

Special Regulations

Fish Creek, a tributary of Clear Creek, is designated a catch and release special management area for rainbow trout. Only unbaited, single-hook artificial lures can be used.

WILDLIFE*Moose*

A resident moose population occurs throughout the unit. Moose from other areas migrate into the lower portion of the unit during the fall and winter seasons.

Bear

The unit provides food and cover for bears. Black bear and brown bear begin to frequent the lowlands in early May, with high spring densities of black bear at the mouth of the river. During June, July, and August bear concentrate along portions of the unit where salmon can be caught. Brown bears cover large areas in search of food, and depend on the river as a transportation corridor.

Bald eagles

There are two known bald eagle nests on the lower Talkeetna River and another just outside the unit on the Susitna River. Nest trees are primarily black cottonwood over fifty-feet tall that are within twenty feet of the river.

Trumpeter Swans

No swan nests are known to occur in the unit. However, the unit probably serves as a migration and staging area in the fall.

Hunting

Moose and bear hunting is concentrated in the lower reaches of the management unit, where foot, boat and off-road vehicle access is possible. The river also serves as a transportation corridor for hunters using boats to access upriver and tributary hunting areas, including Sheep River, Wiggle, and Iron creeks. These upriver locations receive significant use. Wildlife viewing, particularly of moose, is important in the Talkeetna area.

ACCESS

The Talkeetna Spur Road connects the town of Talkeetna to the Parks Highway. In Talkeetna, there are boat launches where powerboats can access the river and floaters can take-out. There are several airstrips in the Talkeetna area but none in the management unit. Some gravel bars on the lower river are infrequently used for landing. There are no lakes in the management unit and the river is too swift for floatplane landings. Powerboaters use the river up to the mouth of Iron Creek. Because of Class IV whitewater, the canyon is accessible only by rafts and kayaks.

3a. Lower Talkeetna River

Background

MILES OF RIVER/RIVER CHARACTERISTICS, RM 0 to RM 15.5 (excluding the mouth of Clear Creek)

This subunit begins at the confluence of the Talkeetna River with the Susitna River and extends to the mouth of Sheep River. The mouth of Clear Creek is in a different subunit. The subunit includes the wide floodplain between the hills and bluffs along the river. Less than 5 percent of this subunit is contiguous wetland.

LAND OWNERSHIP

State	5,907 acres
State/Mental Health	1,077 acres
University of Alaska	204 acres
13 Private Parcels	124 acres
Total	7,312 acres

WILDLIFE

There are two bald eagle nests located near the mouth of the river. One is in the subunit, one is just downriver from the subunit on the Susitna River.

CAMPING

There are two public campgrounds adjacent to this subunit near the town of Talkeetna. In addition, several undeveloped campsites have been identified:

Primary campsites	2
Secondary campsites	9

An unlimited number of marginal campsites are available because of the large number of gravel bars.

DEVELOPMENT

There is little development in the unit. One cabin on the north side of the river by the railroad bridge, and the ruins of another cabin are nearby. The railroad bridge is the only bridge within the subunit. Some earthwork has been done and old railroad cars have been buried to make a slow-water area to launch boats at the Talkeetna boat launch. Existing erosion control structures include rip-rap at RM 4. The USGS maintains a gauging station just upriver from the town of Talkeetna. There is also a cable crossing the river at this location. Numerous cabins and businesses are adjacent to this subunit in Talkeetna and in the Chase and Talkeetna Bluffs subdivisions. There are two public facilities in Talkeetna, the Talkeetna boat launch/campground on the river and another

campground on the west side of town. The Talkeetna sewage plant is adjacent to, but not in, the management unit. The all-terrain vehicle bridge across Larson Creek is just outside the subunit.

ACCESS

The Talkeetna Spur Road and the Alaska Railroad provide the primary access to the mouth of the Talkeetna River. There are a number of roads associated with private lands in town that parallel the river, and an ORV trail from the Bartlett Earth Station to Larson Creek. From there, trails branch out to Larson Lake, Bald Mountain, and Sheep River. Branches of this ORV trail also lead to cabins in the two major subdivisions in the area. The intertie transmission line has been used to access the Talkeetna River from the south. There are also a number of trails on the north side of the river between the railroad and Clear Creek. The Talkeetna River and associated trails are used extensively in winter, particularly below Clear Creek. Powerboats launch at Talkeetna and travel upriver as far as Iron Creek. The primary destination during the peak fishing season is the mouth of Clear Creek.

HERITAGE RESOURCES

The heritage site potential is high and includes the Alaska Railroad bridge, historical features near Talkeetna, and remnants of an old Tanaina settlement.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

There are some materials extraction sites in Talkeetna adjacent to the subunit.

Management Intent

Class II. Because of its proximity to the town of Talkeetna, the river is easily accessed by a variety of summer and winter users. This subunit features high quality fishing, hunting, and camping opportunities for powerboaters and floaters. A boat launch, roads and trails along the south side of the river, and several subdivisions are located within the subunit. In winter, the subunit is heavily used for snowmachining, dogmushing, and

cross-country skiing. The subunit will be managed to provide and enhance these recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat while accommodating uses associated with private lands. Maintaining public use sites is a high priority. There are no non-motorized areas in this subunit.

Management Guidelines

Boating Restrictions. None

Heritage Resources. Historic and prehistoric sites should be evaluated for their interpretive values for tourism and general public interest. This particularly applies to the lower Talkeetna River because of ready public access and concentration of sites.

Public Information. A kiosk which includes information on Talkeetna Recreation River should be constructed at the Talkeetna boat launch.

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 3a.1 River Mouth and Railroad Bridge (RM 0.0).** The river mouth and railroad bridge are heavily used by Talkeetna residents and visitors to the area for fishing and recreation.
- PU 3a.2 Boat Launch and Campground (RM 1.0).** This site is heavily used for boat launching, parking, and public uses associated with the campground.
- PU 3a.3 Larson Creek Mouth (RM 12.8)** This site provides public access to the river by road from the Bartlett Earth Station. The area is used for fishing, camping, and launching boats. The site is also one of the most popular areas for recreational use by the residents of nearby subdivisions. Because the area receives such wide use, no permits or leases should be issued which provide exclusive use of any portion of the site.
- PU 3a.4 Sheep River (RM 15).** This site is used for fishing and camping.

3b. Middle Talkeetna River Subunit

Background

MILES OF RIVER/RIVER CHARACTERISTICS, RM 15.5 to RM 31.1

This subunit begins above the mouth of Sheep River and extends to and includes the mouth of Iron Creek. Less than 5 percent of the area is contiguous wetland.

LAND OWNERSHIP

State	13,438 acres
4 Private Parcels	82 acres
Total	13,520 acres

CAMPING

The following undeveloped campsites have been identified:

Primary campsites	3
Secondary campsites	15
Marginal campsites	9 isolated sites and several segments of the river where there is an unlimited number of campsites on gravel bars.