

LAKE LOUISE SUBREGION



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The following section describes land use policy within the Lake Louise Subregion. It is divided into two parts. The first is an overview of resources and their management for the subregion as a whole. The second presents specific statements of management intent, land use designations, prohibited uses and management guidelines for each of the subregion's three management units. A map showing land ownership in the subregion and boundaries of management units and subunits is presented at the end of the second part.

1. SUBREGION OVERVIEW

Background

The Lake Louise Subregion contains approximately 570,000 acres of which 25,000 acres are comprised of Lakes Louise, Susitna and Tyone. The subregion's northern boundary is 15 miles north of Tyone Lake, and the western border is twelve miles west of Lake Louise. The southern border follows the boundary of the Mat-Su Borough, and the eastern border is between six and ten miles east of the borough boundary. Approximately two-thirds of the land in this subregion is state owned or selected. The remainder is mostly federal land. Private land in the area is limited to several Native allotments and a ring of lots surrounding much of Lake Louise and a scattering of lakefront lots around Lake Susitna.

The Lake Louise Subregion is a unique and popular residential and visitor recreation area, with an "interior" Alaska character quite different from the rest of the study area. The numerous lakes and streams throughout the subregion provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities, as well as habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife. Much of the ground vegetation is used by moose and caribou for browse. Present land uses include substantial amounts of hunting, fishing, and boating; seasonal/recreational settlement; wildlife photography; snowmobiling; and cross-country skiing.

In contrast to high recreational and fish and wildlife values, the potential for commercial timber harvest and agriculture is very low. This is attributable to past forest fires which have destroyed many of the hardwood

stands, high average elevation, and the scarcity of well-drained soils without permafrost.*

Road access into the subregion is by a gravel surfaced, state maintained road, from mile 160 of the Glenn Highway that runs north approximately 21 miles to the south end of Lake Louise.

Water transportation has played a key role in the development of the area. In summer months, the three large, interconnected lakes provide boat access to over 200 miles of shoreline. However, weather conditions on the main lakes often make small boat operations hazardous. Unmarked gravel bars and rock outcroppings are navigational hazards.

The numerous lakes provide excellent access for float planes. There is a state-owned 2,400-foot strip located at the south end of Lake Louise and two privately owned air strips in the area.

There are few trails within the subregion, largely due to the difficulty of travel through the wet terrain. In winter months, lodge operators and cabin owners open a network of snowmachine and cross-country ski trails in the southern portion of the subregion. Routes are changed from year to year depending on game migration patterns and the best locations for ice fishing.

Management Summary

The overall intent for management of this area is to protect the quality of the physical environment and the opportunities for hunting, fishing and other forms of recreation that depend on environmental quality. A secondary objective is to offer moderate amounts of land for settlement. These potentially conflicting ends are achieved through controlling the pace, location and type of land sales.

Settlement

a. Location and Type of Sales

Land will be offered in relatively concentrated areas in order to limit impacts on habitat, water quality and hunting opportunities. Offerings around Lake Louise will include a limited number of additional lakefront lots. Most lakefront lots not already conveyed to private ownership will be retained in public ownership for recreation use. As an alternative to extensive further sales directly on the lake, 2 — 3 sites will be developed as small subdivisions at locations between Lake Louise and the shores of several large adjacent lakes. (It may be possible to offer

* A useful study that includes analysis of development potential, recreation use, vegetation, water quality protection, etc., was prepared for this area under contract to DNR, Division of Parks in the early 1970's. Readers seeking more information on the area should seek out this report. A copy of the study, entitled *Lake Louise*, is in the Southcentral Regional Office of the Division of Land and Water Management in Anchorage.

these areas as small homesteads if the boundaries are worked out carefully or if the sites are pre-staked.) Small clustered settlements at several sites around the lakeshore will be offered at spots that have adequate physical capability, good views and other recreational amenities. Possible sites include land between the main lake and either Little Lake Louise or Dog Lake, and land adjacent to the small lakes in T6N R7W S.M., section 24.

A limited number (less than 25) of the existing surveyed lots around Lake Susitna will be offered for sale. Lots selected for sale will be adjacent to lots already in private ownership.

Lake Louise East, a past remote parcel area, will remain open to settlement through the homestead program. There remain sizeable amounts of good land within this area. The Greenacres past remote parcel area, located just outside the planning area, will be closed to further land disposal, but will be open to remote cabins.

b. Pace and Amount of Sales

The new disposal offerings described above encompass a gross area of approximately 5,125 acres; with the previous remote parcel area added, the total land designated for disposals is approximately 51,205 acres. This yields a net disposal area of approximately 5,725 acres (see Table 1).

TABLE I

Acreage Identified for Settlement

	GROSS AREA (ac)	NET AREA (ac)
New Offerings	5,125	1,125
Reoffering Within Past Disposals	46,080	4,600
TOTAL	51,205	5,725

These offerings will be made slowly over the full 20-year life of the plan. Existing settlement areas and areas offered for sales in the early years of this program should be carefully monitored to determine effects of settlement on water quality and on use of the area by caribou. If it appears that there is little or no appreciable effect on caribou and on water quality, especially on the area's smaller water bodies, then the state will go ahead with the full level of sales described above.

c. Talkeetna Mountains Special Use District

This subregion is within the current boundaries of

the borough's Talkeetna Mountains Special Use District (TMSUD). The ordinance which regulates uses in this area allows land sales but requires a permit before construction of a cabin. Limitations on residential uses imposed by the TMSUD ordinance include restrictions on subdivision, the size and appearance of cabins, allowable water systems, and the methods for sanitary waste disposal. Conditions for issuance of a specific permit may be modified on a case-by-case basis.

Agriculture and Grazing

Agriculture and grazing potential within this subregion are very low and no publicly owned lands are designated for these uses. Any proposed agricultural activities would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Forestry

Forest stands are limited in this area; growth rates are slow, and careful management of the few existing stands is important. Forestry is not designated as either a primary or secondary use in this subregion. Limited timber harvests for personal use may be permitted on a case-by-case basis.

Fish and Wildlife and Recreation

This area provides an abundance of accessible public recreation opportunities, including hunting, fishing, boating, skiing and snowmobiling. Areas not described as sites for settlement — the majority of the subregion — will be retained in public ownership and managed to protect habitat and allow public recreational use. Land along the western third of the subregion will be proposed for legislative designation to protect the area's caribou population (see more on this proposal in the section on the Talkeetna Mountains Subregion).

Several areas within this subregion contain concentrations of trumpeter swan nesting sites. Where these occur on state lands the state will try to control development to protect these areas and may in the future recommend these areas be designated by the governor or legislature as swan reserves. The same policy is recommended for similar federal lands. On federal lands these areas should be considered for designation as areas of critical environmental concern.

Recreation opportunities will be provided through the following actions:

- a. Developed recreation sites — There is a state recreation site on Lake Louise and a number of lakeshore tent camping areas and canoe trails. The recreation site should be a high priority for improvements such as tree planting, grading, etc. The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation has identified several smaller lake complexes in areas near Lake Louise

that should receive further study to determine their feasibility as canoe trail systems and/or camping sites.

- b. *Dispersed recreation areas* — All areas retained in public ownership will be managed to protect or improve recreation opportunities. Corridors along the Little Nelchina River and Tyone River will be retained and managed for recreational use. The land surrounding Susitna Lake and the Tyone Lake-Tyone River system will be recommended for legislative or administrative designation to protect its public recreation and wildlife values.
- c. *Within disposal areas* — Trails, public access sites, and small waterfront access and recreation sites will be identified and protected within the boundaries of all disposal areas.
- d. *Major trails* — A system of trails will be identified and retained in public ownership. (A number of trails already have been identified within the Lake Louise East past disposal area.)

Subsurface

Mineral and energy resources within the unit are minimal and generally are regarded as not having economic development potential. Mineral entry, coal leasing and coal prospecting, however, will be permitted throughout the subregion except in areas of existing and proposed settlement. All public land in this subregion is open to exploration and development of oil and gas.

Transportation

There are no road improvements proposed for this area. Other possible access improvement projects are described below.

A foot trail is proposed, starting at the north shore of the canal between Lake Louise and Susitna Lake. The trail would follow the shoreline around the east side of the lake until it terminates at the road on the south shoreline of Lake Louise.

A canoe portage trail has been recommended by the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation which would follow a group of lakes located near the eastern shores of Lake Louise and Lake Susitna. Other canoe trails would be possible throughout this lake-strewn region.

The state should investigate the need for public parking facilities at the south end of Lake Louise related to public recreation, hunting, use of lakefront cabins and other public activities in the area.