

MANAGEMENT UNIT 4R

Nenana River Corridor

MANAGEMENT INTENT

General. The Nenana River Corridor is one of the most important recreation areas in the state. This area's proximity to the entrance of Denali National Park and Preserve makes it one of the state's highest visitor-use areas. The Nenana River is heavily used by the public for floating and boating, fishing, and public access to hunting and recreation sites. Because of the river's importance to the state's residents and visitor industry, the Nenana River Corridor will be managed to maintain its current character and to protect its scenic, recreational, and fish and wildlife values.

To recognize the Nenana River Corridor's outstanding public values and importance to the state, and to maintain the quality of the recreation and habitat in the corridor, subunits 4R2, 4R3, 4R4, and 4R5 are recommended for legislative designation as a State Recreation River. To accommodate future needs of a municipal government, certain uplands within these subunits are expected to be considered for conveyance to the municipal government. These uplands include lands near developed areas such as McKinley Village, the national park entrance, Healy, Lignite, and Ferry (see Chapter 4, *Areas Recommended for Legislative or Administrative Designation, and Municipal Entitlements*).

Agriculture. There are no known agricultural values in this unit.

Fish and Wildlife. Fish and wildlife is designated as a co-primary use in all subunits within this management unit. The area will be managed to protect the fish and wildlife values in the area.

The Nenana River contains several critical spawning, rearing, and feeding areas for coho, chum, and king salmon. These are predominantly spring areas within the main river system, and spring-fed tributary systems. Spawning is documented for coho salmon in Little Panguingue and Panguingue creeks, as well as a small, spring-fed tributary on the west side of the Nenana just south of Panguingue Creek. Coho rearing is documented in the latter two streams.

Resident fish are widely distributed in the Nenana system, with burbot, arctic grayling, and Dolly Varden the most prevalent species in the upper drainage. Burbot and Dolly Varden are generally distributed

throughout the upper Nenana watershed, with Dolly Varden rearing documented in Panguingue, Lignite, and Moody creeks. Grayling rearing habitat occurs in Panguingue, Lignite, Healy, and Moody creeks. Resident fish spawning occurs in small tributaries alongside the Denali Highway and throughout the upper Nenana valley.

The Nenana River Corridor is within ranges of three caribou herds: the McKinley herd, the Delta herd, and the Yanert herd. Much of the Nenana River Corridor is important-rated and prime-rated habitat for moose, and important habitat for grizzly bear, black bear, and various species of furbearers. Prime habitat and nesting sites for great horned owls, goshawks, golden eagles, and kestrels are located along the Nenana River between Healy Creek and the Yanert Fork.

Minerals. To avoid conflicts with the important recreation, scenic, and habitat values that give the Nenana River its statewide significance, this management unit is closed to mineral entry, except for Subunit 4R1. This mineral closure may be re-evaluated during the development of the management plan for the State Recreation River.

Recreation. Recreation is designated a co-primary use in all subunits within this management unit. The primary management intent for each subunit within this management unit is to maintain its current character and to preserve foreground scenery and opportunities for recreation.

A state campground is recommended for Subunit 4R1. The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation will evaluate the feasibility of constructing a primitive campground within this subunit by November 1992. This campground development should provide access to the Nenana River. An additional pullout is recommended along the Parks Highway within Subunit 4R2. This pullout should have interpretive signs, litter barrels, and short trails to viewing sites above the Nenana River.

Public access to the Nenana River should be protected and improved as public access needs are identified. Moose Creek and Carlo Creek archaeological sites should be protected.

A need has been identified for additional camping facilities in the vicinity of the national park entrance. Because of the lack of suitable state-owned land in

the area, this plan endorses land exchanges or cooperative agreements with other landowners to help fulfill this need. As the area experiences a dynamic change in recreation use, federal and private landowners are reassessing their management strategies for this area. These changes and the impending formation of a regional local government may introduce some additional management options to the area.

The Nenana Gorge immediately north of the Denali National Park entrance is being impacted by seasonal workers who set up unauthorized camps on state land. This area should be studied to determine if solutions such as alternative camp sites and agreements with employers can address this problem.

Settlement. Land sales are prohibited within all subunits in this management unit.

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 management unit. Special guidelines that apply only to this unit follow.

All Subunits. River crossings will be consolidated to the maximum extent feasible. Necessary roads will be located and designed to minimize the impact on views, habitat, and recreational values.

Subunit 4R2. To protect scenic, recreational, and wildlife values, land use authorizations are allowed, to the extent feasible and prudent, only if facilities are temporary and visually screened.

Subunit 4R3. To protect scenic, recreational, and wildlife values, and to mitigate excessive land use and scenic impacts within this subunit, the following measures should be taken:

- 1) High impact areas within the gorge where camping is causing either excessive sanitary and scenic impacts or conflicts with local and residential land uses should be identified no later than the end of the 1991 tourist season. Solutions to mitigate these impacts should be

considered and implemented for each area. These solutions may include closing off high impact areas, a possible camping prohibition, and the siting of rest-area facilities, such as restrooms, trash collection sites, and interpretive signs. All facilities should be constructed and sited to reduce visual impacts.

- 2) Commercial land use authorizations are allowed, to the extent feasible and prudent, only if facilities are temporary and visually screened.

The following interagency team will investigate, evaluate, and recommend solutions to implement these measures: DNR, DEC, DOT&PF, and DCRA.

Hornet Creek Gravel Pad. The current primary use of the Hornet Creek gravel pad is for dumping waste rock from the steep slopes within the gorge.

In the future, if alternative camping facilities become available in the area, and an alternative waste rock site is found, the primary use of the pad should be public day use relating to the recreation opportunities available in the river corridor. Public day use facilities constructed with aesthetic considerations are recommended for the pad. Such facilities could include restrooms, interpretive signs, parking areas, and trails.

Until an alternative waste rock site is found, secondary uses of the pad may include land use authorizations, by permit only, compatible with the primary use. Permitted authorizations may be issued for up to two years, and may include providing overnight camping and visitor related services.

Subunit 4R4. To protect scenic, recreational, and wildlife values, land use authorizations are allowed, to the extent feasible and prudent, only if facilities are temporary and visually screened.

Subunit 4R5. To protect scenic, recreational, and wildlife values, land-use authorizations are allowed, to the extent feasible and prudent, only if facilities are temporary, visually screened, and sited at least 200 feet from the ordinary high water mark of the Nenana River.

LAND-USE DESIGNATION SUMMARY
MANAGEMENT UNIT 4R: *Nenana River Corridor*

Subunit	Primary Surface Uses	Secondary Surface Uses	Subsurface ¹	Prohibited ² Surface Use	Comments
4R1	Public recreation Wildlife habitat		Open	Land disposals Remote cabins Grazing	
4R2	Public recreation Wildlife habitat		Closed	Land disposals Remote cabins Grazing	Recommended State Recreation River designation.
4R3	Public recreation Wildlife habitat		Closed	Land disposals Remote cabins Grazing	Recommended State Recreation River designation.
4R4	Public recreation Wildlife habitat		Closed	Land disposals Remote cabins Grazing	Recommended State Recreation River designation.
4R5	Public recreation Wildlife habitat		Closed	Land disposals Remote cabins Grazing	Recommended State Recreation River designation

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.