

MANAGEMENT UNIT 10: GEORGE RIVER

Background

Location and Land Use. The George River management unit comprises lands north and west of the Kuskokwim River from Aniak to the confluence of the Tatlawiksuk River. It includes the watersheds of the Owhat, Kolmakof, and George rivers, and Crooked, Inowa, and Moose Creeks. The southern boundary of the unit is the north bank of the Kuskokwim River. Most of the uplands in the George River unit are federally owned; most of the riparian lands along the Kuskokwim are owned or selected by the Native corporations. State lands are limited to three small selections just north of the Kuskokwim River between Chuathbaluk and Crooked Creek. There are over eighty parcels of private land within this unit, mostly Native allotments along the Kuskokwim River and the lower reaches of its major tributaries.

Resources and Land Use. The landscape is dominated by the Kuskokwim Mountains, which rise to elevations of 2000 to 3000 feet. Black spruce woodlands cover most of the valley floors and lower hillslopes, with shrubs and alpine tundra at upper elevations. There are few white spruce and hardwood forests; they are limited to scattered pockets on south-facing slopes and along portions of the Kuskokwim River and its major tributaries.

The villages of Chuathbaluk and Crooked Creek, and the seasonal communities at Napaimiut and Flat are within this unit. While the subsistence harvest in this unit is less intensive than in drainages south of the Kuskokwim River, residents of Crooked Creek and Chuathbaluk, and to a lesser extent Aniak, Red Devil, and Tuluksak, conduct many harvest activities here. Moose are hunted along the Kuskokwim River, Crooked Creek, and the George River. Trapping is widespread in the Crooked Creek and George River drainages. Bear are hunted along the Kuskokwim River and its tributaries, and caribou are hunted in the Horn and Russian Mountains. There is active placer mining in

the Flat-Iditarod, Crooked Creek, Granite Creek, and Moore Creek areas.

Access. Access to most of these lands is limited to tundra landing areas for small planes, and strips established adjacent to mining areas. Public airstrips are located at Chuathbaluk, Flat, and Crooked Creek, and there is a private airstrip at Granite Creek. Numerous trails cross the area, especially the northeastern portion of the unit, along rivers and between mining areas. Most of these trails, including portions of the Iditarod National Historic Trail System, were established to provide access to mines. The Kuskokwim River is used for both transportation and recreational boating.

Management Intent

The state-owned and state-selected lands in this management unit will generally be retained in state ownership and managed for multiple use, with emphasis on mining, habitat, and recreation. Nearly all of this management unit will remain open to mineral entry. However, to protect important salmon populations, spawning beds in known mineralized areas along the upper George River will be closed. Rearing areas in known mineralized areas along the George River and its tributaries will be subject to leasehold location requirements. Lands along the river are mostly in Native ownership. However, the bed of the Kuskokwim and other navigable waters such as the George River, Crooked Creek, Owhat River, Kolmakof River, and Moose Creek are state owned and subject to the guidelines of this plan.

Subunit 10a - Napaimiut Selections

The central and eastern blocks of land in subunit 10a will be retained in public ownership and managed for multiple use with emphasis on fish and wildlife habitat and harvest and

public recreation along the Kuskokwim River.

Subunit 10b - Horn Mountains - Upper George River

These lands are recommended for state selection because of their mineral potential. They are within a recently reactivated mining district, and have high potential for placer gold deposits and lode deposits of gold, silver, tin, bismuth, copper, zinc, and antimony. There are also high habitat values, particularly for moose, on the riparian lands along the Owhat, Kolmakof, and George rivers, and Crooked and Big Waldren creeks. The proposed selections in the George River and Flat areas are adjacent to other state-owned lands. If conveyed to the state they should be retained in public ownership and managed for multiple use including mining and wildlife habitat and harvest.

Nearly all the state land in this subunit is open to new mineral entry. However, because of their importance for salmon spawning and king salmon rearing, the beds of portions of the upper George River and the East Fork of the George River in the northeastern block of subunit 10b will be closed. Additional streambeds and uplands along the George River, Willow Creek, Granite Creek, Julian Creek, an unnamed tributary of Granite Creek, and two unnamed tributaries of the George River will be closed to mineral entry or subject to leasehold location requirements if land now managed by BLM is selected and conveyed into state ownership.

Management Guidelines

The complete set of areawide management guidelines is presented in Chapter 2. Any of the guidelines could apply to uses within this management unit; however, guidelines that are most likely to apply are as listed below:

- Fish and wildlife habitat
- Public access
- Subsurface resources

Guidelines specific to this management unit are listed by subunit in the following section.

Subunit 10b - Upper George River - and Navigable Waters

Mineral Closure and Leasehold Location. The beds of the George River in T25N R43W, T25N R44W, and T24N R44W S.M. are state owned and closed to mineral entry to protect important salmon spawning and king salmon rearing habitat. Adjacent uplands are currently managed by BLM and are open to mineral entry. Uplands are proposed for state selection. If conveyed to the state, uplands within 200 feet of the high water mark will be subject to leasehold location requirements.

The beds of the George River in T24N R45W S.M. and the East Fork of the George River in T24N R44W S.M. are state owned and are closed to new mineral entry to protect salmon spawning and king salmon rearing habitat. Adjacent uplands are managed by BLM, are not proposed for state selection, and will remain open to mineral entry.

The beds uplands along Willow Creek in T26N R42W S.M., and Granite Creek and its unnamed tributary in T26N R41W S.M. sections 11, 12, 14, and 15 are currently managed by BLM and are open to mineral entry. If conveyed to the state, the streambeds will be closed to new mineral entry to protect salmon rearing habitat.

The beds and adjacent uplands of Julian Creek and two unnamed tributaries in T24N R44W S.M. (one unnamed creek is in sections 5, 6, and 8 and the other unnamed cree is in sections 7, 17 and 21) are currently managed by BLM and open to mineral entry. These lands are proposed for state selection. If they are conveyed to state ownership the streambeds will be closed to new mineral entry and uplands within 200 feet of the high water mark will be subject to leasehold location requirements in order to protect salmon spawning and rearing habitat.

The boundaries of the closure and leasehold location areas are described in Appendix H.

Lease stipulations for leasehold location areas are listed in the Mining section of Chapter 2.

Access Needs. If selected lands in this subunit are conveyed to the state, legal access to the Kuskokwim River may be needed. Until the land is surveyed, it is unclear whether state lands have river frontage. If there is no state land on the river, access may need to be established through T19N R50W S.M. sections 19 and 20.

RESOURCE INFORMATION SUMMARY

Management Unit 10 - George River

Resource	Subunit	
	10a	10b
Agriculture	Unsuited	Unsuited
Energy	—	—
Fish	Kuskokwim River: salmon & resident fish	Iditarod R., George R. & tributaries, salmon & resident fish
Forestry	Unsuited	Personal use near Flat
Grazing	High potential	High potential; past grazing in Horn Mtns.
Historic/ cultural	High potential along Kuskokwim R.	Known historic sites at Flat
Materials	Potential sites along Kuskokwim R.	Unsuited
Minerals	Moderate to high some claims	High potential, some claims & active mining
Oil & gas	Unknown	Unknown
Public access	Boat on Kuskokwim to limited areas	Boat on Kuskokwim to one point; tundra landings and mining airstrips
Recreation	Moderate on Kuskokwim River, rest low or unknown	Unknown
Settlement suitability	Low along river, rest unsuited	High along Iditarod, rest low to unsuited
Wildlife	Most A-2, some B-1; Bear, moose, waterfowl	Most C, some A-2 & B-1; Bear, moose, ducks
Important trails	None identified trail, Owhat-Iditarod R. trail, Michigan Cr. trail	George R. trail, Sute Cr., numerous trails near Flat

See glossary for definition of ratings.

LAND-USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

MANAGEMENT UNIT 10 - GEORGE RIVER

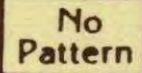
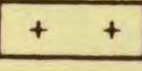

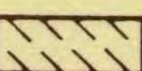
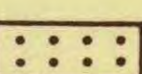
SUBUNIT	LAND OWNERSHIP	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS				COMMENTS
		Primary Surface Uses	Secondary Surface Uses	Prohibited Surface Uses ^a	Subsurface ^b	
10a Napaimiut Selections	State & state selected	Public recreation Wildlife habitat		Land disposals Remote cabins	Open	
10b Horn Mts.- Upper George River	Most federal, small part Native select.	Minerals Wildlife habitat	Public recreation	Land disposals Remote cabins	Open except bed of part of George R.; additional areas closed to mineral entry and subject to leasehold location requirements contingent on conveyance to state ownership.	Proposed for state selection


^aOther uses such as material sales, land leases, or permits that are not specifically prohibited may be allowed. Such uses will be allowed if consistent with the management-intent statement, the management guidelines of this unit, and the relevant management guidelines listed in Chapter 2. Grazing may be allowed in portions of closed units when consistent with the guideline in Chapter 2 (Grazing on Important Habitat Lands).


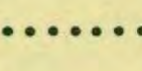
^bAll areas are available for leasing for leasable minerals. Statements of whether or not the unit is open to mineral entry refer only to locatable minerals.

10: George River

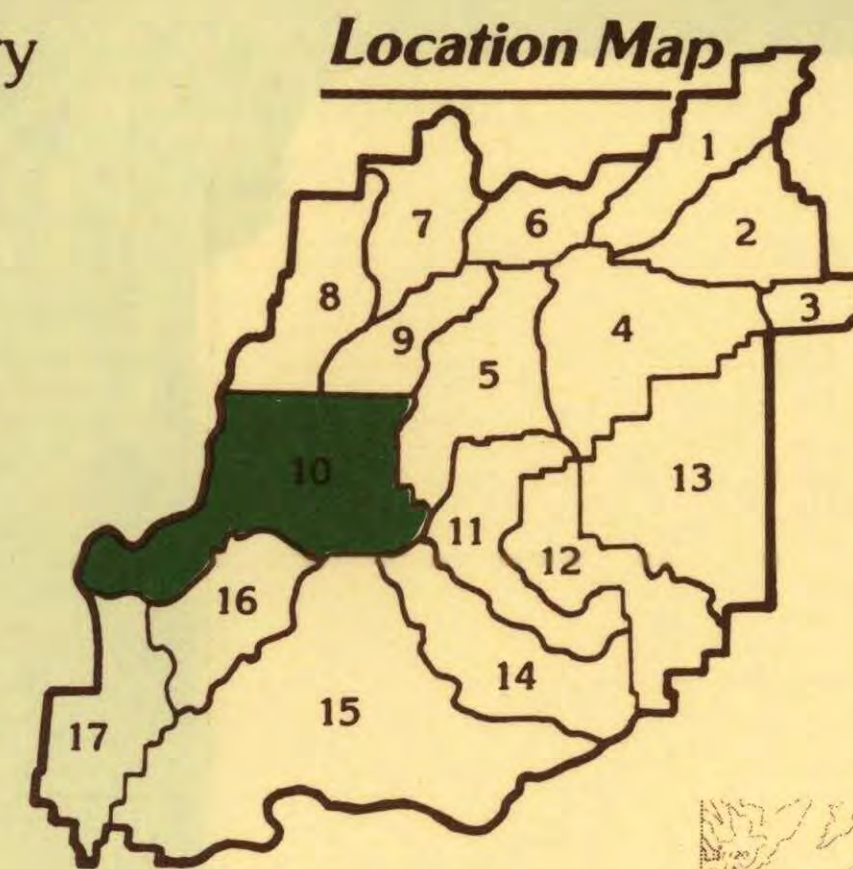
— Management Unit Boundary
 — Subunit Boundary

-  State Owned
-  State Selected
-  Native Owned
-  Native Selected
-  Federal

 Proposed State Selections

-  Trails on public lands
-  Access easements to public land
 ANCSA 17 (b) easements
 & State Omnibus roads

Map shows approximate location of easements to state land and trails across state land. Portions of trails may cross private lands.



U.S.G.S. Quad:
 Iditarod
 Sleetmute
 Russian Mission
 Map Scale:
 1:500,000

