

3c. Clear (Chunilna) Creek Subunit

Background

MILES OF RIVER/RIVER CHARACTERISTICS, Clear Creek RM 0 to RM 9.5

This subunit includes the uplands around the mouth of Clear Creek, and the water column and shorelands for the first 9.5 miles of Clear Creek. Clear Creek is a clear-water stream which is only marginally navigable by powerboat for the first few miles.

LAND OWNERSHIP

State	522	acres
2 Private Parcels	10	acres
Total	532	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. Although active bald eagle nests have not been sighted in recent surveys of this subunit, a nest was located near the mouth in surveys prior to 1988.

CAMPING

Private uplands limit public camping areas to the vicinity of the mouth, where the public camps on state-owned gravelbars. There are also some marginal campsite areas on state-owned uplands.

DEVELOPMENT

Clear Creek Lodge is the only development in the subunit. 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 Creek is by powerboat from Talkeetna. Above the mouth, Clear Creek is not easily navigated by boat; the primary access is by trail. Trails along the west side of Clear Creek connect private cabins with the railroad tracks north of Talkeetna. A foot trail from the mouth of Clear Creek to Fish Creek crosses private land.

There are three small and one large airstrips along Clear Creek on uplands outside the subunit. The largest strip, at the Clear Creek headwaters, is private.

HERITAGE RESOURCES

The heritage site potential at the mouth of Clear Creek is high.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

There are several active mineral locations along Clear Creek between RM 6 and RM 9.5. However, the majority of mining locations and tractor roads on Clear Creek are north of the subunit.

Management Intent

Class II. Public use of this subunit is primarily during the king and silver salmon runs near the mouth of Clear Creek. Because most of the subunit includes only the Clear 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 Creek. Upper Clear Creek is only marginally navigable by floatboats, and has poor ac-

cess for dropoffs. Winter use includes snow-machining, skiing, and dogmushing. The subunit contains winter-moose and salmon-spawning habitat. There are several mineral locations on upper Clear 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 non-motorized areas in this subunit.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. None.

Land Exchange. The owner of the Clear Creek Lodge, at the mouth of Clear Creek, is interested in a land exchange with the state. However, there are concerns that this parcel is subject to flooding and erosion. There may also be problems with the drinking water supply and septic system. DNR or DFG may consider an exchange or

purchase of this land. Consistent with the management intent for the Clear Creek subunit, permanent facilities including structures for accommodating guests or employees will not be allowed on exchange land. Septic systems on state land may be allowed as long as they are outside the protection area, meet stipulations in the plan, and meet all other agency requirements. (Also see 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 3c.1** **Clear Creek and Fish Creek Mouths (RM 6.8).** The state land and water in this area is heavily used during the peak fishing season for fishing and camping. Trail access to Fish Creek should be improved.

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 Knikatnu 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	9,137 acres
Total	9,137 acres

WILDLIFE

Active bald eagle nests 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.