

UNIT 3B**UPPER KALIAKH RIVER AND
TRIBUTARY DRAINAGES****Background**

Unit 3B is defined primarily by access considerations. It is a roadless inland unit, comprised of alpine areas and the upper reaches of several rivers.

Physical features

The upper Kulthieth River valley is extensively forested with mature spruce and hemlock. For several miles above the confluence with the Kaliakh River, the west side of the Kulthieth River is a mile-wide plain of wetlands and willow. Parts of the upper Kaliakh River are braided. The Kosakuts River is flanked by extensive stands of immature spruce and cottonwood.

The eastern-most township in Unit 3B is mostly rugged alpine terrain.

Access

The closest road to any part of this unit is over seven miles distant. Future road access would require extensive construction with major stream crossings or elevation gains. There are two airstrips of unknown condition at the southern edge of this unit (near Donald Ridge) and the northern edge (in the upper Kulthieth valley). Gravel bars on the Kaliakh and Kulthieth rivers provide landing areas for small aircraft.

Land status

The state has selected approximately 34,000 acres in the upper Kaliakh and Kulthieth drainages for conveyance from the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) under Alaska's statehood entitlement. The primary values are fish and wildlife habitat, with future value for timber, depending on access costs. Chugach Alaska Corporation holds prior selection rights to two-fifths of the state's selections. The state owns approximately 23,000 acres comprising the eastern part of Unit 3B.

All other lands in this unit are state-owned.

Adjoining lands

Unit 3B is bounded on the south by the Yakataga State Game Refuge and the proposed refuge addition. To the west lie Hanna Lake and the moraines of the Bering Glacier. To the north is steep alpine land managed by the BLM. The eastern boundary of Unit 3B extends downslope into the Duktoth River drainage approximately to treeline.

Resources and uses

The Kulthieth River, a clearwater tributary of the Kaliakh River, is the primary spawning and rearing area for coho salmon in the Kaliakh watershed. The coho run supports commercial set net and sport fisheries and a dense population of eagles in the lower Kaliakh River system. The Kulthieth River is presently used for hunting access and clearwater sport fishing. The upper Kaliakh River is noted as a potential float put-in for hunting, fishing, and recreational floating. The Kaliakh, Kulthieth, and Kosakuts rivers offer excellent tourism potential based on their scenery, pristine character, remoteness, and fish and wildlife resources.

Management considerations

Conveyance of the state selections in this unit would add substantial timber volumes to the state's timber base and allow state management of the habitat throughout the entire drainages that feed into the Yakataga State Game Refuge.

DNR will not make state timber available for sale or harvest within this management unit until at least December 2014, except for harvest incidental to development of a cabin and trail system.¹ In addition, before future state timber offerings, DNR must revise the Yakataga Area Plan, including re-examination of land classifications and land use designations. The annual allowable cut for state land must also be recalculated after the plan is revised.

Unit 3B - Upper Kaliakh River resource allocation summary

Forestry

Access. The plan directs DNR to request easements across lands to be conveyed to Chugach Alaska Corporation, to ensure opportunities for overland access for forestry on state lands.

Availability. All of the mature commercial timber as well as most pole timber in the Kaliakh and Kulthieth river drainages is designated forestry. One area of mature timber in upper Hope Creek is jointly designated forestry and habitat because of the heavy concentration of mountain goat winter habitat. An area of inoperable mature timber near the refuge is designated general uses, which leaves DNR the option of including it in the timber base.

Under the settlement agreement regarding the university timber litigation, there would be no state timber sales or harvests, except incidental to a cabin and trail system, until at least December 2014.

Fish and wildlife harvest

There are no designated harvest areas. However, future fishing and hunting along the main-stems of the Kiklukh and Kaliakh rivers will benefit from the joint designations for habitat and dispersed recreation along the rivers.

Access. The plan directs DNR to ensure public access through the FLUP process.

¹ See Appendix C for the history and terms of the December 1994 timber settlement.

Unit 3B - Upper Kaliakh River resource allocation summary

Fish and wildlife habitat

The plan endorses priority conveyance of selections in Unit 3B in part because State ownership would allow consistent habitat protection throughout the river drainage. From the confluence of the Kaliakh and Kulthieth Rivers, a joint habitat-forestry-recreation designation extends upstream approximately four miles along the Kaliakh River and to the upper tributaries of the Kulthieth River.

Tidelands and submerged lands near the Tsiu and Kiklukh river mouths are designated H1 HV1 for protection of anadromous fisheries and species that congregate because of the fish. Other tidelands and submerged lands within the three-mile limit are designated H2 HV2.

Minerals development

DNR will adopt a mineral leasehold location order that applies to the state-owned shorelands of the Kaliakh and Kulthieth Rivers and their anadromous tributaries.

Recreation and tourism

From the confluence of the Kaliakh and Kulthieth Rivers, a joint habitat-forestry-recreation designation extends upstream approximately four miles along Kaliakh River and six miles along Kulthieth River. The plan directs DNR to provide specific guidelines for recreation and tourism along Kaliakh River during the FLUP. The area plan also directs DNR to identify access sites and campsites for public use.

Settlement

The area plan did not designate settlement lands in this area. If the selections in Unit 3B are conveyed to the state, there is a public interest in retaining these lands in state ownership as directed by AS 38.04.015, based on their forestry, habitat, and recreation values, as well as their remoteness from essential services.

Transportation

The area plan directs DNR to reserve access under ANCSA Section 17(b) if lands are conveyed to Chugach Alaska Corporation.

Other resources

Several alpine areas are designated for general uses.

Subunit 3b-1 - Donald Ridge

■ **Designation**

General uses (G)

■ **Management Intent**

Allow general multiple uses.

■ **Guidelines:** None. There are no guidelines specific to this subunit.

■ **General Information**

See the table at the end of this subunit.

Subunit 3b-2 - Kosakuts and upper Kaliakh rivers

■ **Designation**

Forestry, habitat, and dispersed recreation (F2, H2, RD2)

■ **Management intent**

Maintain opportunities for forest management for timber production, and maintain conditions for fish and wildlife habitat and dispersed recreation, including boating, hunting and fishing. All activities will minimize significant adverse impacts on these activities and resources.

Maintain access and facilities for dispersed recreation. All activities will minimize significant adverse impacts to public use recreation, including boating, hunting and fishing.

■ **Guidelines:**

Other resources The Kaliakh River has been identified as important for floating and float-based hunting. Specific guidelines to maintain fish and wildlife habitat and harvest and recreation opportunities for the Kaliakh River corridor will be determined during the FLUP process. DNR will retain access sites; address the existing and potential for public uses through the FLUPs. DNR will consider the applicability of FLUP guidelines to uses other than forestry.

Conveyance priority State ownership of these selections remains a priority because it would allow single-owner management of habitat, recreation, and forestry resources for the entire Kaliakh and Kulthieth river systems. However, DNR should seek delay conveyance of selections in this subunit until Chugach Alaska Corporation selections have been conveyed or relinquished. DNR should then assess whether the remaining state selections have high habitat values and are still accessible.

Mineral leasehold location In the beds of the upper Tsivat River and Kaliakh River and their tributaries that support anadromous fish, new mineral entry will be allowed only under leasehold locations in order to protect high quality anadromous fish habitat and to avoid impacts to water quality that is essential for sustaining the productivity of the Yakataga area's commercial, sport, and community harvest fisheries. See Appendix B for a map showing the area of the leasehold location.

■ **General information**

See the table at the end of this unit.

Subunit 3b-3 - unnamed lone mountain

■ **Designation**

General uses (G)

■ **Management intent**

Allow general multiple uses.

■ **Guidelines:**

Mineral leasehold location	In the beds of the upper Tsivat River and their tributaries that support anadromous fish, new mineral entry will be allowed only under leasehold locations in order to protect high quality anadromous fish habitat and to avoid impacts to water quality that is essential for sustaining the productivity of the Yakataga area's commercial, sport, and community harvest fisheries. See Appendix B for a map showing the area of the leasehold location.
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■ **General information**

See the table at the end of this unit.

Subunit 3b-4 - Robinson Mountains east of Kosakuts River

■ **Designation**

General uses (G)

■ **Management intent**

Allow general multiple uses.

■ **Guidelines:**

Conveyance priority	DNR should seek priority conveyance of selections in this unit to augment the state timber base and to facilitate protection of habitat and recreation resources for the entire river system.
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■ **General information**

See the table at the end of this unit.

Subunit 3b-5 - above Kaliakh and Kulthieth rivers' confluence

■ **Designation**

Forestry, habitat, and dispersed recreation (F2, H2, RD2)

■ **Management intent**

Maintain opportunities for forest management for timber production, conditions for fish and wildlife habitat, and conditions for dispersed recreation. All activities will minimize significant adverse impacts to these resources and uses.



Kulthieth River valley

Road access will be allowed for use of state resources in the upper drainages.

■ **Guidelines:**

**Conveyance
priority**

State ownership of these selections remains a priority because it would allow single-owner management of habitat, recreation, and forestry resources for the entire Kaliakh and Kulthieth river systems. However, DNR should delay conveyance of selections in this subunit until Chugach Alaska Corporation selections have been conveyed or relinquished. DNR should then assess whether the remaining state selections have high habitat values and are still accessible.

**Mineral leasehold
location**

In the beds of the Kulthieth River and its tributaries that support anadromous fish, new mineral entry will be allowed only by leasehold location in order to protect high quality anadromous fish habitat and to avoid impacts to water quality that is essential for sustaining the productivity of the Yakataga area's commercial, sport, and community harvest fisheries. See Appendix B for a map showing the areas of leasehold location.

■ **General information**

The Kulthieth River is the primary spawning and rearing area for coho salmon in the Kaliakh watershed.

Subunit 3b-6 - upper Kulthieth River valley

■ Designation

Forestry and habitat (F1, H1)²

■ Management intent

Promote forest management for sustained yield of timber. All activities will, to the extent feasible and prudent, avoid significant adverse impacts to timber resources and production.

Protect or enhance conditions for fish and wildlife habitat, particularly for mountain goats, brown bears, and anadromous fish spawning and rearing. All activities will, to the extent feasible and prudent, avoid significant adverse impacts to these resources and uses.

■ Guidelines:

Conveyance priority State ownership of these selections remains a priority because it would allow single-owner management of habitat, recreation, and forestry resources for the entire Kaliakh and Kulthieth river systems. However, DNR should delay conveyance of selections in this subunit until Chugach Alaska Corporation selections have been conveyed or relinquished. DNR should then assess whether the remaining state selections have high habitat values and are still accessible.

Easements DNR will request BLM to reserve easements across lands conveyed to Chugach Alaska Corp. conveyances under ANCSA Section 17(b) to ensure road access to resources on state land.

Mineral leasehold location In the beds of the Kulthieth River and its tributaries that support anadromous fish, new mineral entry will be allowed only under leasehold location in order to protect high quality anadromous fish habitat and to avoid impacts to water quality that is essential for sustaining the productivity of the Yakataga area's commercial, sport, and community harvest fisheries. See the Appendix B for a map showing the areas of leasehold location.

■ General information

Land conveyances to Chugach Alaska Corporation in T19S R15E could block access to state-owned land in the upper Kulthieth River valley.

The Kulthieth River is the primary spawning and rearing area for coho salmon in the Kaliakh watershed.

² In accordance with the December 1994 settlement agreement, DNR will classify this unit for Forestry and Wildlife Habitat. This is a deviation from the general policy of this area plan not to designate and classify Level 1 uses that have inherent management conflicts. The conflicts between designated uses in this subunit may necessitate detailed site-specific planning. Before DNR may sell state timber between Cape Suckling and Icy Bay (other than the university's timber harvest or small sales incidental to construction and operation of a cabin and trail system), DNR must update the plan including re-examination of the forestry and other land classifications.

Subunit 3b-7 - Robinson Mountains northeast of Odor Creek

■ **Designation**

General uses (G)

■ **Management intent**

Allow general multiple uses.

■ **Guidelines:** None. There are no guidelines specific to this subunit.

■ **General information**

See the table at the end of this unit.

Subunit 3b-8 - alpine slopes on north fork Kulthieth River

■ **Designation**

Habitat (H2)

■ **Management intent**

Maintain conditions for fish and wildlife habitat. All activities will minimize significant adverse impacts to fish and wildlife habitat.

■ **Guidelines:** None. There are no guidelines specific to this subunit.

■ **General information**

See the table at the end of this unit.

Subunit 3b-9 - alpine slopes on south fork Kulthieth River

■ **Designation**

Habitat (H2)

■ **Management intent**

Maintain conditions for fish and wildlife habitat. All activities will minimize significant adverse impacts to habitat resources.

■ **Guidelines:** None. There are no guidelines specific to this subunit.

■ **General information**

See the table at the end of this unit.

Subunit 3b-10 - Hope Creek headwaters

■ Designation

Forestry and habitat (F2, H2)

■ Management intent

Maintain opportunities for road access for timber management in adjoining units. Maintain conditions for fish and wildlife habitat. All activities will minimize significant adverse impacts to timber resources and production and to fish and wildlife habitat. Timber harvests may occur if the FLUP determines that mapped goat habitat does not exist. Also refer to Guideline B in the Fish and Wildlife Habitat Section of Chapter 2.

■ Guidelines:

Alternate road corridors

There are two possible road corridors to access timber in the Hope Creek drainage. One route would parallel the Duktoth River and access the Hope Creek drainage via Hope Pass. This route would cross Subunits 3b-10, 3c-2, 3c-3, and 3d-2. DNR prefers this Hope Pass route because it avoids areas with sensitive goat habitat that DNR recommends be added to the Refuge.

An alternative route is located south of Kulthieth Mountain through Subunits 3d-1 and 3c-4. This Kulthieth Mountain route passes near sensitive goat habitat and may result in greater disturbance and overhunting. DNR will authorize a road south of Kulthieth Mountain if the applicant demonstrates to the satisfaction of the department that it is not feasible and prudent to use the Hope Pass route. If this route is used, DNR may authorize timber harvest adjacent to the road to help fund the road construction, if the timber harvest is consistent with the purposes of the Refuge.

Timber harvest

Timber harvest may occur if the FLUP determines that mapped goat habitat does not exist.

■ General information

See the table at the end of this unit.

Subunit 3b-11 - northern Kulthieth Mountains

■ Designation

Harvest (HV1)

■ Management intent

Protect or enhance conditions for fish and wildlife harvest, particularly for hunting mountain goats. All activities will, to the extent feasible and prudent, avoid significant adverse impacts to harvest activities.

■ **Guidelines:** None. There are no guidelines specific to this subunit.

■ General information

See the table at the end of this unit.

Unit 3B - upper Kaliakh River and tributary drainages

Area # & name	Designation	Resource or Use (See the resource reports and maps for more complete information)	Background
3b-1 Donald Ridge	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ alpine ■ guided goat hunting ■ goose molting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ state selection
3b-2 Kosakuts & upper Kaliakh rivers	F2 H2 RD2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ immature spruce & hemlock at lower elevations; mature hemlock and spruce on slopes ■ mountain goat winter habitat on lower elevations on south and east slopes ■ anadromous fish spawning and rearing ■ bear summer/fall concentrations on Kaliakh River and west fork of Tsivat River ■ goose molting in northern subunit ■ eagle feeding concentration areas along upper Kosakuts and Kaliakh Rivers ■ recreational use of Kaliakh River; floating and float-based fishing and hunting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mostly state and Native selection; one-fifth state-owned ■ Native selections may have been relinquished recently; final plan will confirm status of selections.
3b-3 unnamed lone mountain	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ mature spruce and hemlock; rated inoperable for commercial harvest on Yakataga timber ratings map ■ moose habitat on west side ■ swan nesting & rearing concentration area ■ eagle feeding concentration area ■ anadromous fish spawning and rearing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Borders Yakataga State Game Refuge.
3b-4 Robinson Mtns east of Kosakuts River	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ mostly alpine ■ sparse stands of immature cottonwood and spruce ■ swan nesting & rearing concentration areas ■ eagle feeding concentration area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ State and Native selection. ■ Native selections may have been relinquished recently; final plan will confirm status of selections.
3b-5 above Kaliakh and Kulthieth rivers' confluence	F2 H2 RD2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ immature cottonwood and riparian willow and alder ■ extensive bear & moose concentration areas ■ moose rutting area between rivers above confluence ■ eagle feeding concentration area ■ eagle nesting concentration at Kaliakh and Kulthieth confluence ■ trumpeter swan nesting and rearing concentration area ■ recreation uses: sport fishing, camping ■ anadromous fish spawning and rearing: Kulthieth River is the primary coho spawning and rearing area for the Kaliakh River system ■ upper Kaliakh River is used for floating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Northern half is state- and Native-selected. ■ Native selections may have been relinquished recently; final plan will confirm status of selections.

Unit 3B - upper Kaliakh River and tributary drainages

Area # & name	Designation	Resource or Use (See the resource reports and maps for more complete information)	Background
3b-6 upper Kulthieth River valley	F1 H1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ mature hemlock and spruce ■ mountain goat winter habitat on south & east slopes north of Kulthieth River ■ marten habitat throughout ■ beaver & otter in lowland & riparian areas ■ brown bear summer and fall ■ Kulthieth River is primary coho spawning area for Kaliakh River system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Eastern headwaters are state-owned; western half of this subunit is state and Native selected.
3b-7 Robinson Mountains northeast of Odor Creek	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ alpine ■ no identified resource values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Includes state and Native selection in eastern part of subunit
3b-8 alpine slopes on north fork Kulthieth River	H2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ bear spring feeding concentration area 	
3b-9 alpine slopes on south fork Kulthieth River	H2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ bear spring feeding concentration area 	
3b-10 Hope Creek headwaters	F2 H2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ mature hemlock and spruce ■ mountain goat winter habitat on most south facing slopes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Borders that portion of the former Yakataga Special Management Area (SMA) that is recommended for addition to the Yakataga State Game Refuge.
3b-11 northern Kulthieth Mountains	HV1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ mostly alpine ■ stands of immature spruce in 10% of unit ■ mature spruce and hemlock in 15% of unit ■ mountain goat winter habitat & harvest area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Borders that portion of the former Yakataga Special Management Area (SMA) that is recommended for addition to the Yakataga State Game Refuge.