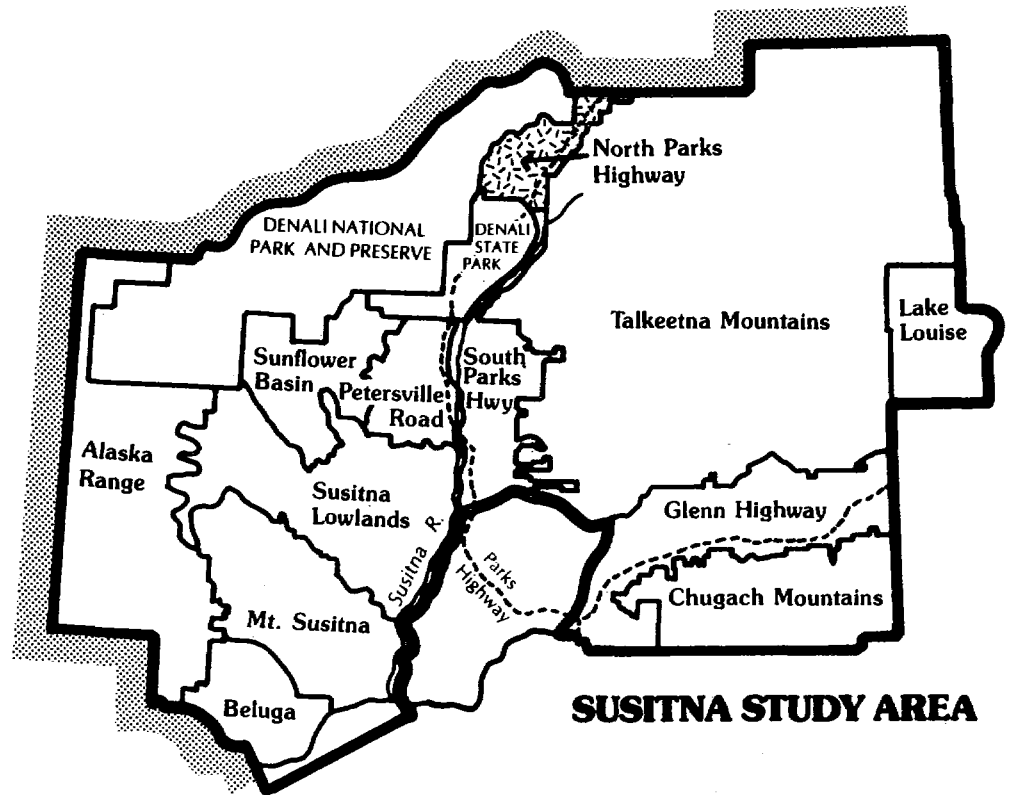


NORTH PARKS HIGHWAY SUBREGION



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The following section describes land use policy within the North Parks Highway Subregion. It is divided into two parts. The first part provides an overview of resources and their management for the entire subregion. The second part 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 North Parks Highway Subregion encompasses the Parks Highway and Alaska Railroad from the northern border of Denali State Park (near Chulitna Pass) north to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough boundary. It extends east to the Talkeetna Mountains and west to the border of Denali National Park and Preserve. The western portion includes part of the Alaska Range surrounding the Ohio Creek Drainage. There are approximately 223,300 acres in this subregion, of which 189,800 (85%) are state owned or selected, 26,800 (12%) are Native owned or selected, and 4150 acres (2%) are owned by the federal government. Approximately 1% of the subregion (approximately 2500 acres) is in private ownership.

This subregion has high values for recreation, fish and wildlife and minerals. The Parks Highway in this subregion provides one of the most scenic drives in the planning area. The area east of the Parks Highway between North Chulitna Butte and Summit Lake (Middle Fork Chulitna River) contains the finest terrain and conditions for cross-country skiing along the entire Parks Highway. It is largely a subalpine zone with broad vistas of the Alaska Range and Talkeetna Mountains. Winter recreation includes dog mushing, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing, especially in the area between Hurricane and Broad Pass. Summer activities include hiking, fishing, floating and camping. Honolulu Creek and the Middle, East and West forks of the Chulitna River are important salmon producing streams for the Cook Inlet commercial fishery and are also popular sport fishing areas. In addition, these drainages support a good deal of trapping. The Chulitna River is growing in popularity for floating and boating trips. Moose, Dall sheep and caribou from the McKinley Park herd also frequent this subregion.

There are many mining claims in this area. Claims are primarily for gold (in the Colorado area particularly), but also for tin (especially along the Ohio Creek drainage). Most mining activity, however, occurs in more remote areas closer to stream headwaters outside the subregion borders. In addition, subunit 2a includes a large limestone deposit, and sand and gravel deposits exist throughout the subregion. There is no oil and gas potential in this region and only very low to low potential for coal. There is little potential within this subregion for agriculture or grazing. There are only limited areas with timber, but these provide wood for personal use. State lands near the highway have potential for disposals for private recreation.

The Parks Highway and Alaska Railroad provide much of the area with a high degree of accessibility, with the exception of the southwest part of the area in the Alaska Range. There are airstrips at Colorado and Summit, and several major trails lead from the highway into the back country, including a jeep trail heading northwest to the Dunkle Mine area. Approximately two miles north of Hurricane Gulch there is a suspension bridge across the Chulitna River, providing foot access to the west.

Management Summary

The overall intent for land management in this subregion is to protect or improve recreation, fish and wildlife and scenic values, while allowing mining and a small number of land sales. To achieve this, the majority of public lands will be retained in public ownership with primary designations for recreation and wildlife habitat, and be open to mineral exploration and development. An overview of management of resources is presented below.

Settlement

A gross area of approximately 22,000 acres will be available for sale in the North Parks Highway. This is expected to yield net sales of approximately 2,610 acres.

New disposals will be offered near Colorado Station, Pass Creek and Granite Creek. In addition, a small amount of land will be identified for sale in the vicinity of Antimony Creek and/or Hurricane Creek (see Management Unit 3c). A large area west of the Chulitna River (over 100,000 acres) will be open for remote cabin permits.

A summary of acreage proposed for sale in the North Parks Highway Subregion is shown in Table 1, below.

TABLE 1

Acreage Identified for Settlement *		
STATE LAND	GROSS AREA (ac.)	NET AREA (ac.)
New Offerings	22,000	2,610

Portions of this subregion are within the current boundaries of the borough's Talkeetna Mountains Special Use District (TMSUD). An ordinance regulates uses in this area. The TMSUD ordinance 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

There is little potential for agriculture or grazing due to climatic limitations. There are no areas designated for agricultural use.

Forestry

Timber resources are of limited extent but locally important for personal use. Forestry designations are limited to secondary designations for personal use within proposed settlement areas.

Fish and Wildlife

The Chulitna River and its tributaries support anadromous fish, and the area provides habitat for black bear, caribou and moose. Especially valuable are winter habitat areas along the rivers. The majority of the subregion will be retained in public ownership and managed to protect fish and wildlife habitat and use areas.

Recreation

Public recreational opportunities will be protected by retaining the majority of the area in public ownership. Protection of the scenic quality of the Parks Highway corridor is a major objective. Several public recreation cabins are recommended for this subregion to accommodate and encourage winter use of the area,

particularly between Hurricane and Broad Pass. In addition, the planning team recommends development of a commercial recreation facility in this area to help support public use.

Subsurface

Mining and mineral exploration are, and will continue to be, very important activities in this subregion. The great majority of public lands will remain open to mineral entry except in areas offered for disposal. In areas easily viewed from the Parks Highway or Alaska Railroad, guidelines and stipulations attached to miscellaneous land use permits will be designed to minimize adverse impacts of mining on scenic quality. Public lands in this subregion will be available for coal leasing or prospecting except in areas offered for disposal. All public lands will be available for oil and gas exploration and development.

Transportation

No additional roads are proposed in the subregion at this time, but DOT/PF is examining possible improvements to the Parks Highway. The Colorado-Bull River Road also could be improved in the next 10 years if mining activity increases. Finally, one of the alternative routes for the proposed Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline follows the Parks Highway-Alaska Railroad corridor through this subregion. Selection of this route would result in additional transportation developments in the subregion. Several sites on state land need to be identified and reserved for material sites to accommodate DOT/PF's maintenance needs for the Parks Highway. Chapter 4 includes a more detailed description of possible transportation improvements. For this subregion these include provision of parking areas along the Parks Highway and upgrading of trails and foot bridges.

* In addition, there are four unsold surveyed parcels within Indian River Subdivision that remain available for sale.