

1b. Middle Little Susitna River Subunit

Background

MILES OF RIVER/RIVER CHARACTERISTICS, RM 65.5 to RM 74

This subunit includes that portion of the Little Susitna River within the city of Houston boundaries. all but one river mile of the subunit is shorelands with no associated uplands. this segment of the river is about 50 feet wide. The upland tract in this subunit has little dry land; it is 60 to 75 percent contiguous wetland, and three- to five-percent non-contiguous wetland.

LAND OWNERSHIP

State	433 acres
Mental health trust	280 acres
Total	713 acres

CAMPING

There are three developed campgrounds adjacent to this subunit. One is run by the city of Houston and two by businesses.

The following undeveloped sites on the river have been identified:

primary campsites	8
secondary campsites	8
marginal campsites	18

DEVELOPMENT

There are numerous homes and businesses adjacent to this subunit. The George Parks Highway and Alaska Railroad bridges cross the river. two major boat launches are located in the vicinity of the Parks Highway bridge.

ACCESS

The George Parks Highway crosses the river at RM 69.5 and parallels the river for about a mile.

Management Intent

Class II. Because of its proximity to the George Parks Highway, the City of Houston, and recreation areas, this subunit receives high public use year-round. In the summer there are high quality fishing and camping opportunities for power-boaters, floaters, and bank users in an accessible, moderately developed natural area. In the winter, the subunit is used by snowmachiners, dog mushers, and skiers. Salmon spawning habitat is located in this subunit. The subunit will be

managed to provide and enhance recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat while accommodating uses associated with private lands adjacent to the subunit. Maintaining public use sites is a high priority. Because of high public use, maintaining existing public use sites and facilities will be the management focus. There are several residences and businesses in the Houston area adjacent to the subunit. There are no non-motorized areas in this subunit. A voluntary no-wake area is proposed near Houston to protect public safety.

Management Guidelines

Voluntary No-wake Area. See management guidelines for the Little Susitna River Management Unit in this chapter.

Trails. To discourage trespass on private lands, public pedestrian access should be clearly marked adjacent to the George Parks Highway. Heavily used trails that are causing erosion or bank failure may need to be relocated or reconstructed.

Public Information. At the public parking area adjacent to the George Parks Highway, a kiosk should be established which displays information on the Recreation Rivers. Signs should also be placed on the north and south side of the George Parks Highway Bridge identifying it as a Recreation River.

Public Use Sites

See *Public Use Sites* in Chapter 2 for management guidelines. Specific locations are shown on maps at the end of this unit.

- PU 1b.1 **George Parks Highway Bridge** (RM 69.8). Public use is heavy on both sides of the road between the highway and railroad bridges. There is one developed and one undeveloped parking area on the north side of the highway bridge. Bank fishing and day use are common. Floatboats are also launched from the parking areas.
- PU 1b.2 **Houston Campground** (RM 70.5). The river banks in this area are used for fishing and day use.