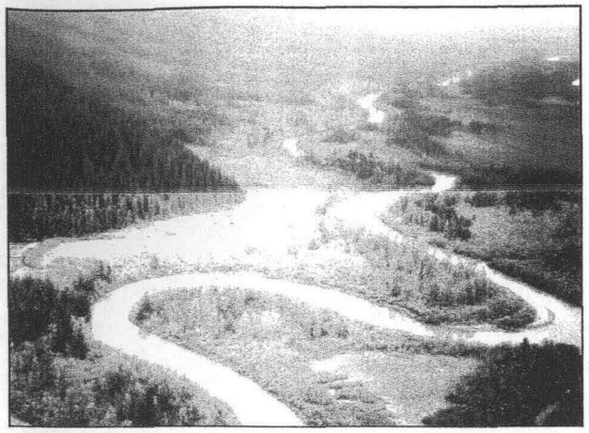


Kulthieth River valley

YAKATAGA AREA PLAN

SUMMARY BROCHURE

April 1995

PURPOSE OF THE YAKATAGA AREA PLAN

The Yakataga Area Plan prescribes how the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will manage approximately 1,384,000 acres of state land along the northern Gulf of Alaska coast, between Cape Suckling and Alsek River. The plan applies to state uplands, tidelands, submerged lands, and shorelands. The plan classifies these lands to indicate their primary uses, and provides guidelines for leases and permits. It identifies land to be sold and other land to be retained in state ownership. The plan restricts mineral entry in the shorelands of several rivers. The Yakataga Area Plan does not make decisions for federal, borough, Native, or private lands, nor does it affect fishing and hunting regulations.

WHERE TO GET A COPY OF THE PLAN

Copies of the complete plan have been sent to the municipal planning offices in Yakutat and Cordova and the public libraries in Anchorage, Cordova, Gustavus, Juneau, Seward, and Yakutat.

Copies are also available for use or purchase from DNR in Anchorage and Juneau. Contact the DNR Public Information Center at 3601 C Street, Suite 200, Anchorage; or the DNR Division of Land public counter at 400 Willoughby Avenue, Suite 400, Juneau.

This brochure summarizes the principal policies of the Yakataga Area Plan.

Bald eagle

HOW THE PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

The Yakataga Area Plan is the product of a four-year effort by DNR staff, a planning team, and the public. The planning team represented 12 state resource agencies. Advisors from federal agencies, local communities, and interest groups helped to shape the policies of this plan. DNR held several public meetings in five interested communities to collect public comments. Following is an outline of the planning process:

THE PROCESS

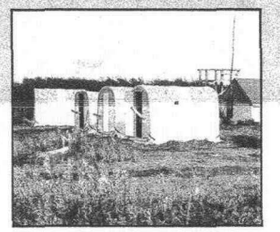
☑ Identify issues	spring 1991
☑ Map and analyze resources	1991 to 1994
☑ Develop and review management alternatives	spring 1992
☑ Prepare the draft plan	fall 1992 - spring 1993
☑ The public and agencies review the draft plan	summer 1993
☑ Prepare the final plan using comments on the draft plan	fall 1993 through 1994*
☑ DNR adopts the plan which becomes DNR policy for managing state lands in the Yakataga area	spring 1995

*The plan was delayed pending settlement of the Mental Health Trust litigation and the University timber rights litigation.

RESOURCE POLICIES OF THIS PLAN

Land use designations in this plan indicate the primary use for a particular area. DNR will manage resources and activities so as to promote or protect this use. The designated use does not preclude other uses: DNR lands are intended for multiple uses.

The area plan presents general management intent and guidelines. Further planning and guidelines may be needed when long-term or widespread development is proposed for a particular site.



Tsiu River camp

Forestry

The Yakataga area has the most valuable timber the state owns. The plan designates approximately 90 percent of the state forest lands in the Yakataga area for forestry.

There will be intensive state timber harvest from Duktoth River east to Icy Cape. The University of Alaska holds one-time timber cutting rights to most of the timber in this area.

For the next twenty years (until 2014), the only harvest of state timber in the planning area west of Duktoth River will be small sales incidental to developing and operating a cabin and trail system. DNR will re-evaluate the area plan and the timber harvest rate before considering timber harvest west of Duktoth River.

The Yakataga Area Plan applies guidelines for state timber harvest. These guidelines include criteria for locating roads, size and shape of clear cuts, and retaining timber in river corridors. The plan supports three log transfer facilities (two in Icy Bay and one in Yakutat Bay).

Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Harvest

In developing the Yakataga Area Plan, DNR and the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) jointly compiled an atlas of important fish and wildlife habitat and harvest areas.

The area plan recommends that the state legislature add 13,000 acres along the lower Kaliakh River to the Yakataga State Game Refuge. This addition would protect mountain goat habitat, which the current refuge lacks. The area plan designates most of the large river corridors for habitat, as well as most marine waters. In fish and wildlife areas not designated for habitat, the plan's guidelines will minimize or mitigate the effects of other activities on habitat. Several specific habitat provisions include:

Mountain goat habitat The plan prohibits timber harvest within mapped mountain goat winter habitat.

Coastal habitat The plan establishes a 500-foot-wide buffer of timber along the coast, to protect important habitat for species that feed and travel along the coast, such as bears, land otters, wolves, and bald eagles. The plan's guidelines limit forestry activities and new surface uses in this 500-foot-wide buffer.

Riparian habitat Setbacks for building along water bodies will help protect riparian habitat for fish and wildlife. Along the five largest streams on state land, the plan establishes special management zones to ensure that any forestry activities will be compatible with habitat and recreation values.

Other habitat provisions DNR will apply additional specific habitat protection measures when reviewing timber harvest plans submitted by the University.

Hunting and fishing areas Most marine waters and river corridors are designated for fish and wildlife harvest to protect commercial, sport, and personal use fisheries. Several upland areas are also designated for fish and wildlife harvest based on established hunting and fishing patterns.

The area plan supports hunting and fishing by protecting habitat, by retaining in public ownership lands that the public now uses for hunting and fishing, and by reserving public access along water bodies.

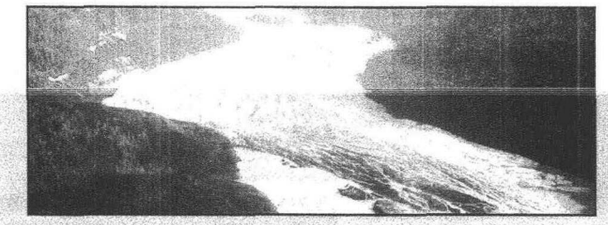
Recreation and tourism

Recreation and tourism have potential to increase in the Yakataga area. A primary attraction is the variety and drama of the glacial, forest, and coastal scenery. Other important attractions are the fish and wildlife and the remote and rugged setting.

Most coastal and river areas are designated for recreation. The plan establishes a 500-foot coastal buffer and recreation management zones along several rivers. DNR will reserve camping and public access sites between Cape Suckling and Duktoth River. The plan also has guidelines for protecting scenic quality. DNR has placed a moratorium on timber harvest west of the Duktoth River for at least 20 years.

The plan allows development of a cabin and trail system to be funded by the University. In addition, the plan identifies several locations where DNR may promote commercial recreation by competitive bid.

The plan encourages DNR to evaluate lands near Bering Glacier in the future for a potential state park. The Bering Glacier area has outstanding tourism and scientific research opportunities.



Tidewater glacier

Mining and materials

The established mining region at Cape Yakataga has been designated for minerals development.

State lands are open to mineral entry unless specifically closed. The plan applies mineral closures or leaseholds to 13 streambeds and estuaries with low mineral potential but high fish productivity, including the Situk River. All other state lands are open for mineral exploration and entry, regardless of land use designation.

The area plan has guidelines for gravel extraction on state lands, particularly to minimize disturbance in river flood plains.

DNR has a separate planning process for oil and gas lease sales. DNR uses a 5-Year Leasing Program to decide on oil and gas leasing. Subsequent to a lease sale, surface land uses related to oil and gas development are subject to this plan.

Land sales

Approximately 1,140 acres in the vicinity of Yakutat are designated for settlement. These areas are near municipal services provided by the City and Borough of Yakutat. DNR has not scheduled any near-term land disposals. Some of these lands may be conveyed to the City and Borough of Yakutat under their municipal entitlement.

State land in remote parts of the Yakataga planning area is generally ill-suited or too remote for settlement and will be retained in state ownership. This avoids high fiscal costs to provide government services in remote areas. In addition, state forestry and habitat management are more efficient with a large, contiguous land base.

Public and private access

The plan has guidelines to protect anchorages, trails, and access to public and private lands and resources.

The plan establishes widths for reserved public access on state lands adjacent to water bodies. The plan has particular access provisions for the Tsiu and Kaliakh rivers to protect the set net and sport fisheries and access to the Yakataga State Game Refuge. DNR will ensure public access along the main haul road between Icy Bay and Cape Yakataga. Where the main haul road crosses non-DNR lands, DNR will seek a right-of-way.

Waterfront development and shoreline use

Four areas in Yakutat Bay and Icy Bay are designated for waterfront development. No suitable sites were identified along the outer coastline because of the hazards from storms and shoreline instability. The plan provides information on natural hazards in certain coastal areas and river corridors.

The plan sets policies for coordinating tideland use with owners of non-state uplands.

Development guidelines for tidelands and shorelines will minimize impacts to habitat, natural hydrology, and public use. The plan establishes widths for reserved public access, building setbacks, fish management zones, and recreation zones along lakes, streams, and marine waters.

LAND USE DESIGNATIONS AND ACREAGE SUMMARY ❖ BY SUBUNIT*

The land use designations in this table are abbreviated as follows:

F	= forestry	HV	= fish and wildlife harvest	S	= settlement
G	= general uses	M	= minerals development	T	= transportation
H	= fish and wildlife habitat	R	= recreation and tourism	WD	= waterfront development

In the table below, the numeral 1 indicates a designated use with high priority, and the numeral 2 indicates a designated use with lesser priority. An "x" means that the designated use was not rated as to priority. Chapter 3 of the area plan gives a detailed explanation of the designation system.

Upland designations

Subunit #	Acres	Land use designations						
		F	G	H	HV	M	R	S
1a-1	3,004			1				
1a-2	2,082	1						
1a-3	7,272			1			2	
1a-4	3,932	1						
1a-5	3,662			1	1		1	
1a-6	879	1						
1a-7	7,322	1						
1a-8	1,733						1	
1a-9	8,524			1			2	
1a-10	1,835						1	
1a-11	1,439	1						
1a-12	579			1	2		1	
2a	9,646		x					
2b	96,984			1			1	
3a-1	6,747				1		1	
3a-2	4,814				1		1	
3a-3	3,186			1	1		2	
3b-1	1,310		x					
3b-2	15,173	2		2			2	
3b-3	1,461		x					
3b-4	4,267		x					
3b-5	8,161	2		2			2	
3b-6	17,883	1		1				
3b-7	21,247		x					
3b-8	920			2				
3b-9	1,262			2				
3b-10	2,278	2		2				
3b-11	1,679				1			
3c-1	4,392	2		1	1			
3c-2	2,955	2		2			2	
3c-3	3,612	1						
3c-4	13,105			1	1			
3d-1	9,977			1			1	

Upland designations

Subunit #	Acres	Land use designations						
		F	G	H	HV	M	R	S
3d1a	1,266	1						
3d-2	3,212	1						
3d-3	5,233	1						
3d-4	1,320		x					
3d-5	8,515		x					
3d-6	2,273	2						
3e-1	4,093			1				
3e-2	9,528	1						
3e-3	640			1				
3e-4	36,271		x					
3e-5	6,262			1	1			
3e-5a	518	1						
3e-6	7,573	1						
3e-7	4,230			1	1			
3e-8	3,151	2				x		
3e-9	6,016	1						
3e-10	320			1				
3e-11	7,978	1						
3e-12	9,132		x					
3e-13	5,594		x					
4a-1	2,015	1						
4a-2	2,581			1	1			
4a-3	9,026			2				
8a-1	267						1	x
8a-2	278							x
8a-3	346							x
8a-4	conveyed to Mental Health Trust							
8a-5	126							x
8a-6	1,244	2		1	1		1	
8a-7	177		x					
8a-8*	584			1	1		1	
8a-9	122							x

*Subunit 8a8 is also designated for Heritage Resources.

Tideland, submerged land and shoreland designations

Subunit #	Acres	Land use designations			
		H	HV	R	WD, M, or T
1b	52,943	2	2		
3a-4	61,675	2	2		
3a-5	1,359	1	1		
3a-6	1,590	1	1		
3e-14	108,131	2	2		
3e-15	3,252		2		x
3e-16	1,706		1		
3e-17	1,024	1	1		
4b	1,199				x
5a	59,741	1		1	
5b	3,324	1		1	
5c	2,438			2	x
5d	1,904	1			
6a-1	86,107	1	2		
6a-2	2,524	1	1		
6a-3	2,827	1	1		
6a-4	5,187	1	2		
6b	269,179	1	2	1	
6c	21,383	1	1	1	
6d	48,827	2	2	1	
7a	164,855	2	2	1	
7b	92	1	1	1	
7c-1	999	1	2	2	
7c-2	205	1	1	2	
7d	4,698	1	1	2	
7e	200	1	1	2	
7f	3,177	1	1	1	
7g	10,914	2	2	1	
7h	100	1	1	1	
7i	2,027	1	1	1	
7j	12,863	1	1	1	
8b-1	33,223	1	1	1	
8b-2	613	1	1	1	
8b-3	247				x
8b-4	80	1			
8b-5	21			1	x
8b-6	127				x

* See maps on reverse side for subunit locations.

OTHER FEATURES

Convey state-selected lands

The state has filed applications (selections) with the federal government to receive title to certain federal lands in the planning area. The plan recommends that DNR postpone conveyance of lands selected at Bering Glacier until the glacier retreats farther, so that only emerging uplands, and not submerged lands, are counted toward the statehood entitlement.

Conveyance of state land selections in the upper Kulthieth and Kaliakh River watersheds has been postponed until Native corporation conveyances are complete so that DNR does not acquire isolated, fragmented parcels.

Logging truck on Icy Cape road

Other plans and programs

The policies of the Yakataga Area Plan were written to be consistent with the Alaska Coastal Management Program. The eastern part of the planning area is within the newly-established City and Borough of Yakutat. DNR's area plan was developed before the City and Borough had developed a district coastal program or a comprehensive plan. However, borough officials represented their interests during the area plan process.

HOW THE PLAN CAN BE CHANGED

The plan must be flexible to respond to changes in information, technology, economics, and public values. The plan may be amended with the approval of the Commissioner of DNR, after public review and consultation with affected agencies. DNR intends that an interagency planning team review this plan every five to ten years to determine if conditions warrant updating the plan.

Special exceptions to the plan can be made in cases where it is impossible or impractical to comply with the plan, and when an alternative course of action will meet the plan's purpose. Special exceptions require public notice. Minor changes to the plan, such as clarifications or corrections, do not require public review.

This brochure was released by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources and printed in Anchorage, Alaska, at a cost of $8.55 per copy. Its purpose is to provide the public with a summary of the policies in the Yakataga Area Plan.

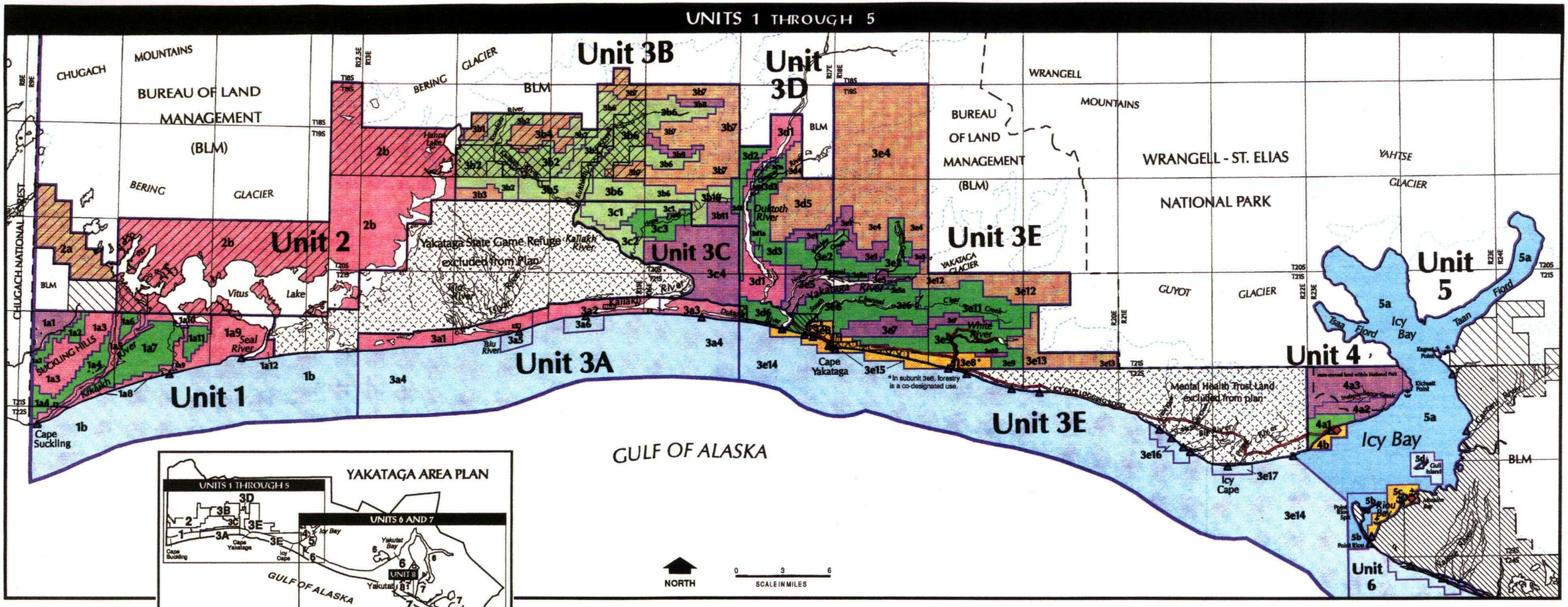
ALASKA DIVISION OF LAND

Alaska Department of NATURAL RESOURCES

YAKATAGA AREA PLAN

SUMMARY BROCHURE

April 1995



LEGEND

LAND STATUS

STATE OWNED OR SELECTED - SUBJECT TO PLAN

- NO PATTERN — state owned - patented or tentatively approved
- state selected
- state and Native selected (dual selection)
- state selected and Federal mining claims

STATE OWNED - EXCLUDED FROM PLAN

- State owned but excluded from plan
- State owned - Yakutat airport

OTHER LAND OWNERSHIP

- Native owned - patented or interim conveyed
- Native selected
- University owned
- LABELED — Federal
- Federal conservation system unit boundary
- municipal
- private, including Native allotments

Note: These maps show generalized land status. Additional categories of land ownership and use exist in the Yakataga planning area, but are too small or complex to be depicted here. See the individual unit maps in the Yakataga Area Plan for detailed land status information.

DESIGNATIONS

- Forestry - primary use
- Forestry - codesignated with other uses
- Fish & wildlife habitat & harvest on uplands - primary use(s)
- Fish & wildlife habitat & harvest on waterways - primary use(s)
- Recreation, habitat & harvest on uplands
- Recreation, habitat & harvest on waterways
- Settlement
- Waterfront development, mining, or transportation
- General uses

AREAS WITH RESTRICTIONS ON NEW MINERAL ENTRY

State lands are open to mineral entry, unless specifically closed. Two streambeds in the planning area are closed to new mineral entry to protect the most productive state-owned stream and estuarine fish habitats. In eleven streams or estuaries, mineral entry is restricted to leasehold location. These areas are too small to be shown here. See the Yakataga Area Plan for maps and lists of areas with restricted mineral entry.

MAP FEATURES

- Yakataga Area Plan boundary
- management unit boundary
- 1a1 — subunit boundary and number (table on reverse side lists acreage and land use designation for each subunit)
- road
- log transfer facility (LTF)
- anchorage
- anadromous fish stream mouth

*In subunit 8a6, forestry is a secondary use, limited to small, selective sales.