

## Unit 11b - Berners Bay

### Background

**Mining and Mineral Potential.** The USFS-owned uplands on the west side of Berners Bay have high mineral potential and support numerous federal and state mining claims. The Jualin Mine is currently conducting exploration activities, and a road has been constructed from the mine to the state tidelands in Subunit 11b6. If the Jualin or other mines are developed, additional support facilities may be proposed on the state tidelands in Subunits 11b6 and 11b7.

**Transportation.** Roads may be proposed to support mining along the USFS-owned shoreline and the state shorelands parallel to the Berners River. There are also federal mining claims on the Upper Antler and Gilkey Rivers. If these claims are developed, ground access may be proposed along these two rivers from their mouths to their headwaters.

A road extension from Echo Cove has been suggested that will follow the east side of Berners Bay and access the rivers flowing into Berners Bay, mines in the Kensington/Jualin area, and upper Lynn Canal including Skagway and Haines.

A tidelands permit has been issued to Curator (SET-92-003) in Subunit 11b6 for a boat and floatplane moorage which includes concrete pyramid anchor, log chain, galvanized steel cable, and mooring buoy, with an option to construct a floatplane raft. This development is associated with the exploration of the Jualin Mine.

**Recreation.** Local residents' recreation use of Berners Bay is much greater than along Lynn Canal in this region. The primary recreational activities are water-based recreation, camping related to boating, and recreational cabin use. Uses related to these activities include sightseeing, beachcombing, hiking, kayaking, canoeing, and motorboating.

The area is heavily used by charter boats and guided kayak trips. Airboats are also commonly used in Berners Bay by anglers, hunters, and cabin users. The area also provides opportunities for viewing bears, raptors, waterfowl, whales, seals, and moose. The estuarine areas near the mouths of the Gilkey, Lace, Antler, and Berners rivers are used as anchorages. Boats travel up the Lace and Berners Rivers for moose hunting. The Antler, Berners, Gilkey, and Lace rivers were found to be eligible by the USFS in the Tongass Land Management Plan (TLMP) as Wild Rivers under the criteria in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. However, these rivers are not recommended for this designation by the USFS at this time.

**USFS Management.** The USFS lands at the mouths of the Gilkey and Antler rivers, and all of the Berner's and Lace rivers, are congressionally designated LUD II. LUD II areas are managed for their wildland character but are open to mineral entry. Road construction is also an "allowable use" (Tongass Timber Reform Act of 1990, Title II, Section 201).

**Moose Habitat Enhancement.** The USFS is considering conducting habitat enhancement for moose by planting willows along the Lace, Berners, and Gilkey rivers in the next five years if funding allows.

**ADFG Facilities.** ADFG has existing facilities along the Berners River including two Coho salmon research camps located 13 miles upriver in Subunit 11b41, and 5 miles upriver in Subunit 11b48.

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## Management Intent

With the exception of Slate Creek Cove (Subunit 11b6) the state tidelands, submerged lands, and shorelands in this unit will be managed to provide a semi-primitive recreational experience, and protect fish and wildlife habitat and harvest opportunities. This includes facilities for fish and wildlife research and management and other habitat improvement activities. Over the long term, roads and utility corridors that provide improved access to mining or serve as part of a regional transportation and utility system may be considered. Part of the tidelands in Slate Creek Cove within Subunit 11b6 will be managed to provide support facilities for mining-related activities while minimizing significant impacts on habitat and recreation for which the subunit is co-designated. The remainder of the subunit will be managed to provide an anchorage for other users of the cove and to protect the anadromous stream mouth at Slate Creek (Subunit 11b7).

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## Management Guidelines

**Heritage Resource Sites.** Subunit 11b46 includes the historic Antler Bay Village Site (Jun-059). DPOR will be consulted prior to authorizing activities in this subunit. Also see Chapter 2, *Heritage Resources*.

**Mineral Closures.** The bed (below the ordinary high water mark) of both branches of the Berners River from the mouth to the planning area boundary will be closed to new mineral location. The Berners River will be closed because mining in the bed of the river would conflict with the spawning, incubation, and rearing of the significant anadromous fish population that live in this clear-water system.

The estuarine area, from mean high water to a water depth of 40 feet (measured at mean low low water), at the mouth of the Berner's, Lace, Gilkey, and Antler rivers will be closed to new mineral location to protect important rearing areas for anadromous fish. The maintenance of the high-quality estuarine rearing habitat adjacent to these streams and the avoiding impacts to the associated water quality and marine plant and animal communities is essential to sustaining the productivity of the Juneau area commercial- and community-harvest fisheries. Maps of these closures can be found in Mineral Order 653 in Appendix B.

**Northern Route Access Corridors.** When authorizing activities on state lands where a regional transportation corridor is proposed, DNR will assure options for the road connection are maintained. Before DNR authorizes any phase or segment of a regional road corridor north from Juneau, appropriate agencies and the public will have the opportunity to comment.

**Additional Selection.** After the plan was adopted, an additional parcel in this unit was selected by the state. National Forest Community Grant Selection 390 is approximately 29 acres and is located on Berners Bay just east of Slate Creek Cove. The purpose of the selection is for community expansion and for facilities to support minerals development. The selection was made under the National Forest Community Grant entitlement program based on Section 6(a) of the Alaska Statehood Act. Although the parcel is neither designated nor classified, management intent for the unit and Chapter 2 guidelines apply.

# Land-Use Designation Summary

For keys to the one-letter and two-letter abbreviations used in this table, see the beginning of this chapter.

UNIT 11B: BERNERS BAY						
Area no. & name	DNR designation	CBJ zoning district	Land type	Adjacent ownership	Resource or use	Other comments
11b1 Antler River mouth	Ha Hv Rd	RR	T	USFS	Anchorage; anadromous fish estuarine rearing habitat; waterfowl hunting; sand lance spawning habitat; migratory waterfowl habitat; anadromous stream mouth; brown and black bear spring habitat	
11b2	Ha Rd	RR	T	USFS	Harbor seals; migratory waterfowl habitat; anadromous stream mouth	
11b3 east shore inner Berners	Ha Rd	RR	T	USFS	Anchorage, anadromous estuarine rearing; wildlife viewing for bears, raptors, waterfowl, whales, seals, moose and seabirds	
11b4 middle Berners Bay	Hv Rd	RR	SU	State	Tanner and king crab commercial and personal use harvest	
11b5 Outer Cove Point	Ha Hv	RR	T	USFS	Salmon sportfishing and gillnetting; Tanner and king crab commercial and personal use harvest; herring spawning	
11b6 Outer Slate Creek Cove	Ha Rd Wd	RR	T		This area may have potential to support transportation and support facilities that may occur in the future on the USFS uplands that have numerous federal mining claims; anchorage; anadromous estuarine nearshore area for early marine rearing	
11b7 Inner Slate Creek Cove	Ha	RR	T	USFS	Anadromous stream mouth; brown and black bear spring and summer habitat; anadromous estuarine nearshore area for early marine rearing	
11b8 inner Cove Point	Ha Hv Rd	RR	T	USFS	Salmon sportfishing; anchorage; Tanner and king crab commercial and personal use; herring spawning	
11b40 Upper Berners River	Ha Rd	RR	SL	USFS	Black and brown bear summer habitat	
11b41 Upper Berners River	Ha Pr Rd	RR	SL	USFS	ADF&G Upper Berners River coho salmon research Camp (13 miles upriver); brown and black bear summer habitat	
11b42	Ha Rd	RR	SL	USFS	Cutthroat trout and char overwintering area; migratory waterfowl habitat; moose winter and summer habitat; brown and black bear summer habitat	

## Land-Use Designation Summary (continued)

For keys to the one-letter and two-letter abbreviations used in this table, see the beginning of this chapter.

UNIT 11B: BERNERS BAY						
Area no. & name	DNR designation	CBJ zoning district	Land type	Adjacent ownership	Resource or use	Other comments
11b43 Berners River and Lace River	Ha Hv Rd	RR	SL	USFS	Migratory waterfowl habitat; intensive moose, bear and waterfowl hunting; anadromous stream; brown and black bear spring and summer habitat; moose winter and summer habitat	
11b44 Mouth of Lace and Antler Rivers	Ha Hv Rd	RR	SL	USFS	Eulachon spawning habitat; migratory waterfowl habitat; anadromous stream mouth (Antler River); intensive bear, moose and waterfowl hunting; moose winter and summer habitat	
11b45 Upper Lace River	Ha Rd	RR	SL	USFS	Anadromous stream; bear summer habitat; moose winter and summer habitat	
11b46 Antler and Gilkey Rivers	Ha Hv Rd	RR			Moose summer and winter habitat; anadromous stream; intensive moose and bear hunting up to forks	
11b47 Antler Glacier Lake	Hv Rd	RR	SL	USFS	Grayling harvest	Float plane access on Antler Glacier Lake
11b48	Ha Hv Pr Rd	RR	SL	USFS	Migratory waterfowl habitat; Lower Berners River ADF&G coho research field camp five miles upstream from river mouth; moose winter and summer habitat; brown and black bear habitat; moose hunting	

# UNIT 11B INSET - Berners Bay

## Navigability

N Rivers & lakes susceptible to navigation

## Land Ownership

All designated areas are state owned

## Designations

- Ha Fish & Wildlife Habitat
- Hv Fish & Wildlife Harvest
- Pr Public Facilities - Reserved
- Rd Recreation - Dispersed
- Wd Waterfront Development
- ⚓ Anchorage

