

## 5a. Mouth of Talachulitna River Subunit

### Background

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#### MILES OF RIVER/RIVER CHARACTERISTICS, RM 0 to RM 2.8

This reach extends from the confluence of the Talachulitna and Skwentna rivers to the bottom of the Talachulitna River canyon. The river here is from 75 to 120 feet wide. Upland areas contain few wetlands: 10 percent contiguous, and 5 percent non-contiguous. The subunit also includes 3 miles of the Skwentna River.

#### LAND OWNERSHIP

State	2,242	acres
12 Private Parcels	65	acres
Total	2,307	acres

#### FISHERIES

This is a very popular fishing area.

#### WILDLIFE

There are two bald eagle nests in this subunit. One is on the edge of the unit on the banks of the Skwentna River, the other on the Talachulitna River at about RM 2. Bears concentrate near the mouth during the summer. Active trumpeter swan nests have not been sighted in recent surveys in this subunit.

#### CAMPING

The following undeveloped campsites have been identified:

Primary campsites	1
Secondary campsites	5
Marginal campsites	1

#### DEVELOPMENT

There are 5 lodges on the river between RM 0 and RM 1.5. Private cabins are located near RM 3 and RM 0.4. DFG has a cabin on the east side of the river at RM 0.5. There are various improvements along the river associated with the lodges

including steps, ramps, equipment storage, and platforms. They are particularly prevalent on the east side of the river where banks are steep and improvements were needed to access private uplands. Boats are stored adjacent to each lodge. The US Geological Survey (USGS) maintains a gauging station on the Skwentna River. The Alaska Department of Natural Resources has also installed a temporary river gauge near the mouth. Boats are stored by the public at the mouth of the Talachulitna River and at the mouth of Shell Creek. Floatplanes have established primitive tie-ups on a beach on the north side of the Skwentna River near the USGS gauging station.

#### ACCESS

There are several local foot trails associated with the lodges and cabins, including trails connecting lodges on either side of the Talachulitna River. There is one private airstrip adjacent to the Talachulitna River Lodge. Although some of the other lodges have permission to use this airstrip, it is not open to the public. The other landing area is on a bar at the mouth of Shell Creek at low water. Floatplanes also land adjacent to the USGS gauging station on the Skwentna River and near the mouth of the Talachulitna River. In the winter, the mouth of the river is used primarily by local residents for snowmachining. Recreation use is low because of its distance from Skwentna and the railbelt.

#### HERITAGE RESOURCES

The heritage site potential is high because several ancient house pits have been found in the area.

#### OTHER ACTIVITIES

There are some mining claims on the north side of the Skwentna River.

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## Management Intent

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**Class II.** Because of its relatively remote setting, this subunit receives only moderate use by recreationists during the snow-free seasons. This subunit features high quality bank and boat fishing for lodge-based users and powerboater users in a scenic, natural setting. The area also features camping opportunities and important take-out points for float trips. The area is moderately developed with commercial recreation lodges located to take advantage of the remote, wilderness

setting of adjacent areas. This subunit receives higher use than other areas along the Talachulitna River. The subunit contains salmon spawning and moose wintering habitat. It will be managed to provide and enhance recreation opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat while accommodating uses associated with private lands. Maintaining public use sites will be a high priority. There are no non-motorized areas in this subunit.

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## Management Guidelines

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**Boating Restrictions.** None.

**Iditarod National Historic Trail.** The primary trail and a connecting trail passes through this sub

unit paralleling the north side of the Skwentna River. See guidelines in Chapter 2, *Heritage Resources, Iditarod National Historic Trail.*

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## Public Use Sites

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

- PU 5a.1 USGS Gaging Station** A small bar across from this station on the Skwentna River is frequently used by floatplanes to pickup floaters. The river adjacent to the site is straight and deep, and some pilots prefer landing there rather than at the mouth of the Talachulitna River.
- PU 5a.2 Mouth of the Talachulitna River (RM 0.0).** This site is frequently used for fishing and camping. It is also used by floatplanes. During late season when the river is low, the banks and trails along the banks are frequently used because the river is too low to navigate.
- PU 5a.3 Exit of Canyon (RM 2.9).** This site is used by people who walk up from the river mouth and from lodges.