

MANAGEMENT UNIT 2: EAST FORK

Background

Location and Land Ownership. This management unit consists of the watersheds that drain into the East Fork. Included are portions of the Tonzona, Slow Fork, and Swift Fork River watersheds. The land within this unit is poorly drained and has large areas of continuous permafrost. Rivers tend to meander and be slow moving. A few areas of rolling uplands exist including the Slow Fork Hills, East Fork Hills, and Telida Mountains. Over half the unit is state owned; approximately one-third is Native owned or Native selected; the remainder is state selected, overlapping selections, or private. A few homesites, one trade and manufacturing site, and approximately 37 Native allotments exist in this unit. Most of the population resides in Telida. A few people reside on homesites and Native allotments outside the village year-round.

Resources and Land Use. Anadromous fish occur in the Tonzona, Slow Fork, and East Fork rivers; resident fish occur throughout the area's waterways. Moose are distributed throughout the area, but are concentrated in winter along the lower East Fork River, Tonzona River, Highpower Creek, and along portions of the Slow and Swift Fork rivers. Caribou are found on the upper Tonzona River.

The western half of the unit is used by residents of Nikolai; the northern half is used by the residents of Telida. Subsistence uses on state lands include trapping, fishing, hunting, personal-use forestry, berry picking, and transportation. The southeastern third of the planning area is not frequently used for subsistence; however, it includes guiding areas on the Tonzona and the Slow Fork Rivers. No mining claims exist in this unit and mineral potential is low throughout most of the area.

The unit is mostly covered with black spruce with a few large continuous areas of shrubs. Few continuous stands of white spruce exist in

this unit, except for of the upper reaches of the river bottoms in the eastern part of the unit: the Swift Fork River, Slow Fork River, Telidaside Creek, Highpower Creek, and Fish Creek. Relatively few stands of hardwoods exist in this unit. Some are located on the lower Swift Fork river bottom; the remainder are confined to the uplands in the Telida Hills and the Grayling Hills. White spruce and hardwoods in this unit are used primarily by the residents of Telida and Nikolai for house logs and firewood.

Access. Access to the area is by boat and floatplane in the summer and snowmachine and skiplane in the winter. Several lakes exist where floatplanes can land but no maintained or bladed airstrips exist except the Telida airstrip. Several trails pass through this unit that connect the following locations within the unit: Telida - Nikolai (also identified as part of the Iditarod National Historic Trail), Telida - Lake Minchumina, Telida - Camp Creek Mine (in the Alaska Range), and Telida - Medfra. Several traplines also exist in the area. The major rivers are used by residents of Nikolai and Telida.

Management Intent

Lands within the unit are remote and used by residents of Telida and Nikolai. This unit will be managed for hunting, trapping, personal-use timber, and wildlife habitat. Remote cabin permits will be allowed along the upper Swift Fork and Slow Fork Rivers. The lands between the Swift Fork River and the boundary of Denali National Park and Preserve were identified in the park's general management plan for a possible land exchange. If the park boundary is moved to follow the Swift Fork River, the fire protection for state and Native lands will be enhanced because the river forms a natural fire barrier. The lands east of the Swift Fork River were also identified as valuable caribou habitat by recent surveys. The area identified for exchange will

not be available for remote cabin permits for 10 years to avoid complicating the proposed exchange.

Grazing will not be allowed in certain areas along river bottoms in order to protect moose winter concentration and calving areas. The beds of Swift Fork and Slow Fork rivers and other navigable waters are state owned and are subject to the guidelines of this plan. The beds of a small section of Highpower Creek where sheefish spawn are closed to new mineral entry. The state-owned beds of all other navigable waters will remain open to mineral entry.

Subunit 2a - Lower East Fork

This subunit is primarily state owned or state selected. Approximately three townships are both state and Native selected. This subunit contains valuable fish and wildlife habitat and timber that occur along the East Fork, Slow Fork, Tonzona, and Swift Fork rivers. This land will be retained in public ownership and managed for multiple use with emphasis on trapping, hunting, fishing, berry picking and personal-use forestry.

Subunit 2b - Hinterlands

This subunit is primarily state owned; approximately two townships were selected by both the state and Native corporations. One trapping cabin permit has been issued on Haynes Lake. Uplands in the southeastern third of the subunit are generally inaccessible, have little timber, are poorly drained, and generally have low surface resource values. This subunit will be retained in public ownership and managed for general multiple use. Remote cabins will be allowed along the west side of the Swift Fork River. Additional lands may be added to this subunit along the Swift Fork River if a land exchange between the state and the National Park Service is completed.

Subunit 2c - Swift Fork

Land east of the Swift Fork River contains low-value surface resources. One trapping cabin permit has been issued on the upper

Swift Fork. This land was identified for a possible land exchange with the National Park Service. If kept in state ownership, remote cabin permits will be allowed, but offerings of remote-cabin permits will be delayed for 10 years in this subunit to avoid complicating this exchange. In addition, after the preliminary exchange agreement is signed, lands within this subunit will be closed to new mineral entry.

Subunit 2d - Upper East Fork

This subunit is primarily state owned with some overlapping selections. One trapping cabin permit has been issued on Haynes Lake. Lands in this subunit are located along the Tonzona, East Fork, and Swift Fork rivers. Access to them is by boat, trail, and floatplane. Remote cabins are allowed in part of this subunit along the west side of the Swift Fork River. With the exception of wildlife habitat, surface values are low. This subunit will be retained in public ownership and managed primarily for wildlife habitat and harvest. Approximately 2,560 acres in two parcels are recommended for state selection in order to consolidate state land holdings in the area. These include T28S R26E K.R.M. section 31 and T26S R28E K.R.M. section 33-35. If conveyed to the state, they will be managed as part of subunit 2d. Additional lands may be added to this subunit west of the Swift Fork River if a land exchange between the state and National Park Service is completed. If conveyed to the state, these exchange lands will be managed as part of subunits 2b and 2d.

Management Guidelines

The complete set of management guidelines is presented in Chapter 2. Any of the guidelines could apply to uses within this management unit. Those most likely to apply are listed below:

- Cultural resources
- Fish and wildlife habitat
- Forestry
- Public and commercial recreation resources
- Remote cabins & trapping cabins
- Trail management

Subunits 2a, 2b, and 2d - Lower East Fork, Hinterlands, and Upper East Fork

Grazing. Grazing leases or permits will not be allowed in the following areas which include the lower East Fork River, Tonzona River, Highpower Creek, and portions of the Slow and Swift Fork rivers, because of their importance as moose wintering and calving areas (see Map 2.1). Temporary passage of domestic grazing animals through this area is not prohibited to reach areas where grazing is permitted. Grazing may be allowed in portions of prohibited areas if consistent with the guidelines in Chapter 2 ("Grazing on Important Habitat Lands"). Also see "Management of Exchange Lands" in this section.

- Within 1 mile of Highpower Creek upstream from the Shisnona River
- Within the following townships:
 - T24S R27E K.R.M. sec. 36
 - T25S R27E K.R.M. sec. 1, 12-17, 20-29 & 31-35
 - T25S R28E K.R.M. sec. 1-26 & 31-35
 - T26S R27E K.R.M.
 - T27S R24E K.R.M. sec. 23-28 & 31-36
 - T27S R26E K.R.M. sec. 1-3, 9-16 & 20-35
 - T27S R27E K.R.M. sec. 1-24
 - T27S R28E K.R.M. sec. 4-9 & 16-20
 - T28S R25E K.R.M. sec. 1-15
- Within 2 miles of the Slow Fork River in townships:
 - T19S R28W F.M.
 - T20S R28W F.M.
 - T20S R27W F.M.
 - T21S R27W F.M.
- Within 2 miles of the Swift Fork River in townships:
 - T18S R27W F.M.
 - T19S R27W F.M.
 - T19S R26W F.M.
 - T20S R26W F.M.

Subunits 2a and 2d - Lower and Upper East Fork

Iditarod National Historic Trail System. The Nikolai-Telida trail that transects these units is part of the Iditarod National Historic Trail System (see maps in Appendix C). The State Office of History and Archeology will be consulted before permits or leases are authorized along this trail.

Mineral Closures - Sheefish Spawning and Land Exchange. Though formal population estimates are not available, the Kuskokwim sheefish population is probably small. The only known sheefish spawning areas for the Kuskokwim River drainage are located on the Big River (unit 4) and Highpower Creek. The uplands adjacent to Highpower Creek where these fish spawn are Native owned. Sheefish that spawn in Highpower Creek use the spawning ground in late September. These sheefish spawn in the lower 200 meters of Highpower Creek, mainly near one gravel bar. This section of Highpower Creek is navigable and the beds of the river in this area are state owned. To protect this discrete sheefish spawning area, the beds of the navigable portion of Highpower Creek from the junction with the Swift Fork River up to the unnamed creek that drains Lake 689' will be closed to mineral entry. This closure is located within T24S R30E K.R.M. section 17. The boundaries of the closures are described in Appendix H and shown on Map 2.4. In addition, after the preliminary land-exchange agreement is signed with the National Park Service, subunit 2c will be closed to new mineral entry.

Subunits 2b, 2c, and 2d - Hinterlands, Swift Fork, and Upper East Fork

Remote Cabin Permits. Parts of these subunits are within Tonzona - South Fork block of the Alaska Range remote cabin permit area. Boundaries of the area open for remote cabin permits are shown on Map 2.2. Parts of subunits 2c and 2d are also within this block. A total of 19 remote cabin permits will be allowed in the Tonzona - South Fork block, with a maximum of one remote cabin permit allowed in any one township. The lands along the Swift Fork River have been recommended

for a possible exchange with the National Park Service. The area identified for exchange will not be available for remote cabin permits for 10 years to avoid complicating the proposed exchange.

Subunit 2a - Lower East Fork

Agricultural Potential. Although ratings in the USDA Exploratory Soil Survey show portions of these subunits as having moderate potential for agriculture but detailed information is unavailable to confirm these ratings. To protect options for long-term use of these lands, the Division of Agriculture should be consulted before permits or leases are issued for any activities that would significantly diminish their capability to support agriculture.

Subunits 2b and 2d - Hinterlands and Upper East Fork

Management of Exchange Lands. If the Swift Fork land exchange is completed, lands west of the Swift Fork River that are conveyed to the state in townships T21S R25W F.M. and T22S R25W F.M. will be managed consistent with the management intent of subunits 2b or

2d. Decisions on whether remote cabin permits will be allowed on these proposed additions to state lands west of the Swift Fork will be made at the time of the exchange agreement or after the exchange is completed.

- Exchange lands to be managed as part of subunit 2b:

 - T21S R25W F.M. sec. 7, 18-20 & 29-32

 - T22S R25W F.M. sec. 4-9, 16-18 & 23

- Exchange lands to be managed as part of Subunit 2d:

 - T21S R25W F.M. sec. 5, 6, 8-9, 16, 17, 21, 28 & 33-34

 - T22S R25W F.M. sec. 3, 10, 15, 18, 19-22 & 26-35

- Grazing will not be allowed in the following sections of Subunit 2d within the exchange lands in order to protect winter moose habitat:

 - T21S R25W F.M. sec. 5, 6, 8-9, 16, 17, 21, 28 & 33-34

 - T22S R25W F.M. sec. 3, 10 & 15

RESOURCE INFORMATION SUMMARY

Management Unit 2 - East Fork

Resource	Subunit			
	2a	2b	2c	2d
Agriculture	Moderate to unsuitable	Low to unsuitable	Low to unsuitable	Moderate to unsuitable
Energy	Very low coal potential	Mostly very low; some low on upper Slow Fork	Very low coal potential	Mostly very low; some low potential on upper Slow Fork
Fish	Salmon and resident fish	Resident fish	Resident fish	Salmon and resident fish
Forestry	High potential along parts of East and Slow forks; rest moderate-low	Unsuitable	Unsuitable	Low to unsuitable
Grazing	High to low potential	High to low potential	High to moderate potential	High to low potential
Historic/cultural	Iditarod National Historic Trail	Unknown	Unknown	Iditarod National Historic Trail
Materials	Low potential	Low potential	Low potential	Low potential
Minerals	Low to very low potential	Low to very low potential	Low to very low potential	Low to very low potential
Oil & gas	Partially within currently mapped estimated Minchumina sedimentary basin boundary	Partially within currently mapped estimated Minchumina sedimentary basin boundary	Partially within currently mapped estimated Minchumina sedimentary basin boundary	Partially within currently mapped estimated Minchumina sedimentary basin boundary
Public access	Boat on rivers, snow machine trails, natural landing areas	Snowmachine trails, natural landing areas	Boat on rivers, snow machine trails, landing on lakes	Boat on rivers, snow machine trails, natural landing areas
Recreation	Low potential	Low potential	Low potential	Low potential
Settlement suitability	High along East Fork & Highpower Cr., rest low to very low	Low to very low	Very low	Low to very low
Wildlife	Mixed: A-2, B-1, C; Moose winter range & calving; bear, ducks & geese	Mostly C, some B-2; Caribou, bear, ducks, moose	Mostly C, some A-1; Caribou, bear, moose	Mostly B-1, some A-1; Caribou; moose winter range & calving; bear, ducks, geese
Important Trails	Telida-Nikolai trail (Iditarod NHT), Telida-Minchumina trail, Telida-Camp Cr. trail, Telida-Medfra trail	Telida-Camp Cr. trail	None identified	None identified

See glossary for definition of ratings.

LAND-USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY







MANAGEMENT UNIT 2 - EAST FORK

SUBUNIT	LAND OWNERSHIP	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS				COMMENTS
		Primary Surface Uses	Secondary Surface Uses	Prohibited Surface Uses ^a	Subsurface ^b	
2a Lower East Fork	State, state select. & state/Native selected	Forestry Wildlife habitat		Land disposals Remote cabins Grazing in part of subunit	Open except along part of Highpower Creek	
2b Hinterlands	State & state/Native selected	General use: low resource values	Land disposals Remote cabins in part of subunit	Land disposals Remote cabins in part of subunit Grazing in part of subunit	Open	Lands may be added to this unit as part of a proposed land exchange.
2c Swift Fork	State	General use: low resource values	Remote cabins in part of subunit	Remote Cabins in part of subunit	Currently open, will be closed to mineral entry after preliminary exchange agreement is signed	Identified for possible land exchange; remote cabin opening delayed 10 yrs.
2d Upper East Fork	State, state selected & state/Native	Wildlife habitat	Remote cabins in part of subunit	Land disposals Remote cabins in part of subunit Grazing in part of subunit	Open	Includes two proposed selections

^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).

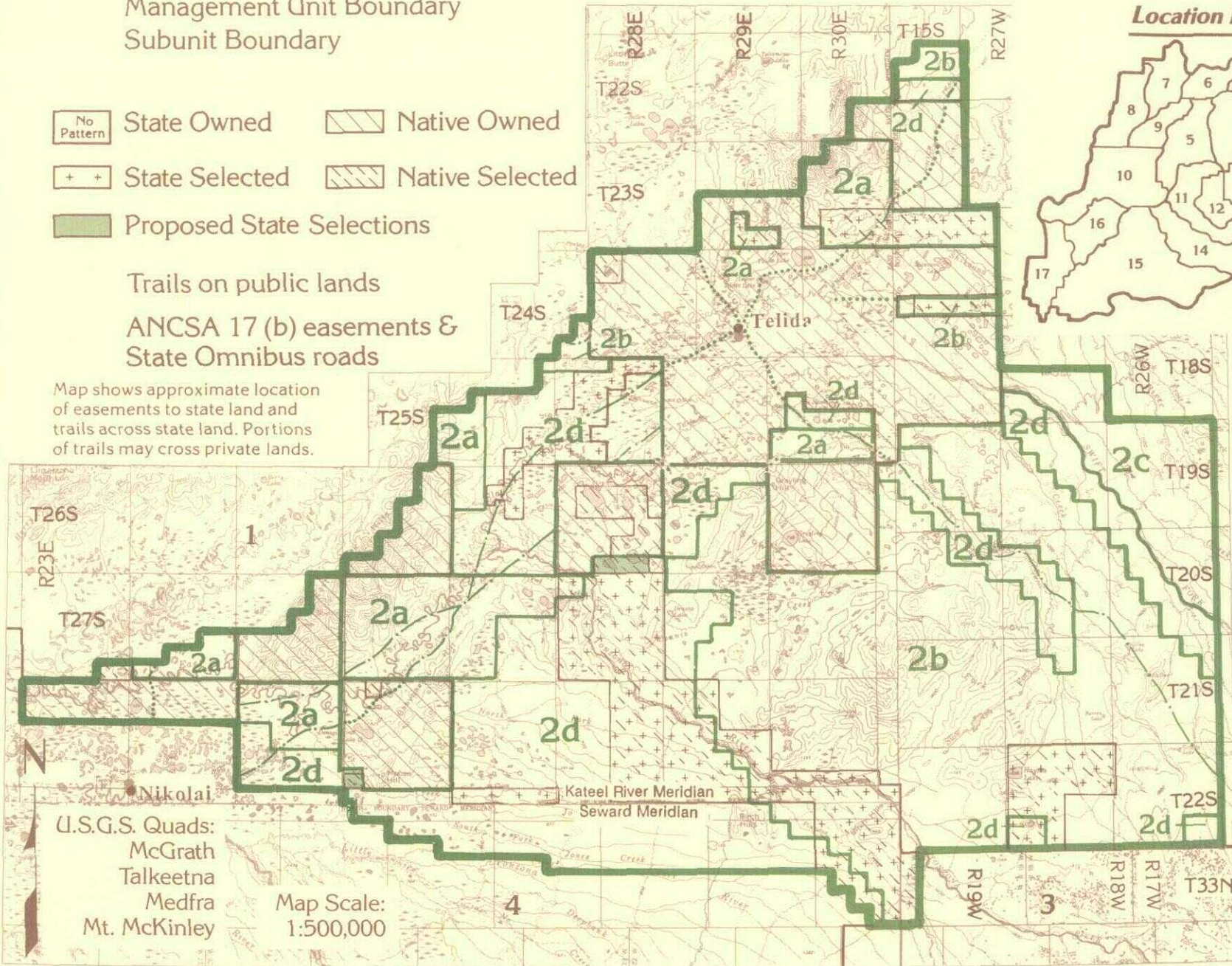
^bAll areas are available for leasing for leasable minerals. Statements of whether or not the unit is open to mineral entry refer only to locatable minerals.

Management Unit Boundary
Subunit Boundary

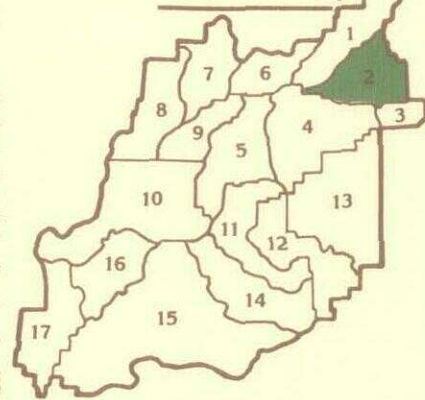
-  No Pattern
-  State Owned
-  Native Owned
-  State Selected
-  Native Selected
-  Proposed State Selections

Trails on public lands
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.



Location Map



2: East Fork

Kuskokwim Area Plan

Map Scale:
1:500,000

U.S.G.S. Quads:
McGrath
Talkeetna
Medfra
Mt. McKinley