

# MANAGEMENT UNIT 8: DISHNA - IDITAROD

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## Background

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**Location and Land Ownership.** This management unit is in the watersheds of the Dishna River, Iditarod River, and Tolstoi Creek. The terrain is mostly rolling hills with the exception of the Beaver Mountains which are over 3,500 feet and contain several high alpine lakes. The lands within the management unit are entirely state owned with the exception of two Native allotments along the Iditarod River. The Innoko National Wildlife Refuge is located along the western border of this unit.

**Resources.** Stands of white spruce are found in a corridor along Tolstoi Creek, lower Madison Creek, and along the Dishna River upstream to the junction with Windy Creek. Mixed stands of hardwoods consisting of birch and cottonwood are found along the Iditarod River, the Dishna River between Windy and Porcupine creeks, and Windy, Otter, and lower Billy Goat, and Moose creeks. Scattered stands of mixed hardwoods are also found along south-facing slopes. Open stands of black spruce are found on north-facing slopes, permafrost areas, and in poorly drained areas. Most of the unit is covered with mixed shrubs. The higher elevations of Camelback Mountain, the Beaver Mountains, and Mount Hurst are tundra covered.

**Resource Use.** Mining claims and mining activity are concentrated in the Tolstoi area, on Mastodon and Madison creeks, in the Beaver Mountains, and adjacent to Flat. Every summer there is an influx of miners into the area particularly around the Beaver Mountains, Flat, Madison Creek, and Mastodon Mountain. Because of its remote location, the area is not heavily used for hunting. Some use occurs, however, in the Beaver Mountains where McGrath and Takotna residents and guides hunt caribou and moose. Residents of Holy Cross and Shageluk use the areas along the Iditarod River for hunting and trapping. There is a limited amount of hunting from miners and the few year-round resi-

dents in the area. A site on the Upper Dishna River is currently being considered for a training facility by the Alaska National Guard. Surrounding areas would be used for maneuvers.

**Access.** The southern route of the Iditarod race trail passes through the unit and is used on alternate years. Several trails identified as part of the Iditarod National Historic Trail system and historic sites and structures associated with it are found within the unit. These include the Iditarod and Tolstoi mining districts, the Iditarod-Dikeman trail, the Iditarod-Flat tram/trail, the Hunter trail, the Ophir-Diskakat trail, and the Ophir-Iditarod summer trail. These trails and sites date back to the gold rush era and many of them continue to be used today for transporting equipment, fuel, and supplies to mining operations and for travel by local residents. Primary access into the area is by small plane to the Flat airstrip, airstrips associated with mining operations, small lakes in the Beaver Mountains, frozen rivers, and snow-covered open areas. Snow machines and dog teams are used along rivers and trails in winter. Because of their distance from Yukon River villages, the Dishna and Iditarod Rivers are infrequently used by boats during the summer months.

## Management Intent

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This unit will be retained in public ownership and managed for multiple use with emphasis on forestry, mining, wildlife habitat. Remote cabin permits will be allowed in part of this unit with no more than three cabins in any one township. Remote cabins will not be permitted in the vicinity of the lower Dishna River, the Iditarod River, Tolstoi, and the Beaver Mountains to avoid conflicts with public recreation, wildlife habitat, trapping, and mining. Subunits 8a and 8b have moderate to high suitability for settlement and will be reconsidered for possible sale when this plan is updated but will be managed

for general use until then. Grazing will not be permitted in certain areas to avoid conflicts with moose winter habitat, brown bear concentration areas, and caribou calving. The number of commercial recreation leases will be limited in the Beaver Mountains in order to protect public access and camping on higher elevation lakes. All state lands retained in public ownership will remain open to new mineral entry.

#### **Subunit 8a - Lower Dishna River**

This subunit is entirely state owned and includes the river corridor of the lower Dishna River and its adjacent uplands. Public lands will be available for timber harvest, hunting, trapping, and fish and wildlife habitat. A small northern portion of this unit along the Dishna River is important moose wintering habitat; grazing will not be allowed in this area. Remote cabin permits will not be allowed in this subunit to avoid conflicts with trapping. This subunit will be retained in state ownership and managed for general use. When the plan is amended, this parcel will be reevaluated to determine whether it should be kept in public ownership for the long term or offered for sale. The subunit contains approximately 3,100 acres suitable for settlement.

#### **Subunit 8b - Iditarod River**

With the exception of a few Native allotments, this subunit is entirely state owned and includes the river corridor on the east side of the Iditarod River and its adjacent uplands. This subunit is bordered on the north by the Innoko National Wildlife Refuge and to the south by private and Native-owned lands around Flat. A small portion of this unit along the Innoko River is important moose wintering habitat; and grazing will not be allowed in this area. Historic sites associated with the gold rush era and Native cultural sites are located in parts of this subunit. The sites are a result of an influx of gold miners at the turn of the century. Historic and probably prehistoric Ingulik Indian villages and campsites are scattered along the river. There has been little historic or archeological study in the area and few sites have been documented. This unit will be

retained in state ownership and managed for general use. When the plan is amended, this parcel will be reevaluated to determine whether it should be kept in public ownership for the long term or offered for sale. The subunit contains approximately 2,200 acres suitable.

#### **Subunit 8c - North Flat**

This subunit is entirely state owned. Historic sites associated with the gold rush era and Native cultural sites are located in parts of this subunit. The sites are a result of an influx of gold miners at the turn of the century. There are some mining claims in the subunit. The subunit is used primarily by residents of Flat and some of the villages on the Yukon. Remote cabin permits will not be allowed in this subunit in order to avoid conflicts with mining and public use. This subunit will be retained in public ownership and managed for multiple use with emphasis on mining and wildlife habitat.

#### **Subunit 8d - Upper Dishna River**

This subunit contains lands with high potential for forestry and wildlife habitat along the Dishna River. The Alaska National Guard is currently considering the area around the Upper Dishna River for a training facility and maneuver area. Remote cabin permits will not be allowed in this subunit in order to avoid conflicts with trapping. This subunit will be retained in public ownership and managed for multiple use with emphasis on forestry and wildlife habitat.

#### **Subunit 8e - Hinterlands**

This unit does not have high surface resource values and is primarily used for transportation between mining areas. The subunit contains some important historic and cultural resources. Many areas along Bonanza Creek have historical importance going back to the gold rush era. Moose Creek halfway cabin on Bonanza Creek is related to the Iditarod National Historic Trail as is the Fourth of July Creek roadhouse on the north side of Camelback Mountain. The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should be contacted

prior to remote cabin permits being authorized in this area in order to avoid or minimize damage to these sites. The Alaska National Guard has expressed interest in applying for a long-term lease for a training facility located approximately two miles northwest of the junction of the Dishna River and Porcupine Creek. The Guard has also expressed interest in applying for permits for maneuvers in the surrounding area. Present information indicates that the impacts of Guard training in the Upper Dishna area would be less than other areas proposed in the planning area. With the preliminary information available, these activities appear compatible with the management intent for state lands in the Dishna area. A final decision on the establishment of such a training site will not be made until an environmental assessment is completed. This does not preclude the Department of Military Affairs from considering a training site south of Tatalina on state lands or negotiating a lease with private landowners in that area (see Units 5 and 9).

Grazing will not be allowed in a small part of this subunit near the Beaver Mountains which is a brown bear concentration area. Remote cabin permits are allowed in portions of this unit but permits will not be allowed in some areas in order to avoid conflicts with mining activity near Tolstoi and the Beaver Mountains; hunting; a brown bear concentration area; and trapping. This subunit will be retained in public ownership and managed for general use.

#### **Subunit 8f - Beaver Mountains-Madison Creek-Mastodon Creek**

This subunit includes some important mining areas east of Tolstoi, northeast of Flat, and in the Beaver Mountains. The Beaver Mountains are also an important caribou and moose hunting area for residents of McGrath and Takotna and guides. The Beaver Mountains are also important for brown bear at certain times of the year. Grazing will not be allowed in portions of this area to avoid conflicts with caribou and brown bear. The Alaska National Guard is currently considering the area around the upper Dishna River for a training facility and maneuver area. Remote cabin

permits are allowed in parts of this unit. In the Beaver Mountains and near Tolstoi they are prohibited in order to avoid conflicts with mining and brown bear concentration areas. The number of commercial recreation leases in the Beaver Mountains that are authorized will be limited. Trapping cabins will not be allowed within one-half mile of Tolstoi Lake. There is interest on the part of residents of McGrath and Takotna in building a public use cabin in the Beaver Mountains. This is an allowed use in this subunit. The state lands in this subunit will be retained in public ownership and be managed for multiple use with emphasis on mining, public recreation, and wildlife habitat.

#### **Subunit 8g - Dishna Uplands**

This subunit is state owned and has high wildlife habitat values. Other surface resource values are low. Three trapping cabins have been applied for on the upper Dishna River. This subunit consists of the Tolstoi Creek lowlands, uplands west of the Dishna River, the upper Dishna River lowlands, and parts of the Moose Creek drainage. This subunit receives a low level of public use. Cat trails and Iditarod National Historic Trail system and race trail pass through this subunit. There are some documented historic sites associated with the gold rush era near Tolstoi.

The Alaska National Guard has expressed interest in applying for a long-term lease for a training facility located approximately two miles northwest of the junction of the Dishna River and Porcupine Creek. The Guard has also expressed interest in applying for permits for maneuvers in the surrounding area. Present information indicates that the impacts of Guard training in the Upper Dishna area would be less than other areas proposed in the planning area. With the preliminary information available, these activities appear compatible with the management intent for state lands in the Dishna area. A final decision on the establishment of such a training site will not be made until an environmental assessment is completed. This does not preclude the Department of Military Affairs from considering a training site south of

Tatalina on state lands or negotiating a lease with private landowners in that area (see Units 5 and 9).

Remote cabin permits are allowed in parts of this subunit with the exception of areas near the Iditarod and Dishna rivers to avoid potential conflicts with trapping and mining. This subunit will be retained in public ownership and managed for multiple use with emphasis on wildlife habitat.

## **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:

- Fish and wildlife habitat
- Forestry
- Public access
- Lakeshore management
- Public and commercial recreation resources
- Remote cabins and trapping cabins
- Subsurface resources
- Trail management

### **General**

**Iditarod National Historic Trail system and race trail.** Both trail systems pass through this unit. Setbacks along them will be consistent with the policies in Chapter 2.

### **Subunits 8a, 8b, 8f and 8g - Dishna River, Iditarod River, Beaver Mountains-Madison Creek-Mastodon Creek, & Dishna Uplands**

**Grazing.** Grazing leases or permits will not be allowed along portions of the Innoko or Dishna Rivers because of their importance as moose winter concentration areas. Grazing will not be allowed in portions of the Beaver Mountains because of their importance for caribou calving and as a brown bear concentration area (Map 2.1). Temporary passage is not prohibited through these areas to reach areas where grazing is permitted. Graz-

ing may be allowed in portions of prohibited areas if consistent with the guidelines in Chapter 2 ("Grazing on Important Habitat Lands").

Grazing leases or permits will not be allowed in the following areas:

- T25S R8E K.R.M. sec. 1
- T30N R47E K.R.M. sec. 1, 2, 11, 12 & 13
- T25S R9E K.R.M. sec. 6
- T30N R46W S.M. sec. 5, 6, 7, 8 & 18
- T31N R42W S.M. sec. 1
- T34N R41W S.M. sec. 33-36
- T33N R42W S.M. 13, 23-26, 35 & 36
- T33N R41W S.M. sec. 1-5 & 8-36
- T33N R40W S.M. sec. 6, 7, 17-21 & 28-33
- T32N R42W S.M. sec. 1-5, 8-16, 21-27, 35 & 36
- T32N R41W S.M. sec. 3-36
- T32N R40W S.M. sec. 31
- T31N R41W S.M. sec. 1-17

### **Subunits 8e, 8f, 8g - Hinterlands, Beaver Mountains-Madison Creek-Mastodon Creek, & Dishna Uplands**

**Remote Cabin Permit Areas.** Parts of these subunits are within the Dishna block of the Dishna-Folger-Tatalina remote cabin permit area. Boundaries of the area open for remote cabin permits are shown on Map 2.2. Parts of subunits 8e, 8f, and 8g are also within this block. A total of 74 remote cabin permits will be allowed in the Dishna block, with a maximum of three remote cabin permits allowed in any one township.

### **Subunit 8f - Beaver Mountains**

**Commercial Leases, Trapping Cabins and Public Use Cabins.** Commercial leasing will not be allowed on the highest lake in the Beaver Mountains (Tolstoi Lake). Commercial leases on other lakes in the Beaver Mountains will be limited to two leases total, with a maximum of one lease on any individual lake. Trapping cabins will not be permitted within one-half mile of Tolstoi Lake. The Beaver Mountains and its lakes have been identified as a possible site(s) for a public use cabin(s).

# RESOURCE INFORMATION SUMMARY

## Management Unit 8 - Dishna-Iditarod

Resource	Subunit			
	8a	8b	8c	8d
Agriculture	Moderate to low potential	Low potential	Unsuitable	Most unsuitable; some low potential
Energy	Very low coal potential	Very low coal potential	Mostly very low potential; some low coal potential	Mostly very low; some low coal potential
Fish	Dishna R.: salmon & resident fish	Iditarod R.: salmon & resident fish	Otter Creek: salmon	Salmon & resident fish
Forestry	High potential along Dishna River; rest unsuitable	High potential along Iditarod River; rest unsuitable	Most unsuitable; some high potential on Iditarod R. & Otter Cr.	High potential on Dishna River
Grazing	High potential	High potential	High potential	High potential
Historic/ cultural	Unknown	Historic sites on Iditarod R.; Iditarod NHTS	Historic sites on Iditarod R.; Iditarod NHTS	Unknown
Materials	Low potential	Low potential	Low potential	Low potential
Minerals	Low potential	Very low to low potential	Mixed; very low to high potential; mining claims	Moderate to high potential, a few mining claims
Oil & gas	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Public access	Boat along Dishna R.; skiplane	Boat along Iditarod R.; trails	Boat along Iditarod R.; trails	Boat along Dishna R.; trails
Recreation	Low potential	Moderate use on Iditarod race trail; rest very low potential	Moderate use on Iditarod Race Trail; rest very low potential	Low potential
Settlement suitability	Most high; some moderate to low potential	Most high; some low potential	Most low to unsuitable; some high on Iditarod River	High on Dishna River
Wildlife	B-1; moose calving & winter range; bear, ducks	B-1 and C; bear, ducks, moose	B-1 and C; bear, ducks, moose	B-1; caribou winter range; moose calving & winter range; bear, ducks
Important trails	None identified	Iditarod race trail & NHTS; Iditarod-Dikeman trail; Iditarod-Flat trail; cat trails	Iditarod race trail & NHTS; Flat-Iditarod trail; cat trails	None identified

See glossary for definition of ratings.

# RESOURCE INFORMATION SUMMARY

## Management Unit 8 - Dishna-Iditarod

Resource	8e	Subunit 8f	8g
Agriculture	Unsuitable	Most unsuitable; some low	Mostly unsuitable; some low potential
Energy	Mostly low; some low potential	Mostly low; some low potential	Mostly very low; some low potential
Fish	Dishna R. tribs.: resident fish	Windy, Billy Goat, & Moose creeks: resident fish	Tolstoi Ck.: salmon & anadromous fish
Forestry	Most unsuitable; some low potential	Unsuitable	Low to unsuitable
Grazing	High potential	High potential	High potential
Historic/cultural	Iditarod NHTS	Iditarod NHTS	Iditarod NHTS and race trail; Historic sites near Tolstoi
Materials	Low potential	Low potential	Low potential
Minerals	Most very low to low potential; some moderate; mining claims	Moderate to very high potential; numerous mining claims	Mostly low, some high; few mining claims
Oil & gas	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Public access	Local trails	Plane to lakes in Beaver Mts., airstrips in mining areas; local trails	Trails
Recreation	Moderate use on Iditarod Race Trail; rest very low potential	Moderate use and potential in Beaver Mts.; rest very low potential	Moderate use on Iditarod Race Trails; rest very low potential
Settlement suitability	Most unsuitable; some low	Unsuitable	Some high on upper Dishna River, mostly low to unsuitable
Wildlife	B-2 and C; bear, caribou, moose	Mostly A-2 & B-2; some C; brown bear conc. area and caribou calving in Beaver Mts.; ducks, moose	B-2; bear, caribou, moose
Important trails	Iditarod Race Trail & NHTS, Hunter trail, Upper Mastodon Cr. trail, Porcupine-Windy Cr. trail	Iditarod NHTS; Iditarod-Ophir trail, Ophir-Dishkaket trail, Madison-Mastodon Cr. trails, cat trails	Trail near Iditarod River, Tolstoi, and Beaver Mts.; Iditarod NHTS and race trail

See glossary for definition of ratings.

# LAND-USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

## MANAGEMENT UNIT 8 - DISHNA-IDITAROD

SUBUNIT	LAND OWNERSHIP	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS				COMMENTS
		Primary Surface Uses	Secondary Surface Uses	Prohibited Surface Uses <sup>a</sup>	Subsurface <sup>b</sup>	
8a Dishna River	State	Resource Mgmt.	Forestry Wildlife habitat	Grazing in part of subunit Land disposals Remote cabins	Open	Reconsider for sales when the plan is updated
8b Iditarod River	State	Resource Mgmt.	Forestry Wildlife habitat	Grazing in part of subunit Land disposals Remote cabins	Open	Reconsider for sales when the plan is updated. Historic sites present
8c North Flat	State	Minerals Wildlife habitat	Forestry	Land disposals Remote cabins	Open	Historic sites
8d Upper Dishna River	State	Forestry Wildlife habitat		Land disposals Remote cabins	Open	
8e Hinterlands	State	General use: low resource values	Remote cabins in part of subunit	Land disposals Remote cabins in part of subunit	Open	Historic sites present
8f Beaver Mts. Madison Ck. Mastodon Ck.	State	Minerals Public recreation Wildlife habitat	Remote cabins in part of subunit	Grazing in part of subunit Land disposals in part of subunit Remote cabins in part of subunit	Open	Historic sites present; possible public use cabin sites
8g Dishna	State	Wildlife habitat	Remote cabins in part of subunit Grazing in part of subunit	Remote cabins in part of subunit Grazing in part of subunit	Open	Historic sites present

<sup>a</sup>Other 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).

<sup>b</sup>All 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.

# Kuskokwim Area Plan

## 8: Dishna - Iditarod

-  Management Unit Boundary
-  Subunit Boundary
-  State Owned
-  Trails on public lands

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

U.S.G.S. Quads:  
Iditarod  
Ophir

Map Scale:  
1:500,000

