. *Improvements.* Because the public was opposed to additional lodges on state land in the Recreation Rivers (see *Lodges* in this section), cabins, wall-tents, and other types of walled structures provided by the lessee to accommodate overnight guests will not be authorized in these campgrounds.

1 **Other Guidelines Affecting Commercial Activities.** Several other guidelines may affect
2 commercial activities. See the following sections of this chapter.

3

4 Subsurface Resources

5 Enforcement

6

General Access

Goals

See Boating, Upland Access, Air Access, and Special Management Areas in this chapter.

Management Guidelines

Permits for Access to Private Land and Mining Locations. A permit is required for all motorized access to private land or active mine operations that cross state land or water closed to motorized use². Permits for motorized access may be issued across closed areas to private lands or mine operations when there is no feasible and prudent alternative to provide access for this use. Fees may be waived in cases where they would constitute an undue hardship on the permittee or act to discourage compliance with the permit requirement. Filing fees may not be waived. Also see *Upland Access, Access to Private Land and Mining Camps*.

Government Use of Motorized Transportation. The operation of motorized vehicles including boats, aircraft, helicopters, and ground vehicles in non-motorized areas by governmental agency for the purposes of law enforcement, emergency search and rescue, medical evacuations, or fire suppression is allowed. For the purposes of fish, game, recreation, or natural resource management when the means of travel meets the requirements for generally allowed uses for general state land, the use in non-motorized areas is allowed by permit.

Other Guidelines Affecting General Access. Several other guidelines may affect general access. See the following sections of this chapter:

- Shoreline Development
- Boat Access
- Upland Access
- Air Access
- Subsurface Resources

² “Motor Use” refers to motors associated with vessels, aircraft, and vehicles used for transportation, not use of motors such as chainsaws and generators.

Boat Access

Goals

Spectrum of Boating Opportunities. Provide for a spectrum of boating opportunities on the six Recreation Rivers.

Specific Opportunities on River Segments. Provide specific motorized and non-motorized boating opportunities on individual river segments.

Public Safety and Property. Protect public safety and property through the established of no-wake areas and float-plane landing areas.

Minimize Conflicts. Minimize conflicts between user groups while providing opportunities for boaters on all rivers.

Public Trust Doctrine. Maintain consistency with the Public Trust Doctrine in the Alaska Constitution.

Management Guidelines

Overall Management Intent. Specific restrictions on boating have been developed to achieve two different goals. The primary goal is to provide for a range of recreation opportunities on the six rivers. This includes providing for motorized and non-motorized recreation experiences. The second goal concerns boating safety. Boating guidelines were not based on the protection of riverbanks and fish habitat from powerboat-caused erosion. Although these effects may be occurring, relationship between powerboats and these impacts has not been conclusively shown at any site in the Recreation Rivers at this time.

References to powerboats include all boats propelled by a motor, including jetboats, prop-driven boats, hovercraft, airboats, and hydroplanes. Personal watercraft and floatplanes are exceptions. Personal watercraft are discussed later in this section. Floatplanes are covered under *Air Access* in this chapter.

The following section describes the relationships between boating guidelines and these goals, outlines the factors that were considered in developing guidelines, and identifies which river segments are affected.

Recreation Experience. Information from public comments, the user questionnaire and public meetings shows that a significant number of floaters and bank anglers believe their recreation experiences are compromised by the use of motorized boats. Specific concerns include: noise impacts, boat speeds, and wake sizes. Many floaters and bank anglers define

high quality experience in terms of the absence of motorized use. However, powerboaters have expressed concern that opportunities for powerboat access should be maintained. To balance the concerns of these competing interests, provide quality floating and bank fishing, and provide for both powerboat and floatboat use, some river segments have been seasonally designated as “non-motorized,” “powerboats only,” or have been left unrestricted.

Safety. Boating safety is a prime concern on the Recreation Rivers. Although few boating fatalities or serious accidents have been documented, users have identified safety problems, particularly in congested areas. To address these problems, some river segments have been designated as “voluntary no-wake areas.”

Erosion and Other Environmental Impacts. There is concern that erosion and damage to fish habitat may be increasing as a result of extensive powerboat use on some river segments. The U.S. Department of the Interior, University of Alaska and ADF&G conducted a cooperative research project to study the effects of jetboats on fish. This study conducted in Katmai National Park/Preserve demonstrated that at water depths of 13-23 cm multiple jet boat passes resulted in almost 100% sockeye embryo mortality while at depths greater than 23 cm mortality was less than 20% (*Effects of Jet Boats on Salmonid Reproduction in Alaskan Streams*, Gregg E. Horton, September 1994). Numerous studies have shown that boat wake impacts can contribute to shoreline erosion and increased turbidity. Habitat loss through shoreline erosion reduces fish spawning and rearing habitat.

Other Factors. In addition to the recreation experience and safety goals, other variables that were considered include:

1. *Accommodating Access to Private Land.* Non-motorized areas were not established in areas where property owners commonly reach their land by powerboat. If powerboats offer the only practical access to private property in or adjacent to the river corridors, landowners may be issued a permit to use powerboats in the non-motorized area to reach their land. See *General Access, Permits for Access to Private Land and Mine Locations* in this chapter.
2. *Minimizing Restrictions.* Non-motorized areas are only designated for segments where the current demand for non-motorized opportunities is considered significant. Similarly, no-wake areas are only proposed for areas where congestion is significant and safety risks are high.
3. *Accommodating Use.* Non-motorized areas are generally designated in areas that receive relatively little or no powerboat use. These areas typically include the upper segments of rivers where there is considerable whitewater or other impediments to safe powerboat use. Conversely, frequent powerboat-use areas are not restricted to powerboat use. Exceptions include segments of the Little Susitna River where there is demand for both motorized and non-motorized use. On this river, the plan prescribes alternating non-motorized and powerboat-only weekends during the fishing season.
4. *Physical Characteristics of the Rivers.* Non-motorized areas generally begin and end at landmarks identified as common limits of most current powerboat travel. No-wake

1 areas begin and end at landmarks identified as common limits of boat and bank angler
2 congestion.

- 3 5. *Seasons*. Non-motorized and powerboat-only periods generally apply to fishing
4 seasons when conflicts between users occur most often. During periods of low water,
5 motorized users (and particularly jetboat users) should be careful not to damage
6 salmon spawning beds or other habitat.

- 7 6. *Future Technologies and Potential conflicts*. Non-motorized areas on the Talachulitna
8 River and Lake Creek are established on segments that do not currently receive
9 powerboat use. This limitation on use is based on the concern that future technologies
10 will allow powerboats access to traditionally non-motorized areas. Defining these
11 areas before motorized access is possible will prevent future conflicts and preserve
12 traditional use patterns.

13
14 **Regulations.** Non-motorized and powerboat-only areas have been established by regulation.
15 No-wake areas are all voluntary and do not require regulations. Both voluntary and
16 regulatory areas should be marked by signs at their upper and lower limits. River segments,
17 seasons, and justifications are described under *Management Guidelines* for each management
18 unit in Chapter 3. Table 2.1 summarizes the regulations.

19
20 **Types of Areas.** Following is a description of the three types of areas included in Table 2.1.

- 21
22 1. *Non-motorized Areas*. The operation of a powerboat is prohibited on designated river
23 segments during designated non-motorized periods. Motors in or attached to boats are
24 allowed as long as they are not operated in the non-motorized area.
- 25 2. *Powerboat-only Areas*. Boats that are not powered by motors are prohibited on the
26 designated segment of the Little Susitna River on the second and fourth weekends of
27 each month between May 15 and August 20.
- 28 3. *Voluntary No-wake Areas*. In these areas signs may be placed to encourage boaters to
29 operate at speeds less than five-miles per hour. Compliance is voluntary and these
30 areas are not established by regulations.

31
32 **Personal Watercraft.** With the exceptions of where the Susitna, Skwentna, and Yentna
33 rivers overlap with the Recreation Rivers, personal watercraft are prohibited (11 AAC 09.030
34 (1)(H)). This prohibition is based on concerns for safety, recreation experience, and shore-
35 nesting birds. Also see *Appendix A* for a definition of *Personal Watercraft*.

36
37 **Registering Commercial Boats.** See *Commercial, Standards* in this chapter.

38
39 **Access to Private Lands.** See *General Access, Permits for Access to Private Land and*
40 *Mining Locations* in this chapter.

1 **Table 2.1: Non-Motorized Areas, Voluntary No-Wake Areas, and Safety Signs**

River	Segment	River Miles	Regulation or Sign	Dates
Little Susitna River	Parks Highway	67.5 - 69.6	No-Wake Voluntary, One-Year Trial Basis	May 15 - August 20
Little Susitna River	Nancy Lake Creek to Game Refuge Boundary	33.2 - 60.5	Non-motorized	Alternating weekends May 15 - August 20
Deshka River	Mouth	0.0 - Island	No-wake, Voluntary	May 15 - August 20
Deshka River	Silver Hole	3.8 - 4.9	Place sign: "Reduce speed to 5 MPH when anglers present"	May 15 - August 20
Deshka River	Forks to 2 mi. below Amber Lake Creek and Forks to 3 mi. below Oilwell Road	0.0 - 19.1 (Kroto Creek) 29.7 - 54.2 (Moose Creek)	Non-motorized, Recommendation to Board of Fish to open lower Moose Creek to salmon fishing	May 15 - August 20
Lake Creek	Whitewater	8.1 - 51.2	Non-motorized	May 15 - August 20
Talachulitna Creek	Lower	0.0 - 17.0	Non-motorized	June 15 - August 20
Talachulitna River	Canyon	9.0 - 18.2	Non-motorized	June 15 - August 20
Alexander Creek	Upper	23.0 - 38.3	Non-motorized	May 15 - August 20
Alexander Creek	Pierce Creek Confluence	7.4	Place sign that cautions large boats above this point	May 15 - August 20

2
3 **Public Trust Doctrine.** Under the Alaska Constitution the state has special duties and
4 management constraints with respect to state-owned land underlying navigable waters. The
5 Alaska Constitution contains principles commonly known as the public trust doctrine. This
6 doctrine requires the state to exercise authority to ensure that the right of the public to use
7 navigable waters for navigation, commerce, recreation, and related purposes is not
8 substantially impaired.

9
10 The Alaska Constitution (Article VIII, sections 3, 13, and 14) and Alaska Statutes (38.05.127
11 and 38.05.128) are the legal basis for applying the public trust doctrine in Alaska. This
12 doctrine guarantees the public right to engage in such things as commerce, navigation,
13 fishing, hunting, swimming, and protection of areas for ecological study.

14
15 The Constitution provides that "free access to the navigable or public waters of the state, as
16 defined by the legislature, shall not be denied any citizen of the United States or resident of
17 the state, except that the legislature may by general law regulate and limit such access for
18 other beneficial uses or public purposes." Eliminating private upland owners' reasonable
19 access to navigable waters may result in compensation.
20

Both federal and state laws providing for the transfer of land to private parties also provide for public access to navigable waters. Implementing the state constitutional guarantee of access to navigable waters under Article VIII, Section 14, AS 38.05.127 requires that the state commissioner of natural resources must “provide for the specific easements or rights-of-way necessary to ensure free access to and along the body of water, unless the commissioner finds that regulating or eliminating access is necessary for other beneficial uses or public purposes.”

It has never been held that any lands normally subject to the public trust doctrine in Alaska are exempt from it, including land occupied and developed.

These statutes and concepts are considered and used throughout this plan. Any management actions will be consistent with the public trust doctrine as defined by the Alaska Constitution, statutes, court decisions, and public involvement.

Other Guidelines Affecting Boat Access. Several other guidelines may affect boat access. See the following sections of this chapter:

- Shoreline Development
- Recreation
- Fish & Wildlife Habitat
- Commercial
- General Access
- Boat Access
- Air Access
- Education
- Enforcement

Upland Access

Goals

Support Management Intent. Accommodate an upland transportation system that supports the management intent for each subunit and is integrated with other region-wide transportation needs.

Minimize Adverse Impact. Accommodate a transportation system with minimal adverse impacts on water quality, riparian and wetland areas, the terrestrial environment, and recreation uses.

Promote Efficiency. Accommodate a transportation system that uses energy efficiently and encourages compact, efficient development patterns including consolidating upland access routes.

Promote Public Safety. Ensure transportation systems are designed, constructed and maintained to an appropriate standard to accommodate the anticipated volume and type of use.

Protection of Special Trails. Protect high-value trails such as the Iditarod Race Trail and the Iditarod National Historical Trail.

Management Guidelines

Transportation Planning. When road transportation routes are proposed that may pass through the Recreation Rivers, interagency review should occur at the scoping phase of route planning to allow agencies to identify important habitat and recreation areas in order to assist with the selection of a route.

Consolidation of Access. Joint use and consolidation of surface access routes will be encouraged wherever feasible and prudent. Surface access should be designed and sited to accommodate future development and avoid unnecessary duplication. The feasibility of using an existing road or trail should be evaluated before the use of a new transportation route is authorized.

Large Vehicle Use in Winter. The department requires a permit for use of vehicles over 1,000 lbs. in winter. Travel is restricted to periods when there is adequate snow or frost (11 AAC 09.030 (1)(E)). See *ORV's*, *Snowcover* in this section. Permit stipulations will be consistent with existing ADNR requirements for use of large ground contact vehicles in winter. Permits will be reviewed in consultation with ADF&G. Winter roads for timber

harvest or transport should be consistent with the Forest Resources and Practices Act and the Susitna Forestry Guidelines.

Access Intent. Public comments show the public does not support additional roads to access the recreation resources in the corridors. Roads strictly for access to recreation opportunities within the Recreation Rivers are not proposed at this time. There are, however, resources, private lands, and transportation needs in and adjacent to the corridors which may require land access.

There are four general classes of roads and trails in and adjacent to the corridors. Many guidelines in this section specify which of the four types of access they apply to.

1. *Pedestrian Trails.* These are designed to accommodate pedestrians and animals.
2. *Small Vehicular Trails.* These are designed to accommodate vehicles with a gross vehicle weight of 1,000 lbs. or under, pedestrians, travel by dogsled, animals, snowmachines, two and three-wheeled vehicles, and small ORV's.
3. *Large Vehicular Trails.* These are designed to accommodate vehicles with a gross vehicle weight of over 1,000 lbs., pedestrians, travel by dogsled, animals, snowmachines, two- and three-wheeled vehicles, small or large ORV's, track vehicles, or four-wheel-drive vehicles.
4. *Roads.* These are designed to accommodate highway vehicles including pedestrians, travel by dogsleds, animals, snowmachines, two- and three-wheeled vehicles, small or large ORV's, track vehicles, four-wheel drive vehicles, automobiles, or trucks.

Priority for Siting Roads (other than ice roads). Where feasible and prudent, the following criteria for consideration of alternative road locations should be used. These are listed below in descending order of priority:

1. Outside rather than inside the corridor.
2. In Class II or III areas or special management areas.
3. In Class I areas where there are no restrictions on motorized transport.
4. In Class I areas where there are restrictions on motorized transport.

Roads crossing rivers should be designed in accordance with the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) design manual. When safe to do so, site distances should be minimized to enhance aesthetic qualities. Also see *Shoreline Development, Bridges* in this chapter.

Roads and Both Types of Vehicular Trails

Class I Areas. In Class I areas, roads and vehicular trail development shall be minimized to maintain the undeveloped character of the corridors and to minimize impacts on habitat, water quality, and vegetation.

Non-motorized Areas. Roads and both types of vehicular trails may be built in non-motorized areas if they are built with public funds or when they are in the public interest.

Access to Private Lands in Class I Areas. Private landowners may construct roads and vehicular trails to their property as long as the use provides a need for which there is no feasible and prudent alternative. A road or vehicular trail from private land to a Recreation River should not be permitted in Class I areas if the proposed route is not the primary form of access to the property. Also see *General Access, Permits to Private Land and Mineral Locations* and *Subsurface, Motorized Access* in this chapter.

Protection of Hydrologic Systems. To minimize adverse impacts to the environment, and risks of degradation to fish and wildlife habitat and water quality, roads and vehicular trails will not be approved in the protection area unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative route. Roads and vehicular trails may also be located in the protection area to access private land, a mining operation with a plan of operation or land use permit, to access a bridge crossing, or where the route is in the public interest. Road and vehicular trail construction will occur only where it can be demonstrated that road design, construction, use, and maintenance will avoid, minimize, or otherwise mitigate impacts to important fish and wildlife habitat. Additionally, roads should be constructed to minimize slope instability. These types of access improvements should be located to avoid influencing the quality and quantity of water in adjacent rivers and lakes, or detracting from the recreational use of the waterway. When routing through wetlands or peat, culverts shall be installed to enable free cross-drainage. Construction should be minimized in areas where the seasonal water table is within four feet of the surface. Where feasible and prudent, topsoil from road or vehicle trail construction shall be used for restoration of disturbed areas.

In potential problem areas, excavation and soil disturbance should be minimized.

Erosion. Where feasible or prudent use methods to decrease runoff, erosion, and sedimentation by methods such as re-seeding, surface roughening, and diversion dikes.

Pedestrian Trails

Trail Damage. Frequent foot traffic on riverbanks can trample vegetation and cause the loss of vegetation. This may result in increased bank erosion from riverflow and surface runoff, and the loss of fish habitat along the banks. Efforts should be made to locate pedestrian trails away from the river. Where this is not possible, trails should be stabilized through techniques such as constructing board walks or trail hardening.

Trails

Signs. Trail signs would be beneficial in several locations. These include areas with unclear trailheads and trail routes or where resource damage is likely to occur.

Iditarod Race Trail. The race trail passes through the Susitna River near the confluence with the Deshka River, the Yenta River near the confluence with Lake Creek, and the Skwentla River northeast of the corridor. Rerouting the trail may be permitted in specific instances in consultation with the Iditarod Trail Committee. A 400-foot wide (200 feet on either side of the centerline) buffer will be located along the trail corridor. No permanent structure or equipment should be placed in the trail corridor if it would adversely affect the trail experience or access along the trail. Where necessary, trail crossings may be permitted to allow access to lands on either side of the trail. Temporary facilities for the Iditarod race and other events that use the trail during the winter may be allowed provided they are removed during the ice-free season. An annual permit for Iditarod related events is not required. Also see *Forestry, Iditarod Trail, and Events* in this chapter. The location of these trails are shown on subunit maps in Chapter 3.

Bridges. See *Shoreline Development; Bridges, and Stream Crossings*.

Closures. Where detrimental to management of fish and wildlife habitat, recreation, or other resources, roads and trails may be closed to the public and rehabilitated when in the public interest.

Section Line Easements. Section line easements require a survey before improvements are built. The width depends on when the land was conveyed to the state. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough has platting authority for section line easements within the corridors. Development of section line easements in Class I subunits is discouraged. No vacations are recommended at this time.

Parking Areas. Parking areas are prohibited below annual high water and in contiguous wetlands. All parking areas should be visually screened from the rivers with natural vegetation.

Off-Road Vehicles (ORV). The trend of increased ORV use in the corridors is likely to continue as more access is developed near the Recreation Rivers. To prevent damage to wetlands, stream banks, steep banks, areas with poorly drained soils, areas with sensitive vegetation, and the recreation experience in non-motorized areas, ADNR has developed the following regulations:

1. *Permits.* To protect soils, water, vegetation, and habitat, ORV use is restricted to existing trails except when there is adequate snow cover (see 3 below). Permits for exceptions will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
2. *Non-motorized Areas.* In areas adjacent to river segments subject to seasonal powerboat restrictions (see subunit maps in Chapter 3), ORV use is subject to the

1 same seasonal limits on motorized travel, except when authorized by permit or the
2 use occurs on designated trails. (See *Designated Trails* in this section.) This limit
3 does not apply in special management areas. See *Boating Access, Regulations* in this
4 chapter.

- 5 3. *Snow Cover.* Use of off-road vehicles 1,000 lbs. or under is allowed throughout the
6 corridors when the department gives public notice that snow cover and ground frost is
7 sufficient to prevent damage to the vegetation. ADNR will announce each year when
8 there is adequate/inadequate cover in the fall and spring through news releases or
9 other means. Adequate cover may vary between rivers so more than one public
10 announcement may be required each spring and fall depending on the snow
11 conditions. The general standard for adequate ground protection from vehicle damage
12 will be one foot of snow and one foot of frost. This standard may be altered to allow
13 for variation in winter conditions. For example, deep snow may prevent freezing but
14 offer adequate ground protection. If the ground is not frozen to a depth of at least one
15 foot, an additional foot of snow is needed for winter ORV travel. Use of off-road
16 vehicles in winter over 1,000 lbs. requires a permit. See *Large Vehicle Use in Winter*
17 in this section.

18
19 **Access to Private Land and Mining Locations.** Permits for exceptions to restrictions on
20 off-road vehicle uses described in the previous section may be issued to allow access to
21 mining activities or to private property when there is no feasible and prudent alternative to
22 provide access for this use. Permit applicants shall apply to use a designated trail (see next
23 section). Permits for off-road access to active mining locations will only be issued for
24 purposes of carrying out mining operations authorized by a land use permit or an approved
25 plan of operations. Also see *General Access, Permits for Access to Private Land and Mining*
26 *Locations* in this chapter.

27
28 **Designated Trails.** Previous sections refer to travel restricted to designated trails in non-
29 motorized areas. To designate a trail, an individual or organization must submit a map and a
30 written description which includes:

- 31
32 1. how the trail will be used;
33 2. how damage to state land and water such as rutting and damage to fragile vegetated
34 areas will be prevented; and
35 3. how the construction and use of the trail will be compatible with other uses;
36 4. where materials to be used are located;
37 5. how timber will be disposed of; and
38 6. how the trail will be constructed.

39
40 DMLW through the interagency review process will review trail applications and decide on
41 the need for and suitability of the proposed route, and its compatibility with other recreation
42 uses and management policies. When a trail is designated, a right-of-way should be issued
43 and recorded on status plats so that the trail can be properly located. Bearings and distances

1 should be included in the description of the trail. Centerlines may be necessary in areas
2 where land status is complex. As more trails are designated, DMLW shall restrict ORV's to
3 designated trails during the snow-free season throughout the corridors rather than just
4 existing trails. Also see *Trails Action Plan* in Chapter 4.

5
6 At this time, ORV use is restricted to existing trails. However, even repeated use by all
7 ground-pressure vehicles in sensitive environments on existing trails may result in long-term
8 damage. Such areas include wetlands, erodible soils, or steep banks. After suitable trails are
9 identified and designated through the trails action plan (see Chapter 4) or other means, off-
10 road vehicles during the snow-free season should be restricted to designated trails throughout
11 the planning area rather than just existing trails. See *Trails Action Plan* in Chapter 4.

12
13 If an application for a designated trail is approved from a private landowner or mine claimant
14 for motorized access through a non-motorized area, ADNR may consider designating the
15 trail for public access if:

- 16
17 1. a determination is made that increased public use will not significantly contribute to
18 the deterioration of the trail;
19 2. the trail or its use is consistent with the management intent for the area.
20

21 DMLW, in consultation with the borough and ADF&G, may designate special purpose trails
22 in motorized areas to provide new recreational opportunities or to resolve conflicts between
23 uses. Where possible, consultation with affected user groups will be conducted prior to
24 designation of such trails, and users will be encouraged to construct and maintain such
25 special purpose trails.

26
27 **Other Guidelines Affecting Upland Access.** Several other guidelines may affect upland
28 access. See the following sections of this chapter:

- 29
30 Shoreline Development
31 General Access
32 Boat Access
33 Subsurface Resources
34 Heritage Resources
35

Air Access

Goals

Access. Allow development of public air access to the Recreation Rivers when it is consistent with the management intent of the plan.

Liability. Minimize liability to the state from unsafe airstrips or floatplane landing areas or the proliferation of public airstrips.

Management Guidelines

Public Airstrips. The Recreation Rivers currently have good air access. However, this plan does not preclude development of additional airstrips. With the exceptions listed below for private airstrips, airstrips developed on state land should be made available for use by the general public. If an applicant requests airstrip development associated with some other type of land-use authorization, the applicant must submit the application for the airstrip with the application for the associated use. Federal Aviation Regulation, Part 157, requires FAA notification before construction, establishment, alteration, or deactivation of civil airports, including floatplane bases. Specific airstrips are discussed in Chapter 3 for subunit 2a (mouth of Deshka) and 4e (Chelatna Lake). In addition to airstrips, waterbodies are very important in both winter and summer for public air access.

Airstrip by Class Areas. Airstrip development may be authorized in Class II, Class III, and Special Management Areas. Airstrip development may be allowed in these areas if:

1. There is a demonstrated significant public need for the airstrip; and
2. There are no feasible alternatives to meet the public need for increased access that would not significantly impact habitat, recreation or other uses.

Airstrip development is discouraged in Class I areas and non-motorized areas because they are inconsistent with the management intent for these areas. In general, airstrips developed entirely on public land should be made available for use by the general public.

Private Airstrips. Private airstrips are discouraged throughout the Recreation Rivers. Exceptions to this policy may be considered on a case-by-case basis. In considering exceptions, the division will consider the plan goals, management intent, and:

1. Opportunities for alternate access;
2. Analysis of surrounding terrain and topographic features;
3. Habitat values, recreation uses in the area, and riparian vegetation and hydrology;

4. Existence of previously or naturally cleared areas;
5. Benefits to the public including reciprocal easements for public use;
6. Opportunities for consolidating airstrips or joint-use airstrips when more than one applicant is likely to apply for airstrips in adjacent areas;
7. FAA input and requirements, and;
8. Other public and agency comments.

A written decision must be prepared that addresses each airstrip application stating the reasons for approving or denying the use. The factors listed above will be considered along with any other relevant information when reaching a decision. Renewal of expired rights-of-way for airstrips will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Floatplane Landing Areas. See Chapter 3, Subunit 2a, *Floatplane Landing Area*.

Airstrips for Mining Operations. Since airstrips for mining operations are usually for restricted use, and any areas where mining leases may occur are in Class I areas where motorized access is seasonally limited, construction of new airstrips will not be permitted for mining operations. This does not preclude mine claimants from applying for airstrips for exclusive use outside the corridors.

Blocking Airstrips. Public use airstrips shall not be blocked by individuals without the prior authorization from ADNR (AS 02.20.050). This does not preclude ADNR from closing existing airstrips for safety reasons or other management concerns.

Aircraft and Helicopter Landing. On the land and water in river segments subject to seasonal powerboat restrictions shown on maps in Chapter 3, aircraft and helicopter landings are subject to the same seasonal motor prohibitions. The intent is to provide for a non-motorized recreation experience during the fishing season along these river segments. (See *Boat Access, Regulations* in this chapter and in Chapter 3.) This restriction does not apply to Special Management Areas (also shown on maps in Chapter 3) where aircraft and helicopter landings are allowed. There are also exceptions for access to private lands and mining locations. See *General Access, Permits for Access to Private Land and Mining Locations* in this chapter. The Federal Aviation Administration should be contacted by the department to ensure that these non-motorized areas are shown on the *NOAA Sectional Maps* and the *NOAA Government Flight Information Publication Supplement, Alaska*.

Aircraft Storage. Floatplanes and wheel planes kept below ordinary high water shall be stored consistent with the boat storage guidelines. See *Shoreline Development, Boat Storage* in this chapter.

Other Guidelines Affecting Air Access. Several other guidelines may affect air access. See the following sections of this chapter:

- Upland Development
- Shoreline Development
- General Access
- Boat Access
- Subsurface Resources

Water & Solid Waste

Goals

Water Quantity. Reserve adequate water quantities to provide for recreation and fish and wildlife habitat for each river system throughout the year.

Water Quality. Manage upland activities for multiple use within the corridors using mitigation measures to alleviate potential adverse effects on water quality.

Wetlands. Protect the hydrologic, habitat, and recreational values of public wetlands.

Litter and Solid Waste. Reduce litter, solid waste, and human waste deposition in the corridors in order to protect recreational values, water quality, and public health.

Management Guidelines

Litter. Litter and other signs of use were identified as a serious problem in the Recreation Rivers. Users were almost unanimous in saying that a “no litter” standard should be in place throughout the Recreation Rivers. To address this concern, the department should adopt a regulation prohibiting littering or bringing waste or refuse into the Recreation Rivers for its disposal. A public education program should be developed by ADNR, in cooperation with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and user groups, which stresses the “pack-it-in - pack-it-out” ethic. This should include signage at common access points. Other management tools to reduce litter should include providing staff for litter pick-up patrols and working with volunteer groups to expand this effort. The department should also work with commercial operators interested in picking up litter, in lieu of paying commercial-use permit fees. ADNR and the borough should consider contracting for litter pick-up if staff is short and funding is available. Funding these management options is a high priority.

Providing dumpsters or trash cans in remote locations in the corridors is not encouraged at this time. However, as funding allows, the borough, ADF&G, and DPOR may provide dumpsters at major road accessible boat launches such as the Deshka Landing, Susitna Landing, Little Susitna Access, and the Talkeetna boat launch, to encourage private landowners and the public not to dispose of garbage within the Recreation Rivers. Operators of private boat launches are also encouraged to provide these facilities for their customers.

Solid Waste. Landfills, dumps, and burial of solid waste and litter will not be authorized on state lands in the Recreation Rivers. ADNR should identify unauthorized disposal sites and, in coordination with ADEC, close these sites.

Wastewater Disposal Systems. All commercial guide camps on state lands are required to meet ADEC regulations for wastewater systems. No wastewater disposal systems such as leach fields and septic systems will be allowed on the shorelands. Wastewater disposal systems elsewhere in the Recreation Rivers shall comply with ADEC regulations at 18 AAC 72.

Other Signs of Use. Other than litter, the most common signs of use along the rivers is the accumulation of toilet paper and unburied human waste. ADEC recommends that for one-time individual use, human defecation should be at least 100 feet from any stream or waterbody and away from campsites or other areas frequented by people. All fecal materials and tissues should be buried in a small hole, covered with soil, packed down, and vegetation replaced. To protect public health, the public education program proposed for the Recreation Rivers should include information on the proper disposal of human waste. (See *Public Education*.)

Privies. Consistent with ADEC regulations, privies must be located at least 100 feet from the nearest waterbody, and the bottom of the pit must be at least 4 feet above the water table.

Drinking Water. Commercial facilities are required to provide water from an approved drinking water source. In addition, approved public drinking water sources are necessary at the mouths of the Deshka River, Clear Creek, Lake Creek, Talachulitna River, and Alexander Creek. The cost of providing public sources of drinking water at these sites with public funds is prohibitively expensive because of new EPA regulations. Until approved public drinking water sources are developed at these locations, the public should be warned, through a public education program, not to drink untreated surface water.

Wastewater Treatment Plants. Large-scale waste treatment plants for municipalities, subdivisions, manufacturing, or industry are prohibited in the Recreation Rivers.

Fuel Storage. No more than 55 gallons of fuel, oil, and other liquid petroleum products may be stored on state land or water, or associated structures, within 100 feet of any waterbody. Fifty-five gallon drums stored within 100 feet of the river must be within an impermeable-diked area with a capacity of 110 percent of the largest amount of fuel stored. Underground storage of petroleum products in the Recreation River is prohibited. Additional best practices include: storing as little fuel as practical near surface waters; having secondary containment; protecting storage containers from snow and ice damage; and conducting regular inspections to ensure pipes, connections, and structures supporting the fuel are all in good condition. Any spill to water, and any spill over one gallon on soil, must be reported immediately to ADEC.

Bears and Garbage. (See *Fish and Wildlife* in this chapter.)

Storm Drains. Private storm drains may not discharge into the Recreation Rivers or their tributaries. Public storm drains may be allowed if settling ponds and grease separators are used to maintain water quality, a maintenance schedule is planned and undertaken, appropriate erosion control measures are taken (where erosion is a problem), and pre-existing

1 contours are maintained. When storm drains discharge into wetland, perforated pipe to
2 dissipate water should be used.

3
4 **Water Intake Structures.** When issuing appropriations for waters in fish-bearing streams,
5 ADNR will require that water intake structures be installed that do not entrap, impinge, or
6 injure fish. Water intake structures will be screened and intake velocities will be limited.
7 Support structures should be designed to prevent fish from being led into the intake. Other
8 effective techniques may also be used to achieve the intent of this guideline. Screen size,
9 water velocity, and intake design will be determined in consultation with ADF&G.

10
11 **Instream Flow.** In accordance with AS 41.23.420(b), “The commissioner shall reserve to the
12 state under AS 46.15.145 an instream flow (see glossary) or level for the water in the rivers
13 described in AS 41.23.500 that is adequate to achieve the purposes of AS 41.23.400.” ADNR
14 should establish reservations of water (also called instream flow reservations) through a
15 reservation of water application in accordance with AS 46.15.145 and 11 AAC 93.141-147.
16 It is recommended that continuous stream flow monitoring and data collection programs be
17 established on all six recreational rivers with special attention to waterbodies that historical
18 flows are poorly documented or non-existent. Any stream flow data collected will be used to
19 establish the initial reservation of water, to complete a mandated review of the reservation in
20 or within 10 years, in accordance with AS 46.15. 145(f), as well as to monitor and enforce
21 instream flow reservations.

22
23 Instream flow reservations have been established for reaches within the Little Susitna River,
24 Deshka River, Talkeetna River, and Lake Creek. Contingent on funding and staff, instream
25 flow reservation applications for the Talachulitna River and Alexander Creek should be filed.
26 Some applications are based on synthetic hydrology, using sound, scientific methodology,
27 which may require an amendment of these applications under 11 AAC 93 as additional data
28 are acquired and analyzed.

29
30 Until an instream flow reservation is filed, out-of-stream applications will be adjudicated
31 consistent with AS 46.15 with consideration given to fish and wildlife, recreation, and other
32 stream values. Notice will be given to ADF&G, ADEC, and other interested parties as
33 required by AS 46.15.133.

34
35 **Water Discharge from Mining Operations.** Zero discharge of pipe effluent will be allowed
36 into the rivers from mining operations. Any discharge that requires an ADEC permit in a
37 tributary to any of the Recreation Rivers must meet water quality standards at the point of
38 discharge or the edge of the mixing zone.

39
40 **Wetlands Drainage and Associated Discharge.** Wetlands serve to filter nutrients and
41 sediments from upland runoff. They also stabilize water supplies by storing excessive water
42 during flooding and by recharging groundwater during dry periods. In addition, wetlands
43 provide important feeding, rearing, nesting, and breeding grounds for many species, selected
44 recreational uses, and aesthetic values.

To protect these wetland values, drainage into wetlands will be authorized only in a manner that:

1. There shall be no impediment to fish passage.
2. Ditches shall not physically connect to any natural bodies of water.
3. Settling ponds and grease separators shall be used to maintain water quality. A strict maintenance schedule shall be undertaken.
4. Disturbed soil areas shall be revegetated by the next growing season. Natural revegetation is acceptable if the site is suitable and will revegetate itself within the next growing season.
5. Discharged waters shall not exceed the state water quality standards.
6. Excess material excavated from the site that is not needed for site development shall be disposed of at an upland site or outside the Recreation Rivers.
7. Side slopes shall not exceed 2:1.

Other Guidelines Affecting Water and Solid Waste. Several other guidelines may affect water and solid waste. See the following sections of this chapter:

Shoreline Development
Fish & Wildlife Habitat
Commercial
Subsurface Resources
Education

Forestry

Goals

Personal Use. ADNR will continue to make wood available for personal use within the constraints of budget, access, and habitat and recreation values and the Recreation Rivers Act. Sources of wood for personal use may include permits or sales in remote areas, personal use harvesting areas in road-accessible regions, use of wood residues incident to clearing for other purposes, and harvest of dead and down wood.

Commercial Use. Make wood products available for use incidental to the construction of access or for habitat enhancement.

Forested Land Base. Maintain in public ownership a forested land base that is adequate to meet the needs for personal use harvest, recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, soil, and water.

Fire. Protect from wildfire, human life, valuable public and private forest lands, and significant human improvements.

Management Guidelines

Forest Resources and Practices Act. All timber harvests must comply with the Forest Resources and Practices Act. That act and implementing regulations guide forest management, reforestation, and protection of non-timber forest resources. For more information, see *AS 41.17* and *11 AAC 95*.

Restrictions in the Act. The Recreation Rivers Act provides specific guidance on timber harvest on state lands within the Legislatively Designated Area. This does not apply to harvest on private or borough lands. *AS 41.23.470(b)* states that, “The commissioner may conduct only a negotiated timber or material sale under *AS 38.05.115* to provide for personal use, including house logs and firewood, or for a use incidental to the construction of access, or for habitat enhancement.

Regulations for Personal Use. Negotiated personal-use sales are subject to the regulations in *11 AAC 71.050*. Wood obtained for personal use may not be sold, bartered or used for commercial purposes. In the Recreation Rivers, contracts for personal-use wood will be limited to 3200 linear feet of houselogs, 10 thousand board feet of saw logs, or 10 cords of fuel wood. For each established personal-use harvesting area, the Division of Forestry & Fire Protection sets the number of cords allowed per permit.

1 **Commercial Use.** Negotiated timber sales for commercial use are allowed under
2 AS 41.23.470(b) and 11 AAC 71.045 as long as harvest is incidental to the construction of
3 access or for habitat enhancement.
4

5 **Dead and Down Wood.** Generally Allowed Uses within the Recreation Rivers include using
6 small amounts of dead-and-down wood for cooking and warming fires (11 AAC 09.030
7 (3)(C)). To protect woody debris on the river bottoms which is important for fish habitat,
8 cutting, burning, or removal of dead-and-down wood that is larger than seven inches in
9 diameter and is located below ordinary high water is prohibited except under the provisions
10 for hazard trees. See *Hazard Trees* in this section.
11

12 **Trees of Concern.** Cutting of any size tree that is determined to pose an elevated level of
13 risk to river navigation or public safety may only be done with an authorization which comes
14 from Division of Forestry & Fire Protection, DMLW or ADF&G depending on the
15 circumstances.
16

17 **Personal Use in Road Accessible Areas.** Personal use harvest of standing timber in road
18 accessible areas may only be allowed on the upland parcel south of Bench Lake on the upper
19 Little Susitna River. The Division of Forestry & Fire Protection will revegetate these areas
20 consistent with the Susitna Forestry Guidelines and AS 41.17. Negotiated sales will be
21 available on a first-come, first-serve basis.
22

23 **Personal Use in Non-road Accessible Areas.** Harvest of standing timber for personal use in
24 non-road accessible areas may be allowed by negotiated personal use sales. Harvests will be
25 by group-selection cut and revegetated with woody species including birch, spruce, aspen
26 and willow (see *Regeneration* below). *Group Selection Cut* is a method of cutting where all
27 the trees are harvested within a cutting unit, and where the cutting unit is less than five acres.
28 Harvest of house logs may be harvested by the individual tree selection method.
29

30 **Regeneration.** Personal wood harvest users in non-road accessible areas will be required to
31 revegetate the site after harvest. Site preparation ensures prompt reforestation and benefits
32 habitat and visual quality. Where natural regeneration, artificial seeding, or planting will be
33 used for reforestation, a bed adequate for regeneration will be required after timber harvest.
34 The site preparation method used will depend on site characteristics and vegetation required
35 for reforestation and habitat. Recommended reforestation techniques will be included in the
36 personal-use-sale contract.
37

38 **Plan Update.** During plan updates, the planning team and advisory board will consider
39 methods of regenerating forests including whether to recommend to the legislature that the
40 corridors be open to commercial timber harvest. Commercial harvest in the corridors is
41 prohibited now except under the conditions outlined in Section 41.23.470(b).
42

43 **Timber Harvest on Borough Lands.** For forest management policies on borough lands,
44 contact the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.
45

1 **Commercial Use.** Harvest of timber for personal use does not include use of wood for
2 constructing or heating commercial facilities such as lodges. Wood obtained from personal-
3 use permits may be used to heat or construct a lodge owner's personal residence. In no case
4 may the wood obtained through a personal use permit be bought, sold, or bartered.

5
6 **Harvest for Habitat Enhancement.** Commercial or personal use harvest may be allowed for
7 habitat enhancement. Habitat enhancement may only occur with concurrence from ADF&G.

8
9 **Harvest Incidental to the Construction of Access.** Harvest incidental to the construction of
10 access may allow adequate clearing to ensure drying of the roadbed. Clearing shall be
11 minimized where roads cross rivers.

12
13 **Timber Salvage.** Timber with commercial or personal-use value should be salvaged from
14 lands that will be cleared for other uses, such as moose habitat enhancement or for
15 transportation or utility corridors. This will be accomplished by:

- 16
17 1. *Review.* The Division of Forestry & Fire Protection will review proposals for
18 significant land clearing actions to evaluate whether the timber is worth salvaging and
19 to advise the Director of the Division of Mining, Land & Water on appropriate
20 salvage methods.
- 21 2. *Scheduling.* Major projects that involve clearing large amounts of forested land, such
22 as for moose habitat enhancement, will be planned in advance to allow a reasonable
23 period to arrange for and conduct salvage of the timber. This advance planning
24 includes sufficient time to conduct inventories and harvest.

25
26 **Public Notice.** Contracts for personal-use wood harvest are exempt from notice requirements
27 for commercial timber sales. Designated personal-use harvest areas that will be open for
28 multiple personal use contracts, or areas where timber cutting is for habitat enhancement,
29 should be included in the five-year schedule of timber sales. They will be subject to the
30 notice requirements for commercial sales consistent with the Susitna Forestry Guidelines.

31
32 **Public Use Sites.** Because of the high public use in certain areas, the intensity of harvest of
33 dead and down wood, and the difficulty of regeneration in areas heavily used by the public,
34 personal use wood contracts will not be authorized in public use sites, except when cutting is
35 necessary to construct authorized improvements. Resource agencies may remove trees of
36 concern (e.g., standing dead trees near popular campsites).

37
38 **Buffers.** The Forest Resources and Practices Act does not allow commercial cutting on state
39 lands within 100 feet of anadromous and high-value resident fish waters. Harvest between
40 100 and 300 feet along anadromous and high-value resident fish waters must be consistent
41 with the maintenance of important fish and wildlife habitat.

42
43 **Iditarod Trail.** The buffer width for the Iditarod Race Trail is described under *Upland*
44 *Access, Iditarod Race Trail* in this chapter. The buffer width for the Iditarod National
45 Historic Trail is described under *Heritage Resources, Iditarod National Historic Trail* in this

chapter. Timber harvest for uses incidental to the construction of access or for habitat enhancement may be permitted in the trail corridor only if such harvests protect or enhance the visual and other characteristics of the trail. Harvesting in the Iditarod National Historic Trail corridor will be designed in consultation with the State Office of History and Archeology. The approximate location of the Iditarod Race Trail and the Iditarod National Historic Trail are shown on subunit maps in Chapter 3.

Unauthorized Access. Timber cutting for personal use or incidental to the construction of access shall not be for purposes of creating unauthorized access. This type of harvest will be contingent upon receiving required authorization for constructing airstrips, roads, or other types of access improvements.

Fire Management. Fire suppression intensities are determined by the Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan for the Susitna Basin. Fire management practices, including suppression and prescribed burning, are designed to implement the land management policies laid out in the land use plans for the area. Use and storage of fire retardants is allowed throughout the Recreation Rivers.

Use of motorized equipment including boats, aircraft, and ground vehicles, for fire-suppression purposes is allowed in non-motorized areas. Because it would be difficult to manage fires in the one-mile wide corridors different from fires on adjacent lands, fire suppression levels for the corridors will be consistent with those for adjacent areas.

Seasonal Scheduling. To avoid conflicts with recreational uses of the river, harvest should not occur during the peak fishing season. The peak use periods for each subunit are listed for each subunit in Chapter 3. Seasonal restrictions on harvest does not apply to areas where there is little boating or fishing, such as the upland parcel south of Bench Lake on the upper Little Susitna River. Timber harvesting during the snow-free season will be directed to well-drained sites where summer harvest can aid site preparation and reduce damage to wetlands.

Other Guidelines Affecting Forestry. Several other guidelines may affect Forestry. See the following sections of this chapter:

Fish & Wildlife Habitat

Upland Access

Heritage Resources

Subsurface Resources

Goals

Mineral and Energy Supplies. Make metallic minerals, oil, and gas available to contribute to the energy and mineral supplies, and to the economy.

Environmental Quality and Recreation Values. When developing subsurface resources, minimize surface disturbance, degradation of water quality, and impairment and conflicts with recreation uses.

Recreation Mining. Make metallic minerals available for recreation mining.

Management Guidelines - Mining

Restrictions in the Act. Under AS 41.23.470(c), “the commissioner may permit mining leasing under AS 38.05.205 on uplands within a recreation river corridor if leasing is allowed under a management plan that has been adopted by the commissioner. The commissioner shall establish appropriate conditions for permits, operating plans, and leases to mitigate the effects of mineral development activities on the environment and to prevent, to the extent practicable, degradation of the recreation uses of the river.” Map 2.2 shows the area open to new mineral entry under lease (LLO 15) and the areas closed to mineral entry under Mineral Closing Order 455.

Mineral Leasehold Location Order. Between RM 42.2 and RM 45.8 along Lake Creek rights to locatable minerals may be acquired only under the leasehold location system, AS 36.05.205, and may not be acquired by locating a mining claim under AS 38.05.195. This was implemented by both a leasehold location order (LLO 15) and a mineral opening order (MOO 604) which includes approximately 3,560 acres. There is a 300-foot staking setback from the ordinary high-water mark on Lake, Camp, and Sunflower creeks provided by Mineral Closing Order 455. In addition, leasehold locations may not be staked in the public use sites at the mouth of Camp and Sunflower creeks (PU 4d.1 and PU 4d.2). Leases will be restricted to 5-year periods. The lease should include language that states that if at any time the lease is in effect, the lessee has defaulted on the lease, or upon termination of the lease for any reason, the state may take possession of the property, improvements, and equipment of the lessee on the leased area as security for payment of rent due, or to indemnify lease.

Mineral Orders. Mineral Closing Order 455, as prescribed by the Susitna Area Plan, closed the majority of the Recreation River corridors to new mineral entry. The original 1991 Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Management Plan called for the remainder of the corridors to be closed to mineral entry (with the exception of the portion of Lake Creek described in

the Leasehold Location Order above). These lands were closed under Mineral Closing Order 605. Closures prevent surface use conflicts and protect high public use values.

Land Use Permits for Mining. Under existing regulations, mining operations that use heavy equipment, disturb the riverbed, restrict public access, or build or use a surface structure require approval by the Division of Mining, Land & Water. This approval is generally authorized by a Land Use Permit. To simplify the permitting process, mine operators can file the Application for Permits to Mine in Alaska which serves as a combined permit application for several agencies. Copies of the Applications for Permits to Mine in Alaska will be distributed to agencies that request copies.

Data Needs. The application for a Land Use Permit will include, in addition to the standard Application for Permits to Mine in Alaska questionnaire, sufficient explanation to show how the mine operator plans to comply with the plan guidelines for mineral development, rehabilitation of mine sites, relationship to scenic and heritage resources, and public access.

Plan of Operations for Mineral Leases. An approved plan of operations for a mineral lease takes the place of the Land Use Permit required for unleased land. If proposed lease activities are so minor that they could take place without a Land Use Permit on unleased land, a plan of operations is not required (11 AAC 86.800).

The plan of operations must show how the operator proposes to comply with the lease stipulations and other pertinent guidelines in this plan.

Data Needs. Plans of operation will follow existing regulations given in 11 AAC 86.800. In addition, the following information will be required:

1. Justification for vegetation clearing.
2. Delineation of proposed access roads within the lease or accessing the lease on a topographic map.
3. Location, size and purpose of any proposed structures and description of how visual guidelines will be met.

Approval of Plan of Operations. ADNR will approve plans of operation required for locatable mineral leases and Land Use Permits if the plans or permit applications adequately address the guidelines of this plan, state laws and regulations, and if ADNR has consulted with and given careful consideration to the recommendations of ADF&G and ADEC. If after a reasonable period of time a negotiated solution cannot be reached with the operator, or in the event of repeated violations, violation of the plan of operations or Land Use Permits is cause for enforced cessation of operations.

Best Management Practices. ADF&G will utilize its manual, *Best Management Practices for Placer Mining* when issuing Title 16 permits and reviewing of and commenting on the Division of Mining, Land & Water's plans of operations and Land Use Permits for mining.

ADF&G recommendations for rejection or modification of a Land Use Permit or a plan of operations for placer mining will be based on Title 16 and the ADF&G Best Management Practices. (This document is available from ADF&G or ADNR).

1. *Removal of Vegetation.* Vegetation may be removed no more than one year ahead of mining unless unusual circumstances exist. The area of vegetation removal will be for the immediate areas of the excavations, and sites for overburden storage, settling ponds, access roads, equipment storage, and other authorized structures. The timing and extent of vegetation removal must be outlined in the mining plan.
2. *Tailings and Overburden.* Overburden and tailings will be stockpiled and/or deposited in accordance with the mining plans.
3. *Control of Run-off, Siltation and / or Pollution.* The area must be managed to minimize non-point sources of pollution.
4. *Mine Site Consultation.* To assist the mine operator in developing the operation in a manner that is as compatible as possible with public use of the area in the vicinity of the mine, an onsite pre-development conference should be held with the mine operator and ADNR, ADF&G, and ADEC officials. If agencies are unable to perform the on-site consultation due to budget or staff constraints, the plan of operations may be approved without it.

Water Discharge. Zero discharge of wastewater will be allowed into the rivers or their tributaries from mining operations. Also see *Agency Implementation Responsibilities, DGGS*, in Chapter 4.

Siting of Structures. Special care will be taken to site mining camps. Minimizing visual prominence of structures provides a benefit to miners by making them less noticeable to potential vandals and by promoting public acceptance of surface alterations to state lands. The following guidelines will be followed in locating mining structures, unless no feasible or prudent alternative exists.

1. For existing locations, living accommodations for mineral exploration, annual assessment, or production must be setback at least one-fourth mile from ordinary high water in the main river. Living accommodations associated with locations in the area open for new mineral entry under the leasehold location system on upper Lake Creek must be located outside the corridor.
2. No full-time residences will be allowed on either existing or new locations inside the Recreation Rivers. Living accommodations must be removed at the end of each season. Use of mining locations for homesites, non-mining related business, or recreation sites is prohibited. Camps associated with recreational mining should comply with regulations for *primitive tent camps* described under *Recreation* in this chapter.
3. Structures that are not used for living accommodations may be allowed on mining operations, if, in the judgment of the Division of Mining, Land & Water, they are

necessary for the operation. These may remain for more than one work season but must be removed at the end of the term of use. Abandoned or unusable construction materials, equipment, or structures should be removed annually.

4. Structures and construction materials should be consolidated behind natural contours rather than on prominent points, or behind vegetative screens. Visibility of structures from the rivers should be minimized to the extent practical.
5. Structures should be grouped together where possible.
6. Structures should be kept to the minimum number necessary to perform mining operations.
7. Structures should blend with the landscape to the extent possible. For example, structures should be rustic in nature or painted a dark color to blend with the terrain. Shiny metal roofs and walls are discouraged.
8. Trash should be neatly contained and removed from public view. It should not be an attractive nuisance for bears. Disposal should be consistent with the solid waste guidelines in this chapter.

Public Access Across Mining Locations. Public access across mining locations is usually unrestricted. Public access within an actively mined area may be restricted if authorized under an approved plan of operation, to protect public safety, or to prevent unreasonable interference with the rights of the miner. *No trespass* signs may only be posted in the immediate working area or on structures after access restrictions have been authorized by ADNR. Signs may not be used to block the public's use of legal access or intimidate the public. Facilities will not be located where they would block public access to state lands or waters.

Motorized Access. Seasonal motorized transport restrictions will not apply to the use of motors or powered transport associated with assessment work or commercial production on active mining claims. See *General Access*, *Permits for Access to Private Land and Mine Claims*, and *Upland Access*. For recreational mining, motor transport or use of motorized equipment shall not be allowed in the non-motorized areas during the period when those prohibitions apply.

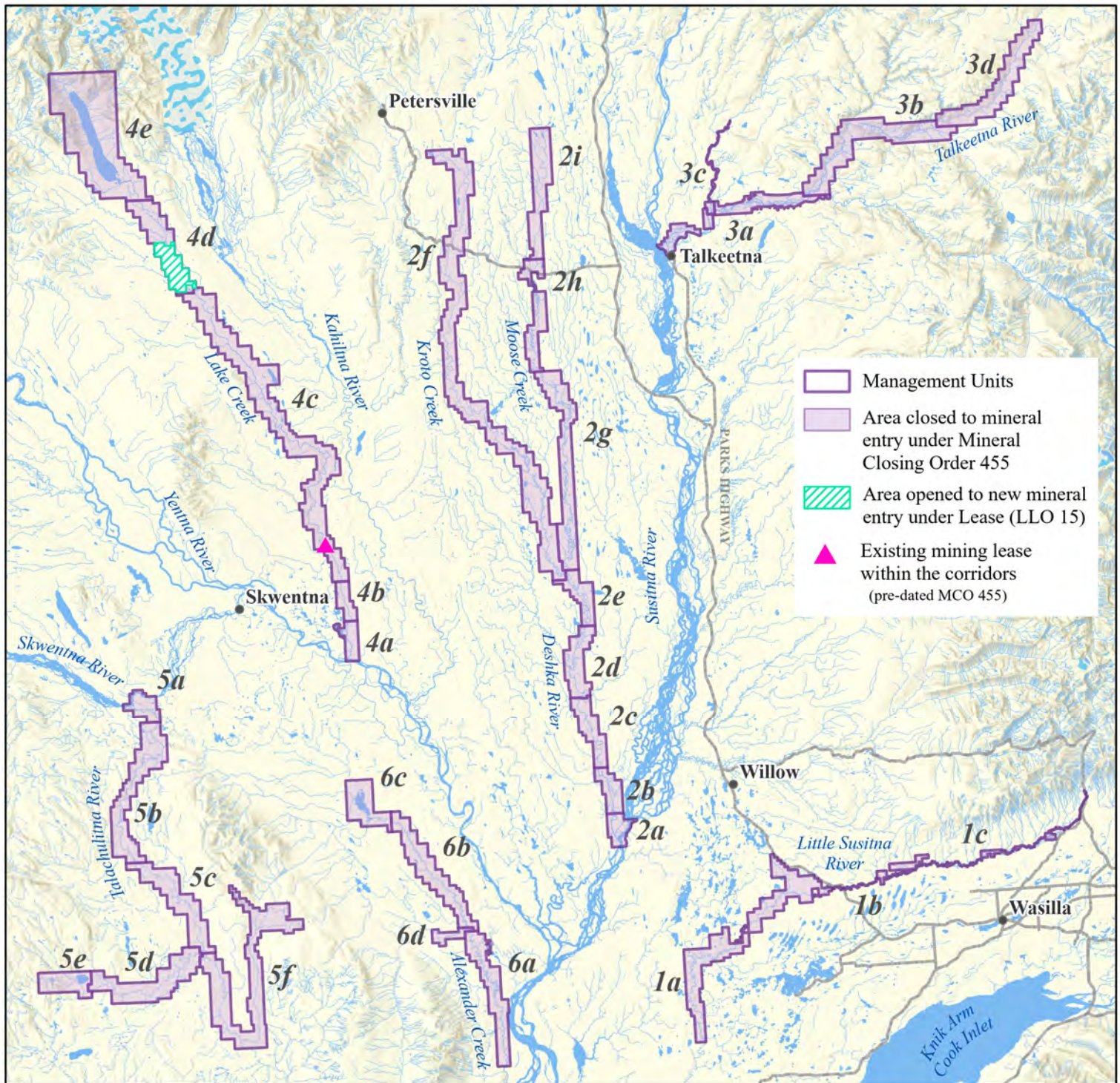
Leases for Tourism Gold Mining. Leases for tourism-related gold-mining businesses will not be issued in the Recreation Rivers.

Suction Dredges. Recreational mining is defined as using a suction dredge with a nozzle of six inches or less, powered by a 16 HP motor or less. Although a permit for recreational mining is not required from ADNR, a Title 16 Permit is required from ADF&G if the use is to occur in a designated anadromous waterbody. ADF&G should not allow suction dredging in the active river channels where water is flowing during the time of the activity. The use of a suction dredge larger than 6" requires an Application for Permits to Mine in Alaska or plan of operation from ADNR. Also see *Upland Access* in this section.

SUSITNA BASIN RECREATION RIVERS MANAGEMENT PLAN

Area Open to New Mineral Entry under Lease

MAP 2.2



MANAGEMENT UNITS & SUBUNITS

1. Little Susitna River

- 1a. Lower Little Susitna River
- 1b. Middle Little Susitna River
- 1c. Upper Little Susitna River

2. Deshka River

- 2a. Mouth Of Deshka River
- 2b. Lower Deshka River
- 2c. Middle Deshka River
- 2d. Neil Lak
- 2e. The Forks
- 2f. Koto Creek
- 2g. Lower Moose Creek
- 2h. Oilwell Road
- 2i. Upper Moose Creek

3. Talkeetna River

- 3a. Lower Talkeetna River
- 3b. Middle Talkeetna River
- 3c. Clear (Chunilna) Creek
- 3d. Talkeetna Canyon

4. Lake Creek

- 4a. Lake Creek Mouth
- 4b. Lower Lake Creek
- 4c. Middle Lake Creek
- 4d. Upper Lake Creek
- 4e. Chelatna Lake

5. Talachulitna River

- 5a. Mouth of Talachulitna River
- 5b. Talachulitna Canyon
- 5c. Middle Talachulitna River
- 5d. Talachulitna Creek
- 5e. Judd Lake
- 5f. Upper Talachulitna River

6. Alexander Creek

- 6a. Lower Alexander Creek
- 6b. Upper Alexander Creek
- 6c. Alexander Lake
- 6d. Sucker Creek

Land Use Designations only apply to land owned by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, as indicated by the management units on the map. And due to size, some management units may not display on the map. There may be some private parcels contained within management units, but designations do not apply to non-state lands. This map is for graphic representation only and intended only to be used as a guide.

1 **Signs.** Marking mining locations should be consistent with the guidelines under *Recreation,*
2 *Marking Natural Objects and Public Educations, Signs.*

3
4 **Leasable Minerals other than Oil and Gas.** Coal and other leasable minerals, with the
5 exception of oil and gas, will not be available for leasing.

6 7 8 **Management Guidelines - Oil and Gas**

9
10 **Oil and Gas Leasing.** With the exception of guidelines listed below, the plan defers
11 decisions regarding leasing for oil and gas to ADNR's existing leasing processes. The
12 department's statewide policies for oil and gas are found in the Five Year Oil and Gas
13 Leasing Program. Specific stipulations for oil and gas exploration, development, and
14 production activities will be developed and applied on a case-by-case basis for each oil and
15 gas lease sale using the lease sale process.

16
17 **Siting Facilities.** The siting of onshore facilities, other than roads, docks, or pipeline
18 crossings, will be prohibited within 500 feet of all fishbearing streams and lakes unless it is
19 shown to the satisfaction of the director of the Division of Oil and Gas, after consultation
20 with the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, that the alternative site locations outside this
21 buffer zone are not feasible or prudent.

22
23 Additionally, to the extent feasible, the siting of facilities within one-half mile of the banks of
24 the main stems of the six Recreation Rivers is prohibited. Pipeline crossings must be aligned
25 perpendicular or near perpendicular to the watercourse.

26
27 **Seismic Exploration.** The plan defers to existing ADNR seismic exploration permitting
28 processes. To avoid conflicts with recreation users, damage to sensitive habitats, and to
29 protect scenic qualities of the rivers, techniques that can occur in winter and that minimize
30 clearing of vegetation are preferred.

31
32 **Other Guidelines Affecting Materials.** Several other guidelines may affect materials
33 extraction. See the following sections of this chapter:

34
35 Shoreline Development
36 Recreation
37 Commercial
38 General Access
39 Upland Access
40

Materials

Goals

Material Supplies. Make materials available for personal use, use incidental to the construction of access, or for habitat enhancement.

Environmental Quality and Recreation Resources. When developing material sources, minimize surface disturbance, degradation of water quality, and visual impairment.

Management Guidelines

Restrictions in the Act. Materials include the common varieties of sand, gravel, rock, peat, pumice, pumicite, clay, and sod. The Recreation Rivers Act authorizes negotiated material sales within the corridors under AS 38.05.115 to provide for personal use and for use incidental to the construction of access or for habitat enhancement. Personal use is limited to 100 cubic yards. Negotiated material sales for non-personal use are limited to 25,000 cubic yards of materials per year. Consistent with the Recreation Rivers Act, negotiated sales to state or federal agencies, political subdivisions, and charitable organizations authorized under AS 38.05.810 may be allowed.

Location. If feasible and prudent, material sites outside the corridors should be utilized before developing material sites located within the Recreation Rivers.

Extraction Below Ordinary High Water. Material extraction will not be allowed below ordinary high water (OHW) or in the protection area. Exceptions to allow extraction for habitat enhancement may occur for sites identified by ADF&G or to move a minimal amount of materials which may be necessary to provide a flat base for the toe of a structure. Elsewhere in the corridors material sales will be allowed on a case-by-case basis.

Reclamation. Reclamation of a material site shall be consistent with state reclamation law. At the discretion of DMLW, a bond will be required of the site developer.

Existing ADOT/PF Pits. There are two active ADOT/PF materials sites in the Recreation Rivers. One is a 90-acre site located in T18N, R1E, Sec. 8, on the upper Little Susitna River, off the Palmer-Fishhook Road. The eastern half of this tract has been transferred to ADOT/PF under an Interagency Land Management Transfer (ILMTADL 59287) for an undetermined duration. The second site is located on 1.3 acres on Oilwell Road where the road crosses Kroto Creek. This site is very important to ADOT/PF for maintenance of Petersville Road. ADOT/PF applied for an Interagency Management Land Agreement in 2018.

1 Materials extraction may continue from these sites under the existing authorizations. The
2 sites will be reclaimed consistent with state reclamation law and ADOT/PF Standard
3 Stipulations for material sources after extraction is completed. Also see *ADOT/PF Materials*
4 *Site, Subunit 3c and ADOT/PF Materials Site, Subunit 2f* in Chapter 3.

5
6 **Other Guidelines Affecting Subsurface Resources.** Several other guidelines may affect
7 subsurface resources. See the following sections of this chapter:

8
9 Shoreline Development

10 Upland Access

11

Land Status

Goals

Land Retention. Retain state lands within the Recreation Rivers in state ownership.

Land Acquisition. Acquire private lands through purchase, lease, gift, exchange or other means when the parcel could significantly contribute to the public values and uses in the Recreation Rivers.

Cooperation. Cooperate between state, federal, and municipal agencies to ensure that land and water within the Recreation Rivers is managed efficiently. Cooperate, at the request of a municipality, in the planning for municipal land adjacent to the Recreation Rivers.

Authority. The authority under the Recreation Rivers Act only applies to those lands designated as Recreation Rivers by the legislation (AS 41.23.420(f)).

Municipal Land. If a municipality commits land for inclusion in the Recreation River Plan or management, the department will receive the concurrence of the municipality to the management plan proposed as it applies to municipal land. Municipal land not committed by a municipality for inclusion in a Recreation River corridor is excluded from the operation of the plan.

Management Guidelines

Retention in State Ownership. State lands in the Recreation Rivers will be retained in state ownership and will be managed in accordance with the management intent and guidelines intent in the plan.

Land Acquisition. Under AS 41.23.460, ADNR may acquire isolated parcels of private land in the corridor by purchase, lease, gift, or exchange. Land may not be acquired for inclusion in the corridors by eminent domain. Private land may be returned to the state or borough through foreclosure, escheat, or other circumstances. ADF&G may use federal-share and matching state funds for land purchases to enhance recreational boating and sport fishing. Land purchased by ADF&G may be noted as OSL (Other State Land) on the status plat and managed by ADNR under an MOU or management agreement. Federally mandated criteria for use of parcels purchased with federal funds must be followed.

It is not the goal of the plan to acquire all private land in the Recreation River corridors. Only land that significantly contributes to the management intent for the Recreation Rivers should be proposed for acquisition. Criteria for identifying and prioritizing potential parcels for acquisition are listed below.

- 1 1. The parcel has been identified in the resource inventory or by a site inspection as
2 containing unique habitat.
- 3 2. The parcel provides needed access to other state land or water.
- 4 3. The parcel can be used by many members of the public, thereby dispersing user
5 pressure from other areas or increasing recreation opportunities.
- 6 4. Public ownership of the parcel would preclude uses not consistent with management
7 intent and guidelines for the Recreation River.

8
9 Parcels should meet most of the following site criteria:

- 10
11 1. Topography and soil are suited to what the parcel will be managed for. For example,
12 acquiring important wetlands for habitat protection would be consistent with this
13 guideline.
- 14 2. The parcel should be free of toxic wastes, garbage, and contamination from septic
15 systems. An environmental risk assessment should be conducted unless the parcel has
16 had no evidence of prior use or development that may result in the disposal of wastes.
17 The applicant may be required to collect soil samples and conduct surface and
18 subsurface water quality tests.
- 19 3. The parcel has no significant erosion or accretion problems that could eventually
20 render the site unusable or require expensive soil stabilization work.
- 21 4. The site does not include structures or facilities that are not suitable for public use or
22 are not needed to fulfill the plan's management intent and guidelines.
- 23 5. The site is not surrounded by private land, unless the site will be used for access.
24 Areas recommended for designation as Recreation Rivers are discussed in Chapter 4.

25
26 **Land Exchanges.** Land exchanges between the state and private landowners may be pursued
27 to improve access to state lands or to protect important resources. The land exchange process
28 is lengthy and staff intensive. When the same objective can be achieved through a
29 cooperative agreement, it is the preferred management tool. Criteria for acquiring new lands
30 in the corridors through an exchange are described in the previous section.

31
32 **State Selections.** All townships in the Recreation Rivers were selected by the state under
33 Section 6(b) of the Alaska Statehood Act. Most of this land has been conveyed to the state.
34 Any selected tracts of land that are available or become available in the future should be
35 identified and placed on the state's land conveyance priority list (tentative approval) as a
36 BLM high priority.

37
38 **Classifications.** Consistent with the Recreation Rivers Act and management intent in this
39 plan, all state lands within the Recreation Rivers shall be classified under categories in
40 11 AAC 55 as Public Recreation Land, Water Resources Land, and Wildlife Habitat Land.
41 Borough-owned lands in the Recreation Rivers were classified by the Matanuska-Susitna
42 Borough Assembly.

1 **Mental Health Lands.** Mental health lands are located on the lower Little Susitna River and
2 near Talkeetna. These lands are an integral part of two Recreation Rivers and will be
3 managed consistent with the management intent for the subunits in which they are located.
4 However, to the extent that the plan conflicts with the Alaska Mental Health Enabling Act of
5 1956, court decisions, and new state laws, the plan will not apply to Mental Health Trust
6 lands within the Recreation River corridors.

7
8 **University Lands.** Under AS 38.04.005(f), the land owned by the Board of Regents of the
9 University of Alaska is not subject to Chapter 4 statutes of Title 38 which includes planning,
10 classification, and inventorying processes. This plan does not apply to University lands in the
11 Recreation River corridors.

12
13 **Cooperative Agreement.** To ensure efficient and consistent management of lands in and
14 adjacent to the Recreation Rivers, ADNR may enter into management agreement with
15 different agencies and municipalities. Also see Chapter 4, *Agency Implementation*
16 *Responsibilities*.
17

Heritage Resources

Goals

Heritage Resources. The Alaska Historic Preservation Act establishes the state's basic goal: to preserve and protect the historic, prehistoric, and archaeological resources of Alaska. This plan will provide management consistent with that goal.

Management Guidelines

Site Identification. Historic and prehistoric resources should be identified by:

1. pre-activity surveys to identify and evaluate sites in areas of high potential or known resources; or
2. surveys conducted by ADNR archaeologists or historians in compliance with the Alaska Historic Preservation Act.

Site Protection. Historic and prehistoric sites should be preserved and protected by:

1. review of development plans in the Recreation Rivers for impacts on historic and prehistoric sites;
2. review of permit, lease, and special use applications for impacts on historic and prehistoric sites, or probability of impacts in high and moderate potential areas; and
3. monitoring of known sites for impacts in areas of intensive fishing, camping, or other uses.

Public Education. Historic and prehistoric sites should be evaluated for their interpretative value. Where suitable, interpretive signs or board displays may be erected on heritage sites for the purpose of providing public education or to enhance tourism opportunities. Known heritage sites on the Little Susitna River, the mouth of the Deshka River, and the lower Talkeetna River should receive first priority because they have good public access and a high concentration of sites. (See also *Education, Signs* in this chapter.)

Disturbance or Removal of Heritage Resources. Per AS 41.35.200, the disturbance or removal of cultural, archaeological, or historical material on state land (including in the Recreation Rivers) is not allowed, unless authorized by the State Office of History and Archeology.

Iditarod National Historic Trail. The Iditarod National Historic Trail crosses the following subunits: Lower Little Susitna River (1a), Lower Alexander Creek (6a), and Upper Alexander Creek (6b). The route is located near but is southwest of Alexander Lake (6c) and

1 near but north of Talachulitna River Mouth (5a). The old Skwentna connecting trail crossed
2 the Lake Creek Mouth (4a) subunit. For exact locations, see the subunits in Chapter 3.
3 Minimum trail buffers should be 100 feet (50 feet on either side of the centerline). Permits
4 and leases within the buffer should be designed in consultation with the State Office of
5 History and Archaeology. Also see *Forestry, and Iditarod Trail*, in this chapter and BLM's
6 *Iditarod National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan (1986)*.
7

8 **Other Guidelines Affecting Heritage Resources.** Several other guidelines may affect
9 Heritage Resources. See the following sections of this chapter:

10
11 Forestry

12 Education
13

Education

Goals

Provide Information. Provide adequate and accurate orientation and direction for visitors.

Provide for Safety. Promote safe recreation through informational brochures, programs, and regulations.

Provide Awareness of Habitat Values. Promote public awareness of habitat values, the activities which may adversely affect such areas, and potential management actions required to prevent habitat degradation.

Provide Awareness of Regulations. Promote public awareness of regulations and permits and the resource values upon which they are based. Also promote public awareness of the diverse opportunities within the Recreation Rivers to reduce conflicts between user groups.

Landowner Programs. Design and initiate an educational program on shoreline land-use practices to assist shoreline landowners in safely developing their property and adjacent state lands, while protecting river resources.

Interpretation. Provide interpretation services to highlight and explain points of interest such as heritage sites.

Management Guidelines

General Education. Throughout the planning process education was identified by the public as an effective management tool for enhancing recreation opportunities, reducing resource damage, and minimizing user conflicts. To meet these goals, education materials should be developed cooperatively by state agencies, the borough, interested user groups, and other individuals or organizations with relevant expertise. The following education materials are appropriate in the Recreation Rivers.

1. *Public Outreach.* ADNR field staff should be made available to contact users in the Recreation Rivers and make public presentations to user groups. Information displays should be made available for loan to organizations or for special events. Education videos should also be developed and available for viewing by interested groups.
2. *Brochures.* Informational brochures should be developed on subjects relevant to the use and management of the Recreation Rivers. This may include a brochure describing each river. Topics for brochures may include, areawide regulations, boating safety, minimum impact camping techniques, legal access, and land ownership. Efforts should be made to make brochures available in foreign languages.

1 Brochures should be made available at boat launches, businesses, and information
2 offices.

3 3. *Kiosks or Bulletin Boards.* Kiosks or bulletin boards displaying information on the
4 Recreation Rivers should be established at key entry and exit points, and at developed
5 facilities within or adjacent to the Recreation Rivers.

6 4. *Signs.* The use of signs as a management tool or for public education should be
7 minimized in Class I areas, and elsewhere in the Recreation Rivers. Other than signs
8 on roads, signs should be constructed of natural materials, particularly in Class I
9 areas. Signs should be used judiciously for identifying management area boundaries,
10 important heritage sites, safety hazards, regulations, and other important public
11 information as determined by the department and other public agencies. The
12 placement of signs on state lands shall be restricted to those placed by the state and
13 other public agencies, or required by agencies, such as legal descriptions on mining
14 claims, or a land use permit posted on a temporary camp. Commercial, “no
15 trespassing,” and other private signs are prohibited on state lands within the
16 Recreation Rivers. However, “no trespassing” signs may be allowed on active mining
17 locations or safety signs for improvements under state authorization. (See *Subsurface*
18 *Resources, Public Access Across Mining Claims.*)
19

20 The DMLW director may authorize the use of other signs, under permit, for non-profit or
21 other groups serving a public purpose, if the use is consistent with the management of the
22 subunit. Also see *Shoreline Development, Other Types of Buoys.*
23

24 **Other Guidelines Affecting Education.** Several other guidelines may affect education
25 issues. See the following sections of this chapter:
26

27 Shoreline Development
28 Recreation
29 Boat Access
30 Subsurface Resources
31

Enforcement

Public Concerns. Throughout the planning process, the public stated that enforcement should be a high priority. They thought that many of the problems in the Recreation Rivers could only be addressed through a combination of better education and enforcement (education needs are described in the previous section). The public cited a number of areas where enforcement was needed including: littering, long-term camps, abandonment of property, intoxication, and reckless operation of boats.

Citation Authority. The Recreation Rivers Act grants the commissioner authority to designate peace officers to enforce provisions of the act under AS 41.23.440(b). 11 AAC 09.050 establishes the procedure for dealing with a person's noncompliance with activity restrictions described in this plan.

ADNR should seek statutory authority and draft regulations which provide citation authority to DMLW so the plan can be fully implemented. Until this occurs, DMLW should work with the Alaska Department of Public Safety to address the public concerns described in the above section. Also see *Other Recommendations, Enforcement* in Chapter 4.

Other Guidelines Affecting Enforcement. Several other guidelines may affect education. See the following sections of this chapter:

- Recreation
- Commercial
- Boat Access
- Education

1
2

Chapter 3

Land & Water Management Policies for each Management Unit

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Chapter 3

Land & Water Management Policies for Each Unit

Introduction

This chapter includes background information, management intent, and management guidelines for management units, subunits, public use sites, and special management areas.

Management Intent

Management intent for state land and water in the planning area is based on a three-class system, where each class represents a point on a spectrum of possible levels of development and use of state lands. The management intent for a specific subunit, special management area, or public use site reflects the desired future condition of that area. The three classes of management intent for the 31 subunits are described in Table 3.1. More specific management intent for each subunit, public use site, and special management area is described under each unit. When making management decisions for activities taking place in these areas, the management intent for the specific subunit, public use site, or special management area, and the management intent described in Table 3.1 and below should be taken into consideration. When the general management intent described here varies from the specific intent described under each subunit, the more specific management intent takes precedence.

Special Management Areas. There are thirteen (13) special management areas (SMAs) on state land and water in the planning area. These are areas of existing or proposed isolated developments, or clusters of private land in Class I areas. Their designation as special areas acknowledges these circumstances; and the need to manage them for different levels of development and recreation experiences than on the surrounding public lands. Special management areas will be managed as Class II areas. Motorized access is allowed in these areas even when they are located along non-motorized river segments. See the subunit maps following each unit in this chapter for the location of special management areas. Also see *Special Management Areas* in Chapter 2.

Public Use Sites. Public use (PU) sites are site-specific designations for state land and water used to identify and provide management intent for areas that receive high public use or have unique resource values or require special management attention. There are sixty-nine (69) public use sites within the Recreation Rivers. These sites have been identified as possessing important access, fishing, camping, other recreation, or public use values. The designation is intended to protect the opportunity for the public to use these sites and to protect the public values of these sites. The guidelines for specific sites are outlined in Chapter 3. When

1 making management decisions about public use sites, consideration should be given to: the
2 general management intent for public use sites described here; specific management intent
3 for the site; and the management intent for the subunit. Public use sites in Class I areas are
4 generally managed for a more primitive recreation experience than those located in Class II
5 and III areas. The management intent for public use sites does not apply to borough or
6 private lands adjacent to these sites. See the subunit maps following each unit in this chapter
7 for the location of these sites. Also see *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2.
8
9

10 **Delineation of Management Units & Subunits**

11
12 There are six management units within the planning area (one for each river system) and
13 31 subunits. Each subunit includes a river segment and its associated uplands. Subunit
14 boundaries are based on river-use patterns, resources, management concerns and
15 constraints, river characteristics, and land ownership. Management intent and guidelines
16 are provided for each subunit.
17
18

19 **Borough Lands**

20
21 The Matanuska-Susitna Borough owns land in the following subunits: Lower Little Susitna
22 River (1a), Mouth of Deshka River (2a), Lower Deshka River (2b), Middle Deshka River
23 (2c), Kroto Creek (2f), Oilwell Road (2h), Upper Moose Creek (2i), Lake Creek Mouth (4a),
24 Judd Lake (5e), and Lower Alexander Creek (6a). To obtain classifications and management
25 intent for borough lands, contact the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.
26

1 **Table 3-1: Recreation Opportunity Spectrum**

VARIABLE	CLASS I	CLASS II	CLASS III
Development	There are generally no facilities ¹ for user convenience or comfort.	There are generally limited and isolated facilities for user convenience or comfort.	Facilities exist for user convenience or comfort, although these are generally rustic in design.
Environment	Area is characterized by little or no modifications to natural environment. In many, but not all places, the opportunity is provided for isolation from the sights and sound of man, to feel a part of the natural environment.	Area is characterized by limited and isolated modifications to the natural environment. Provides some opportunity for isolation from sights and sounds of man, but this is not as important as for Class I areas.	Area is characterized by moderate alterations to the natural environment. Little opportunity for isolation from the sights and sounds of man, although opportunity for a high degree of interaction with the environment still exists.
Signs of Use	Apparent signs of use such as litter or unburied human waste are few and isolated without management attention.	Apparent signs of use such as litter or unburied human waste are more frequent and noticeable, although they remain low with some management attention.	Apparent signs of use such as litter or unburied human waste are more frequent and noticeable, although they remain low with special management attention.
Social Interaction	Interaction levels between groups are low.	Interaction between groups is moderate.	Interaction between groups is high.
Risk	Provides the opportunity to have a high degree of physical (natural) challenge and risk, and to use outdoor skills.	Provides opportunity for moderate physical (natural) challenge and risk, and to use outdoor skills.	Opportunities for physical (natural) challenge and risk are less important.
Management Presence ²	Management presence is low.	Management presence is higher.	A relatively high degree of management presence may be necessary for safety and resource protection reasons.
Access (Does not include winter travel)	Primitive or non-existent transportation improvements. Fewer opportunities for motorized access. There may be some seasonal restrictions on motorized access. However, many Class I areas have no restrictions on motorized access.	Moderate number and scale of transportation improvements. Few restrictions on seasonal motorized access except to protect public safety in congested areas.	More transportation improvements and higher standards for facilities such as public airstrips and trails. In general, no restrictions on seasonal motorized access except no-wake areas to protect public safety in congested areas.

2

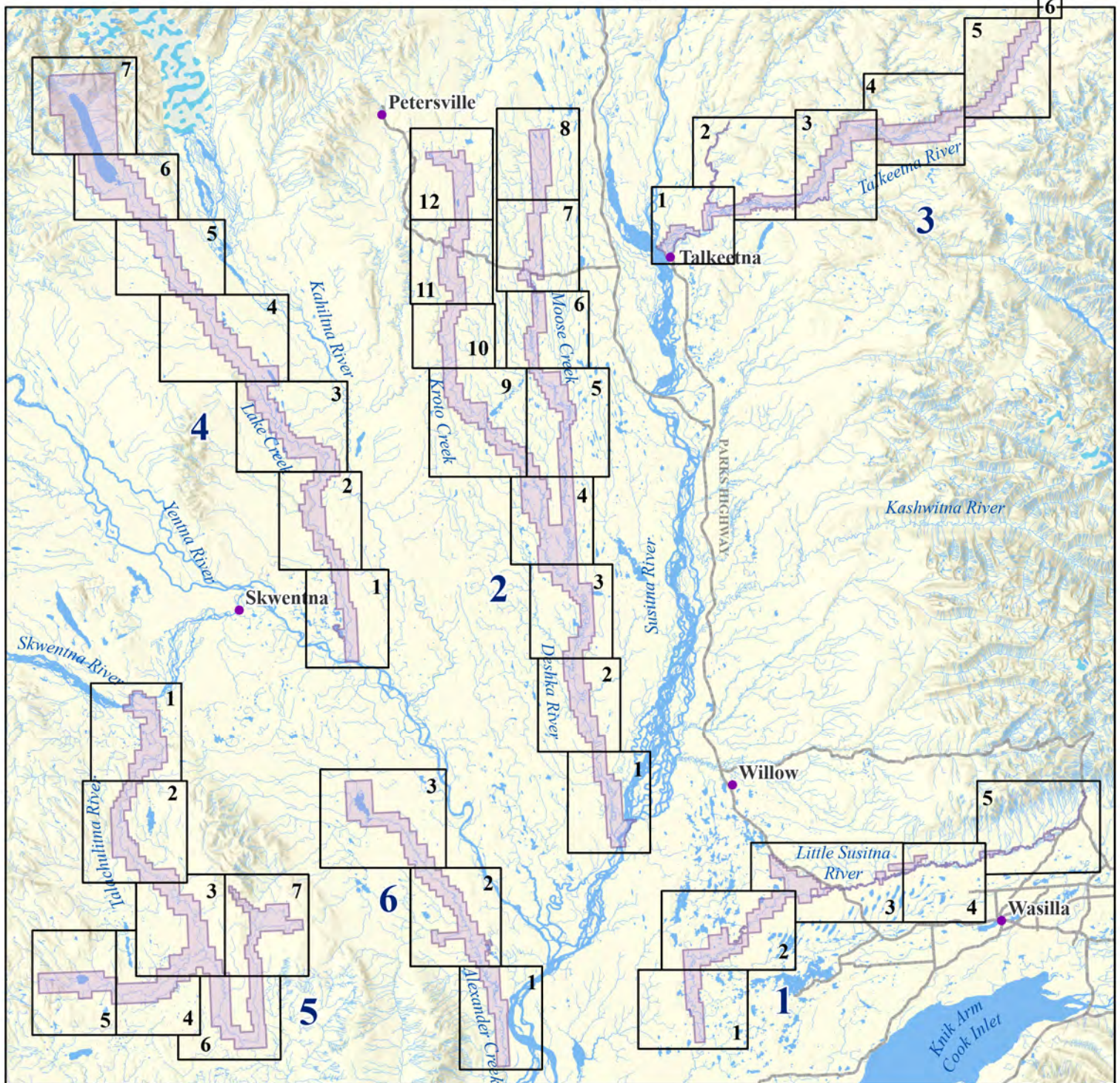
¹ Facilities include camps authorized for more than 4 days in summer and public facilities (including improvements such as toilets, campgrounds in summer, and signs). Camps used for research or resource management are case-by-case.

² “Management Presence” refers to the levels of management required to manage public use including litter patrols, providing public information, and maintaining public facilities. Management presence does not refer to the degree of regulation required.

1
2

Index Map

MAP 3.1



Management Units

1. Little Susitna River
2. Deshka River (Kroto Creek / Moose Creek)
3. Talkeetna River
4. Lake Creek
5. Talachulitna River
6. Alexander Creek

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| 1 | Index to Adjoining Maps |
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1. Little Susitna River Management Unit

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1b. Middle Little Susitna River Subunit 3 - 16
1c. Upper Little Susitna River Subunit 3 - 18

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1. Little Susitna River Management Unit

Background

Miles of River

This unit includes approximately 67 river miles of the Little Susitna River and 5.5 miles of Nancy Lake Creek. The management unit extends from the northern Susitna Flats Game Refuge boundary (RM 33.2) to the south boundary of the Hatcher Pass Management Area (RM 100).

Land Ownership

State	14,598 acres
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	1,581 acres
Mental Health Trust	838 acres
Native	284 acres
Private & Other	80 acres
Total	17,381 acres

River Characteristics

From the headwaters to the mouth, the Little Susitna River changes from a clear, rushing mountain stream to a slowly meandering muddy river draining marshy lowlands. Channel widths range from 75 to 200 feet. The ice-free season is generally from May through October. The average streamflow at the Fishhook Road crossing (RM 99.5) ranges from a winter low of 21 cubic feet per second (cfs), to a summer high flow averaging 669 cfs. The 100-year floodplain ranges in width from 1,200 feet to 4,000 feet and is of considerable width in the Houston area.

The terrain within the Little Susitna Recreation River ranges from steep hillsides on the upper river to flat and rolling lowlands on the lower river. Contiguous wetlands are the prevalent land feature in middle sections, particularly in the Nancy Lake Creek area.

Scenic values are highest on the upper river where the water is clear and there are views of the Talkeetna Mountains. The lower river is silty and slow-moving and visibility is reduced by rolling terrain and tall trees. In the middle reaches, near the Parks Highway, the visual quality is diminished by powerlines, bridges, and other structures.

Fisheries

Species Present

Arctic Lamprey	Dolly Varden
Burbot	Pink salmon
Chinook salmon	Rainbow trout
Chum salmon	Sockeye salmon
Coho salmon	Whitefish

Chinook, coho, and chum salmon spawn throughout the management unit. Pink salmon are common below the Parks Highway. Sockeye salmon spawn in many lakes draining into the river, including Nancy Lake. They are not found in large numbers above Nancy Lake Creek. Burbot and whitefish are found in the lower river. Resident Dolly Varden are present in the upper reaches of the management unit. Small numbers of rainbow trout can be found throughout the ice-free season. Arctic lamprey are present in the Little Susitna River near RM 42. Invasive northern pike have been identified within several lakes adjacent to the Little Susitna River.

Sport Fishing

The Little Susitna River receives the highest angling effort of the six rivers because it is easily accessible and is closest to population centers in Southcentral Alaska. The peak recreation and fishing activities on the Little Susitna River correspond with the Chinook and coho salmon runs. These are approximately May 21 to July 4, and July 10 to September 1. Sockeye salmon are also caught in small numbers, approximately July 15 to August 30. Rainbow trout are caught throughout the ice-free season.

The most popular fishing area on the river is adjacent to the Little Susitna Public Use Facility at approximately RM 28. Although most of this use occurs on the Susitna Flats State Game Refuge, some extends into the lower part of Subunit 1a in the Recreation River. Fishing is also popular at the mouth of Nancy Lake Creek and adjacent to the Parks Highway Bridge.

Special Regulations

The Little Susitna River is closed to salmon fishing above the Parks Highway.

Wildlife

Moose

Because of their importance as game and for wildlife viewing, moose are the most economically important wildlife species in the planning area. They are particularly important in this management unit because the Little Susitna River is relatively accessible. The unit provides moose with food, forest cover, and water. Associated wetlands are critical for

1 moose calving in the spring. Riparian habitat is critical to winter survival of moose and also
2 provides travel corridors. Upland coniferous forests provide thermal cover and shallower
3 snow depths.

4 *Bear*

6
7 Because brown bear are less tolerant of human modifications to the environment, black bear
8 are more common in this drainage than brown bear. Black bear begin to frequent the
9 lowlands and river flats in early May. High spring densities can be found near the mouth of
10 the river. During June and July, bear are attracted to the river due to increased presence of
11 salmon. The river also provides travel corridors which are an important component of brown
12 bear habitat.

13 *Bald Eagles*

15
16 Eagles are known to feed on spawning salmon and perch in trees within the unit. Several
17 nesting sites are documented along the lower and upper subunits of the river corridor.

18 *Trumpeter Swans*

20
21 Lakes with suitable nesting habitat, occur within the corridor. Trumpeter swan nesting sites
22 have been documented within the lower and middle Little Susitna River subunits.

23 *Hunting*

25
26 The most heavily hunted areas are road-accessible areas, followed by off-road vehicle, boat,
27 and aircraft-accessible areas. The Parks Highway and the Little Susitna River Access are the
28 primary access points to the Little Susitna River. Moose and black bear are the primary
29 species harvested. A significant amount of the black bear harvest within Game Management
30 Subunit 14A occurs along the Little Susitna River. Most of this harvest occurs in May, June,
31 and September with June being the peak harvest period.

32 *Trapping*

34
35 Recreational trapping for beaver, coyote, fox, mink, and muskrat occurs in the corridor
36 during spring and winter open seasons.

37 **Camping**

39
40 Recreational use of this unit is high, due to access for fishing. Day use is more common than
41 overnight use. There are two commercial campgrounds and one public campground in
42 Houston. There are numerous undeveloped campsites along the river. Most are located at
43 trail and creek junctions.

Access

The Little Susitna River is accessible by several roads. Boats are widely used on the Little Susitna River. Power boats and jet boats are common below the Parks Highway. Use of rafts and canoes is common below Schrock Road. Power boats gain access from the Little Susitna Public Use Facility, the Parks Highway access, or across Cook Inlet from Anchorage. Floaters often begin at the Parks Highway and float to the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area portage or to the Little Susitna River Access Road. Kayaks are common in the spring on the upper river above the Edgerton-Parks Road. Airboat use is infrequent.

Management Guidelines for the Unit

Boating Restrictions

- 1. Voluntary no-wake area**

From the oxbow just below the railroad bridge to the Parks Highway Bridge (RM 67.5 - 0-69.6).

Season: May 15 - August 20

Justification: The boat launch in this area is heavily used. The area is also heavily used by bank anglers. The voluntary no-wake area reduces conflicts between powerboaters and bank anglers and reduce safety risks between power-boaters. The river segment is narrow and includes several blind bends. The upper and lower limits of the zone were designed to include the area where heavy powerboat and bank angling use overlap. Signs identifying the voluntary no-wake area may be established.
- 2. Non-motorized area**

From the Plan Boundary above the Little Susitna Access Road (RM 33.1) to the rock one river-mile below Nancy Lake Creek (RM 60.4).

Weekends: The first and third weekends of each month. (12:01 a.m. Saturday to midnight Sunday).

Season: May 15 to August 20

Power-boats-only area

River segment is the same as above non-motorized area.

Weekends: The second and fourth weekends of each month (12:01 a.m. on Saturday to midnight Sunday).

Justification: This area is popular with both powerboaters and floaters, particularly during the salmon runs. The “alternating weekends”

provide high quality float and powerboat opportunities regularly through the summer and reduces user conflicts. The fifth weekend of each month and weekdays from May 15 - August 20 have no restrictions.

The restrictions end in mid-August when there are fewer boaters and fewer conflicts on the river.

The upper limit of the non-motorized area is at a rock below Nancy Lake Creek which is a popular fishing hole. The non-motorized area does not constrain the area above the fishing hole that is traditionally used by powerboats from Houston and Miller's Reach.

1a. Lower Little Susitna River Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 33.2 to RM 65.5 and Nancy Lake Creek RM 0 to RM 5.5

The subunit extends from the Susitna Flats Game Refuge to the City of Houston western boundary. It also includes the lower 5.5 miles of Nancy Lake Creek.

The river meanders through this subunit and moves slower than in the subunits upstream. Contiguous wetlands cover 75 to 80 percent of the subunit above Nancy Lake Creek, and 15 to 20 percent of the area in the lower third of the subunit.

Land Ownership

State	12,728 acres
Mental Health Trust	838 acres
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	1,581 acres
Total	15,147 acres

Wildlife

Eagles are known to feed on spawning salmon and perch in trees within the subunit. Several nesting sites are documented along the lower portions of the river corridor. Lakes with suitable nesting habitat, occur within the corridor. Trumpeter swan nesting sites have been documented within the lower subunits.

Access

There are three roads that provide access to this part of the Little Susitna River and its tributary, Nancy Lake Creek. The Little Susitna Access Road, to the south of the subunit, serves as the primary access and boat launch for the lower river. Floaters also take out there. Considerable pedestrian and off-road vehicle traffic extends up the river from this road. The George Parks Highway, just above this subunit, also provides access for boats and off-road vehicles that use this subunit. Finally, a road at RM 7 on Nancy Lake Creek provides boat access to the creek.

Two float plane landing areas are located adjacent to the subunit at Hock and Yohn Lakes. Primitive foot trails connect the river with these lakes. The river is too narrow and shallow to accommodate floatplanes.

The frozen Little Susitna River and Nancy Lake Creek are used for winter travel. There are interconnecting winter trails in the subunit between Nancy Lake, Houston, Willow, and Big Lake that are used primarily by snowmachines and dog teams. The trails follow seismic lines, powerlines, or open swamps west of the Parks Highway. The Iditarod National Historic Trail crosses the Little Susitna River near Yohn Lake. The Susitna 500 and Little Su 50k winter wilderness races parallel and cross portions of the Little Susitna River in Subunit 1a.

Heritage Resources

There are just a few known heritage sites in this subunit, but this section of the river is particularly rich in traditionally-harvested resources and the potential for more heritage sites is very high. The Iditarod National Historic Trail, which crosses this subunit, was the winter route used to transport mail and supplies from Seward to Nome during the early part of this century.

Management Intent

Class I. This subunit is used by a variety of users year-round, because of its proximity to the railbelt and because it is rich in Recreation Resources.

The subunit features high quality fishing, hunting and camping opportunities for powerboaters, floaters, and bank fishermen in a relatively remote, undeveloped setting. In the winter, the subunit features numerous snowmachine, dog mushing, and cross-country skiing trails. It also includes winter moose habitat and salmon spawning habitat. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance these recreation opportunities and fish and wildlife habitat. Maintaining levels of low development and an essentially unmodified natural environment will be the focus of management. Maintaining public use sites is a high priority. While Class I intent is generally defined as having low levels of social interaction between users, higher levels of use are accessible in this popular subunit, including accommodating road access at the upper and lower ends of this subunit and on Upper Nancy Lake Creek. Management of

1 this subunit is expected to be higher than in other Class I areas because of the level of public
2 use. Management includes some seasonal restrictions on powerboat and floatboat use in
3 order to provide both motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities.
4

5 6 **Management Guidelines**

7
8 **Boating Restrictions.** See management guidelines for the Little Susitna River Management
9 Unit in this chapter.

10
11 **Iditarod Trail.** The Iditarod National Historic Trail crosses this subunit on borough lands
12 near Yohn Lake. For guidelines on activities near these trails on state lands see Chapter 2:
13 *Trails, Iditarod Race Trail and Heritage Resources, Iditarod National Historic Trail.*

14
15 **Heritage Resources.** Historic and prehistoric sites in this subunit should be evaluated for
16 their interpretative values for tourism or general interest sites because of easy public access
17 and the concentration of sites.

18
19 **Public Information.** At the Little Susitna River Access Road a kiosk may be established to
20 provide information on the Recreation Rivers. A sign may also mark the lower limit of the
21 Recreation River near RM 33.2.

22
23 **Overlap between Management Unit & Nancy Lake State Recreation Area.** There is an
24 inadvertent overlap between the Little Susitna Recreation River Management Unit and the
25 Nancy Lake State Recreation Area. This error should be corrected in the statutes. Areas that
26 remain in the Recreation Rivers, outside of the state recreation area, should be managed
27 consistent with this subunit.

28
29 **Regulations in the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area.** This river segment has dual
30 designation as a Recreation River and a State Recreation Area. Boating regulations are
31 consistent with those for the Little Susitna River non-motorized zone. ADNR also adopted
32 camping regulations for the areas within one-half mile of the Little Susitna River in the
33 Nancy Lake State Recreation Area. Regulations are consistent with the four-day camping
34 regulations for all the Recreation Rivers.

35 36 37 **Public Use Sites**

38
39 See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown
40 on maps at the end of this unit.

41
 PU 1a.1 Iditarod National Historic Trail Crossing (RM 34). This is a popular
 campsite.

- PU 1a.2 Hock Lake Trail** (RM 39.5). This is a well-used access point to Hock Lake. ADF&G has a weir camp located at this site.
- PU 1a.3 Papoose Creek** (RM 47.5). This is a popular area for camping, hunting and fishing. Site is adjacent to pipeline corridor.
- PU 1a.4 Skeetna Lake Portage** (RM 55). This site includes the trail portage to Skeetna Lake in the Nancy Lake Recreation Area. This is also a popular camping spot.
- PU 1a.5 Campsite by the Big Rock Fishing Hole** (RM 60). This is a popular fishing hole and camping area.
- PU 1a.6 Nancy Lake Creek Junction** (RM 61.5). This is a popular area for fishing and camping. Red salmon linger at this confluence before ascending Lake Creek to Nancy Lake where they spawn. Utility corridor goes through this site.
- PU 1a.7 Miller's Reach Boat Launch** (RM 65.5). This site includes a side road in this subdivision that is used as a powerboat launch.

Recommendations for this Subunit

Cooperative Management Agreement. The DMLW, DPOR, ADF&G, and the borough may work cooperatively on recreation management along the Little Susitna River between Hock Lake and the Little Susitna River Access Road. High public use and the close proximity of the boat launch, campground, refuge, weir, harvest survey station, and borough lands warrant cooperative recreation management in the area. Cooperative management agreements should address issues such as facility maintenance, regulations, use of facilities and equipment, funding, and field staff responsibilities. Also see Chapter 4, *Agency Responsibilities*.

1b. Middle Little Susitna River Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 65.5 to RM 74

This subunit includes that portion of the Little Susitna River within the city of Houston boundaries. The subunit is shorelands with no associated uplands, this segment of the river is about 50 feet wide. The upland tract in this subunit has little dry land; it is 60 to 75 percent contiguous wetland, and three- to five-percent non-contiguous wetland.

Land Ownership

This subunit is state-owned shorelands with no associated uplands. The land ownership surrounding the corridor is primarily private with an approximately mile wide stretch of borough land neighboring the corridor and a small amount of state-owned land as well.

Wildlife

No known nesting sites for bald eagles or trumpeter swans have been recently surveyed within this subunit.

Camping

There are three developed campgrounds adjacent to this subunit. One is run by the city of Houston and two by businesses.

Development

There are numerous homes and businesses adjacent to this subunit. The George Parks Highway and Alaska Railroad bridges cross the river, two major boat launches are located in the vicinity of the Parks Highway bridge.

Access

The George Parks Highway crosses the river at RM 69.5 and parallels the river for about a mile.

Management Intent

Class II. Because of its proximity to the George Parks Highway, the City of Houston, and recreation areas, this subunit receives high public use year-round. In the summer there are high quality fishing and camping opportunities for powerboaters, floaters, and bank users in an accessible, moderately developed natural area. In the winter, the subunit is used by snowmachiners, dog mushers, and skiers. Salmon spawning habitat is located in this subunit. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat while accommodating uses associated with private lands adjacent to the subunit. Maintaining public use sites is a high priority. Because of high public use, maintaining existing public use sites and facilities will be the management focus. There are many residences and businesses in the Houston area adjacent to the subunit. There are no non-motorized areas in this subunit. A voluntary no-wake area is located near Houston to protect public safety.

Management Guidelines

Voluntary No-wake Area. See management guidelines for the Little Susitna River Management Unit in this chapter.

Trails. To discourage trespass on private lands, public pedestrian access should be clearly marked adjacent to the George Parks Highway. Heavily used trails that are causing erosion or bank failure may need to be relocated or reconstructed.

Public Information. In coordination with the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, a kiosk may be established which displays information on the Recreation Rivers at the public parking area adjacent to the George Parks Highway. Signs may also be placed on the north and south side of the George Parks Highway Bridge identifying it as a Recreation River.

Public Use Sites

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 1b.1 George Parks Highway Bridge (RM 69.8). Public use is heavy on both sides of the road between the highway and railroad bridges. There are two developed parking facilities on the north side of the highway bridge. Day use is popular. Floatboats are also launched from the parking areas.

PU 1b.2 Houston Campground (RM 70.5). The river banks in this area are used for fishing and day use.

1c. Upper Little Susitna River Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 74 to RM 100

The subunit extends from the City of Houston's east boundary to the Hatcher Pass Management Unit, just above the Hatcher Pass Bridge. The majority of this subunit is state-owned shorelands with little associated uplands. The river is generally shallow and relatively swift in this subunit. Below RM 81.4 the river becomes silty. The uplands within this subunit contain no significant wetlands.

Land Ownership

State	1,870 acres
Native	284 acres
Private & Other	80 acres
Total	2,234 acres

Wildlife

In recent USFWS surveys, occupied bald eagle nests have been observed within this subunit as well as several unoccupied nests.

Camping

Due to access provided by Schrock, Schrock-Pittman, Fishhook, and Wasilla-Fishhook Roads, there are several popular day-use sites along the river.

Development

There are many homes and associated structures adjacent to the subunit located on private parcels. Several bridges cross the river in this subunit. The Sushana bridge is the only location where there are state-owned uplands. There may be other bridges that span the Little Susitna shorelands and water column but the adjacent uplands are not state-owned.

Access

This subunit is accessible from three paved, well-traveled roads. Schrock Road and Fishhook Road are important routes between Wasilla and Palmer and are key residential areas in the Matanuska Valley. A series of unpaved roads parallel the river outside the subunit to the north and south, with many spur roads to access private residences. Boat traffic is minimal. Float boats can launch at Schrock Road or Fishhook Road. The upper portion of the river is too rocky for powerboats. It is used by white-water kayakers when the water is high enough. The lower portion of the subunit is seldom used by powerboaters because of log jams and the closure to salmon fishing.

Winter use of the area is primarily by snowmachine on or adjacent to the river. Several off-road vehicle trails and seismic lines cross the subunit.

Heritage Resources

While only one known site exists in this subunit, the potential for more is high. Considerable historic mining activity has occurred in the area.

Other Activities

There is an ADOT/PF gravel pit located within the subunit at RM 84.5. Car dumps are located near the subunit on both sides of the river.

Management Intent

Class II. This subunit includes mostly shorelands and the water column bounded by private land. It features fishing (trout and Dolly Varden only) and camping opportunities for powerboaters, floaters, and bank users in an accessible, moderately developed area. It also features salmon spawning habitat and winter moose habitat. Numerous developed and undeveloped private parcels are adjacent to the subunit. The subunit will be managed to maintain and enhance these recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat, while accommodating uses associated with private lands in the subunit. Maintaining public use sites will be a high priority. There are no non-motorized areas in this subunit.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. None.

Personal-Use Forestry. The Division of Forestry & Fire Protection may designate personal-use cutting areas on the upland parcel just south of Bench Lake in sections 15, 16, and 17 on the upper Little Susitna River. See *Forestry, Personal Use in Road-Accessible Areas*.

Public Information. Signs should be placed on either side of the Hatcher Pass bridge, identifying the Little Susitna Recreation River.

ADOT/PF Materials Site. There is an existing ADOT/PF material site in this subunit near RM 14. ADOT/PF manages this site under an interagency land management transfer (ILMT) from ADNR (ADL 59287). The site will be managed consistent with the ILMT which allows ADOT/PF to construct, maintain or improve, and remove buildings, roads, airports, and works of any description, and to use or remove sand, gravel, timber, or other materials necessary to make use of the lands for public purposes. Plan guidelines and management intent do not apply to this site. However, management of the site must be consistent with the Recreation Rivers Act. After materials extraction is completed, the site will be rehabilitated consistent with the ADOT/PF standards. If surface jurisdiction and management of the site returns to ADNR, it will be managed consistent with the plan guidelines and management intent for the subunit.

Public Use Sites

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 1c.1 Day Use Site (RM 81). This site is accessed by road on the south side of the river and is used for fishing and camping.

PU 1c.2 Schrock Road (RM 84.5). This road crossing is used for accessing the river, launching floatboats, fishing, and day use. There is a cleared area adjacent to the bridge used by vehicles for overnight camping.

PU 1c.3 Sushana Road Bridge (RM 87.7). This is a popular camping spot.

PU 1c.4 Carney Road Bridge (RM 90.5). This is a popular fishing spot.

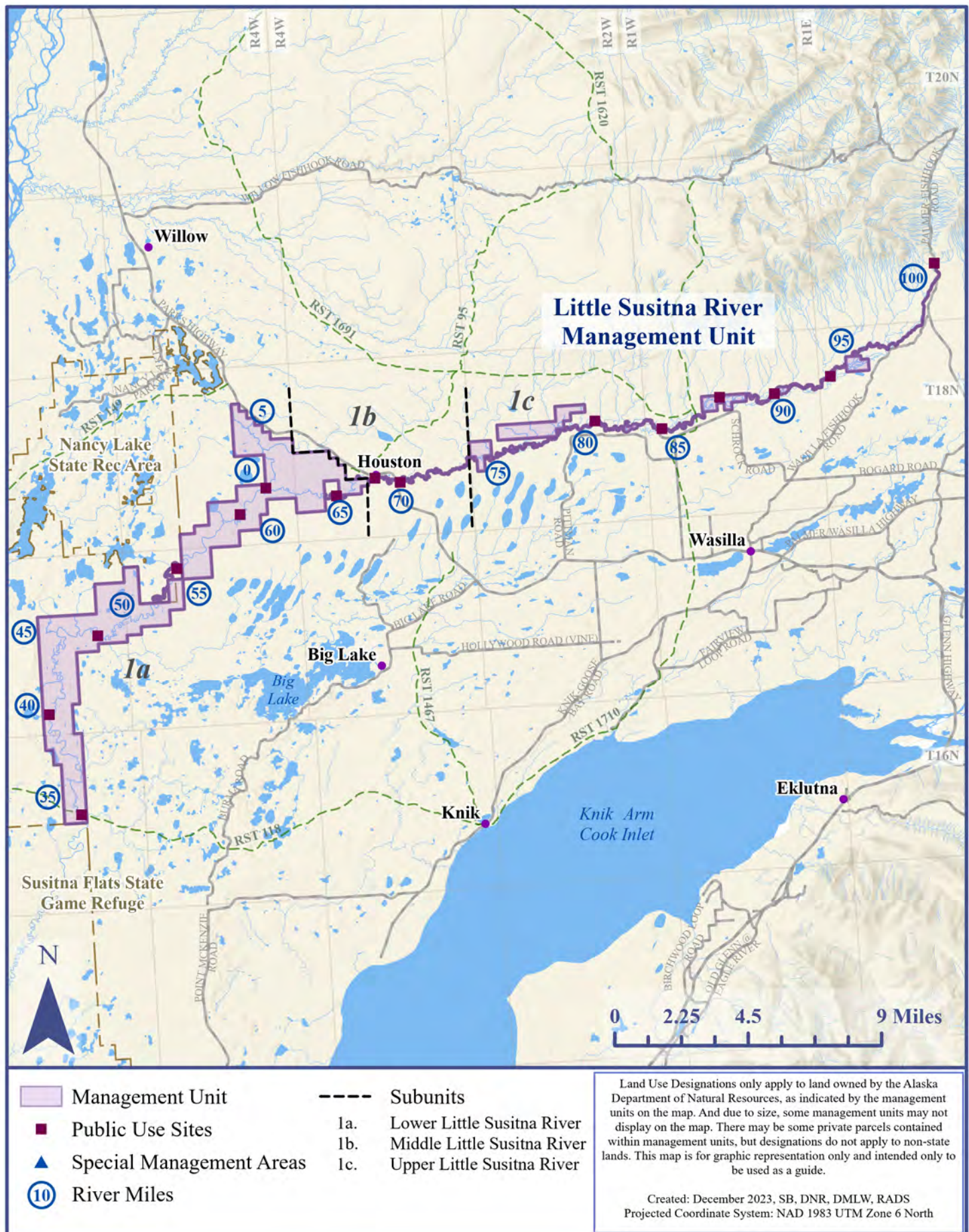
PU 1c.5 Welch Road Bridge (RM 92.8). This site is popular for fishing.

PU 1c.6 Hatcher Pass Bridge (RM 99.5). This is the entrance to the scenic Little Susitna River canyon, running through the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area. Sightseeing from the bridge is popular, and ADOT/PF has recently provided a parking area for sightseers. The banks adjacent to the bridge are also used for taking out kayaks.

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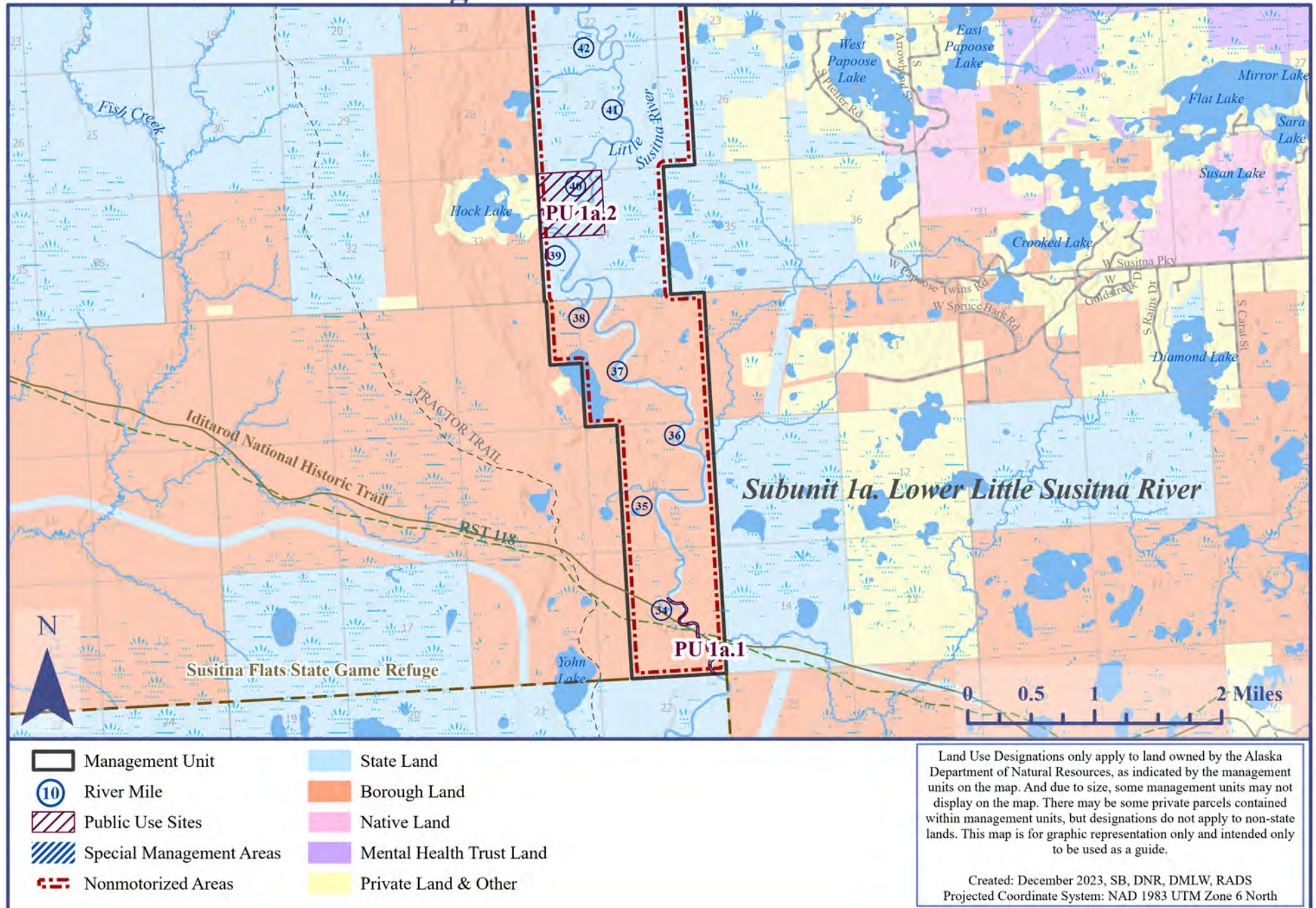
SUSITNA BASIN RECREATION RIVERS MANAGEMENT PLAN

LITTLE SUSITNA RIVER



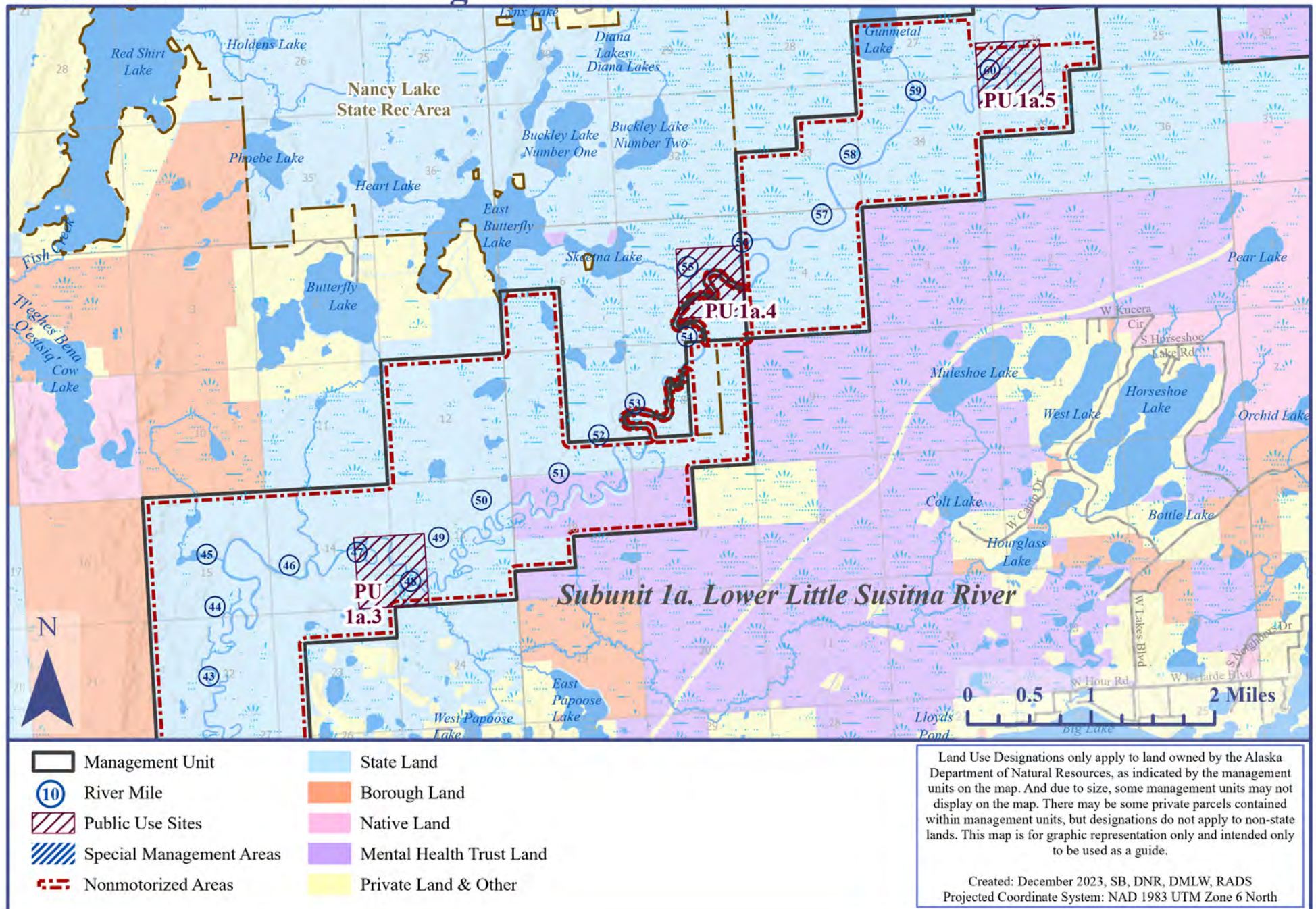
Little Susitna River Management Unit

MAP 1



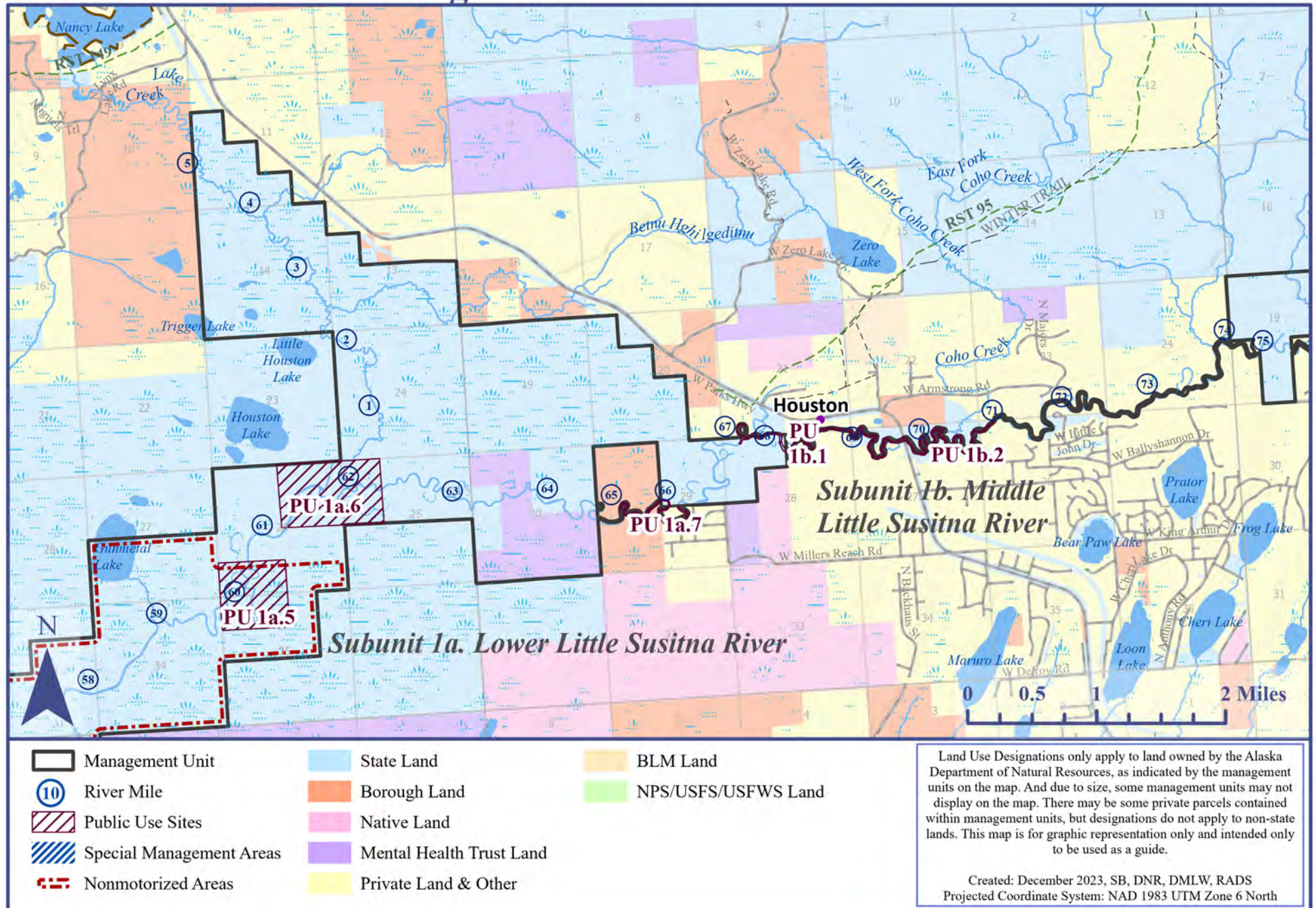
Little Susitna River Management Unit

MAP 2



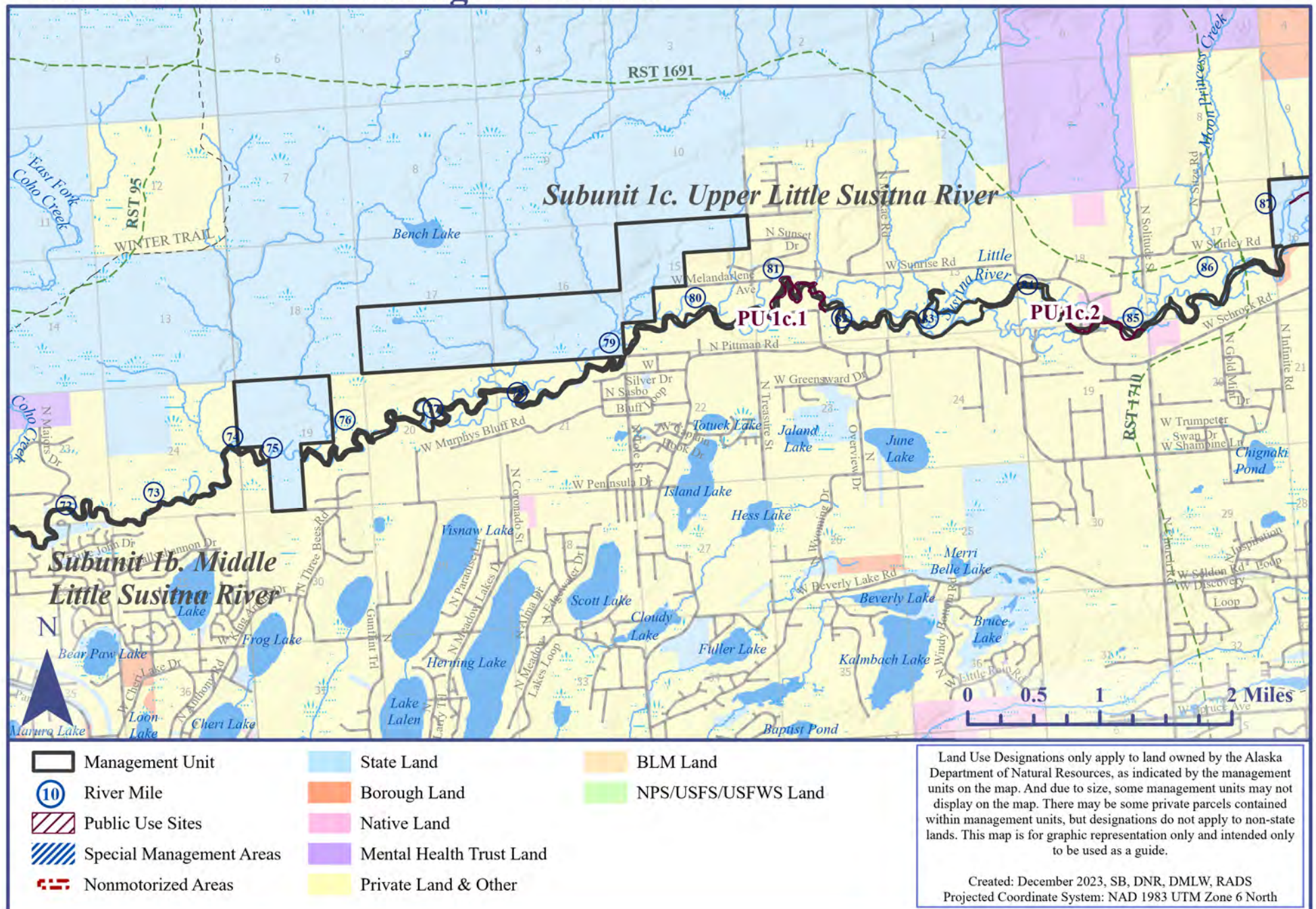
Little Susitna River Management Unit

MAP 3



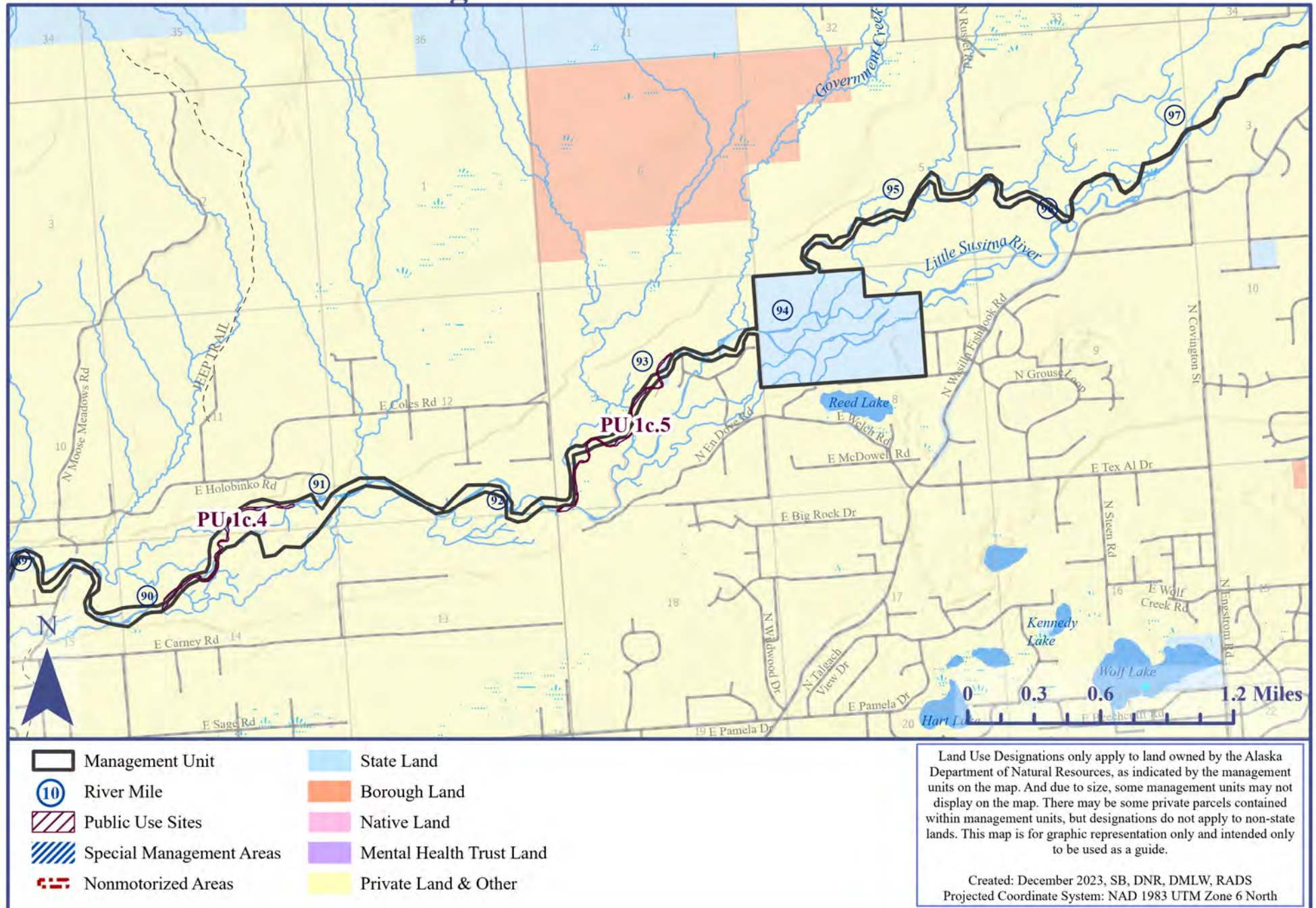
Little Susitna River Management Unit

MAP 4



Little Susitna River Management Unit

MAP 5



2. Deshka River Management Unit

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2. Deshka River Management Unit

Background

Miles of River

This unit includes over 140 river miles including the Deshka River³ from its confluence with Susitna River (RM 0.0) to (RM 82.4) and 59 miles of Kroto Creek above the Forks.

Land Ownership

State	61,233 acres
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	11,536 acres
Private & Other	1,858 acres
Total	74,627 acres

River Characteristics

The Deshka River meanders with mid-channel bars and riffles throughout. Channel width varies along the river. Near the mouth the normal channel width is about 300 feet, in Subunits 2b and 2c it is 100 feet, in Subunits 2d and 2e it is 50 feet, and upstream of the forks it is 30 feet. The average stream flow near the mouth is 873 cubic feet per second. Winter low flows are 200 to 300 cfs. Peak summer flows are 800 to 2800 cfs. The average depth is 2 to 8 feet. The width of the 100-year floodplain at the mouth of the Deshka River is approximately 1.5 miles, primarily to the east side of the river, meeting the floodplain of the Susitna River. The banks at the mouth of the Deshka River have experienced an increase in levels of erosion in recent years. Over half of this corridor is wetlands. Wetlands are particularly extensive near the Moose-Kroto creek confluence. The terrain in the remainder of the corridor is rolling to flat with moderately dense tree cover.

The Deshka River has experienced a trend of warming summer temperatures in recent years. These temperature increases have been shown to stress and may lead to population declines in cold-water fishes, including salmonids. Airborne thermal image surveys of the Deshka River have located patches of cold water (cold-water refuges) that provide localized relief from warming water and contribute to an overall cooling gradient of the river's main channel. The reliable presence of these cold-water refugia will be important to the persistence of salmonids and other fish species as the trend of warming summer temperature increases into the future.

³ The term *Deshka River* as used in this plan to refer to Unit 2 includes both Moose Creek and Kroto Creek from the Susitna River to their headwaters. *Deshka River* is also used more specifically to include the river below the confluence of Kroto and Moose Creeks. Above the confluence of Moose and Kroto creeks, these creeks are called by their respective names.

Because the view from the river is generally confined to the riverbanks, the visual quality along the Deshka River is moderate. However, in open areas, there are panoramic views of the Alaska Range, Denali, and the Talkeetna Mountains. The river is a dark color from tannins in the water. There are numerous camps, buildings, and docks along the river particularly near the mouth.

Fisheries

Species Present

Arctic grayling	Pink salmon
Arctic lamprey	Rainbow trout
Chinook salmon	Slimy sculpin
Coho salmon	Sockeye salmon
Humpback whitefish	Threespine stickleback
Longnose sucker	

Chinook salmon are found from the mouth of the Deshka to the upper reaches of Moose and Kroto creeks. They spawn in the river beginning at approximately RM 5. A small number of sockeye salmon are found at the headwaters of Kroto Creek and near the upper limit of Moose Creek. Coho and pink salmon spawn nearly to the upper boundary of the Moose and Kroto creek subunits. Arctic grayling and rainbow trout are present throughout the management unit.

Sport Fishing

The level of sport fishing on the Deshka River is second only to the Little Susitna River in the planning area. Peaks in recreation and fishing activities on the Deshka River correspond with the Chinook and coho salmon runs; approximately May 29 to July 4 and July 15 to September 5. Many people fish for rainbow trout and Arctic grayling in late May as the pink salmon smolt out the lower river and throughout the summer to early fall. The most popular fishing areas are the mouth of the Deshka and lower 10 miles of river, the Forks, and the mouths of Trapper and No Name creeks.

Special Regulations

Moose and Kroto creeks have been designated by ADF&G as catch and release special management waters for rainbow trout.

Wildlife

Moose

Moose and Kroto creeks have high moose densities in the winter. Riparian habitat is critical for the winter survival of moose. Riparian willow stands provide a large portion of the winter

1 forage. The river provides established travel corridors which are enhanced by upland
2 coniferous forests that provide thermal cover and shallower snow depths. Radio telemetry
3 studies conducted by ADF&G indicate high concentrations of moose occur in and along the
4 corridor during late fall and winter seasons.

5 6 *Bear*

7
8 On the Deshka River, brown bear and black bear are equally common and are important for
9 hunting and wildlife viewing. This river is one of the more important spring black bear
10 harvest areas in Game Management Unit 16A. Black bear frequent the lowlands and river
11 flats in early May. During summer, forested, riparian habitats provide food and cover. During
12 June and July, salmon provide a significant portion of the bears' diet. Travel corridors along
13 the river are important components of brown bear habitat. Both species of bear target moose
14 calves as prey in May and early June.

15 16 *Bald Eagles*

17
18 Bald eagle nests have been identified within or immediately adjacent to several of the
19 subunits within the management unit. Nest trees are primarily black cottonwood, always over
20 50 feet tall, and usually within 20 feet of the river.

21 22 *Trumpeter Swans*

23
24 Trumpeter swans were documented throughout the river corridor in recent USFWS surveys.

25 26 *Hunting*

27
28 Moose and bear are important for hunting and viewing. Hunting of moose and bear is
29 concentrated in the road-accessible areas along the Petersville and Oilwell roads. Hunters
30 access the mouth of the Deshka River and Moose Creek downstream of the Oilwell Road by
31 boat. Airplanes and off-road vehicles are also used for hunting. This management unit
32 receives some of the highest hunting use of all the Recreation Rivers because of its proximity
33 to population centers, relative ease of access, and large moose population.

34 35 *Trapping*

36
37 Recreational trapping for otter, muskrat, mink, beaver, fox, coyote, marten, and wolf occurs
38 in the corridor during spring and winter seasons.

39 40 **Access**

41
42 Moose and Kroto creeks are accessible by automobile from the Petersville and Oilwell roads.
43 Foot and off-road vehicle trails along the river and seismic lines also are common.
44 Powerboats generally access the lower river from the Deshka or Susitna landings. With
45 adequate flows, they can travel up to the confluence of Moose and Kroto creeks. Travel by

powerboat is low above the confluence. Float trips originate from several locations on the upper river. Floatplanes land on the Susitna River, the lower Deshka River, and several other places along the corridor. Airplanes use several strips located along the lower river. The Deshka River is used extensively for winter travel by private property owners and other recreationists. Snowmachines are the primary method of transportation, but dog mushing is also common.

Management Guidelines for the Unit

Boating Restrictions

- 1. Voluntary no-wake area** Confluence with Susitna River (RM 0.0) to the island.

Season: May 15 - August 20.

Justification: This is a highly congested area with high boat traffic, boats anchored in midstream, and high floatplane traffic. A no-wake area reduces safety hazards.
- 2. Non-motorized area** From just above the forks (RM 29.7) to: just below Oilwell Road on Moose Creek (RM 54.2), and to just below Amber Lake Creek on Kroto Creek (RM 19.1).

Season: May 15 - August 20.

Justification: The non-motorized areas on Moose and Kroto creeks provide high quality float trips. Because of numerous riffles and shallows on both creeks, powerboat use is low. There is no private property in the corridor in these two river segments.

2a. Mouth of Deshka River Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, Susitna River Confluence (RM 0.0) to RM 1.9

This subunit extends from above the confluence of the Deshka and Susitna rivers to 0.5 miles above the ADF&G camp.

Contiguous wetlands comprise ninety percent of the area along the river between RM 0 and RM 1. Most of the dry terrain is in private ownership. From RM 1 to RM 1.9, wetlands occur in the areas between river channels.

Land Ownership

State	1,370 acres
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	877 acres
Private & Other	65 acres
Total	2,312 acres

Several parcels of private land are located along the west bank of the river near the mouth. There is also private land on the east bank, including the land on which a private lodge is located. An ADF&G cabin is authorized by an Interim Land Management Agreement with ADNRR. The Alaska Wildlife Troopers also have a cabin within the corridor that is authorized by permit. Both cabins are surrounded by state land.

Fisheries

During peak season, the mouth of the Deshka River can receive as much as 80 percent of the daily fishing use for the entire Deshka River.

Wildlife

Several unoccupied bald eagle nests have been located within the subunit, although occupied nests have not been sighted in recent surveys. Active trumpeter swan nests have not been sighted in recent surveys of this subunit.

Camping

The borough maintains a campground at the mouth and issues permits to camp on its land.

Development*Upland Structures and Improvements*

There is extensive development in this subunit. Most private parcels have some level of development including commercial lodges and private cabins. The ADF&G and Alaska Wildlife Troopers each have cabins.

Temporary camps are established in May as soon as ice leaves the river. These camps remain through the summer and many improvements are left through the winter. There are also a number of camps established for just one to three nights peaks during Chinook salmon season. These camps are often located away from the river in less desirable places because of the lack of space on the shoreline. The same areas used for camps are used for boat and equipment storage. Many river users are flown to the mouth of the Deshka, or charter larger boats to access the area and use smaller boats stored in the subunit to travel along the river. Some of the abandoned and stored debris is washed away by spring flooding, however, much still remains and abandoned boats and camps have accumulated over the years. The borough

established a campground in 1990 and requires a permit for camping in the remainder of the area. This has altered the use patterns and largely eliminated the practice of abandoning camps and equipment on public lands.

Water-Dependent Structures

Several docks are associated with cabins and lodges in this subunit. Many of the cabins and lodges have small shelters or storage areas adjacent to the river for equipment and gasoline. There are also some access stairways, particularly along the steep west banks of the river.

Access

Foot and off-road vehicle trails have been established in the subunit. Most are associated with structures on private land or the campsites along the east bank of the Deshka River. Access to the area is by airplane or boat. The mouth of the river is used as a pick-up point for float trips and by fishermen. Most powerboats that use the river are launched from the Deshka Landing. The most congested section of the Deshka River for boats is below RM 0.4 which offers the best fishing opportunities.

Floatplanes and wheelplanes land near the mouth of the river. There is a public airstrip on state land near the confluence with the Susitna River. Floatplanes also frequently land on the Susitna and Deshka rivers. There are also primitive landing areas on gravel bars.

Heritage Resources

There is a high probability of locating additional heritage resources sites in the subunit. Known sites are on private land.

Other Activities

Small-scale timber cutting occurs for firewood and houselogs. There is also extensive wood gathering by campers.

Management Intent

Class III. This subunit is notable for its high concentration of anglers in a relatively small area during the Chinook and coho salmon runs. The subunit features high quality fishing and camping opportunities for powerboaters, floaters, and bank users in an accessible moderately developed area. Lodges and residences are located on either side of the river. With good wheel and floatplane access, this subunit receives more air traffic than any other area in the Recreation Rivers. Winter use is by snowmachiners, skiers, and dog mushers. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance these recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat, while accommodating uses associated with private lands. Management presence is expected to be high. Managing for concentrated public and commercial use will be the focus

of management activities. Proposed actions include providing public facilities such as a campground and privies to minimize unsanitary conditions, reducing damage to natural resources from over-use, and preventing unauthorized use of public lands. Because of the concentration of use, public education through signs and a visitor contact station is recommended. There is a voluntary no-wake area at the mouth to protect public safety during the fishing season. There are no non-motorized areas in this subunit. Because of the proximity of state and borough lands and intense public use, cooperative management or conveyance of part of this area to the borough should be considered.

Management Guidelines

No-Wake Area. See management guidelines for the Deshka River Management Units in this chapter.

Commercial Camps. Commercial camps are prohibited on state land in this subunit. Borough use of this land for a visitor contact station, public campground, or other public facility may be authorized by permit or lease.

Camping Limits. If borough camping policies result in trespass, sanitation problems, overcrowding, threats to public safety, or resource damage on state lands ADNR should work with the borough to address these problems. Limits in addition to the four-day camping limit on state land may be considered. If needed, these limits may be established by regulation, designating the area a *Special Use Area* under 11 AAC 96.010; or under the closures and use-management provisions described under *Recreation* in Chapter 2.

Floatplane Landing Area. The lower Deshka is an extremely popular fishing, boating, and recreation area. Public access is by float plane and powerboat. Because of the high density of floatplanes and boats on the river, ADNR should consider establishing a floatplane landing area during the peak season, when boat and plane traffic is heaviest. DMLW, DGGS, the borough, FAA and the public should be involved in the process of evaluating boat and plane use patterns, airspace, hydrology, and other variables. If the initial evaluation demonstrates that a designated landing area is feasible and prudent, a landing area should be designed. ADNR should then implement needed regulations, establish signs or buoys, and notify FAA and the public of the designated landing area.

Wheelplane Landing Strips. A public airstrip owned by ADNR exists on the west side of the river and provides access to the area. Another airstrip exists on lands owned by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and is used to access a lodge in this subunit.

Consistent Management of the Mouth Area. One of the goals of the plan is to provide consistent management of lands within the planning area. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough is the major landowner at the mouth of the Deshka River and developed the Deshka River Recreation River Management Plan for their lands. The borough also had a land-use permit in 1990 and 1991 to use state lands at the mouth. If the borough agrees to manage state land

in Section 35 consistent with the general management intent for the mouth of the Deshka Subunit and it is consistent with AS 41.23.400 - 510, ADNR may consider conveyance or leasing the parcel under AS 38.05.810, or entering into a management agreement. Lands that may be addressed by conveyance or lease are in Section 35, T19N, R6W, and include the two vegetated point bars east of the mouth of the Deshka River and northwest of the main channel of the Susitna River. A plan amendment is not required to convey, lease or reclassify this parcel as long as it is consistent with this intent.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game Site. ADF&G manages a site near RM 2 under an Interagency Land Management Agreement (ILMA) with ADNR. The site will be managed consistent with the ILMA. ADF&G and the Alaska Wildlife Troopers currently have cabins on the site. With concurrence from ADF&G, additional cabins for ADNR field staff and equipment may be constructed near the ADF&G camp. Since well-drained uplands adjacent to the river in state ownership are limited within this subunit, these lands should be retained in state ownership. See guidelines for *Resource Management Camps* in Chapter 2.

Heritage Resources. Historic and prehistoric sites near the mouth should be evaluated for their interpretive values for tourism and general public interest. Since most of these sites are located on private land, this will require the cooperation of property owners.

Public Information. An informational sign exists on land owned by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough at the mouth of the Deshka River identifying the boundary of the Recreation River.

Weapons. Between June 15 and August 31, discharge of weapons is prohibited within one-quarter mile of the river on state land and water between the mouth of the Deshka River and the ADF&G camp. See *Recreation, Use of Weapons* in Chapter 2.

Public Use Sites. Unlike other subunits where public use sites were identified, this entire subunit receives high public use and will be managed as important for access, fishing, camping, or other recreation and public use.

2b. Lower Deshka River Subunit

Background

River Miles/River Characteristics, RM 1.9 to RM 6.8

This subunit extends from the ADF&G cabin to the Laub Homestead. The immediate upland terrain is flat to rolling with occasional 30 to 50 foot cutbanks. The river contains numerous channels and islands. The channel is 100 to 200 feet wide. The water is usually brown and relatively slow moving. Less than 25 percent of the subunit is contiguous wetlands. All wetlands are located on the east side of the river.

Land Ownership

State	504 acres
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	2,219 acres
Private & Other	231 acres
Total	2,954 acres

Fisheries

This segment contains at least two popular fishing areas, although visitor use here is lower than at the mouth of the river. The ADF&G data suggests 9 to 20 percent of the total Deshka River use occurs within this subunit.

Wildlife

Active bald eagle nests and trumpeter swans have not been sighted in recent surveys of this subunit.

Camping

Camping is concentrated between RM 2 and RM 5, particularly near the Silver Hole public use site.

Development

There are several private cabins located in the subunit. A large homestead has been used in the past for commercial recreation.

Access

One seismic line near the homestead is used for year-round access by off-road-vehicles. There are two private airstrips. Considerable powerboat traffic travels through this reach enroute to various fishing areas. Navigability is marginal at about RM 5.5 at low water levels.

Heritage Resources

The heritage site potential in this subunit is high, primarily due to the high number of house pits in the area. Most of the known sites are on private land.

Management Intent

Class II. This subunit receives high public use because of its proximity to the mouth of the Deshka River, and the opportunities it provides for a variety of recreation uses. This subunit

features fishing, camping, powerboating, and floating opportunities in a moderately accessible natural setting. In winter the subunit is used by snowmachiners, dog mushers and skiers. The area contains salmon spawning and moose wintering habitat. Private lands are located along the river in the northern half of the subunit. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance these recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat while accommodating uses associated with private lands. A limited number of commercial camps may be authorized. Maintaining public use sites will be a high priority. There are no nonmotorized areas in this subunit. Warning signs may be placed at the Silver Hole (PU 2b.1) to warn boaters to reduce speed when anglers are present.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. None

Commercial Camps. A maximum of two commercial camps may be authorized in this subunit. Commercial camps will not be authorized in public use sites.

Camping Limits. If borough camping policies result in trespass, sanitation problems, overcrowding, threats to public safety, or resource damage on state lands, ADNR will work with the borough to address these problems. Limits in addition to the four-day camping limit on state land may be considered. If needed, these limits may be established through regulation, designating the area a *Special Use Area* under 11 AAC 96.010, or under the closures and use management provisions described under *Recreation* in Chapter 2.

Public Use Sites

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 2b.1 Silver Hole(s) (RM 3.9). This site is used for camping and fishing. Users camp both on the shore and in their boats.

PU 2b.2 Mile 6 Fishing Hole (RM 6). This is a popular fishing and camping site.

2c. Middle Deshka River Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 6.8 to RM 14.4

This subunit extends from the Laub Homestead to Trapper Creek. Wetlands are located adjacent to the river and cover less than 25 percent of the upland area.

Land Ownership

State	2,739 acres
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	1,520 acres
Private & Other	159 acres
Total	4,418 acres

Wildlife

Neither active bald eagle nor trumpeter swan nests have been sighted in recent surveys of this subunit.

Camping

Good campsites are scarce in this subunit.

Development

Several private cabins are located in this subunit. All the cabins are located in the northern half of this subunit along the river. There are also commercial lodges located within the subunit.

Access

Powerboat activity is heavy in this subunit during highwater periods. River navigability becomes marginal during low water levels in late summer. A tractor trail and seismic line are used by vehicles at RM 10 on the west side of the river.

Heritage Resources

There are several known heritage sites in this subunit and the potential to locate more is high.

Management Intent

Class II. This subunit features high quality fishing, hunting, and camping opportunities for powerboaters and floaters in a relatively remote, undeveloped setting. In winter the subunit is used by snowmachiners, dog mushers, and skiers. There are also a number of private parcels in the subunit. The subunit contains salmon spawning and moose wintering habitat. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance these recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat, while accommodating uses associated with private lands. A limited number of temporary camps will be allowed. Maintaining public use sites will be a high priority. A voluntary no-wake area is located at the Silver Hole public use site to protect public safety. There are no non-motorized areas in this subunit.

Management Guidelines

Voluntary No-wake Area. See management guidelines for the Deshka River Management Unit in this chapter.

Commercial Camps. A maximum of two temporary camps may be authorized in this subunit. Commercial camps will not be authorized in public use sites.

Public Use Sites

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 2c.1 Unnamed (RM 10.1). This is a popular fishing and camping site.

PU 2c.2 Unnamed (RM 13.8). This is a popular fishing and camping site.

PU 2c.3 Trapper Creek (RM 14.5). This is a popular fishing and camping site.

2d. Neil Lake Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 14.4 to RM 23.3

This subunit extends from Trapper Creek to Neil Lake. The terrain is flat; the river slow-moving. Just over 50 percent of the area is contiguous wetland. Neil Lake and the land around it are not in the Recreation Rivers.

Land Ownership

State	5,048 acres
Private & Other	87 acres
Total	5,135 acres

Wildlife

Trumpeter swan have been sighted in recent USFWS surveys of this subunit.

Camping

This subunit is very popular for camping particularly on gravel bars.

Development

There are many private cabins around Neil Lake which is adjacent to the subunit. There are several docks located on the lake.

Management Intent

Class II. This subunit features high quality fishing, hunting, and camping opportunities for powerboaters and floaters in a relatively remote, undeveloped setting. There are some private lands in the southern half of the subunit, and around Neil Lake, northwest of the subunit. In winter the subunit is used by snowmachiners, dog mushers, and skiers. The subunit contains salmon spawning and moose wintering habitat. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance these recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat while accommodating uses associated with private lands. Some commercial camps may be authorized. Maintaining public use sites is a high priority. There are no nonmotorized areas in this subunit.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. None.

Boat Storage. A public boat storage area may be designated near Neil Lake. See *Shoreline Development, Boat Storage* in Chapter 2.

Access to Neil Lake. Much of the land surrounding Neil Lake is privately owned. Although Neil Lake and the surrounding land are not within the corridor, some access the lake from the corridor. The primary access points currently used by the public are three trails on the southeast end of the lake. Two trails connect with the Deshka River, the other with a slough of the Deshka River. There is an existing 30-foot easement through tract D, widening to 60 feet on state lands outside tract D. In addition, the 10-foot easement on the shore of Neil Lake is not wide enough to accommodate the floatplanes that beach at the trailhead. Signs could be placed to mark the legal access through the private parcel (tract D). A private parcel, tract E, on the southeast corner of the lake was donated to ADF&G (ADL 228368) and now is managed by ADF&G (OSL 1121). This parcel now provides public access to/from the lake into the corridor.

Public Information. A kiosk that provides information on the Deshka Recreation River may be established on or adjacent to Neil Lake.

Commercial Camps. Up to two commercial camps may be allowed in this subunit. Commercial camps will not be authorized in public use sites or on Neil Lake.

Public Use Sites

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

- PU 2d.1 Chijuk Creek** (RM 17.7). This is a popular fishing and camping site.
- PU 2d.2 Eagle's Nest Camp** (RM 17.8). Fishing and camping spots are popular at this site.
- PU 2d.3 Middle King Fishing Hole** (RM 20.7). This site provides good fishing and camping. ADF&G holds a 10-foot pedestrian easement for public access along both banks of the creek.
- PU 2d.4 Upper King Hole** (RM 21.8). This is a popular fishing and camping site. ADF&G holds a 10-foot pedestrian easement for public access along both banks of the creek.
- PU 2d.5 Neil Lake** (RM 23). There are several camp sites and trails associated with this public use site. The public use site includes several trails connecting the lake with a slough and the river, and areas used for dropping-off parties, camping, and for tying up floatplanes or boats. Neil Lake itself is not within the corridor.

2e. The Forks Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 23.3 to RM 29.8

The subunit extends from Neil Lake to the confluence of Moose and Kroto creeks. The terrain is flat to rolling. The water column is 60 to 75 feet wide and meandering. Water velocity is slow. Floaters often exit the river at Neil Lake for this reason. Water levels drop during the fishing season making navigation marginal through the course of the summer. Wetlands are contiguous and cover about 50 percent of the area, mostly along the river banks.

Land Ownership

State	3,658 acres
Private & Other	10 acres
Total	3,668 acres

Wildlife

Active bald eagle nests have not been sighted in recent surveys of this subunit however, USFWS has documented trumpeter swan in the subunit.

Camping

The Forks are the first place where floaters, coming downstream, can catch and keep Chinook salmon, so fishing pressure is high in this subunit. Several camps have been established here in past years although camping use has declined.

Development

There may be a few remote private cabins located within this subunit.

Access

There is one short off-road vehicle trail at the east end of the small lake at RM 26. A seismic line crossing the river at RM 27.8 is a popular access trail and is used in winter. Another seismic line which parallels the subunit to the west is used in winter. Neil Lake is used for floatplane landings.

Management Intent

Class I. This subunit features high quality fishing, hunting, and camping opportunities for powerboaters and floaters in a relatively remote, undeveloped setting. There are no private lands in the subunit. Neil Lake is a primary access point for river users. Use is also concentrated at the Forks (the forks of Moose and Kroto creeks), a popular fishing and camping area. In winter the subunit is used by snowmachiners, dog mushers, and skiers. The subunit contains salmon spawning and winter moose habitat. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance the recreation opportunities named above. Maintaining an essentially unmodified natural environment will be the focus of management. Maintaining public use sites will be a high priority. Although the Deshka Recreation River does not include Neil Lake or the lands around the lake, public access to the river from the lake should be maintained. There are no non-motorized areas in this subunit.

Management Guidelines

Boating restrictions. None. See management guidelines for the Deshka River Management Unit in this chapter for a safety warning sign to be placed on a slough of the river.

Public Use Site

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 2e.1 The Forks (RM 30). The confluence of Moose and Kroto Creek is a popular fishing area and camping spot. This site includes the north, east, and west banks.

2f. Kroto Creek Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 0 (Kroto-Moose Creek Confluence), to RM 58 (Kroto Lake)

This subunit includes all of Kroto Creek, from the junction with Moose Creek to Kroto Lake. Kroto Creek is similar to, but smaller than Moose Creek. It is narrow, shallow and marginally navigable, even by floatboats. The lower segment, below Amber Lake, has fewer navigability problems. Float trips occasionally begin at Amber Lake. Powerboats sometimes are able to use Kroto Creek, just above the forks, during high water. Approximately 90 percent of the subunit below Amber Lake is contiguous wetland. Wetlands make up 10 to 25 percent of this subunit above Amber Lake.

Land Ownership

State	29,882 acres
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	1,042 acres
Private & Other	319 acres
Total	31,243 acres

Wildlife

Recent USFWS surveys have documented many adult trumpeter swans and their young within the subunit. Bald eagle nests have not been sighted in recent surveys.

Camping

Use of Kroto Creek is relatively light. It is heavier on the portion below Amber Lake because navigability improves below Amber Lake. Kroto Creek has not been surveyed for commonly used campsites.

Development

One lodge is located on Kroto Lake. It is primarily used in the winter for cross-country skiing and other winter activities. There are several private cabins in the subunit.

A bridge crosses Kroto Creek on Petersville Road. There are several docks on a lake at RM 51 in this subunit and several on Amber Lake, adjacent to but outside the subunit.

Access*Summer*

Kroto Creek users can access Amber Lake by floatplane and float Amber Lake Creek for one mile before entering Kroto Creek. Oilwell Road crosses Moose Creek via a bridge, passes by Amber Lake, and crosses Kroto Creek, before it terminates 2.5 miles east of the Kahiltna River. An unimproved seismic line continues to the Yentna River. There are extensive offroad vehicle trails between RM 43 (just downriver from the Petersville Road) to Kroto Lake. Because of the combination of heavy use and extensive wetlands, this area has the most evidence of off-road vehicle use in the Recreation Rivers. In several places there are dozens of parallel tracks. Much of this impact may be a result of a few property owners near Safari Lake who use off-road vehicles to access Petersville Road by passing through the Kroto Creek subunit. The nine seismic lines that cross the river do not appear to be receiving summer use. Within the corridor there is floatplane access to a lake west of the river at RM 51 and Lake 295' at RM 14. Amber Lake and Parker Lake (outside but adjacent to the subunit) are also used by floatplanes.

Winter

Upper Kroto Creek includes extensive open bogs used for winter travel. There are a number of intertwining trails along the creek above the Petersville Road. This area is extremely popular for snowmachining, dog mushing, and cross-country skiing and has seen an increase in use in recent years. Several Iditarod mushers train in the area. The lodge on Kroto Lake caters to winter ski tourers and other winter recreationists.

There is also a winter trail from the Moose Creek bridge to Schneider Lake that crosses Kroto Creek at RM 21.5. There is extensive use of the trails in the Amber Lake area connecting the Oilwell Road and Skwentna. Below Amber Lake, seismic lines are used for winter travel. Seismic lines and the Oilwell Road are used in winter for transporting heavy equipment.

Management Intent

Class I. This subunit features fishing, hunting, and camping opportunities for powerboaters, floaters, and bank fishermen. Fishing for Chinook salmon is prohibited and rainbow trout

fishing is catch-and-release only. However, the creek provides important fish habitat. Powerboat navigation becomes marginal later in the summer due to low water levels. In the winter, the subunit features numerous snowmachine, dog mushing, and cross-country ski trails, particularly between the Petersville Road and Kroto Lake. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance these recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat while accommodating uses associated with private lands. Maintaining an essentially unmodified natural environment will be the focus of management. Maintaining public use sites will be a high priority. The lower part of this subunit will be managed to provide non-motorized opportunities during the fishing season.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. See management guidelines for the Deshka River Management Unit in this chapter.

ADOT/PF Materials Site. There is an existing ADOT/PF material site in this subunit on 1.3 acres near RM 67.5 on Oilwell Road where it meets Petersville Road. This site is very important to ADOT/PF for maintenance of Petersville Road. ADOT/PF applied for an interagency land management agreement (ILMA) from ADNR in 2018. See Chapter 2, *Materials*.

Public Information. A kiosk should be constructed on Amber Lake where the public begin float trips down Amber Lake and Kroto creeks. An additional kiosk can be placed off Oilwell Road where the public congregates near the creek. Signs identifying Kroto Creek as a Recreation River should be placed on either side of the Petersville Road bridge.

Boat Launch. A boat launch that accommodates trailers should not be built where Kroto Creek meets Oilwell Road. The river is too shallow and rocky to safely accommodate large power boats. A primitive launch may be constructed to accommodate boats carried on rooftops.

Public Use Sites

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 2f.1 Amber Lake Creek Confluence (RM 21.5). The confluence is used for fishing and camping by Kroto Creek floaters whose trips originate at Amber Lake. Site accessible via Oilwell Road.

PU 2f.2 Amber Lake (RM 24). Several private cabins exist on the banks of Amber Lake. The lake may be accessed via Oilwell Road.

Special Management Areas

See *Special Management Areas* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations of sites are shown on the map at the end of this unit.

SMA 2f.1 Oilwell Road Crossing of Kroto Creek (RM 21.5) This special management area includes a road crossing and the private land along the river adjacent to the crossing. The SMA will be managed as a Class II area. Class II area guidelines will apply. The area will be managed to accommodate public facility improvements associated with the road crossing while providing for and enhancing public recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat. Seasonal restrictions on ground or air transport intended to provide a non-motorized experience in the adjacent subunit do not apply within the SMA.

SMA 2f.2 Petersville Road Crossing (RM 47.1). This SMA includes the land and water in and adjacent to Petersville Road crossing. A private parcel and structural improvements are located in the SMA. The area will be managed as a Class II area. Class II guidelines will apply. The area will be managed to accommodate necessary maintenance and improvements to the Petersville Road Bridge, and access to private lands in the SMA while providing for and enhancing public recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat. In summer it is primarily a day-use area. In winter the bridge is heavily used by automobiles, snowmachines, dog sleds, and skiers.

SMA 2f.3 Unnamed Lake (RM 51.0). Private parcels with cabins and docks are located in the SMA. There is also a floatplane landing area. It will be managed as a Class II area. Class II area guidelines will apply. It will be managed to accommodate access to private lands in the SMA while providing for and enhancing public recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat.

SMA 2f.4 Kroto Lake (RM 58.5) There is one cabin and one lodge on this lake. An ORV trail connects the lake with the Petersville Road. Floatplanes rarely use the lake because of its small size. The SMA will be managed as a Class II area. Class II area guidelines will apply. The area will be managed to accommodate access to private lands in the SMA while providing for and enhancing public recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat.

2g. Lower Moose Creek Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 29.8 to RM 54.2

This subunit extends from the junction of Moose and Kroto creeks to the southern-most private parcel on Moose Creek. The water column is 40 to 125 feet wide. The terrain is rolling, contiguous wetlands cover about half of the subunit.

Land Ownership

State	11,882 acres
Private & Other	15 acres
Total	11,897 acres

Wildlife

Both occupied and unoccupied bald eagle nests have been sighted within the subunit. Recent surveys have documented adult trumpeter swans in the subunit.

Development

There is no private land within this subunit.

Access

Several off-road vehicle trails access the upper subunit from Oilwell Road. Other off-road vehicle trails near RM 25 link up with seismic lines crossing Kroto Creek. Several seismic lines on Moose Creek are used in the winter. Most of the boat traffic is from canoes or rafts, although small powerboats are occasionally used.

Management Intent

Class I. Because of extensive wetlands and the relatively remote location of this subunit, it is visited primarily by floaters in summer and snow travelers in winter. This subunit also features fishing, hunting, and camping opportunities. Although the subunit contains salmon spawning habitat, fishing for Chinook salmon is prohibited. Rainbow trout fishing is catch-and-release only. Powerboat navigation becomes marginal due to low water levels later in the summer. In winter, the subunit features snowmachine and dog mushing trails. There is no private land in the subunit. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance these recreation opportunities, the primitive quality of the area, and fish and wildlife habitat. Maintaining an essentially unmodified natural environment will be the focus of management. Maintaining public use sites is a high priority. The lower part of the subunit will be managed to provide non-motorized opportunities during the fishing season. Opportunities for harvesting Chinook salmon should be provided by the Board of Fisheries in the lower part of this subunit.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. See management guidelines for the Deshka River Management Unit in this chapter.

Fishing Regulations. See *Other Recommendations, Fishing Regulations* in Chapter 4.

2h. Oilwell Road Subunit

Background

River Miles/River Characteristics, RM 54.2 to RM 69.5

This subunit extends from the private land beginning about 3 miles below the end of Oilwell Road, to a point approximately one mile above the Petersville Road. The terrain is rolling. Contiguous wetlands cover approximately 80 percent of the subunit.

Land Ownership

State	3,425 acres
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	1,097 acres
Private & Other	897 acres
Total	5,419 acres

Wildlife

Few trumpeter swans have been sighted in recent surveys in this subunit. Bald eagle nests have not been observed in recent surveys.

Development

The area along Moose Creek near the Oilwell and Petersville roads is heavily developed. There are many private cabins in this subunit and commercial businesses on Petersville Road.

Three bridges cross Moose Creek. The Petersville Road bridge is heavily used in both summer and winter. The Oilwell Road bridge crosses Moose Creek near RM 57.5. A foot-bridge is located at RM 61.5.

Access

Road access is by the Petersville (RM 69) and Oilwell roads (RM 57.5). There are several foot and off-road vehicle trails along Oilwell Road to access private land. Most trails are concentrated along the creek between Nine-mile Creek (RM 51.5) and one mile north of the

Petersville Road. Oilwell Road is used as a float put-in on the Deshka River. Above Oilwell Road the river is seldom floated. There are no aircraft landing areas.

Moose Creek is extensively used in winter by snowmachiners and dog mushers. Most of the use is between RM 57 and RM 69. Several seismic lines that cross Moose Creek are used in winter. Snowmachine trail rides and dog mushing races pass through this subunit. Above the Petersville Road the subunit is heavily wooded and receives light winter use.

Management Intent

Class II. Because of its proximity to the Petersville Road and numerous parcels of private land, the subunit is used for a variety of purposes. It features fishing, hunting, and camping opportunities, and uses associated with the road. The river is navigable below the Oilwell Road terminus, except in late summer when water levels usually drop. Although the subunit contains fish spawning habitat, fishing for Chinook salmon is prohibited. Rainbow trout fishing is catch-and-release only. In winter, the subunit features snowmachining, skiing, and dog mushing trails. There are numerous private parcels of land, particularly on the east side of the river along the Oilwell Road. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance these recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat while accommodating uses associated with private lands on the road. Maintaining public use sites is a high priority. The river will be managed to provide both motorized and non-motorized opportunities. There are no non-motorized areas in the subunit.

Management Guidelines

Boating restrictions. None.

Public Information. A kiosk may be placed along Oilwell Road providing information on the Recreation Rivers. Signs should also be placed on either side of the Moose Creek bridge on Petersville Road and either side of the bridge on Oilwell Road, identifying Moose Creek as a Recreation River.

Public Facilities. Moose Creek is too shallow through most of the season for prop or jetboats. A boat launch able to accommodate trailers should not be built off the Petersville or Oilwell roads.

Public Use Sites

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 2h.1 Oilwell Road Crossing (RM 57.5). This site is used for camping, fishing, and launching boats.

PU 2h.2 Petersville Road Crossing (RM 68.5). This site is a popular day use area. In the past, there have been local businesses on the private lands adjacent to the site and it was a community meeting area. Access to the river is restricted by private land.

2i. Upper Moose Creek Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 69.5 to RM 82.5

Upper Moose Creek is generally narrow and shallow. Contiguous wetlands cover about 10 percent of the mostly flat terrain. Non-contiguous wetlands cover another 10 percent of the area.

Land Status

State	2,725 acres
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	4,781 acres
Private & Other	75 acres
Total	7,581 acres

Wildlife

Trumpeter swans have been sighted in recent surveys in this subunit. Bald eagle nests have not been observed.

Camping

There is no boat use on upper Moose Creek. Private landowners on the upper limit of the subunit access the area by floatplane. Campsites along the river have not been inventoried.

Development

Several cabins and associated docks are located on Loon and “S” lakes.

Access

There are three floatplane landing areas but no airstrips in this subunit. The floatplane landing areas are located on the two lakes at the headwaters and on a lake at RM 43.5. The lakes at the headwaters receive frequent winter use.

Management Intent

Class I. This subunit features limited fishing and camping opportunities during the summer months. The river is not navigable. Although the subunit contains salmon spawning habitat, Chinook salmon fishing is prohibited. Rainbow trout fishing is catch-and-release only. The subunit is primarily used in the fall for hunting and by private property owners. Winter uses include snowmachining, dog mushing, and skiing. Private lands are located near “S” Lake, Loon Lake, and K’da Lake. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance recreation opportunities, a primitive setting, and fishing and wildlife habitat while accommodating uses associated with private lands. Maintaining an essentially unmodified natural environment will be the focus of management. There are no non-motorized areas in this subunit.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. None.

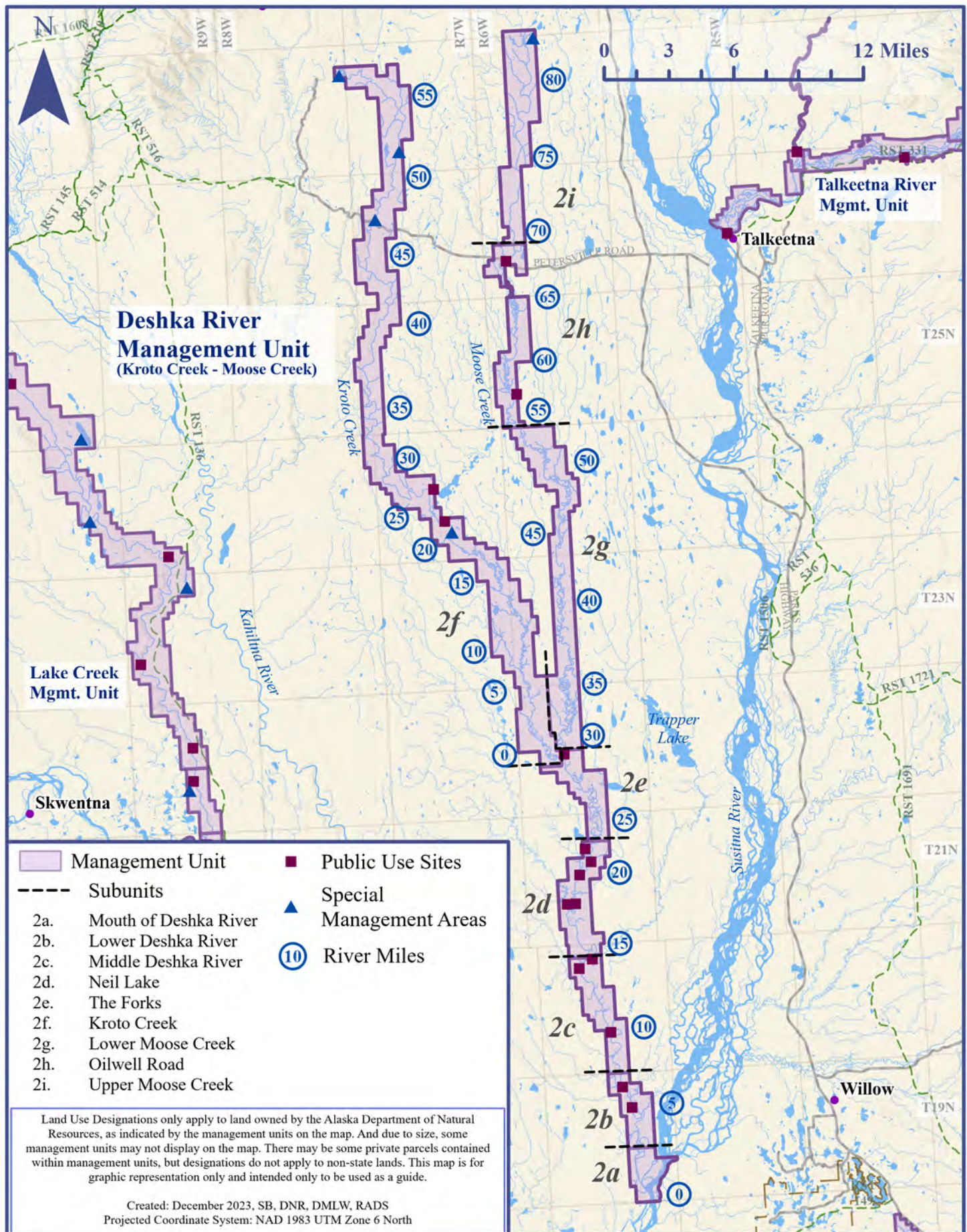
Special Management Area

See *Special Management Areas* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations of sites are shown on the map at the end of this unit.

SMA 2i.1 “S” Lake and Loon Lake (RM 82.5). These lakes are used by floatplanes to access private land with cabins and docks located on the lakes. The SMA will be managed as a Class II area. Class II area guidelines will apply. The area will be managed to accommodate access to private lands in the SMA while providing for and enhancing public recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat.

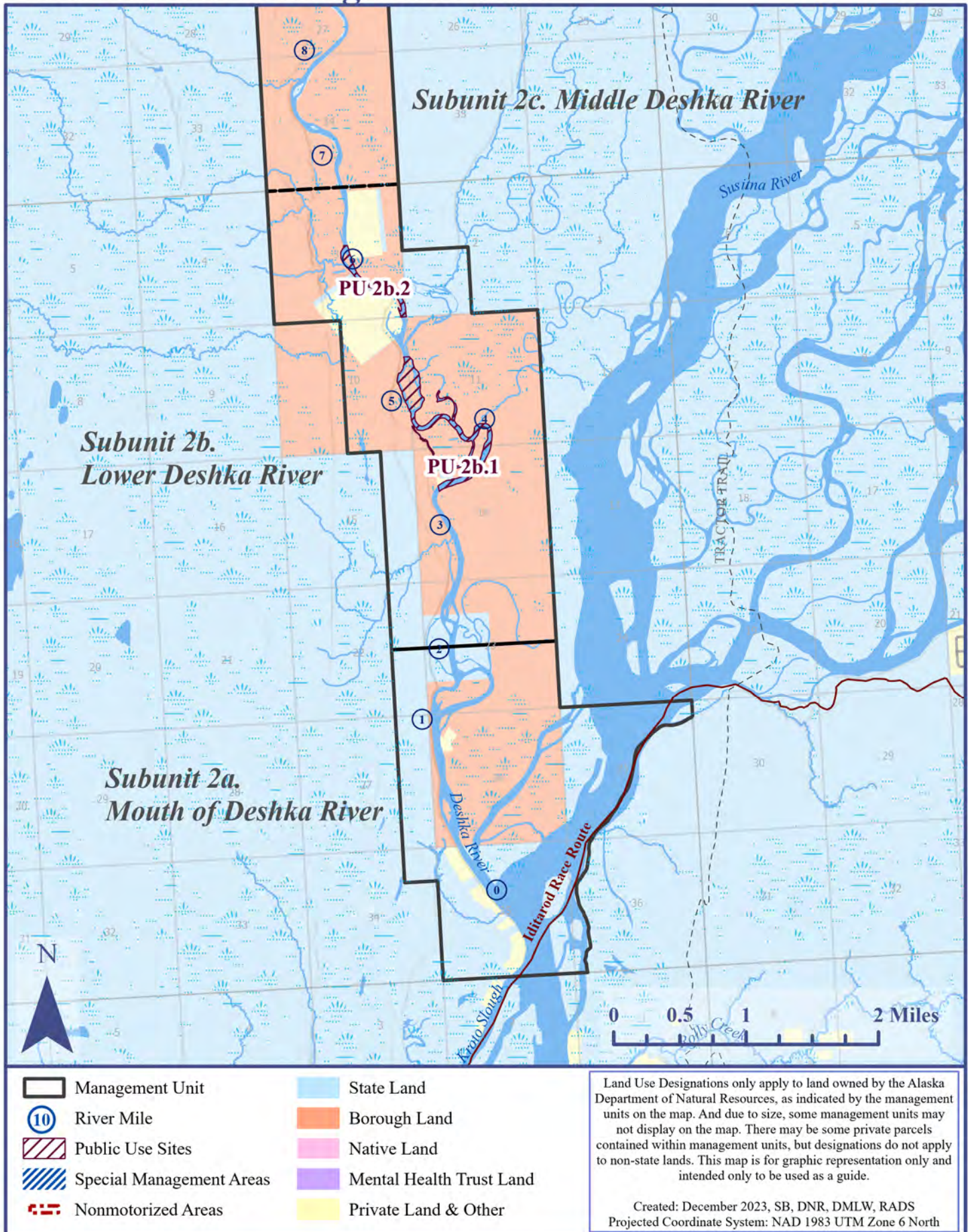
SUSITNA BASIN RECREATION RIVERS MANAGEMENT PLAN

DESHKA RIVER



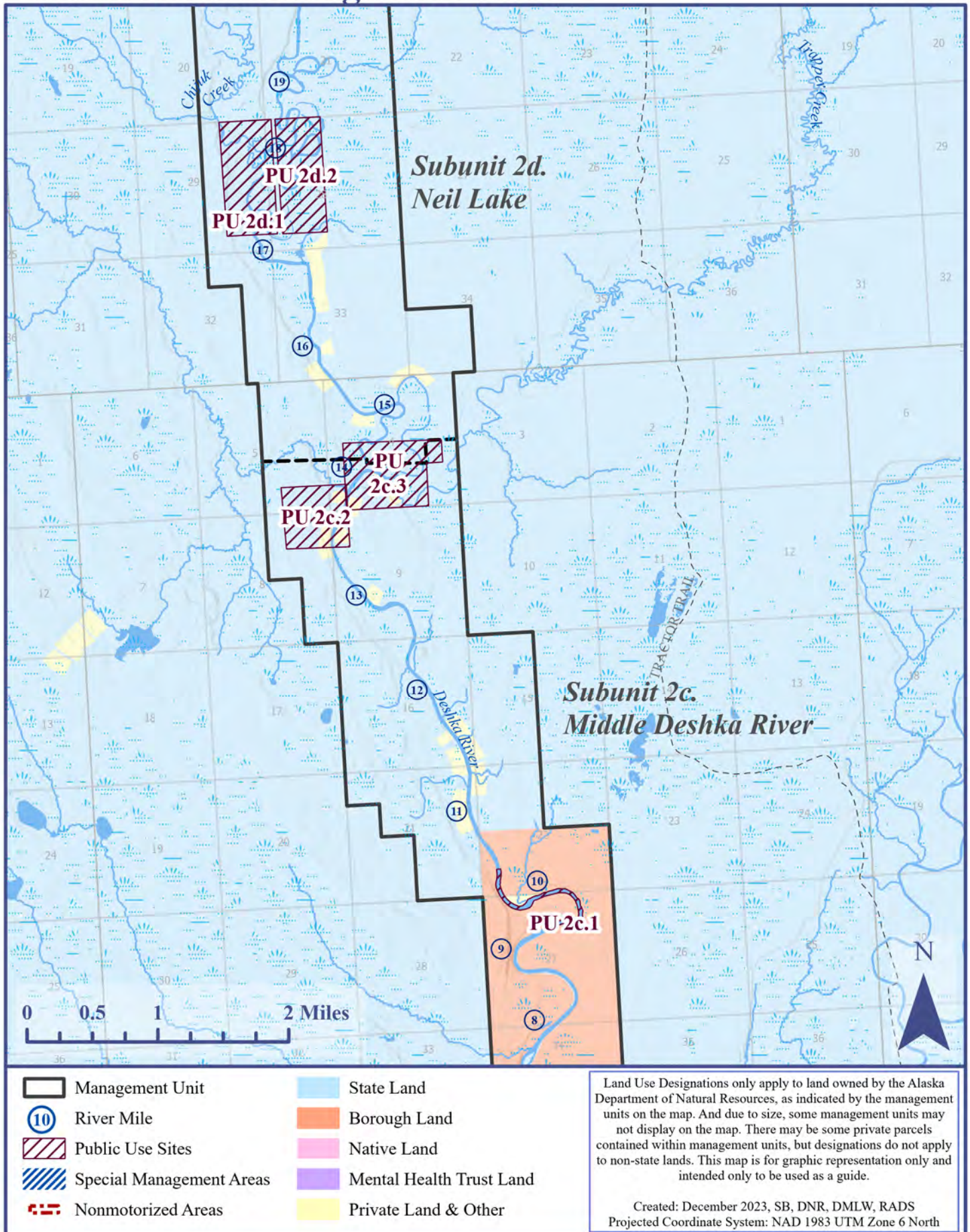
Deshka River Management Unit

MAP 1



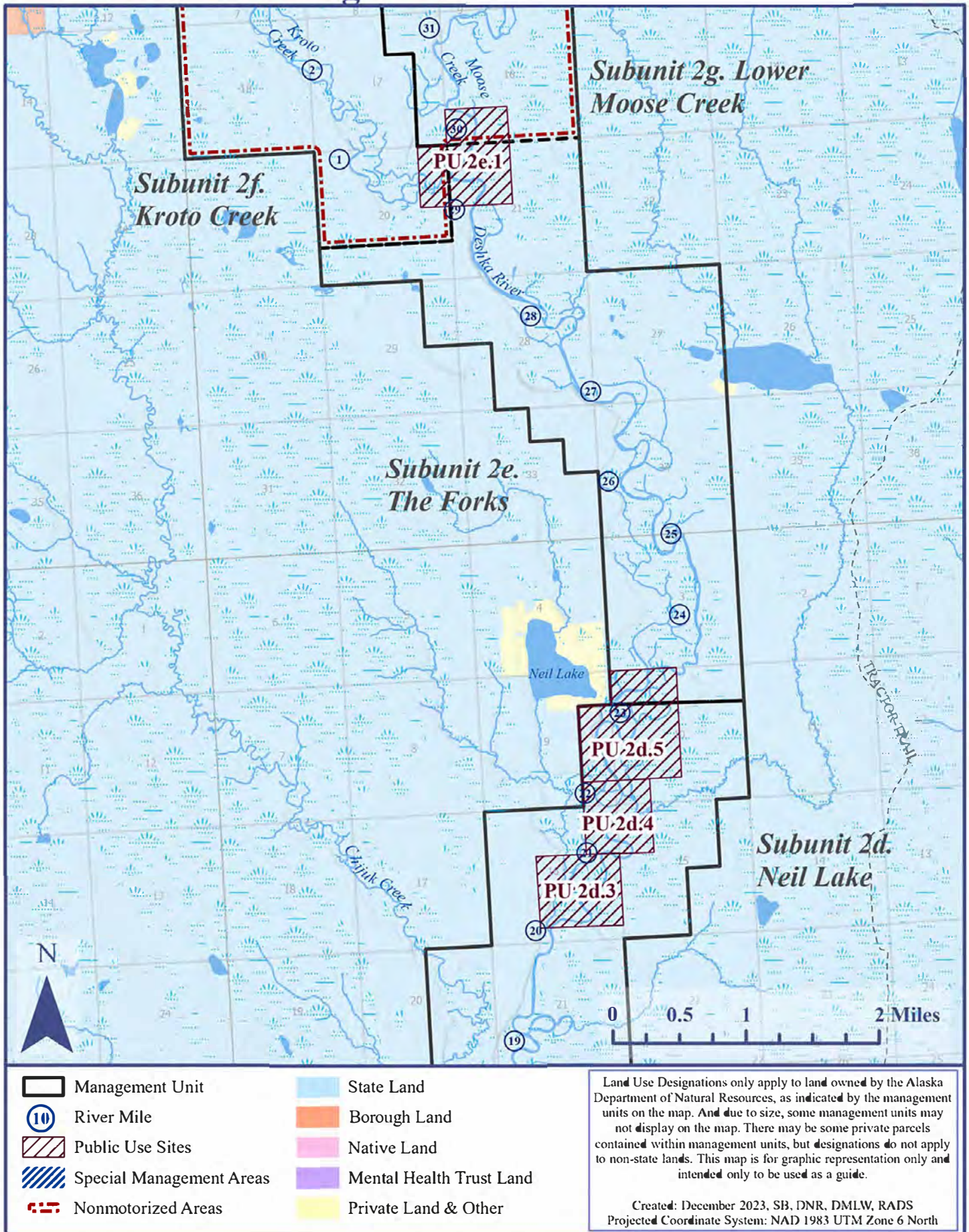
Deshka River Management Unit

MAP 2



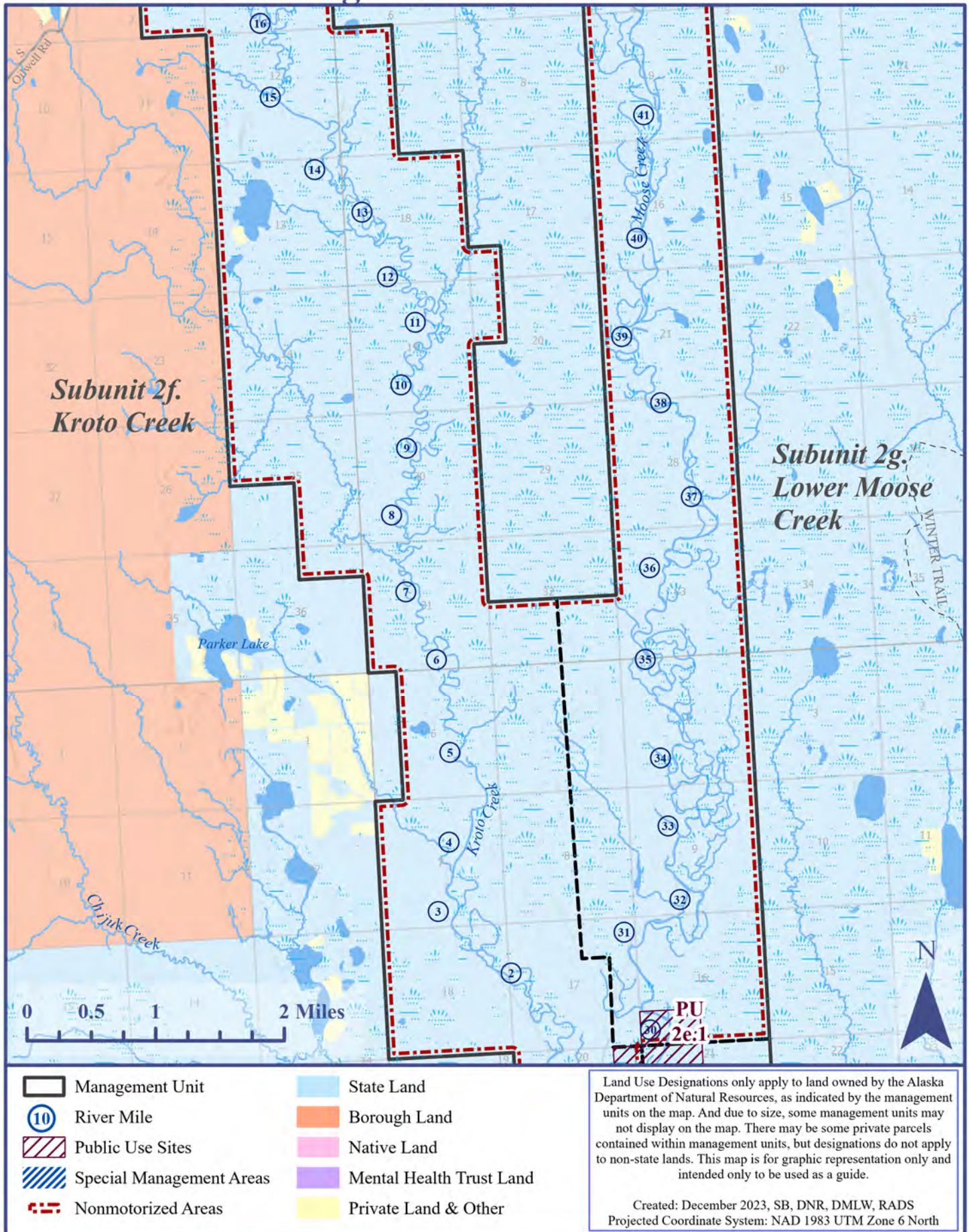
Deshka River Management Unit

MAP 3



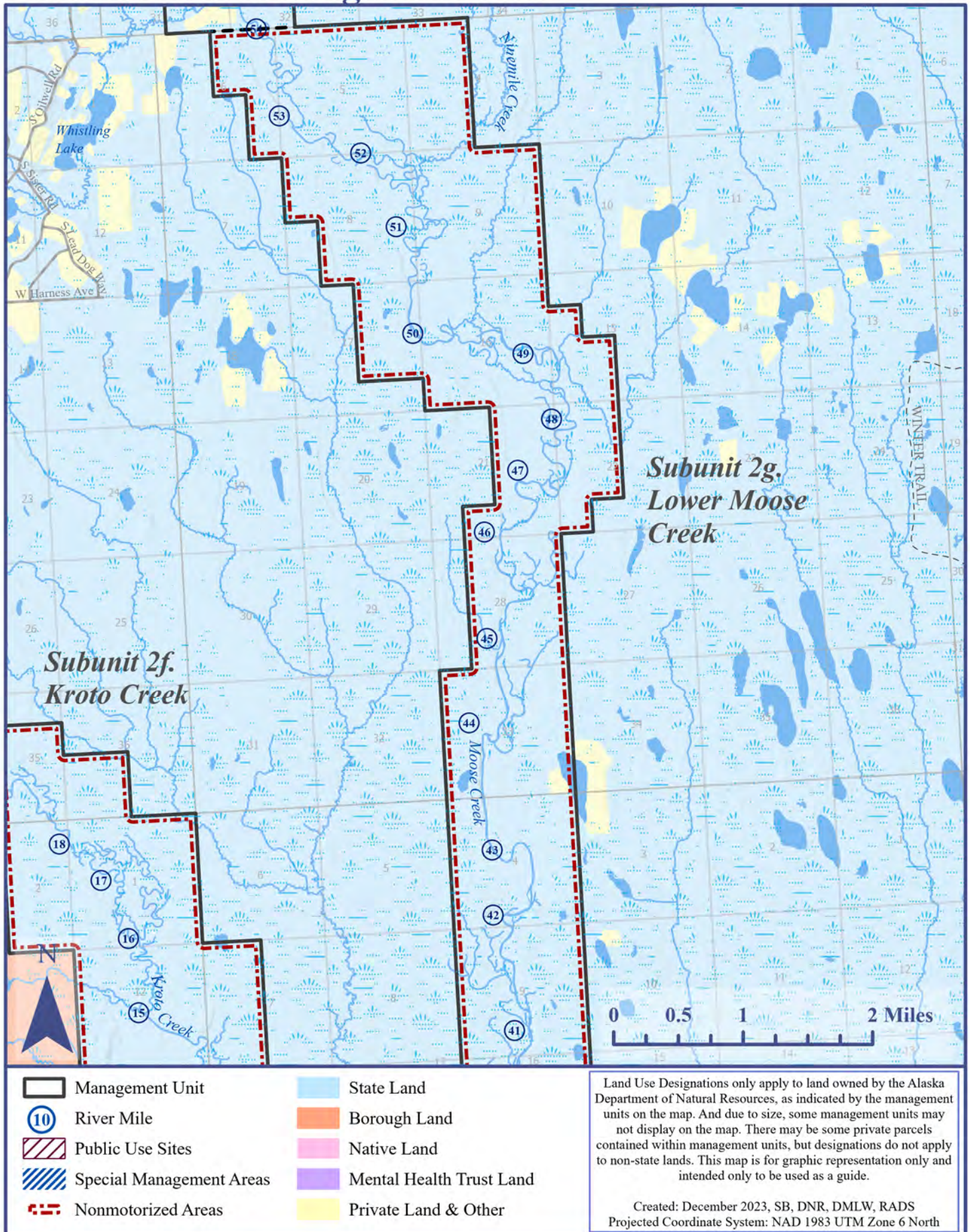
Deshka River Management Unit

MAP 4



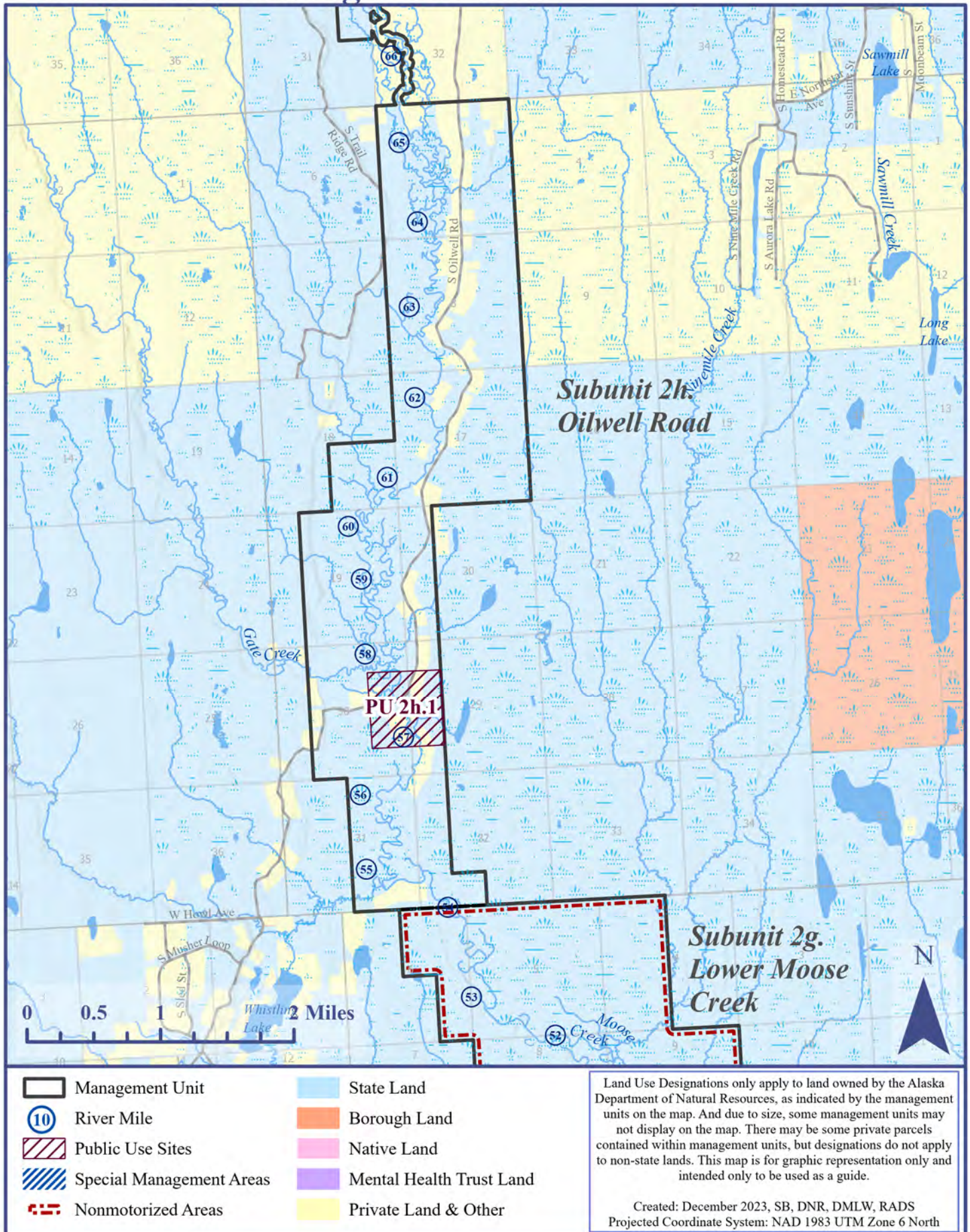
Deshka River Management Unit

MAP 5



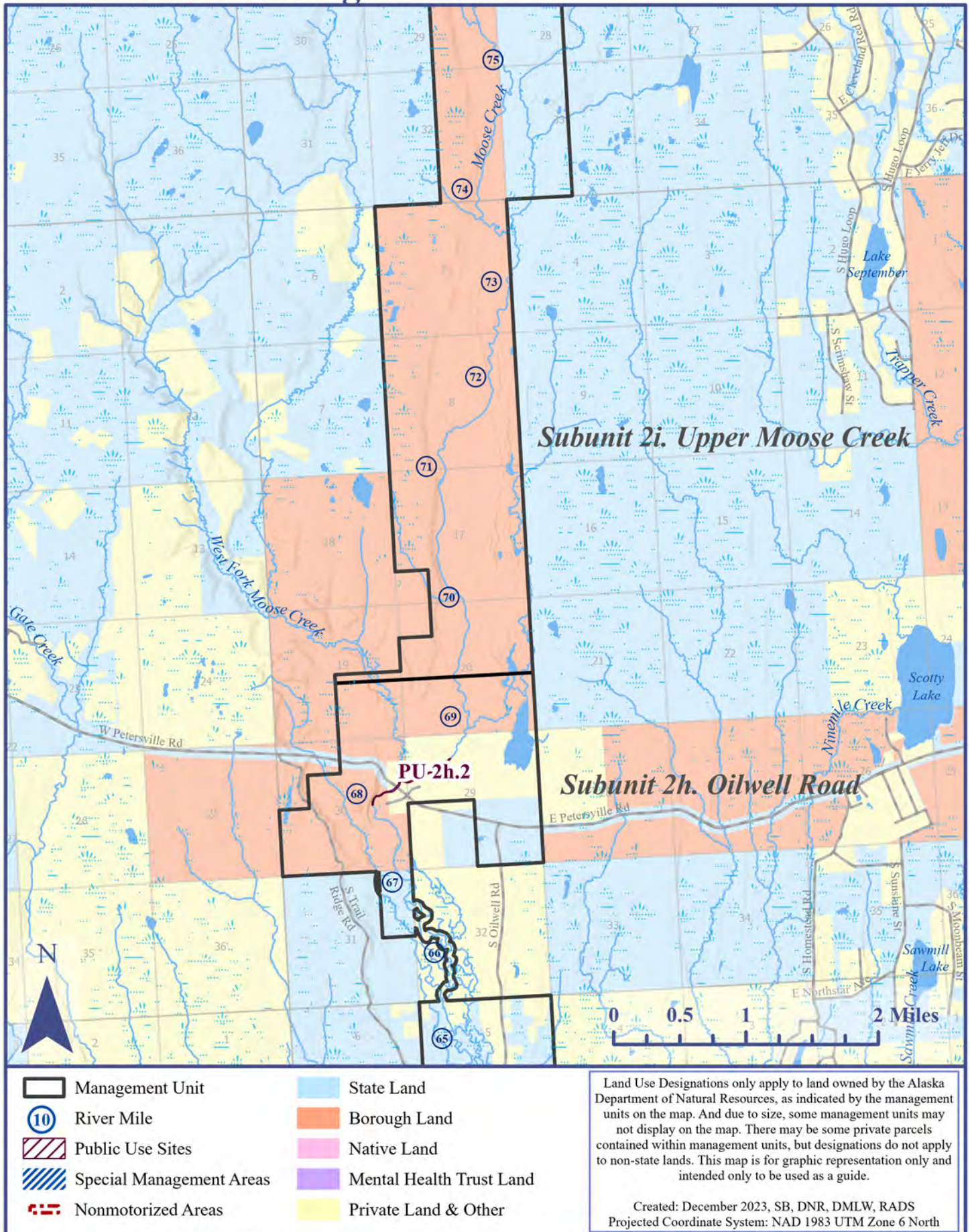
Deshka River Management Unit

MAP 6



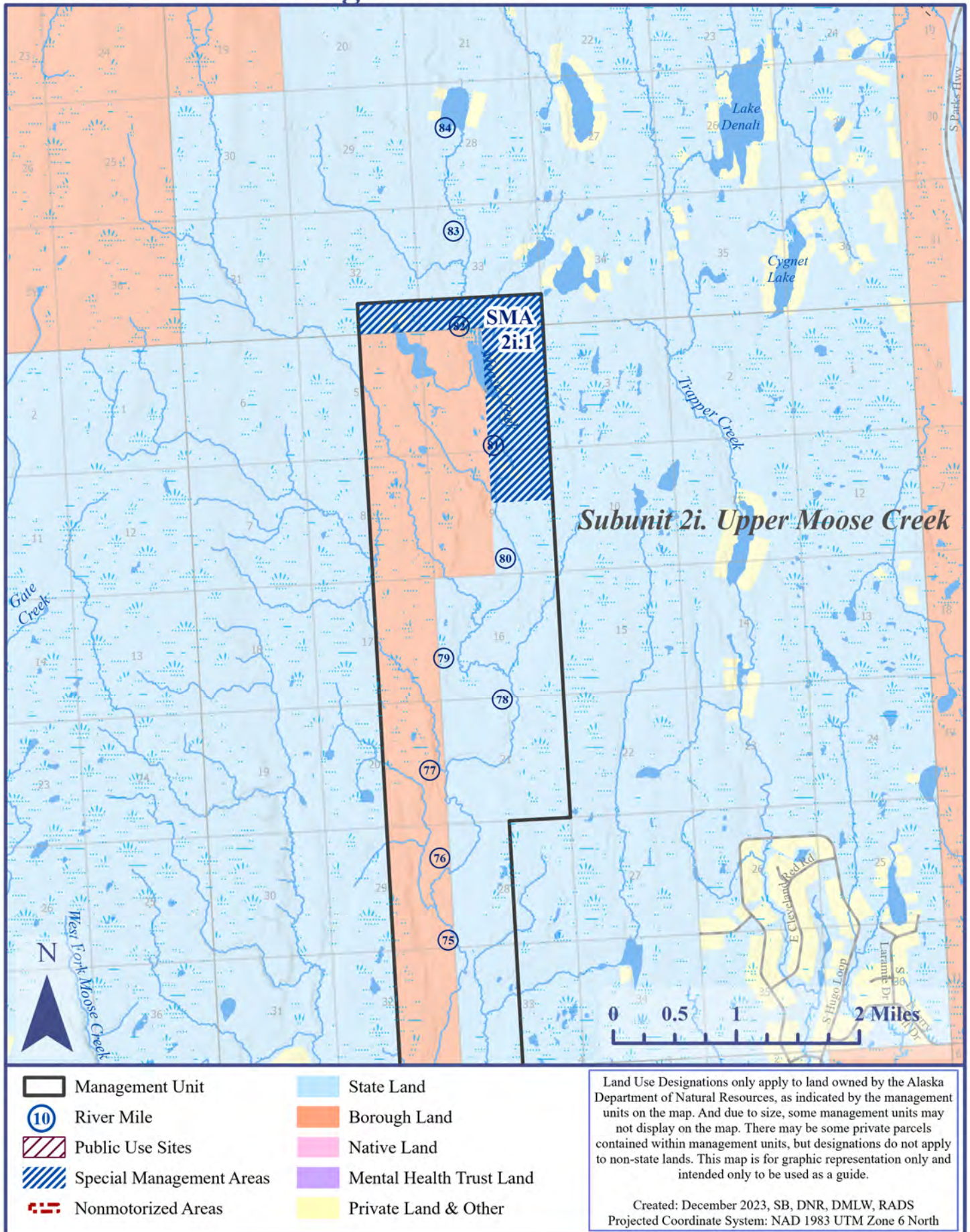
Deshka River Management Unit

MAP 7



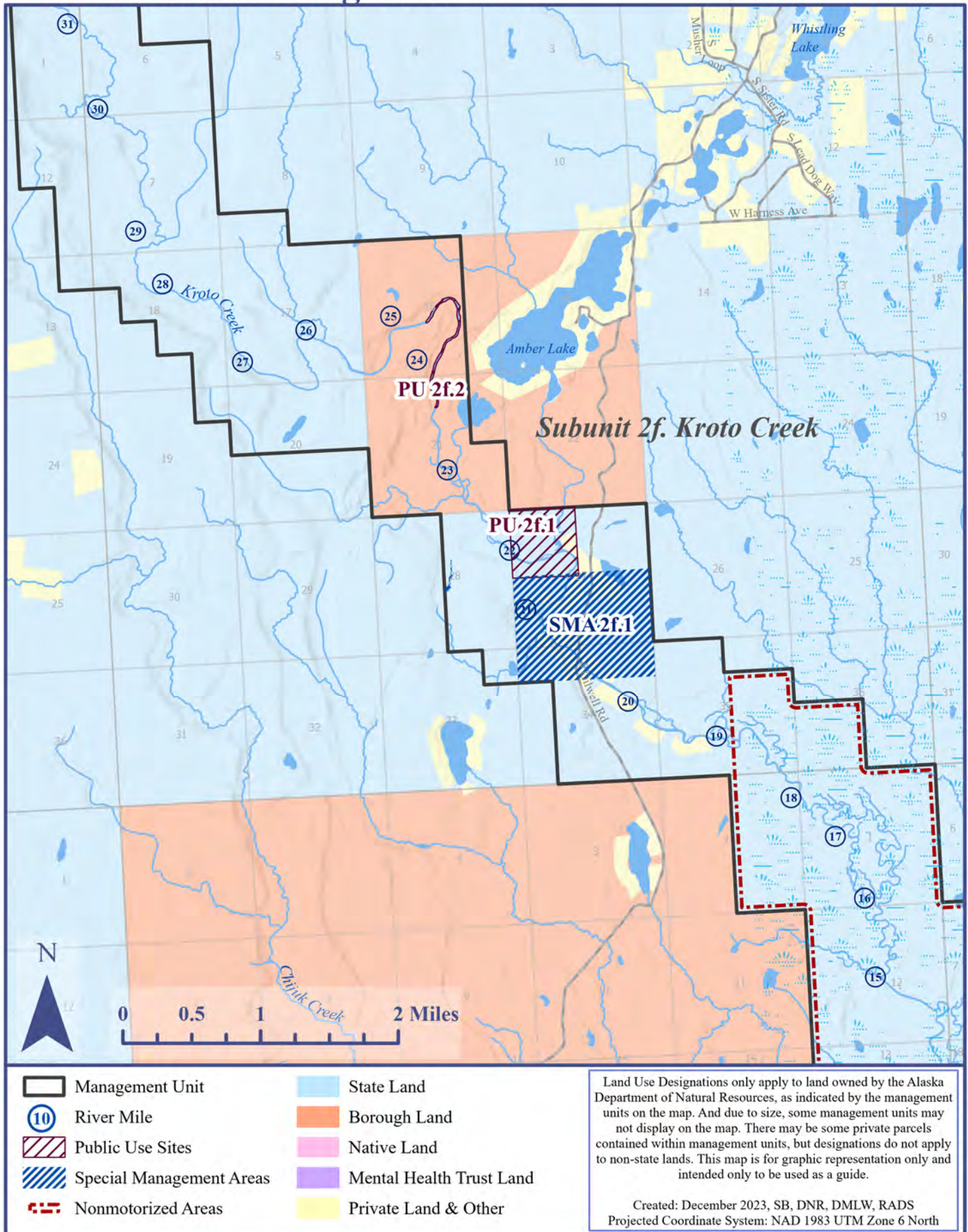
Deshka River Management Unit

MAP 8



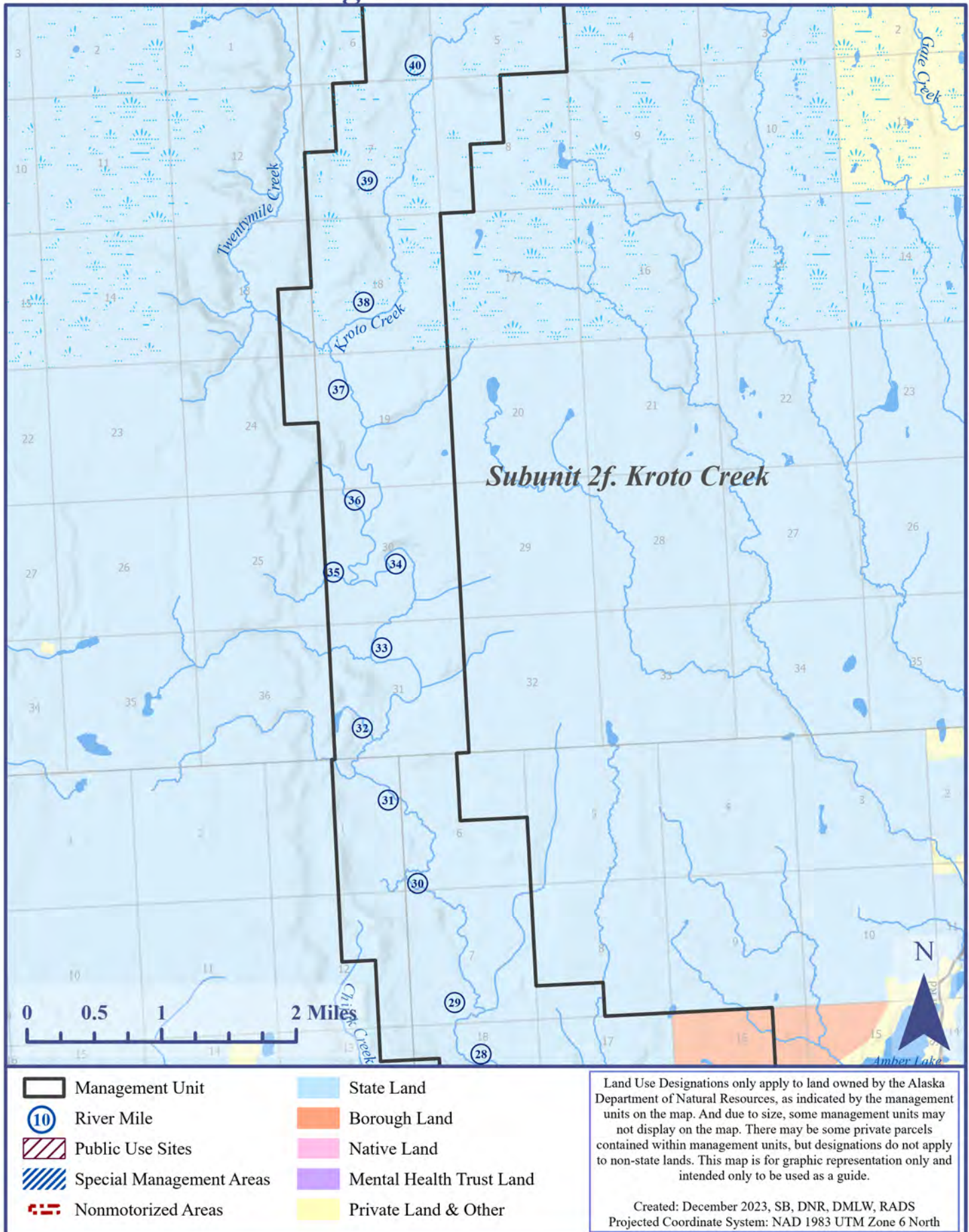
Deshka River Management Unit

MAP 9



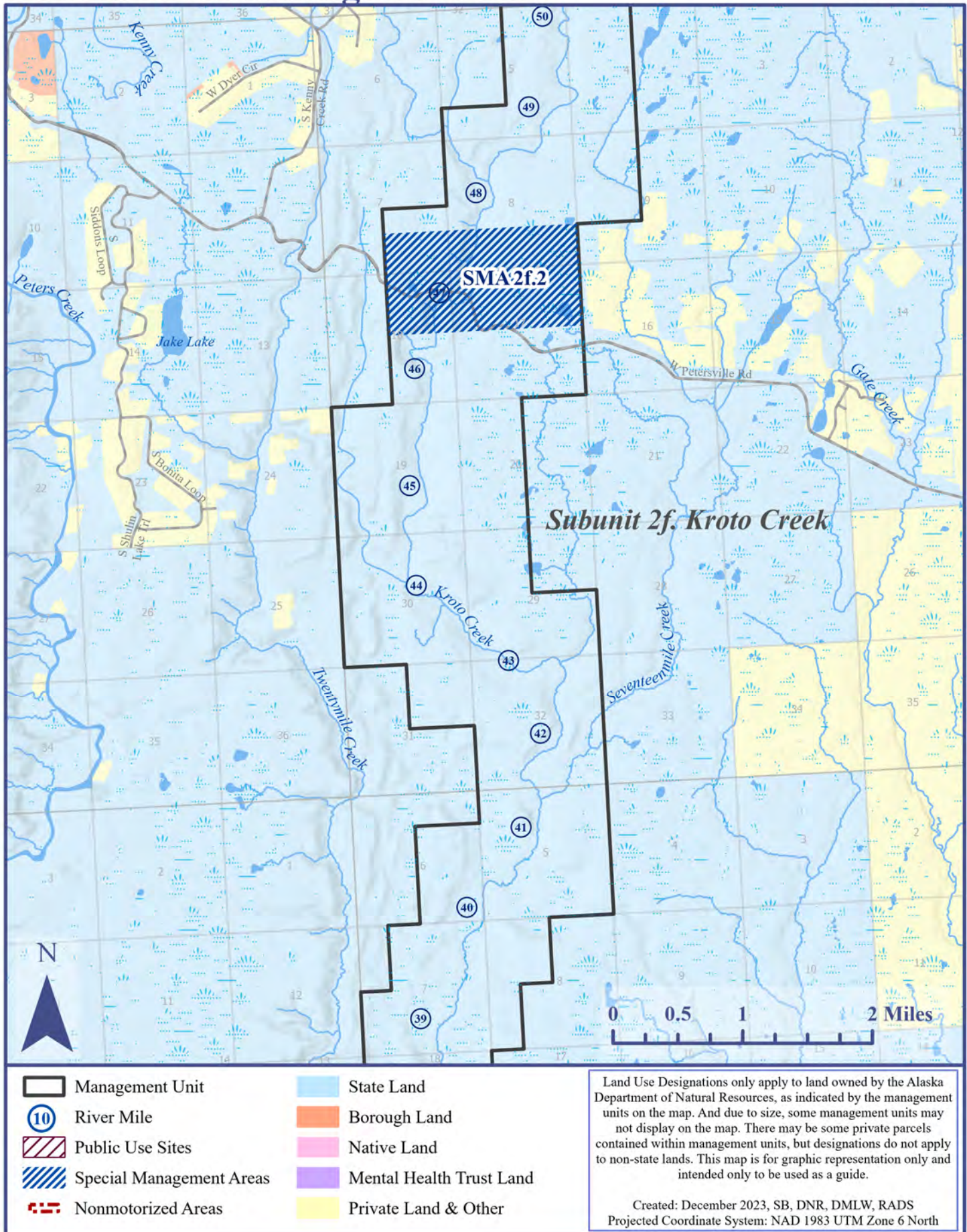
Deshka River Management Unit

MAP 10



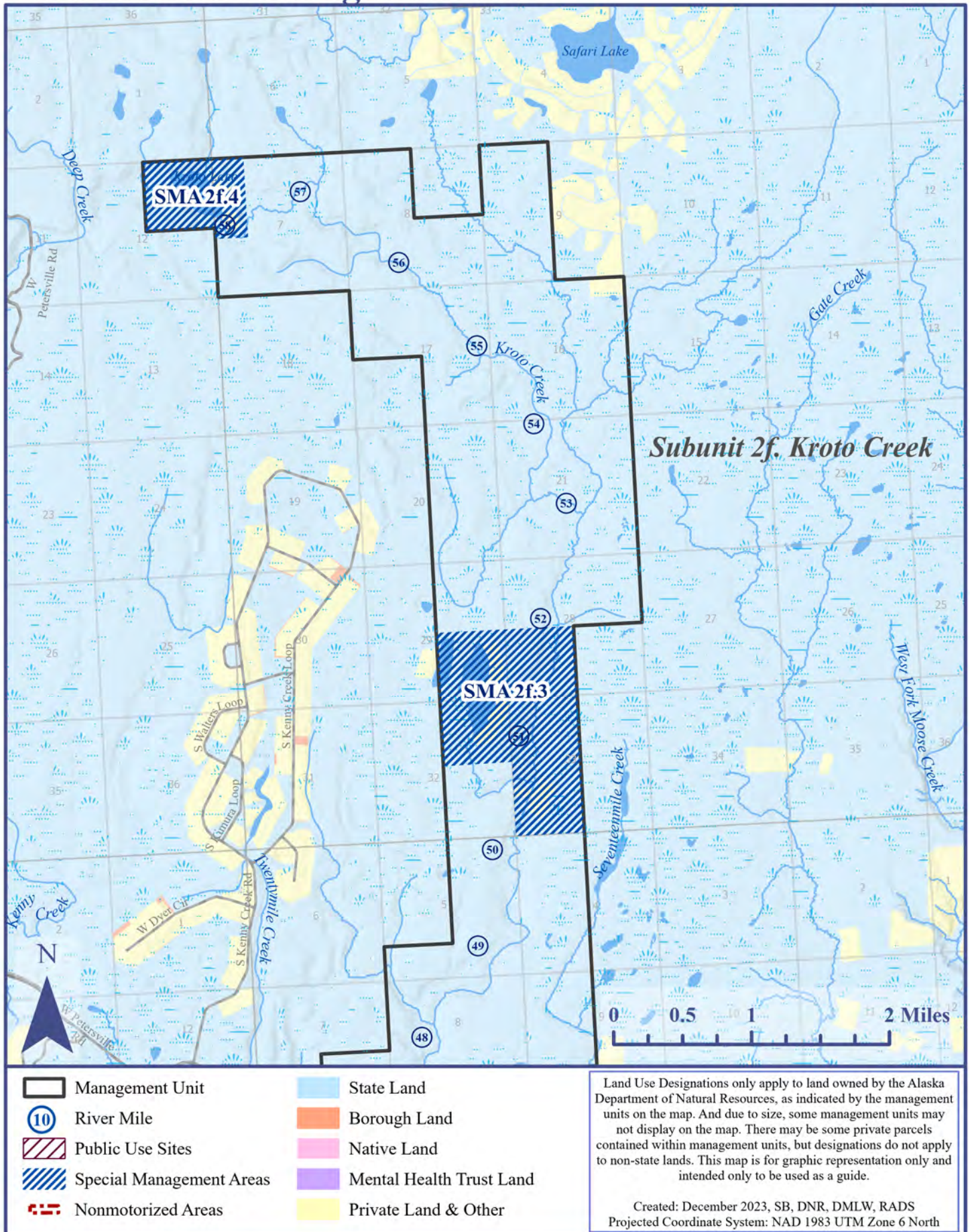
Deshka River Management Unit

MAP 11



Deshka River Management Unit

MAP 12



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3. Talkeetna River Management Unit

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3. Talkeetna River Management Unit

Background

Mile of River

This unit includes 44.5 miles of the Talkeetna River from its confluence with the Susitna River to the upper Talkeetna River Canyon, and 9.5 miles Clear (Chunilna) Creek from its confluence with the Talkeetna River (RM 0) to RM 9.5. The unit also includes the mouths of Sheep River, Iron Creek, Disappointment Creek, and Larson Creek.

Land Ownership

State	29,719 acres
Native	20 acres
Private & Other	315 acres
Total	30,054 acres

River Characteristics

The volume and velocity of the Talkeetna is greater than the other five Recreation Rivers. The river in the Canyon is narrow and fast-moving. Below the Talkeetna River Canyon, the river is wide and braided, with numerous large, forested islands. Because the river is glacial in origin, it is laden with silt during the summer months. Summer streamflow depths vary from 1 to 6 feet, and the lower river channel varies in width from 200 to 500 feet. The mean annual flow varies from 2249 to 5856 cfs, with winter low flows averaging between 521-686 cfs and summer highs averaging between 766-10,600 cfs.

This unit is highly scenic because of the canyon on the upper river and views of the Talkeetna Mountains and Alaska Range from the lower river. Most human modifications in the unit are not visible from the river with the exception of those along Clear (Chunilna) Creek and in the vicinity of Talkeetna which somewhat diminish the visual quality of the river.

Fisheries

Species Present

Arctic grayling	Dolly Varden
Burbot	Pink salmon
Chinook salmon	Rainbow trout
Chum salmon	Slimy sculpin
Coho salmon	Sockeye salmon

Chum, coho, Chinook, and pink salmon spawn in Clear (Chunilna) Creek. Grayling and rainbow trout are found throughout the Clear (Chunilna) Creek and Lower Talkeetna River subunits. Throughout the remainder of the management unit, chum, coho, sockeye, and Chinook salmon are present, along with Dolly Varden, rainbow trout, and grayling. While chum and pink salmon occasionally spawn in the river itself, the remaining pink, chum, Chinook, and coho salmon spawn in clear tributaries. Sockeye salmon spawn in several lakes draining into the Talkeetna River, including Larson Lake.

Sport Fishing

The peaks in recreation and fishing activity on the Talkeetna River correspond with the Chinook and coho salmon runs and late fall when rainbow trout and Dolly Varden drop down and concentrate in the lower river near Talkeetna. These are approximately June 15 to July 15 for Chinook, July 15 to September 15 for coho, and September 5 to ice up for resident species. The most popular fishing spot is the mouth of Clear (Chunilna) Creek, where all species of sport fish found in the river are caught. Near the railroad bridge and the mouth of Disappointment Creek receive less use.

Special Regulations

Fish Creek, a tributary of Clear (Chunilna) Creek, is designated a catch and release special management area for rainbow trout. Only unbaited, single-hook artificial lures can be used.

Wildlife

Moose

A resident moose population occurs throughout the unit. The river corridor provides essential riparian habitat for wintering moose.

Bear

The unit provides food and cover for bears. Black bear and brown bear begin to frequent the lowlands in early May, with high spring densities of black bear at the mouth of the river. Both species of bear target moose calves as prey in May and early June. During June, July, and August bear concentrate along portions of the unit where salmon can be caught. Brown bear cover large areas in search of food and depend on the river as a transportation corridor.

Bald eagles

Several occupied and unoccupied bald eagle nests have been documented on the lower and middle Talkeetna River. Nest trees are primarily black cottonwood over fifty feet tall that are within twenty feet of the river.

Trumpeter Swans

Trumpeter swans have been sighted along the Lower Talkeetna River subunit. The unit probably serves as a migration and staging area in the fall.

Hunting

Moose and bear hunting is concentrated in the lower reaches of the management unit, where foot, boat and off-road vehicle access is possible. The river also serves as a transportation corridor for hunters using boats to access upriver and tributary hunting areas, including Sheep River, Wiggle, and Iron creeks. These upriver locations receive significant use. Wildlife viewing, particularly of moose, is important in the Talkeetna area.

Trapping

Trapping for beaver, coyote, fox, mink, muskrat, otter, wolf and wolverine occur in the corridor during spring and winter seasons.

Subsistence

Within Game Management Unit 13E, there are opportunities for moose and caribou harvests under subsistence regulations. Harvest opportunities also exist for small land mammals and furbearers.

Access

The Talkeetna Spur Road connects the town of Talkeetna to the Parks Highway. In Talkeetna, there are boat launches where powerboats can access the river and floaters can take-out. There are several airstrips in the Talkeetna area but none in the management unit. Some gravel bars on the lower river are infrequently used for landing. There are no lakes in the management unit and the river is too swift for floatplane landings. The mouth of Clear (Chunilna) Creek is often accessed via helicopter and is a drop-off location for float trips. Powerboaters use the river up to the mouth of Iron Creek. Because of Class IV whitewater, the canyon is accessible only by rafts and kayaks to most users.

3a. Lower Talkeetna River**Background**

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 0 to RM 15.5 (excluding the mouth of Clear (Chunilna) Creek)

This subunit begins at the confluence of the Talkeetna River with the Susitna River and extends to the mouth of Sheep River. The mouth of Clear (Chunilna) Creek is in a different

subunit. The subunit includes the wide floodplain between the hills and bluffs along the river. Less than 5 percent of this subunit is contiguous wetland.

Land Ownership

State	4,849 acres
Native	20 acres
Private & Other	87 acres
Total	4,956 acres

Wildlife

Many bald eagle nests are located near the mouth of the river and long the corridor throughout the subunit. Occupied and unoccupied nests have been documented. Trumpeter swan adults and their young have been observed in recent surveys.

Camping

There are two public campgrounds adjacent to this subunit near the town of Talkeetna. Camping is very popular near Larson Creek during salmon runs. In addition, several undeveloped campsites exist within the area. An unlimited number of marginal campsites are available because of the large number of gravel bars.

Development

The railroad bridge is the only bridge within the subunit. Existing erosion control structures include a large rip-rap revetment near the confluence with the Susitna River and another rip-rap revetment at RM 4. The USGS maintains a gauging station just upriver from the town of Talkeetna. Numerous cabins and businesses are adjacent to this subunit in Talkeetna and in the Chase and Talkeetna Bluffs subdivisions. There are two public facilities in Talkeetna, the Talkeetna boat launch/campground on the river and another campground on the west side of town. The Talkeetna sewage plant is adjacent to, but not in, the management unit. There is a wet crossing location across Larson Creek just outside the subunit however, this requires a Title 16 habitat permit from ADF&G.

Access

The Talkeetna Spur Road and the Alaska Railroad provide the primary access to the mouth of the Talkeetna River. There are a number of roads associated with private lands in town that parallel the river, and an ORV trail from Talkeetna Alaska Teleport to Larson Creek. From there, trails branch out to Larson Lake, Bald Mountain, and Sheep River. Branches of this ORV trail also lead to cabins in the two major subdivisions in the area. The Talkeetna River Trail provides easy access for ORVs as well as boat access. The intertie transmission line has been used to access the Talkeetna River from the south. There are also a number of trails on the north side of the river between the railroad and Clear (Chunilna) Creek. The

Talkeetna River and associated trails are used extensively in winter, particularly below Clear (Chunilna) Creek. Powerboats launch at Talkeetna and travel upriver as far as Iron Creek. The primary destinations during the peak fishing season are the mouths of Clear (Chunilna) Creek and Larson Creek.

Heritage Resources

The heritage site potential is high and includes the Alaska Railroad bridge, historical features near Talkeetna, and remnants of an old Tanaina settlement.

Other Activities

There are some materials extraction sites in Talkeetna adjacent to but not within the subunit.

Management Intent

Class II. Because of its proximity to the town of Talkeetna, the river is easily accessed by a variety of summer and winter users. This subunit features high quality fishing, hunting, and camping opportunities for powerboaters and floaters. A boat launch, roads and trails along the south side of the river, and several subdivisions are located within the subunit. In winter, the subunit is heavily used for snowmachining, dog mushing, and cross-country skiing. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance these recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat while accommodating uses associated with private lands. Maintaining public use sites is a high priority. There are no non-motorized areas in this subunit.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. None

Heritage Resources. Historic and prehistoric sites should be evaluated for their interpretive values for tourism and general public interest. This particularly applies to the lower Talkeetna River because of ready public access and concentration of sites.

Public Information. A kiosk which includes information on Talkeetna Recreation River may be constructed at the Talkeetna boat launch.

Public Use Sites

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 3a.1 River Mouth and Railroad Bridge (RM 0.0). The river mouth and railroad bridge are heavily used by Talkeetna residents and visitors to the area for fishing and recreation.

PU 3a.2 Larson Creek Mouth (RM 12.8) This site provides public access to the river by the Talkeetna Iron Creek Trail and by road from Talkeetna Alaska Teleport. The area is used for fishing, camping, and launching boats. The site is also one of the most popular areas for recreational use by the residents of nearby subdivisions. Because the area receives such wide use, no permits or leases should be issued which provide exclusive use of any portion of the site. An outhouse should be developed at this location.

3b. Middle Talkeetna River Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 15.5 to RM 31.1

This subunit begins above the mouth of Sheep River and extends to and includes the mouth of Iron Creek. Less than 5 percent of the area is contiguous wetland.

Land Ownership

State	12,682 acres
Private and Other	191 acres
Total	12,873 acres

Wildlife

Occupied and unoccupied bald eagle nests have been observed in recent surveys of the subunit.

Camping

There are many isolated sites and several segments of the river where there is an unlimited number of campsites on gravel bars.

Development

There are several cabins on private land between RM 17 and RM 20.

Access

Access to this portion of the river is by powerboat or by floating from points upstream. There is no air access in the subunit although lakes north of the river are used by floatplanes.

Heritage Resources

The heritage site potential is high due to the high level of historic and prehistoric use.

Management Intent

Class I. Because of the limited fishing opportunities and the limited number of clear water tributaries, this subunit receives moderate use. The area includes important moose winter habitat. It is also used for camping and hunting. In winter, the subunit receives limited use by snowmachiners, dog mushers, and skiers. Only a few private parcels are within the subunit. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance these recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat. Maintaining an essentially unmodified natural environment will be the focus of management. Maintaining public use sites is a high priority. There are no non-motorized areas in this subunit.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. None.

Trapping Cabins. There is one valid trapping cabin permit on the Talkeetna River located near RM 22. This permit may be renewed if there are no significant conflicts with fish and wildlife habitat, or recreation.

Public Use Sites

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 3b.1 Disappointment Creek Junction (RM 23.5). This is an important creek junction frequently used for camping and day use.

PU 3b.2 Iron Creek Junction (RM 31). This is an important site frequently used for camping, day use and for those floating the river.

3c. Clear (Chunilna) Creek Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, Clear (Chunilna) Creek RM 0 to RM 9.5

This subunit includes the uplands around the mouth of Clear (Chunilna) Creek, and the water column and shorelands for the first 9.5 miles of Clear (Chunilna) Creek. Clear (Chunilna) Creek is a clear-water stream which is only marginally navigable by powerboat for the first few miles.

Land Ownership

State	575 acres
Private & Other	37 acres
Total	612 acres

Wildlife

Black bear concentrate over the length of the subunit during salmon season. Brown bear also concentrate on the uppermost section of the subunit. Active bald eagle nests have not been sighted in recent surveys of this subunit.

Camping

Private uplands limit public camping areas to the vicinity of the mouth, where the public camps on state-owned gravel bars. There are also some marginal campsite areas on state-owned uplands.

Development

Several cabins are located adjacent to the subunit. Because the creek is entrenched in a canyon, these cabins are located on high banks and are generally not visible from the river.

Access

Primary access to the mouth of Clear (Chunilna) Creek is by powerboat from Talkeetna. Above the mouth, Clear (Chunilna) Creek is not easily navigated by boat; the primary access is by trail. Trails along the west side of Clear (Chunilna) Creek connect private cabins with the railroad tracks north of Talkeetna. A foot trail from the mouth of Clear (Chunilna) Creek to Fish Creek crosses private land.

There are several airstrips along Clear (Chunilna) Creek on uplands outside the subunit. The largest strip, at the Clear (Chunilna) Creek headwaters, is private.

Heritage Resources

There are a few known heritage sites in this subunit and the heritage site potential at the mouth of Clear (Chunilna) Creek is high.

Other Activities

There is an active mining claim on Clear (Chunilna) Creek north of the boundaries of the subunit.

Management Intent

Class II. Public use of this subunit is primarily during the Chinook and coho salmon runs near the mouth of Clear (Chunilna) Creek. Because most of the subunit includes only the Clear (Chunilna) Creek water column and shorelands, the subunit also serves as a greenbelt adjacent to several parcels of private land that line the creek. The subunit features high quality fishing, hunting, and camping opportunities. Boaters primarily use the Talkeetna River and the lower half-mile of Clear (Chunilna) Creek. Upper Clear (Chunilna) Creek is only marginally navigable by floatboats and has poor access for dropoffs. Winter use includes snowmachining, skiing, and dog mushing. The subunit contains winter moose and salmon-spawning habitat. There are several mineral locations on upper Clear (Chunilna) Creek. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance recreation opportunities and fish and wildlife habitat. With the exception of uses associated with mining, maintaining an essentially unmodified natural environment will be the focus of management. There are no nonmotorized areas in this subunit.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. None.

Public Use Site

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 3c.1 Clear (Chunilna) Creek Mouth (RM 6.8). The state land and water in this area is heavily used during the peak fishing season for fishing and camping. While Fish Creek once flowed into Clear (Chunilna) Creek, the mouths are now separate. Trail access to Fish Creek should be improved. A box toilet could be installed near the mouth of Clear (Chunilna) Creek as previous outhouses installed by ADF&G are now in the wooded area.

3d. Talkeetna River Canyon Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 32.25 to RM 44.5

This subunit extends upstream from the mouth of Iron Creek to the middle of the Talkeetna Canyon, and the south boundary of land owned by the Knikatu Corporation. The river in the canyon drops approximately 29 feet per mile, and for most of this subunit the river is entrenched in a steep-walled canyon. Talkeetna Canyon is one of the premier stretches of whitewater in North America. It offers nearly 14 miles of continuous Class III rapids and several Class IV areas. There are no significant wetlands within the subunit.

Land Status

State	11,613 acres
Total	11,613 acres

Wildlife

Active bald eagle nests and trumpeter swans have not been sighted in recent surveys in this subunit.

Camping

There are only two or three marginal campsites at the upper end of the subunit. Campsites are limited because of steep terrain and because there are few places where the river slows enough for a boat to safely land.

Access

There are a few short foot trails for scouting the rapids in the canyon. There are no airstrips or floatplane landing areas in the subunit. Float trips typically begin at Yellow Jacket Creek landing area, outside the Recreation Rivers. Alternately, there are lakes used by floatplanes on upper Prairie Creek. Use of the mouth of Prairie Creek by floatplanes is infrequent. Wheelplanes occasionally use a primitive landing area on a river bar (RM 48.5) downstream from the mouth of Prairie Creek.

Management Intent

Class I. Public use of this subunit is primarily by whitewater floaters. The canyon is very scenic and provides high quality opportunities for Class II, III, and IV whitewater boating. The subunit also provides primitive camping opportunities. There is open water year-round, so the subunit receives little winter use. Because of the primitive nature of the recreation

opportunities, the number of camp encounters in the canyon will be managed to maintain a low level of encounters. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat. Maintaining an essentially unmodified natural environment will be the focus of management. There are no non-motorized areas in this subunit.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. None.

Emergency Caches. Permits for storage of emergency caches may be issued in Talkeetna Canyon. These caches may contain equipment, clothing, cover, food, and reserve gear to be used in the event of a boating accident in the canyon. These caches should be bear-resistant, and out of sight of the river and campsites.

Recommended Addition. The Talkeetna Recreation River should be expanded to include up to RM 51.5. If added, it should be managed as part of this subunit. Prairie Creek is not recommended for designation as a Recreation River at this time. See Chapter 4, *Areas Recommended for Designation as Recreation Rivers, Upper Talkeetna River, and Other Recommendations, Future Additions, Prairie Creek*.

Public Information. A sign may be placed on the public easement at the mouth of Prairie Creek to clearly identify the site. The sign may also provide information on the Recreation Rivers. The eastern boundary of the Talkeetna River may also be marked with a sign identifying it as a Recreation River.

Standards for Interaction Impacts. The 14 miles of Class III and IV whitewater in the Talkeetna Canyon is one of the longest stretches of continuous whitewater in North America. The technical skill required to float this stretch limits use to a small, specialized group of users. Among these users, there is a strong consensus about the type of experience offered in the canyon, the impact levels acceptable for that experience, and the need for a permit system if impacts rise above those defined levels.

Key indicators for the type of experience desired by these floaters include camp encounters (or camp sharings – the percentage of nights camping within sight or sound of another party) and river encounters (the number of other parties seen on the river). Users define the Talkeetna Canyon as a remote, wilderness, whitewater float trip. Excessive river and camp encounters can detract from this experience.

In order to preserve the type of experience Talkeetna floaters currently have, the following standards should be applied.

1. No camp encounters in Talkeetna Canyon.
2. Less than two river encounters on the same day.

Monitoring river encounters and establishing a relationship between river encounters and use levels, can be administratively difficult. Camp encounters are more easily measured and their relationship to use levels in Talkeetna Canyon appears direct. The geography of the canyon limits the number of usable campsites to two. Current use levels are low, and competition for these campsites is light. However, if use increases, competition for campsites may be anticipated in the future. If users are forced to share camps (or continue through the canyon when campsites are full resulting, in safety hazards) on more than twenty percent of trips, a use limit system may be developed and implemented.

Voluntary Trip Scheduling Program. For most users, current use levels do not cause impacts greater than the standards described above. However, a minority of trips experience greater impact levels than users consider acceptable. If use increases, this problem could continue until a use limit is developed. To prevent the mandatory trip scheduling associated with a use limit, a voluntary trip scheduling program administered by ADNR may be implemented for the Talkeetna Canyon at this time.

Commercial and private trip leaders will be encouraged to register proposed trips as soon as they have been planned. ADNR will maintain a list and notify trip leaders when more than one trip has been scheduled for the same day (experience indicates that paired launches result in unacceptable impacts). It will be the trip leaders' responsibility to reschedule or otherwise alter trips if they so desire.

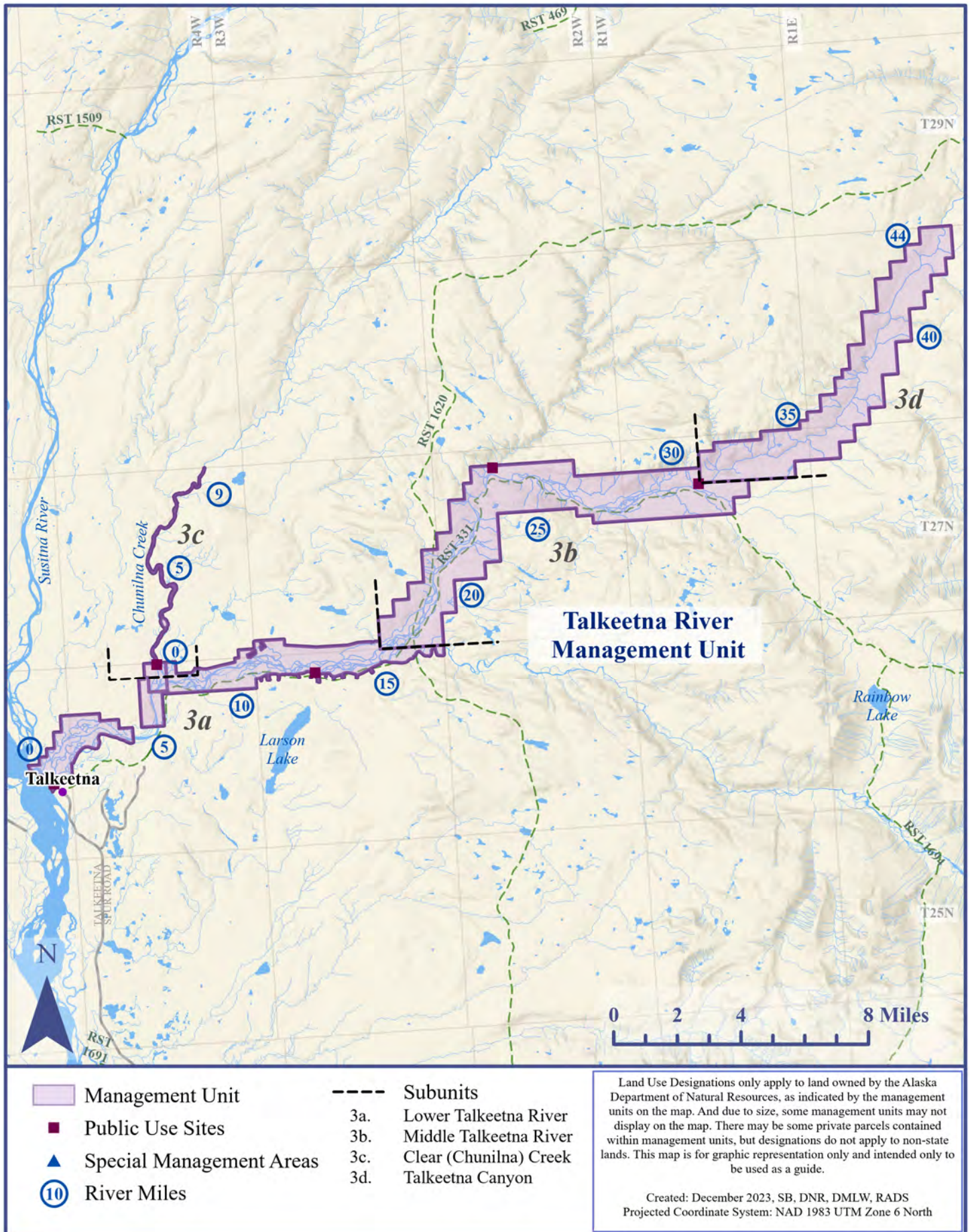
Public Use Site

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 3d.1 Mouth of Prairie Creek (RM 51.5). If the upper Talkeetna Canyon is added to the Recreation River, the one-acre public site easement at the mouth of Prairie Creek will be a public use site. This site is located just downstream of the confluence on the north side of the Talkeetna River. It includes a one-acre site-easement and adjacent Talkeetna River shorelands. All the uplands in the area are Native-owned and this is the only site where the public can camp. There is also a private five-acre parcel between the site easement and the Talkeetna River - Prairie Creek confluence. The grant of site easement (Talkeetna Recording District, Book 124, pages 587-590) restricts the use of the site as follows: only members of the public traversing the Talkeetna River by watercraft may use the site. The use of the site is exclusively for use as a temporary site for camping. Use is limited to a maximum of twenty-four hours. The site cannot be used for fishing, unlimited camping, or other purposes not associated with the use described above. Signs shall be posted at the site defining both the use and area restrictions of the easement. The site cannot be improved except for those improvements appropriate for a primitive campsite (e.g. sanitary facilities, fire-rings, etc.)

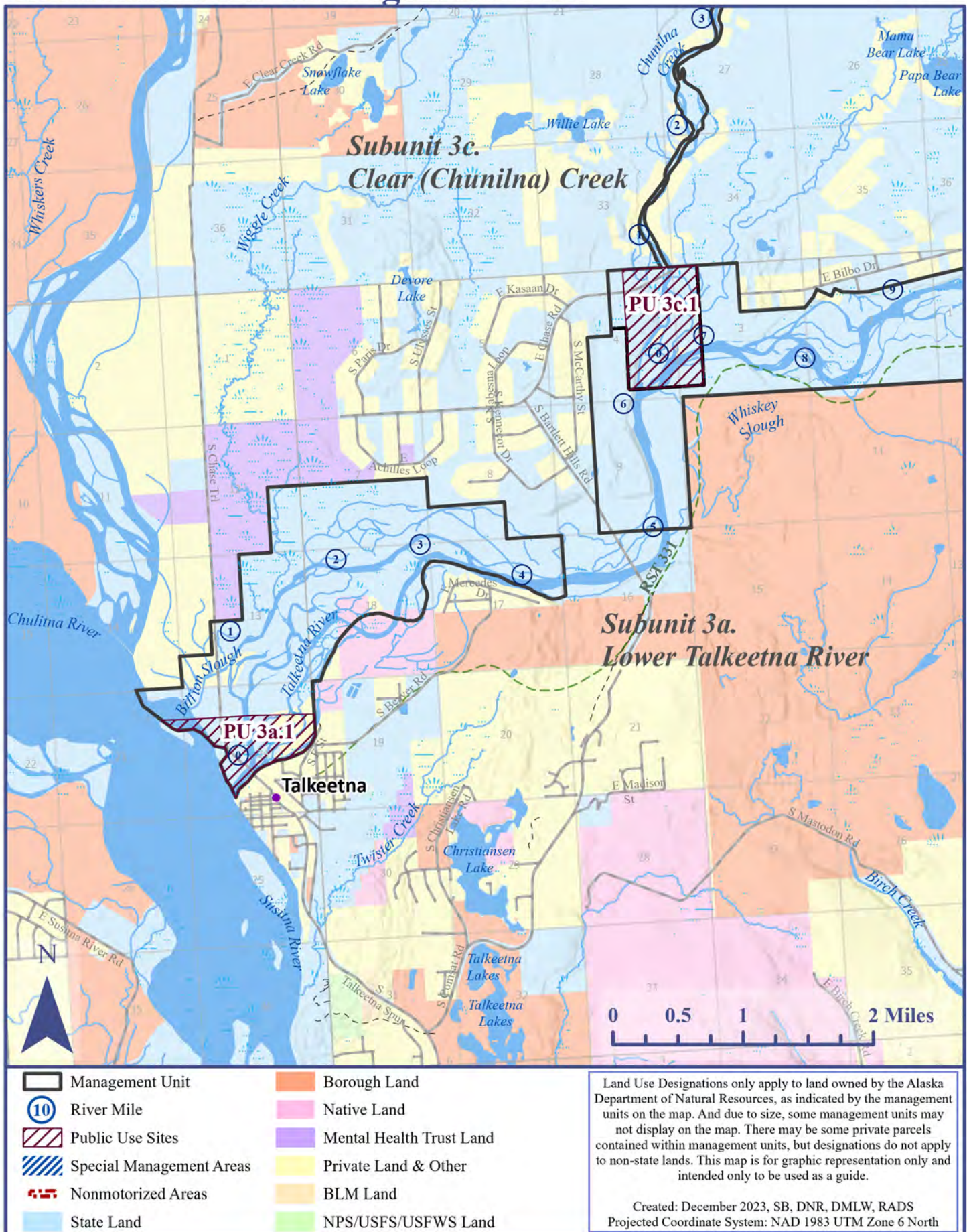
SUSITNA BASIN RECREATION RIVERS MANAGEMENT PLAN

TALKEETNA RIVER



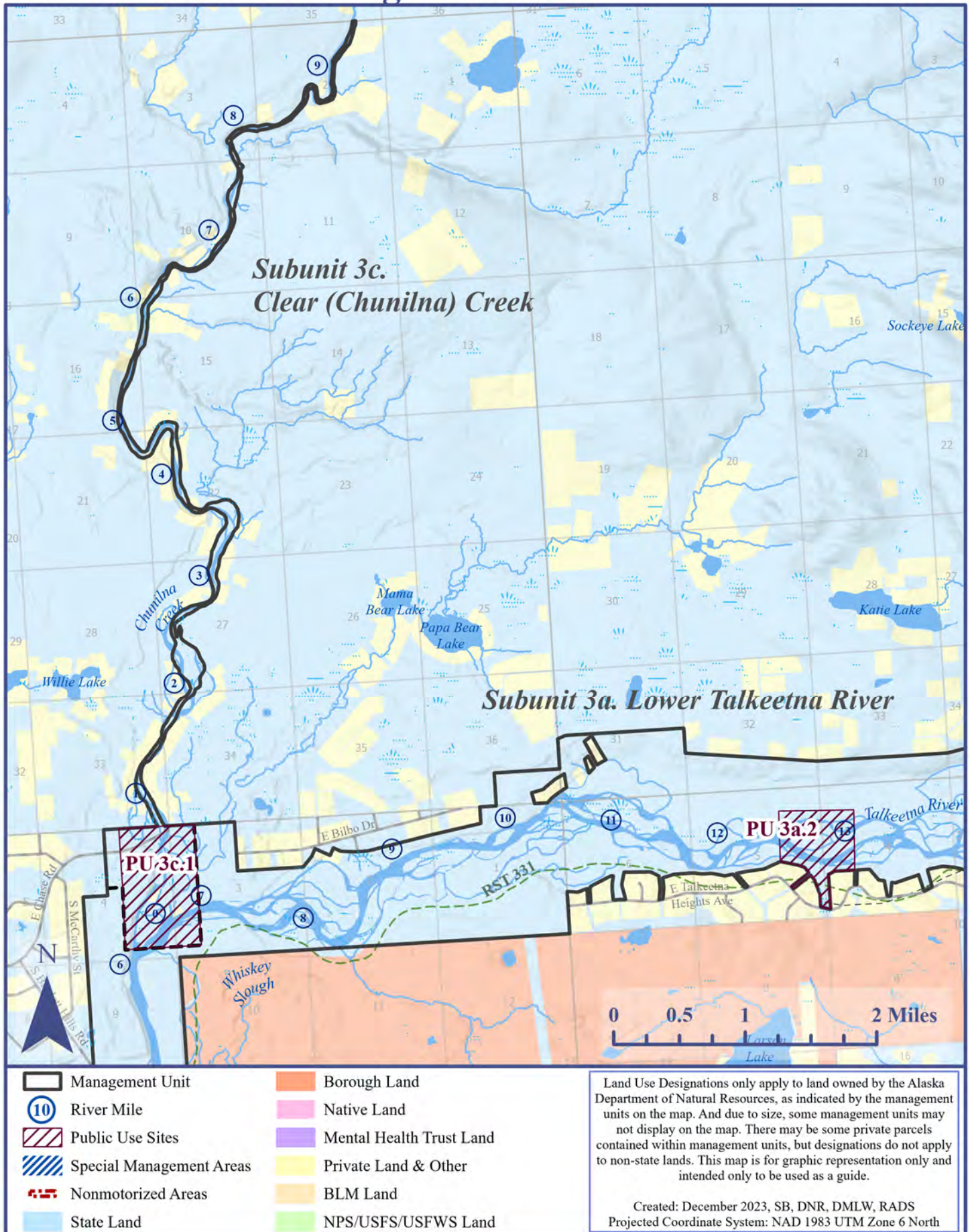
Talkeetna River Management Unit

MAP 1



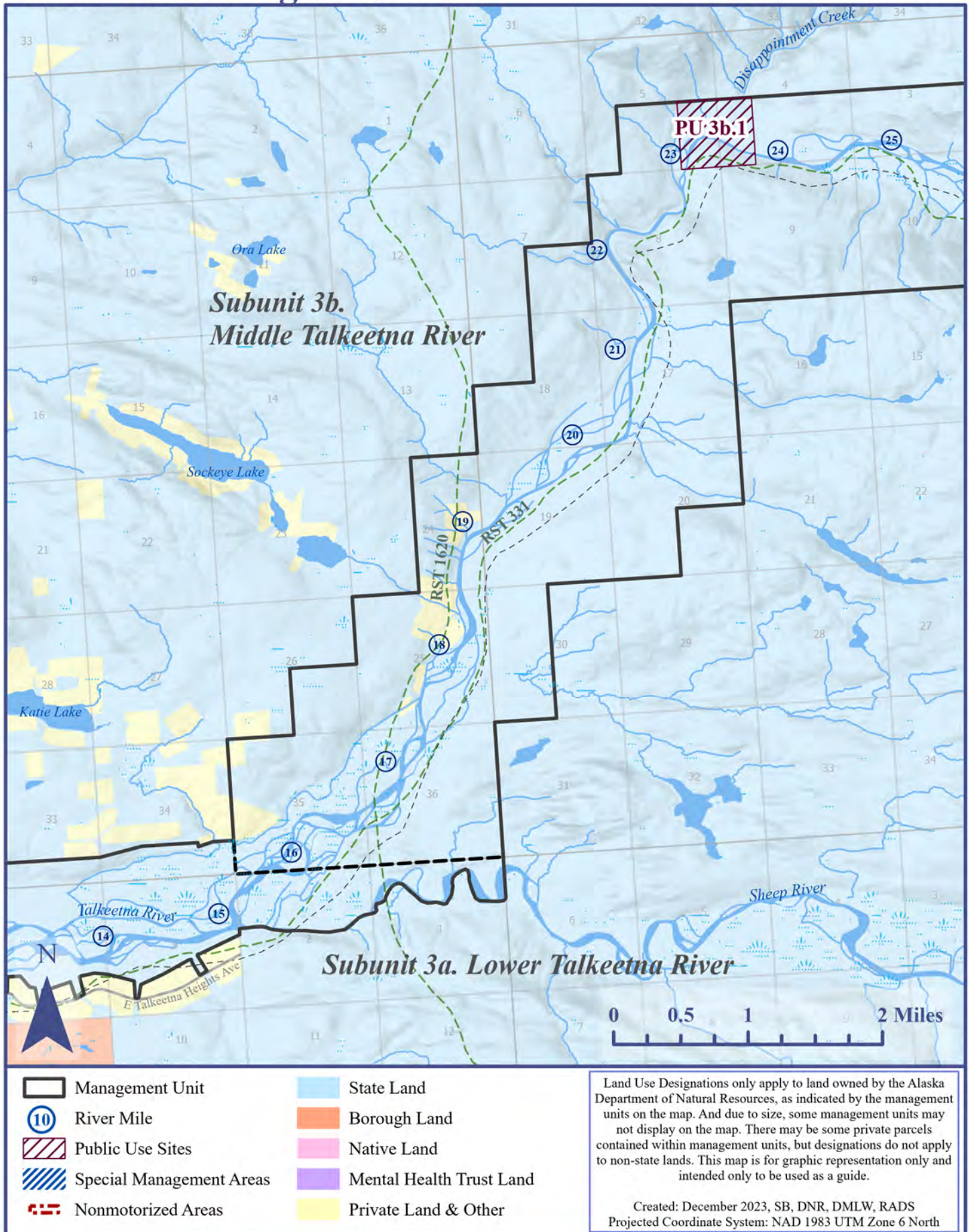
Talkeetna River Management Unit

MAP 2



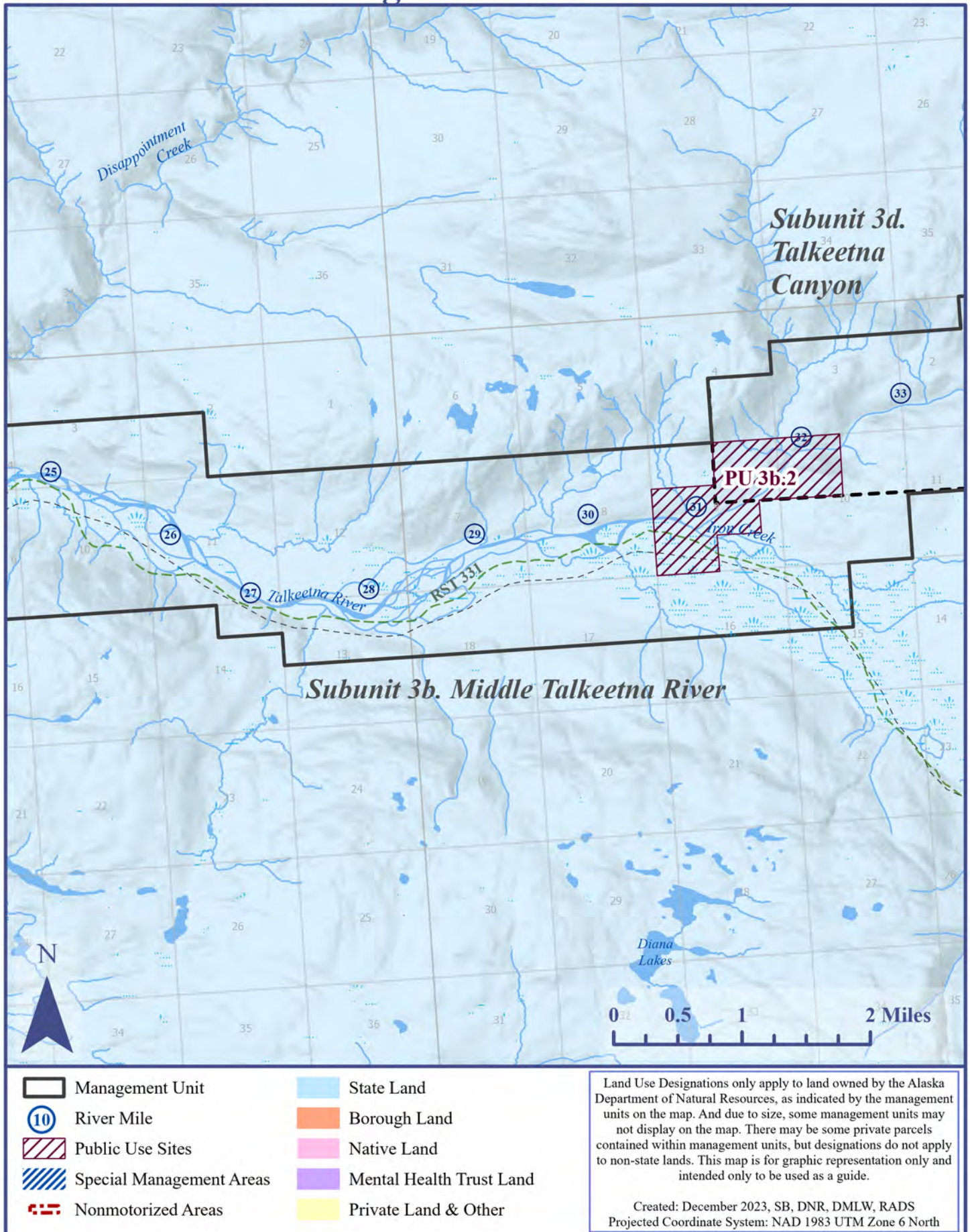
Talkeetna Management Unit

MAP 3



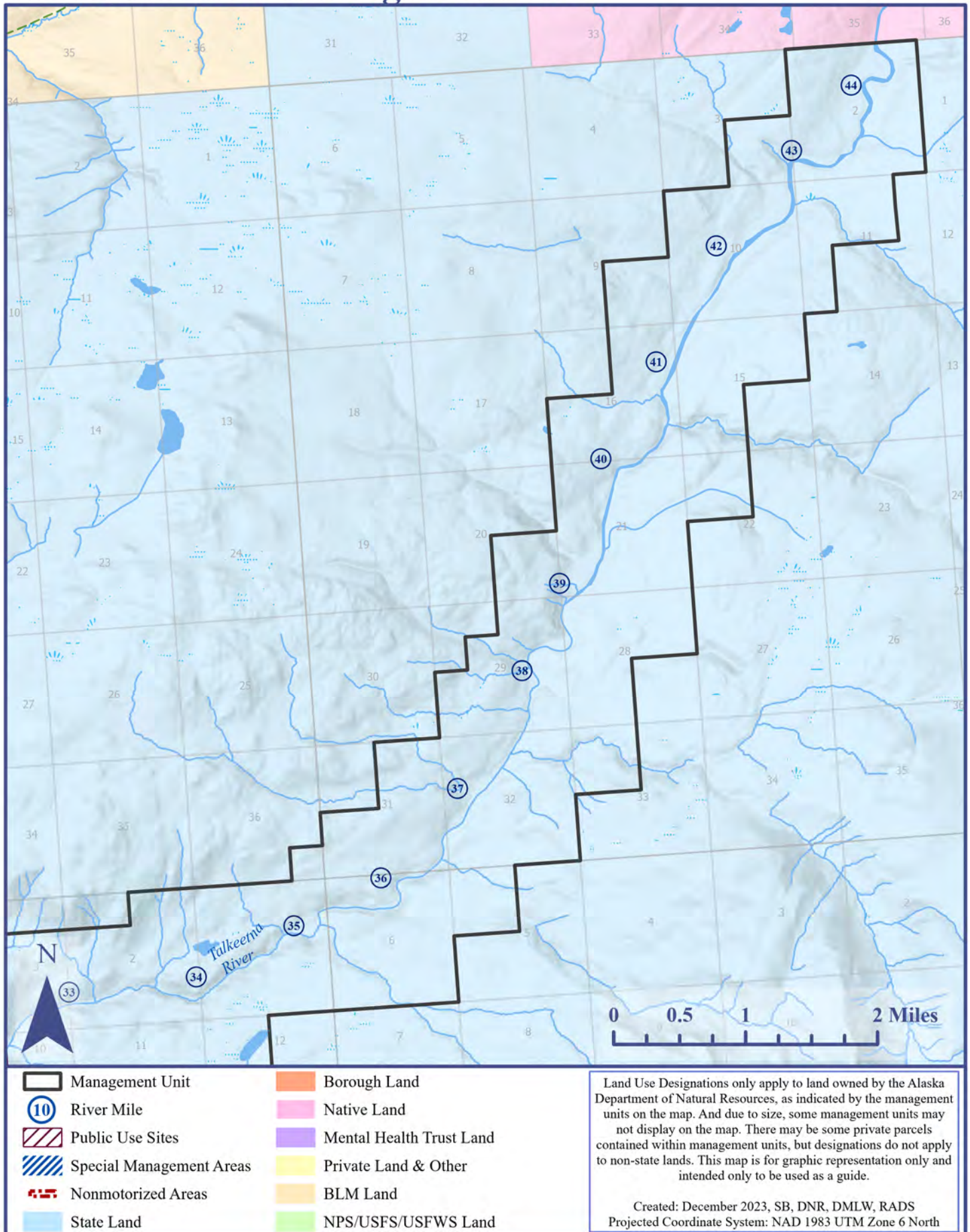
Talkeetna River Management Unit

MAP 4



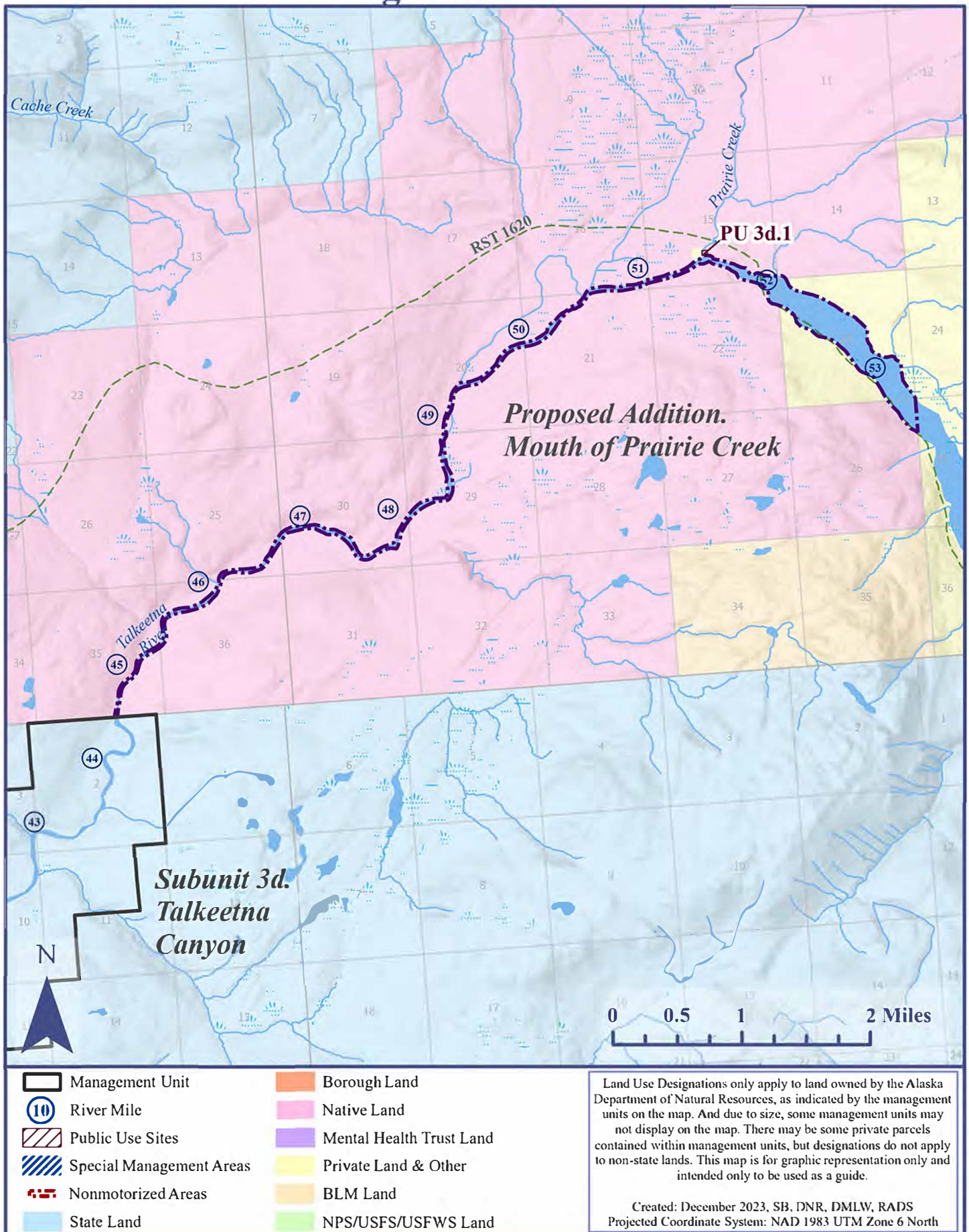
Talkeetna River Management Unit

MAP 5



Talkeetna River Management Unit

MAP 6



4. Lake Creek Management Unit

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4. Lake Creek Management Unit

Background

Miles of River, RM 0 to RM 64

The Lake Creek management unit begins at the confluence of Lake Creek and the Yentna River and extends to a point about 2 miles above Chelatna Lake on Snowslide Creek. During a large flood event in 2012, the active channel at the mouth of Lake Creek migrated west. In addition to including a mile-wide corridor along Lake Creek, the Recreation River includes Chelatna and Shovel lakes and their adjacent uplands, and the shorelands under Bulchitna Lake, near the mouth.

Land Status

State	63,429 acres
Private & Other	582 acres
Total	64,011 acres

River Characteristics

Lake Creek begins at Chelatna Lake which is surrounded by the Alaska Range. The creek is moderately narrow and swift-moving, dropping 24 feet per mile until it reaches RM 8, where it widens and slows down. The creek ranges in width from 75 to 250 feet, and from 2 to 6 feet in depth. A meandering stream with a point bar and cutbank channel, the estimated winter low flows are between 460 and 538 cfs. Summer highs are between 879 and 2,214 cfs. Because most of the upper river runs through a canyon, most flooding in a 100-year flood event would occur below RM 12.5.

The scenic qualities of Lake Creek are perhaps the highest of all the Recreation Rivers. Starting at Chelatna Lake, there are many good views of the Alaska Range. The steep walls of the canyon and the clear water also contribute to the creek's scenic qualities. Some human modifications at Chelatna Lake and the mouth detract slightly from the visual quality of Lake Creek.

Fisheries

Species Present

Arctic grayling	Coho salmon
Burbot	Pink salmon
Chinook salmon	Rainbow trout
Chum salmon	Sockeye salmon

Sockeye salmon run the length of Lake Creek and spawn in Chelatna Lake, and tributary lakes and streams. Coho, Chinook, and pink salmon run up to Chelatna Lake and begin to spawn as far downstream as the mouth of Lake Creek. Chum salmon spawn from the mouth to the canyon. The tributaries of Camp and Sunflower creeks provide extensive Chinook and coho salmon spawning habitat. Burbot, rainbow trout and grayling are present throughout the management unit, particularly at the mouths of tributaries.

Sport Fishing

The peaks in recreation and fishing activity on Lake Creek correspond with the Chinook and coho salmon runs. These are approximately June 4 to July 4, and July 4 to August 20, respectively. Also, in the late summer/early fall, many people fish for rainbow trout. Float trips targeting resident species from Chelatna Lake to the mouth are common throughout the summer.

The more popular fishing areas are the mouth of Lake Creek and the Bulchitna Lake outlet. Other popular spots include the mouths of Coffee, Sunflower, Camp, Home, and Yenlo creeks. The outflow of Lake Creek and some deep holes near Quiet Lake are also regularly fished.

Special Regulations

Special management waters for rainbow trout are designated from a marker located a quarter mile upstream of the stream that drains Bulchitna Lake upstream to Chelatna Lake. Only unbaited, single-hook, artificial lures may be used upstream of this marker.

Wildlife

Moose

Moose are distributed throughout the management unit year-round. There are significant fall and winter concentrations of moose in the sections of the corridor adjacent to the Yenlo Hills area. Other important moose concentration areas are located in Sunflower, Camp, Home, and Yenlo creeks.

Bear

Black bear and brown bear are also distributed throughout the unit, brown bear being perhaps more prevalent. Brown bear tend to concentrate along portions of Lake Creek when the salmon are in the creek. Brown bear concentrate along Sunflower, Camp, Home, and Yenlo creeks during salmon spawning seasons.

Bald eagles

Occupied and unoccupied bald eagle nests have been observed in recent surveys from the Lake Creek Mouth subunit to the Middle Lake Creek subunit. Nest trees are primarily in black cottonwood, always over fifty feet tall, and usually within twenty feet of the river.

Trumpeter Swans

Trumpeter swans have been observed in recent surveys from the Lake Creek Mouth subunit to the Upper Lake Creek subunit. Significant nesting habitat occurs in areas northwest of the corridor.

Hunting

Moose and bear hunting occurs along the upper and lower portion of Lake Creek and along Sunflower, Camp, Home and Yenlo creeks.

Trapping

Recreational trapping for otter, muskrat, mink, beaver, fox, coyote, wolf and marten occurs along Sunflower, Camp, Home, and Yenlo creeks.

Subsistence

This area is utilized by Skwentna residents for the Tier II moose hunt. The southern portion of the corridor is utilized for subsistence berry harvest as well.

Camping

Lake Creek provides a popular four- or five-day float trip. The campsites that receive the heaviest use are on Chelatna Lake, major tributary junctions, and below Bulchitna Lake.

Access

Lake Creek is accessible primarily by air. Boaters also travel up the Yentna River to the mouth of Lake Creek from the Dshka or Susitna landings on the Susitna River. Due to numerous rocks and a steep gradient, powerboat access is currently limited to the lower river and Chelatna Lake.

Management Guidelines for the Unit

Boating Restrictions

- 1. Non-motorized area** Exit of Lake Creek canyon where whitewater ends to exit of Chelatna Lake where whitewater begins (RM 8.1 - 51.2).

Season: May 15 - August 20.

Justification: This segment provides high quality float trips and is not currently used by powerboats. This restriction is intended to protect high quality whitewater trips from future technologies which could provide powerboat access and result in use conflicts. Although there is private property along this segment, it is better accessed by air or ground vehicles rather than boats because of the whitewater. The flat-water stretches on Chelatna Lake and the lower creek are used by powerboats. There are no boating restrictions on these sections.
- 2. Voluntary no-wake area** Along north bank of the Yentna River near the mouth of Lake Creek.

Season: May 15 - August 20.

Justification: Boat anglers are concentrated near the mouth of Lake Creek during the fishing season. To protect public safety, signs will be placed on a one-year trial basis in this area. The effectiveness of these signs will be evaluated at the end of the trial period. If the signs are found to be effective in protecting public safety, they will be posted during succeeding seasons. Because the Yentna River is so wide, the no-wake area is not intended to apply to most of the southern 3/4 of the Yentna River used for floatplane landings and powerboat travel up and down the main river where wakes are unlikely to be a hazard to fishermen at the mouth of Lake Creek.

4a. Lake Creek Mouth Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 0 to RM 3.5

This subunit extends from the confluence of Lake Creek and the Yentna River to a point just above the outlet of Bulchitna Lake. During a large flood event in 2012, the active channel at the mouth of Lake Creek migrated west. It also includes Bulchitna Lake shorelands and a one-mile section of the Yentna River. The Yentna River is wide and turbid while Lake Creek is generally clear. Contiguous wetlands make up about half of the uplands in this subunit.

Land Ownership

State	2,071 acres
Private & Other	127 acres
Total	2,198 acres

Fisheries

Most of the salmon fishing on Lake Creek is within this subunit and centers near the mouth of Lake Creek and the outlet of Bulchitna Lake.

Wildlife

An active bald eagle nest has been sighted in recent surveys of this subunit close to the mouth of Lake Creek. Trumpeter swans have not been observed in recent surveys.

Development

There are several lodges and cabins within the subunit with others adjacent to the subunit. Many of the cabins are used commercially and host at least a few clients every year. Many of these are no longer on the active channel after the channel migrated west during the large flood event of 2012.

There is a dock located at a lodge located on the eastern channel and several on Bulchitna Lake. Several docks are located just outside the subunit on Fish Lakes and along the Yentna River.

Access

There are several local footpaths and ORV trails associated with lodges, cabins, and public use near the mouth. There are also four section or seismic lines near the mouth. Only one of these appears to be used during the summer. Several of the ORV trails run from Bulchitna Lake to Lake Creek and are used to tow boats. A historic wagon road and RS 2477 right-of-way (RST 136) runs north from McDougal just east of the subunit.

The entire Lake Creek subunit receives ample snowcover during most years. The Iditarod, Iditarod Trail Invitational, and Iron Dog Classic races have been run on the Yentna River through this subunit in recent years. There is extensive winter travel by snowmachine and dog teams during the winter months. The Yentna River is a winter highway for both local residents and recreation users originating from points along the Parks Highway, and Petersville and Knik roads. A series of seismic lines and tractor trails connecting Shulin, Amber, and Trapper lakes is used to transport heavy equipment. In Winter, private property owners and recreational users also travel up the lower part of Lake Creek. Open water prevents snowmachines from running through the canyon.

Floatplane landing areas in the subunit include Bulchitna Lake and the Yentna River. Floatplanes are often moored along the Yentna River in the subunit. There is one airstrip just upstream from the mouth of Lake Creek on a bar in the Yentna River (outside the subunit) by a private lodge.

Heritage Resources

The heritage site potential is high. There are historic mining trails, the nearby settlement of McDougal, and signs of historic cabins.

Management Intent

Class III. This subunit receives intense public use in a relatively small area during the Chinook and coho salmon runs. The area with the highest concentration of lodges in or adjacent to the Recreation Rivers is at the mouth of Lake Creek. A large proportion of the use is from fly-in commercial use. Bulchitna Lake is a popular fly-in access point for bank fishing. The subunit provides high quality fishing, hunting, and camping opportunities for powerboaters, floaters, and bank users. It also supports salmon spawning and winter moose habitat. There are winter opportunities for snowmachining, dog mushing, and cross-country skiing, particularly along the Yentna River. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat, while accommodating uses associated with private lands. The subunit will be managed to provide opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized use. There are no non-motorized areas in this subunit. A voluntary no-wake area was established at the mouth to protect public safety in this high-use fishing area.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. None.

Iditarod National Historic Trail. A connecting trail from this historic trail passes through the subunit and terminates at McDougal (See Chapter 2 guidelines on *Heritage Resources*, *Iditarod National Historic Trail*).

Public Access. Public access between Bulchitna Lake and Lake Creek exists on the east side of the lake along the small tributary that flows from Lake Creek. ADNR will not encourage trespass on private land by marking the trail or trailheads that are on private land. However, obtaining public access between the Bulchitna Lake and the Lake Creek is a high priority.

Public Information. Because of intense use by bank fishermen, a kiosk may be established near Bulchitna Lake that displays information on the Recreation Rivers. A sign was established near the mouth of Lake Creek identifying Lake Creek as a Recreation River.

Anchor Buoys. Anchor buoys are allowed at the mouth under the regulations proposed in Chapter 2, *Shoreline Development, Anchor Buoys*.

Public Use Sites

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 4a.1 Lake Creek Mouth (RM 0). This is a heavily used area for fishing and camping. Numerous boats and floatplanes tie up on the banks. The parcel was acquired by ADF&G for sport fish access and Recreation purposes. It shall be retained and managed for that purpose

PU 4a.2 Bulchitna Lake (RM 3.5). The lake is state owned. The lands around the lake are in borough and private ownership. The trail to the lake and the shorelands along the river adjacent to the lake are heavily used for fishing, camping, hiking, and access to the lake. ADNR should develop a box toilet at this location to accommodate use.

4b. Lower Lake Creek Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 3.5 to RM 6.8

This subunit extends from just above Bulchitna Lake to the canyon exit. There are considerable contiguous wetlands in the lower half of the subunit, and no significant wetlands above RM 5.

Land Ownership

State	1,962 acres
Private & Other	38 acres
Total	2,000 acres

Wildlife

Bald eagle nests and trumpeter swans have not been observed in recent surveys of this subunit.

Development

There is a private cabin and a dock on Lake 216 (elevation) near RM 6.

Access

The McDougal-Peters Creek Trail (RST 136) parallels the subunit on the east side and is used for winter access by snowmachines and cat trains. Floatplanes may access the area on a small lake near RM 6. A trail leads from it to the creek. Winter use is light. Snowmachines are used to access private property. Several seismic lines that cross the subunit are used in the winter.

Management Intent

Class I. Most of the summer use of this subunit is from powerboaters seeking alternate fishing holes upstream from the mouth and by floaters ending float trips originating on Chelatna Lake. The subunit features high quality fishing, camping, and hunting opportunities in a relatively remote, undeveloped setting. The creek contains salmon spawning habitat. In winter, the subunit receives limited snowmachine, dog mushing, and skiing use. There are some private lands along the west bank of the river. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance recreation opportunities, primitive setting, and fish and wildlife habitat. Maintaining an essentially unmodified natural environment will be the focus of management. The numbers of encounters on the river and at campsites will be managed to provide a remote recreation experience. The subunit will be managed to provide opportunities for motorized and non-motorized access. There are no restrictions on motorized access in this subunit.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. None.

Standards for Interaction Impacts. See management guidelines for Subunit 4d, Upper Lake Creek.

Voluntary Trip Scheduling Program. See management guidelines for Subunit 4d, Upper Lake Creek.

Special Management Area

See *Special Management Areas* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations of sites are shown on the map at the end of this unit.

SMA 4b.1 Lake 216' (elevation) Campsite (RM 6) This special management area (SMA) includes the land and water in and adjacent to an unnamed lake. A private parcel and structural improvements are located in the SMA,

including a cabin and dock. The SMA will be managed as a Class II area. Class II area guidelines will apply. The area will be managed to accommodate access to private lands in and adjacent to the SMA while providing for and enhancing public recreation opportunities and fish and wildlife habitat.

Public Use Site

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 4b.1 Lake 216' (elevation) Campsite (RM 6). This campsite shows evidence of frequent use throughout the fishing season.

4c. Middle Lake Creek Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 6.8 to RM 41.8

This subunit extends from the canyon exit to the mouth of Camp Creek. Below RM 25, there is no significant amount of wetlands. From RM 25 to RM 30, 20 to 30 percent of the area is wetland, mostly contiguous. Above RM 30, 75 to 90 percent of the uplands are contiguous wetlands.

Land Ownership

State	25,440 acres
Private and Other	163 acres
Total	25,603 acres

Wildlife

Recent surveys have found occupied and unoccupied bald eagle nests near the creek. Trumpeter swans have also been documented in recent surveys of the subunit. Brown bear densities along Yenlo Creek are high during the summer and fall when salmon are running. The Yenlo Hills and Yenlo Creek area have high fall and winter densities of moose.

Development

There are several private cabins and docks on Quiet Lake, and as well as on Lake 1,015' (elevation) near RM 27.

Access

There is an extensive system of off-road vehicle trails in the wetlands along the northeast side of the creek (from RM 32 to RM 42 and from RM 17 to RM 21 [the Quiet Lake area]) which receive year-round use. These trails are used heavily during hunting season. There are a few airstrips associated with private cabins adjacent to the subunit, but these are not used for activities associated with the creek. The McDougal-Peters Creek Trail (RST 136) parallels the Lake Creek unit on the east side from RM 0 to RM 14. It is used as a tractor trail and off-road vehicle trail. Several lakes in the subunit are used for floatplane access including Quiet Lake, Shovel Lake, Lake 1,015' (RM 27), and Martana Lake (RM 26).

There are extensive areas of open bogs adjacent to the subunit used for snowmachine travel. Two long seismic lines crossing the lower subunit are used in winter, in conjunction with the summer off-road vehicle trails. In previous winters snowmachines were used for trapping in the area.

Heritage Resources

The heritage site potential is high due, in part, to the history of mining in the area.

Other Activities

This subunit historically contained many active mining claims, however, all mining claims in the subunit are now closed. Located at RM 10, there is an active mining lease that was converted from a mining claim that predated mineral entry closure for the corridors. The historic and currently active mining community of Collinsville is located above Camp Creek 8 miles northwest of the subunit. A dredge, cabin ruins, and cables, visible at RM 7.5, are remnants of historic mining activity in the corridor.

Management Intent

Class I. This subunit is primarily used by floaters during the ice-free season. The subunit provides high quality fishing, camping, whitewater, and hunting opportunities in a remote, scenic setting. Class II, III, and IV whitewater provide risk values when floating the river. Private lands are located primarily around lakes. Because the canyon has open water in winter, there is little winter use. The creek and its tributaries contain salmon spawning habitat. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance recreation opportunities, a primitive setting, and fish and wildlife habitat, while accommodating uses associated with private lands. With the exception of uses associated with private lands, the focus of management will be on maintaining an essentially unmodified natural environment. The numbers of encounters on the river and at campsites should be maintained at a low level to provide for a remote recreation experience. Management of activities on existing mine leases will focus on providing opportunities for mineral extraction while avoiding or minimizing negative impacts on recreation, public access, habitat, and water quality. Maintaining public

use sites will be a high priority. The subunit will be managed to provide non-motorized opportunities during the fishing season with the exception of access to mine locations, private lands, and special management areas.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. See management guidelines for the Lake Creek Management Unit in this chapter.

Standards for Interaction Impacts. See management guidelines for Subunit 4d, Upper Lake Creek.

Voluntary Trip Scheduling Program. See management guidelines for Subunit 4d, Upper Lake Creek.

Special Management Areas

See *Special Management Areas* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations of sites are shown on the map at the end of this unit.

SMA 4c.1 Quiet Lake (RM 20). This SMA includes the land and water in and adjacent to Quiet Lake. Several private parcels and structural improvements are located in the SMA including cabins, docks, and trails connecting with Lake Creek. The SMA will be managed as a Class II area. Class II area guidelines will apply. The area will be managed to accommodate access to private lands in the SMA while providing for and enhancing recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat. An airstrip may be constructed on a public easement that exists west of the lake. Seasonal motor restrictions do not apply within the SMA.

SMA 4c.2 Martana Lake and Two Unnamed Lakes (RM 24-28). This SMA includes the land and water in and adjacent to Martana Lake, and two unnamed lakes. Several private parcels and structural improvements are located in the SMA including cabins, docks, and trails. The SMA will be managed as a Class II area. Class II area guidelines will apply. The area will be managed to accommodate uses associated with private lands in the SMA while providing for and enhancing recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat. Seasonal motor restrictions do not apply within the SMA.

SMA 4c.3 Shovel Lake (RM 32). This SMA includes the land and water in and adjacent to Shovel Lake. Several private parcels and structural improvements are located adjacent to the SMA. There is a primitive trail connecting Shovel Lake with the river. The SMA will be managed as a Class II area. Class II area guidelines will apply. The area will be managed to

accommodate access to private lands adjacent to the SMA while providing for and enhancing recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat. Seasonal motor restrictions do not apply within the SMA.

SMA 4c.4 Primitive Landing Area (RM 39). This SMA includes only a large gravel bar in the middle of the creek that has been traditionally used for wheelplane landings. This SMA will be managed as a Class I area and Class I guidelines will apply. Although the landing area may not be improved, wheelplane landings on this bar will continue to be allowed although upper Lake Creek is designated a non-motorized area. This exception for wheelplane landings does not apply to helicopters or boats on the river adjacent to the gravel bar.

Public Use Sites

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 4c.1 Upper Hole (RM 7.9). This site provides fishing and camping opportunities at the point where motor restrictions begin upstream.

PU 4c.2 Yenlo Creek Junction (RM 13.5). This site receives high public use for camping and fishing. It is a well-known destination point for float trips down the river.

PU 4c.3 Two Unnamed Campsites (RM 20.8 and RM 21). These are frequently used for fishing and camping.

PU 4c.4 Home Creek Junction (RM 35.5). This site receives high public use for camping and fishing. It is a well-known destination point for float trips down the river.

4d. Upper Lake Creek Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 41.8 to RM 51.2

This subunit extends from a point just above the mouth of Camp Creek to a point below Chelatna Lake. Seventy-five to ninety percent of the uplands in this subunit are contiguous wetlands.

Land Ownership

There are 8,226 acres of state land.

Wildlife

Bald eagle nests have not been sighted in recent surveys within this subunit. Trumpeter swans have been documented in recent surveys.

Access

Originating in the Petersville area, two old tractor trails, Mills Creek-Cache Creek Trail (RST 145) and Youngstown-Home Lake Trail (RST 1608), cross the river at RM 43 and RM 46 respectively. These trails were once used to support mining activities and are used in winter. Some winter recreation users travel from the Petersville Road area, via the Forks Roadhouse and Pickle Creek, and to access the upper creek and Chelatna Lake. Travel is dependent on overflow on the Kahiltna River. There is a floatplane landing area on Rock Lake west of RM 45. It is connected by a trail to Lake Creek, and is used as a pick-up point for commercial float trips beginning at Chelatna Lake.

Heritage Resources

The heritage site potential is high due in part to the mining history in the area.

Management Intent

Class I. This subunit is primarily used by floaters during the ice-free season. The subunit provides high quality fishing, camping, whitewater, hunting, and other recreation opportunities in a remote scenic setting. Class II, III, and IV whitewater provide risk values when floating the river. The creek and its tributaries support salmon spawning habitat. There are no private lands or mining claims in the subunit. Because of its remote location, there is only limited winter use by snowmachiners. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance recreation opportunities, a primitive setting, and fish and wildlife habitat. Some limited development may occur associated with an area that is open to new mineral entry under lease. Management of activities on active mining locations will focus on providing opportunities for mineral extraction while avoiding or minimizing impacts on recreation, public access, habitat, and water quality. With the exception of uses associated with mining locations, the focus of management will be to maintain an essentially unmodified natural environment. The numbers of encounters on the river and at campsites should be maintained at a low level to provide for a remote recreation experience. Maintaining sites for public use will be a high priority. With the exception of the area open to mineral entry, the subunit will be managed to provide opportunities for a non-motorized experience during the fishing season.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. See management guidelines for the Lake Creek Management Unit described earlier in this chapter.

Mining. The uplands between Camp Creek (RM 41) and Sunflower Creek (RM 46) are open to new mineral entry under lease but the remainder of the subunit is closed to new mineral entry. A 300-foot staking setback from ordinary high water from Lake, Camp, and Sunflower creeks. The public use sites at the mouth of Camp and Sunflower creeks remain closed to new mineral entry. Mining guidelines listed in Chapter 2 under *Surface Resources*, apply. These guidelines are designed to protect water quality, recreation, and habitat values.

Standards for Interaction Impacts. The upper section of Lake Creek has among the lowest use levels and offers one of the most remote, wilderness-oriented float trips in the Recreation Rivers system. The cost, logistics, and technical skill required to float the river limit use to experienced whitewater floaters. Key indicators for the type of experience desired by these floaters include camp encounters (or camp sharing – the percentage of nights camping within sight or sound of another party) and river encounters (the number of other parties seen on the river). Users define Upper Lake Creek as a remote, wilderness whitewater float trip, and excessive river and camp encounters can detract from this experience.

In order to provide for the type of experience Lake Creek floaters currently receive and prefer, prescribed standards for these impacts are:

1. No camp encounters on Lower, Middle, and Upper Lake Creek (Subunits 4b, 4c and 4d).
2. Less than five river encounters per day.

Monitoring these impacts and establishing a relationship between them and use levels can be administratively difficult. However, through a monitoring program, it is possible to generate the necessary information.

At current use levels, these standards are rarely exceeded. However, use is increasing, and competition may be anticipated. If this occurs, and users are forced to share camps or see more than three groups per day on more than twenty percent of trips, a use limit system may be developed and implemented.

Voluntary Trip Scheduling Program. For most users, current use levels do not cause impacts greater than the standards described above. However, a minority of parties experience greater impact levels than users consider acceptable particularly at public use sites. If use increases, this problem could continue until a use limit is developed. To prevent the mandatory trip scheduling associated with a use limit, a voluntary trip scheduling program administrated by ADNR may be implemented for Lower, Middle and Upper Lake Creek (Subunits 4b, 4c, and 4d) before limits are implemented.

Commercial and private trip leaders will be encouraged to register proposed trips as soon as they have been planned. ADNR will maintain a list and notify trip leaders when more than one trip has been scheduled for the same day (experience indicates that paired launches result in unacceptable impacts). It will be the trip leaders' responsibility to reschedule or otherwise alter trips if they so desire.

Public Use Sites

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 4d.1 Camp Creek Junction (RM 41.8). This site receives high public use for camping and fishing. It is a well-known destination point for float trips.

PU 4d.2 Sunflower Creek Junction (two sites) (RM 46). These two sites are located on either side of the river. They receive high public use for camping and fishing. The junction is a well-known destination point for float trips.

4e. Chelatna Lake Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 51.2 to RM 64

This subunit includes Chelatna Lake and the lower 2.5 miles of Snowslide Creek which drain into Chelatna Lake. The subunit also includes the uplands within a mile of the lake, and the uppermost segment of Lake Creek, downstream to a point where it begins to narrow and gain speed. Chelatna Lake is 7 miles long and less than a mile wide and is the largest lake in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley. The Alaska Range rises from its shores and Denali National Park borders on the north half of this subunit. The upper section of Lake Creek in this subunit is about 500 feet wide, slow, and placid. The areas around the south end of the lake and headwaters of the creek are about 90 percent contiguous wetland.

Land Ownership

State	25,730 acres
Private & Other	254 acres
Total	25,984 acres

Fisheries

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) occasionally operates a weir on the outlet of Chelatna Lake to count sockeye salmon escapement. A camp near this site is also used occasionally by ADF&G for northern pike eradication efforts.

Wildlife

Neither active bald eagle nor trumpeter swan nests have been sighted in recent surveys of this subunit.

Camping

Camping is common along Chelatna Lake.

Development

A lodge sits at the outlet of Chelatna Lake. Several private cabins are scattered around the lake, mostly on the north and east shores. Near the lodge, there is a dock, a boat storage area, and an airstrip.

Access

Most trails are concentrated near the south end of the lake. Regional trails connect with Collinsville and the Kahiltna River/Petersville Road. There are also a number of foot, off-road-vehicle, and truck trails adjacent to the lodge on Chelatna Lake and nearby cabins. The slopes near the remainder of the lake support only primitive game trails. Access to the cabins on the north and east sides of the lake is by boat or floatplane. Some recreation users travel from the Petersville Road in winter, via the Forks Roadhouse and Pickle Creek, to access upper Lake Creek and Chelatna Lake areas. Winter travel is dependent on overflow on the Kahiltna River.

The primary areas of the lake used for floatplane landing are near the lodge, the lagoon just downstream from the lodge, near the mouth of snowslide creek and near the mouth of Coffee Creek. The first two areas are used as drop-off and pickup points for lodge clients and the public. Snowslide and Coffee Creeks are used as stopover picnic areas for Alaska Range flightseeing trips.

Heritage Resources

The heritage site potential is high due to a long history of activity in the area.

1 Management Intent

2
3 **Class II.** This subunit is primarily used by floaters beginning their descent of Lake Creek,
4 sightseeing flights, and lodge-based recreation users. The lake contains important salmon
5 spawning habitat. The subunit provides high quality fishing, camping, and hunting
6 opportunities. The subunit is the most scenic in the Recreation Rivers, and is bounded on the
7 north by Denali National Park and the Alaska Range. Private lands are located along the
8 south and east shores of the lake. Because of its remote location, there is little winter use. The
9 subunit will be managed to provide and enhance recreation opportunities, a scenic setting,
10 and fish and wildlife habitat, while accommodating uses associated with private lands.
11 Maintaining public use sites is a high priority. The subunit will be managed to provide for
12 both motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities. There are no non-motorized
13 areas in this subunit.
14
15

16 Management Guidelines

17
18 **Boating Restrictions.** None.
19

20 **Chelatna Airstrip** (T27N, R12W, Sec. 13, SM). The Chelatna airstrip provides important
21 public access to Lake Creek, and surrounding land and water. It is strategically located at the
22 head of Lake Creek, and serves as the drop-off point for float trips and access to private lands
23 around the lake. No other wheelplane landing area exists in the vicinity. The airstrip is
24 managed as a remote, unmaintained public airstrip. As an unmaintained airstrip, it may be
25 improved or upgraded. It may receive maintenance on an as-needed basis, if included as a
26 line-item in a state agency's budget. The shoreline adjacent the west end of the airstrip is also
27 important for mooring boats, inflating rafts, and as a drop-off point for floatplanes. Actions
28 in this area should ensure that public access to this area is maintained.
29

30 **Public Information.** A kiosk should be established near the Chelatna Airstrip and at one of
31 the primary floatplane drop-off points on Chelatna Lake to display information on the
32 Recreation Rivers. A sign should also be established near the outlet of the lake identifying
33 Lake Creek as a Recreation River.
34

35 **Foot Trails.** Development of hiking trails from the lakeshore to above tree line will provide
36 access to open tundra areas and Denali National Park which surrounds Chelatna Lake.
37 Development of these trails is a low priority for ADNR. Proposals to build hiking trails from
38 applicants or the National Park Service should be considered particularly if they provide
39 pedestrian access to the scenic high country around the lake.
40
41
42

Public Use Sites

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 4e.1 Unnamed Campsite (RM 54.0). This site is frequently used by floatplanes to drop off floaters. Floaters often camp at this site. ADNR should develop a box toilet at this location to accommodate occurring use.

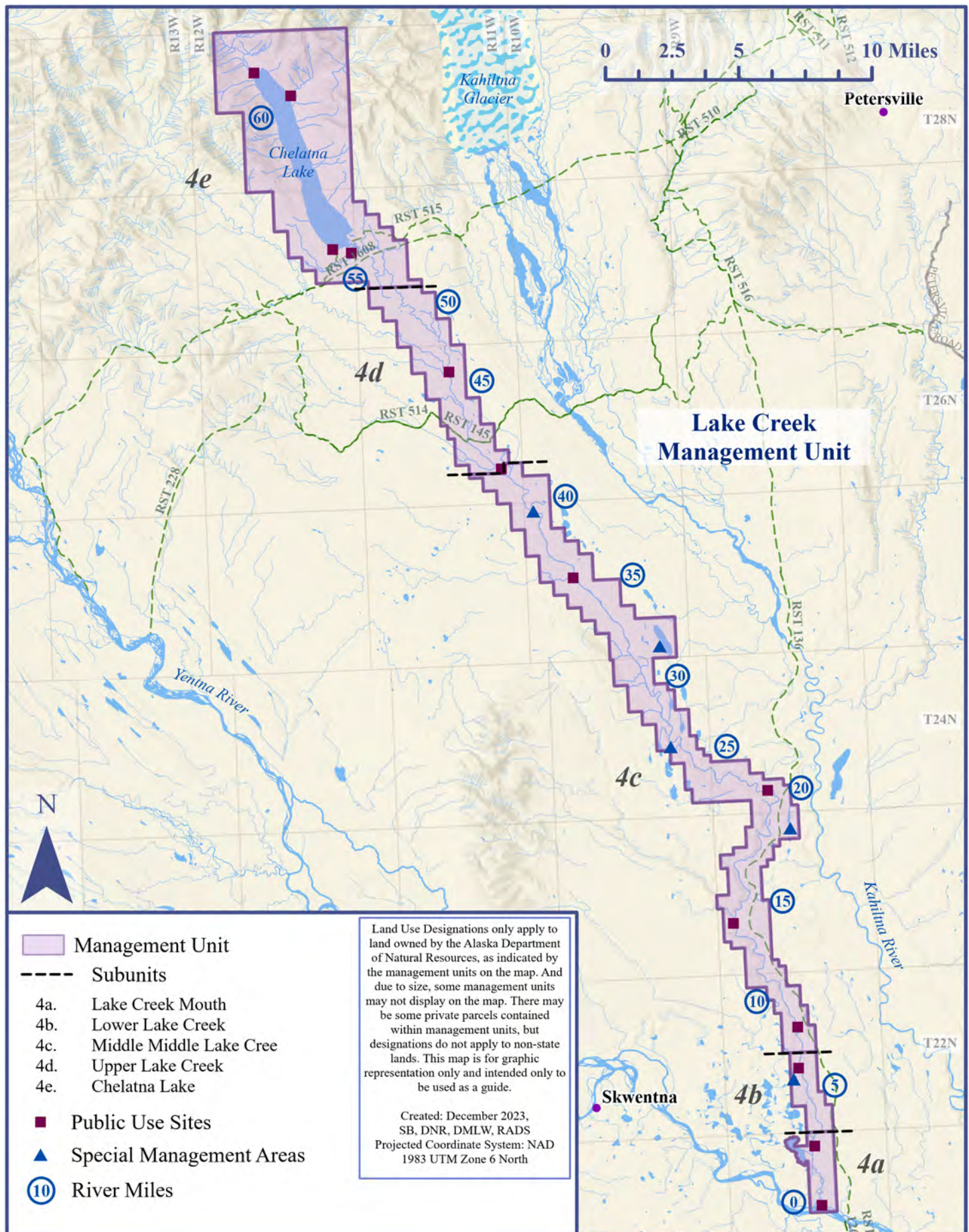
PU 4e.2 Chelatna Airstrip (RM 54.3). This site is frequently used by both wheel and floatplanes for dropping off recreationists, private landowners, and lodge clients. Residents of the lake also store their boats on the banks adjacent to this airstrip. The site is also used for camping prior to float trips.

PU 4e.3 Coffee Creek (RM 60.5). The mouth of this creek is frequently used by floatplane pilots and their passengers as a stopover during sightseeing trips of Denali.

PU 4e.4 Snowslide Creek (RM 61.5). The mouth of this creek is frequently used by floatplane pilots and their passengers as a stopover during sightseeing trips of Denali.

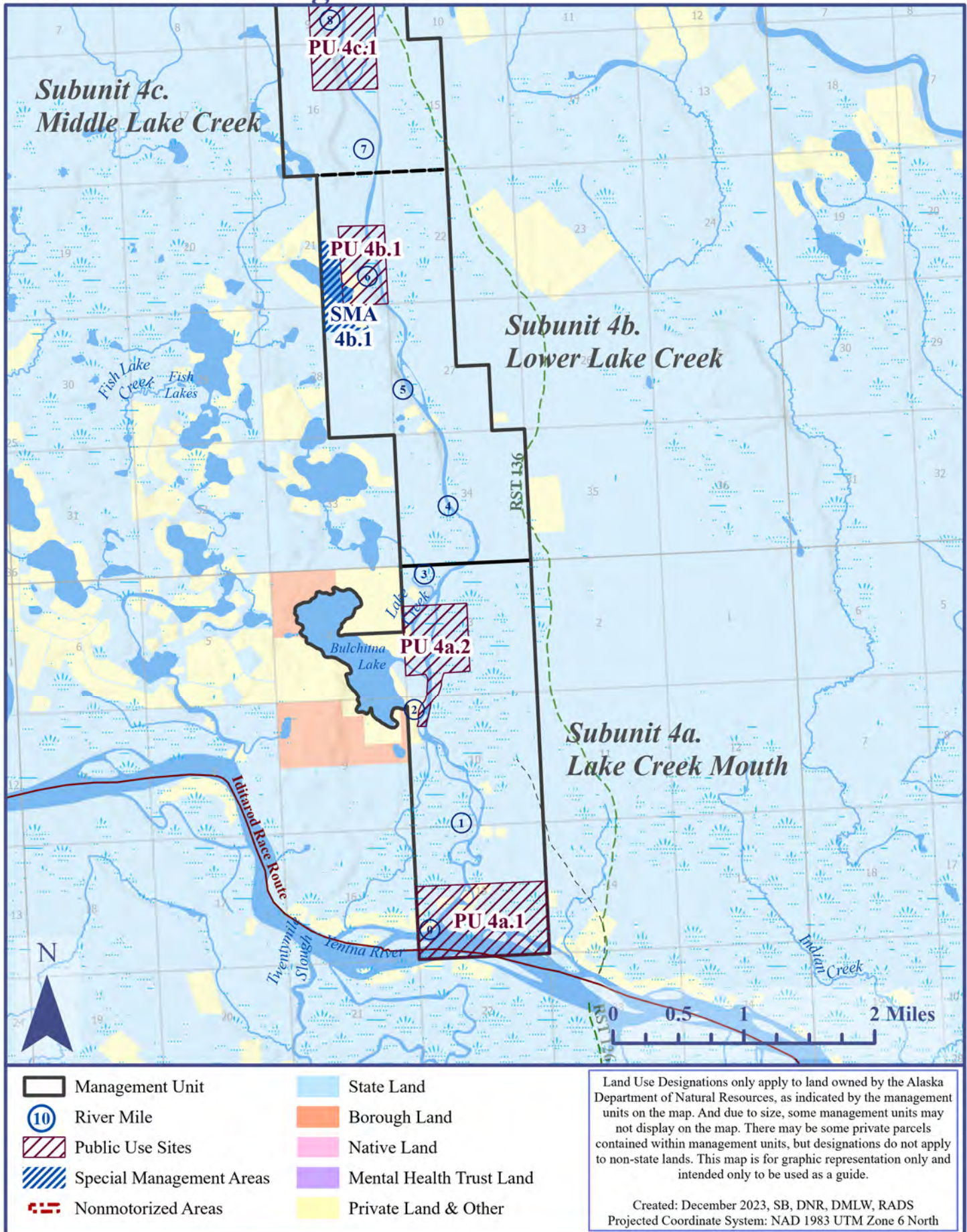
SUSITNA BASIN RECREATION RIVERS MANAGEMENT PLAN

LAKE CREEK



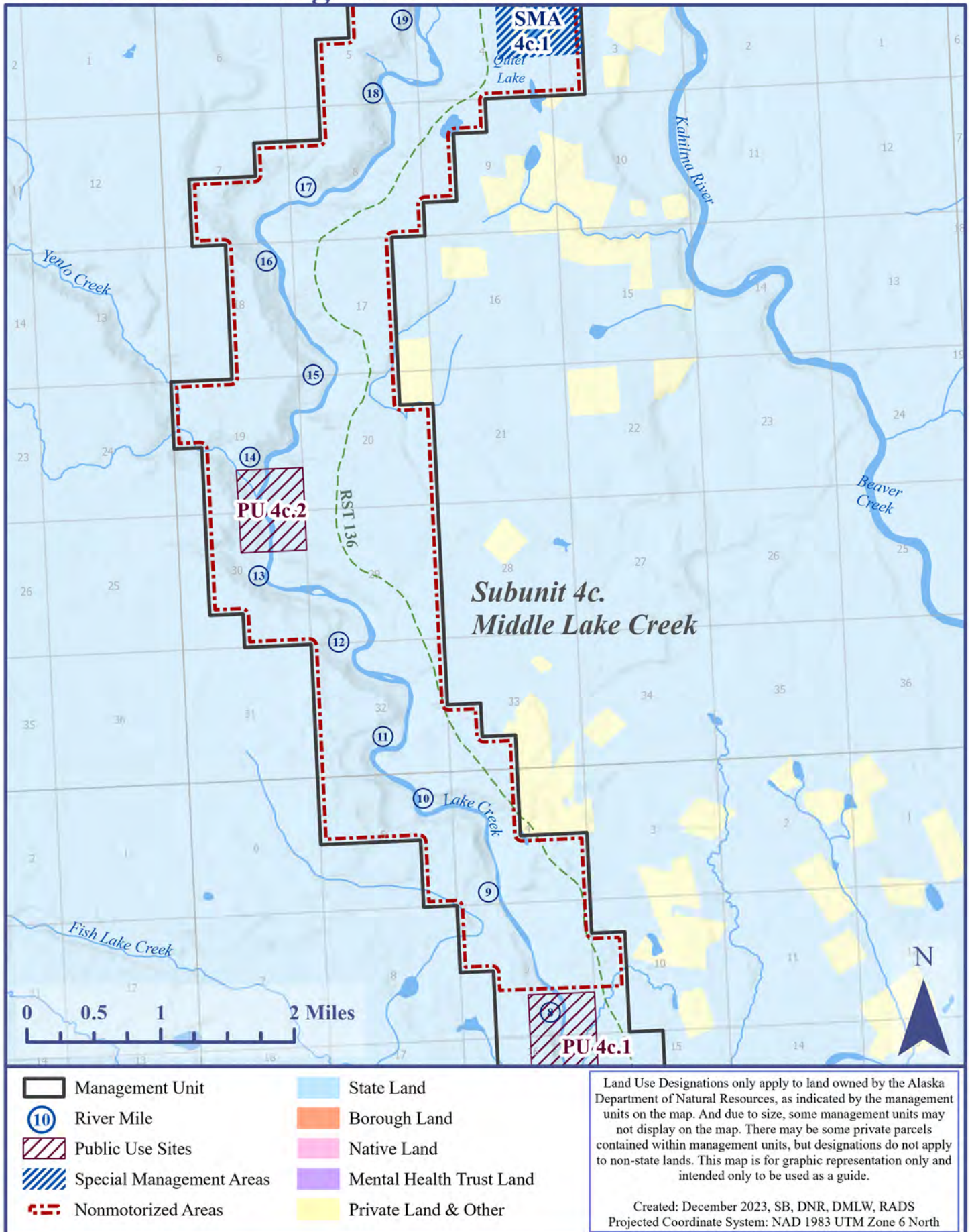
Lake Creek Management Unit

MAP 1



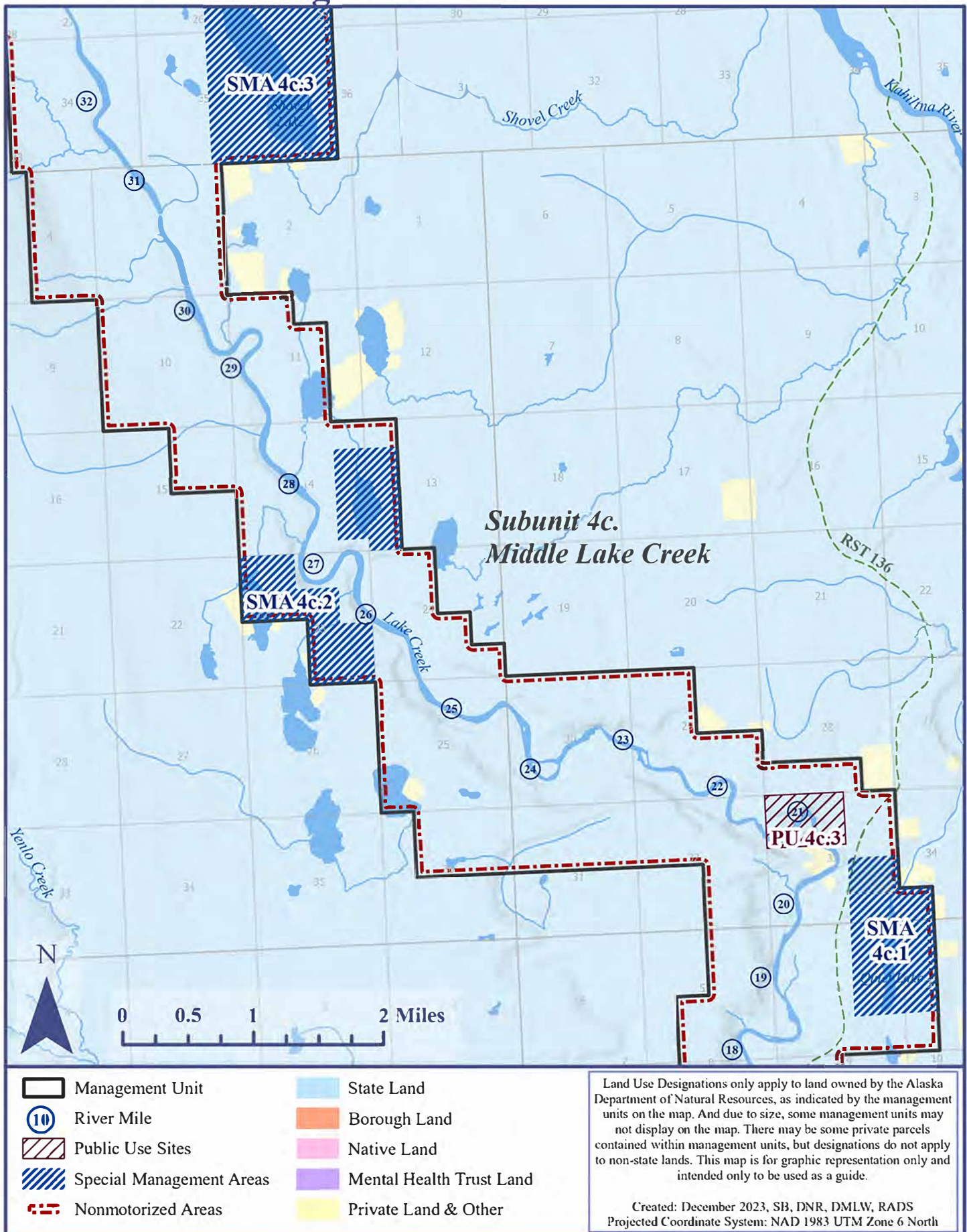
Lake Creek Management Unit

MAP 2



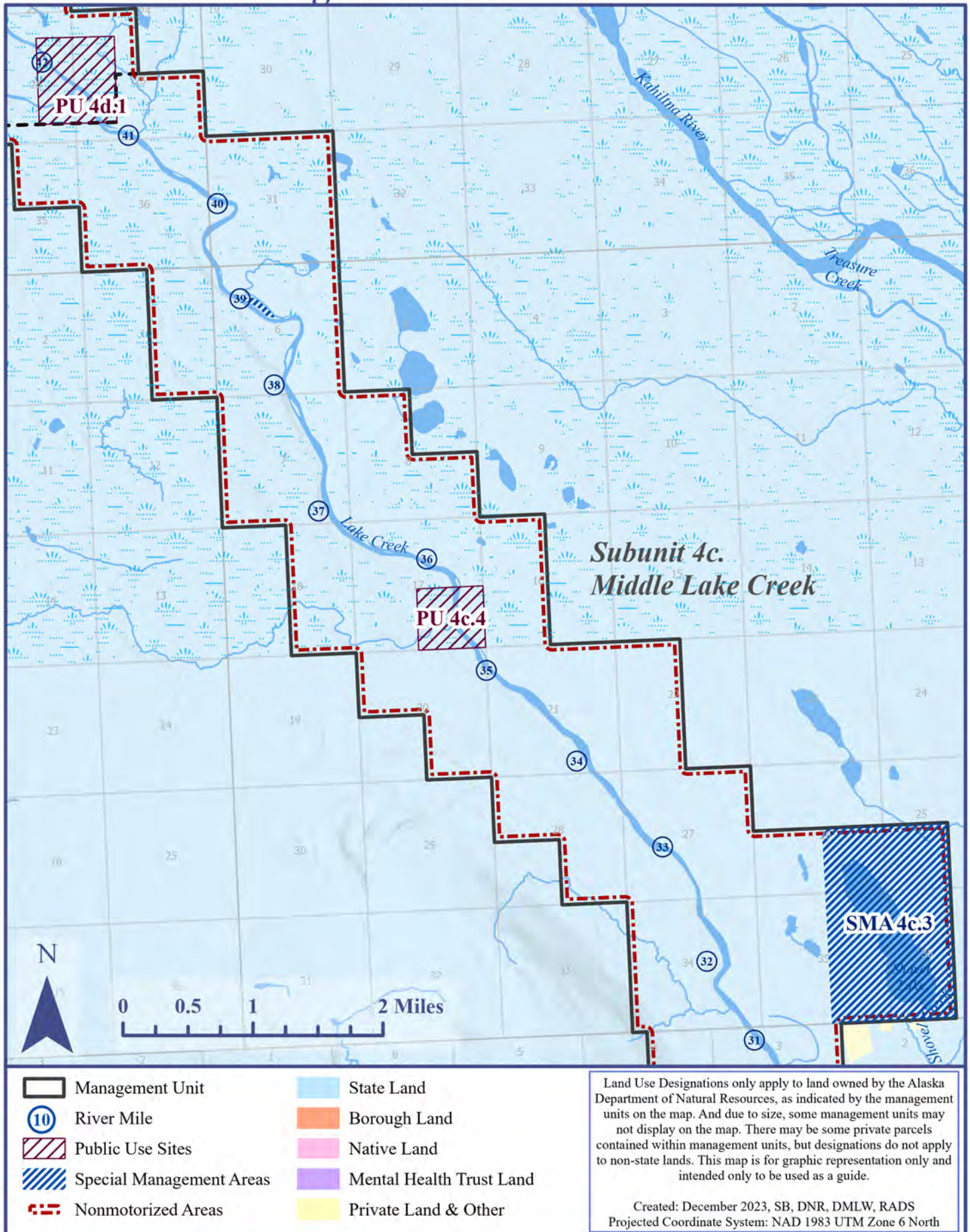
Lake Creek Management Unit

MAP 3



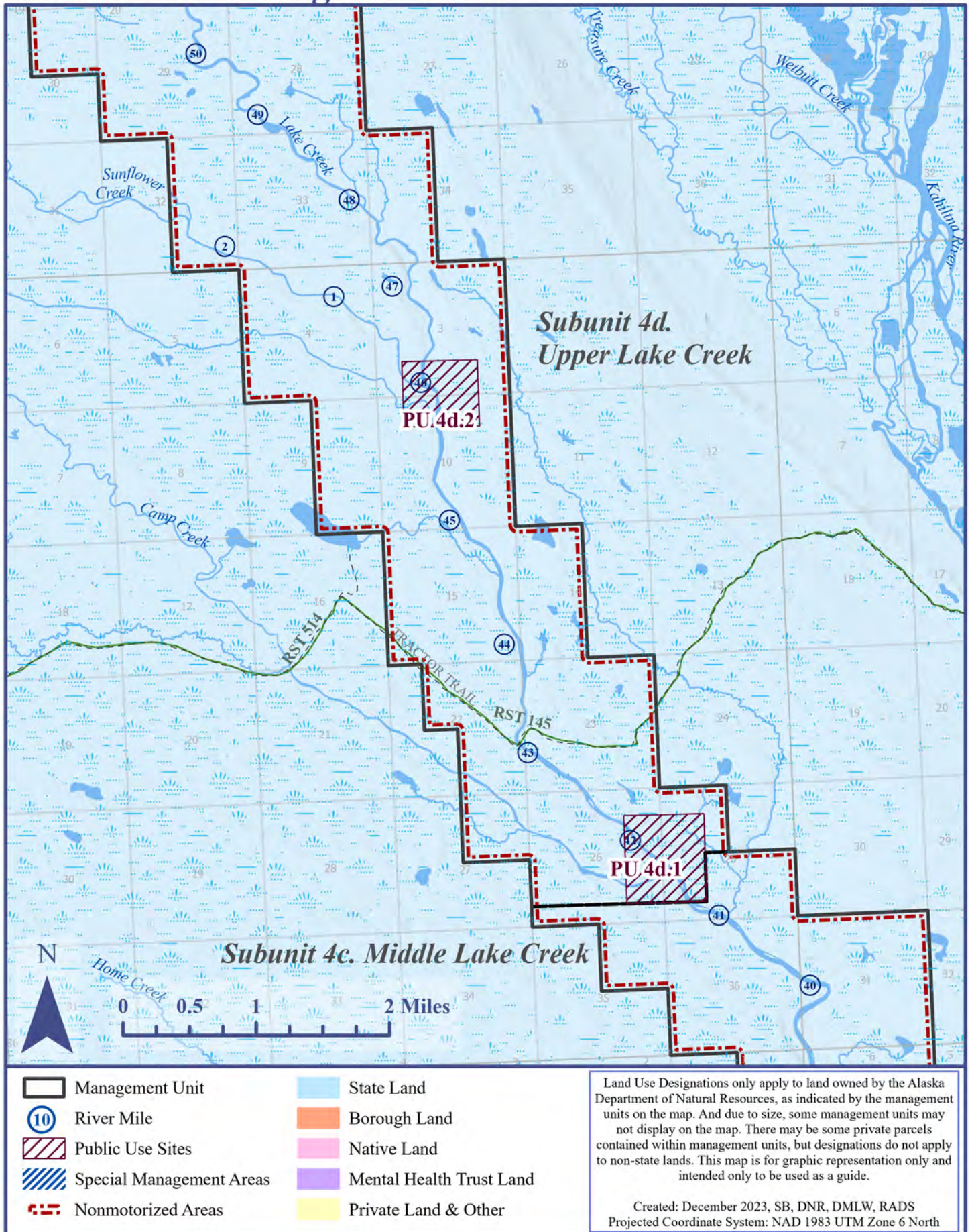
Lake Creek Management Unit

MAP 4



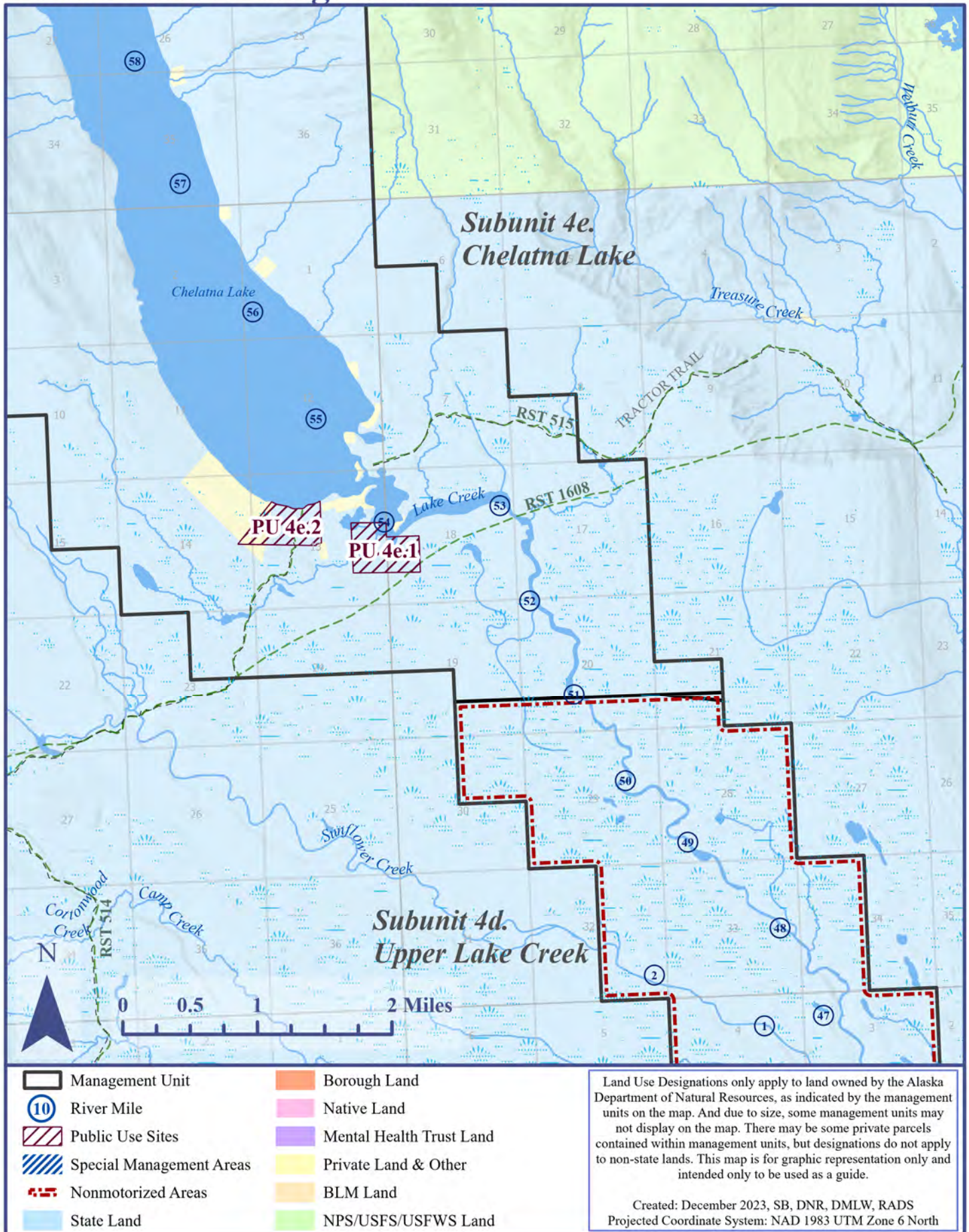
Lake Creek Management Unit

MAP 5



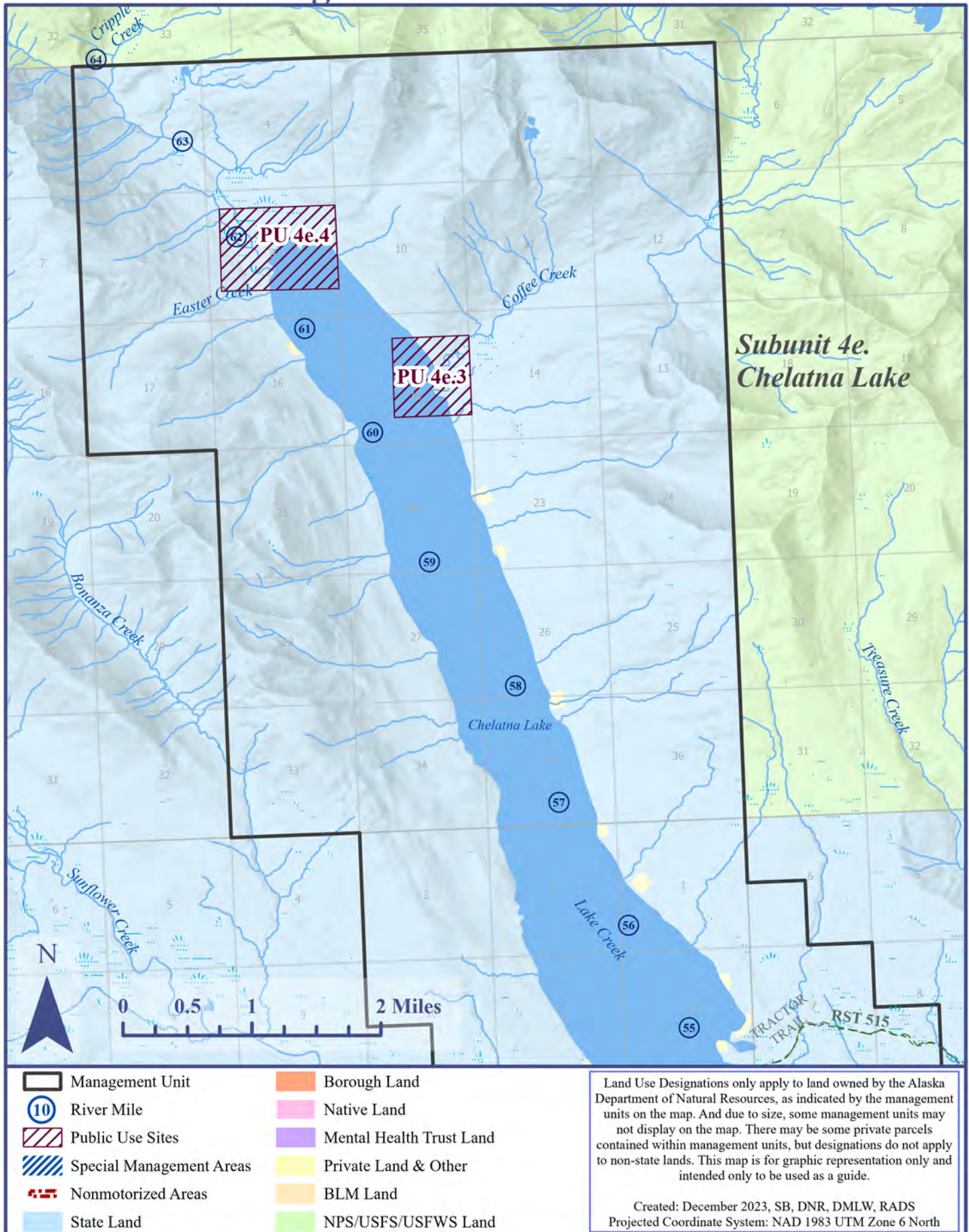
Lake Creek Management Unit

MAP 6



Lake Creek Management Unit

MAP 7



5. Talachulitna River Management Unit

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5. Talachulitna River Management Unit

Background

Miles of River

This unit includes 64.5 miles of the Talachulitna River and 22 miles of Talachulitna Creek.

Land Ownership

State	51,734 acres
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	917 acres
Private & Other	147 acres
Total	52,798 acres

River Characteristics

The Talachulitna River begins in the Beluga Mountains and runs 65 miles to join the Skwentna River. Talachulitna Creek is the main tributary of the Talachulitna River. The lower half-mile of the following major tributaries are also included in the Recreation River: Grayling, Friday, Deep, and Thursday creeks. The management unit also includes about 3 miles of the Skwentna River. Important lakes include Judd, Talachulitna, and Wolf lakes. Multiple measurements were made from 1989 to 1992 and found discharges as low as 83 cfs in the winter as well as discharges that can exceed 2000 cfs in the summer.

The clear water of Talachulitna Creek, good views of the Alaska Range and Beluga Mountain, and the steep-walled canyon of the Talachulitna River make this unit very scenic. The limited number of man-made improvements detract only slightly from the visual character.

Fisheries

Species Present

Arctic grayling	Pink salmon
Chinook salmon	Rainbow trout
Chum salmon	Sockeye salmon
Coho salmon	

Chum, coho, and pink salmon begin spawning at the mouth, and reach as far up as RM 39, the confluence of Talachulitna Creek and Talachulitna River. Sockeye salmon mostly spawn in Judd Lake and also reach Talachulitna Lake. Chinook salmon migrate most of the way up the Talachulitna River, and as high as Judd Lake on Talachulitna Creek and to the

1 headwaters of the Talachulitna River. Rainbow trout and grayling are found throughout the
2 management unit.

3 4 *Sport Fishing*

5
6 The peaks in recreation and fishing activity on the Talachulitna River correspond with the
7 Chinook and coho salmon runs. These are approximately June 20 to July 4, and August 1 to
8 August 21, respectively. The more popular fishing areas are the mouth, tributary junctions,
9 the confluence with Talachulitna Creek, and the outlet of Judd Lake. Float trips from Judd
10 Lake to the mouth are common for rainbow trout and Arctic grayling.

11 12 *Special Regulations*

13
14 The Talachulitna River is designated as a catch-and-release special management area for
15 rainbow trout. Sport fishing is by unbaited, artificial lure, single hook only.

16 17 **Development**

18
19 There are four lodges operating along the river. Most private cabins and commercial lodges
20 are around Judd Lake, at RM 20, and near the mouth. Water-dependent improvements such
21 as docks, stairs, and storage sheds are associated with most of these lodges and cabins. There
22 is one private airstrip near the mouth.

23 24 **Wildlife**

25 26 *Moose*

27
28 Moose are generally distributed throughout the unit. Fall moose hunting occurs along the
29 upper and middle reaches of the unit. There are significant fall concentrations of moose in the
30 upper reaches of the Talachulitna Creek below Judd Lake. Hunters fly in and float the river
31 to a lower pick-up point.

32 33 *Bear*

34
35 Guided brown and black bear hunting occurs along the upper river. During the salmon
36 spawning season, black bear concentrate on the Talachulitna River between the confluence
37 with the Skwentna River and Talachulitna Creek.

38 39 *Bald Eagles*

40
41 Bald eagle nests have not been observed in recent surveys. However, bald eagles are known
42 to roost along the river and feed on salmon when available.

Trumpeter Swans

Trumpeter swans are known to nest within the corridor and have been documented in recent surveys. Lakes with suitable nesting habitat also occur adjacent to the corridor.

Hunting

The Talachulitna River and Creek are important for moose and bear hunting from Judd Lake to the Skwentna River confluence. Most of the hunting occurs from rafts or boats or from tree stands along the river.

Trapping

Trapping for beaver, coyote, fox, mink, muskrat, otter, wolf and wolverine occur in the corridor during spring and winter seasons.

Subsistence

Residents of Skwentna utilize the area around the Talachulitna River for subsistence. There is a Tier II moose hunt within Game Management Unit 16B which takes place in an area encompassing the Talachulitna River. The area is also utilized for subsistence harvest of small mammals and furbearers as well as upland game.

Camping

The Talachulitna River receives mostly overnight use. Camps mostly occur at sites identified by the plan as the public use sites on the upper river. Camping is also common at the mouth.

Access

The river mouth is accessible to powerboaters traveling up the Skwentna River, and by floatplanes and wheelplanes. The airstrip is in private ownership. ORV use is primarily by private landowners. The middle river is accessible by floatplanes, wheelplanes, and powerboats. Judd Lake supports frequent floatplane traffic associated with lodges and float trips. Small jets boats are also used on the lake and along the river. Float trips typically start at Judd Lake and end at RM 19 or at the Skwentna River. Travel within the corridor by helicopter also occurs. Winter travel is limited primarily to local residents because of the area's distance to the railbelt.

Management Guidelines for the Unit**Boating Restrictions**

1. *Non-motorized area* Talachulitna Creek mouth to exit of Judd Lake (RM 0.0-17.1)
 Season: June 15 - August 20.
 Justification: This segment is rarely used by powerboaters. This river segment provides high quality float trips. This restriction will protect high quality float trips from future technologies which could allow powerboat access, resulting in conflicts. Restrictions were not proposed for the mouth or the middle portion of the Talachulitna River because of frequent use by powerboats and private property. The Talachulitna River above the forks has no restrictions because it is used infrequently by powerboaters but is inaccessible to floaters.
2. *Non-motorized area* From the Talachulitna River confluence with Thursday Creek to Hell's Gate (RM 9.0 to 18.0)
 Season: June 15 - August 20.
 Justification: See justification above.

5a. Mouth of Talachulitna River Subunit**Background**

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 0 to RM 2.8

This reach extends from the confluence of the Talachulitna and Skwentna rivers to the bottom of the Talachulitna River canyon. The river here is from 75 to 120 feet wide. Upland areas contain few wetlands: 10 percent contiguous, and 5 percent non-contiguous. The subunit also includes 3 miles of the Skwentna River.

Land Ownership

State	2,649 acres
Private & Other	70 acres
Total	2,719 acres

Fisheries

This is a very popular fishing area.

Wildlife

Bears concentrate near the mouth during the summer. Active bald eagle and trumpeter swan nests have not been sighted in recent surveys in this subunit.

Development

Private cabins are located near RM 3 and RM 0.4. ADF&G has a cabin on the east side of the river at RM 0.5. There are various improvements along the river associated with the lodges including steps, ramps, equipment storage, and platforms. They are particularly prevalent on the east side of the river where banks are steep and improvements were needed to access private uplands. Boats are stored adjacent to each lodge. The US Geological Survey (USGS) maintains a gauging station on the Skwentna River. The Alaska Department of Natural Resources has also installed a temporary river gauge near the mouth. Boats are stored by the public at the mouth of the Talachulitna River and at the mouth of Shell Creek. Floatplanes have established primitive tie-ups on a beach on the north side of the Skwentna River near the USGS gauging station.

Access

There are several local foot trails associated with the lodges and cabins, including trails connecting lodges on either side of the Talachulitna River. There is one private airstrip near the river mouth that is not open to the public. The other landing area is on a bar at the mouth of Shell Creek at low water. Floatplanes also land adjacent to the USGS gauging station on the Skwentna River and near the mouth of the Talachulitna River. In the winter, the mouth of the river is used primarily by local residents for snowmachining. Recreation use is low because of its distance from Skwentna and the railbelt.

Heritage Resources

The heritage site potential is high because several ancient house pits have been found in the area.

Other Activities

There are some mining claims on the north side of the Skwentna River outside of the river corridor.

Management Intent

Class II. Because of its relatively remote setting, this subunit receives only moderate use by recreationists during the snow-free seasons. This subunit features high quality bank and boat fishing for lodge-based users and powerboat users in a scenic, natural setting. The area also features camping opportunities and important take-out points for float trips. The area has

some development with a few commercial recreation lodges located to take advantage of the remote, wilderness setting of adjacent areas. This subunit receives higher use than other areas along the Talachulitna River. The subunit contains salmon spawning and moose wintering habitat. It will be managed to provide and enhance recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat while accommodating uses associated with private lands. Maintaining public use sites will be a high priority. There are no non-motorized areas in this subunit.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. None.

Iditarod National Historic Trail. The primary trail and a connecting trail passes through this subunit paralleling the north side of the Skwentna River. See guidelines in Chapter 2, *Heritage Resources, Iditarod National Historic Trail*.

Public Use Sites

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 5a.1 Skwentna Canyon (USGS Gaging Station). A small bar across from this station on the Skwentna River is frequently used by floatplanes to pick up floaters. The river adjacent to the site is straight and deep, and some pilots prefer landing there rather than at the mouth of the Talachulitna River. ADNRR is working to organize a boat storage area at this site.

PU 5a.2 Mouth of the Talachulitna River (RM 0.0). This site is frequently used for fishing and camping. During late season when the river is low, the banks and trails along the banks are frequently used because the river is too low to navigate. Multiple lodges are located upstream of site.

PU 5a.3 Exit of Canyon (RM 2.9). This site is used by people who walk and boat up from the river mouth and from lodges.

5b. Talachulitna River Canyon Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 2.8 to RM 18.3

This subunit extends the length of the Talachulitna River canyon. The channel width is 40 to 60 feet, and the current is relatively swift. The uplands include steep hillsides and cliffs. Less than five percent of the subunit is wetlands.

Land Ownership

State	10,688 acres
Private & Other	5 acres
Total	10,693 acres

Wildlife

Black bears concentrate along the river throughout this subunit during salmon season. Bald eagle nests have not been observed in recent surveys. Trumpeter swans and their young have been observed in recent surveys of the subunit.

Camping

The canyon is a frequent overnight stop-over point for float trips. However, there are fewer campsites than on the upper segments, because of the steep walls of the canyon.

Access

There is one off-road vehicle trail in this subunit around Dog Lake (RM 5). There is also a foot trail from Lake 430' (RM 3) to the river at RM 2.8. Because of the Class III rapids, boat use is primarily by raft or kayak. Dog Lake (RM 5) is used by floatplanes. A lake at RM 3, adjacent to the subunit, is used by floatplanes to access private cabins. A small landing area at RM 6.8 is used to access private land and fishing areas. Helicopters are also used for access within this subunit.

Management Intent

Class I. Because of its remote setting and difficult access, this subunit receives only moderate use by floaters during the snow-free season. This subunit features scenic floating, fishing, and camping opportunities. There is also potential for an adventurous powerboating opportunity during periods of high water. The area is remote, undeveloped, and has important wilderness, and fish and wildlife values. Two sets of Class II-III rapids enhance risk values associated when floating the river. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance recreation opportunities and fisheries values while protecting the primitive qualities of the area. Maintaining an essentially unmodified natural environment will be the focus of management attention. Social interaction levels will also be managed for low encounters to protect the quality of users' experiences. Maintaining public use sites will be a high priority. There are seasonal motor restrictions in the southern part of this subunit to provide a nonmotorized experience.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. See management guidelines for the Talachulitna River Management Unit described earlier in this section.

Landing Area in Canyon. A large gravel bar at RM 6.8 is used by wheelplanes for landing. This landing area should remain unimproved and continue to be available for wheelplane access.

Standards for Interaction Impacts. The non-motorized sections of the Talachulitna Creek and Talachulitna Canyon subunits have seen an increase in use levels in recent years due to opportunities to fish for Chinook salmon and improved access via helicopter. They also offer one of the most remote, wilderness-oriented float trips in the planning area. The cost, logistics, and technical skill required to float the river limits use to experienced whitewater floaters. Among these users, there is strong consensus about the type of experience offered on Talachulitna Creek and in the canyon, the impact levels acceptable for that experience, and the need for a permit system if impacts rise above those defined levels.

Key indicators for the type of experience desired by these floaters include camp encounters (or camp sharing – the percentage of nights camping within sight or sound of another party) and river encounters (the number of other parties seen on the river). Users define the Talachulitna as a remote, wilderness-like, whitewater float trip. Excessive river and camp encounters would detract from this experience.

In order to provide for the type of experience Talachulitna floaters currently receive and prefer, prescribed standards for these impacts are:

1. No camp encounters on Talachulitna Creek (Subunit 5d) and in Talachulitna Canyon (Subunit 5b).
2. Less than three river encounters per day in the above two subunits.

Monitoring these impacts, and establishing a relationship between them and use levels, can be administratively difficult. However, through a monitoring program, it is possible to generate the necessary information.

At current use levels, these standards are rarely exceeded. However, if use increases, competition may be anticipated in the future. If this occurs, and the users are forced to share camps or more than three groups per day on more than twenty percent of trips, a use limit system may be developed and implemented.

Voluntary Trip Scheduling Program. For most users, current use levels do not cause impacts greater than the standards described above. However, a minority of trips experience greater impact levels than users consider acceptable, particularly at public use sites. If use increases, this problem could continue until a use limit is developed. To prevent the mandatory trip scheduling associated with a use limit, a voluntary trip scheduling program

administered by ADNR may be implemented for the Talachulitna Canyon (Subunit 5b) and Talachulitna Creek (Subunit 5d) before limits are implemented.

Commercial and private trip leaders will be encouraged to register proposed trips as soon as they have been planned. ADNR will maintain a list and notify trip leaders when more than one trip has been scheduled for the same day (experience indicates that paired launches result in unacceptable impacts). It will be the trip leaders' responsibility to reschedule or otherwise alter trips if they so desire.

Public Use Sites

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 5b.1 Landing Area (RM 6.8). The natural gravel bar at this site is flat and frequently used by pilots as a landing strip. The landing area should continue to be available for public use. This site is at the same location as SMA 5b.1.

PU 5b.2 Thursday Creek Junction (RM 9). This site receives high public use for camping and fishing. It is a well-known destination point for float trips down the river.

PU 5b.3 Deep Creek Junction (RM 14). This site receives high public use for camping and fishing. It is a well-known destination point for float trips down the river.

PU 5b.4 Friday Creek Junction (RM 16). This site receives high public use for camping and fishing. It is a well-known destination point for float trips down the river.

PU 5b.5 Fishing Hole (RM 16.5). This site includes a popular fishing hole.

PU 5b.6 Hell's Gate (RM 18). This rapid is usually portaged all season because of the large, narrow drop. The site is highly scenic with high walls and large rapids. A portage trail follows the west bank. Floaters camp both above and below the drop. Powerboaters tie up just above the drop and walk down to Friday Creek to fish.

Special Management Area

See *Special Management Areas* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations of sites are shown on the map at the end of this unit.

SMA 5b.1 Primitive Landing Area (RM 6.8). This area includes a primitive landing area used by wheelplanes to access private land and by the public to access fishing areas. Extensive camping also occurs in the area. The Special

Management Area will be managed as a Class II area. Class II area management intent and guidelines will apply. The area will be managed to accommodate uses associated with private lands in the SMA while providing for and enhancing public recreation opportunities and fish and wildlife habitat.

5c. Middle Talachulitna River Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 18.3 to RM 32.5

This subunit extends from the top of the canyon up to the junction of the Talachulitna River and Creek. The river is winding and slower-moving, with oxbow sloughs. The river here is 40 to 60 feet wide. Contiguous wetlands encompass less than 5 percent of the corridor below RM 20, and about 50 percent from RM 20 to RM 32.5. Several oxbow lakes are adjacent to the river.

Land Ownership

State	8,195 acres
Private & Other	24 acres
Total	8,219 acres

Wildlife

Active bald eagle nests have not been sighted in recent surveys of this subunit. Several trumpeter swan and their young have been observed along the river corridor and on the oxbow lakes and sloughs. High concentrations of black bears occur along the river during salmon season.

Development

A few private cabins are located at the midpoint (RM 20). There is also a commercial lodge located on state land under lease near this location. Lodge and cabin owners store boats and boat-related equipment along the river.

Access

Most of the trails in the subunit are in the immediate vicinity of the existing lodge and cabins. They are used to access the river, a primitive landing area, woodlots, and adjacent cabins. There are also trails used in the winter by local residents that parallel the river. Fishermen also walk up tributaries on primitive trails or on river bars. Just downstream of the midpoint lodge is a floatplane landing area (RM 19). Some floaters from Judd Land end their trip here.

Boats and floatplanes are stored at the south end of this floatplane landing area. Powerboats are used to shuttle clients and local residents upstream to the cabins and lodges. During high water, floatplanes can taxi and land in front of the lodge. There is also a private airstrip in a swamp behind the lodge used by the lodge owner. In addition, the lodge uses a helicopter and stores it between the lodge and the river. Hilene Lake (adjacent to and east of the corridor) is used by floatplanes to access private land around the lake.

Winter access is mostly by local residents who live at the midpoint of the river. There is some trapping in the winter. Residents on adjacent lakes such as Trinity and Hilene lakes also use snowmachines. In the past heavy equipment has been transported to Coal, Friday, and Saturday creeks.

Heritage Resources

The heritage site potential is high for this area.

Other Activities

Timber has been harvested adjacent to all the cabins and the lodges at the midpoint for house logs, firewood, and milled wood.

Management Intent

Class I. Because of the overlapping use between floaters and powerboaters, this subunit receives higher use than adjacent subunits. This subunit features high quality fishing and camping opportunities for floaters and lodge-based powerboaters. The area is moderately developed with commercial lodges located to take advantage of the remote, primitive setting. The subunit contains important salmon spawning habitat. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance these recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat. While existing development at moderate levels is consistent with this intent, new development on state lands will be minimized. Maintaining public use sites will be a high priority. There are no non-motorized areas in this subunit. The management intent for the special management area location in this subunit is described below.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. None

Boat Storage. A public boat storage area should be designated near the cluster of private land in this subunit and the floatplane landing area at RM 19. See *Shoreline Development, Boat Storage* in Chapter 2.

Special Management Area

See *Special Management Areas* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations of sites are shown on the map at the end of this unit.

SMA 5c.1 Private Lands (RM 20). There are several private parcels and a state lease with a commercial lodge in this area. Floatplanes, wheelplanes, and helicopters land in the area. There are also a number of boats and planes moored on the banks in the summer. The Special Management Area (SMA) will be managed as a Class II area. Class II area guidelines will apply. This area will be managed to accommodate uses associated with private lands in the SMA while providing for and enhancing recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat.

Public Use Sites

PU 5c.1 Grayling Creek Junction (RM 25.5). This site is a frequent destination point for floaters and powerboaters. The site is a well-known fishing hole. There is a prominent, sheltered campsite nearby and gravel for campsites immediately downstream of the confluence.

PU 5c.2 The Forks (RM 32.5). This site is a popular destination point for floaters and powerboaters. The site is a well-known fishing hole. There is also a large gravel bar used for camping.

5d. Talachulitna Creek Subunit**Background**

Miles of River/River Characteristics, Talachulitna Creek, RM 0 to RM 17

This subunit extends from the confluence of Talachulitna Creek and the Talachulitna River, up Talachulitna Creek to a point just below Judd Lake. Talachulitna Creek is clear and shallow, and about 20 to 30 feet wide. The corridor contains about 60 percent contiguous wetlands and 5 percent non-contiguous wetlands.

Land Ownership

State	9,542 acres
Private & Other	5 acres
Total	9,547 acres

Fisheries

Chinook salmon fishing occurs within the subunit from mid-June through season closure in mid-July. Fishing for Coho salmon occurs mid-August through mid-September.

Wildlife

Trumpeter swans and their young have been observed along the river corridor and in ponds located in the subunit. Active bald eagle nests have not been sighted in recent surveys of this subunit.

Development

There is an abandoned caterpillar on the south bank of the river at RM 7.0. This vehicle was being transported from upper Saturday or Friday Creek to upper Coal Creek when it broke down and was abandoned. There is one cabin on private land in this subunit on the north bank of the Creek at RM 6.8.

Access

Primitive trails exist from the lodge to points downstream. A loop trail has been cut on the north side of the river. There is evidence of heavy off-road vehicle use between the cabin at RM 6.8 and the cabins on the east side of Trinity Lakes. Off-road vehicle trails between RM 6 and RM 9 also parallel the river on the north side. Access within the subunit via helicopter has increased. Winter access to Trinity Lakes and Judd Lake is limited to snowmachines. Winter use is low but increasing and guided tours are being lead in this area onto Beluga Mountain. Some winter trapping and spring bear hunting occurs in the area.

Heritage Resources

The heritage site potential is high in this subunit.

Management Intent

Class I. Because of its remote setting, this subunit receives only moderate use by floaters who start their trips at Judd Lake and by bank fishermen who walk downstream from Judd Lake. This subunit features high quality floating, fishing, and camping opportunities. The area is remote, undeveloped, and has high wilderness and wildlife values. Sweepers and other hazards present risk values associated with floating the river. The river contains important spawning habitat. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance recreation opportunities, wilderness, fish, and wildlife qualities of the area. Maintaining an essentially unmodified natural environment will be the focus of management attention. Maintaining public use sites will be a high priority. Social interaction levels will also be managed for low

levels to protect the quality of users' experiences. There are seasonal motorized restrictions in this unit to provide a non-motorized experience.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. See management guidelines for the Talachulitna River Management Unit described earlier in this section.

Standards for Interaction Impacts. See Subunit 5b, Talachulitna River Canyon.

Voluntary Trip Scheduling Program. See Subunit 5b, Talachulitna River Canyon.

Public Use Sites

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 5d.1 Trinity Creek Junction (RM 4.5). This site is popular for fishing and camping.

PU 5d.2 Unnamed Campsite (RM 14). This site is frequently used for fishing and camping.

PU 5d.3 Unnamed site (RM 16.5). This site is a popular fishing area used by clients who walk down from the lodge on Judd Lake. ADF&G has a 4.99-acre parcel, which provides public access to the outfall of Judd Lake and the Talachulitna River.

5e. Judd Lake Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, Talachulitna Creek RM 17 to RM 22

This subunit includes Judd and Talachulitna lakes. Less than 10 percent of the area around the lakes is contiguous wetland.

Land Ownership

State	3,110 acres
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	917 acres
Private & Other	43 acres
Total	4,070 acres

Fisheries

The Talachulitna Creek inlet and outlet on Judd Lake are popular fishing areas.

Wildlife

Trumpeter swans have been documented by USFWS near Talachulitna Lake and the surrounding wetlands. Bald eagle nests have not been sighted in recent surveys of this subunit.

Camping

The most heavily used campsite is at the inlet to Judd Lake.

Development

There are nine cabins on Judd Lake. A lodge has a large dock, an airstrip and several other structures at the creek outlet. ADF&G manages 5 acres of land at the outlet of Judd Lake. This parcel is the location of an ADF&G cabin that it utilized during the operation of the Judd Lake weir. This parcel also provides public access.

Access

Judd Lake is accessible in summer by floatplane or via a private airstrip adjacent to the lodge. The lake is the primary put-in for float trips down the river. The lodge has brushed a foot trail from the west end of the lake along the creek to Talachulitna Lake. The lodge has also cut a loop trail that extends approximately two miles downriver. There are also foot trails around the lake associated with the private cabins and the lodge and some short foot trails associated with the sandy area at the inlet to the lake.

Heritage Resource

There are a couple known heritage sites in this subunit and the potential for more is high.

Management Intent

Class II. This subunit features high quality fishing, hunting, and camping opportunities for lodge-based or airplane-based users in a scenic setting. The lake is also a staging point for Talachulitna River float trips. One lodge and a few private cabins sited in the lake area take advantage of the remote, primitive setting. Both Judd Lake and Talachulitna Lake contain salmon spawning habitat. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat. Maintaining moderate levels of development in a natural environment will be the focus of management attention. Maintaining public use sites is a high priority. There are no non-motorized areas in this subunit.

Management Guidelines

Boating restrictions. None.

Public Information. A kiosk which provides information on the Recreation Rivers may be established at a prominent location on Judd Lake. A sign may be established at the outlet of the lake identifying the Talachulitna River as a Recreation River.

Public Use Site

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 5e.1 Judd Lake (RM 18). Public lands near the inlet are a drop-off point for float trips. Most of the land directly surrounding the inlet is in private or borough ownership and is the location of a private cabin. The public use site is the shorelands and water column only directly south of the inlet and extends back along Talachulitna Creek to the west. The inlet is mostly wetlands. This site is also used for fishing.

5f. Upper Talachulitna River Subunit**Background**

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 32.5 to RM 64.5

The river in this subunit is shallow, meandering, and less than 20 feet wide. There are several beaver dams across the main channel. There is a narrow, steep gorge with a waterfall at RM 38. The terrain is flat to rolling except at its headwaters on the shoulder of Beluga Mountain. Thirty to 50 percent of the area is contiguous wetland.

Land Ownership

There are 17,550 acres of state land.

Wildlife

Trumpeter swan have been observed in recent surveys of this subunit. Active bald eagle nests have not been sighted in recent surveys of this subunit.

Camping

The use of this subunit is limited with little access to the area. Moose hunters are known to camp at Wolf Lakes.

Access

There are off-road vehicle trails between RM 46 and RM 54, on the east and south sides of the river. The largest of the Wolf Lakes, at the headwaters of the river, is used by floatplanes during hunting season. This subunit is used for snowmachining by a local trapper and residents along the Talachulitna River. To the east is Beluga Mountain which prevents access from Alexander Creek.

Management Intent

Class I. This subunit receives minimal summer public use because of its distance from the railbelt and has minimal boat or plane access. It is used infrequently by airplane-based hunters in fall and powerboat-based hunters during periods of high water. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat. Little active management is expected in this subunit. There are no non-motorized areas in this subunit.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. None.

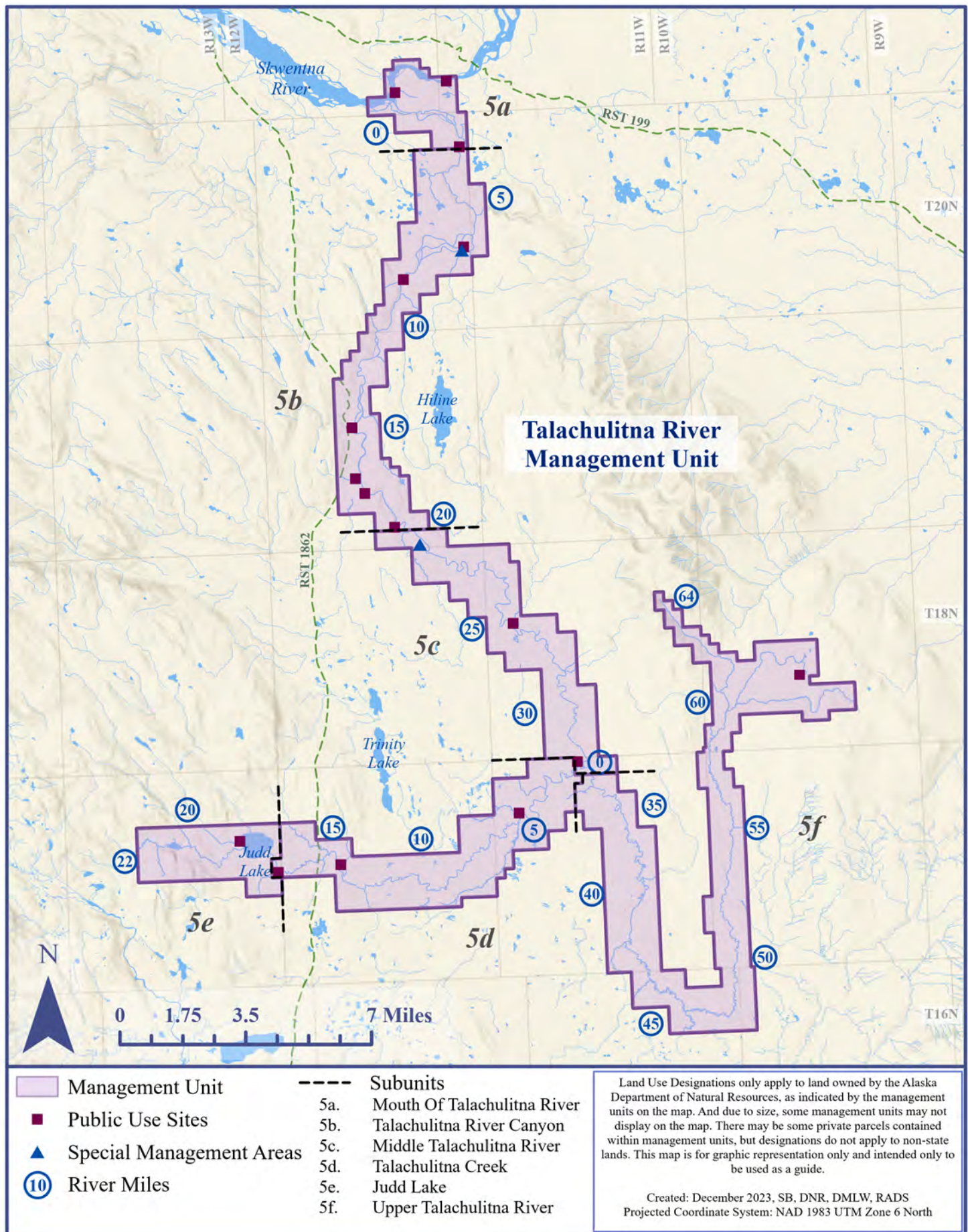
Public Use Site

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 5f.1 Wolf Lakes (RM 64). There are only a few campsites adjacent to the lakes. These are used during the moose hunting season.

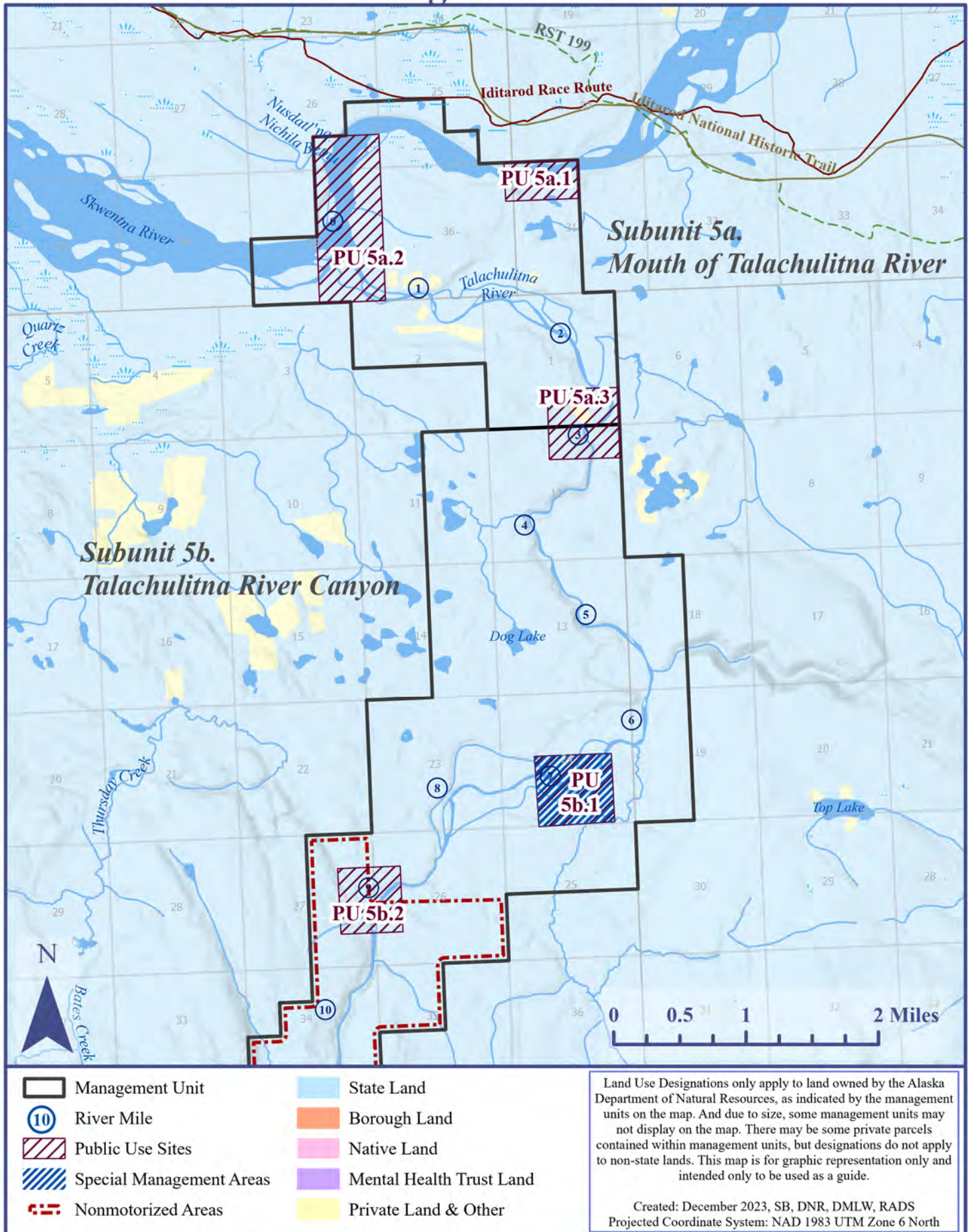
SUSITNA BASIN RECREATION RIVERS MANAGEMENT PLAN

TALACHULITNA RIVER



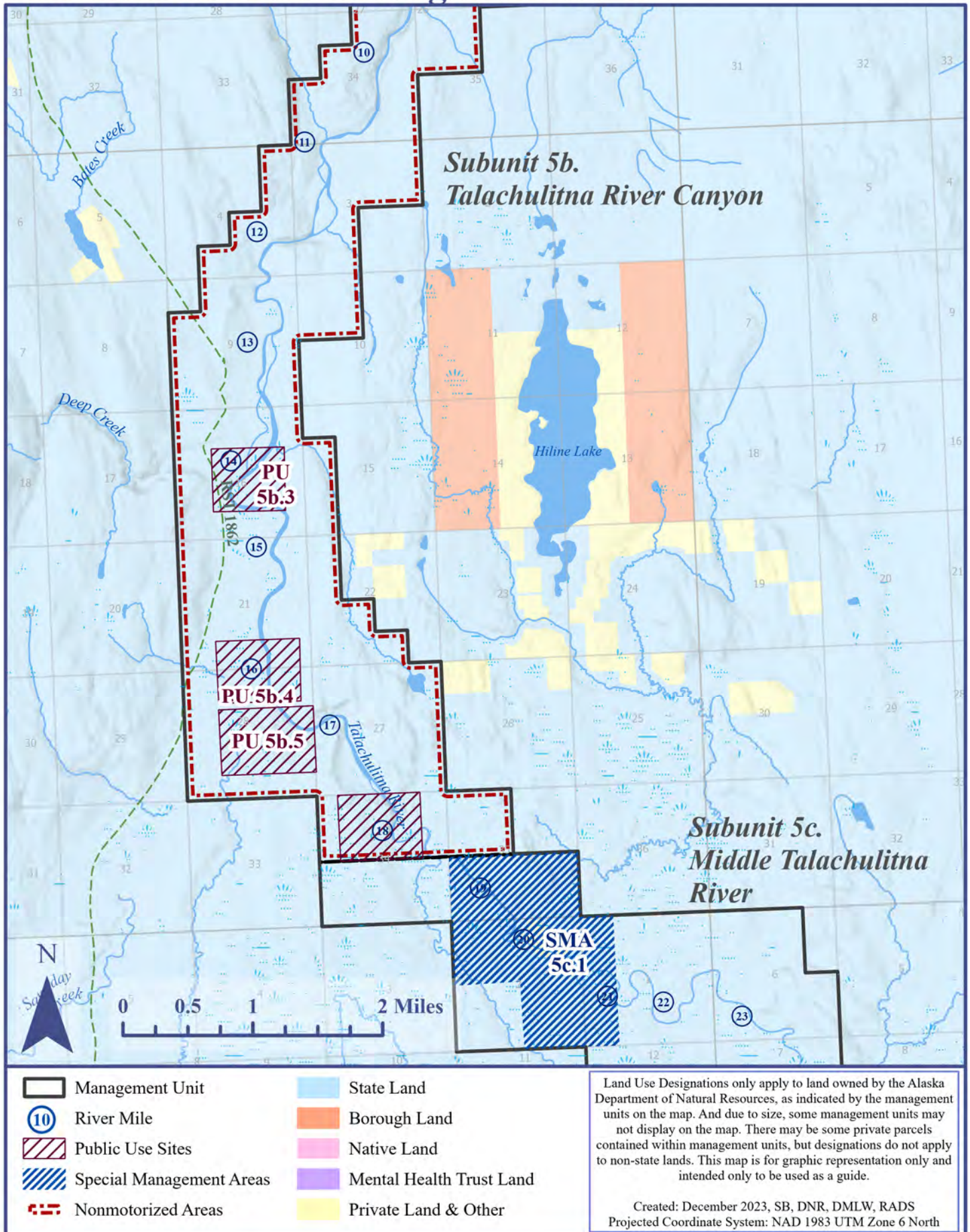
Talachulitna River Management Unit

MAP 1



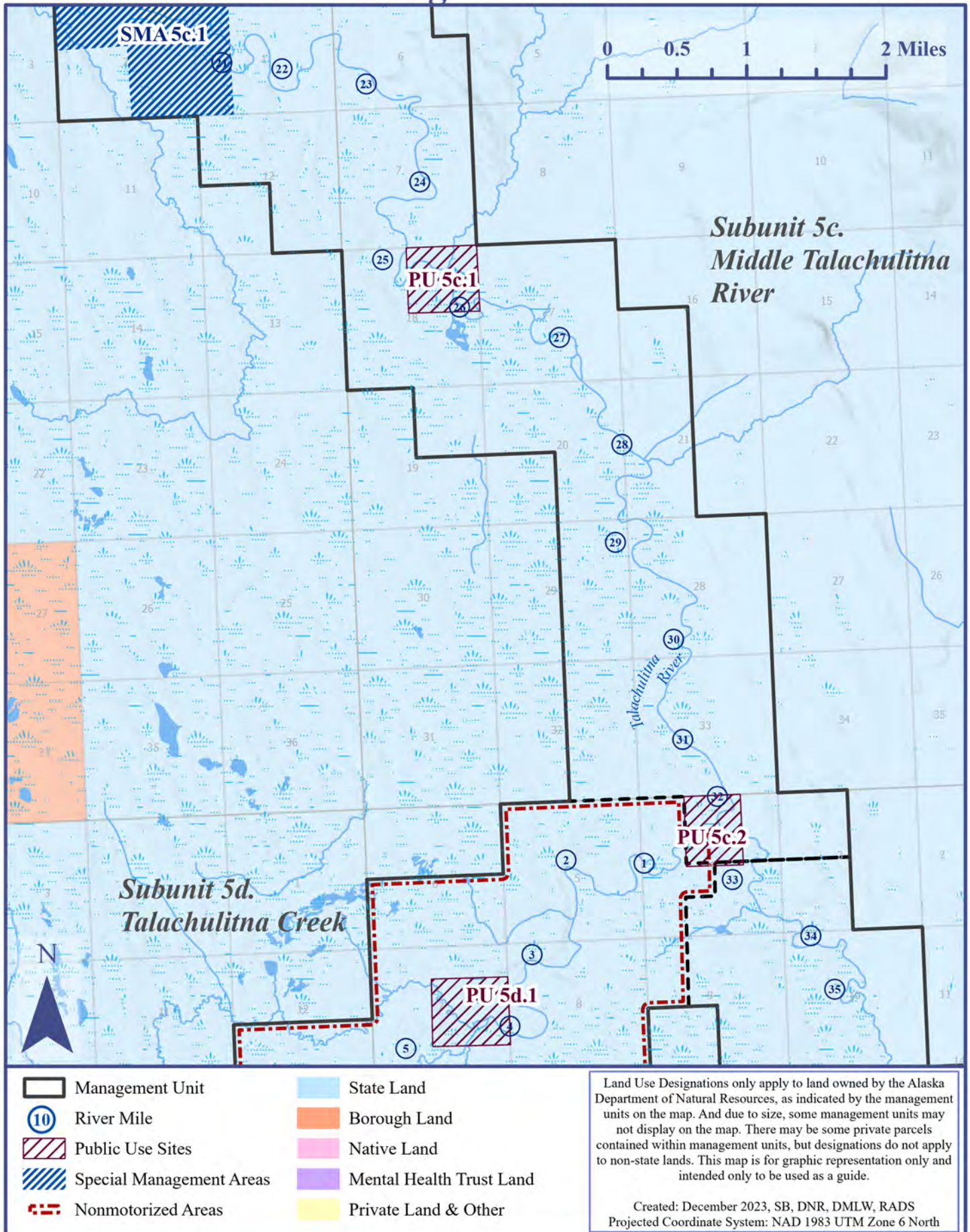
Talachulitna River Management Unit

MAP 2



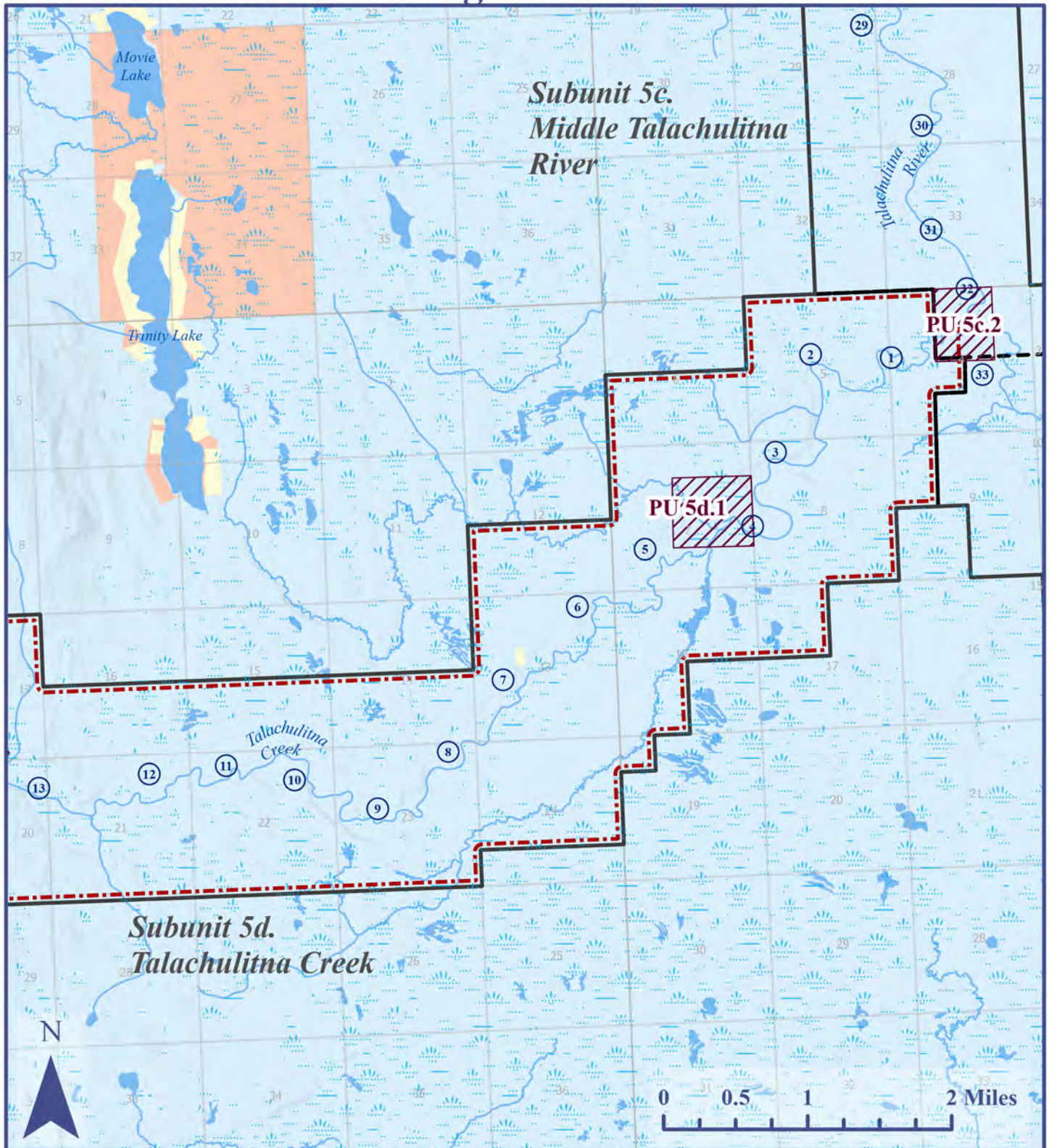
Talachulitna River Management Unit

MAP 3



Talachulitna River Management Unit

MAP 4



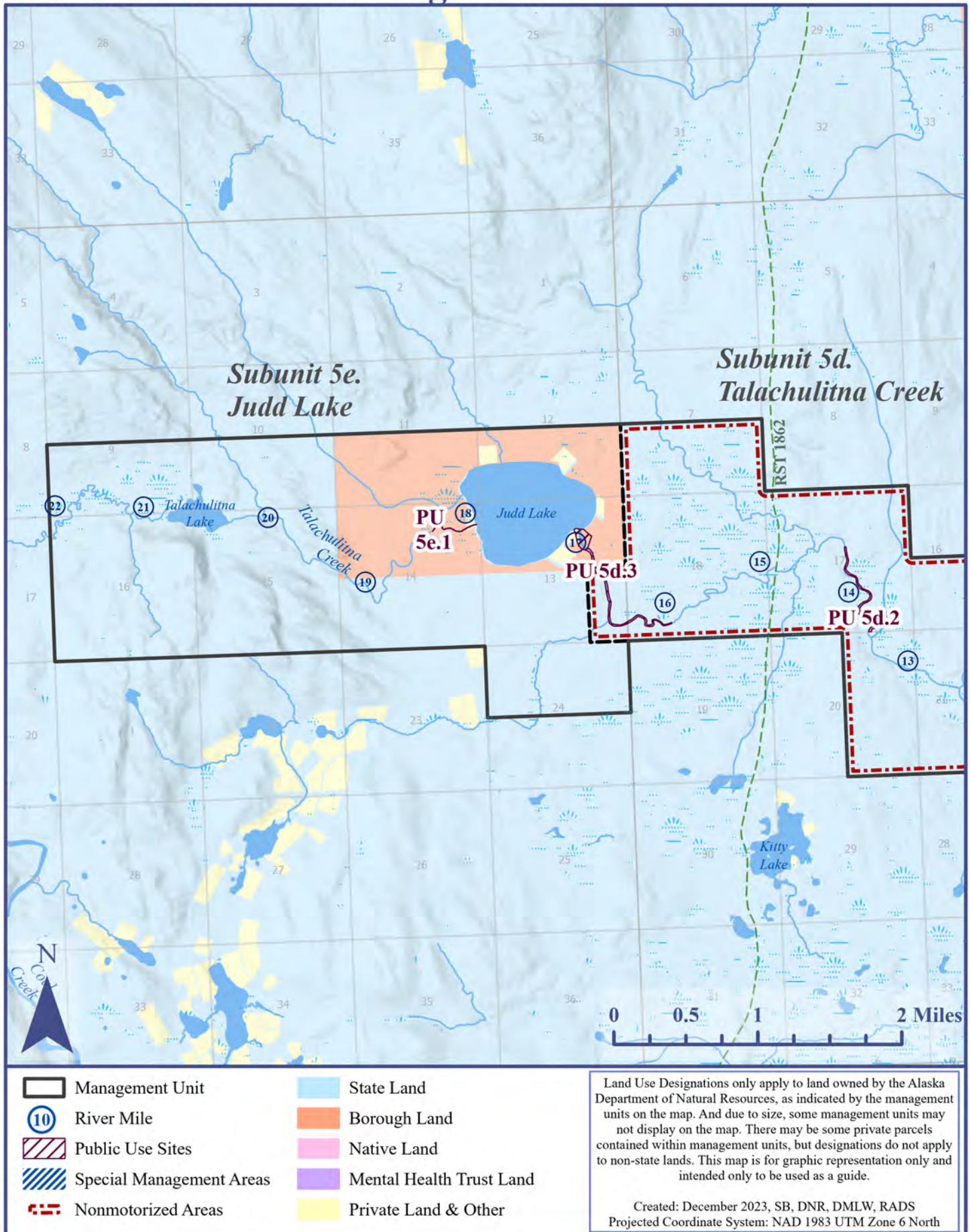
- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Management Unit | State Land |
| River Mile | Borough Land |
| Public Use Sites | Native Land |
| Special Management Areas | Mental Health Trust Land |
| Nonmotorized Areas | Private Land & Other |

Land Use Designations only apply to land owned by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, as indicated by the management units on the map. And due to size, some management units may not display on the map. There may be some private parcels contained within management units, but designations do not apply to non-state lands. This map is for graphic representation only and intended only to be used as a guide.

Created: December 2023, SB, DNR, DMLW, RADS
Projected Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 6 North

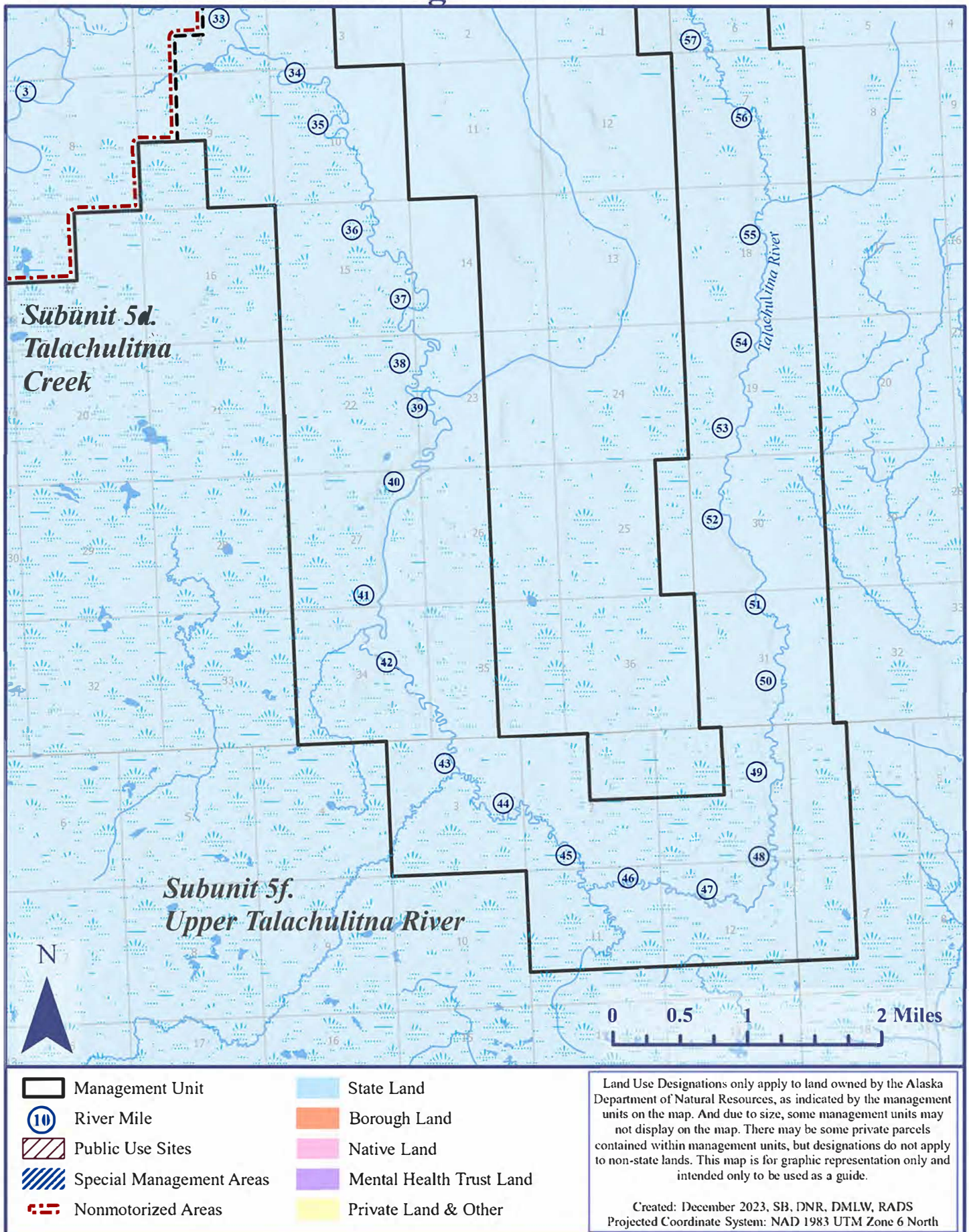
Talachulitna River Management Unit

MAP 5



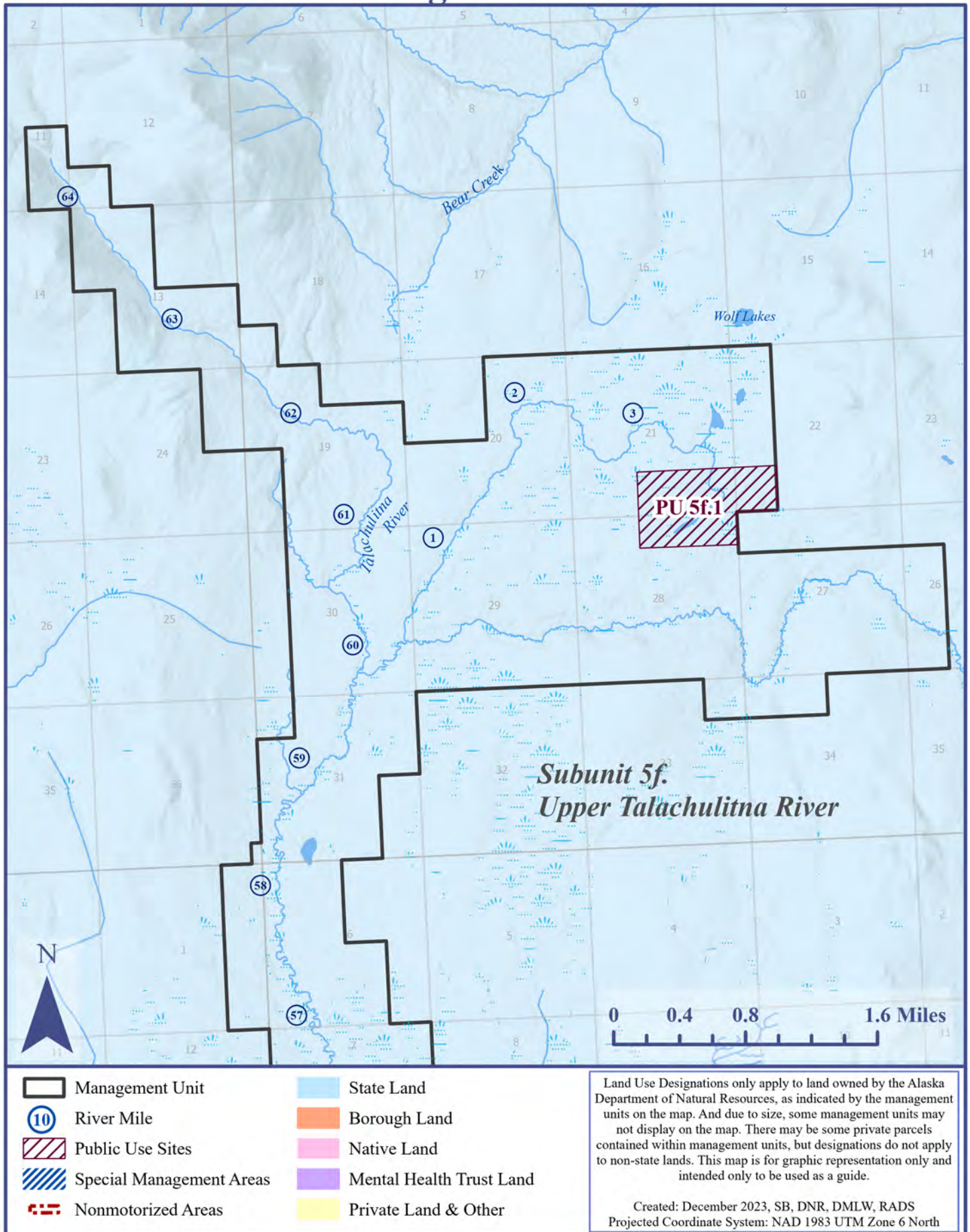
Talachulitna River Management Unit

MAP 6



Talachulitna River Management Unit

MAP 7



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6. Alexander Creek Management Unit

6a. Lower Alexander Creek Subunit..... 3 - 190
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6d. Sucker Creek Subunit 3 - 196

6. Alexander Creek Management Unit

Background

Miles of River

This unit includes 40.2 miles of Alexander Creek from RM 3.8 to RM 44.0. The unit also includes 5.5 miles of Sucker Creek.

River Characteristics

Alexander Creek is a slow, meandering stream that originates in Alexander Lake and flows south to the Susitna River. The creek temperature has been increasing over time and there has been an increase in vegetative growth. The terrain is generally flat to occasionally rolling. The management unit begins 3.5 miles above the confluence with the Susitna and extends up to Alexander Lake and the surrounding uplands. The lower 5 miles of Sucker Creek are also in the unit. The Alexander Creek channel is 1 to 5 feet deep and from 50 to 200 feet wide. Multiple measurements were taken from 1989 to 1992 with discharges ranging from 160 cfs to 473 cfs. Waters from a 100-year flood can cover a considerable area in sections of the upper and lower river because the river is slow moving and the surrounding area is relatively flat.

Around Alexander Lake the visual qualities are high with good views of the Alaska Range, including Denali. Downstream visual qualities are lower because views are confined by high banks and there are more man-made improvements.

Land Ownership

State	20,266 acres
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	2,261 acres
Private & Other	411 acres
Total	22,938 acres

Fisheries

Species Present

Arctic grayling	Northern pike
Chinook salmon	Pink salmon
Chum salmon	Rainbow trout
Coho salmon	Sockeye salmon

All species of salmon are present throughout the management unit. The majority of Chinook, coho, and pink salmon spawn all along the river above RM 8. In addition, Sucker Creek and

its upper Wolverine Creek branch provide major spawning grounds for Chinook salmon. Small numbers of chum salmon have been observed by local residents in the vicinity of the mouth of Pierce Creek but the spawning area has not been documented by ADF&G.

Northern pike are prolific throughout the drainage, heavily concentrated in Alexander Lake and side channel habitats.

Sport Fishing

The peak of fishing activity on Alexander Creek corresponds with the coho salmon run from approximately July 15 to August 25. The once popular Chinook salmon fishery has been closed since 2008 due to impacts from northern pike predation. Also, throughout the summer and particularly in the late summer, people fishing for Arctic grayling and rainbow trout is common. Popular fishing spots are the mouths of Pierce, Trail, and Sucker creeks. The most popular fishing area for salmon is at the mouth of Alexander Creek which is in the Susitna Flats State Game Refuge. Alexander Lake supports a popular fishery for northern pike during the winter and summer months.

Special Regulations

The whole of Alexander Creek has been designated special management waters for rainbow trout. Retention of rainbow trout is prohibited. Retention of Arctic grayling and Dolly Varden is also prohibited. Only unbaited, single-hook, artificial lures may be used upstream of a marker located 400 yards upstream of Trail Creek.

Wildlife

Moose

Winter densities of moose along Sucker Creek and the lower portions of Alexander Creek are very high. The extensive wetlands are important for moose calving in spring. Large numbers of moose summer on Mount Susitna and Beluga Mountain, and other adjoining areas.

Bear

Brown bear and black bear are distributed throughout the unit. Brown bear concentrate on the upper creek to feed on spawning salmon when available. Black bear concentrate on the lower creek during the same period. Both species of bear target moose calves as prey in May and early June.

Bald Eagles

Bald eagle nests have not been observed in recent surveys of the management unit.

Trumpeter Swans

Trumpeter swans have been observed along the corridor and adjacent lakes/ponds.

Hunting

Moose and bear hunting are very popular in this corridor during the fall. Alexander Creek receives some of the heaviest use by hunters of all the Recreation Rivers. The entire river is floatable and hunted from Alexander Lake to its confluence with the Susitna River. Hunters using power boats generally hunt the lower 20 miles.

Trapping

Recreational trapping for otter, muskrat, marten, mink, beaver, fox, coyote, wolf, and wolverine occurs in the corridor during spring and winter seasons.

Subsistence

Located in Game Management Unit 16B, this is an area that Susitna residents utilize for subsistence. Subsistence harvest may occur for moose and black bear, as well as birds and eggs, and plants and berries.

Invasive Species

Elodea

Elodea was first identified in Alexander Lake in 2014 and in Sucker Lake in 2016, and by 2018 both lakes were fully infested. The Alaska Division of Agriculture began implementing an eradication plan for the watershed in 2018.

Northern Pike

Alexander Creek was known for its run of Chinook salmon and was one of the most popular fisheries in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley. However, due to heavy pike predation on juvenile Chinook salmon, minimum escapement hasn't been met since 2005, and the fishery has been closed since 2008. It's estimated that the Chinook salmon return in the Alexander watershed has been reduced 77% as a result of pike predation. Beginning in 2011, ADF&G began a northern pike suppression program where crews gillnet side sloughs in the spring, targeting northern pike. To date, ADF&G has removed over 30,000 northern pike from Alexander Creek. Unfortunately, Alexander Creek provides ideal habitat for pike, and Alexander Lake/Sucker Lake at the headwaters are completely dominated by northern pike.

Development

Most of the cabins on Alexander Creek are concentrated downstream of the planning area boundary, near the mouth of the creek. However, there are a number of cabins on the river below Trail Creek and around Alexander Lake. In the last 30 years, the number of recreational cabins has increased, however, there has been a decline in the number of residents that live along the corridor year-round. In addition, several lodges were once located along Alexander Creek but have since been closed.

Access

Most of the boat traffic on Alexander Creek is near the mouth which is outside the unit. Powerboats travel from Doshka Landing to access the creek. Alexander Creek is not as popular a rafting trip as it once was, though it is still floated. Most float trips begin at Alexander Lake and last 3 to 5 days. Both float- and wheel-planes land at several places in the unit, particularly at Alexander Lake. Airboats and jetboats are often taken up Alexander Creek to access Alexander Lake.

Management Guidelines for the Unit**Boating Restrictions**

- 1. Non-motorized area** Point just above Sucker Creek (RM 23.0) to a point just below exit of Alexander Lake (RM 38.3)

Season: May 15 - August 20.

Justification: This river segment provides non-motorized recreation opportunities. This river segment is so shallow that it is seldom used by powerboaters. The restriction ensures that the opportunities for non-motorized whitewater trips are maintained, regardless of technological changes which could allow powerboat use in the future. Restrictions do not cover the motorized trail along the outlet of Alexander Lake nor the area just above the Sucker Creek confluence that contains camping areas used by powerboaters and wheelplanes.
- 2. Safety Warning sign** Mouth of Pierce Creek (RM 7.4).

Season: May 15 - August 20.

Justification: Above this point Alexander Creek is narrow, shallow, and winding. Several large boats have grounded above this point. A warning sign will be placed at this point warning large boats about hazards above Pierce Creek.

6a. Lower Alexander Creek Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 3.8 to RM 19.8

This subunit extends from Granite Creek to just above the mouth of Sucker Creek. Alexander Creek is 50 feet wide, widening to 150 feet towards the downstream end of the subunit. Contiguous wetlands make up 20 percent of the area, non-contiguous another 10 percent.

Land Ownership

State	5,252 acres
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	2,261 acres
Private & Other	316 acres
Total	7,829 acres

Wildlife

Lower Alexander Creek has some of the highest winter and spring densities of moose in the planning area. Active bald eagle nests and trumpeter swans have not been sighted in recent surveys of this subunit.

Development

The subunit includes many private recreational cabins with several year-round residents. One of these cabins is used commercially as a fishing lodge. Private landowners just west of the subunit use a trail and dock at RM 4.6 to access the creek. There are also numerous cabins outside the subunit around Otter and Weenie lakes.

Access

A prominent summer trail near RM 12 parallels Trail Creek for at least one mile. A section line on the east side of the subunit and parallel to the river is accessible in the summer and connects a block of private land at RM 5 with an airstrip. Another airstrip lies west of RM 18. There is a dock and major trail at RM 4.6 on the west side of the river that is used by private landowners west of the subunit.

There is extensive winter travel along Alexander Creek below Sucker Creek. Snowmachine use is by both recreational users and private property owners. The Beluga gas line from the Knik Road is used as a trail to access Alexander Creek in winter. Snowmachines also travel to lower Alexander Creek from the Iditarod race trail and from Deshka Landing. The Iditarod National Historic Trail runs through this subunit on a trail paralleling the river just west of Otter Lake.

Heritage Resources

There are several areas of known heritage sites in this subunit, and the potential for discovery of more is high due to historic subsistence use, and the proximity to the village of Alexander near the mouth.

Management Intent

Class II. Most recreation use in this subunit occurs during the coho salmon run. The once popular Chinook salmon fishery has been closed since 2008 due to impacts from northern pike predation. Also, throughout the summer and particularly in the late summer, people fishing for Arctic grayling and rainbow trout is common. Because of strong salmon runs and other sport fishing opportunities, relatively inexpensive air access from the railbelt, and the placid nature of the river, the subunit receives heavy use by both powerboaters and floaters. The subunit provides opportunities for boaters in a relatively remote, undeveloped setting. The subunit also contains salmon spawning and winter moose habitat. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance recreation, and fish and wildlife habitat while accommodating uses associated with private lands. Some temporary camps will be allowed. Because of high public use, amount of private land, and the absence of state uplands, temporary camps will not be allowed below RM 4 if the mouth is added to the Recreation Rivers. Maintaining public use sites is a high priority. The subunit will be managed to provide opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities. There are no non-motorized areas in this subunit.

Management Guidelines

No-wake Area. See management guidelines for the Alexander Creek Management Unit described earlier in this section.

Temporary Camps. Up to three temporary camps may be permitted in this subunit. They will not be authorized in public use sites nor below RM 4 if the river mouth is added to the Recreation Rivers.

Public Information. A sign should be placed at the south boundary of the Alexander Creek corridor identifying it as a Recreation River.

Public Use Sites

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 6a.1 Pierce Creek (RM 7.4). This site is used for fishing and camping.

PU 6a.2 Trail Creek (RM 12.2). This site is used for fishing and camping. ADF&G has a seasonal weir camp at this location.

6b. Upper Alexander Creek Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 20.1 to RM 38.3

The subunit begins above the mouth of Sucker Creek and extends to the south end of a trail downstream from Alexander Lake. The creek is 3 to 4 feet deep, and 20 to 50 feet wide. The water is generally clear above RM 25 but becomes silty below this point. The terrain is gently rolling. Contiguous wetlands cover about half of the area.

Land Ownership

There are 8,680 acres of state land in this subunit.

Wildlife

Active bald eagle nests have not been sighted in recent surveys of this subunit. Trumpeter swans and their young have been observed.

Camping

There are numerous secondary and marginal campsites along the entire length of the subunit.

Development

There is a parcel under state lease at RM 33 on Rose Lake which contains cabins and docks used for a commercial guiding business.

Access

There is a short trail between Rose Lake and Alexander Creek. The lake is also used by floatplanes, often to drop off floaters. The Iditarod National Historic Trail crosses Alexander Creek near RM 21.5. Seismic lines along the river are also used for winter access. There are

extensive open bogs adjacent to the river that are used for snowmachining. Airboats are sometimes taken up the creek.

Heritage Resources

There are a few known heritage sites in this subunit and the potential for more is high.

Management Intent

Class I. Most recreation use in this subunit occurs during the coho salmon run. The once popular Chinook salmon fishery has been closed since 2008 due to impacts from northern pike predation. Because of fishing opportunities, relatively inexpensive air transportation from the railbelt, and the placid nature of the river, this subunit receives moderate use by floaters. Suitability for powerboat use is marginal because of low water volumes. The subunit provides float boat opportunities in a relatively remote, undeveloped setting. The area contains important winter moose habitat and supports salmon spawning. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance recreation opportunities, a primitive setting, and fish and wildlife habitat. Maintaining an essentially unmodified natural environment will be the focus of management. Maintaining public use sites will be a high priority. With the exception of the Rose Lake special management area, the subunit will be managed to provide a non-motorized experience during the fishing season.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. See management guidelines for the Alexander Creek Management Unit described earlier in this section.

Iditarod National Historic Trail. The trail system parallels the river in this subunit between Otter Lake and Alexander Lake. See guidelines in Chapter 2, *Upland Access, Trails, Iditarod National Historic Trail* and *Iditarod Race Trail*.

Special Management Area

See *Special Management Areas* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations of sites are shown on the map at the end of this unit.

SMA 6b.1 Rose Lake (RM 33). There is a parcel under state lease on the lake which contains cabins and docks used for a commercial guiding business. Floatplanes use the lake. The Special Management Area (SMA) will be managed as a Class II area. Class II area management intent and guidelines will apply. This area will be managed to accommodate uses associated with

existing state leases in the SMA while providing and enhancing recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat.

6c. Alexander Lake Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, RM 38.3 to RM 44.0

Alexander Lake is about 2.5 miles long and 0.5 miles wide. The terrain around the lake is flat. Contiguous wetlands make up at least 90 percent of the area within the subunit. Well-drained sites are mostly in private ownership.

Land Ownership

State	5,007 acres
Private & Other	95 acres
Total	5,102 acres

Wildlife

In recent surveys, trumpeter swans have been observed along Alexander Creek and adjacent lakes/ponds. Active bald eagle nests have not been sighted in recent surveys in this subunit.

Invasive Species Concerns

The Division of Agriculture has been working to eradicate the invasive aquatic plant, *Elodea* from Alexander Lake since 2018. Full eradication in Alexander Lake is challenging due to the many inflows into the lake that make maintaining a specific concentration of herbicide difficult. Reintroduction is also a challenge from the inflows but also from anthropogenic sources such as boats, floatplanes and gear. The Division of Agriculture anticipates full eradication in the next few years.

ADF&G began a northern pike suppression program in 2011. Crews have been gillnetting side sloughs in the spring, targeting, and removing northern pike. To date, ADF&G has removed over 30,000 northern pike from Alexander Creek. Unfortunately, Alexander Creek provides ideal habitat for pike, and Alexander Lake/Sucker Lake at the headwaters are completely dominated by northern pike. ADF&G plans to continue implementation of aggressive pike removal in the watershed.

Development

The former Alexander Lake Lodge is located on the south end of the lake. There are a number of improvements associated with the lodge including equipment storage and boat

1 storage areas adjacent to the river. No longer operating as a commercial lodge, the structures
2 are still used for private purposes. Several private cabins are scattered around the lake,
3 mostly on the south end.

4 5 **Access**

6
7 There is a major off-road vehicle trail from the former lodge along the east shore of the lake.
8 Most of this trail is in wetlands. Another trail is located in the woods on the north side of the
9 creek. Seismic lines in this subunit do not appear to be heavily used in summer. Floaters are
10 usually dropped off by floatplanes at one of three primitive campsites around the lake. The
11 most commonly used landing area is near the lake exit. The other floatplane drop-off area is
12 on the northwest side of the lake. This second site is more commonly used in late summer
13 when the lake becomes clogged with vegetation.

14
15 The Iditarod National Historic Trail parallels this subunit to the west of Alexander Lake.
16 Private property owners around the lake use snowmachines on the lake and on the river.

17 18 **Heritage Resources**

19
20 The heritage site potential is high.

21 22 23 **Management Intent**

24
25 **Class II.** This subunit is used primarily as a put-in point for float trips down Alexander
26 Creek and other recreational activities at the lake. This subunit provides fishing and hunting
27 opportunities. The subunit contains winter moose and salmon spawning habitat. Camping
28 opportunities are limited because well-drained sites around the lake are in private ownership.
29 Private lands are located on the south half of the lake and along the creek. Winter use of the
30 subunit is primarily by snowmachines, skiers, and dog mushers following the Iditarod
31 National Historic Trail. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance these recreation
32 opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat while accommodating uses associated with private
33 lands. Developing a suitable dry access point for the public is a high priority. Wetlands
34 compose over 90 percent of the public lands in this subunit. Development of, or activities on,
35 wetlands that would result in significant damage should be avoided or minimized.
36 Maintaining public use sites is a high priority. The subunit will be managed to provide
37 opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized access. There are no non-motorized
38 areas in this subunit.

39 40 41 **Management Guidelines**

42
43 **Boating Restrictions.** None.
44

Iditarod National Historic Trail. The trail system parallels this subunit to the west of Alexander Lake. See guidelines in Chapter 2, *National Historic Trail and Trails, Iditarod Race Trail*.

Public Information. A kiosk should be established to provide information on the river at the most commonly used public air-taxi drop-off point on Alexander Lake. A sign should be established at the outlet of the lake identifying it as a Recreation River.

Public Use Site

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 6c.1 Unnamed Put-in Site (RM 41.2). Most of the well-drained upland sites around the lake are in private ownership.

6d. Sucker Creek Subunit

Background

Miles of River/River Characteristics, Sucker Creek, RM 0.0 to RM 5.5

Sucker Creek is a clear-running tributary about 20 feet wide near the mouth. The subunit contains a few contiguous wetlands, less than 20 percent of the area.

Land Status

There are 1,327 acres of state land.

Wildlife

Active bald eagle and trumpeter swan nests have not been sighted in recent surveys of this subunit.

Fisheries

The mouth of Sucker Creek (just outside the subunit) is used as a fishing and camping area for boaters on Alexander Creek. The creek is also fished by floaters originating on Trail or Sucker lakes.

Invasive Species Concerns

The Division of Agriculture has been working to eradicate the invasive aquatic plant, *Elodea* from Sucker Lake since 2018. Full eradication in Sucker Lake is challenging due to the inflow and possible reintroduction from Alexander Creek. Reintroduction is also a challenge due to anthropogenic sources such as boats, floatplanes and gear. The Division of Agriculture anticipates full eradication in the next few years.

ADF&G began a northern pike suppression program in 2011. Crews have been gillnetting side sloughs in the spring, targeting, and removing northern pike. To date, ADF&G has removed over 30,000 northern pike from the Alexander Creek drainage. Unfortunately, Alexander Creek provides ideal habitat for pike, and Alexander Lake/Sucker Lake at the headwaters are completely dominated by northern pike. ADF&G plans to continue implementation of aggressive pike removal in the watershed.

Camping

Three marginal campsites exist near the mouth of Sucker Creek (in adjacent subunits).

Access

There is a foot trail from Trail Lake to Sucker Creek. This trail is used by floaters who carry their gear from the floatplane drop-off on Trail Lake to Sucker Creek. The trail is through wetlands, making it difficult to carry heavy gear including rafts. There is only limited winter use of this subunit. Small wheel planes land on a gravel bar at RM 20.6 although use has declined, and fishermen walk down to the mouth.

Management Intent

Class I. This subunit is used primarily by powerboaters coming upriver, floaters descending Alexander and Sucker creeks and users who access the area by wheelplane. The subunit provides fishing, hunting, and camping opportunities. In winter the subunit receives some snowmachine use. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance these recreation opportunities, a primitive setting, and fish and wildlife habitat. Maintaining an essentially unmodified natural environment will be the focus of management. Maintaining the public use site at the mouth of Sucker Creek will be a high priority. The subunit will be managed to provide both motorized and non-motorized opportunities. There are no non-motorized areas in this subunit.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. None.

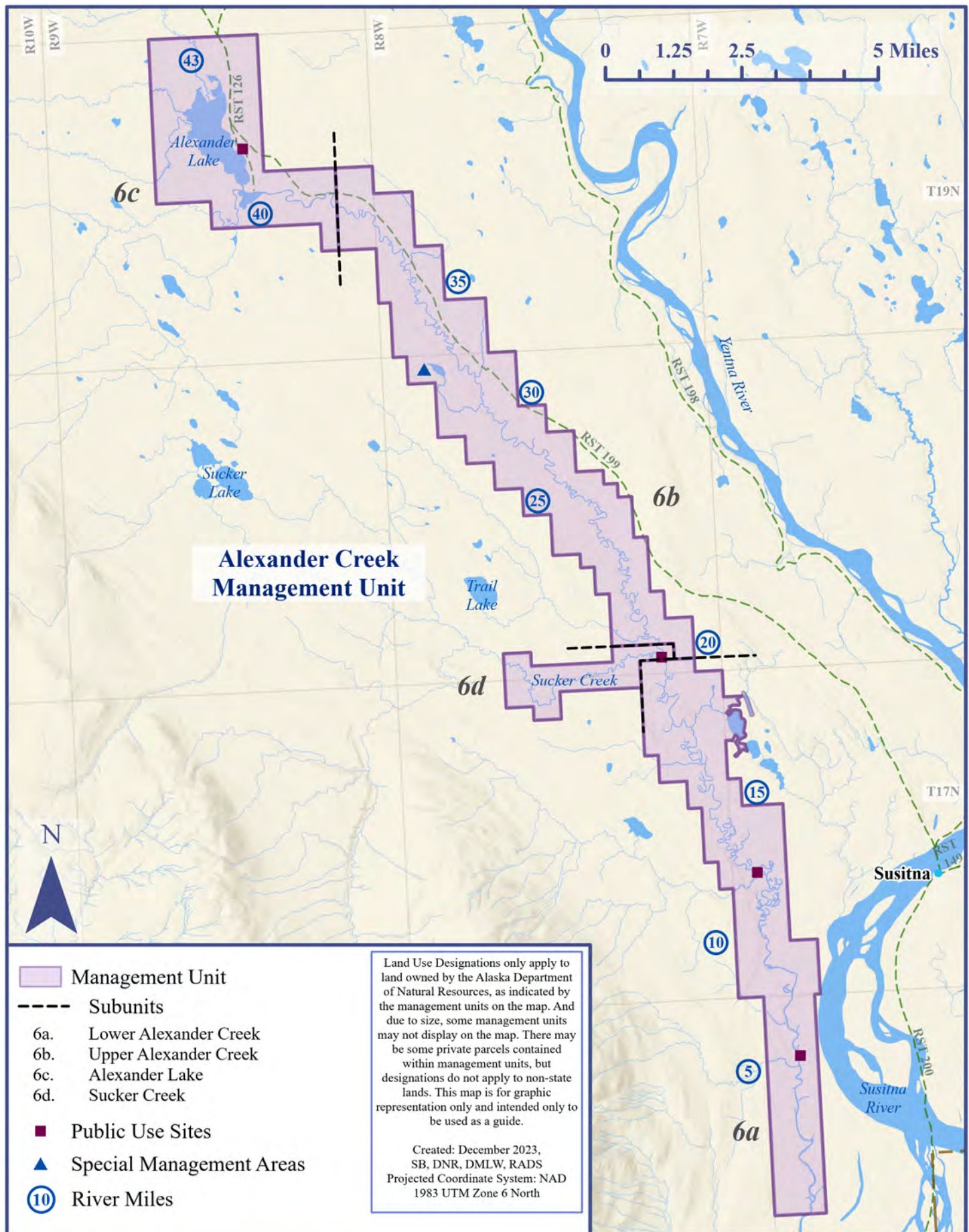
Public Use Site

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

PU 6d.1 Sucker Creek Junction (RM 2.0). The area along both Alexander and Sucker creeks within one-quarter mile of the confluence is used for fishing and camping.

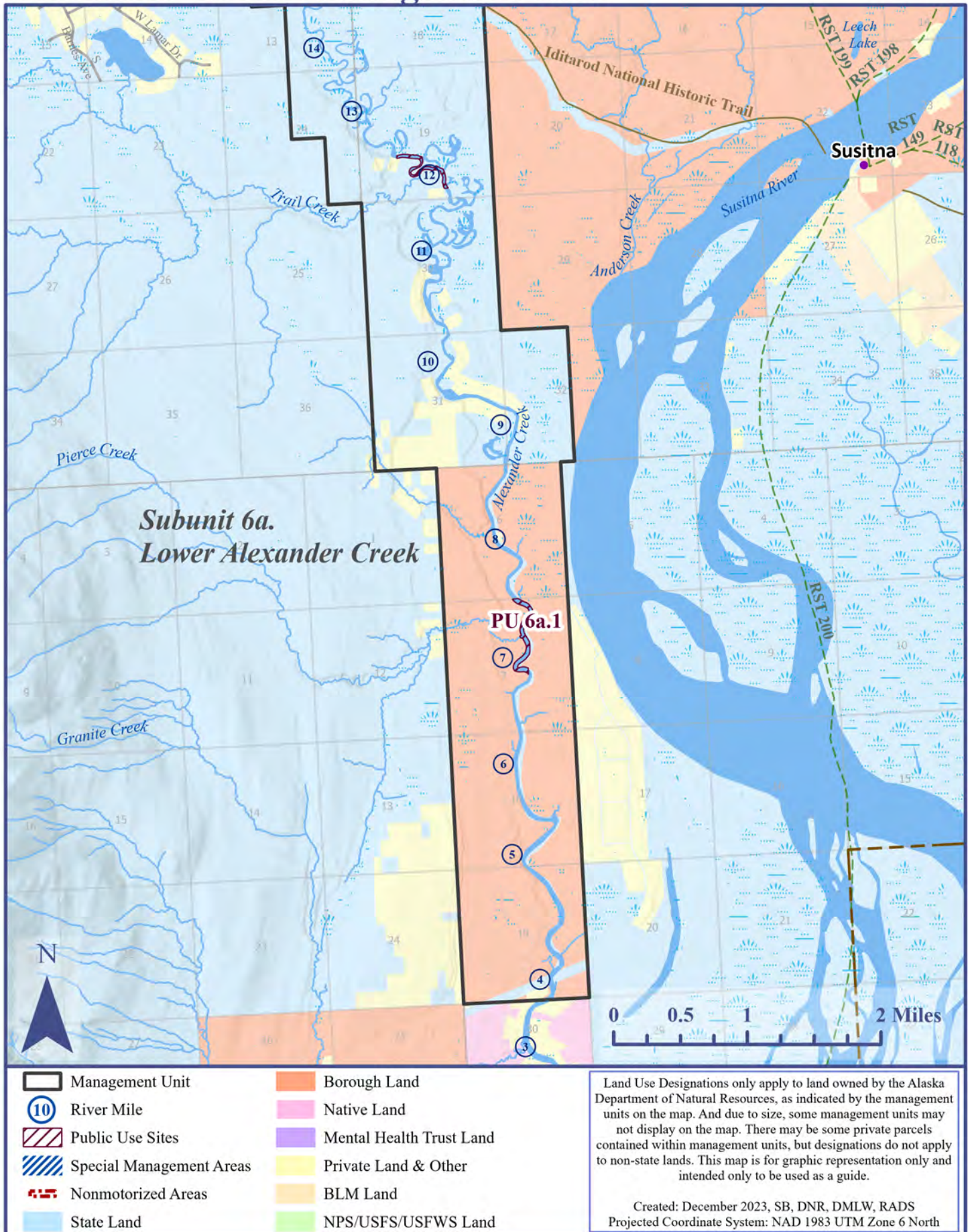
SUSITNA BASIN RECREATION RIVERS MANAGEMENT PLAN

ALEXANDER CREEK



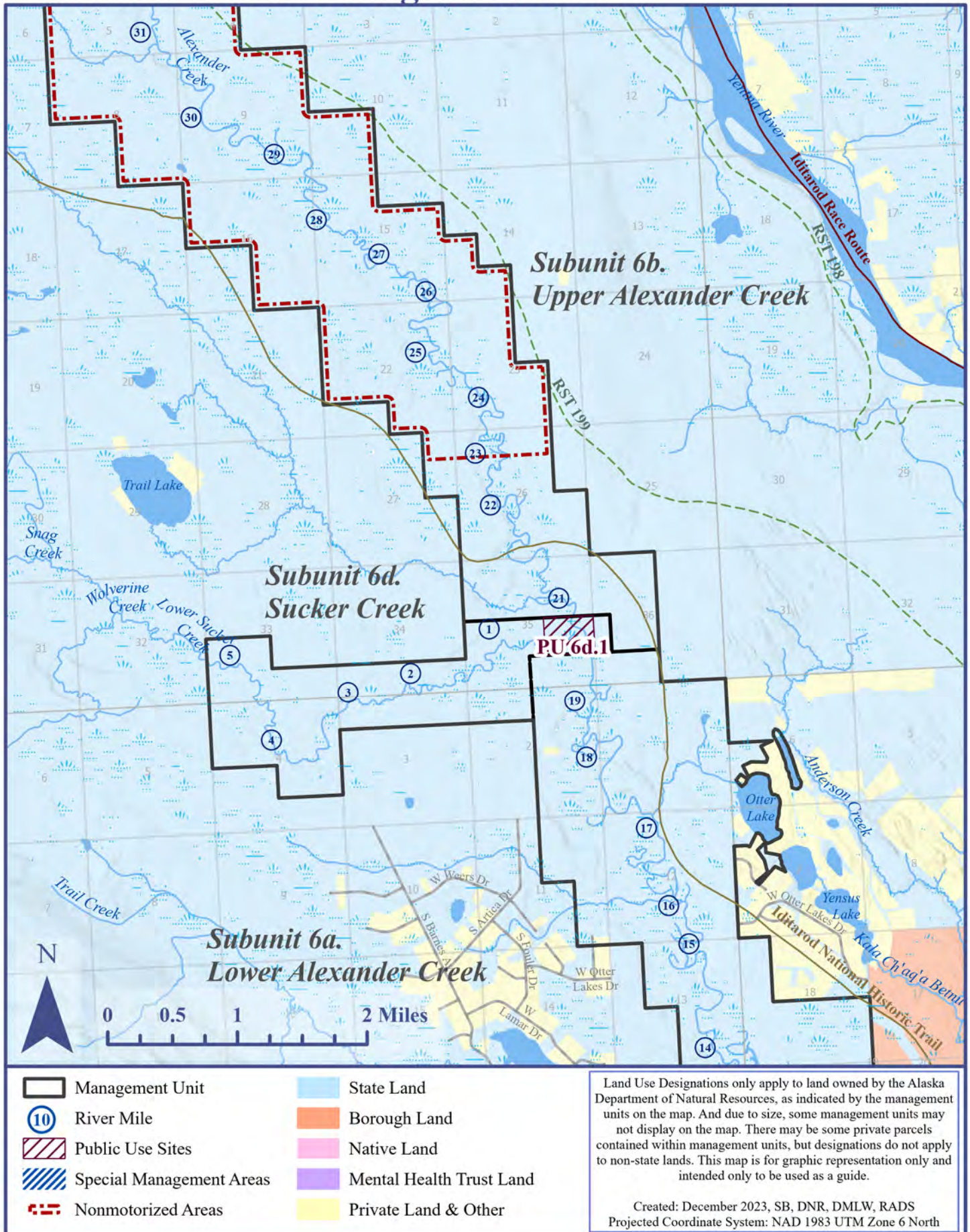
Alexander Creek Management Unit

MAP 1



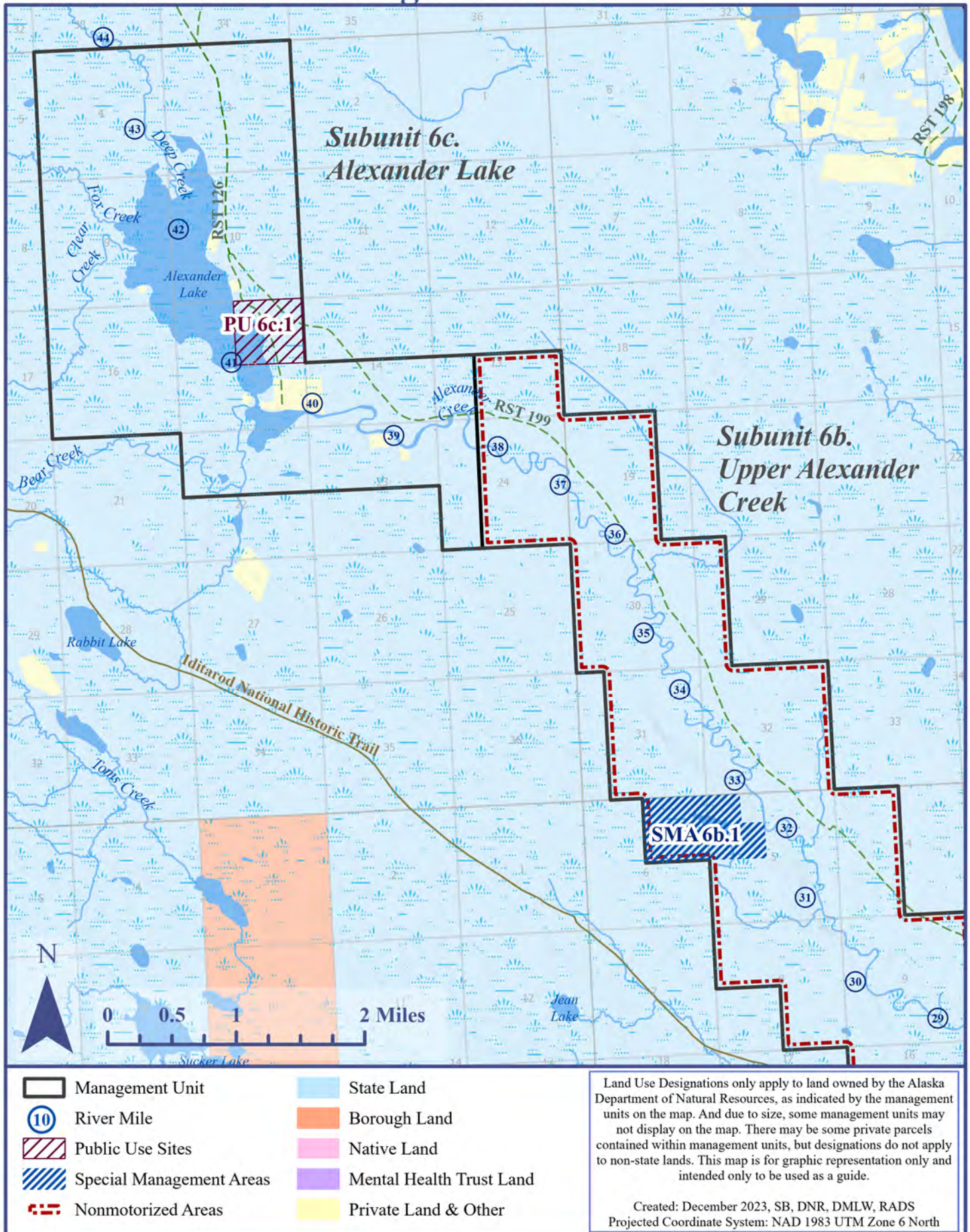
Alexander Creek Management Unit

MAP 2



Alexander Creek Management Unit

MAP 3



Chapter 4

Implementation

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Chapter 4 Implementation

Introduction

This chapter outlines the actions necessary to implement the land use policies and actions described by the plan. These actions include proposals for legislation, a list of agency responsibilities, and recommendations for cooperation or coordination with other agencies and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

These implementation actions will be used as a basis for budget preparations, requests for legislative funding of capital improvement projects or designations, data collection, and other actions necessary to implement the plan.

These actions will take place as the need develops. Most of the projects depend on funding, although some could be done with volunteer help, such as litter patrols or the placement of signs.

Areas Recommended for Designation as Recreation Rivers

Background

Under AS 41.23.490, state-owned land and water may be established as a Recreation River only by the legislature. Designation will ensure that these lands are retained in public ownership and managed consistent with the adjacent subunits. Additions are shown on Talkeetna Map 6 in Chapter 3. Additional recommended designations are also described under *Other Recommendations*, *Future Additions* in this chapter.

1. Middle Little Susitna River (delete 350 acres). A three-mile length of the Little Susitna River shorelands and water column has been designated as both part of the State Recreation Rivers and the Nancy Lakes State Recreation Area (Township 17 North, Range 4 West, Seward Meridian, Sections 5, 7, and 8). The dual designation of the shorelands and the water column should remain. DMLW and DPOR should develop a management agreement for this area. The uplands that have dual designation should be deleted from the Recreation Rivers. The legal description of proposed changes are as follows:

Existing Recreation Rivers description:

T.17 N., R. 4 W., S.M.

Section 7: W $\frac{1}{2}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$

Section 8: E $\frac{1}{2}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$

Change Recreation Rivers description to:

T.17 N., R. 4 W., S.M.

Section 7: W $\frac{1}{2}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$

Section 8: E $\frac{1}{2}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$

2. Upper Talkeetna River (add approximately 150 acres). The scenic Talkeetna Canyon extends to just above the mouth of Prairie Creek (RM 51.5). The uplands on the upper portion of the canyon are Native-owned. Because of its values for whitewater boating, the subunit should be extended to the upper end of the canyon. The proposed addition would add seven river miles to the Recreation Rivers and include the shorelands, river column, and public easement between the existing Talkeetna Recreation River boundary and the upper end of the canyon above the mouth of Prairie Creek. The addition should be managed as part of the Upper Talkeetna River Subunit (3d). Because the Talkeetna above this point is wide, braided, and contains several mining operations, it is not recommended for addition. The proposed addition should include:

The shorelands and the water column of the Talkeetna River from mean high water mark to mean high water mark from the point at which it crosses the line dividing Townships 28 and 29 North, Seward Meridian, upstream to the point at which it crosses the line dividing sections 23 and 24, Township 29 North, Range 2 East, Seward Meridian.

3. Error in Legal Description. A typographic error in the legal description for the Talkeetna Recreation River should be corrected. Change AS 41.23.500(6)(J) from Section 16: E $\frac{1}{2}$ to Section 16: E $\frac{1}{2}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$.

Procedures for Plan Review, Modification, & Amendment

Introduction

Land-use designations, policies, implementation actions, and management guidelines in this plan may be changed if conditions warrant. The plan will be updated periodically as new data and new technologies become available, and as changing social or economic conditions place different demands on state lands within the planning area. This section discusses three elements of plan modification: periodic review, changes to the plan, and discretion within guidelines.

Periodic Review. The planning team and advisory board should be consulted annually to evaluate plan implementation. The plan will be reviewed approximately once every five years to determine if revisions are necessary. An interagency planning team and the

Recreation Rivers advisory board will coordinate this review. This revision should be consistent with AS 41.23.430 - .440 in the Recreation Rivers Act.

Changes to the Plan. Categories of management intent, policies, implementation actions, and management guidelines of this plan may be changed if conditions warrant. The plan will be updated periodically in response to new data or changing resource conditions or uses.

The various kinds of changes allowed in 11 AAC 55.030 are:

“A revision to a land-use plan is subject to the planning process requirements of AS 38.04.065. For the purposes of this section and AS 38.04.065, a ‘revision’ is an amendment or special exception to a land use plan as outlined below:

1. Plan Amendment

An ‘amendment’ permanently changes the land use plan by adding to or modifying the basic management intent for one or more of the plan’s subunits or by changing its allowed or prohibited uses, policies, or guidelines.

The following actions are examples of changes that would require an amendment:

- a proposal to prohibit a use that is now a designated use, or, conversely to allow a prohibited use;
- a proposal to open an area to mineral entry; or
- allowing leasing for a lodge anywhere in the planning area.

2. Special Exceptions

A special exception does not permanently change the provisions of the plan and cannot be used as the basis for a reclassification of an area. Instead, it allows a one-time limited-purpose variance of the plan’s provisions, without changing the plan’s general management intent or guidelines. Special exceptions may be made if complying with the plan is excessively burdensome, impractical, or inequitable to a third party, and if the purposes and spirit of the plan can be achieved despite the exception.

The following actions are examples of changes that would be a special exception:

- based on more detailed data, allowing a prohibited use in a small area on the edge of a management subunit next to a subunit where that use is allowed; or

- a preference right granted under AS 38.05.035(e), where the director determines such an action is necessary to correct an injustice and will not significantly affect the intent of the plan.

Special Exceptions to Guidelines Modified by “Will”

Special exceptions to guidelines modified by the phrase “will” may be allowed for individual actions. The decision not to follow a pertinent guideline modified by the term “will” will be consistent with the procedures for special exceptions.

Procedures for Special Exceptions

A. Taking into account the requirements of AS 38.04.065(b), the director will prepare a written document that specifies:

- the reasons for the special exception (i.e., why a variance of the plan’s provisions is needed);
- the alternative action or course of action to be followed;
- why the special exception is in the public interest; and
- how the general intent of the plan and management unit will be met by the alternative course of action.

B. Where practical, the document should be part of or circulated with a finding required by AS 38.05.035(e).

3. Minor Changes

A minor change to a land-use plan is not considered a revision under AS38.04.065. A ‘minor change’ is a change that does not modify or add to the plan’s basic intent, and that serves only to clarify the plan, make it consistent, facilitate its implementation, or make technical corrections.

4. Discretion within Guidelines

Some policies in the plan, such as those modified by the terms “feasible and prudent,” “feasible,” and “should” are written to allow for exceptions if the conditions described in the policy are met. The definitions of these terms are given in Appendix A. The procedures for allowing exceptions to these guidelines are given in this section. Allowing an exception following these procedures is neither a revision nor a change to the plan.

Guidelines Modified by “Feasible and Prudent” or “Feasible”

Exceptions to guidelines modified by the phrase “feasible and prudent” or “feasible” (see definitions in Appendix A) may be allowed after following the steps outlined below.

A. The regional manager will prepare a written document that specifies:

- the conditions that make compliance with the guideline not feasible or not feasible and prudent;
- the alternative course of action to be followed; and
- how the intent of the plan and management unit will be met by the alternative course of action.

B. Where practical, the document should be part of or circulated with a finding required by AS 38.05.035(e).

C. Before making the final determination, the director will give notification required by the applicable permitting procedure and request comments on the proposed action. This notification will include the points described in A.

Guidelines Modified by “Should”

Exceptions to guidelines modified by the word “should” can be made by the ADNR Regional Manager, or his designees. The guideline does, however, state an intent of the plan that should be met, using the best managerial practices for the given situation. These exceptions require a written justification in the administrative record. The justification should briefly outline how the action meets the intent of the guideline or why the particular circumstances justify deviation from the intended action or conditions.

5. Recommended Statute Changes for Public Notice Requirements

AS 41.23.440(a) requires extensive public participation and public notice in preparing and revising management plans for the Recreation Rivers. This requirement is appropriate for preparing or updating the plan. However, the requirement makes it difficult to make small changes in the plan, changes that may be necessary to facilitate management or enforcement, and that are noncontroversial.

From AS 41.23.440(a), “In preparation *or revision* of the plan, the commissioner shall comply with the notice requirements of AS 38.05.945 and provide *written notice by first-class mail to private property owners in the Recreation Rivers corridors* and shall hold at least two public hearings in municipalities and communities near the Recreation River and the Recreation River corridor.” Amendments and special exceptions to the plan are revisions.

The requirement that revisions include two public hearings, and wide-spread notice by mail (over and above the requirement AS 38.05.945) will make it expensive to do small changes that are non-controversial but are necessary to facilitate management, enforcement, or correct errors in the plan.

AS 38.04.065(b)(8) already requires meaningful participation by affected local governments, state and federal agencies, adjacent landowners, and the general public. AS 38.05.945 already requires the department to publish notice in newspapers of general and local circulation. It also requires public service announcements, posting in conspicuous locations, notification of parties likely to be affected, or another method calculated to reach affected persons. This level of notice should be sufficient for actions expected to be only of limited effect or controversy. In addition, all amendments and special exceptions require notice to the Recreation Rivers advisory board and planning team.

Therefore, to facilitate non-controversial changes to the plan, the requirements of AS 41.23.440(a) should be limited to preparing the plan, updating the plan, or changes expected to be controversial.

Non-controversial amendments and special exceptions should be guided by the existing department procedures established for other department plans under AS 38.04.065 and AS 38.05.945.

Trails Action Plan

Trails cross through a mix of land ownerships and agency jurisdictions within the planning area and trails are essential to transportation and recreation in the Susitna Basin. Consistent trail management policies are needed to ensure that trails continue to be available for public use, and that trail use does not adversely affect other resources, such as wetlands and anadromous streams. ADNR, in consultation with ADF&G and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, should prepare a trails plan for the Susitna Basin. Specific tasks for the trails plan are:

1. Public participation

- Develop a public participation program to involve trail user groups in plan development.
- Develop public information materials explaining plan decisions (e.g., trailhead kiosks, brochures).
- Coordinate volunteers to help implement the plan.

2. Trail mapping

- Map existing trails and legal access.
- Identify current use of the trails.
- Identify trails capable of sustaining summer ORV use and identify areas susceptible to damage from summer ORV use (e.g., wetlands or erosive slopes).
- Determine appropriate management of ORVs in susceptible areas (e.g., designated trails for summer ORV use).
- Identify areas where additional trails are needed.

3. Stream crossing

- Identify sites where trails cross anadromous streams.
- Determine the appropriate method for stream crossing at these sites (e.g., bridge, individual ADF&G permit, general ADF&G permit).
- Work with ADF&G to establish general Title 16 permits for stream crossings where appropriate.

4. Trail management

- Develop management guidelines for public trails.
- Establish regulations or a special use area to manage summer ORV use. Identify whether new authorities are needed for trail management.
- Set priorities for needed trail maintenance or construction projects, including trailhead facilities and bridges.
- Set priorities for enforcement of trail policies and regulations.
- Identify funding needed for trail management.
- Develop trail management program including considering all possible sources of management assistance, including state and borough agencies, federal assistance, and volunteer groups.

Other Recommendations

Recreation Rivers Advisory Board. Consistent with AS 41.23.430(b) the commissioner shall consult with the advisory board in preparing, adopting, and revising the Recreation Rivers management plan and regulations affecting use and management of the Recreation Rivers. ADNR and the advisory board will adopt and periodically update bylaws which outline the responsibilities of the commissioner and the board, and rules of order.

Public Notice Statute Changes. See Part 5 in this chapter under *Procedures for Plan Review, Modification, and Amendment*.

Denying Permits and Leases. The planning team and advisory board recommend that applicants with a past record of serious fish and game violations (such as same-day airborne hunting, wanton waste of fish or game, or over-harvesting) be denied permits and leases to use state lands or facilities for commercial use.

Enforcement. The Recreation Rivers Act grants the commissioner authority to designate peace officers to enforce the provisions of the act under AS 41.23.440(b). ADNR should seek citation authority and draft regulations which describe the authorities of peace officers in the Recreation Rivers. The regulations should also describe the citation authority and procedures for setting a bail bond schedule. Also see *Enforcement* in Chapter 4.

Monitoring. Successful management programs require systematic monitoring. Monitoring enables managers to document how impacts or uses are changing and, respond to those changes. A monitoring program for the Recreation Rivers will focus on: use levels (trips per day), litter (volume collected by patrols per river mile and percentage of sites with significant levels), camp encounters (percentage of nights users camp within sight and sound of other camps), and river encounters (number of groups seen per day).

While use monitoring is needed for all segments, the department will begin with the three whitewater reaches of the Talkeetna River, Talachulitna River, and Lake Creek. Because the number of trips on these rivers is relatively small (less than two hundred per year on each), the staff cost of collecting and analyzing this information would be low.

Use information areawide should continue to be collected by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game creel census and statewide survey efforts.

Future Additions

Prairie Creek. Prairie Creek has been suggested as an addition to the Recreation Rivers because it serves as access to the Talkeetna Canyon and is an excellent whitewater float in its own right. Access is limited because the uplands are Native-owned. The creek also has high value as a bear concentration area during the king salmon run. There are concerns that a designation as a Recreation River may create conflicts between recreationists and bears during the king salmon run. In addition, under 41.23.480(c), “The commissioner may not manage a Recreation River corridor described in AS 41.23.500 as a unit of the state park system or as a game refuge, game sanctuary, or as critical habitat.” This may preclude ADF&G management of uses in the proposed addition to protect bears.

As an alternative to adding Prairie Creek to the Talkeetna Recreation River, information on public access should be available including the locations of one-acre 17(b) easements on Stephan Lake and at the mouth, trail easements, the rights of the public to use the water

column, and the rights of the public to use the land below the ordinary high water. Information on how to reduce conflicts with bears should also be provided. This may include discouraging the public from using Prairie Creek during the king salmon run. Finally, if the river is proposed as critical habitat area, language should be included to allow for recreation use, including floating, when bears are not concentrated in the area.

Commercial Facilities. AS 41.23.470(d) should be amended to delete “If the facility is not in competition with a private facility or enterprise.” This clause is too broad, difficult to adjudicate, and may subject the state to litigation if competition develops after a facility is built. The section essentially prohibits all types of leasing under AS 38.05.070 (and .073) within the Recreation Rivers. The planning team and advisory board thought that there may be cases where leasing a commercial campground or boat launch may be in the best public interest even if the facility competes with another private facility or enterprise.

Fisheries Enhancement on Lake Creek. The Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association should provide the public and the Recreation Rivers Advisory Board the opportunity to comment on fisheries enhancement activities on Lake Creek.

Agency Implementation Responsibilities

1. Alaska Department of Natural Resources

A. Department

Amend Regulations. Promulgate regulations needed to implement the policies and guidelines recommended for the Recreation Rivers by this plan revision.

Adopt consistent regulations in the Nancy Lakes State Recreation Area. Adopt regulations for the alternating weekends motorized and non-motorized weekends for boats on the Little Susitna River and the 96 hour camping limit for the river where it passes through the Nancy Lakes State Recreation Area. The camping limit should apply to an area within one-half mile of the Little Susitna River in the Nancy Lakes State Recreation Area.

B. Division of Mining, Land & Water (DMLW)

The Division of Mining, Land & Water is the division within ADNR charged with the management of state land and water within the planning area. The division will prioritize the following implementation items based upon the level of funding, staffing, and other resources allocated for management:

1) Develop policies and procedures. After ADNR has promulgated regulations establishing the necessary authorities, the division will develop the policies and procedures needed to

1 implement programs recommended in the plan, such as the commercial use permit and
2 enforcement responsibilities.

3
4 **2) Education.** The DMLW will take the lead, in cooperation with other agencies, in
5 developing brochures to inform river users of regulations specific to Recreation Rivers,
6 boater safety, and disposal of waste and litter. Informational signs and kiosks will also be
7 developed and posted by the division.

8
9 **3) Provide trained staff.** Provide equipment, training, field housing, and office space for
10 staff to perform management duties at the level consistent with funding levels. Office staff
11 will be responsible for administering the commercial use permit program, adjudication of
12 land use authorizations, and field support and coordination. Field staff will enforce plan
13 regulations, post trespass structures, and maintain public facilities.

14
15 **4) Monitor whitewater river use.** Work with boaters to monitor use and impacts on these
16 rivers. The division may institute a voluntary reservation system for the use of the Talkeetna
17 Canyon and later Lake Creek and the Talachulitna River.

18
19 **5) Enter into cooperative management agreements.** Where needed, the division should
20 enter into cooperative management agreements with other state, federal, or local agencies for
21 management of specific sites or areas in the Recreation Rivers.

22
23 **6) Establish public facilities.** The division will work with the advisory board to establish
24 priorities for the development of public facilities identified by the plan.

25 26 27 **C. Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys (DGGS)**

28
29 **1) Initiate boat erosion study.** Initiate a study of the effects of boat-induced erosion on the
30 Little Susitna River. This river was selected for study because of its high level of boat use,
31 narrow width, erodible banks, and accessibility.

32
33 **2) Instream flow.** Continue to monitor stream flow on Lake Creek, the Talachulitna River,
34 and Alexander Creek.

35
36 **3) Evaluate erosion control structures.** The division will assist in evaluating erosion
37 control structures and the effects on flow regime. In addition, the division will continue to
38 evaluate stream flow on all Recreation Rivers as necessary for instream flow reservations.

39
40 **4) Lake Creek.** Conduct base-line monitoring of water quality of Lake, Camp, and
41 Sunflower creeks (in cooperation with ADEC) adjacent to the area open to new mineral entry
42 under the leasehold location system.

D. Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation (DPOR)

1) Cooperative management agreement. DMLW and DPOR should develop a cooperative management agreement(s) to ensure efficient management of state land and waters in areas managed by either of the two divisions in or adjacent to the Recreation Rivers.

2. Alaska Department of Fish & Game

The Department of Fish and Game has several on-going and proposed research projects to obtain information on fish and wildlife populations, and human uses of fish and wildlife resources in the Susitna Recreation Rivers. The information generated by these projects is essential for managing the river. In addition, ADF&G should initiate management actions that ensure consistent and efficient management between the ADF&G and ADNR on the Recreation Rivers.

A. Division of Habitat

1) Identify sites for general stream crossing. To reduce the need for construction of additional bridges within the Recreation Rivers, the division should work with user groups to identify appropriate crossing points that may be authorized for use under a general permit (AS 16.05.870).

B. Division of Sport Fisheries

1) Initiate research on effects of boats on fisheries. Conduct and cooperate with the University of Alaska to evaluate the effects of jet boat use on fish habitat.

2) Instream flow. The division will supply information on fisheries resource location, timing, and flow needs in cooperation with the Division of Habitat to reserve instream flow for Alexander Creek and the Talachulitna River.

C. Division of Wildlife Conservation

1) Lower Susitna moose population identification and movements study. This study will provide information on moose populations, movements, biology, and habitat preferences in the Susitna Valley including in all of the Recreation River corridors.

3. Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

The Department of Environmental Conservation has broad responsibility to conserve, improve, and protect water quality to enhance the health, safety, economic, and social well-being of Alaskans. ADEC has an ongoing project to obtain information on turbidity in the Little Susitna River. Turbidity exceedances in the lower Little Susitna River led to an impairment listing in Alaska's 2014/2016 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report under the Clean Water Act § 303(d). The area of impairment extends 8.5 river miles beginning 5 miles downstream and ending 0.7 miles upstream of the Public Use Facility boat launch. This is the area of heaviest motorized boat traffic. The period of concern for the impairment is during the month of August coinciding with the peak silver salmon fishery and heavier motorized boat traffic, the primary source of the turbidity pollution. ADEC is collecting additional turbidity data at the same locations studied previously to determine if pollution conditions have changed and if the river now meets State Water Quality Criteria for turbidity. ADEC is currently evaluating turbidity data from 2020, 2022, and 2023.

ADEC removed the petroleum hydrocarbon impairment for the same river miles in the 2022 Integrated Report. The lower Little Susitna River was included in Category 4b (Impaired with an improvement plan) in the 2014/16 Integrated Report. Since then, multiple activities have occurred to reduce petroleum hydrocarbon levels in the river from motorized boating. Water quality data from 2019 - 2020 demonstrated the controls are effective.

A. Division of Water

1) Lake Creek. Conduct base-line monitoring of water quality of Lake, Camp, and Sunflower creeks (in cooperation with ADF&G) adjacent to the area open to new mineral entry under the leasehold location system.

2) All waters. Conduct data analysis on readily available water quality data to determine if waters are attaining water quality standards on a biennial basis during the Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report.

4. Alaska Department of Public Safety

A. Alaska Wildlife Troopers

Enforcement. Provide enforcement staff on the rivers as budget and staffing allow.

5. Matanuska-Susitna Borough

A. Planning

Develop comprehensive plans. Develop a comprehensive plan for areas within the Recreation Rivers, to ensure that uses of private lands within the corridors do not significantly degrade fish, wildlife, or recreation values.

6. United States Coast Guard

A. Enforcement

Increase patrols on the six Recreation Rivers, especially during the peak fishing season near the river mouths.

B. Navigability Determination

Clarify which of the Recreation Rivers are navigable.

1
2

1 **Appendices**

2

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9

10

Appendix A

Glossary

AAC. Alaska Administrative Code.

ADEC. Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

ADF&G. Alaska Department of Fish & Game.

ADNR. Alaska Department of Natural Resources.

ADOT/PF. Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities.

Airboat. A boat driven by an aircraft propeller and steered by a rudder. This does not include aircraft or hovercraft.

Aircraft. Any device that is used or intended for flight or movement of people or goods in the air. This does not include a hovercraft.

Airstrip development. Construction of a landing strip for airplanes that involves levelling the ground or removing or modifying a substantial amount of vegetation.

Anadromous fish stream. A waterbody supporting anadromous fish, including rivers, lakes, or streams from their mouth to their uppermost reaches, including all sloughs and backwaters adjoining the waters, and that portion of the streambeds or lakebeds covered by ordinary high water. Anadromous streams are shown in “The Atlas to the Catalog of Waters Important for Spawning, Rearing, or Migration of Salmon” (referred to as the Anadromous Fish Stream Catalog) compiled by ADF&G.

Anchor buoy. A float attached to the bottom by anchors, lines, or chains for making fast a vessel.

AS. Alaska Statute.

Boat storage. Keeping a boat in one place more than four days on state land and water during the ice-free season and more than 14 days during the winter. This includes attaching a boat to the bank by a line, pulled up on the shorelands, or placed on the uplands. Boat storage does not include boats tied to mooring buoys, anchored to the bottom, or attached to docks.

Boat. Any type of watercraft used or capable of use being used as a means of transportation on water. This does not include aircraft equipped to land on water or floating facilities.

Buffer. An area of land between two activities or resources used to reduce the effect of one activity upon another.

Camp(ing). See *Primitive tent camps*.

Campground. See the examples of the types of improvements that may be included in a campground in the definitions for *Recreation, Developed Public Facility* in Chapter 2.

Campsite. An area suitable or used for camping.

CFS. Cubic feet per second.

Class 1. Moving water with a few riffles and small waves. Few or no obstructions.

Class 2. Easy rapids with waves up to three feet, and wide, clear channels that are obvious without scouting. Some maneuvering is required.

Class 3. Rapids with high, irregular waves often capable of swamping an open canoe. Narrow passages that often require scouting from shore.

Class 4. Long, difficult rapids with constricted passages that often require precise maneuvering in very turbulent waters. Scouting from shore is often necessary, and conditions make rescue difficult. Generally not possible for open canoes and kayakers should be able to Eskimo roll.

Class 5. Extremely difficult, long and very violent rapids with highly congested routes which nearly always must be scouted from shore. Rescue conditions are difficult and there is significant hazard to life in event of a mishap. Ability to Eskimo roll is essential for kayakers.

Class 6. Difficulties of Class 5 carried to the extreme of navigability. Nearly impossible and very dangerous. For teams of experts only, after close study and with all precautions taken.

Clean fill. Fill that is free of organics, human refuse, and toxic pollutants.

Closed to mineral entry. Areas where mining has been determined to be in conflict with significant surface uses in the area and the staking of new mineral locations is prohibited. Existing mineral locations at the time of plan adoption are not affected by mineral closures.

Commercial. An action or operation that generates income from the buying, selling, renting, bartering, or trading goods or services.

Commercial camp. A camp authorized by a land use permit that may remain at one site for longer than 96 hours (4 nights) between May 15 and August 31 (more than 14 days between September 1 and May 14) but no more than one year. They are for commercial operations, and provide temporary habitation and facilities for guests, guides, and employees. Temporary

1 camps must be removed at the end of their permitted period of use. They do not include
2 resource management camps or mining camps.

3
4 **Commercial recreational uses.** Recreational uses of lands, waters, and resources for
5 business or financial gain, such as guided sport fishing, guided and outfitted sport hunting,
6 guided recreation, or air and water taxi services.

7
8 **Commissioner.** The Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources.

9
10 **Concurrence.** Under existing statutes, regulations, and procedures, the Alaska Department of
11 Natural Resources is required to obtain the approval of other groups before taking a specific
12 action. Concurrence binds all parties to conduct activities consistent with the approved
13 course of action.

14
15 **Conservation buffer** (or area). See *Riparian Management Areas, Conservation Area* in
16 Chapter 2.

17
18 **Consultation.** Under existing statutes, regulations, and procedures, the Alaska Department of
19 Natural Resources informs other groups of its intention to take a specific action, and seeks
20 their advice or assistance. Consultation is not intended to be binding. It is a means of
21 informing affected organizations and individuals about forthcoming decisions and getting the
22 benefit of their expertise. ADNR replies to parties offering advice or assistance by informing
23 them of the decision and the reasons for which the decision was made or notifying them that
24 the decision and finding are available upon request.

25
26 **Corridor.** See *River corridor*.

27
28 **Department.** Alaska Department of Natural Resources.

29
30 **Developed public facility.** May include any of the following: boat ramp, campground, picnic
31 area, flush or vault toilets, visitor information center, or parking area. Also see *Primitive*
32 *Public Facility*.

33
34 **Director.** Director of the Division of Mining, Land & Water.

35
36 **Division.** Division of Mining, Land & Water, a division of ADNR.

37
38 **DMLW.** Division of Mining, Land & Water, a division of ADNR.

39
40 **DPOR.** Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, a division of ADNR.

41
42 **Due deference.** That deference which is appropriate in the context of the commenter's
43 expertise and area of responsibility, and all the evidence available to support any factual
44 assertions. Where due deference is given, if the commissioner does not agree with a

commenting agency, the commissioner shall prepare a written statement of the reasons for the disagreement. (AS 41.17.098)

Easement. An interest in land owned by another that entitles its holder to a specific limited use.

EPA. Environmental Protection Agency.

Evidence of human use. Physical signs of human activity that include man-made changes to the environment from development and other signs of human activity not associated with development (such as litter, campfire rings, and trails), or other alterations to the existing environment.

Feasible. Capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, technical, and safety factors. See also, *Procedures for Plan Reviews, Modification, and Amendment* in Chapter 4.

Feasible and prudent. Consistent with sound engineering practice and not causing environmental, social, or economic problems that outweigh the public benefit to be derived from compliance with the guideline. See also, *Procedures for Plan Review, Modification, and Amendment* in Chapter 4.

Fish and wildlife. Any species of aquatic fish, invertebrates, and amphibians, in any stage of their life cycle, and all species of birds and mammals, found or that may be introduced in Alaska, except domestic birds and mammals. The term “area(s)” in association with the term “fish and wildlife” refers to both harvest and habitat areas.

Floating residential and commercial facilities. A general phrase used to encompass floating caretaker facilities, floathomes, and floatlodes (see individual definitions of these terms).

Floating lodge. A floating commercial facility providing overnight accommodations to the public for a fee that is moored, anchored, or grounded on state land or water.

Floating facility. Includes floathomes, floatcamps, floating lodges, floating caretaker facilities, and other similar floating residential or commercial facilities anchored, moored, or grounded on state land or water. Floating mobile docks for fishing are not included in this definition.

Floating dock. A floating structure, generally attached to the bank by ropes, chains, or other types of lines or by hinged walkways or ladders, used for loading or unloading aircraft or boats or for recreation.

1 **Floating mobile docks.** Floating structures used for fishing that are not attached to the bank.
2 Floating mobile docks are usually supported by barrels, styrofoam, or logs rather than a
3 hull(s). They are often used for fishing.
4

5 **Floathome or floatcamp.** These are floathouses, house boats, tents on floats, or cabins on
6 floats that are moved, anchored, or grounded on state land or water.
7

8 **Freeboard.** The vertical clearance of the lowest structural member of the bridge
9 superstructure above the water surface elevation of an overtopping flood.
10

11 **Generally allowed activities.** Refers to uses of state land or water for which no permit or
12 other authorization is required.
13

14 **Goal.** A statement of basic intent or general condition desired in the long term. Goals usually
15 are not quantifiable and do not have specified dates for achievement.
16

17 **Guideline.** A course of action to be followed by ADNR resource managers or required of
18 land users when the manager permits, leases, or otherwise authorizes the use of state land or
19 resources. Guidelines also range in their level of specificity from giving general guidance for
20 decision making or identifying factors that need to be considered, to setting detailed
21 standards for on-the-ground decisions. Some guidelines state the intent that must be followed
22 and allow flexibility in achieving it.
23

24 **Helicopter.** An aircraft deriving its lift from blades above the vessel that rotate around an
25 approximate vertical axis.
26

27 **Hovercraft.** A vehicle supported above the surface of the land or water by a cushion of air
28 produced by downward-direction fans. This does not include helicopters or hovercraft.
29

30 **Hydroplane.** A high-speed boat with hydrofoils or a stepped bottom, so that the hull is raised
31 wholly or partially out of the water allowing it to skim along the water at a high rate of speed.
32

33 **Instream flow.** Water flowing past a given point during one second. [From 11 AAC
34 93.970(19)].
35

36 **Interagency land management agreement/transfer (ILMA/ILMT).** An agreement between
37 two state agencies that transfers management responsibility of land from one agency to the
38 other.
39

40 **Land manager.** A representative of the state agency or division responsible for managing
41 state land.
42

43 **Land use permit.** An Alaska Department of Natural Resources authorization for the
44 temporary use of state land or resources. It conveys no right in the land, but it authorizes the
45 holder of the permit to conduct an activity under the terms of the permit and provides

immunity from prosecution for trespass while conducting the authorized activity. It does not constitute waiver of any other state laws regarding trespass, water use, waste, or water or air pollution. A permit is, by its terms, revocable at will by the state (from AS 38.05.850, 11 AAC 96).

Leasable mineral. Leasable minerals include deposits of coal, sulfur phosphates, oil shale, sodium potassium, oil, and gas.

Lease. An agreement which gives rise to relationship of landlord and tenant. AS 38.05.070 and AS 38.05.073 describe types of leases for state land.

Legislative designation. An action by the state legislature that sets aside a specific area for special management actions and ensures the area is kept in public ownership.

Level of encounters. The number of people or groups of people seen during a specified time.

Life of the plan. The plan uses a 20-year planning period to guide land management. However, the plan is a flexible tool and may be changed if conditions warrant. The plan will be reviewed approximately every five years to determine if revisions are necessary. See Chapter 4, *Procedures for Plan Review, Modification, and Amendment*.

Locatable mineral. Includes both metallic (such as gold, silver, lead) and nonmetallic (such as spar, asbestos, and mica) minerals.

Lodge. A place of temporary habitation, usually for let or a public house that provides lodging and usually meals and other services. Lodges on state land are authorized by lease. They may be solid wall buildings or frame tents that do not need to be removed, nor the site restored to its natural state, after each season of use.

Management intent. A statement that defines the department's near and long-term management objectives and the methods to achieve those objectives.

Marina. Docks used for commercial or public purposes, such as those associated with lodges or campgrounds.

Marginal campsite. Sites capable of supporting tents without additional brush clearing but seldom used because of the abundance of better sites nearby.

Marker buoy. A float attached to the bottom by anchors, lines, or chains for making fast a vessel.

Materials. Includes common varieties of sand, gravel, rock, peat, pumice, pumicite, cinders, clay, and sod.

1 **Mining.** Any structure or activity for commercial exploration and recovery of minerals,
2 including resource transfer facilities, camps, and other support facilities associated with
3 mineral development.

4
5 **Mining camps.** Structures built by mine claimants for mineral exploration, annual
6 assessment, or production in the Recreation Rivers. Mining camps do not include commercial
7 camps, resource management camps, or camps associated with recreational mining.

8
9 **Mining location.** A property right to locatable minerals established by discovery, location,
10 and filing under AS 38.05.195 or 38.05.205.

11
12 **Navigable.** Used in its land title context, refers to lakes and rivers that meet federal or state
13 criteria for navigability. Under the Equal Footing Doctrine, the Alaska State Act, and the
14 Submerged Lands Act, the state owns land under navigable waterbodies.

15
16 **No-wake area.** Areas where powerboaters are encouraged to operate at less than five miles
17 per hour.

18
19 **Non-motorized area.** See Chapter 2, *General Access, Boat Access; Upland Access; and Air*
20 *Access.*

21
22 **NPS.** National Park Service.

23
24 **Off-road vehicle (ORV).** A vehicle designed or adapted for cross country operation over
25 unimproved terrain, which has been declared by its owner at the time of registration, or
26 determined by the Alaska Department of Public Safety, to be unsuitable for general highway
27 use.

28
29 **Ordinary high water (mark).** The mark along the bank or shore up to which the presence
30 and action of the nontidal water are so common and usual, and so long continued in all
31 ordinary years, as to leave a natural line impressed on the bank or shore and indicated by
32 erosion, shelving, changes in soil characteristics, destruction of terrestrial vegetation, or other
33 distinctive physical characteristics [from 11 AAC 53.900(23)].

34
35 **Overtopping flood.** A flood described by the probability of exceedance and water surface
36 elevation at which flow occurs over highway, over the watershed divide, or through
37 structure(s) provided for emergency relief.

38
39 **Permit.** See *Land Use Permit*.

40
41 **Personal watercraft.** Small motorized craft capable of carrying between one and four people
42 who stand or ride saddle-style. These craft are powered by jet pump engines which generally
43 do not exceed 650 cc. Three examples of personal watercraft brands and models include
44 Bombardier Seadoos, Kawasaki jetskis, and Yamaha Waverunners.

1 **Plan(ning) area.** See *Recreation Rivers*.

2
3 **Policy.** An intended course of action or a principle for guiding actions. In this plan, ADNR
4 policies for land and resource management include goals, management intent statements,
5 management guidelines, implementation plans and procedures, and various other statements
6 of ADNR's intentions.

7
8 **Powerboat.** Any type of watercraft used or capable of being used as a means of
9 transportation on water, not including personal watercraft and aircraft equipped to land on
10 water.

11
12 **Powerboats-only area.** See Chapter 2, *Boat Access*.

13
14 **Primary campsites.** Sites that show evidence of frequent use. These sites are generally well
15 known and offer amenities, such as scenic qualities or good fishing, that make them popular
16 destination points.

17
18 **Primitive tent camp.** Include portable camps such as pup tents, tarps supported by poles,
19 and other similar designs.

20
21 **Primitive public facility.** Includes minimal improvements such as privies, fire-rings, log
22 benches, and cleared campsites. Also see *Developed public facility*.

23
24 **Prohibited use.** A use not allowed because of conflicts with the plan management intent or
25 management guidelines. Uses not specifically prohibited are allowed if compatible with the
26 management intent statements for the subunit and plan guidelines. Changing a prohibited use
27 to an allowable use requires a plan amendment.

28
29 **Protection area.** See *Riparian Management Areas, Protection Areas* in Chapter 2.

30
31 **Public facility.** Improvements constructed with public funding that provide amenities for
32 recreation. In the Recreation Rivers these could include campgrounds, boat launches, privies
33 and fire rings.

34
35 **Public trust doctrine.** A doctrine that directs the state to manage tidelands, shorelands, and
36 submerged lands for the benefit of the people so that they may engage in such things as
37 commerce, navigation, fishing, hunting, swimming, and ecological study, or other uses.

38
39 **Public use.** Any human use of state land, including commercial or non-commercial uses.

40
41 **Public use site.** Designated sites on state land in the planning area identified as important
42 public access (including float and wheeled plane landing areas), camping, hunting, fishing, or
43 other recreation or public use areas.

1 **Recreation.** Any activity for recreational purposes, including, but not limited to, hiking,
2 camping, boating, hunting, fishing, and sightseeing.

3
4 **Recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS).** A three class system used by the Bureau of Land
5 Management and other agencies to describe a range of recreation opportunities and settings
6 that an area will be managed for.

7
8 **Recreation River(s).** All land and water (including uplands and shorelands) designated
9 under 41.23.500(1-6).

10
11 **Recreational mining.** Recreational mining is the extraction of placer gold primarily for the
12 purposes of enjoyment, pleasure, and experience, rather than for profit or use. Recreational
13 mining does not require participants to have exclusive rights to the minerals through a mine
14 lease. Recreational mining is not mining or a surface use under the state mining law. With the
15 exception of suction dredging, recreational mining does not require a permit. Recreational
16 mining must occur either in unstaked areas or by permission of the location holder.

17
18 **Regulatory floodway.** The flood-plain area that is reserved in an open manner by federal,
19 state, or local requirements, i.e., unconfined or unobstructed either horizontally or vertically,
20 to provide for the discharge of the base flood so that the cumulative increase in water surface
21 elevation is no more than a designated amount (not to exceed 1 foot as established by the
22 Federal Emergency Management Agency for administering the National Flood Insurance
23 Program.

24
25 **Reservation of water.** Water appropriate for maintaining a specified instream flow or level
26 of water at a specified point on a stream or waterbody or in a specified part of a stream or
27 waterbody, for specified periods of time for permissible purposes.

28
29 **Resource assessment.** A document completed for this plan that contains background
30 information, analyses, and resource data important for making the land management
31 decisions in this plan.

32
33 **Resource management camps.** Facilities established for resource or recreation
34 management, or for scientific study. They are generally built by natural resource agencies
35 such as ADNR or ADF&G, the borough, or non-profit groups and the university. They do not
36 include commercial camps or mining camps.

37
38 **River corridor.** Uplands designated within the Recreation Rivers under AS 41.23.500(1-6).

39
40 **Rivers.** The water column designated under 41.23.500(1-6).

41
42 **RM, River mile.** System for measuring the river miles, beginning at the river mouth. Some
43 tributaries also have river miles shown in the plan measured from the tributary confluence
44 with the main river to the headwaters of the tributary.

Roads. Designated routes for pedestrians or vehicles including dogsleds, animals, snowmachines, two-and three-wheeled vehicles, small and large ORVs, track vehicles, four-wheel-drive vehicles, automobiles, and trucks.

SCRO. Southcentral Regional Office of the Division of Mining, Land & Water, Alaska Department of Natural Resources.

Secondary campsite. A site that has desirable qualities, such as good gravel or an open area, but is not a primary destination point because it lacks good fishing or other recreation qualities.

Segment, river. A division of a Recreation River which may include uplands, shorelands, and the river column. *Segment* is not synonymous with *subunit*. *Segment* is typically used to refer to areas which include a part of a subunit or more than one subunit.

Shall. Same as “will.”

Shoreland. Land belonging to the state that is covered by navigable, nontidal water up to the ordinary high watermark as modified by accretion, erosion or reliction (see definitions for *Navigable* and *Ordinary High Water*).

Shoreline development. Any development below or within 100-feet of ordinary high water.

Should. States intent for a course of action or a set of conditions to be achieved. Guidelines modified by this word state the plan’s intent, yet allows the land manager to use discretion in deciding the specific means for best achieving the intent, or whether circumstances justify deviation from the intended action or set of conditions. A guideline may include criteria for deciding if such a deviation is justified. See *Procedures for Plan Review, Modification, and Amendment* in Chapter 4.

Significant impact, effect, conflict, or loss (adapted from the Alaska Coastal Management Plan statutes, AS 46.40.210). A use or an activity associated with that use, which proximately contributes to a material change or alteration in the natural or social characteristic of the land and in which:

- a) the use, or activity associated with it, would have a net adverse effect on the quality of the resources;
- b) the use, or activity associated with it, would limit the range of alternative uses of the resources; or
- c) the use would, of itself, constitute a tolerable change or alteration of the resources but which, cumulatively, would have an adverse effect.

Snow vehicle or snowmachine. A motor vehicle with a gross weight of 1000 pounds or less, designed to travel primarily over ice or snow, and supported in part by skis, belts, cleats, or low-pressure tires.

Special management area (SMA). Areas with existing or proposed development, or clusters of private land. They will be managed as Class II areas if they are surrounded by a Class I area. They will be managed as Class III areas if they are surrounded by a Class II area. See *Special Management Areas* in Chapter 2.

State-owned land. See *State land*.

State land. All lands, including uplands, tidelands, submerged lands and shorelands belonging to or acquired by the State of Alaska, excluding lands owned by the University of Alaska.

Stretch, river. See *Segment*.

Trails, large vehicular. Trails designed for vehicles with a gross weight of over 1,000 lbs., pedestrians, dogsleds, animals, snowmachines, two-and three-wheeled vehicles, small and large ORVs, track vehicles, and four-wheel-drive vehicles.

Trails, small vehicular. Trails designed for vehicles with a gross weight of 1,000 lbs. or under, pedestrians, dogsleds, animals, snowmachines, two and three-wheeled vehicles, and small ORVs.

Trails, pedestrian. Trails designed for pedestrian and animal use.

Trapping cabin. A cabin constructed under a trapping cabin construction permit, as authorized and described in AS 38.95.075, AS 38.95.080 and 11 AAC 94.

Trespass. Any unauthorized use or structure on public land.

Upland Development. Any development more than 100-feet from ordinary high water.

Uplands. Lands above ordinary high water.

Vehicle. Any device for carrying persons or objects over land, water, or through air, such as automobiles, snowmachines, bicycles, off-road vehicle, motorized boat, non-motorized boat, and aircraft.

Vessel. Includes boats and aircraft.

Water-dependent. A use or activity which can be carried out only on, in, or adjacent to water areas, because the use requires access to the waterbody [from 6 AAC 80.900(17)].

Water-related. A use or activity which is not directly dependent upon access to a waterbody, but which provides goods or services that are directly associated with water-dependence and which, if not located adjacent to water, would result in a public loss of quality in the goods or services offered [from 6 AAC 80.900(18)].

1 **Waterbody.** Includes rivers, lakes, and streams.

2
3 **Weapon.** Includes mechanical, gas, or air-operated guns; pistols; rifles; shotguns; revolvers;
4 bow and arrows; slingshots; or crossbows.

5
6 **Wetlands.** Lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is
7 usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water. For purposes of this
8 definition wetlands must have one or more of the following three attributes: (1) at least
9 periodically, the land supports predominantly hydrophytes, (2) the substrate is predominantly
10 undrained hydric soil, and (3) the substrate is non-soil and is saturated with water or covered
11 by shallow water at some time during the growing season of each year. This definition
12 includes both vegetated and non-vegetated wetlands, recognizing that some types of wetlands
13 lack vegetation (e.g., sandbars).

14
15 For purposes of this management plan, wetlands are further divided into two classes.
16 *Contiguous wetlands* have visible surface water connections with the Recreation Rivers or
17 their tributaries. *Non-contiguous wetlands* have no apparent surface water connection. From
18 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's "Classification of and Deepwater Habitats of the United
19 States" (Cowardin, et al. 1979). Also see Chapter 2, *Riparian Management Areas*.

20
21 **Will.** Requires a course of action or a set of conditions to be achieved. A guideline modified
22 by this word must be followed by land managers and users. If such a guideline is not
23 complied with, a written decision justifying the noncompliance is required. See Chapter 4,
24 *Procedures for Plan Review, Modification, and Amendment*.

Appendix B

Recreation Rivers Act

Section

400. Purposes	460. Acquisition of additional land
410. Compatible activities	470. Application of public land laws
420. General management of recreation rivers and corridors	480. Cooperative management agreements
430. Advisory board	490. Limitation on establishment
440. Management plan	500. Establishment of recreation rivers and recreation corridors
450. Management of municipal land	510. Definition

Sec. 41.23.400. Purposes.

(a) The purpose of AS 41.23.400 - 41.23.510 is to establish as recreation rivers the land and water now owned by the state and the land and water acquired in the future by the state that lies within the recreation rivers and the river corridors described in AS 41.23.500.

(b) The primary purpose for the establishment of the six recreation rivers is the maintenance and enhancement of the land and water described in AS 41.23.500 for recreation.

(c) The primary purposes for the management of the six recreation rivers are

(1) the management, protection, and maintenance of the fish and wildlife populations and habitat on a sustained-yield basis;

(2) continued recreation and economic use, including the uses described in (3) and (4) of this subsection, and enjoyment by the public and individuals of recreational activities that include hunting, fishing, trapping, camping, boating, hiking, snowmachining, skiing, dog mushing, and wildlife viewing, while ensuring the scenic and natural integrity of the recreation river;

(3) multiple use management of upland activities within the recreation river corridor to ensure that mitigation measures to alleviate potential adverse effects on water quality and stream flow will take place; and

(4) accommodation of access for resource uses, including recreation and tourism, within or adjacent to the river corridor.

Sec. 41.23.410. Compatible activities.

The commissioner shall allow the following activities on a recreation river or within a recreation river corridor when they are compatible with AS 41.23.400 and consistent with a management plan adopted under AS 41.23.440:

(1) the use of aircraft, powerboats, snow machines, all-terrain vehicles, motorized transportation, and transportation by animal;

(2) the sale and harvest of wood products under AS 41.23.470(b);

(3) sand and gravel extraction under AS 41.23.470(b);

(4) the construction and operation of recreation facilities; and

(5) other uses permitted in the management plan required by AS 41.23.440, including mining and mineral development.

Sec. 41.23.420. General management of recreation rivers and corridors.

(a) The state-owned land and water within the area established as a recreation river under AS 41.23.500, including the recreation river corridor, is assigned to the commissioner for management consistent with the purposes of AS 41.23.400.

(b) The commissioner shall reserve to the state under AS 46.15.145 an instream flow or level for the water in the rivers described in AS 41.23.500 that is adequate to achieve the purposes of AS 41.23.400.

(c) The commissioner may regulate boating, if necessary, under the management plan adopted under AS 41.23.440.

(d) The provisions of AS 41.23.400 - 41.23.510 do not affect the authority of

(1) the Department of Fish and Game, the Board of Fisheries, the Board of Game, or the Big Game Commercial Services Board under AS 08.54, AS 16, or AS 41.99.010; or

(2) the Department of Environmental Conservation under AS 46.03.

(e) The commissioner may not restrict the use of weapons, including firearms, within a recreation river and a recreation river corridor except in sites of high public use such as picnic areas, boat ramps, camping grounds, and parking areas when the commissioner determines that the use of weapons constitutes a threat to public safety. Except as provided in this subsection, the commissioner may not restrict fishing, hunting, or trapping within a recreation river and its recreation river corridor.

(f) The authority of the commissioner under AS 41.23.400 - 41.23.510 ceases where the land and water established as a recreation river under AS 41.23.400 - 41.23.510 meets land and water that is not established as a recreation river.

Sec. 41.23.430. Advisory board.

(a) A 13-member Recreation Rivers Advisory Board is established. Board members serve without compensation and are not entitled to per diem and travel expenses authorized by law for boards and commissions under AS 39.20.180. The governor shall appoint members representing

(1) commercial fishing;

(2) sport fishing;

(3) sport hunting;

(4) conservation;

(5) subsistence;

(6) forest products;

(7) mining;

(8) powerboat users;

(9) recreationally-oriented commercial users;

(10) other recreational users;

(11) private property owners within the recreation river corridor;

(12) the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission from the membership of the planning commission; and

(13) the mayor of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough or the designee of the mayor.

(b) The commissioner shall consult with the advisory board in preparing, adopting, and revising the recreation river management plan and regulations affecting use and management of the recreation rivers.

Sec. 41.23.440. Management plan.

(a) The commissioner, in consultation with representatives of affected municipalities, shall prepare and adopt and may revise a management plan for each of the six recreation rivers and their recreation river corridors. In preparing or revising the plan, the commissioner and each affected municipality shall consult with the public and state agencies, including the commissioner of fish and game and the advisory board established under AS 41.23.430. In preparation or revision of the plan, the commissioner shall comply with the notice requirements of AS 38.05.945 and provide written notice by first-class mail to private property owners in the recreation river corridors and shall hold at least two public hearings in

1 municipalities and communities near the recreation river and the recreation river corridor.
2 The management plan shall establish long-range guidelines and management practices
3 consistent with AS 41.23.400 to

4 (1) establish guidelines and restrictions, if necessary, for an activity occurring under
5 AS 41.23.410 to implement the purposes of AS 41.23.400;

6
7 (2) protect, maintain, or enhance the fish and wildlife habitat and the free-flowing nature
8 of the river;

9
10 (3) identify special recreation values and manage the level of intensity and types of
11 recreation uses;

12
13 (4) designate management guidelines for development activities;

14
15 (5) designate management guidelines for commercial recreation activities or development,
16 including recreation services;

17
18 (6) provide for necessary public services, such as transportation and utility corridors,
19 crossing or fording corridors, public safety, and law enforcement;

20
21 (7) allow reasonable access to public land and private inholdings, including municipal
22 land that is offered for sale or lease, and to land beyond or adjacent to the recreation river and
23 the recreation river corridor;

24
25 (8) establish criteria and expedient timelines to review future proposed uses for
26 compatibility with AS 41.23.400.

27
28 (b) The commissioner shall adopt regulations necessary to implement the management plan.
29 The commissioner may not adopt regulations before a management plan takes effect. The
30 commissioner may designate employees of the department as peace officers to enforce the
31 provisions of AS 41.23.400 - 41.23.510.

32
33 (c) A management plan proposed by the commissioner under (a) of this section shall be
34 submitted to the legislature for review within the first 10 days of the first regular session of
35 the legislature to convene after completion of the plan by the commissioner. The plan takes
36 effect 100 days after submission of the plan to the legislature unless rejected by an act of the
37 legislature.

38
39 **Sec. 41.23.450. Management of municipal land.**

40 If a municipality commits land for inclusion in a recreation river corridor described in
41 AS 41.23.500, the commissioner shall obtain the concurrence of the municipality to the
42 management plan proposed under AS 41.23.440 as it applies to municipal land. The
43 commissioner shall cooperate, at the request of a municipality, in planning for municipal land
44 adjacent to a recreation river corridor. Municipal land not committed by a municipality for

1 inclusion in a recreation river corridor is excluded from the operation of the management
2 plan.

3
4 **Sec. 41.23.460. Acquisition of additional land.**

5 (a) The commissioner may acquire in the name of the state land that is adjacent to or located
6 within the land described in AS 41.23.500 by purchase, lease, gift, or exchange for inclusion
7 within a recreation river corridor.

8
9 (b) The commissioner may not acquire land for inclusion in a recreation river corridor by
10 eminent domain.

11
12 **Sec. 41.23.470. Application of public land laws.**

13 (a) The provisions of AS 38.04, AS 38.05, AS 38.35, and AS 38.95 apply to land described
14 in AS 41.23.500 except to the extent that a provision of AS 41.23.400 - 41.23.510 is
15 inconsistent.

16
17 (b) The commissioner may conduct only a negotiated timber sale under AS 38.05.115 to
18 provide for personal use, including house logs and firewood, or for a use incidental to the
19 construction of access, or for habitat enhancement.

20
21 (c) The commissioner may permit mining leasing under AS 38.05.205 on upland within a
22 recreation river corridor if leasing is allowed under a management plan that has been adopted
23 by the commissioner. The commissioner shall establish appropriate conditions for permits,
24 operating plans, and leases to mitigate the effects of mineral development activities on the
25 environment and to prevent to the extent practicable degradation of the recreation uses of the
26 river.

27
28 (d) To enhance public use and enjoyment of a recreation river corridor under a management
29 plan adopted under AS 41.23.440, the commissioner may provide for the construction and
30 operation of commercial facilities such as lodges, campgrounds, and boat launches by

31 (1) leasing land under AS 38.05.070, including competitive leasing to a prequalified
32 bidder; and

33
34 (2) contracting for the construction and operation of a facility under AS 36.30 so long as
35 the facility is not in competition with a private facility or enterprise.

36
37 (e) The annual estimated balance in the account maintained by the commissioner of
38 administration under AS 37.05.142 may be appropriated by the legislature to the department
39 to carry out the purposes of AS 41.23.400 - 41.23.510.

40
41 **Sec. 41.23.480. Cooperative management agreements.**

42 (a) The commissioner may enter into a cooperative management agreement for the
43 management of land and water described in AS 41.23.500 or of other adjacent land and water
44 with a federal agency, a municipality, another agency of the state, or a private landowner.

(b) The commissioner may transfer the management of a specific site within a recreation river corridor described in AS 41.23.500 to a state agency, a municipality, or a private entity to carry out a program authorized by law or to enhance the objectives of the management plan adopted under AS 41.23.440.

(c) The commissioner may not manage a recreation river corridor described in AS 41.23.500 as a unit of the state park system or as a game refuge, game sanctuary, or a critical habitat. The commissioner may assign management of a recreation facility or site such as a campground or a boat launch to the division of parks.

Sec. 41.23.490. Limitation on establishment.

State-owned land and water may be established as a recreation river corridor only by the legislature.

Sec. 41.23.500. Establishment of recreation rivers and recreation river corridors.

Subject to valid existing rights, the state-owned land and water and all land and water acquired by the state in the future, including shore and submerged land that lies within the following described parcels, are established as recreation rivers and reserved as special purpose areas under art. VIII, sec. 7, Constitution of the State of Alaska and shall be retained by the state and be managed under AS 41.23.400 - 41.23.510;

(1) Alexander Creek State Recreation River

(2) Kroto Creek and Moose Creek State Recreation River

(3) Lake Creek State Recreation River

(4) Little Susitna State Recreation River

(5) Talachulitna State Recreation River

(6) Talkeetna State Recreation River

Sec. 41.23.510. Definition.

In AS 41.23.400 - 41.23.510, “recreation river corridor” means the uplands within a recreation river established under AS 41.23.500.

Appendix C

Recreation Rivers Regulations

Chapter 09

State Recreation Rivers System

Article 1

General Provisions

11 AAC 09.005. Management plan.

The area-wide and unit-specific management policies (Chapters 2 and 3) of the Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Management Plan, dated August 1991, which went into effect on May 12, 1991, in accordance with AS 41.23.440, are adopted by reference as a regulation. The department will administer this chapter in accordance with the cited portions of the management plan.

11 AAC 09.010. Float plane landing areas.

After consultation with appropriate governmental and private entities, the commissioner will designate a portion of a recreation river as closed to float plane landing or takeoff, if the commissioner determines that the landing or takeoff would be a significant public safety concern. In addition, the commissioner will designate a portion of a recreation river as a float plane landing area and exclude or restrict all other vehicular traffic, if the commissioner determines that other vehicular traffic would be a significant public safety concern. A float plane landing area will not be designated within a non-motorized portion of a recreation river. The commissioner will notify the public of an area closed to float plane landing or takeoff or designated as a float plane landing area by publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the affected area and by giving notice to appropriate federal authorities.

11 AAC 09.020. Public use cabins.

(a) The commissioner will place into a public use cabin system a cabin within the recreation rivers system that the department acquires by any method or constructs, unless the commissioner determines that the placement is inconsistent with the management plan for the area.

(b) A person may not use or occupy a cabin in the public use cabin system that is managed by the department on a reservation and fee basis without first obtaining a reservation from the department and paying the required fee.

11 AAC 09.030. Generally allowed uses.

A permit or other written authorization is required for uses and activities not appearing on the list in this section. The following land uses and activities, alone or in combination, are generally allowed uses on land subject to the Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Management

Plan, adopted by reference in 11 AAC 09.005, that do not require an authorization under AS 41 or 11 AAC 96.010(a), except that a land use or activity for a commercial recreation purpose requires prior registration under 11 AAC 96.018:

(1) travel or travel-related activities, as follows:

(A) hiking, backpacking, skiing, climbing, or other foot travel;

(B) bicycling;

(C) travel by horse or dogsled or with pack animals;

(D) using an off-road motorized vehicle with a gross weight of 1,000 pounds or less, including a snowmobile or all-terrain vehicle, whether wheeled or tracked, on established trails, except during periods when Table 2.1 of the management plan closes the area to motorized use;

(E) using an off-road motorized vehicle with a gross weight of 1,000 pounds or less, including a snowmobile or all-terrain vehicle, whether wheeled or tracked, off an established road right-of-way if the department gives public notice that snow cover and ground frost is sufficient to prevent damage to vegetation;

(F) using a highway vehicle on a road or trail built and maintained for use by highway vehicles;

(G) using a boat, canoe, raft, or kayak, subject to restrictions for non-motorized and powerboat-only areas as listed in Table 2.1 of the management plan;

(H) using personal watercraft only on the Susitna, Yentna, and Skwentna Rivers;

(I) landing a fixed-wing aircraft or helicopter, except during periods when Table 2.1 of the management plan closes the area to motorized use;

(J) driving up to 100 head of livestock;

(2) access improvements, as follows:

(A) placing a floating dock for an upland owners or lessee's personal, noncommercial use, if

(i) the total surface area of the dock is not more than 100 square feet; the dock does not extend more than 15 feet from the water body's edge at any water level, and the walkway, ladder, or ramp connecting the dock to the shore is no more than four feet wide;

(ii) no surface-treated, pentachlorophenol-treated, or creosote-treated construction materials are in contact with the water;

(iii) barrels used in the structure are cleaned and sealed sufficiently to prevent the escape of hazardous materials into the water body;

(iv) the dock is designed and boats and aircraft are tied to it so as not to create a safety hazard or impede navigation or the lawful use of aircraft; and

(v) the dock is removed before ice forms on the water body;

(B) placing an anchor buoy on a lake, if marked with the owner's name, or placing a temporary anchor buoy or marker at the mouth of Lake Creek, if the anchor buoy or marker does not interfere with the primary navigation channel, is marked with the owner's name, is not left unattended for more than 30 minutes, is pulled within six hours, and is not reset for an additional hour;

(3) removing or using state resources, as follows:

(A) hunting, fishing, or trapping; nothing in this subparagraph relieves a person from complying with applicable state and federal statutes and regulations on the taking of fish and game;

(B) harvesting wild plants, mushrooms, berries, and other plant material for personal, noncommercial use; however, the cutting of trees is not a generally allowed use under this subparagraph;

(C) using dead and down wood for a cooking or warming fire, unless the department has closed the area to fires during the fire season;

(D) recreational gold panning;

(E) hard-rock mineral prospecting or mining using light portable field equipment, including a hand-operated pick, shovel, pan, earth auger, or a backpack power drill or auger;

(F) suction dredging using a suction dredge with a nozzle intake of six inches or less, powered by an engine of 18 horsepower or less, and pumping no more than 30,000 gallons of water per day;

(4) organized assemblies, as follows:

(A) a private, noncommercial assembly of up to 15 persons if held between May 15 and August 31, or of any number of persons if held during the rest of the year, in an area designated by the management plan as Class I;

(B) a private, noncommercial assembly of up to 50 persons if held between May 15 and August 31, or of any number of persons if held during the rest of the year, outside areas designated by the management plan as Class I;

(C) a race, derby, spectator event, or other promotional or entertainment event organized on a noncommercial basis if held between September 1 and May 15;

(5) other uses, as follows:

(A) setting up and using a primitive tent camp for personal, noncommercial recreational purposes, or for any non-recreational purpose, including as a support camp during mineral exploration, for no more than four days at one site between May 15 and August 31 of each year, and for no more than 14 days at one site during the rest of the year, without

(i) causing lasting damage to vegetation, drainage, or soil stability;

(ii) interfering with public access or other public purposes; or

(iii) harassing or unlawfully disturbing fish or wildlife;

(B) storing or parking vehicles, equipment, and boats, for a maximum of four days in any one location between May 15 and August 31, and for a maximum of 14 days in any one location during the rest of the year, except that vehicles used to drop off or pick up persons using a recreation river for authorized noncommercial recreational activities may remain parked as long as the recreational activity continues;

(C) lawful use of weapons, including firearms, except within one-quarter mile of the Deshka River between its mouth and the camp maintained by the Department of Fish and Game at approximately river mile 2 between May 15 and August 21, or within any other area of high public use where a weapons closure is in effect, because of threats to public safety.

11 AAC 09.040. Resource management camp.

(a) Upon written determination of its necessity by the department, the commissioner will, in the commissioner's discretion, designate a site within the recreation river management system as a resource management camp. In the designation, the commissioner will, in the commissioner's discretion, establish conditions for the use of the camp consistent with the management plan.

(b) A resource management camp will be available to a municipal, state, or federal agency or non-profit group that has entered into a cooperative management agreement with the department concerning the use of the site.

11 AAC 09.050. Enforcement orders.

The management plan referred to in 11 AAC 09.005 establishes the activity restrictions the commissioner finds necessary to implement the purposes of AS 41.23.400. A person's noncompliance with those restrictions will be dealt with as follows:

(1) a peace officer designated to enforce the provisions of AS 41.23.400 - 41.23.510 will serve notice of the applicable restriction by personally communicating it to the person or, if the person is not present, by posting at the site of the noncompliance;

(2) the notice will include an order to correct the noncompliance within a stated period by ceasing or modifying the restricted activity, restoring damage caused to state land and water, or leaving the premises; the notice will notify the user that an inspection is required to determine whether the noncompliance has been corrected; the order constitutes a written authorization of the division of land;

(3) for each inspection to determine whether the noncompliance has been corrected, an inspection fee as required by 11 AAC 05.160 will be charged;

(4) failure to comply with the peace officer's order terminates the person's privilege of using the recreation rivers system, suspends the user's permit, if any, issued under 11 AAC 09.200 or 11 AAC 09.300, and constitutes a trespass; if the noncompliance continues or fees are not paid, the department reserves the right to pursue any lawful remedy, including an action for civil or criminal trespass.

Article 2

Use by General Public

11 AAC 09.200. Recreation rivers permit.

(a) A recreation rivers permit from the department is required for a non-commercial activity that does not appear on the list in 11 AAC 09.030.

(b) A person applying for a recreation rivers permit shall submit to the department:

(1) a completed application on a form provided by the department;

(2) the fee as required by 11 AAC 05.210; and

(3) proof of the applicant's current comprehensive liability insurance coverage.

(c) The commissioner will, in the commissioner's discretion, issue a recreation rivers permit, if the commissioner determines that the issuance of the permit is consistent with law and the management plan.

(d) Before issuance of a permit under this section, the department will notify the applicant of the amount of performance guarantee for each specific permitted activity. The amount of the performance guarantee shall be based on the past performance of the applicant related to the activities for which a permit is requested, the potential damage to state resources or liability incurred by the state, and the potential cost to the state of restoration because of activities related to the permit. The amount of the performance guarantee may not exceed estimated potential costs or liability, but shall not be less than \$1,000. The department will not issue the

1 permit before receiving the required performance guarantee and annual fee as prescribed for
2 a land use permit in 11 AAC 05.210.

3 (e) The commissioner will issue a permit under this section for a period not to exceed five
4 years. The term of the permit will be specified on the face of the permit and set consistent
5 with the management plan for the area. The commissioner will issue the permit subject to
6 specific terms and conditions. Each permit shall contain a specific description of the
7 permitted activity.

8 (f) A permit issued under this section is revocable at will. The department will revoke a
9 permit for the following reasons:

10 (1) the permit holder's failure to comply with law related to the permit or the terms or
11 conditions of the permit;

12 (2) the department's determination that the revocation is necessary to further the
13 management plan for the area.

14 (g) The department will, in its discretion, suspend a permit issued under this section for the
15 same reasons that a permit is revocable under (f) of this section, if the department determines
16 that the failure was minor or a suspension will better further the management plan for the
17 area. Additionally, the department will, in its discretion, proceed against the permit holder's
18 performance guarantee for a failure to comply with law related to the permit or the terms or
19 conditions of the permit.

20 21 **11 AAC 09.210. General permit.**

22 The department may issue a general permit under 11 AAC 09.200 to authorize a specific
23 category of uses requiring a recreation rivers permit. The general permit is subject to specific
24 terms and conditions listed on the permit. If the department issues a general permit, an
25 applicant for a recreation rivers permit must meet all of the requirements of 11 AAC 09.200.

26 27 **11 AAC 09.220. Reports.**

28 (a) A holder of a permit issued under 11 AAC 09.040 shall submit a written report to the
29 department within 30 days after completing the permitted activity. The report shall
30 summarize the activity conducted under the permit.

31 (b) A holder of a permit issued under 11 AAC 09.200 for more than one year in duration
32 shall file an annual report with the department before the anniversary of the date on which
33 the permit was originally issued. The annual report must summarize the activities conducted
34 under the permit in the past year.

35 36 37 **Article 3**

38 **Commercial Use**

39 40 **11 AAC 09.300. Commercial-use permit.**

41 (a) A commercial-use permit from the department is required for a commercial recreation
42 activity that does not appear on the list in 11 AAC 09.030.

43 (b) A person applying for a commercial-use permit shall submit to the department

44 (1) a completed application on a form provided by the department;

45 (2) the fee as required by 11 AAC 05.210; and

(3) proof of the applicant's comprehensive liability insurance coverage as required by 11 AAC 09.320.

(c) The commissioner will, in the commissioner's discretion, issue a commercial-use permit if the commissioner determines that the issuance of the permit is consistent with law and the management plan.

(d) Before issuance of a permit under this section, the applicant must provide proof of satisfaction to the department that the requirements for insurance and performance guarantees set out in 11 AAC 09.320 have been met.

(e) The commissioner will issue a permit under this section for a term not to exceed one year. The term of the permit will be specified on the face of the permit and will be set consistent with the management plan for the area. The commissioner will issue the permit subject to specified terms and conditions. Each permit shall contain a specific description of the permitted activity.

(f) A permit issued under this section is revocable at will. The department will revoke a permit for the following reasons:

(1) the permit holder's failure to comply with law related to the permit or the terms or conditions of the permit;

(2) the department's determination that the revocation is necessary to further the management plan for the area.

(g) The department will, in its discretion, suspend a permit issued under this section for the same reasons that a permit is revocable under (f) of this section, if the department determines that the failure was minor or a suspension will better further the management plan for the area. Additionally, the department will, in its discretion, proceed against the permit holder's performance guarantee for a failure to comply with law related to the permit or the terms or conditions of the permit.

11 AAC 09.305. General permit.

The department may issue a general permit under 11 AAC 09.300 to authorize a specific category of uses requiring a commercial-use permit. The general permit is subject to specific terms and conditions listed on the permit. If the department issues a general permit, an applicant must meet all the requirements of 11 AAC 09.300(b).

11 AAC 09.310. Fees.

The flat rate fee required by 11 AAC 05.050(1) must be paid before obtaining a commercial-use permit. The additional fees required by 11 AAC 05.050(2) must be paid on either a monthly or seasonal basis, as directed by the commissioner, except that the commissioner will, in the commissioner's discretion and after determining it to be in the financial interest of the state, waive all or part of the additional fees required by 11 AAC 05.050(2).

11 AAC 09.320. Insurance and performance guarantees.

(a) An applicant for a commercial-use permit shall provide proof to the department of a current comprehensive liability insurance policy that will cover the activity to be permitted. The amount of required insurance coverage may vary depending on the applicant's activity, but must be a minimum of \$300,000. The policy must be issued by a company that has a certificate of authority issued under AS 21.09.010 in force and in good standing or whose

company name appears on the list of approved surplus line insurers under AS 21.34.050. The State of Alaska must be listed as an additional insured on the insurance policy.

(b) Before issuance of a commercial-use permit, the department will notify the applicant of the amount of performance guarantee for each specific permitted activity. The amount of the performance guarantee shall be based on the past performance of the applicant related to the activities for which a permit is requested, the potential for damage to state resources or liability incurred by the state, and the potential cost to the state of restoration because of activities conducted under the permit. The amount of the performance guarantee may not exceed estimated potential costs or liability, but shall not be less than \$1,000. The department will not issue the commercial-use permit before the department has received the required performance guarantee from the applicant.

11 AAC 09.330. Commercial camps.

(a) A commercial enterprise wishing to establish a camp on state land in a recreation river must apply to the department for a commercial-use permit. A limited number of permits is available allowing camps for longer than four days between May 15 and August 31 of each year. Guidelines established in the management plan specify the number of permits and the general locations available.

(b) A permit is issued for the term of the actual use of a commercial camp. The permitted use may include related activities, such as storage of the disassembled camp.

(c) Each permit for longer than four days between May 15 and August 31 of each year will be available on a first-come, first-served basis until such time as the commissioner determines that the demand exceeds the supply. At that time, the department will initiate a lottery or an auction for the years following the year in which the demand exceeded the supply.

(d) A commercial camp must be located consistent with the management plan described in 11 AAC 09.005. However, a camp may not be:

- (1) located in a public use site;
- (2) located below ordinary high water;
- (3) located within 100 feet of a waterbody or wetland;
- (4) located within 300 feet of a recognized heritage site;
- (5) authorized if it does not minimize evidence of human activity as seen from the river;
- (6) allowed to block public easements or trails; or
- (7) located within one-quarter mile of a bald eagle nest.

11 AAC 09.340. Reports.

A holder of a commercial-use permit shall submit a written report to the department within 30 days after completing the permitted activity. The report shall summarize the activities conducted under the permit.

Article 4

Definitions

11 AAC 09.900. Definitions.

In this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

- (1) "active river channel" means a channel of a river or stream that has water flowing through it at the time of a proposed activity;
- (2) "aircraft" means a device that is used or intended for flight or movement of people or goods in the air; "aircraft" does not include a hovercraft;
- (3) "anchor buoy" means a float attached to the bottom of a waterbody by an anchor, line, or chain for making fast a vessel;
- (4) "commissioner" means the commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources;
- (5) "department" means the Alaska Department of Natural Resources;
- (6) "division of insurance" means the division of insurance in the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development;
- (7) repealed 12/7/2002;
- (8) "general permit" means a permit authorizing a specific category of uses of a generic application filed by the department on behalf of an entire category of potential users;
- (9) "management plan" means the plan incorporated by reference in 11 AAC 09.005;
- (10) "mining location" means a property right to a locatable mineral established by discovery, location, and filing under AS 38.05.195 or 38.05.205;
- (11) "permit" means a temporary authorization under this chapter that will grant permission to do an activity without transferring a property interest;
- (12) "recreation river" means all land and water including uplands and shorelands, designated under AS 41.23.500(1) - (6);
- (13) "recreation river corridor" has the meaning given that term in AS 41.23.510;
- (14) "recreation rivers permit" means a permit for an activity that does not appear on the list referred to in 11 AAC 09.030 and that would be authorized by a land use permit under 11 AAC 96 if the activity were on state land that is not within a recreation river;
- (15) "recreation rivers system" means the state recreation rivers, including recreation river corridors, established in AS 41.23.500;
- (16) "resource management camp" means a facility established for resource or recreation management, or for scientific study, by an entity such as the department, the Department of Fish and Game, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, a non-profit group, or the University of Alaska; "resource management camp" does not include a commercial camp or mining camp;
- (17) "river corridor" has the meaning given the term "recreation river corridor" in this section;
- (18) "state land" has the meaning given that term in AS 38.05.965;
- (19) "upland" has the meaning given that term in AS 38.05.965;
- (20) "waterbody" means river, lake, or stream;
- (21) "commercial recreation" has the meaning given in 11 AAC 96.250.

Chapter 05

Fees for Department Services

11 AAC 05.210. Recreation rivers system.

(a) Fees established under this section are for permits, revocable and temporary surface authorizations and cabin use authorizations. If a revocable-at-will authorization is revoked

without cause, the unused portion of the annual use fee for the authorization is refundable, prorated on a monthly basis. Except where a fee is by statute or required by statute to be based on appraised market value, the director of the division of mining, land and water may, by written order, reduce or revise one or more of the fees established in (d)(1) or (d)(2) of this section by waiving a portion of the fee. Under this section, an order waiving a portion of a fee

(1) must apply to all applicants or petitioners for that authorization, petition, or service;

(2) may not exceed 20 percent of the amount established in (d)(1) or (d)(2) of this section for an authorization, petition, or service;

(3) must be published on the division's public internet webpage and the Alaska Online Public Notice System 30 days before the effective date of the waiver;

(4) may not waive or reduce any additional fees imposed under (c) of this section; and

(5) is not subject to appeal under AS 44.37.011 or 11 AAC 02.

(b) The director shall consider in waiving a portion of a fee under (a) of this section

(1) the estimated actual costs of the authorization, petition, or service to the department;

(2) the economic needs of the department; and

(3) the public interest.

(c) When the department determines that an authorization, petition, or other service will require additional costs, or staff time in excess of the maximum hours set out in (d)(1) of this section, but that a higher fee under 11 AAC 05.270 is not required, then,

(1) the department may, in addition to the fee established in (d)(1) of this section,

(A) charge an additional hourly fee under (d)(4) of this section for staff time in excess of the maximum hours set out in (d)(1) of this section to pay for the estimated actual staff cost for provision of the services requested; and

(B) charge fees necessary to pay for additional estimated actual costs, including costs under 11 AAC 05.200 for recordation by the department;

(2) the department will provide the applicant or petitioner written estimates detailing the additional costs for the department to continue processing the application; and

(3) the department may require payment of the appropriate additional fee amount before the department undertakes additional processing.

(d) The fees for permits, revocable and temporary surface authorizations and cabin use authorizations are as follows:

(1) for an application for issuance, extension, or amendment of a land use recreation rivers permit or commercial-use permit application for use within the recreation rivers system, \$300 for up to 20 hours of staff time;

(2) for a commercial use permit for recreation-related commercial uses within the recreational rivers system;

(A) an annual fee of \$450; plus

(B) an additional fee, if applicable, as follows:

(i) five percent of the total gross revenues from fees charged to drop-off clients who are transported to a recreation river and who remain there unaccompanied by the permit holder or an employee of the permit holder;

(ii) \$15 each day each client accompanied during use of a recreation river by the permit holder or an employee of the permit holder;

(iii) \$5 for each day's rental of a non-motorized boat, and \$9 for each day's rental of a motorized boat, on a recreation river; no fee is required under this clause if client fees described in (A) or (B) of this paragraph include rental of a boat;

(3) for a commercial-use permit for a commercial camp within the recreation rivers system, an annual fee determined as in 11 ACC 05.170(d)(2)(D), plus 20 percent, in addition to applicable fees under (2) of this subsection;

(4) for each additional hour in excess of the maximum hours listed in (1) of this subsection, \$50.

(e) The commissioner will waive the annual land use permit fee prescribed in this section for access within a recreation river corridor, if the commissioner determines that the permit is necessary to provide access to private property or a mining location within the recreation river corridor and a feasible and prudent alternative does not exist to provide that access.