

MANAGEMENT UNIT 4 – CHASE

MANAGEMENT INTENT

This large management unit extends from the Susitna River east to the Talkeetna Mountains and includes the Chase area, Chunilna Creek, and Sockeye Lake. Due to a large number of past open-to-entry (OTE) sites, mining claims, state remote parcel and subdivision disposals, and the proximity of Talkeetna and access via the Alaska Railroad, this area supports a number of year round and many seasonal residents. The area will be managed to support additional state land sales and to protect public access within and through the area, to protect habitat, and to provide opportunities for public recreation and harvest of personal use firewood. All public lands in this unit are available for oil and gas leasing. Public lands in this unit also will remain open to mineral location and be available for coal leasing except for existing and proposed disposal areas (subunits 4c, 4d, and 4e) and Lower Chunilna Creek Corridor (subunit 4f).

The unit has been divided into seven subunits: a retention area east of the Susitna River and north of the Chase III area (4a), a parcel of borough land between the railroad and the Chase III area (4b), the Chase III agricultural homestead area (4c), the Chase II remote parcel area (4d), an area in the eastern corner of the management unit proposed for sale (4e), Lower Chunilna Creek Corridor (4f), and Upper Chunilna Creek Corridor (4g). See the maps at the end of this section for boundaries of these areas and the accompanying chart for a summary of land uses in each subunit.

Subunit 4a encompasses some fairly steep land in the northwest corner of the management unit. The unit will be managed to protect important fish and wildlife habitat (e.g., concentrations of black and brown bear, fall and winter moose habitat) and recreation opportunities, and to provide open space.

Subunit 4b, borough land just east of the Susitna River, has high values for settlement and forestry, provides moose winter range, and has some potential for agriculture (Class III soils). This area is designated borough land bank. It is accessible by railroad, but it is unlikely to be offered for sale in the near term.

Subunit 4c (the Chase III area), was offered in 1984 for agricultural homesteads. Parcels were awarded in September, 1984, but staking was halted by court order in April, 1985. The project is currently in litigation. There are 32 parcels ranging in size from 40 to 160 acres for a total of 3,530 net acres. Local trails and access routes for existing residents have been iden-

tified to protect pedestrian access and routes of possible future roads through and within the area. Habitat concerns have been addressed primarily through retention of land within the project area with particularly high fish and wildlife values. This includes a corridor of between ¼ and 1 mile wide to be retained along Chunilna Creek (although much of the land immediately adjacent to the creek is privately owned or under mining claims). It also includes retention of much of the land in the southwest portion of the project — the area where habitat concerns are greatest. (See also the management guidelines section for this management unit.)

Subunit 4d is a large area on either side of Chunilna Creek encompassing Sockeye Lake. This entire area was offered in 1980 as the Chase II remote parcel area. It was reopened to further stakings in February, 1984 and remained open until the close of the remote parcel program on June 30, 1984.

Subunit 4e is located in the eastern portion of the management unit, approximately 14 miles east of the Alaska Railroad. It is just north of the Talkeetna River corridor and west of Disappointment Creek and encompasses several lakes. This area has values for fish and wildlife (it is near a suspected brown bear denning area), recreation, and settlement. It is designated for settlement, and probably will be offered under the homestead program.

Subunits 4f and 4g comprise the Chunilna Creek Corridor. Much of the land in this corridor is already in private ownership due to past open-to-entry disposals, or covered by mining claims. Remaining public land will be managed to protect important fish and wildlife habitat (e.g., concentrations of black and brown bear, fall and winter moose habitat and anadromous fish) and recreational opportunities, and to provide open space. The plan recommends investigating the possibility of a buy back program to restore to public ownership some of the private lots along the creek and retaining any relinquished open-to-entry sites along the creek. Due to high public values subunit 4f (Lower Chunilna Creek Corridor) will be closed to mineral entry and unavailable for coal leasing. The Upper Chunilna Creek Corridor (subunit 4g) has a surface use designation of minerals due to the high concentration of existing claims in the area.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

The complete set of areawide management guidelines is presented in Chapter 2 of this plan. All of the

LAND USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

SUBREGION South Parks HighwayMANAGEMENT UNIT 4 - Chase

SUBUNIT	LAND OWNERSHIP (GENERALIZED)	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS				PROHIBITED SURFACE USE(S)*	COMMENTS
		SURFACE		SUBSURFACE			
		PRIMARY USE(S)	SECONDARY USE(S)	LOCATABLE MINERALS	LEASEABLE MINERALS		
4a Mile 238 Retained Area	State (includes many open-to- entry parcels)	Public Recreation Wildlife Habitat	Forestry (personal use)	Open	Available for leasing	Trapper Cabins Remote Cabins Land Disposals	
4b Mile 233 Borough Land	Borough	Borough Land Bank Values: Agriculture, Forestry, Public Recreation, Settlement, Wildlife Habitat		Open	Available for leasing	---	
4c Chase III Ag.	State/ Private	Agriculture (existing homesteads)	Forestry (personal use) Wildlife Habitat	Closed	Not available for coal leasing or prospecting	Remote Cabins Trapper Cabins	
4d Chase II Remote	State/ Private	Settlement (past remote parcel offering)	Forestry (personal use) Wildlife Habitat	Closed	Not available for coal leasing or prospecting		

*Other uses such as material sales, land leases, remote cabin permits, etc., that are not specifically prohibited may be allowed. Such uses will be allowed if consistent with the management intent statement and management guidelines of this unit, and with the relevant management guidelines in place.

LAND USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY

SUBREGION South Parks Highway

MANAGEMENT UNIT 4 - Chase

SUBUNIT	LAND OWNERSHIP (GENERALIZED)	LAND USE DESIGNATIONS				PROHIBITED SURFACE USE(S)*	COMMENTS
		SURFACE		SUBSURFACE			
		PRIMARY USE(S)	SECONDARY USE(S)	LOCATABLE MINERALS	LEASEABLE MINERALS		
4e Disappointment Creek	State	Settlement	Public Rec. Wildlife Habitat	Closed prior to disposal	Not available for coal leasing or prospecting	—	Estimated net disposal area=1,040 acres
4f Lower ChuniIna Creek Corridor	State (includes many OTE parcels)	Public Recreation Water Resources Wildlife Habitat	Forestry (personal use)	Closed	Not available for coal leasing or prospecting	Trapper Cabins Remote Cabins Land Disposals Grazing	
4g Upper ChuniIna Creek Corridor	State (includes many OTE parcels)	Minerals Public Recreation Water Resources Wildlife Habitat	Forestry (personal use)	Open	Available for leasing	Trapper Cabins Remote Cabins Land Disposals Grazing	

*Other uses such as material sales, land leases, remote cabin permits, etc., that are not specifically prohibited may be allowed. Such uses will be allowed if consistent with the management intent statement and management guidelines of this unit, and with the relevant management guidelines in chapter 2.

guidelines potentially apply to uses within the management unit; however, those that are most likely to be applicable in this unit are indicated with asterisks in the list below.

- *Agriculture
- *Fish & Wildlife Habitat
- *Forestry
- *Recreation
- *Settlement
- Subsurface
- *Transportation
- Instream Flow
- *Lakeshore Management
- *Public Access
- Remote Cabin Permits
- *Stream Corridors
- *Trail Management
- *Wetlands Management
- Resource Management

Management guidelines that apply to this management unit only are presented below by subunit.

Subunit 4b (Mile 233)

Stream Corridors

The management intent for land adjacent to the streams referenced below is to permit fishing, camping and other active uses and to protect water quality and riparian habitat should land in this subunit be conveyed to private ownership. Corridor widths will be set on a case-by-case basis using policies from Chapter 2. The standard minimum buffer width (200' on each side of the river) should be used on unnamed tributaries to the Susitna River which appear on the 1:63,360 scale USGS topographic maps.

Subunits 4b, 4c and 4f (Mile 233 Borough Land, Chase III, and Lower Chunilna Creek Corridor)

Protection of Transportation Routes

Chapter 4 of this plan identifies a system of possible improvements to the regional and local transportation system. One route passes through these subunits. The precise location of this route has not been determined, although a general location is shown on the maps in Chapter 4. Land use authorizations in these units such as land sales, leases, or other actions should be located so as not to preclude the option to build this road along a feasible and efficient route.

Subunit 4c (Chase III Agricultural Homestead Area)

Refer to the Summer, 1984 disposal brochure for a parcel map and locations of items discussed below.

Transportation Corridors

Maintaining pedestrian access and possible future road corridors through and within the Chase project is an important objective for this area. The platted right-of-way called Clear Creek Road on the brochure map, runs east from the Alaska Railroad and is 300' wide. Access to and between all parcels will be retained through interior lot line easements linked to the larger route described above. Interior lot line easements are 50' wide in each lot for a total width of 100'. An easement of 25' will be retained on all exterior lot lines. This allows alternative access through the project in addition to the main access routes.

In the southwest portion of the project (sections 17, 20, 29) there is an existing summer trail which bypasses a wetland and the Clear Creek Road right-of-way crosses a narrow portion of the wetland in section 20. The existing summer trail has been protected through issuance of a temporary 60' right-of-way and is shown on DNR status plats. If and when the Clear Creek Road actually is constructed, the 60' temporary ROW will be vacated.

Trails and Access

The general rules for protection of trails are as follows: where a number of trails pass through a relatively narrow area, or where a single trail is used on a regular basis by a significant number of people, this route generally will be retained in public ownership. Where a trail is primarily used to provide access to the residence of one or just a few people, and this route crosses a proposed homestead parcel, reasonable alternative access will be provided through retention of easements along the boundaries of the parcels or identification of other routes. Wherever possible these parcel boundaries have been adjusted to better coincide with existing trails. As an additional measure, temporary (3 year) easement permits will be issued that allow access across homestead parcels. These temporary easement permits will give existing users the opportunity to establish new trails along homestead parcel boundaries or to work out arrangements with owners of homestead parcels.

East-west pedestrian access through the project area generally will be maintained through the retention of numerous interior lot line easements. One corridor approximately 1/4-mile wide will be retained, however, through sections 16 and 20 west of Chunilna Creek.

North-south access through the project will be provided by a corridor along Chunilna Creek and an approximately 1/2-mile wide north-south corridor between the two groups of parcels.

Retention of Land in Public Ownership

Public land immediately surrounding Mama and Papa Bear Lakes and to the southwest of the lakes in T27N R4W S.M., section 26 will be retained in public ownership to protect habitat of anadromous fish that use streams in this area, to allow public recreation and to provide woodlots and public access. (See also subunit 5a).

Anadromous fish streams feeding into Mama and Papa Bear Lakes are primarily of value as spawning and rearing areas. Public use is low or non-existent, in part because the lower reaches of this tributary system are lined with private land. The quality of water will be protected along these streams through application of a 100' development setback on either side of these streams on any new parcels sold. Fifty-foot pedestrian easements also will be retained to provide a degree of public access.

In the western portion of the project where there are private parcels or poor soils, any remaining public land will be retained in public ownership. This includes all of sections 9 and 16. In addition, portions of sections 20 and 29 have been retained in public ownership to provide wood for residents on smaller parcels in the homestead area and in the subdivisions to the south.

Land along Chunilna Creek was heavily staked during the open-to-entry (OTE) program, and there are numerous mining claims in the area. Remaining public land in this corridor will be retained in public ownership for recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, hunting and fishing, public access, and possibly wood lots. If relinquishment of OTE parcels occurs within 1/2 mile either side of Chunilna Creek, these sites will be retained in public ownership to protect habitat, recreation and other public values. Determination of appropriate action on relinquished OTE parcels outside the river corridor will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Recreation and Fish & Wildlife

Chunilna Creek corridor will be managed to protect fish and wildlife habitat and opportunities for recreational use by retaining the area in public ownership in a natural state. See guidelines on "Retention of Land in Public Ownership" for management of land around Mama and Papa Bear Lakes.

Woodlots

To help meet the personal use firewood needs of present and future residents in the Chase area and in sub-

divisions to the south, land retained in public ownership, particularly in the southwest, southeast (near Mama and Papa Bear lakes) and central (sections 9 and 16) portions of the project, will be available for personal use woodlots or small timber sales.

Wetlands

On all water bodies and significant wetlands within or adjacent to agriculture parcels, clearing and development setbacks will be specified in the farm conservation plan and conveyance documents. (See regional guidelines, Chapter 2, for a definition of wetlands.)

Subunits 4d and 4e (Chase II Remote Parcel Area and Disappointment Creek)

Stream Corridors

The management intent for land adjacent to the streams referenced below is to permit fishing, camping and other active uses and to protect water quality and riparian habitat. Consequently, this land should be retained in public ownership. Corridor widths will be set on a case-by-case basis using policies in Chapter 2. The standard minimum buffer width (200' on each side of the river) should be used on the unnamed creek which runs northwest from Sockeye Lake (4d). Buffers 100' wide should be used on either side of all other unnamed creeks that appear on the 1:63,360 scale USGS topographic maps in subunit 4d, and on all tributaries to the Talkeetna River and Disappointment Creek which appear on the 1:63,360 USGS topographic maps in subunit 4e.

Forestry

Personal use or small scale timber sale areas will be identified to supply some of the wood products for any future settlement in subunit 4e and to the west.