

MANAGEMENT UNIT 1C

Ester Dome

MANAGEMENT INTENT

General. State land in this unit is retained in public ownership for multiple use management. The emphasis is on subsurface resource development. Trails may be rerouted, if necessary, to accommodate mineral development. All state land in this unit is open to mineral entry.

Fish and Wildlife. Ester Dome has high value habitat for grouse and ptarmigan. Most recreational hunting of these birds occurs on roads and trails. Because of the possible danger of personal injury in areas of intense mining activity, hunting will not be encouraged off trails and roads within this management unit.

Forestry. This management unit supports a dense productive cover of second growth hardwoods, which are now reaching harvestable size. Given the area's proximity to Fairbanks and an extensive road system, these forests will be managed to supply fuelwood through a mix of small scale commercial and personal use harvest areas.

Minerals. This area is one of the highest priorities for mineral development in the Basin. Major mining development is in progress. The area has high grade mineralization and, because it is close to Fairbanks, it is economically feasible to develop. It is currently being explored and mined quite intensively. Unit 1C1 is designated primary use minerals. This indicates that the principal management objective is mineral development, but with minimization of adverse impacts to existing residential areas.

There are several residential areas in close proximity to Ester Dome. Mining activity can have negative impacts on these residential uses. When permitting mining operations, DNR should recommend that operators consider the noise and other impacts of their activities on adjacent land uses. Local residents and mine operators should continue to work with the Fairbanks North Star Borough to more adequately deal with these issues through local land use controls.

Recreation. Ester Dome is a popular recreation area near Fairbanks. There are three main values of the area for recreation: 1) the Equinox Trail that passes through the area; 2) outstanding views of the Fairbanks region from the road system on the dome and 3) the alpine environment (2000 to 2300 foot level), which provides a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities. The dome also has potential for a downhill skiing area, but only if mineral activity on the dome declines.

These recreational uses can be provided for by protecting trails on the dome. A significant portion of the existing trails are on mining claims. If a portion of a trail cannot be used because of mineral activity, an alternative route should be identified. Particular attention should be given to protecting the Equinox Trail either in its existing location or in an alternate one. A loop should be considered along the upper ridge in a manner that does not conflict with mining. Also, trails that are rerouted will remain comparable in width to the original trail. Because of the possible danger of personal injury in areas of intense mining activity, recreation will generally not be encouraged in areas off the trails.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Management guidelines that apply to all state land are listed in Chapter 2. Some or all of those guidelines may apply to uses in this unit.

Communication sites. Communication sites will be consolidated in a small area on the top of the dome.

LAND-USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY
MANAGEMENT UNIT 1C: *Ester Dome*

| Subunit | Primary Surface Uses | Secondary Surface Uses | Subsurface ¹ | Prohibited ² Surface Use | Comments |
|---------|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|
| 1C1 | Minerals | | Open | Land disposals Remote cabins | Ester Dome |

¹ Subsurface designations refer to locatable minerals. All areas are available for leasing for leasable minerals, except as noted for coal.

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