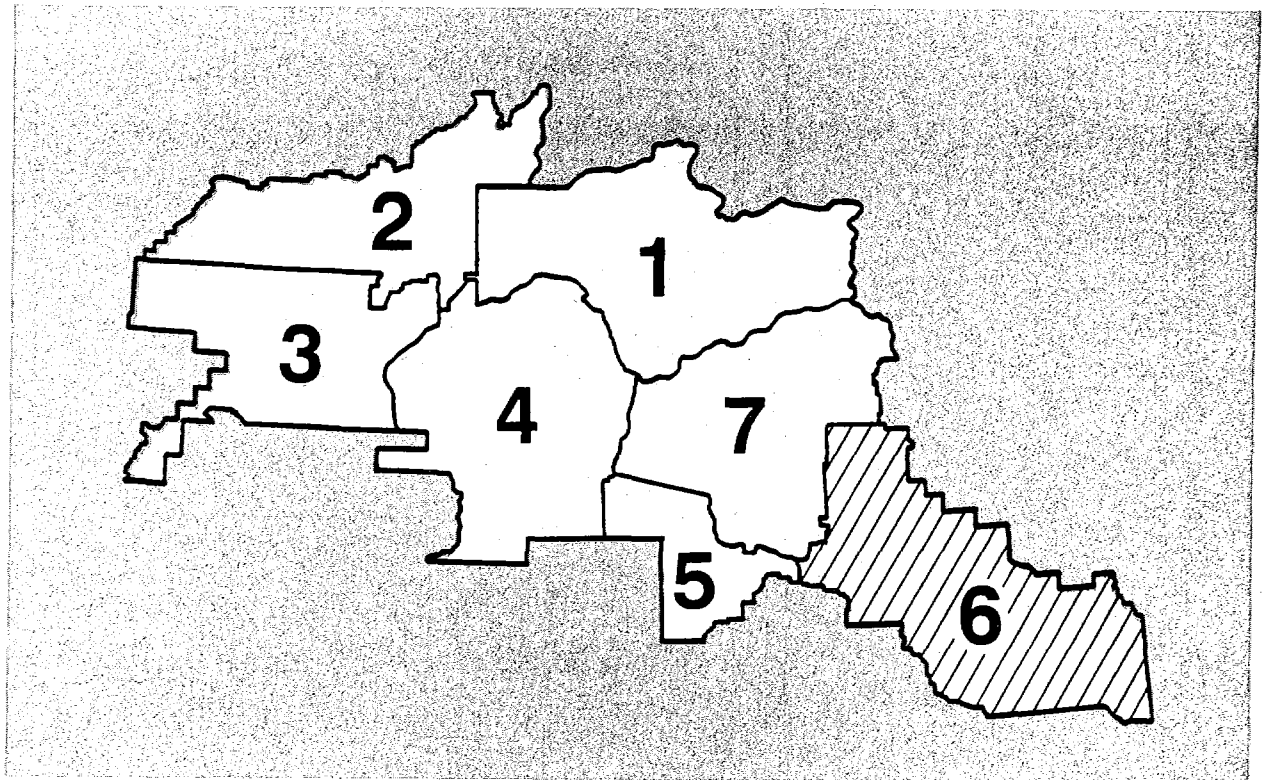

Subregion 6

Upper Tanana



Subregion 6

UPPER TANANA

This subunit includes the communities of Northway, Mentasta Lake, Tok, Tanacross, and Dot Lake. The Alaska Highway and the Tanana River pass through the center of the subregion. The Glenn Highway extends from Tok to Mentasta on the southwestern boundary of the subregion. These highways provide excellent access to the communities in the region, but much of the area is mountainous and inaccessible.

Commercial guiding for big game, tourism, hunting, recreation, mineral exploration, forestry, and sport and subsistence hunting are major land uses in the subregion. Settlement in the subregion is largely confined to areas along the Alaska Highway.

The area outside the State Forest will be managed for multiple use, including fish and wildlife and recreation. The northwestern part of the subregion will also be managed to encourage subsurface resource development. A total of 8,076 acres are recommended for sale in this subregion; about half of the sale areas were offered during 1985-1990. All lands retained in state ownership will be open to mineral entry.

AGRICULTURE

There are no areas recommended for large scale agriculture in this subregion because of high elevation and harsh climate. There is interest in small scale agriculture in the area, however, and an area of 1,000 acres will be available for this purpose. The areas most suitable for this are east and southwest of Tok near the junction of the two highways, but north of the Eagle Trail.

Within the Upper Tanana Subregion, 1,000 acres of state land may be available for agriculture. In subunits with co-primary designations of agriculture and settlement, land may be sold fee simple (for settlement) if soils are not suitable for agriculture.

STATE LAND RECOMMENDED FOR AGRICULTURE

| Future Projects | Subunit | Acres |
|-----------------|---------|-------|
| Tok Agriculture | 6D1 | 1,000 |

FISH & WILDLIFE

There are high wildlife values in most of this subregion. Many areas of this region have high human use value, including the area south of Tok along the Glenn Highway.

Mineral licks along the Tok and Robertson rivers and Clearwater Creek will be managed as critical habitat. The area around Mt. Neuberger is recommended for legislative designation as a State Game Refuge.

Areas along Yerrick Creek south of Cathedral Rapids, along the Tok and Tanana rivers near proposed disposals, and the majority of state-owned land in the Tanacross and Northway areas will be managed for joint recreation and habitat values. The remaining state-owned areas of this region with the exception of the State Forest and disposal areas will be managed for multiple use, including wildlife habitat.

FORESTRY

In this region, the legislatively designated Tanana Valley State Forest will supply wood needs of most communities. Timber harvesting will be allowed on all retained lands in the subregion.

Much of the Tanana Valley State Forest in this region has poor public access due to rivers and native land. Higher elevations limit site productivity in the region, but commercial timber volumes are still common, and support several sawmills.

MINERALS

The Tok Massive Sulfides, located on the western edge of this subregion, represent one of the more significant mineral concentrations in the state. The active claim blocks in the area between the Tok River and Johnson Glacier will be managed for minerals as a primary use. There are no known oil and gas or coal resources in this area.

There are also several areas of high potential for minerals north of the highway between Dot Lake and Northway and around Berry Creek south of Dot Lake. These areas should be retained in public ownership. All lands retained in state ownership will be open to mineral entry.

RECREATION

In this subregion the Alaska and Glenn Highways provide outstanding views and physical access to high mountain recreation opportunities. Glaciers provide important routes into the high country. Many trails and wildlife are important recreation resources. This subregion is important to tourists, and to local residents.

Several lakes, trails, and access sites in this subregion will be designated for recreation.

Visual quality along the Alaska and Glenn highway corridors will be protected.

SETTLEMENT

Within the Upper Tanana Subregion, 3,570 acres of state land may be offered for sale: 1,320 acres for subdivisions and homesites; and 2,250 acres for fee simple homesteads.

Land for Community Expansion

The state has identified 1,320 acres of new subdivisions for community expansion. This new acreage, however, will not be sold until a significant percent of the land that has previously been offered and returned to the state has been taken.

Native corporations also own land in the immediate vicinity of most communities. Some of this land is likely to be sold over the next 20 years.

Native landholdings and past state sales are likely to create a large surplus of community expansion land in the subregion for all villages except Northway, where no state land has been offered. In this area, the state should offer a small subdivision.

STATE LAND RECOMMENDED FOR COMMUNITY EXPANSION

| Future Projects | Subunit | Acres |
|-----------------------------|---------|--------------|
| Glenn Extension Subdivision | 6D1 | 120 |
| Northway Subdivision | 6B | 200 |
| Tok New Subdivision | 6D1 | 1,000 |
| TOTAL | | 1,320 |

| Existing Projects | Subunit | Acres |
|--------------------------|---------|--------------|
| Eagle Subdivision | 6D1 | 214 |
| Glenn Subdivision | 6D1 | 1,000 |
| Three Mile Subdivision | 6D1 | 152 |
| Tok Area, Past Disposals | 6D1 | 1,080 |
| TOTAL | | 2,446 |

Land for Recreational and Self-sufficient Living

Large-lot homesteads are popular in the Upper Tanana subregion. The state should continue to offer land from previous disposals before offering new projects. The total number of parcels in each fee simple homestead area should not exceed the net acres divided by forty.

STATE LAND RECOMMENDED FOR RECREATIONAL SUBDIVISIONS OR FEE SIMPLE HOMESTEAD

| Future Projects | Subunit | Acres |
|---------------------------|---------|--------------|
| Fireweed Homestead | 6F1a | 250 |
| Robertson River Homestead | 6F1b | 200 |
| Tok Area Homestead | 6D1 | 1,000 |
| Tower Bluffs Homestead | 6F1c | 800 |
| TOTAL | | 2,250 |

| Existing Projects | Subunit | Acres |
|--------------------------|---------|--------------|
| Tower Bluffs Subdivision | 6F1 | 260 |
| Seven Mile Homestead | 6D1 | 800 |
| TOTAL | | 1,060 |

TRANSPORTATION

The following access corridors have been identified by the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF). There are no proposals for actual construction of access within these corridors at this time, but the option to develop access in these areas should not be precluded.

Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline: A route, basically parallel to the existing Trans-Alaska Pipeline, is proposed for the construction of a gas line from the North Slope to Fairbanks. A possible continuation of the route is then to the Canadian Border via the Alaska Highway corridor.

Alaska, Tok Cutoff, and Taylor Highways Realignment and Northway Road: DOT&PF has plans to reconstruct and realign portions of the Alaska, Tok Cutoff (Glenn), and Taylor highways and the Northway Road. In some areas this includes replacement of major bridges. DOT&PF will work with the planning team to choose the routing that best meets the land use objectives described in this plan and complies with appropriate highway standards and project costs.

Alaska Railroad Extension: A route has been identified through the Tanana River and Alaska Highway corridors for an extension of the Alaska Railroad from Fairbanks to the Canadian border.

Prince William Sound - Upper Tanana Railroad Corridor: In this subregion, a corridor has been identified by the Interior Alaska Transportation Study for a railroad from Prince William Sound at Valdez or Cordova to the Interior near Tok. Such a railroad would provide access to the Delta Belt and other mining areas along the route. The route follows the Richardson and Tok Cutoff Highway corridors.

Delta Belt Access: In this subregion, corridors to the Delta Belt mineral area have been identified by the Interior Alaska Transportation Study. Access would be via a railroad spur line from either the Prince William Sound railroad route or a spur line from an extension of the Alaska Railroad from Fairbanks. An alternative would be road access from either the Alaska Highway or the Tok Cutoff.

Trails and Revised Statute (RS) 2477 Roads: Many trails and minor roads exist in this subregion. See Chapter 2, *Public Access and Trails Management for additional information.*