

Forestry

Note: The Forest Resources and Practices Act (AS 41.17) and Regulations (11 AAC 95) provide additional policy and guidance for managing forest related activities. Site specific guidelines for forestry management activities will be addressed through the Forest Land Use Plan or the university's Annual Operating Plans prior to any commercial timber sale or harvest (AS 38.05.112).

A. Timber harvest

1. **Forest Land Use Plans (FLUP).** This area plan will not make timber harvest decisions. Before commercial timber harvest decisions are made for the Yakataga area, the Division of Forestry will prepare a draft Forest Land Use Plan (FLUP)¹¹ that is the preliminary decision document. FLUPs will contain site-specific guidelines for timber harvest.

For timber harvest by the university under ADL 223456, the university's Annual Operating Plan rather than a FLUP will be the means to apply site-specific guidelines for timber harvest.

2. **Timber harvest stipulations.** All timber harvesting operations will be conducted according to the stipulations in the Forest Land Use Plans, Forest Resources and Practices Act, and other state guidelines and laws.
3. **Size and shape of timber harvest units.** Harvest unit size will not exceed 160 acres, except after consultation with DEC and DFG, and public review and commissioner approval through the FLUP or the university's Annual Operating Plan. Non-linear borders are preferred on cutting units to minimize visual impact. The size, shape, and spacing of timber harvest units and interspersed leave areas will be based upon considerations of wildlife travel impediments, silvicultural requirements, wildlife feeding, the purposes of adjacent special management areas and leave areas, windfirmness, vegetation patterns, terrain, and harvest equipment efficiency.
4. **Leave area design criteria.** Forested leave areas should include natural travel corridors such as ridge points, the forested edge of swamps, the coastal fringe, and riparian corridors. Leave areas are essential to provide interconnected habitat for many species for travel, feeding, resting, and escape or avoidance of predators. Guidelines developed by the U.S. Forest Service concerning windthrow will be used in the design of leave areas.
5. **Management of leave areas.** Bridge timbers may be taken from leave areas narrower than 330 feet only if there is no feasible and prudent alternative.
6. **Harvest unit layout.** A patch cutting system of interspersed cutting units and leave areas will be used where feasible and prudent. The state will lay these units out following DOF Southeast Region Engineering Guide -Forestry Road Standards.
7. **Slopes greater than or equal to 70 percent.** Forest management activities may not be conducted on slopes greater than 70 percent unless approved in writing by DOF after receiving recommendations from DEC and DFG. Timber operations will be designed to prevent mass wasting and to maintain soil productivity, tree regeneration, and fish habitat.
8. **Fell trees away from vegetated tideflats.** Trees will be directionally felled away from vegetated tideflats. Logging debris will not be deposited on vegetated tideflats.

¹¹ FLUPs are generally completed between five and 14 months prior to the anticipated timber auction date. An opportunity will be provided for agencies and the public to review and comment on FLUPs. The DOF will evaluate and respond to comments to this document in the final FLUP. If the timber harvest decision proceeds, DOF will modify it as needed using public and agency comments.

B. Log transfer facilities and sort yards

All sort yards and log transfer facilities (LTF) will be constructed, sited, operated, and monitored in compliance with the *Log Transfer Facility Siting, Construction, Operation, and Monitoring/Reporting Guidelines* (October 21, 1985). Modifications to the approved operations require interagency review and approval.

Guidelines for siting resource transfer facilities are located in the Upland and Waterfront Development section of this plan.

C. Cutting and gathering wood for personal use

Dead and down wood on state land may be gathered for personal use. This wood may not be used for barter, sale, or commercial purposes. Live or standing dead trees on state land may not be harvested without DNR authorization.

D. Beach log salvage

Beach log salvage will be administered under the provisions of the ACMP consistency review procedures. If, in the future, beach log salvage is no longer covered under the provisions of an ACMP general concurrence determination, and if beach log salvage activities are proposed, this plan should be amended to include guidelines to manage beach log salvage.

E. Maintain a mosaic of habitat

Forested land will be managed to provide a mix of cut and uncut areas to maintain a sustained yield of fish, wildlife, and commercial timber.

F. Mountain goat winter habitat

1. Forestry management activities are prohibited in mountain goat winter habitat mapped in the Fish and Wildlife Resources Atlas of the Yakataga Area Plan. This habitat is essential to maintain the sustained yield of mountain goats in the Yakataga area. The mature timber canopy coverage in these areas provides shelter, accessible forage, and travel to escape terrain or new food sources. The mapped habitat may be updated by DFG during the FLUP. Within the university's substitute timber tract, mapped goat habitat will be examined in the field and DNR will preclude timber harvest only in areas that DFG verifies on the ground serve as winter goat habitat. The criteria for mapping winter goat habitat are explained in the glossary (Appendix A).
2. The Forest Land Use Plans or the university's Annual Operating Plans will address the following conditions when designing forestry management activities within ¼ mile of mapped goat winter habitat, with due deference to DFG:
 1. provide necessary movement corridors for goats in winter,
 2. prevent noise or other human disturbance of goats in winter through seasonal restrictions,
 3. ensure windfirmness within mapped goat winter habitat, and
 4. minimize improved public access in order to minimize unmanageable illegal harvest of goats.

Within the university's substitute timber tract, only Number 1 and Number 2 of the above restrictions apply, and they apply only from November 15 to May 31 of each year. DNR, with due deference to DFG, may approve earlier lifting of restrictions 1 and 2 on a site-specific basis within the university's substitute timber tract.

DNR will consult with DFG and apply appropriate provisions for goat winter habitat during the FLUP or ACMP review of the university's Annual Operating Plans.¹²

If a party withdraws from the settlement agreement pursuant to Section 16 of that agreement, and the university receives status quo ante rights to harvest timber at Cape Suckling as if the agreement had not occurred, the goat habitat guideline from the October 1994 draft Yakataga Area Plan¹³ would replace this version.

G. Moose winter habitat

Forest management activities within 1,000 feet of mapped moose winter feeding concentration areas will be consistent with maintenance of thermal and security cover and winter browse production, and will require consultation with DFG. Refer to mapped habitat in the Fish and Wildlife Resources Atlas of the Yakataga Area Plan or updated moose habitat maps in FLUPs. Opportunities for enhancing moose habitat will be considered.

DNR will consult with DFG and apply appropriate provisions for moose winter habitat during the FLUP or ACMP review of the university's Annual Operating Plans.

If a party withdraws from the settlement agreement pursuant to Section 16 of that agreement, and the university receives status quo ante rights to harvest timber at Cape Suckling as if the agreement had not occurred, the moose habitat guideline from the October 1994 draft Yakataga Area Plan¹⁴ would replace this version.

H. Species that need additional habitat protection in forestry management areas

Some species in the planning area will need habitat maintenance measures more detailed than this area plan provides. Species that require further consideration include, but are not limited to: moose, goats, black and brown bears, swans, and eagles. DOF, in cooperation with DFG, will apply more detailed habitat protection through the Forest Land Use Plan (FLUP) process. Allowance for goat, bear and moose habitat will be made in the FLUP. The FLUP will address the following: 1) shelter; 2) accessible forage; 3) travel to escape terrain or new food sources; 4) special provisions; 5) unusual conditions; 6) significant impact; 7) if needed, mitigation as outlined in Habitat Guideline A of this plan, and 8) timber harvest methods and configurations to provide natural travel corridors and escape cover.

I. Coastal edge of timber

Forestry management activities within 500 feet of the coastal edge of timber must maintain 90 percent of the overstory canopy coverage, plus or minus 2 percent, throughout the rotation; and must be consistent with the maintenance of wildlife habitat, visual aesthetics, recreation and tourism values and opportunities, and windfirmness. Timber harvested from the coastal buffer will avoid construction of roads in the buffer, except as necessary to cross the buffer, and harvest design and methods will otherwise minimize the alteration of the natural coastal fringe of forest. Timber harvest will be seasonally scheduled to avoid disturbance of wildlife, recreation, and tourism uses of the coastal buffer.

-
- 12 For timber harvest under ADL 223456, the university's Annual Operating Plan rather than a FLUP will be the means to implement this guideline.
- 13 The October 1994 draft plan exempted the university from the goat guideline for timber harvest within Cape Suckling Tract A-148 under terms of ADL 223456. Mountain goat winter habitat was largely excluded from the university timber harvest through the original conveyance terms of ADL 223456. If the university reclaims timber harvest rights at Cape Suckling, DNR will consult with DFG and apply appropriate provisions for goat winter habitat in the Cape Suckling tract during ACMP review of the university's Annual Operating Plans.
- 14 The October 1994 draft plan exempted the university from the moose guideline for timber harvest within Cape Suckling Tract A-148 under terms of ADL 223456. Moose winter habitat along the major stream corridors in the Cape Suckling tract was excluded from the university timber harvest through the original conveyance terms of ADL 223456. If the university reclaims timber harvest rights at Cape Suckling, DNR will consult with DFG and apply appropriate provisions for moose winter habitat in the Cape Suckling tract during ACMP review of the university's Annual Operating Plan.

The intent is to maintain the ocean shoreline vegetation critical for natural wildlife travel corridors, thermal shelter, escape cover, and food adjacent to the dunes, estuaries, and coastal wetlands that are heavily used feeding areas for brown and black bears, land otters, mink, wolves, and bald eagles. The specific timber stands to be retained shall be determined in the field by DFG and DNR during the Forest Land Use Plan and/or ACMP review of Annual Harvest Plans.¹⁵

J. Special management zones (SMZS) on large rivers

The Kiklukh, Kaliakh, Kulthieth, Duktoth, and Yakataga Rivers will be specifically addressed during the Forest Land Use Plans to ensure that forest management along these rivers is consistent with maintenance of fish and wildlife habitat and recreation.¹⁵ These rivers are large dynamic rivers (USFS types FP4, FP5, and GO2) characterized by a grade ≤ 3 percent and a channel contained by vegetation rather than landforms. DNR will give due deference to DFG and will consult with DPOR in determining the appropriate width of the special management zones and the necessary measures to maintain habitat and recreation values.

K. Special management zones within 100 to 300 feet of anadromous or high-value resident fish streams, adjacent to the 100-foot no timber harvest zone

Forest management activities between 100 and 300 feet of anadromous or high-value resident fish streams where these streams pass through important habitats of concern may occur after the FLUP has been adopted and a final finding completed. The FLUP must be consistent with the maintenance of important fish and wildlife habitat mapped for the Yakataga Area Plan in the Fish and Wildlife Resources Atlas. Habitat maps may be updated by DFG during the FLUP process. The mapped habitats of concern include the following:

- bear summer/fall concentration areas
- bear spring concentration areas
- moose winter concentration areas
- mountain goat winter habitat
- bald eagle feeding concentrations
- trumpeter swan nesting and molting
- beaver concentration areas
- highest quality land otter habitat
- bald eagle nest sites

The 100- to 300-foot special management zone will not apply on yet-to-be identified anadromous streams within the university's substitute tract. Yet-to-be identified anadromous streams are those that were not listed in the 1994 ADF&G Atlas to the Catalog of Waters Important for spawning, rearing, or migration of salmon. There will still be a 100-foot no-timber-harvest zone along yet-to-be identified anadromous streams.

¹⁵ For timber harvest under ADL 223456, the university's Annual Operating Plan rather than a FLUP will be the means to implement this guideline.

L. Road standards for forestry management activities:**1. Road location:**

- a. DNR will locate mainline and secondary roads for forestry management activities. Others may locate spur roads (less than 500 feet in length) within units accessing designated landings subject to advance approval by DNR.
- b. Where feasible and prudent, roads will be located away from streams supporting fish habitat, creating an effective vegetative filter and minimizing impacts on water quality.
- c. Roads will be located and surveyed in accordance with the DOF Southeast Region Engineering Guide -Forestry Road Standards.

2. Road design:

- a. All roads will be designed according to the DOF *Southeast Region Engineering Guide - Forestry Road Standards*.
- b. Surfacing material will be the minimum necessary to allow for log trucking without surface deformation.
- c. Turnouts will be intervisible with a surface length of 50 feet with 25 foot tapers.
- d. The state will design and approve all bridges. All bridges not meeting the minimum load carrying capacity of U80 will be repaired or replaced.
- e. All roads will be designed to maximize resource access while minimizing significant adverse impacts to the environment.



Old-growth forest near Cape Yakataga

M. Deferral of state timber sales except on the university timber tracts

DNR will not offer for harvest state timber in the Yakataga area from Icy Bay westward to Cape Suckling sooner than December 2014 (twenty years from the date of the settlement), with the exception of small timber sales to enable the construction and operation of a cabin and trail system. DNR will allow small timber sales for the exclusive purpose of providing logs for construction, maintenance, or repair of, or firewood associated with, the trail and cabin system.

The university's harvest of timber on the White River tract, the Yakataga tract, and the substitute tract (as mapped in ADL 223456) is not subject to this deferral.