

FORESTRY

1. GOALS

A. Economic Development. Contribute to Alaska's economy with an integrated forest products industry that provides a range of job opportunities, competitively-priced products and increased per capita income, while ensuring that personal-use needs of all Alaskans are met within the capabilities of the land.

B. Land Base for Forestry. Maintain in public ownership a forested land base that is adequate to meet the economic development goal above, and is dedicated to the production of a full range of forest products for commercial and personal use and associated resources such as recreation, wildlife, soil, water and range.

C. Management of Alaska's Forest Resources. Manage the public forested lands of Alaska to guarantee their long term productivity and the continuous availability of forest products at reasonable cost, while maintaining and enhancing other valuable resources and opportunities for the public to use and enjoy them.

Protect valuable public and private forest lands from wildfire, insects and other destructive agents, and protect significant human improvements and all human life from wildfire.

2. MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

A. Multiple Use Management. Unless particular forms of natural resource use are specifically prohibited, all lands designated for forest use are intended to be managed for the fullest possible range of beneficial uses. The relative importance of each use will be specified in the management intent statements and controlled by the management guidelines for each management unit.

B. Timber Salvage. Timber with commercial or personal use value should be salvaged from lands that are to be cleared for other uses, such as farms and transportation or utility corridors. This will be accomplished by adherence to the following guidelines.

1. The Division of Forestry will review proposals for significant land clearing actions to evaluate whether the timber is worth salvaging and to advise the Director of the Division of Land and Water Management on what method of salvage to use.

2. Major projects that involve clearing large amounts of forested land — such as agricultural projects — will be planned and scheduled far enough in advance to allow a reasonable period to arrange for and carry out commercial salvage of the timber prior to clearing the land. This advance planning includes sufficient time to secure budget allocations for timber inventories to determine the most appropriate methods of harvest, and time to carry out the inventories.

3. If timber is not salvaged prior to sale of land to farmers, the value of the timber will be included in the evaluation of the land and in the price paid by the farmers, so that the state will be compensated for the loss of this public resource.

4. Where necessary as part of the most appropriate method of timber salvage, future farm home sites, wood lots, wooded wind breaks and other areas to be left uncleared will be delineated. This may be done whether timber on the project area is to be harvested in large blocks prior to sale of the farms, or whether farms are to be sold with the timber and then individual farmers are to be responsible for land clearing and possible timber harvest. The Division of Forestry will work with the Division of Agriculture, Division of Land and Water Management, Department of Fish and Game and the U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service to identify these areas to be left uncut. Identification will include flagging or otherwise marking in the field so the timber harvest operator can distinguish the areas to avoid.

5. If the timber is not salvaged prior to sale of the land, the Division of Forestry will provide technical assistance to farmers in finding and negotiating with a logging contractor, or in carrying out the harvest themselves and marketing the timber.

C. Forest Practices Act. Guidelines for forest management in this plan assume compliance with the Forest Resources and Practices Act. That act and implementing regulations will help guide forest management and help ensure protection of non-timber forest resources. The guidelines in this plan apply to forest management in addition to the direction given by the Forest Practices regulations.

D. Personal Use Wood Harvest. An important objective of forest management is to provide opportunities for people to harvest firewood and houselogs from public land for their personal use. Therefore, when forested lands are available near communities and where personal-use harvest is con-

sistent with other purposes for which the land is being managed, some of this land should be managed to help provide personal-use wood products. (For guidelines on providing personal-use harvest areas near land disposal projects, see Settlement guidelines, this chapter.)

E. Fire Management. Fire management practices, including prescribed burning, will be designed to implement the land management policies laid out in the area plan. These practices will be described in a fire management plan that is in conformance with the area plan and is developed as part of the Alaska Interagency Fire Management Council planning process.

F. Other Guidelines Affecting Forest Management. A number of other guidelines may affect forest management. For details of these guidelines, see the following sections of this chapter:

Fish and Wildlife Habitat
Settlement
Subsurface Resources and Materials
Transportation
Lakeshore Management
Public Access
Stream Corridors
Trail Management
Wetlands Management

3. LAND ALLOCATION SUMMARY

In the Susitna study area there are approximately 900,000 acres of public land with high or moderate potential for commercial timber management and a significant additional area with potential for personal use. These lands lie principally below 1,500 feet in the lowlands and river valleys between the Talkeetna Mountains on the east and the arc of the Alaska Range on the north and west. Large blocks of forest lands occur in the Susitna Lowlands, Mt. Susitna, South Parks, Petersville Road and Glenn Highway Subregions. Smaller blocks occur in the Beluga and Lake Louise Subregions.

A. Remote Forest Lands. Most (approximately 60%) of the forest lands with commercial potential are remote. The remote lands with the highest capability for forestry (based on their soils and existing vegetation) are between the Yentna and Susitna Rivers south of Petersville Road, in the Lewis, Theodore and Beluga River drainages southwest of Mt. Susitna and between Lake Creek and Donkey Slough. The plan proposes administrative or legislative establishment of state forests or forest reserves for most of these lands.

B. Accessible Forest Lands. Approximately 360,000 acres of commercial forest lands have access, or are close enough to a road (within 5-6 miles) that they probably will have road access in the near future. These accessible lands lie principally in the foothills of the Talkeetna Mountains east of the Parks Highway, along the Chulitna River, along Petersville Road and south of that road in the Peters Creek and Kroto Creek drainages. In addition, there are over 100,000 acres of forest land with potential for personal use that are close to either roads or settled areas in remote regions.

C. Allocations. In this plan approximately 464,000 acres are proposed for legislative designation as multiple use areas with forestry as one of the primary uses. Lands in the following areas are proposed for legislative or administrative designation:

1. Peters Creek — Petersville Road Subregion (150,000 acres recommended by plan)
2. Yentna-Susitna — Susitna Lowlands Subregion (approximately 40,000 acres)
3. Kashwitna — South Parks Highway Subregion (54,000 acres)
4. Mt. Susitna — Mt. Susitna Subregion (96,000 acres)
5. Lake Creek — Mt. Susitna Subregion (25,000 acres)
6. Kroto-Kahiltna — Susitna Lowlands Subregion (approximately 99,000 acres)

In addition to these proposed legislative designations, there is a substantial amount of land proposed for public retention in other management categories (e.g., recreation river corridors) where forestry is designated either a primary or secondary use.

Lands proposed for legislative designation generally are large blocks of high quality forest land, although, because they are committed to multiple use management, some portions of these areas are included in the special designations primarily for their habitat, recreation or other public use value. Other retained forest lands are extremely mixed, including both high quality forests and land where timber is relatively scarce.

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough owns approximately 185,000 acres of forested land. Due to ownership patterns and parcel sizes, however, less than 60,000 acres are suitable for commercial management. The plan designates most of this land "borough land bank;" decisions regarding appropriate uses are left to a later date when improved

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access or changing economic conditions merit reevaluation. Approximately 25,000 acres of commercial forest land near Chijuk Creek have been classified by the Borough for forestry.