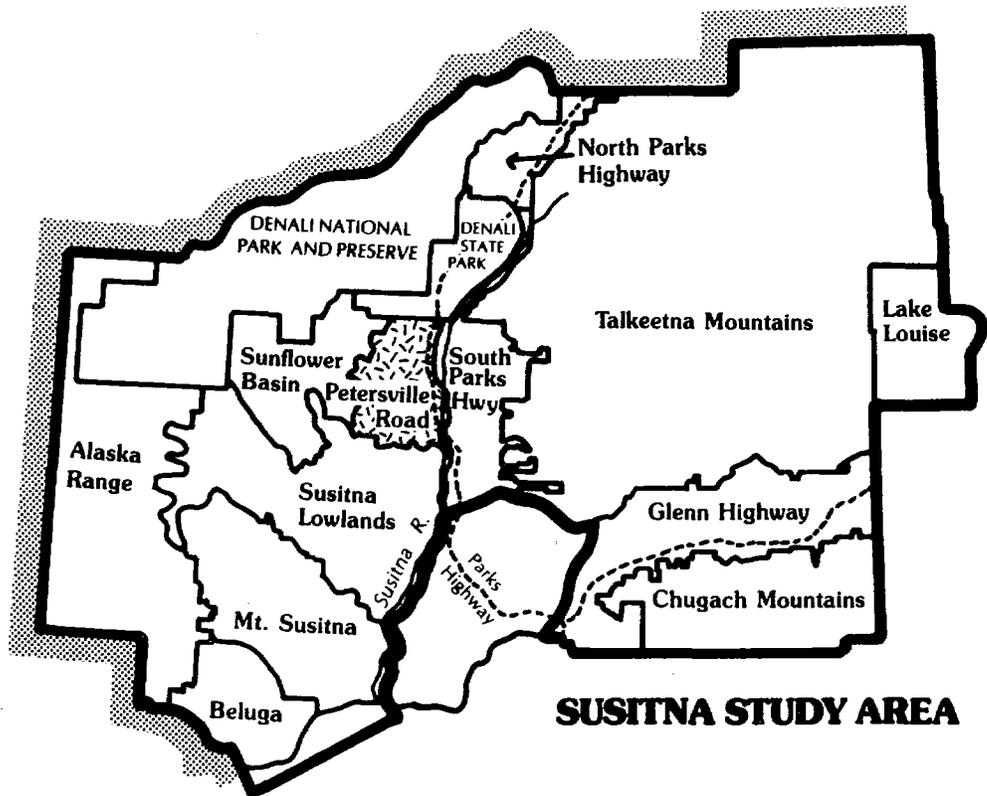


PETERSVILLE ROAD SUBREGION



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The following section describes land use policy within the Petersville Road subregion. It is divided into two parts. The first is an overview of resources and their management for the subregion as a whole. The second presents specific statements of management intent, land use designations, prohibited uses, and management guidelines for each of the subregion's seven management units. A map showing land ownership in the subregion and boundaries of management units and subunits is presented at the end of the second part.

1. SUBREGION OVERVIEW

Background

The Petersville Road Subregion comprises approximately 350,000 acres. It is bounded on the east by the Chulitna and Susitna rivers and on the north by the boundary of Denali State Park. The subregion extends south of Petersville Road approximately 15 miles along the drainages of Kroto, Gate, Seventeen Mile, Ninemile and Peters Creeks, and along Oilwell Road.

This subregion is predominantly state owned with significant areas in borough, Native and university ownership. Of the total area, approximately 72% (approximately 246,000 ac.) is in state ownership, 15% borough (50,000 ac.), 10% university selected (36,000 ac.), and (3-4%) (10,000 to 15,000 ac.) privately owned. Numerous state land disposals have occurred in this area.

The Petersville Road Subregion is the focus of near term development interests for settlement, forestry, and agriculture. It is currently the most heavily hunted portion of the planning area. It also is used for other recreational activities including snow-machining, dog mushing, cross-country skiing, and fishing. Settlement presently is scattered throughout most of the subregion on old OTE sites and other past disposals. Some small-scale agriculture exists along the Petersville Road and on past borough agricultural land sales. There is relatively little mining in this subregion. The majority of mining activity that does occur is located along Peters Creek south of the Petersville Road.

Unlike the other subregions west of the Susitna River, the Petersville Road subregion has road access. It is bounded on the east by the Parks Highway and crossed by the Petersville Road. Oilwell Road branches off Petersville Road approximately 6 miles from the Parks Highway and travels south for approximately 6.5 miles to Moose Creek. It is an all-weather road to this point.

Beyond Moose Creek, it continues south and west through the rest of the subregion as a winter road. In FY 85, the state legislature appropriated \$97,400 toward construction of a bridge across Moose Creek. Construction may begin in the summer of 1985. Once the creek is crossed, the year-round road could be extended south toward Amber Lake. There is also a winter trail connecting Petersville Road to the Shulin Lake area, and there are landing strips near the junction of Oilwell Road and Petersville Road. Several lakes are used for float plane landings.

Management Summary

Road access and high resource values will result in increased use and development of a variety of resources in the Petersville Road subregion. Additional state and borough land sales will be offered, primarily in the eastern half of the subregion. Sales may include a small number of agricultural homesteads where specific sites within disposal areas have suitable soils. The land along the Petersville Road will be the focus of much of the recreational activity and development in the subregion. While some development will take place close to the road, other parts of the road corridor will remain in public ownership to enhance settlement values and protect visual quality. A system of publicly owned lands will be retained throughout the subregion to provide recreational opportunities and public access and to protect scenic quality and habitat. In addition, much of the southwest quarter of the subregion will remain in public ownership to provide a base for forest management, including timber production, habitat management and recreation. Portions of this area are proposed for legislative designation as multiple use forest lands and state recreation rivers.

Management of each of the major resources and land uses in the subregion (settlement, agriculture, forestry, fish and wildlife, recreation, subsurface resources, and transportation) is summarized in the following sections.

Settlement

The Petersville Road subregion contains some of the most desirable land for private recreation, year-round settlement and commercial development in the entire study area. There are good lands close to road access in areas where topography and vegetation can reduce adverse visual impacts of development. Numerous disposals have been offered in this subregion in the past, including Gate Creek, Denali View, Schneider Lake, Nine Mile and Amber Lakes remote parcel areas, and subdivisions at Swan Lake, Trapper

Creek/Glen, Kenny Creek, Ninemile, Peters Creek South, and Safari Lake. State and borough agricultural disposals also have taken place at Moose Creek, Scotty Lake, and Rabideux.

A gross area of approximately 83,000 acres of state and borough land is designated for settlement in this subregion (see Table 1). Settlement areas are concentrated between Moose Creek and the Susitna River. Additional sales are proposed between Kroto Creek and Moose Creek within and adjacent to existing disposal areas and near Amber Lake. West of Kroto Creek, two small sales are located near Schneider Lake, and over-the-counter sales of the approximately 90 unsold surveyed lots in the existing Kenny Creek, Safari Lake, and Trapper Creek/Glen subdivisions are recommended. Settlement is appropriate in this subregion, but it is essential that disposals meet the goals emphasized by local residents — protection of environmental quality and rural lifestyles. Therefore, the following policies will be implemented.

- a. Subdivisions will be limited to areas near existing access (generally 2-3 miles from existing roads, or adjacent to areas with water or air access) or where roads can be built to each parcel by the state or borough prior to sale. More remote areas will be offered as homesteads with prestaked parcels.

TABLE I

Acreage Identified for Settlement and Agriculture		
	GROSS AREA (ac)	NET AREA (ac)
STATE LAND		
New Offering	39,960	8,970
Reofferings within Past Disposal Areas	29,790	1,570
Agriculture	1,040	520
STATE TOTAL	70,790	11,060
BOROUGH LAND		
New Offerings	11,820	4,190
STATE AND BOROUGH TOTAL	82,610	15,250

- b. New disposals generally will be concentrated in the eastern half of the region, or in conjunction with resource development or community establishment or expansion.
- c. Sale of remaining parcels in existing disposal areas generally will be a higher priority than offering new areas for sale, although disposals will include both reofferings and new sale areas.

- d. Disposals will be designed to provide a variety of residential and private recreational opportunities ranging from road accessible subdivisions to low density settlement in an area that may remain roadless. (See also the Transportation section of this subregion for more information on the roadless area proposal.)
- e. Publicly owned buffers and setbacks from major roads, lakeshores and streams will be used to help protect public access and open space. The land along some streams will be retained entirely in public ownership (e.g., Kroto Creek).

A summary of the acreage proposed for sale in the Petersville Road subregion is shown in Table 1. A net area of approximately 11,000 acres of state land will be available for sale over the next twenty years. Most of the sales will be subdivisions or non-agricultural homesteads, but approximately 520 acres may be sold as agricultural homesteads if the soils are suitable for agricultural use. Approximately 4,190 acres of borough land near Amber Lake and Trapper Creek also will be offered for sale if they are needed to support community development.

Approximately 35,300 acres of land are included in the borough land bank. This may be available for settlement in the long term, but there are no immediate plans for sale. When these areas are reevaluated to determine their long term best use, forestry, habitat, and public recreation values will be considered as well as agricultural and settlement potential. In the interim, these lands will be managed for existing public uses, including forestry, habitat and recreation.

Construction of public use cabins is recommended for the Kroto Creek and Moose Creek corridors to support public recreation along the waterways.

Agriculture

Opportunities for agricultural development (including homesteads) are limited by poor soil conditions in most of the subregion. The only accessible area of state land with blocks of soils suitable for commercial agriculture, the 2,360 acre Rabideux agricultural project, was offered for sale in 1984. Approximately 520 acres of state land may be available for agricultural homesteading adjacent to settlement areas if the soils prove to be suitable. There is little potential for grazing in the Petersville Road subregion. Therefore, grazing is not a designated use in any management unit. A few areas are closed to grazing, where conflicts between livestock and wildlife would be likely. On the remainder of the public lands in the subregion, applications for grazing permits will be reviewed on a case-by-case

basis. In addition, grazing operations may take place on lands conveyed to private owners.

Approximately 19,000 acres of borough lands that may have agricultural potential are included in the borough land bank. They may be available for agricultural development in the long term, but there are no imminent plans for sale. Future evaluation should determine their agricultural potential as well as their value for forestry, settlement, habitat, and public recreation. In the interim, these lands will be managed for timber, wildlife habitat, and public recreation.

Forestry

Most of this subregion supports timber resources with considerable value for commercial and/or personal use. The timber is especially valuable because it is much more accessible than most public forest land in the study area. A number of state timber sales have taken place in this subregion in recent years. Approximately 57,600 acres of land with high or moderate potential for commercial forestry will be retained in state ownership with forestry designated a primary use. These lands are primarily in the Peters Creek-Kroto Creek area in the southwestern portion of the subregion. Forestry is designated a secondary use on an additional 25,800 acres of land retained for public ownership along the Kroto Creek and Moose Creek corridors. Both these primary and secondary designations are within areas proposed for legislative designation to provide for multiple use management including timber harvest, habitat and public recreation. Some smaller forested areas will be identified for personal use to provide firewood and houselogs to local residents.

Fish and Wildlife and Recreation

This subregion is hunted more heavily for moose than any other area in the Susitna Basin. In addition, it contains extremely popular fishing streams and important habitat for bears and swans. Fish and wildlife resources are one of the main attractions that bring people to the area. These resources must be protected in order to preserve the settlement and recreational values in the subregion.

Recreational activities occur throughout most of the subregion. In addition to wildlife-based recreation, the area supports extensive lake, trail, and river-based activities such as boating, snowmachining and cross-country skiing. The subregion's cold, snowy winters and relative accessibility have made it very popular for dog mushing. Most of the Peters Creek and Kroto Creek drainage south of Petersville Road will be proposed for legislative designation to protect habitat, public recreation and forest values (see forestry above).

Where Kroto and Moose Creek corridors are presently publicly owned, they will be retained in public ownership and proposed for legislative or administrative designation in recognition of their extremely high habitat and public recreation values. In general, settlement will be concentrated in the eastern half of the subregion, leaving most of the western half in public ownership.

Public ownership of trail and river corridors, public access points, campgrounds, and reservation of some lakefront property also will serve to ensure that opportunities for public recreation are protected.

Mining

a. Mining Resources and Mining Claims

A number of mining claims have been staked in the northern part of the subregion, but there is little mining activity at present. The concentration of past and proposed land sales in this area will result in a relatively large proportion of the area being closed to mineral entry, but the lands proposed for closure have little mineral potential. In addition to settlement and agricultural areas, public recreation sites and some important recreational rivers (Kroto and Moose creeks and their major tributaries) will be closed to mineral entry. All other areas, including the large tracts of public land in the western portion of the subregion proposed for legislative or administrative designation for forestry, habitat and recreation, will be open to mining.

b. Coal

Potential for coal development is low to very low in all but the extreme northwest corner of the subregion. Recreation sites, settlement and agricultural disposals, and the Kroto and Moose Creek corridors will not be available for coal leases or prospecting permits. The availability of these areas will have little or no effect on coal development because of the low coal potential involved. All other public lands will be available for coal leasing.

c. Oil and Gas

Several portions of the subregion have been leased for oil and gas exploration, but little activity is presently occurring. Oil and gas exploration is permitted throughout the subregion. In the Kroto and Moose Creek corridors specific mitigation measures necessary to protect the recreation and habitat values of the corridors will be developed as part of the lease sale process if and when such a sale occurs. (See guidelines in Management Units 1 and 4.)

Transportation

This subregion is currently accessible via the Parks Highway, Petersville Road, Oilwell Road, winter trails, and small planes. A number of possible routes are recommended for further consideration for expanding road access in this subregion. These include 1) an extension of Oilwell Road to Amber Lake and eventually farther south into the Susitna Lowlands Subregion, 2) spur roads from Petersville Road and Oilwell Road to some settlement and agricultural areas, 3) an upgrade of the Shulin Lake trail for year-round use, and 4) roads to lands intended for long term commercial forest management.

The lands within T28N R6W; sections 1, 2, 11-14, 23-26, 35 and 36 of T28N R7W; sections 1-12 of T27N R6W; and sections 1, 2, 11 and 12 in T27N R7W, have been proposed for designation as a roadless area by a local group, the Tokosha Citizens Council. Transportation under this proposal would be by summer foot paths, winter ski trails, snowmachine and dogsled routes, and fly-in access. The final responsibility for the decision on the proposal will rest with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. The land use designations within this area should not be taken as either opposition to or support for the roadless area proposal.