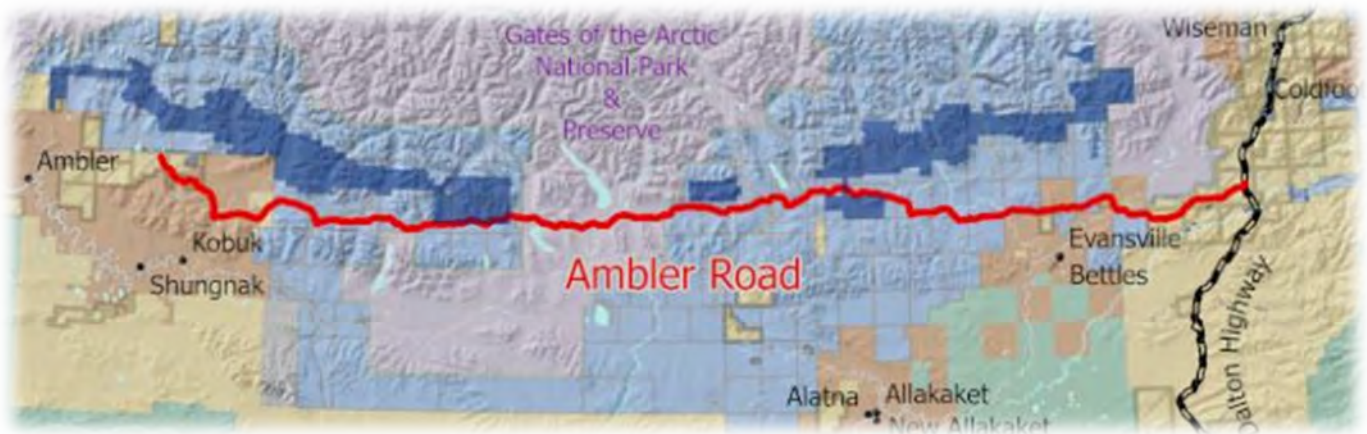


# Ambler Road Site Specific Plan

Adopted June 2022



Prepared by:  
Alaska Department of Natural Resources  
Division of Mining, Land and Water  
Resource Assessment & Development Section



# **Ambler Road Site Specific Plan**

**June 2022**



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



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**

GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

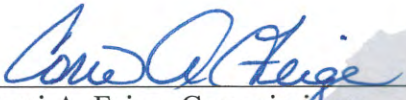
## Department of Natural Resources

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### ADOPTION OF 2022 AMBLER ROAD SITE SPECIFIC PLAN

The Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources finds that the Ambler Road Site Specific Plan (ARSSP) meets the requirements of AS 38.04.065 and 11 AAC 55.010-55.030 for site specific land use plans, and hereby adopts the plan. The Department of Natural Resources will manage state land consistent with this plan.



*Corri A. Feige*

Corri A. Feige, Commissioner  
Department of Natural Resources



*6/27/22*

Date



## Acknowledgements

This is a site specific land use plan in the area surrounding the proposed Ambler Road, developed by the Department of Natural Resources with generous assistance from representatives of several state agencies. The following people contributed their time and technical expertise to provide, review, and discuss plan related information and assist in resolving plan issues. The Resource Assessment and Development Section staff appreciates the contributions made by its own staff, and by those individuals who took the time to attend meetings, review the document, and provide their input to the Department.

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## **Introduction**

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has received an application for a proposed industrial road right-of-way (ROW) approximately 211 miles in length stretching from milepost 161 along the Dalton Highway to the Ambler Mining District. 11 AAC 55.040(i) requires that land classification precede conveyance or leasing of state land, which is the purpose of this Site Specific Land Use Plan (SSP). In addition to land use designations, the SSP also contains an inventory and analysis of resources and uses for state land in the planning area, and provides management guidelines for use of state land. These management guidelines form the basis for classification of approximately 244,188 acres of state-owned and state-selected uplands. The classification for state-selected lands would become effective on the day Tentative Approval (TA) is granted. This SSP, adopted by the Commissioner of DNR on June 27, 2022, is considered a final plan and guides decision making within the plan boundary.

The proposed road would start at a location approximately 170 miles northwest of Fairbanks and terminate near the Ambler River, approximately 18 miles northwest of the City of Kobuk. The planning area extends from the start of the proposed route to the eastern boundary of the Northwest Area Plan and incorporates state lands within and surrounding the proposed right-of-way corridor, and additional sites needed for construction and maintenance of the proposed gravel industrial road. The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA), a public corporation of the State of Alaska, is the applicant. The application is for a private exclusive easement and is assigned serial number ADL 421741. AIDEA intends to charge commercial users a fee for use and maintenance of the road.

## **Background Information**

### **Location**

#### **Geographic**

The subject lands lie between the Brooks Range to the north, the Yukon River to the south, and between the Dalton Highway to the east, and the Northwest Area Plan boundary to the west.

#### **Borough/Municipality**

Unincorporated State Land.

#### **USGS Map Coverage**

Bettles D-2, Bettles D-3, Bettles D-4, Bettles D-5, Hughes D-1, Hughes D-2, Survey Pass A-1, Survey Pass A-2, Wiseman A-1, Wiseman A-2, Wiseman A-3, Wiseman A-4, Wiseman A-5, Wiseman A-6.

## **Legal Description**

The areas subject to this plan are more clearly defined as being all State land within:

T 25 N, R 16 W, FM, Sections 1-6, 8-14;  
T 25 N, R 18 W, FM, Sections 1-4;  
T 25 N, R 20 W, FM, Sections 1-12;  
T 25 N, R 21 W, FM, Sections 1-6, 9-12;  
T 25 N, R 22 W, FM, Sections 1-6;  
T 26 N, R 17 W, FM, Sections 13-17, 19-24, 27-34;  
T 26 N, R 19 W, FM, Sections 19-36;  
T 26 N, R 20 W, FM, Sections 25-36;  
T 26 N, R 21 W, FM, Sections 19-23, 25-36;  
T 26 N, R 22 W, FM, Sections 6-9, 16-36;  
T 26 N, R 23 W, FM, Sections 1-26;  
T 26 N, R 24 W, FM, Sections 1-24;  
T 26 N, R 25 W, FM, Sections 1-2, 11-14, 23-24;  
T 27 N, R 24 W, FM, Sections 31-35;  
T 27 N, R 25 W, FM, Sections 35-36;  
T 19 N, R 23 E, KRM, Sections 1-24, 29-30;  
T 19 N, R 24 E, KRM, Sections 1-24;  
T 19 N, R 25 E, KRM, Sections 1-21;  
T 19 N, R 26 E, KRM, Sections 25-36;  
T 19 N, R 27 E, KRM, Sections 6-7;  
T 20 N, R 25 E, KRM, Section 25-26, 31-36;  
T 20 N, R 26 E, KRM, Sections 25-36; and  
T 20 N, R 27 E, KRM, Sections 30-31.

All State-selected land within:

T 25 N, R 14 W, FM, Sections 4-8, 18;  
T 25 N, R 15 W, FM, Sections 1-18;  
T 25 N, R 18 W, FM, Sections 1-6;  
T 26 N, R 13 W, FM, Sections 9-17, 19-24, 27-33;  
T 26 N, R 14 W, FM, Sections 20-36;  
T 26 N, R 15 W, FM, Sections 25, 31-36; and  
T 26 N, R 17 W, FM, Sections 25-26.

## **Title and Land Status**

### **Classification**

This plan classifies all state-owned and state-selected land in the subject area. State land is classified under the authority of AS 38.04.005, AS 38.05.300, and 11 AAC 55.010 -.280, according to the management intent set forth in this plan. See the attached Land Classification Order (LCO) NC-21-001.



### **Title Status**

The State of Alaska holds fee title to the land and mineral estate of a majority of the subject area, approximately 198,370 acres, under Patent or Tentative Approval acquired through state general grant selections. A portion of the subject area, approximately 45,818 acres, is state-selected federal land.

### **Third Party Interests**

Trapping cabin located in F025N016W, Sec. 05, ADL 413390.

Trapping cabin located in K020N026E, Sec. 28, ADL 403355.

### **Mineral Status**

Open to mineral entry except where designated, as follows:

MO 1162A01 located in F026N013W, Secs. 11, 14, 15, 16, 22, closed to entry for ASAP ROW.

MO 1147 located in F026N013W, Secs. 11, 14, closed to entry for TAPS ROW.

### **State Determined Navigable Waterbodies**

Middle Fork Koyukuk River, North Fork Koyukuk River, Koyukuk River, Wild River, John River, Timber Creek, Malamute Fork of the John River, Malamute Fork of the Alatna River, Iniakuk River, Alatna River, Helpmejack Creek, Kichaiakaka Creek.

### **Climate**

The plan area is located within Interior Alaska, where the climate is characterized as subarctic and semiarid. The area has microclimates that experience low annual precipitation of approximately 17 inches and a range of temperatures as high as 100°F and as low as -70°F (BLM 2016). Lowland basins and broad valleys between the Brooks and Alaska-Aleutian ranges largely influence the climate. Area winds are dominated by wind flows from the east that reach 15 to 25 miles per hour. High winds in the lowland areas with open riverbeds often re-entrain particulates (ADEC 2016). These climate factors could contribute to haze and poor visibility, but also to atmospheric clearing.

### **Resource Inventory**

#### **Topography/Geology**

The plan area spans multiple physiographic provinces. The proposed route follows the southern foothills of the Brooks Range and runs through the Arctic Mountains province, which consists of glacier-carved mountains and hills of folded and faulted sedimentary rocks and their metamorphic equivalents. Alluvium and glacial drift fill the valleys and lowlands between ranges. Continuous permafrost underlies this region.

#### **Minerals**

The proposed road project provides access to the Ambler Mining District, which has been explored for mineral potential since the 1950s and contains a major mineral belt. Nova Copper U.S. Inc. (now Trilogy Metals, Inc. or Ambler Metals LLC), Valhalla Mining LLC,

and Teck Alaska Incorporated have staked more than 160,000 acres of mining claims in the District. The project may provide access to existing claims or mineral occurrences along the selected transportation corridor, including the following:

- Rare earth elements (REEs), placer gold, platinum group elements (PGEs), carbonate-hosted copper, sandstone-hosted uranium, and tin-tungsten-molybdenum deposits.
- Bituminous coal occurrences along the route in the Upper Koyukuk Basin (total estimated resource quantity unknown).

### **Soils**

Soil types in the plan area vary widely, but have common characteristics: they all developed under a cold temperature regime in which biological and chemical transformations are slow and soil horizons or layers are subject to physical dislocations as a result of freeze-thaw processes.

### **Vegetation**

The plan area is comprised of lowlands, hills, and mountains within Alaska's Interior and Northern subregions west of the Dalton Highway, between the Brooks Range Mountains to the north and the Yukon River to the south.

Forest and woodlands are common at lower elevations, with black spruce in wetland bogs; white spruce and balsam poplar along rivers; white spruce, paper birch, and trembling aspen on well-drained uplands; and shrub communities at higher elevations dominate the Kobuk ecoregion. Tussocks, shrubs, mixed forest, and alpine tundra on the southern side of the range dominate the Brooks Range ecoregion.

### **Wildlife**

As many as 38 mammal species may occur in the plan area, including large furbearers such as bears, wolves, and foxes. Mammalian species presence varies across the area, depending on habitat type and prey distribution. Most of the plan area is in low and tall shrub habitats or mesic spruce forests of the Kobuk Valley ecoregion.

The plan area is within the range of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd (WAH). The WAH generally uses the plan area during migration and as winter range.

Moose are distributed intermittently throughout the plan area, and remain in the area year round (including winter).

Dall sheep occur within the steep mountain slopes, alpine ridges, and meadows of the Brooks Range.

### **Birds**

Approximately 141 avian species may occur in the plan area. There is little information on avian species distribution or abundance in the plan area, and researchers have completed few avian monitoring studies in this region.

Passerines (perching/song birds) are the most common species group in terrestrial habitats, although species composition varies depending on land cover type and elevation. Waterfowl, gulls, terns, and shorebirds are generally attracted to lakes, rivers, and other wetlands; however, some species prefer alpine meadows and tundra. The majority of avian species are migratory and present only in summer or during migration. Approximately 20 year-round resident species occupy the plan area, including owls, ravens, ptarmigan, grouse, chickadees, and dippers. Approximately 130 species nest within the plan area, including these resident species.

### **Fish**

More than 20 fish species have been documented in the plan area. Pacific salmon, sheefish, broad and humpback whitefish, Arctic grayling, northern pike, and burbot are major targets of subsistence, sport, and/or commercial fisheries.

The ADF&G Anadromous Waters Catalog (AWC) identifies five Pacific salmon species in the affected environment (Chinook, chum, sockeye, coho, and pink salmon). Chinook and chum salmon are widely distributed; ADF&G studies confirm that at least one of these two species use all major rivers or streams in the study area as well as other tributary streams. The ADF&G has classified Chinook salmon in the Yukon River system as a stock of Yield Concern (5 AAC 39.222(f)(42)).

### **Recreation**

Recreation and tourism in the area includes road-based activity along the Dalton Highway, fly-in/backcountry trips along the southern Brooks Range, float trips and fishing and hunting along the broad lowland river corridors.

### **Cultural Resources**

There are 56 previously recorded AHRS sites located within the plan area. The majority of previously recorded sites are prehistoric, although a portion are historic.

### **Land Use and Economic Conditions**

#### **Access**

Access to the subject area is along RS 2477 routes, by boats, snowmachines or planes.

#### **Historic and Present Uses and Activities**

Recreational use, subsistence use, mining use. Proposed project provides access to a mining district.

#### **Economic Conditions in the Subject Area**

Communities near the planning area have “mixed” economies in which households rely on cash income and the harvest of subsistence resources.

## Areawide Management Guidelines

DNR will use the following guidelines when considering issuing authorizations and conveyances or making management decisions on state land throughout the plan area. These guidelines will also apply to lands that are currently state-selected and top filed when they are tentatively approved or patented into state ownership.

### General Guidelines

- State land will be managed to protect access and public resources. The types of resources to be protected include, but are not limited to, habitat, recreation, water quality, watersheds, and trails.
- All authorizations for use of state land within the planning area will be consistent with the management intent in this plan.
- State land will remain open to mineral entry unless specifically closed.
- In considering authorizations for use of state land, DNR will adjudicate applications to:
  - minimize damage to streambeds, fish and wildlife and their habitats, vegetation, trails, and other resources;
  - minimize conflicts between resource conservation and use; and
  - protect the long-term value of the resource, public safety, and the environment.
- If authorizations from other agencies are required, DNR will consider issuing a permit or lease contingent upon issuance of these other authorizations.
- Protect significant cultural resources through the following actions:
  - The Office of History and Archeology (OHA) within the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR) reviews authorizations, construction projects or land uses for potential conflict with cultural resources. The office determines if there may be an adverse effect on heritage resources and makes recommendations to mitigate these effects.
  - Cooperating with concerned government agencies, Alaska Native corporations, statewide or local groups, and individuals to develop guidelines and recommendations on how to avoid or mitigate identified or potential conflict.
  - Require the establishment of buffers (50' or greater) around significant cultural resources as part of the overall protection process when subdividing or otherwise using state lands.

## **Unit Specific Management Guidelines**

This section presents specific land management guidelines for each of the seven management units within this plan. This plan designates state lands in categories that are generally consistent with current use patterns and the most significant resources in the planning area. Guidance by unit is organized in a Resource Allocation Table (RAT).

### **Organization of Resource Allocation Table**

- Unit number and geographic description.
- Map number for attached graphic depiction of management units.
- Land Use Designations which describe the general management direction for specific parcels (units) of state land.
- Management Intent, which consists of an explanation of how specific units of state land are to be managed. Management intent language gives additional specificity to the general management direction provided by the land use classifications.
- Parcel specific management direction for state land.

A land use designation recognizes uses or resources that are of major importance within a management unit. Unit designations are based on readily available resource information; current and projected use patterns; and input from the public, organizations, agency staff, and other sources. Activities and authorizations identified in units as “designated uses” may take precedence over other uses that are authorized subsequent to designation.

The designations in the RAT convert to classifications identified under Title 11 of the Alaska Administrative Code. Multiple designations may be applied to a single unit. ADNR will manage activities in the unit to encourage, develop, or protect the uses or resources for which the unit is designated; however, all state land is intended for multiple use and should be managed in a manner that is consistent with this mission. Although some uses are designated, other uses may still be allowed in a given unit. ADNR will manage state land according to these designations and the equivalent land use classifications.

### **Designations Used in This Plan**

#### **Ha – Habitat**

This designation applies to areas of varied size for fish and wildlife species during a sensitive life-history stage where alteration of the habitat or human disturbance could result in a permanent loss of a population or sustained yield of a species. In this plan, Ha was applied to moose and caribou wintering areas, Dall sheep areas, and anadromous fish streams where

spawning and rearing occurs. Lands classified Habitat will remain in state ownership. Permits, easements, material sales, leases, and other types of less-than-fee disposals of state lands may be authorized. The identified habitat values for which these lands are classified shall be maintained to the greatest extent practicable. If impacts to the habitat cannot be avoided, they should be minimized through stipulations contained in an authorization. Linear transportation facilities, pipelines, communication infrastructure, and other types of infrastructure or developments that serve a public purpose or are in the interest of the state may be authorized and must consider the values identified for the unit. This designation converts to a classification of Wildlife Habitat Land.

#### **Hv – Harvest**

Fish and wildlife harvest areas are subsistence, recreational and/or community harvest areas of varied size where alteration of habitat could permanently limit sustained yield to traditional users; or are areas of intense harvest where the level of harvest has reached, or is projected to reach, the harvestable surplus for the resource. This land will remain in state ownership. This designation applies to uplands and submerged lands. Permits, easements, material sales, leases, and other types of less-than-fee disposals of state lands may be authorized. The identified harvest values for which these lands are classified shall be maintained to the greatest extent practicable. If impacts to the habitat cannot be avoided, they should be minimized through stipulations contained in an authorization. Linear transportation facilities, pipelines, communication infrastructure, and other types of infrastructure or developments that serve a public purpose or are in the interest of the state may be authorized and must consider the values identified for the unit. This designation converts to a classification of Wildlife Habitat Land.

#### **Ma – Materials**

Sites suitable for extraction of materials, which include common varieties of sand, gravel, rock, peat, pumice, pumicite, cinders, clay, and sod are designated Materials. Permits, easements, leases, and other types of less-than-fee disposals of state lands may be authorized if they do not impede the extraction of materials from the land. Consult the Resource Allocation Table for identification of potentially appropriate uses for a specific unit. Linear transportation facilities, pipelines, communication infrastructure, and other types of infrastructure or developments that serve a public purpose or are in the interest of the state may be authorized and must consider the values identified for the unit. This designation converts to a classification of Material Land.

#### **Rd – Public Recreation-Dispersed**

This designation applies to those areas that offer or have a high potential for dispersed recreation or tourism and where desirable recreation conditions are scattered or widespread rather than localized. Some level of development or activities that facilitate dispersed recreation is anticipated and may include remote airstrips, trapping cabins, trails, and primitive campsites among other uses and activities. Permits, easements, material sales, leases, and other types of less-than-fee disposals of state lands may be authorized. If impacts to the identified resources cannot be avoided, they should be minimized through stipulations contained in an authorization. Developments on these lands typically facilitate public use and

recreation. Linear transportation facilities, pipelines, communication infrastructure, and other types of infrastructure or developments that serve a public purpose or are in the interest of the state may be authorized and must consider the values identified for the unit. This designation converts to a land use classification of Public Recreation Land.

### **Rm – Resource Management**

Land that contains one or more resource values, none of which is of sufficiently high value to merit designation as a primary use, or, because of the size of the parcel, a variety of uses can be accommodated with appropriate siting and design controls is designated Resource Management. This designation may also apply where there is a lack of resource, economic, or other information with which to assign a specific land use designation. Lands within this designation may be important for harvest activities by local residents seasonally. Consult the Resource Allocation Table for the management unit designated Resource Management in each region to determine the resources and uses present in these areas. Permits, easements, material sales, leases, and other types of less-than-fee disposals of state lands may be authorized. Linear transportation facilities, pipelines, communication infrastructure, and other types of infrastructure or developments that serve a public purpose or are in the interest of the state may be authorized on lands within this designation. This designation converts to a classification of Resource Management Land.

## **State Land Classification**

To implement the plan on state lands, ADNR must classify state lands to reflect the intent of land use designations made by this plan. State law requires that land classification precede most conveyance or leasing of state uplands or tidelands. According to state statute, classification means, the designation of lands according to their apparent best use. It identifies the primary use for which the land will be managed, but all other uses are initially presumed as compatible with the primary use. For this reason, all plan classifications are intended for multiple uses. In some instances, more than one designation is identified; these are termed co-designations and indicate that two (or more) uses are considered to be compatible within a specific management unit of state land. The Resource Management (Rm) designation is used in this plan, typically applying to management units where two or more resource values exist but none is of sufficiently high value to merit designation as a primary use and uses are judged to be compatible within specific portions of the management unit. Compatibility of uses should be able to be achieved through separation, or siting and design techniques that should reduce or preclude the undesirable effects of a particular use. Following is a list of land classifications, and their associated definitions in Alaska regulations (the Alaska Administrative Code – AAC), which apply to state lands in the planning area as a result of plan adoption. ADNR will manage state lands and resources consistent with these classifications and with the management directions given in the RAT for specific management units of state land.

**11 AAC 55.120. Material Land**

Land classified material is land that is suitable for the extraction of common varieties of sand, gravel, stone, peat, clay, and other similar materials.

**11 AAC 55.160. Public Recreation Land**

Land classified public recreation is land that is suitable for recreation uses, waysides, parks, campsites, scenic overlooks, hunting, fishing or boating access sites, trail corridors, or greenbelts along bodies of water or roadways.

**11 AAC 55.200. Resource Management Land**

Land classified resource management is either: 1) land that might have a number of important resources, but for which a specific resource allocation decision is not possible because of a lack of adequate resource, economic, or other relevant information; or for which a decision is not necessary because the land is presently inaccessible and remote and development is not likely to occur within the next 10 years; or 2) land that contains one or more resource values, none of which is of sufficiently high value to merit designation as a primary use.

**11 AAC 55.230. Wildlife Habitat Land**

Land classified wildlife habitat is land which is primarily valuable for: 1) fish and wildlife resource production, whether existing or through habitat manipulation, to supply sufficient numbers or diversity of species to support commercial, recreational, or traditional uses on an optimum sustained yield basis; or 2) a unique or rare assemblage of a single or multiple species of regional, state, or national significance.



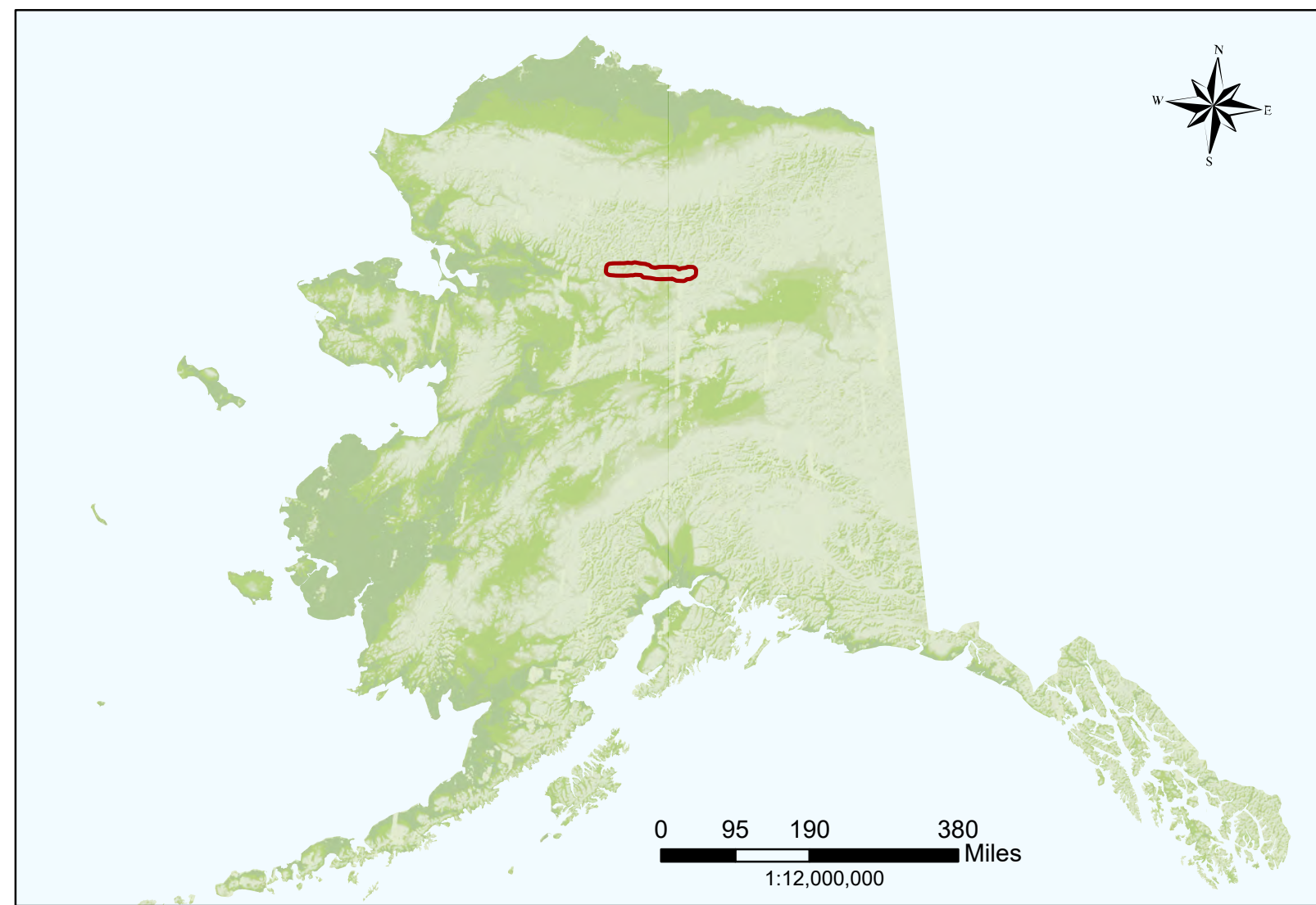
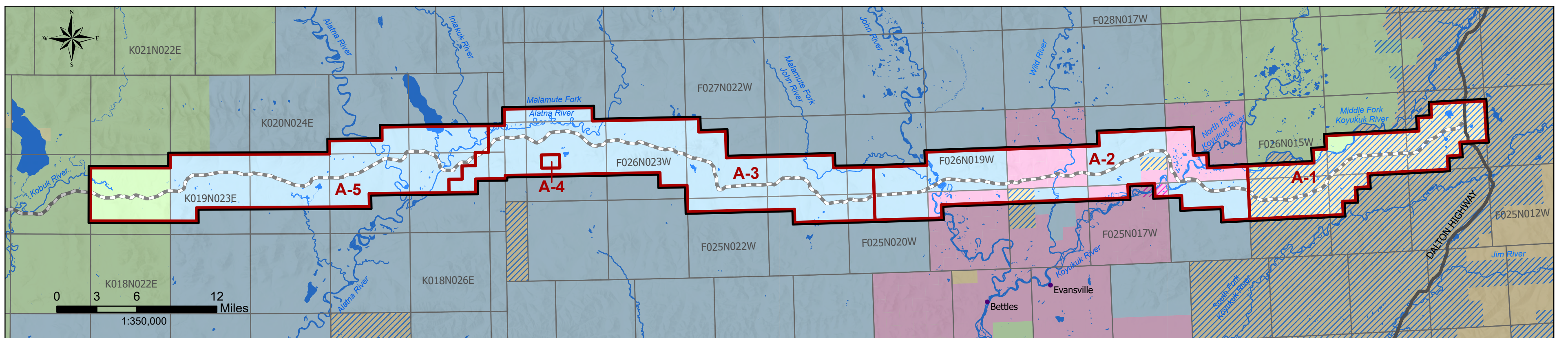
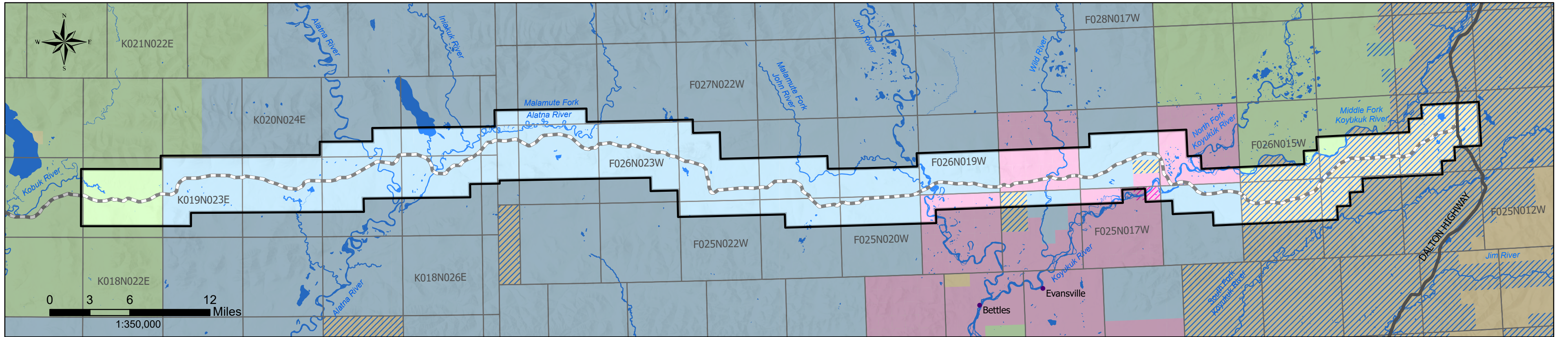
## Resource Allocation Table – Ambler Road Site Specific Plan

Unit # / Name	Designation(s) / Acres	Map	Management Intent	Resources and Uses
A-1 West of Dalton Hwy	Rm 43,289 ac.	2	<p>Manage this unit for a variety of uses and resources.</p> <p>ADNR shall consult ADF&amp;G regarding authorizations involving uses that may impact caribou habitat or anadromous waterbodies.</p> <p>Any authorizations involving long-term uses are to consider impacts on public access to subsistence resources and recreational activities.</p> <p>Protect heritage sites within the unit.</p>	<p>This unit consists of a large parcel of state-selected lands, though the State owns all shorelands and submerged lands under navigable waterbodies. The unit is bounded on the east by the Dalton Highway and extends approximately seventeen miles southwesterly along the Brooks Range Foothills to the north, and the Jack White Range to the south. The main waterbody in this unit is the Middle Fork Koyukuk River and its tributaries. The terrain is boreal uplands, lowlands and alpine tundra, with ponds and lakes dispersed throughout. John R Creek also traverses the unit.</p> <p>The Middle Fork Koyukuk River supports spawning and juvenile Chinook salmon, and chum salmon are present. A small area in the far northwest corner of the unit is used by caribou for migration and year-round use. Subsistence resources in the unit include caribou, fish, berries and plants.</p> <p>The Dalton Highway, Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS), Alaska Stand Alone Pipeline (ASAP), and the Alaska LNG-Mainline Pipeline rights-of-way traverse this unit.</p> <p>Portions of the unit are closed to mineral entry under MO 1162A01 and MO 1147. State and Federal mining claims and coal occurrences are in the unit, as well as two ADOT/PF gravel sites.</p> <p>Recreation occurs within the stream corridors. Several RS 2477 routes are also located in the unit, including RST 209 – Bettles-Coldfoot, RST1611 – Bergman-Cathedral Mountain, RST 38 – Tramway Bar, and RST 412 – Slate Creek, which coincides with a portion of the proposed Ambler Road alignment.</p> <p>The AHRS reports heritage sites in or around this unit.</p>

Unit # / Name	Designation(s) / Acres	Map	Management Intent	Resources and Uses
<b>A-2</b> <b>Koyukuk River to John River</b>	Ha, Rd 47,232 ac.	2	<p>Manage unit for habitat and harvest values as well as dispersed recreation and access.</p> <p>Uses may be authorized in this unit but consideration must be given to the impact upon the caribou herd by a potential use. Consult ADF&amp;G prior to issuing an authorization involving a long-term or permanent use that may impact this population. Maintain harvest opportunities.</p> <p>ADNR shall consult ADF&amp;G regarding authorizations involving uses that may impact anadromous waterbodies.</p>	<p>This unit includes parcels of state-owned land, state-selected land, and Native owned land, though the State owns all shorelands and submerged lands under navigable waterbodies. The unit extends approximately 30 miles westerly along the Brooks Range Foothills to the north, and the Jack White Range and Alatna Hills to the south. The terrain includes boreal alpine, boreal upland and lowland, and boreal upland and subalpine. Major waterways include the John River, Malamute Fork John River, Wild River, Koyukuk River, Middle Fork Koyukuk River, and North Fork Koyukuk River, with ponds and lakes dispersed throughout the unit. These waterways support chum and Chinook Salmon spawning grounds, Whitefish, and Inconnu/Sheefish. Caribou migration and year-round use occur in the unit.</p> <p>Several RS 2477 routes are located in the unit, including RST 18 – Bettles-Wild Lake River Trail, RST 209 – Bettles-Coldfoot, RST1611 – Bergman-Cathedral Mountain, and RST 450 – Hickel Highway.</p> <p>Open to mineral entry. Coal occurrences are present in the unit, and a planned construction camp to support the proposed Ambler Road project.</p>
<b>A-3</b> <b>John River to Iniakuk/Alatna Rivers</b>	Rm 87,581 ac.	3	<p>Manage this unit for a variety of uses and resources.</p> <p>ADNR shall consult ADF&amp;G regarding authorizations involving uses that may impact anadromous waterbodies.</p> <p>Any authorizations involving long-term uses are to consider impacts on public access to subsistence resources and recreational activities.</p>	<p>This unit includes large parcels of state-owned land. The unit extends approximately 30 miles westerly along the Brooks Range Foothills to the north, and the Alatna Hills to the south. Terrain includes boreal alpine, boreal upland and lowland, and boreal upland. Major waterways include the Malamute Fork John River, Mettenpherg Creek, Malamute Fork Alatna River, and West Fork Henshaw (Sozhekla) Creek, which support chum salmon rearing and spawning, Chinook salmon spawning, and coho salmon rearing.</p> <p>Open to mineral entry. State mining claims are present within the unit. An airstrip, a construction camp and material sites are planned in this unit to support the proposed Ambler Road project.</p>
<b>A-4</b> <b>Material/RipRap Site</b>	Ma 860 ac.	3	<p>Manage unit for its material resources consistent with the authorization issued by ADNR. These lands shall be retained in state ownership to provide continuity in transportation operations among other beneficial uses.</p> <p>Lands are available for lease, permit, or other less-than-fee disposal.</p>	<p>This unit is a small unit within a larger unit comprised of an important planned material and riprap site to support the proposed Ambler Road project. Open to mineral entry. State mining claims are present within the unit.</p>


Unit # / Name	Designation(s) / Acres	Map	Management Intent	Resources and Uses
<b>A-5 Iniakuk/Alatna Rivers to Kobuk River</b>	Ha, Hv 65,227 ac.	3	<p>Manage unit for habitat and harvest values as well as dispersed recreation and access.</p> <p>ADNR shall consult ADF&amp;G regarding authorizations involving uses that may impact caribou or moose habitat, Dall sheep populations, or anadromous waterbodies.</p> <p>Any authorizations involving long-term uses are to consider impacts on public access to subsistence resources and recreational activities.</p> <p>Protect heritage sites within the unit.</p>	<p>This unit includes large parcels of state-owned land and a portion of Gates of the Arctic National Park, where the State owns all shorelands and submerged lands under navigable waterbodies. Unit extends westerly from Iniakuk River on the east to the boundary of the Northwest Area Plan on the west, along the Brooks Range Foothills to the north, and Helpmejack Hills and Alatna Hills to the south. Terrain includes boreal alpine and boreal uplands. Major waterways include Alatna River, Iniakuk River, Helpmejack Creek, Rockybottom Creek, Opposite Creek, Tobuk Creek, and Kichaiakaka Creek, which support chum salmon spawning, Chinook salmon spawning and rearing, adult coho salmon, and Dolly Varden rearing. The unit provides caribou and moose habitat year-round, and Dall sheep are present in alpine regions.</p> <p>Open to mineral entry. State mining claims are present in this unit. A proposed material/riprap site and construction camp to support the Ambler Road project are located within the unit.</p> <p>The AHRS reports heritage sites within or near this unit.</p>
<b>A-6 Navigable Rivers and Lakes – General</b>	See Units A-01 through A-05	2, 3	<p>The designation and management intent for navigable waterbodies that cross or are surrounded by state-owned and state-selected lands not within federal conservation units are the same as those of the upland tract, except for the navigable portions of waterbodies that contain fish spawning and rearing areas, which are designated Habitat.</p>	<p>See resources and uses for units A-01 through A-05.</p>
<b>A-7 Navigable Rivers and Lakes within Conservation System Units</b>	Ha, Rd	2, 3	<p>The navigable portions of waterbodies within CSUs that contain anadromous fish are designated Habitat. All such areas are also designated Public Recreation-Dispersed.</p>	<p>See resources and uses for units A-01 through A-05.</p>





## Ambler Road Site Specific Plan Map 1 Planning Area & General Land Status

- Ambler Road Boundary
- Classification Units
- Proposed Ambler Route
- State Selected
- Native Selected
- State Lands
- Native Lands
- BLM
- NPS/USFWS

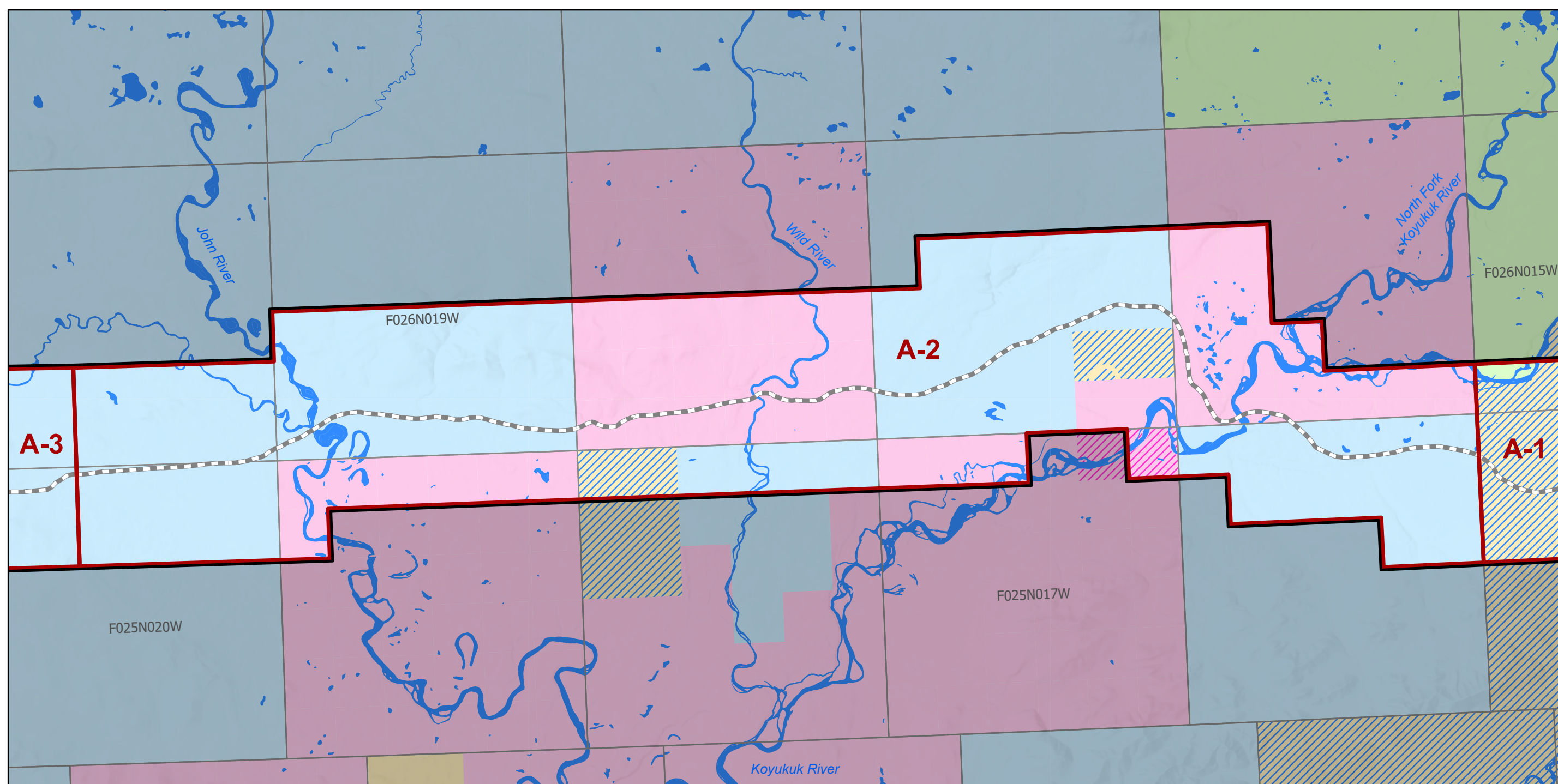
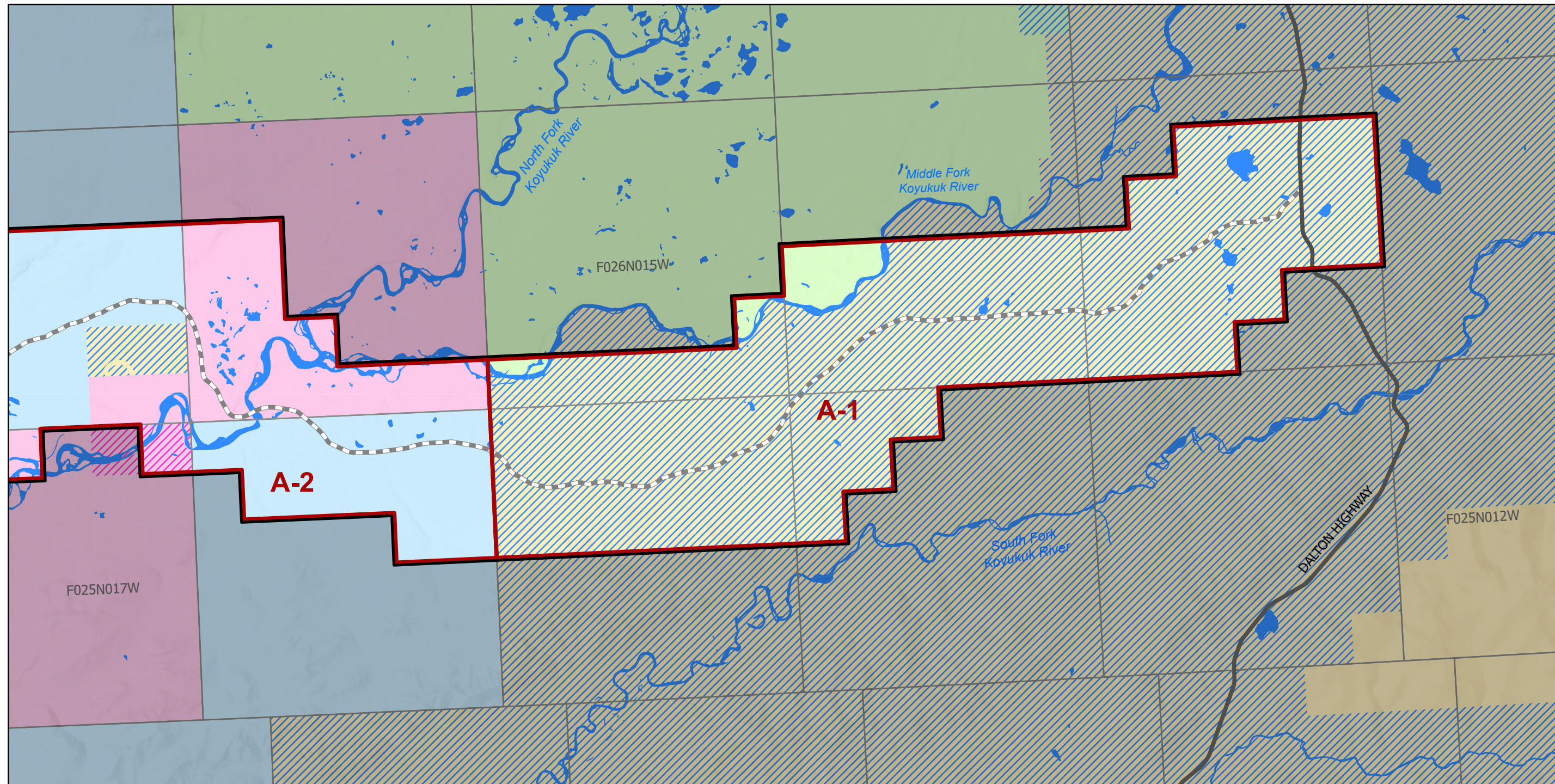


Land use designations only apply to land owned by the State Department of Natural Resources, as indicated by the management units on this map. There are other parcels contained within these units but the designation does not apply to these non-state lands.

This map is for graphic representation only and is intended to be used only as a guide. Areas outside of the planning area are shaded out. Colors may appear darker.  
Created: January, 2022 JLG, DNR, DMLW, RADS  
Projected Coordinate System: NAD 1983  
Albers Equal Area Conic



# Ambler Road Site Specific Plan Map 2 Eastern Units and Designations



- Ambler Road Boundary
- Classification Units
- Proposed Ambler Route
- State Selected
- Native Selected
- State Lands
- Native Lands
- BLM
- NPS/USFWS

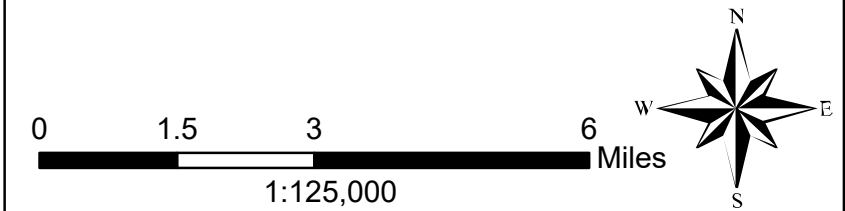
### Unit Designations

- A-1 Rm
- A-2 Ha, Rd



Land use designations only apply to land owned by the State Department of Natural Resources, as indicated by the management units on this map. There are other parcels contained within these units but the designation does not apply to these non-state lands.

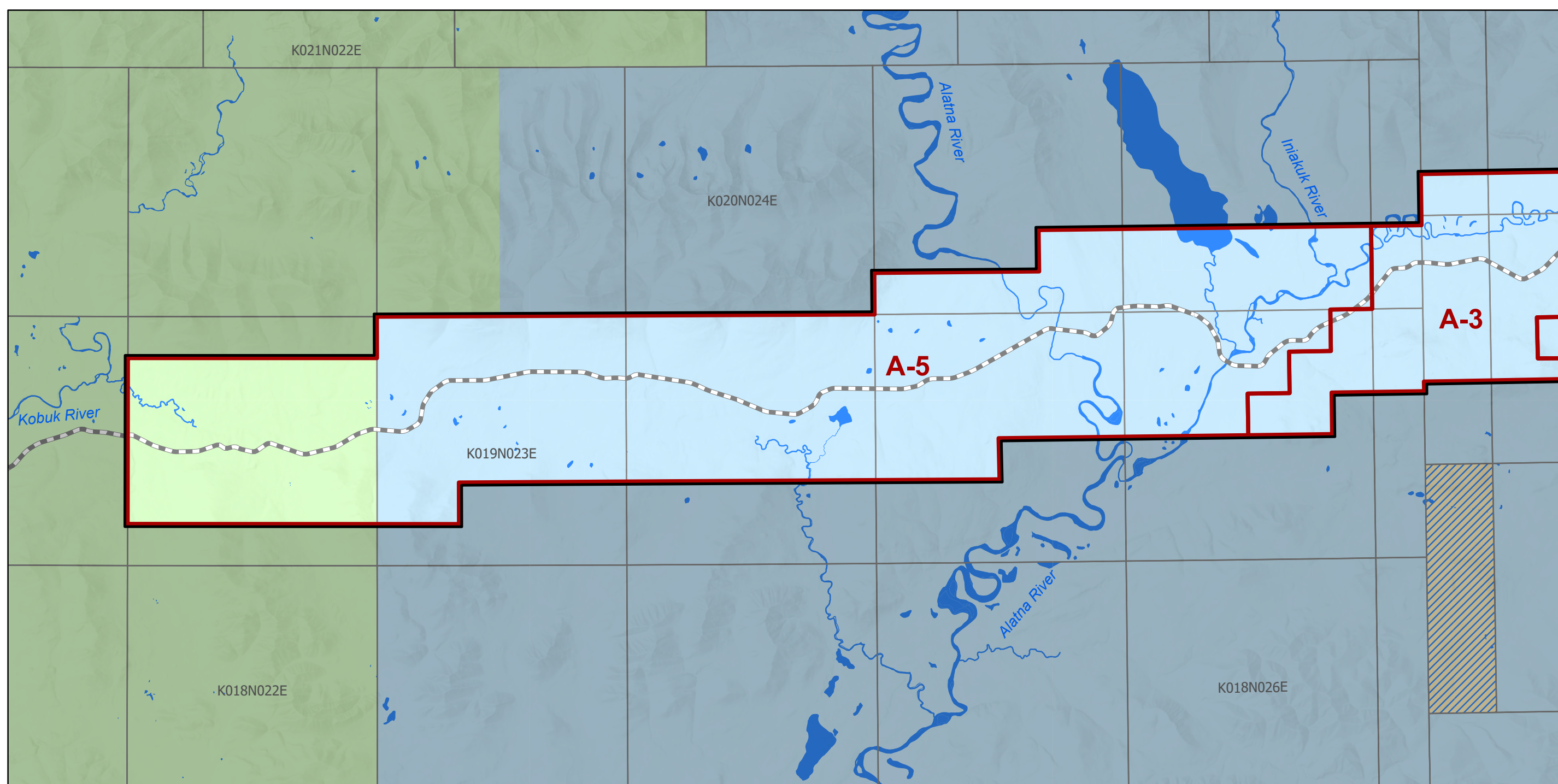
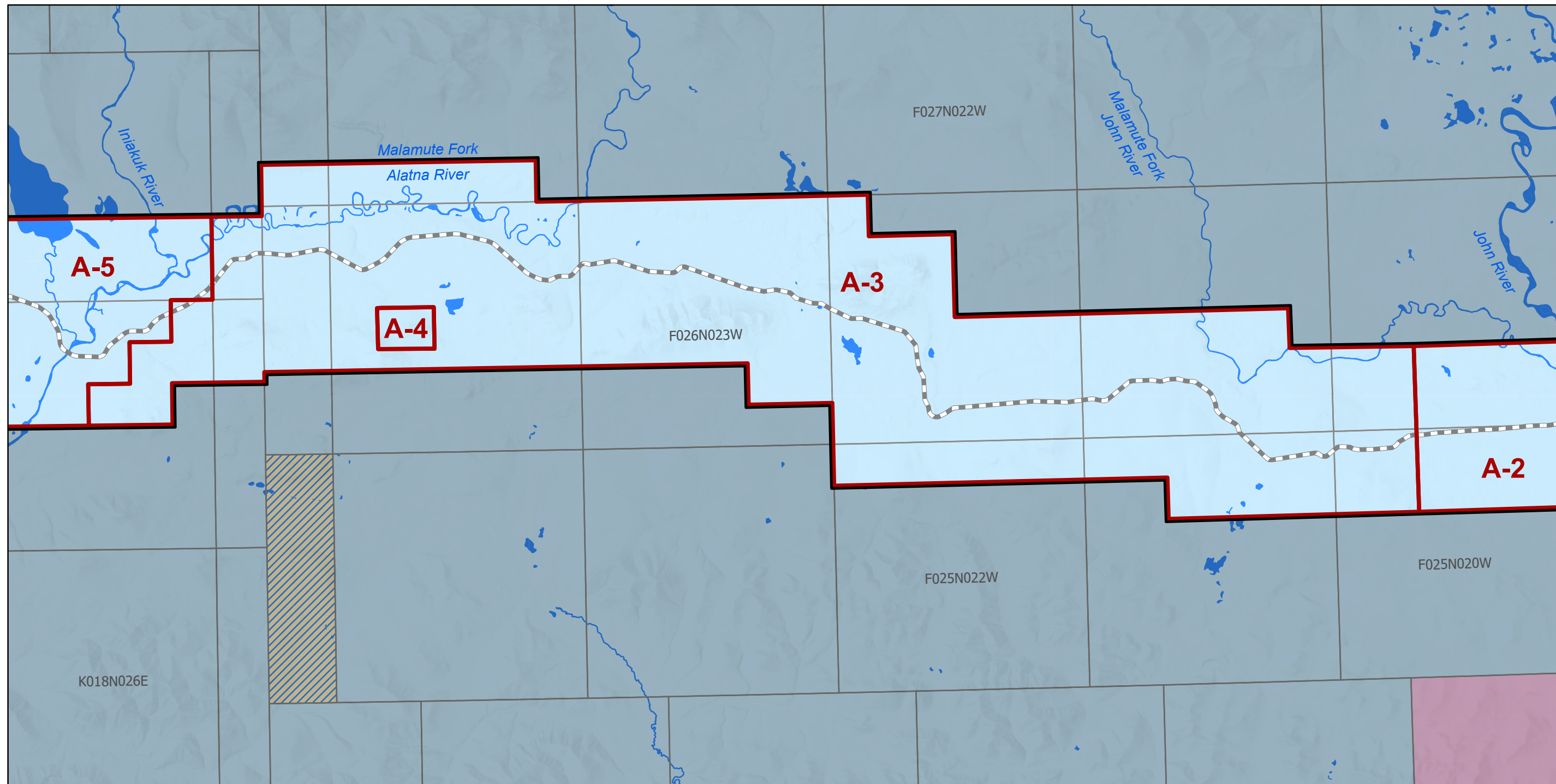
This map is for graphic representation only and is intended to be used only as a guide. Areas outside of the planning area are shaded out. Colors may appear darker.  
Created: January, 2022 JLG, DNR, DMLW, RADS  
Projected Coordinate System: NAD 1983  
Albers Equal Area Conic







# Ambler Road Site Specific Plan Map 3 Western Units and Designations



- Ambler Road Boundary
- Classification Units
- Proposed Ambler Route
- State Selected
- Native Selected
- State Lands
- Native Lands
- BLM
- NPS/USFWS

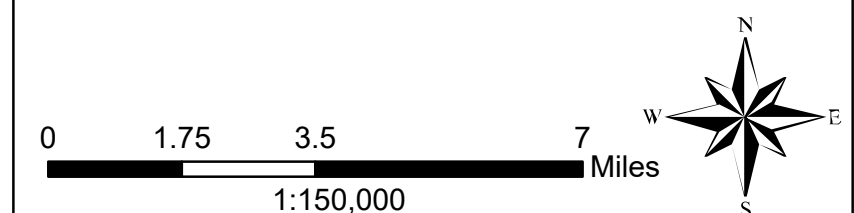
### Unit Designations

- A-3 Rm
- A-4 Ma
- A-5 Ha, Hv



Land use designations only apply to land owned by the State Department of Natural Resources, as indicated by the management units on this map. There are other parcels contained within these units but the designation does not apply to these non-state lands.

This map is for graphic representation only and is intended to be used only as a guide. Areas outside of the planning area are shaded out. Colors may appear darker.  
Created: January, 2022 JLG, DNR, DMLW, RADS  
Projected Coordinate System: NAD 1983  
Albers Equal Area Conic





## Appendix A Glossary

**AAC.** Alaska Administrative Code

**Access.** A way or means of approach. Includes transportation, trail, easements, rights of way, and public use sites.

**Adequate.** Sufficient for a specific need or requirement.

**ADF&G.** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

**ADNR.** Alaska Department of Natural Resources

**ADOT/PF.** Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

**Anadromous waters.** A river, lake or stream that is specified under AS 16.05.871(a) as important for the spawning, rearing, or migration of anadromous fishes; or is not so specified but has been determined to contain or exhibit evidence of anadromous fish. The anadromous designation applies from the waterbody's mouth to its uppermost specified point, including all sloughs and backwaters adjoining the listed water, and that portion of the streambed or lakebed covered by ordinary high water. Anadromous waters are shown in "The Atlas and Catalog of Waters Important for Spawning, Rearing, or Migration of Anadromous Fishes" (referred to as the Anadromous Waters Catalog (AWC)) compiled by ADF&G and adopted by regulation.

**AS.** Alaska Statutes

**AWC.** Anadromous Waters Catalog, see "Anadromous waters"

**Buffer.** An area of land between two activities or resources managed and used to reduce the effect of one activity upon another. These areas are usually vegetated or are required to be re-vegetated if the original vegetation has been removed.

**Classification.** Land classification identifies the primary purpose for which state land will be managed, subject to valid existing rights and multiple uses. (11 AAC 55.040(c)). Land classifications are converted from plan designations through a Land Classification Order. Other land uses may be authorized by the Department that do not conflict with the land use plan (11 AAC 55.040(c)).

**Classification Order.** See "Land Classification Order"

**Closed to mineral entry.** Areas where the staking of new mineral claims is prohibited because mining has been determined to conflict with significant surface uses in the area. Existing mineral claims that are valid at the time of plan adoption are not affected by mineral closures.

**Co-designation.** When more than one land use designation is identified in a management unit. These two (or more) designations reflect uses or resources that are of equal importance, are considered compatible within a specific management unit, and apply to the entirety of the management unit. (See also “Land use designation”)

**Commissioner.** The Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources

**ADEC.** Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

**Department.** Alaska Department of Natural Resources or DNR

**Designated use.** An allowed use of major importance in a particular management unit. Activities in the unit will be managed to encourage, develop, or protect this use. Where a unit has two or more designated uses, the management intent statement and guidelines for the unit; the general guidelines; and existing statutes, regulations, and procedures, will direct how resources are managed to avoid or minimize conflicts between designated uses.

**Designation.** See “Land Use Designation”

**Dispersed recreation.** Recreational pursuits that are not site specific in nature, such as hunting, fishing, recreational boating or wildlife viewing. The designation of “Public Recreation-Dispersed” is used to indicate such uses where public recreation within a management is especially great or significant. These types of uses are allowed on nearly all state general domain land and are those uses that are permitted as Generally Allowed Uses in 11 AAC 96.020.

**Disposal.** Refers to the conveyance of state land or an interest in state land to another entity. Disposal, as used in this plan, is meant to convey this general meaning. The Terms “Land Disposal” or “Agricultural Land Disposal” describe particular types of disposal. See also “Land Disposal” and “Agricultural Land Disposal.” Such disposals are evidenced by conveyance documents, including either a patent or Quit Claim Deed. The issuance of an easement or lease does not utilize these forms of conveyance documents.

**DPOR.** Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, a division of DNR

**Easement.** Generally, an interest in land owned by another that entitles its holder to a specific limited use. Easements may be issued within areas that are designated by the plan to be retained.

**Fish and wildlife.** Any species of aquatic finfish and amphibian, reptile, bird or mammal in any stage of their life cycle found in or which may be introduced into 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.

**Generally allowed use (GAU).** An activity conducted on state land managed by the Division of Mining, Land and Water that is not in a special category or status. For the most part these uses are allowed for 14 days or less, and a permit is not required (11 AAC 96.020).

**Guideline (or Management Guideline).** A course of action to be followed by ADNR resource managers or required of land users when the manager permits, leases, or otherwise authorizes the use of state land or resources. Guidelines also range in their level of specificity from giving general guidance for decision making or identifying factors that need to be considered, to setting detailed standards for on-the-ground decisions. Some guidelines state the intent that must be followed and allow flexibility in achieving it.

**Habitat.** Areas that serve as a concentrated use area for a single or multiple species of fish and wildlife during a sensitive life history stage or are highly important to the maintenance or management of a single or multiple species of fish or wildlife. This designation, when used, applies to localized areas having particularly valuable or sensitive habitat within the planning boundary. The “Ha” designation does not preclude human uses that are compatible with the following fish and wildlife categories. Also refers to the plan designation of Habitat or the land classification of Wildlife Habitat Land.

**Land Classification Order.** An order approved by the Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources that classifies state land into specific land use categories (AS 38.04.065 and AS 38.05.300). The Land Classification Order in this Site Specific Plan classifies all state lands within the planning area according to the land use designations assigned to individual land parcels in the Resource Allocation Tables contained in this plan.

**Land use designation.** A category of land allocation determined by a land use plan. Designations identify the primary use or uses of state land. See page 7, which sets out how the land use designations of this plan will be classified according to 11 AAC 55. Referred to in this plan as Designation. Designations are applied to state general domain land, but not usually to Legislatively Designated Areas (LDAs). A designation is only applied where the authorizing statute indicates that Title 38 (Public Land) authorities are to be retained for certain aspects of LDA management or if the LDA is not completely removed from the general public domain.

**Lease.** A Department of Natural Resources authorization for the use of state land according to terms set forth in AS 38.05.070-105. The State Pipeline Coordinator’s Section holds authority for surface authorizations that pertain to pipeline infrastructure as defined under in AS 38.35.

**Management intent statement.** The statements that define the department’s near and long-term management objectives and the methods to achieve those objectives. As most often used in the plan, it refers to the management objectives and methods to achieve those objectives for a management unit. Management intent statements function to provide more specific guidance than that provided by a plan designation or land classification and are to be interpreted as intended to be consistent with that designation or classification.

**Materials.** “Materials” include but are not limited to common varieties of sand, gravel, rock, peat, pumice, pumicite, cinders, clay and sod. Materials may also refer to the designation of Materials or the land classification of Materials Land.

**Mineral entry.** Acquiring exploration and mining rights under AS 38.05.185-38.05.275.

**Mining.** Any structure or activity for commercial exploration and recovery of minerals, including, but not limited to resource transfer facilities, camps, and other support facilities associated with mineral development. The term “mining” does not refer to offshore prospecting.

**Mining claim.** Rights to deposits of minerals, subject to AS 38.05.185-38.05.275, in or on state land that is open to claim staking may be acquired by discovery, location and recording as prescribed in AS 38.05.185-38.05.275. The locator has the exclusive right of possession and extraction of the minerals lying within the boundaries of the claim, subject to AS 38.05.185 -38.05.275.

**Minor Change.** A minor change to a land use plan is not considered a revision under AS 38.04.065. 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 (11 AAC 55.030).

**Multiple use.** Means the management of state land and its various resource values so that it is used in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the people of Alaska, making the most judicious use of the land for some or all of these resources or related services over areas large enough to provide sufficient latitude for periodic adjustments in use to conform to changing needs and conditions; it includes:

- a) the use of some land for less than all of the resources, and
- b) a combination of balanced and diverse resource uses that takes into account the short-term and long-term needs of present and future generations for renewable and nonrenewable resources, including, but not limited to, recreation, range, timber, minerals, watershed, wildlife and fish, and natural scenic, scientific, and historic values (AS 38.04.910).

**Native-owned land.** Land that is patented or will be patented to a Native corporation.

**Native-selected land.** Federally owned land that is selected by a Native corporation but not yet patented.

**Navigable.** Used in its legal context, it refers to lakes and rivers that meet federal or state criteria for navigability. Under the Equal Footing Doctrine, the Alaska Statehood Act, and the Submerged Lands Act, the state owns land under navigable waterbodies.

**Navigable Water.** Means any waterbody of the state that is navigable in fact for any useful public purpose and as specifically described in AS 38.05.965(13).

**Ordinary high-water mark (OHW).** The mark along the bank or shore up to which the presence and action of the non-tidal water are so common and usual, and so long continued in all ordinary years, as to leave a natural line impressed on the bank or shore and indicated by erosion, shelving, changes in soil characteristics, destruction of terrestrial vegetation, or other distinctive physical characteristics (from 11 AAC 53.900(23)).

**Permanent use.** A use that includes a structure or facility that is not readily removable. Permanent facilities are improvements that do not need to be removed and usually involve the construction of a foundation for the improvement.

**Permit.** A Department of Natural Resources authorization for use of state land according to terms set forth in 11 AAC 96.

**Primary use.** The primary intended use of state land or water, which is indicated through a primary land use designation. In this plan there may be two compatible uses within a management unit. When this occurs, it is represented by a co-designation. These types of uses are most often expressed through a land use designation (see “Designation”) in this plan.

**Public Trust Doctrine.** A doctrine that requires the state to manage tidelands, shorelands, and submerged lands for the benefit of the people so that they can engage in such things as commerce, navigation, fishing, hunting, swimming, and ecological study. (See also Appendix C)

**Public use.** Any human use of state land, including commercial and non-commercial uses.

**Recreation.** Any activity or structure for recreational purposes, including but not limited to hiking, camping, boating, anchorage, access points to sport hunting and fishing areas, and sightseeing. “Recreation” does not refer to subsistence hunting and fishing. See the term Subsistence.

**Resource management.** A land designation or classification used for lands which are presently inaccessible or remote and may have a number of resources; where the lack of adequate resource, economic or other relevant information combined with the unlikelihood of resource development within the next 20 years makes a specific resource allocation decision

unnecessary; or where a number of uses can be accommodated in a given area. In previous land use plans, this designation was referred to as General Use.

**RS 2477.** RS 2477 stands from Revised Statute 2477 from the Mining Act of 1866, which states that “The public right-of-way for the construction of highways over public lands, not reserved for public use, is hereby granted. Information on RS 2477s can be accessed at the DNR website: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/trails/index.htm>

**Right-of-way.** The legal right to cross the land of another.

**Shall.** Same as “will.”

**Shoreland.** Land belonging to the state that is covered by navigable, nontidal water up to the ordinary high-water mark as modified by accretion, erosion or reliction. (See definition of Navigable.) Shorelands are generally lake bottoms or the beds of navigable rivers and streams.

**Should.** States intent for a course of action or a set of conditions to be achieved. Guidelines modified by the word “should” state the plan’s intent and allow the manager to use discretion in deciding the specific means for best achieving the intent or whether circumstances justify deviations from the intended action or set of conditions. Includes the concept of “feasible and prudent.” Any deviation from a management intent statement or management guideline in an authorization requires an explanation for the variation in the written decision. See also “Will.”

**Site Specific Plan (SSP).** A land use plan under AS 38.04.065, a Site Specific Plan is a planning document prepared in the absence of a regional plan, that states the management intent for each resource in the planning area, addresses impacts on adjacent land uses, and contains the following: a summary of existing land uses and ownership patterns; a discussion of resource potential and land uses on state lands and water; land classifications that set out primary uses; consideration of mineral potential, existing or potential conflicts; and, management guidelines and stated management intent, representing department policies to guide the actions of the department when making land use decisions, directing land management and ensuring compatibility among competing land uses (11 AAC 55.030(e)). Until land has been classified, a disposal or transfer of state land or an interest in state land will not be allowed (11 AAC 55.040(i)). This Site Specific Plan was adopted to meet the legal requirement for classification of state land prior to the proposed Ambler Road project, which would be a disposal of interest.

**State land.** A generic term meaning all state land, including all state-owned and state-selected uplands, all shorelands, tidelands and submerged lands. See also definitions of state-owned land and state-selected land as well as definitions for shorelands, tidelands, and submerged lands. ‘State Land’ excludes lands owned by the University of Alaska, the Mental Health Trust Authority, or by state agencies that have acquired through deed.



**State-owned land.** Land that is patented or will be patented to the state, including uplands, tidelands, shorelands, and submerged lands.

**State-selected land.** Federally owned land that is selected by the State of Alaska, but not yet patented nor Tentatively Approved (TA) by the Bureau of Land Management.

**Submerged Lands.** Land covered by tidal waters between the line of mean lower low water and seaward to a distance of three geographic miles or as may hereafter be properly claimed by the state. (AS 38.05.965) (See definition of Tidelands)

**Subsistence.** Subsistence is defined in Alaska state laws as the “non-commercial customary and traditional uses of fish and wildlife.” See AS 16.05.940, especially subsections 30 and 31 (sport fishing), 32 (subsistence hunting), and 33 (subsistence uses) for further information.

**Suitable.** Land that is physically capable of supporting a resource development.

**Sustained Yield.** Means the achievement and maintenance in perpetuity of a high level of annual or regular periodic output of the various renewable resources of state land consistent with multiple use. (AS 38.04.910(12))

**Tidelands.** Lands that are periodically covered by tidal waters between the elevation of mean high water and mean lower low water. (AS 38.05.965)

**Uplands.** Lands above mean high water.

**Wetlands.** Includes both freshwater and saltwater wetlands. “Freshwater wetlands” means those environments characterized by rooted vegetation which is partially submerged either continuously or periodically by surface freshwater with less than 0.5 parts per thousand salt content and not exceeding three meters in depth. “Saltwater wetlands” means those coastal areas along sheltered shorelines characterized by salt tolerant, marshy plants and large algae extending from extreme low tide which is influenced by sea spray or tidally induced water table changes. Note: This definition may be inconsistent with the federal definition of wetlands as applied by the U.S. Corps of Engineers.

**Will.** Requires a course of action or a set of conditions to be achieved. A guideline modified by the word “will” must be followed by land managers and users. Deviation from plan designations, management intent, or management guidelines requires a plan amendment consistent with 11 AAC 55.040(f).



**STATE OF ALASKA  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
DIVISION OF MINING, LAND AND WATER**

**Land Classification Order No. NC-21-001**

I. Name: Ambler Road Site Specific Plan

II. The classifications in Part III are based on written justification contained in one of the following plans:


Area Plan:  
Adopted ( ) Revised ( ) Dated \_\_\_\_\_

Management Plan:  
Adopted ( ) Revised ( ) Dated \_\_\_\_\_

Site Specific Plan:  
Adopted (x) Revised ( ) Dated \_\_\_\_\_

III. Legal Description	Acreage	Acquisition Authority	Existing Classification	Classification by this action
See plan maps	244,188		None	See plan maps

IV. This order is issued under the authority granted by AS 38.04.065 and AS 38.05.300 to the Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources. The above described lands are hereby designated and classified as indicated. Nothing shall prevent the reclassification of these lands if warranted in the public interest.

Classified:   
Commissioner,  
Department of Natural Resources

Date: 6/27/22



## **Appendix C**

### **Public Trust Doctrine**

The Public Trust Doctrine provides that public trust lands, waters, and living natural resources in a state are held by the state in trust for the benefit of all the people, and establishes the right of the public to fully utilize the public trust lands, waters, and resources for a wide variety of public uses. Each state has the authority and responsibility for managing these public trust assets to assure the public rights are upheld.

The Public Trust Doctrine applies whenever navigable waters or the lands beneath those waters are altered, developed, conveyed, or otherwise managed. It also applies whether the trust lands are publicly or privately owned. Shorelands below the ordinary high-water mark are considered public trust lands. In summary, all lands beneath navigable waters, be they shorelands, tidelands, or submerged lands out to the three mile limit are public trust lands.

The Alaska Constitution contains numerous provisions embracing principles of the Public Trust Doctrine that require the state to exercise authority to ensure that the right of the public to use navigable waters for navigation, commerce, recreation, and related purposes is protected. In Alaska, the Public Trust Doctrine extends beyond those submerged lands in which the state holds title to include all waters that are navigable. The state's waters are themselves reserved to the people for common use.

The Alaska Constitution (Article VIII, sections 1, 2, 3, 6, 13, and 14) and Alaska Statutes (38.05.127 and 38.05.128) contain some of the provisions, which are the legal basis for applying the Public Trust Doctrine in Alaska. In Alaska, this doctrine guarantees the public's right to engage in activities such as commerce, navigation, fishing, hunting, trapping, and swimming, while also providing for the protection of areas for ecological study.

The Alaska Constitution provides that "free access to the navigable or public waters of the state, as defined by the legislature, shall not be denied any citizen of the United States or resident of the state, except that the legislature may by general law regulate and limit such access for other beneficial uses or public purposes." The Alaska Supreme Court has concluded "the provisions in Article VIII [of the Constitution] were intended to permit the broadest possible access to and use of state waters by the general public." *Wernberg v. State*, 516 P. 2d 1191, 1198-9 (Alaska 1973). The Alaska legislature has broadly defined the navigable and public waters available for public use in AS 38.05.965. Moreover, the legislature has endorsed a broad interpretation of the Public Trust Doctrine in Article VIII of Alaska's Constitution in finding that:

"Ownership of land bordering navigable or public waters does not grant an exclusive right to the use of the water and any rights of title to the land below the ordinary high-water mark are subject to the rights of the people of the state to use and have access to the water for recreational purposes or any other public purposes for which the water is used or capable of being used consistent with the public trust." Sec. 1, Ch. 82, SLA 1985.

### *Appendix C: Public Trust Doctrine*

The legislature has also declared that the right to use state waters does not include the right to enter or trespass upon private lands. Nevertheless, with 99 percent of Alaska in public ownership at statehood, state laws regarding the transfer of land to private parties provide for public access to navigable waters. For instance, AS 38.05.127 implements the state's constitutional guarantee of access to navigable waters under Article VIII, Section 14. Under the statute, the Commissioner of the Alaska Department 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." The State's responsibilities to implement the Public Trust Doctrine 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.