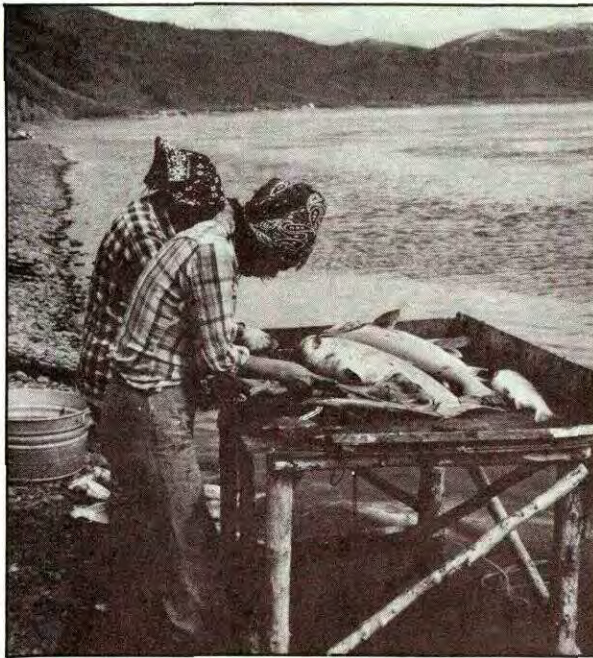


# Chapter 4 Implementation

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# Chapter 4

## IMPLEMENTATION

### Introduction

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This chapter describes the actions necessary to implement the land use policies proposed by this plan. Included are proposed land selections and relinquishments of selected lands; land use classifications; recommenda-

tions for legislative designations; recommendations for field staff and research; and procedures for plan modification and amendment.

### Proposed Selections and Relinquishments

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This plan identifies several areas for future state land selections and for relinquishment of existing state selected lands. These recommendations are described below, along with the reasons for proposing these changes in land status. In general, lands are proposed for selection either to consolidate state land ownership and improve the efficiency of state land management, or because the land has high resource values that merit state management. The selections and relinquishments are shown on the management unit maps in Chapter 3, and on Map 4.1.

#### New State Selections

The state is entitled to select additional lands for state ownership from vacant, unappropriated, and unreserved federal lands. In the Kuskokwim Area, there are over four million acres that the state could select. Most of this land is in the Kuskokwim Mountains--in the George River, Crooked Creek, and Owhat drainages--or in the lowlands of the middle Big River, Tatlawiksuk, Chineekluk, Swift, and Stony river drainages. Most of these lands have low surface and subsurface resource values and are not desirable for state

selection. However, there are some lands with high resource values or strategic locations that merit state selection. A total of approximately 448,580 acres in 14 parcels should be selected. Some of these parcels have already been selected by Native corporations. If the state top-files, that is, files a selection on Native-selected land, the state selection would attach if the Native selection were relinquished or rejected.

The total amount of additional land the state may select is limited. Therefore, final determination of whether more lands will be selected in the Kuskokwim Area will be made through a statewide process in which the lands recommended for selection in this plan are evaluated relative to opportunities for additional selections in other parts of the state. Each parcel is rated as either high, moderate, or low priority for selection within the Kuskokwim Area.

Parcels proposed for selection are listed below along with their acreage, the reason for selection, a reference to the subunit they are located in, and their priority for selection. The subunit descriptions in Chapter 3 state the



management intent for these lands if they are conveyed to state ownership.

**Medfra** - Big River-South Fork subunit 4a - T28S R21E K.R.M. sections 1, 12-15, 22-23, and 26-27 -- approximately 5,860 acres - high priority. This parcel is Native-selected land on the North Fork of the Kuskokwim River downstream from Medfra. It is surrounded by state-owned land and is readily accessible by boat and trail along the North Fork. The plan recommends that the state top-file on this parcel because of the high forestry, habitat, and public recreation values of these lands, and in order to consolidate state ownership in this area in the event that the land is not conveyed to the Native corporation.

**South Fork Uplands** - Big River-South Fork subunit 4a -- T33N R26W S.M. sections 19-21 and 28-33 -- approximately 5,760 acres - low priority. This parcel is federal land in the lower south Fork Valley. There is no established access. It adjoins state land on two sides. This parcel is recommended for state selection because of high habitat value and to consolidate state ownership.

**Big River-Nikolai** - Big River-South Fork subunits 4a and 4c -- T34N R27W S.M.; T33N R28W S.M.; T33N R30W S.M. sections 19-36; T32N R29W S.M.; T32N R30W S.M. sections 1-4, 10-15, 22-27, and 34-36 -- approximately 74,880 acres - high priority in west half; low priority in east half. These parcels are federal lands along Big River and the South Fork west of Nikolai. They are accessible along the rivers and the Iditarod Trail. The west half or this area (subunit 4c) is recommended for selection by the state because of its high forestry, habitat, and recreation values. The east half (subunit 4a) is recommended for selection because of potential for long-term gas development for local use and recreation values along the Iditarod Trail.

**Tatlawiksuk** - Kuskokwim River subunit 5a - T22N R38W S.M. sections 1-3, 9-15, -- approximately 6,400 acres - high priority. This a parcel of Native selected land along the Kuskokwim River near the confluence of the Tatlawiksuk and Kuskokwim rivers. It is adjacent to state-owned land. The plan recommends

the state top-file on this parcel because of its high forestry, habitat, and public recreation values, and to consolidate state land ownership in this area in the event that it is not conveyed to the Native corporation.

**George River** - George River subunit 10b -- T27N R41W S.M., T27N R42W S.M., T26N R40W S.M., T26N R41W S.M., T26N R42W S.M., T25N R40W S.M., T25N R41W S.M., T25N R42W S.M., T25N R43W S.M., and T25N R44W S.M. sections 1-3, 10-15, 22-27, and 34-36 -- approximately 241,920 acres - high priority. These parcels are federal lands in the headwaters of the George and Takotna rivers. They are recommended for selection by the state because of their high mineral potential.

**Horn Mountains** - George River subunit 10b -- T20N R50W S.M., T20N R51W S.M., T19N R50W S.M. sections 1-21 and 28-33; T19N R51W S.M. sections 4-9, 16-21, and 31-33; T18N R51W S.M. -- approximately 96,000 acres - high priority. These federal lands are recommended for selection by the state because of their high mineral potential.

**Flat** - George River subunit 10b -- T27N R48W that portion east of the Iditarod River, and T26N R48W that portion east of the Iditarod River -- approximately 30,400 acres - moderate priority. These are federal lands recommended for state selection because of their high mineral potential.

**Stony River** - Stony River subunits 14a and b -- T19N R41W S.M. section 13 and T18N R39W S.M. sections 9, 13-17, and 24 -- approximately 5,120 acres - high priority. These two parcels are Native-selected lands on or near the Stony River. They are surrounded by state-owned lands and are accessible by boat from the Stony River. The plan recommends that the state top-file on these lands because of their high forestry and habitat values, and in order to consolidate state land ownership in this area in the event that these lands are not conveyed to state ownership.

**Holitna River** - Holitna River subunit 15a -- T18N R43W S.M. sections 31 and 36; T18N R44W S.M. sections 25 and 36; and T17N

## 4-2 Proposed Selections & Relinquishments

R43W S.M. sections 13 and 23-26 -- approximately 5,760 acres - high priority. These three parcels are Native-selected lands near the Holitna River and adjacent to state-owned lands. The plan recommends that the state top-file on these lands because of their high forestry and habitat values, and in order to consolidate state land ownership in this area in the event that these lands are not conveyed to Native ownership.

**Fuller Creek - Holokuk-Oskawalik subunit 16c -- T19N R34W S.M. sections 1-18, 20-27, and 34-36 -- approximately 18,560 acres - high priority.** This parcel is federal land near the community of Red Devil and is accessible from Red Devil by trail. The plan recommends selection of this area because of its value for settlement and mining. If conveyed to the state, a portion of the land will be offered for sale to provide opportunities for private land ownership near Red Devil.

In addition to these proposed selections, there are several parcels of land in the northern half that are currently unavailable for selection because they are within townships that must be conveyed to Doyon under current laws or because they are within a federal withdrawal for military purposes. If lands within these areas become available for state selection, they are recommended for selection. They include small parcels of Native selections with high surface values in the following townships:

T23S R29E K.R.M.  
T24S R28E K.R.M.  
T26S R24E K.R.M.  
T27S R23E K.R.M.  
T28S R22E K.R.M.  
T28S R26E K.R.M.  
T29S R13E K.R.M.  
T31N R35W S.M.  
T32N R34W S.M.  
T33N R29W S.M.  
T34N R28W S.M.  
T34N R38W S.M.

Road-accessible lands near Tatalina currently withdrawn from selection include parcels in T33N R35W and T33N R36W S.M.

Lastly, if additional lands are needed for selection, federal riverfront parcels in the following townships should be reconsidered for selection. Resource values are lower than in many parts of the region, but they are on the main river in areas where the state has little riverfront land. The townships are:

T17N R52W S.M.  
T17N R53W S.M.  
T17N R54W S.M.  
T19N R44W S.M.  
T20N R44W S.M.  
T20N R45W S.M.  
T21N R47W S.M.

### Proposed Relinquishments

Some tracts of previously selected state lands are isolated from larger blocks of state lands, making them difficult and expensive to manage. Resource assessment work done to prepare the Kuskokwim Area Plan also indicates that some tracts lack resource values that merit state management. Because the state has selected more land than it is entitled to receive from the federal government, state selections on inaccessible, isolated tracts of land with low resource values should be relinquished. A total of 51,840 acres in three tracts are proposed for relinquishment. There are additional state-selected lands that meet the criteria for relinquishment, but due to restrictions in Sections 906(f) and (g) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, most of the selections in the Kuskokwim Area may not be relinquished.

Tracts proposed for relinquishment are:


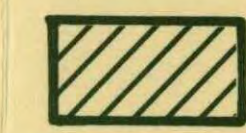
**North Fork - North Fork subunit 1c - T22S R25E K.R.M. sections 1-3, 10-15, 22-27, and 34-36 - approximately 11,520 acres.**

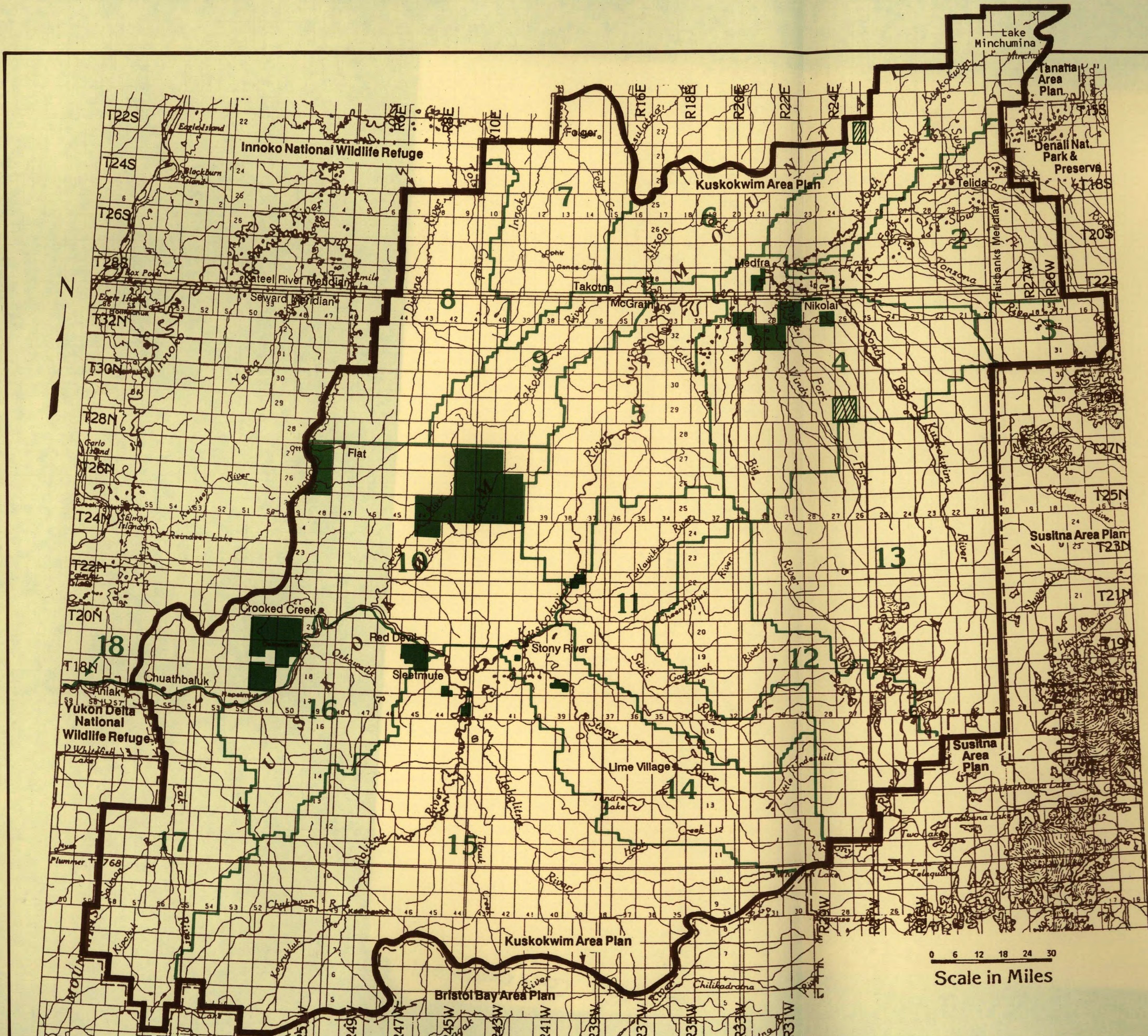
**Windy Fork - Big River-South Fork subunit 4b - T29N R26W S.M. - approximately 23,040 acres.**



# Summary of New Selections and Relinquishments

MAP 4.1

-  Areas Recommended for State Selection
-  State-Selected Lands Recommended for Relinquishments





# Land Use Classifications

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This plan establishes primary and secondary land use designations for state land in the Kuskokwim Area. For the plan to be implemented on state land, DNR must classify land into the classification categories in 11 AAC 55 in a way that reflects the plan intent. Land classifications are recorded on the state status plats, and are the formal record of the primary uses for which each parcel of state land will be managed. The plan serves as the final finding by the Commissioner of DNR on land-use classifications. The primary surface land use

designations in Chapter 3 will be converted to classifications as shown in Table 4.1, Table 4.2, and Appendix I. Land with a dual classification for settlement and a retention category, e.g., settlement and public recreation, cannot be offered for sale unless the land is reclassified. Therefore, settlement is the sole classification category for these lands. However, these lands will be managed for both uses as described by the management intent and primary designations.

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**Table 4.1 Conversion of Primary Use Designations to Classifications**

<u>PRIMARY USE DESIGNATIONS</u>	<u>CLASSIFICATIONS</u>
Forestry, Public Recreation, Wildlife Habitat	Forest Land, Public Recreation Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
Forestry, Transportation, Wildlife Habitat	Forest Land, Transportation Corridor Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
Forestry, Wildlife Habitat	Forest Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
General Use	Resource Management Land
Materials, Transportation, Water Resources, Wildlife Habitat	Material Land, Water Resource Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
Minerals	Mineral Land
Minerals, Public Recreation, Wildlife Habitat	Mineral Land, Public Recreation Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
Minerals, Settlement	Settlement Land
Minerals, Transportation, Wildlife Habitat	Mineral Land, Transportation Corridor Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
Minerals, Wildlife Habitat	Mineral Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
Public Recreation, Settlement	Public Recreation Land, Settlement Land
Public Recreation, Wildlife Habitat	Public Recreation Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
Resource Management	Resource Management
Settlement	Settlement Land
Water Resources, Wildlife Habitat	Water Resources Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
Wildlife Habitat	Wildlife Habitat Land

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**Table 4.2 Management Unit Classifications<sup>1</sup>**

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<u>Management Unit</u>	<u>Subunit</u>	<u>Classifications</u>
Unit 1 - North Fork	1a	Settlement Land
	1b	Wildlife Habitat Land
	1c	Resource Management Land
	1d	Forest Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
Unit 2 - East Fork	2a	Forest Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
	2b	Resource Management Land
	2c	Resource Management Land
	2d	Wildlife Habitat Land
Unit 3 - Tonzona	3a	Public Recreation Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
	3b	Resource Management Land
Unit 4 - Big R. - South Fork	4a	Wildlife Habitat Land
	4b	Resource Management Land
	4c	Forest Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
Unit 5 - Kuskokwim River	5a	Forest Land, Public Recreation Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
	5b	Settlement Land
	5c	Public Recreation Land, Settlement Land
	5d	Resource Management Land
	5e	Settlement Land
	5f	Settlement Land
	5g	Settlement Land
	5h	Resource Management Land
	5i	Resource Management Land
	5j	Wildlife Habitat Land
Unit 6 - Nixon Fork	6a	Forest Land, Public Recreation Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
	6b	Mineral Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
	6c	Resource Management Land
	6d	Wildlife Habitat Land
Unit 7 - Innoko River	7a	Mineral Land, Transportation Corridor Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
	7b	Forest Land, Transportation Corridor Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
	7c	Resource Management Land
	7d	Wildlife Habitat Land

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<sup>1</sup>KAP Classification Order No. SC-88-001 went into effect on March 22, 1988. See Appendix I for acreage and primary designations for individual subunits.

**Table 4.2 Management Unit Classifications (cont.)**

<u>Management Unit</u>	<u>Subunit</u>	<u>Classifications</u>
Unit 8 - Dishna River	8a	Resource Management Land
	8b	Resource Management Land
	8c	Mineral Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
	8d	Forest Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
	8e	Resource Management Land
	8f	Mineral Land, Public Recreation Land Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
	8g	Wildlife Habitat Land
Unit 9 - Takotna River	9a	Resource Management Land
	9b	Wildlife Habitat Land
	9c	Mineral Land
	9d	Forest Land, Public Recreation Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
Unit 10 - George River	10a	Public Recreation Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
	10b	Mineral Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
Unit 11 - Swift River	11a	Wildlife Habitat Land
	11b	Resource Management Land
Unit 12 - South Alaska Range	12a	Public Recreation Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
	12b	Resource Management Land
	12c	Resource Management Land
Unit 13 - North Alaska Range	13a	Public Recreation Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
	13b	Settlement Land
	13c	Settlement Land
	13d	Settlement Land
	13e	Settlement
	13f	Resource Management Land
Unit 14 - Stony River	14a	Forest Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
	14b	Wildlife Habitat Land
	14c	Resource Management Land
	14d	Public Recreation Land, Wildlife Habitat Land



**Table 4.2 Management Unit Classifications (cont.)**

<u>Management Unit</u>	<u>Subunit</u>	<u>Classifications</u>
Unit 15 - Holitna River	15a	Forest Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
	15b	Wildlife Habitat Land
	15c	Water Resources Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
	15d	Resource Mangement Land
	15e	Settlement Land
	15f	Settlement Land
	15g	Mineral Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
Unit 16 - Holokuk - Oskawalik	16a	Wildlife Habitat Land
	16b	Resource Mangement Land
	16c	Settlement Land
Unit 17 - Aniak River	17a	Forest Land, Public Recreation Land Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
	17b	Public Recreation Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
	17c	Resource Mangement Land
	17d	Settlement Land
	17e	Public Recreation Land, Wildlife Habitat Land
Unit 18 - Birch Tree Crossing	18a	Material Land, Water Resources Land, Wildlife Habitat Land

**Mineral Orders**

This plan identifies areas where mineral entry status will change, including:

1. Areas currently closed to new mineral entry that will be reopened,
2. Areas that will be closed to new mineral entry, and
3. Areas where leasehold location will be required.

These areas are shown on Map 2.4. To implement these decisions, mineral opening orders, and mineral closing orders were prepared by DNR and were signed by the commissioner when the plan was adopted. The final finding for these orders are in Appendix H. A list of streams subject to mineral closure or leasehold location is in Appendix H.



## **Municipal Entitlement**

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The municipal entitlement act (AS 29.65) establishes the state land classification categories that may determine a municipality's general grant land entitlement and that are available for transfer to a municipality. Under existing laws, the size of a municipality's entitlement is 10 percent of the vacant, unappropriated, unreserved (VUU) land in the municipal boundaries, not to exceed 20 acres per capita. In the Kuskokwim Area, there is abundant land in the VUU categories. Entitlement will probably be limited by population rather than land classification.

The Kuskokwim Area Plan has classified the state land within the planning area boundaries (see Land Use Classifications in this chapter). Classifications have been made on the best information available during the planning process at the scale appropriate to the planning effort, generally 1:250,000. These classifications are broad and have not considered whether the lands should be available for transfer to municipalities incorporated in the future. Many of the lands are classified in categories that would not be available for transfer, including Wildlife Habitat Land and Mineral Land. However, settlement of municipal entitlements is a high priority of the department and the current classifications will not preclude consideration of parcels of land for reclassification and transfer to a municipality.

When an area incorporates under state law, it may select state land within its boundaries that, except for classification, otherwise meets the definition of vacant, unappropriated, unreserved land under AS 29.65. When such lands are selected, the Departments of Natural Resources and Fish and Game will do a more detailed, site-specific analysis of the resource values of the selected lands. This analysis may result in a change in the designation and classification of all or part of the parcel under consideration to a classification that is available for transfer. Changes in designations and classifications will require plan amendment and reclassification before the selection may be approved.

For example, river corridor lands that are classified Wildlife Habitat/Public Recreation are not available for transfer. A more detailed review of habitat values may show that parts of the corridor are suitable for local management either because the resource values do not merit state retention or because the land is not essential to the overall management intent for the area. Where this is the case, reclassification of part of the land may be recommended to allow for land transfer. Transfer to a municipality will not be approved until the recommended changes have been publicly reviewed through the amendment and reclassification processes.



# **Procedures for Plan Modification and Amendment**

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The land use designations, policies, implementation actions, and management guidelines of 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 land.

**Periodic Review.** The plan will be reviewed at least once every five years to determine if revisions are necessary. An interagency planning team will coordinate this review at the request of the Commissioner of DNR. The plan review will include meetings with all interested groups and the general public. A meeting of the Kuskokwim Area Plan advisory board also will be held annually to review plan implementation.

**Amendments.** The plan may be amended. An amendment adds to or modifies the basic intent of the plan. Changes to allowed or prohibited uses, policies, guidelines, and some implementation actions constitute amendments. Amendments must be approved by the Commissioner of DNR. Amendments require public notice and consultation with affected agencies. Amendments may require public meetings if the Commissioner decides the level of controversy warrants it. Amendments may be proposed by DNR, other agencies, or the public. Requests for amendments are submitted to the Southcentral Regional Office of the DNR Division of Land and Water Management (DLWM) in Anchorage.

The following actions are examples of changes that would require an amendment:

- A proposal to close an area to new mineral entry
- Allowing a use in a subunit where it is currently prohibited, unless provisions for exceptions are contained in the plan

- Offering land for sale in an area designated for retention or reclassifying to allow selections by a municipality.

The Director of the Division of Land and Water Management determines whether a proposed revision constitutes an amendment or just a minor change.

**Minor Changes.** A minor change is one that does not modify or change the basic intent of the plan. Minor changes may be necessary for clarification, accuracy, consistency, or to facilitate implementation of the plan. Minor changes are made at the discretion of the Director of DLWM and do not require public review. Minor changes may be proposed by agencies or the public. Requests for minor changes are submitted to the Southcentral Regional Office of DLWM. The director will notify other agencies when minor changes are made. Affected agencies will have the opportunity to comment on minor changes following notification; the comment period may be provided through existing interagency review processes for associated actions. If the agencies disagree with the regional manager's decision, the decision may be appealed to the Director of DLWM, and the director's decision may be appealed to the Commissioner of DNR.

**Special Exceptions.** Exceptions to the provisions of the plan may be made without modification of the plan. Special exceptions shall occur only when complying with the plan is excessively difficult or impractical and an alternative procedure can be implemented that adheres to the purposes and spirit of the plan. An example of a special exception is a preference right granted under AS 18.05.035 where the Director determines such an action is necessary to correct an injustice and will not significantly affect the intent of the plan.

DNR may make a special exception in the implementation of the plan through the following procedures:



**1. The Southcentral Regional Manager of DLWM shall prepare a finding that specifies the following:**

- The extenuating conditions that require a special exception.
- The alternative course of action to be followed.
- How the intent of the plan will be met by the alternative. This may incorporate into a finding under AS 38.05.035.

**2. Agencies that have responsibility for land uses with primary or secondary designations in the affected area will be given an opportunity to review the findings. If the agencies disagree with the regional manager's decision, the decision may be appealed to the Director of DLWM, and the director's decision may be appealed to the Commissioner of DNR. If warranted by the degree of controversy, the commissioner may hold a public meeting before making a decision.**



## Recommendations for Research

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**Birch Tree Crossing Material Site.** The river bar at Birch Tree Crossing has been heavily used for material extraction for over 30 years. Concerns have been raised that the rate of gravel extraction may exceed the rate of redeposition, causing erosion of upland properties, degrading fish and wildlife habitat, and deteriorating water quality. In order for DNR, ADF&G, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other affected agencies and landowners to address these concerns when reviewing permit applications and proposed material sales, they should conduct a cooperative study that provides necessary background information on rates of deposition, erosion patterns, and the effects of material extraction on fisheries and drinking water.

**Preferred Material Sites.** In order to minimize conflicts between material extraction activities and other surface resources and land uses, preferred material extraction sites should be identified in and along the Kuskokwim River. Preferred sites should be identified by a study group consisting of representative from DNR, ADF&G, the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, Calista Corporation, and the Kuskokwim Corporation. Identified sites should include sites feasible and prudent for community use. Results of this study would be used by state agencies when reviewing permit applications and requests for material sales.

**Fisheries.** The middle and upper Kuskokwim basin provides spawning and rearing habitat for a large percentage of the salmon that support the commercial fishery in Commercial Fisheries Districts 1 and 2. Data on anadromous fish habitat, stock assessment, and spawning studies are insufficient to manage this fishery optimally. The plan recommends allocation of funds for the following research:

- Stock assessment of salmon particularly related to escapement and enumeration.

- Surveys to identify spawning and rearing habitat for anadromous fish in the planning area.
- Spawning studies principally in the Kuskokwim, Holitna, and Hoholitna drainages.
- Continued funding of the Kogrukluk weir and Aniak sonar site.

**Aniak River Survey.** The Aniak drainage attracts fishermen from around the world for its sport fishing. The Aniak supports the farthest north rainbow fishery in Alaska. Fishermen are also catching char, grayling, king, and silver salmon. Other wildlife and recreation resources along the Aniak include scenery, diversity of plant life and wildflowers, photography, and opportunities to see lynx, bear, wolves, and moose, as well as to experience a wilderness setting.

Local residents also use several techniques for fishing including drift and set nets, fishwheels, rod and reel, and hooking through the ice in winter. The drainage is also used by local residents and communities along the Kuskokwim for hunting, trapping, berry picking, and personal-use timber. Because of the importance of the Aniak for all these uses as well as its rainbow fishery, which is at the northern limits of the species range and more susceptible to overharvest, leases for commercial recreation facilities are prohibited along the Aniak. In addition, permit applications for guide sites or tent camps and campsites will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

In order to prevent overuse of the rainbow fishery, and so that the rainbow trout population can be managed for optimal use by subsistence and recreation users, the ADF&G Sport Fish Division should conduct annual surveys to determine rainbow population and harvest levels.



## **Recommendations for Field Staff and Enforcement**

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The emphasis of this plan is on multiple use. The plan relies on existing laws and regulations as well as new guidelines to make as many uses compatible as possible. To ensure that these measures are effective, and to develop public confidence in the state's ability to manage for multiple use, they must be enforced. Examples of actions where fieldwork, monitoring and enforcement are likely to be needed include land sales, remote cabin permits, leases for commercial recreation facilities, materials sales, timber harvests, and mining permits and leases.

DNR will take appropriate action against unauthorized uses of state land. Priorities for such action will be determined by the availability of funding and the severity of the impact of the unauthorized use on significant settlement activities, public recreation, or other public uses of state land or on public access.

DNR puts a high priority on monitoring and enforcing compliance with stipulations on leases, permits, and sales and taking action against unauthorized activities in those situations where activities have a high probability of creating significant negative impacts to other important resources or uses. Field staffing and funding are currently inadequate to enforce the laws and guidelines on all 16 million acres of state land in the planning area. The department's ability to enforce will depend on its budget. The Department will continue to reflect these priorities for monitoring and enforcement of its budget requests. The plan recommends that additional funds be dedicated to enforcement activities to support implementation of the new and continuing land management programs in the Kuskokwim area.

## **Recommendations for Legislative Designation.**

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One area in the planning region is proposed for special legislative designation. The plan recommends that the legislature consider designating lands along the Holitna and Hoholitna rivers as a state Public Use Area. The Public Use Area would comprise approximately 850,000 acres. It would include the lands in subunit 15a and some adjacent portions of 15b and 15c that are rated A-2 ("special value habitat") in the Fish and Wildlife Element (Kuskokwim Area Plan - Fish and Wildlife Element, ADNR, May, 1987).

These lands contain the most productive moose habitat and salmon spawning streams in the Kuskokwim basin. They also support concentrations of brown bear, waterfowl, and furbearers. This area is nationally known for sport hunting and fishing, and is one of the most intensively used areas in southwest Alas-

ka for subsistence harvests. The timberlands along the Holitna and Hoholitna rivers are some of the most productive in the Kuskokwim basin. They are presently used for fuel, lumber, and logs for personal use, and have the potential for commercial harvesting.

Legislative designation would officially recognize the outstanding habitat and forestry values of this area, and grant much more certainty that these lands will be kept in public ownership and available for public use in perpetuity. Legislative designation can also serve as a basis for requesting funds for more active management of the lands and fish and wildlife populations in this area. The plan can only recommend that this area be established; the decision to establish a Public Use Area must be made by the legislature.



The intent for the Public Use Area is to manage the lands for multiple use, with emphasis on protecting fish and wildlife habitat, providing for human use of fish and wildlife resources, and promoting forest management and use. Other activities will be allowed whenever consistent with these purposes. These lands would not be available for sale or exchange, except for an exchange to resolve

land claims at Nogamut. (see description in subunit 15a management intent). The public use area will be managed by ADNR under a management plan prepared jointly with the Department of Fish and Game. Lands within the Public Use area will remain open to new mineral entry except for those streambeds identified for closures in subunits 15a, 15b, and 15c.

## **Recommendations for Additional Access**

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Maps of existing legal access were reviewed to determine where additional access is needed to ensure future use of valuable resources on state lands. Of particular concern are areas with moderate to high surface and subsurface values on state-owned and state-selected lands, and proposed disposals. In addition, protection of existing transportation routes between population centers is a goal of the plan. In general, no additional access is needed where there are existing or previously proposed 17(b) easements, state omnibus roads, navigable rivers, or trails across public lands. Additional access routes, are not listed if they would not meet BLM's requirements for 17(b) easements. Areas needing additional legal access are listed below.

There are a variety of ways additional legal access can be established. Techniques include proposing 17(b) easements, acquiring access, or relocating existing 17(b) easements. The best technique will vary from site to site and can be identified only through more detailed examination of individual sites. The list below identifies only the need for additional access, not the technique for providing it or the description of detailed routes.

### **1c. Munsatli Ridge - Sischu Mountains-**

General Use - Low Resource Values - Legal access may be needed across T21S R26E K.R.M. just south of Stone Mountain if this overlapping Native and state selection is not conveyed to the state. The existing trail connects Telida to the Sulukna River drainage

which has moderate to high fish and wildlife values.

**5b. Appel II - Primary use Settlement** - If the southern portion of this subunit is conveyed to the state and is offered for settlement, the slough immediately south of the subunit may be the only form of legal access to the southern four sections. If the slough is not navigable, an alternate form of access may be necessary to the Kuskokwim River.

**5d. Candle Hills - Primary use Resource Management** - Road access to the northern edge of this subunit is uncertain without a survey of the Takotna - Sterling Landing Road. If this subunit is conveyed to the state, if a decision is made to offer this area for settlement, and if the surveyed road does not provide legal access to the subunit, access from the road will be needed. Access may also be necessary if minerals are to be developed. Winter access across the sloughs to the southeast of this subunit which access the navigable portion of the Kuskokwim River also is desirable.

**5f. Selatna - Primary use Settlement** - Access is available to this subunit along the navigable portions of the Selatna River even if the northern half of this subunit, which is an overlapping selection, is not conveyed to the state. However, in order to provide improved access to the southwestern portion of this proposed disposal, access may also be needed along the unnamed stream with its mouth near



the east end of Nunivak Bar (T28N R35W S.M. section 19).

**10b. George River/ Horn Mountains -** Primary uses Minerals and Wildlife Habitat - The Horn Mountains have been proposed as a state selection. If this land is conveyed to the state, access to the Kuskokwim River may be needed. Until the townships are surveyed, it is unclear whether the state land in T18N R50W S.M. section 31 is state owned and provides access to the river. If the corner of this township does not provide access, other potential routes to the Kuskokwim River are across Native-selected land in T19N R50W S.M. section 36 and T17N R51W S.M. sections 19 and 20.

**15e. Sleetmute North -** Primary use Settlement - This subunit is an overlapping state and Native selection. If the lands within this subunit are conveyed to the state, and if a disposal is scheduled, additional access may be necessary. This proposed disposal has a 17(b) easement which connects with the village of Sleetmute, but there is no legal access from the south or east. The corner of T19n R43W S.M. section 25 in this subunit is an overlapping state and Native selection and may be on the navigable portion of the Kuskokwim River. However, bluffs along the river may make it an impractical point of access if this section is conveyed to the state. Another potential access point is the corner of T19N

R43W S.M. section 13 in this subunit which is an overlapping state and Native selection and may include an old oxbow of the Kuskokwim River near the mouth of Inowak Creek. If the oxbow is in this section and if it is navigable, no other access may be needed. If subunit 15e is conveyed to the Native corporation, legal access may be needed along the cat trail that is used to reach mining claims on the south and east forks of the George River. There are also moderate wildlife habitat resource values along the George River.

**16a. Kiokluk Mountains -** Primary use Wildlife Habitat - Access may be needed through the Holokuk Canyon in T16N R51W S.M. and T15N R51W S.M. The upper Holokuk and Chineekluk rivers, and the Kiokluk, Chuilnuk, and Buckstock Mountains contain numerous mining claims and moderate to high wildlife habitat values. Additional legal access may not be necessary if the section of the Holokuk passing through the canyon is determined navigable at the time it is conveyed.

**16c. Fuller Creek -** Primary uses Settlement and Minerals - If this land is conveyed to the state and offered for sale, and if adjacent Native-selected lands in T19N R44W S.M. are conveyed to the Native corporation, an easement will be needed on the existing trail through the Native-selected land.