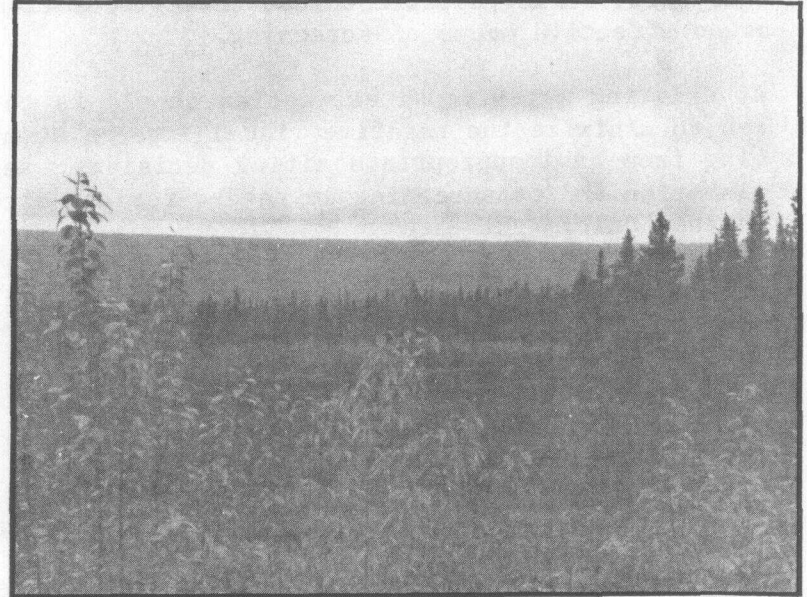


Kenny Lake Farmlands

General Description

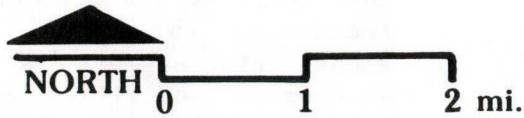
Management Unit 22, is a 10.5 mile stretch of road, bounded by the community of Kenny Lake on the west end and the edge of the upland terrace at the confluence of the Copper and Tonsina Rivers on its east end. This unit derives its character from the combination of distant views of the Wrangell Mountains and close views of the cultivated farmlands on gently rolling terrain.

Arrayed across the horizon are Mt. Drum, Mt. Sanford, Mt. Wrangell and Mt. Blackburn. Periodic and filtered views of these dramatic peaks give distinction to what would otherwise be a relatively homogenous and uninteresting landscape. While both the Copper and Tonsina Rivers are near at hand and play important roles in shaping the terrain of the Copper River uplands, their presence is not noticed in this unit.



Farming activities add to the interest of the drive along the Edgerton Road because the open fields provide contrasting colors and textures to the spruce and foothills beyond.

Dominating the foreground views are the farms that are scattered across the entire terrace. Their presence increases both the area's visual interest and its scenic values. With the generally flat terrain and dense spruce and aspen vegetation, clearing for cultivation and development opens up otherwise hidden views of the surrounding Wrangell and Chugach mountains. Contributing to the units' visual diversity are open fields alternating with dense forests or narrow strips of trees which filter the distant views. Some of the homesteads add to the rural character in their use of typical Alaskan architectural motifs. Log cabins sporting a moose rack over the door, hand-built homes, or



22 Kenny Lake Farmlands


Assessment Units E5 – E11


KEY

Rest- Rest Area

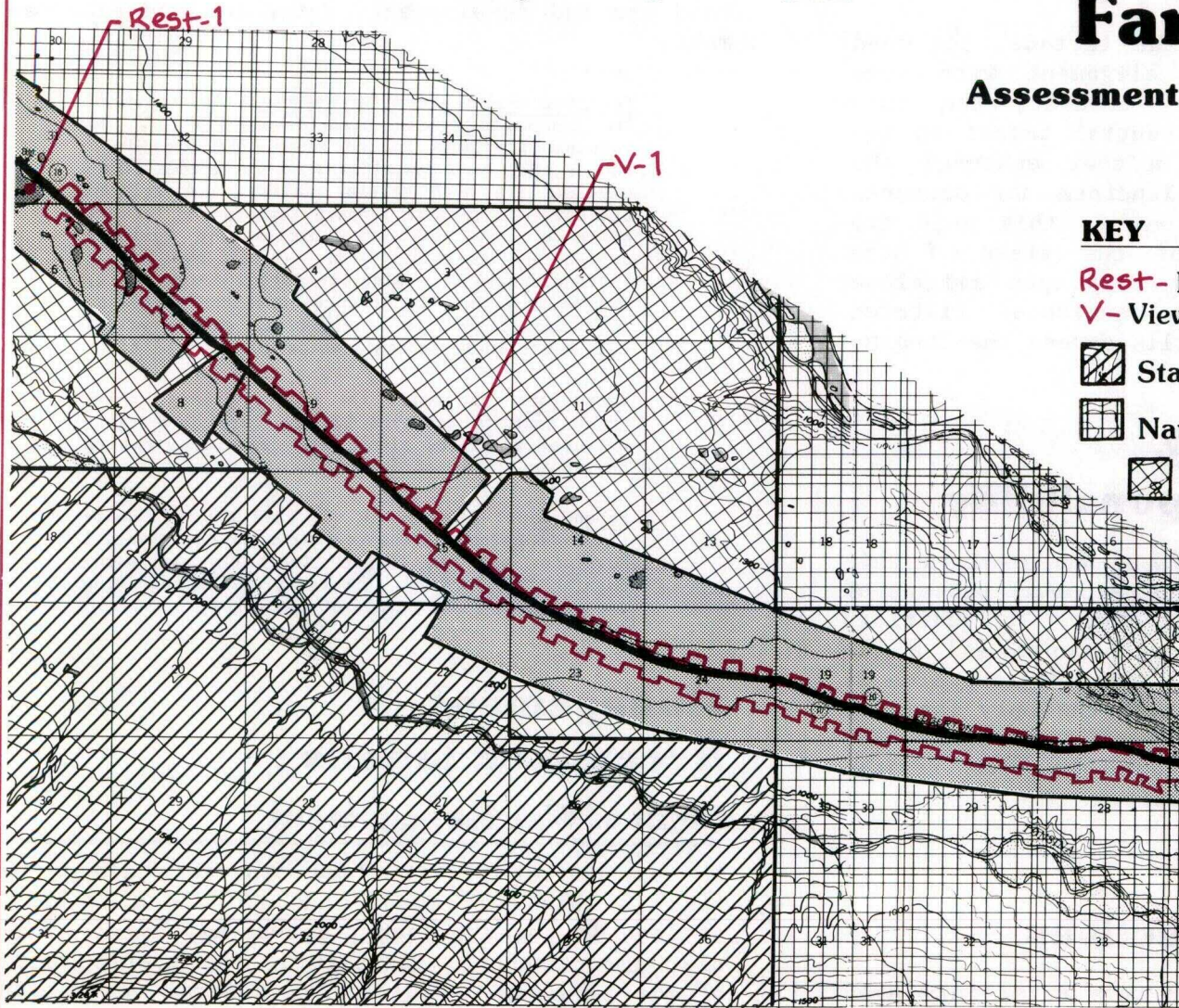
V- View Management

 State Selected Land

 Native Corp. Land

 Native Selected Land

 Private Land



front yards overflowing with old automobiles and other assorted paraphernalia are found along the road. Mailboxes painted in rainbow colors mounted on tortuously shaped log posts also add variety to the drive.

In cutting a path across the terrace, the road follows a gently curving alignment with some long, straight tangents. However, the road design, in general, has a neutral impact on the driving experience - it neither enhances the appreciation of the area landform nor detracts from it. The scenic values in this unit are relatively high because of the views of the Wrangell peaks that periodically open and close to the northeast and the continuous filtered views of the Chugach foothills across the Tonsina River.

Land Ownership & Management Responsibility

Almost all the land bordering the road in this unit is privately owned in a patchwork pattern of old homesteads and small lots. In addition, there are several Native allotments and a few small Native selections. A roadside rest area is located at Kenny Lake, and is the only facility of its kind in the unit. The DOTPF manages a 200 foot wide right-of-way on either side of the centerline throughout the unit.

Visual Resource Management Objectives

Roadside land management in this rural farm area should recognize the high intrinsic scenic value

of distant mountain views as well as the important contribution private development has made to increasing the visual diversity and interest along this segment of the road. Therefore, management activities should promote sensitive land use and development, retention and enhancement.

Sensitive Land Use and Development: To encourage the continued agricultural development of the valuable farmlands in the Kenny Lake area in a manner that both contributes to the area's economy and its high scenic quality. A related objective is to make property owners and farmers aware of how clearing, cultivation, building design and location, etc., affect the area's attractiveness as a place to live and invest in; and to show them how they can develop their land in a manner that is sensitive to scenic values and meets their economic needs at the same time.

Retention: To retain the unit's present character that is composed of its rural and agricultural qualities along with dramatic views to the Wrangells.

Enhancement: To enhance the area's scenic quality by opening and framing views to the Wrangell Mountains and the Chugach foothills and maintaining the present diversity of alternating opened, closed and screened views.

Management Recommendations

Right-of-Way Management

The pattern of private land ownership along the road in this unit means that DOTPF's management of land in the 200 foot right-of-way is of singular importance in maintaining the scenic value of the landscape. Currently, natural vegetation growing close to the road's edge and the varied

sequence of open fields and dense forests are essential elements of this unit's character. These qualities can be maintained through careful attention to roadside management practices.

In order to maintain road visibility, provide for snow removal, and minimize animal road kills, trees and the understory vegetation have been cut to a depth of 20-25 feet from the road edge for long stretches in this unit. Now growing back in lupine, horesetail and other small shrubs, the road edge has a softened, natural appearance which is enhanced by colorful flowers in the summer. The practice of encouraging native flowering plants to grow to the road edge should be continued. Other complementary and recommended management practices include the following:

- Generally minimize tree thinning and cutting in the right-of-way; selectively trim trees and vegetation only where necessary for roadside visibility.
- Create a natural "feathered" edge in those areas scheduled for cutting by leaving low plants immediately next to the road, some taller, brushy plants just beyond the edge, followed by taller trees.
- Vary the width of the management strip to make the edge appear more natural.
- Avoid disturbing the soil in cleared areas.
- Encourage scattered concentrated plantings of aspen as an accent along the drive. Aspen is notable for the bright green color in spring and brilliant yellow in the fall.
- Do not clear along the entire length of road during one season as another means of varying the

impact of management practices on the road's visual diversity.

View Management (V)

The sequential vegetation changes in the drive, along open fields with unobstructed views to the mountains, into a "tunnel" of dense trees on either side of the road, and then in to a partially open area where a thin band of trees filters views across another field, helps to create spatial and visual variety in this somewhat monotonous terrain. In their management of land adjacent to the road, DOTPF's maintenance and operations crews can enhance this diversity by using selective cutting and planting practices to both open up and frame views.

- V - 1 Unique scenic vistas of the Wrangells or the Chugach Mountains should be identified where it is important to keep surrounding trees and brush cleared to maintain the views.

In other areas, DOTPF's maintenance of vegetation in the right-of-way strip should be sensitive to the sequential spatial experience along the road. As a general rule, trees should be retained in those areas where the landscape is open and trees are needed to create a break. Trees can be thinned in those areas where it will enhance views to fields beyond or create a visual break after a long forested enclosure.

A precise identification of areas appropriate for cutting or planting is not attempted here. Instead, a staff landscape architect should work with the maintenance crew on an annual basis to define the yearly management plan. This program would identify areas for vegetation maintenance or thinning as well as where some additional screening may be necessary. Specific plants - such as aspen or other deciduous trees - may be recommended as a roadside accent.

Greenbelts

In this unit, where private land ownership predominates, greenbelts are not recommended. However, private landowners are encouraged to set back all development a minimum of 25 feet from the inside edge of the right-of-way in a partially screened location. This will help buffer residences and other uses from the noise, fumes and traffic on the Edgerton Road as well as help retain the more rural, scenic quality of the road.

Land Use & Development

The scenic quality and visual interest of this unit are enhanced by the farms and residential development located along the road. Not only are the open fields a pleasing contrast in color and vegetation type to the surrounding landscape, but also the barns and homes themselves are interesting landscape features. In addition, the agricultural development in this area is a clear indication of land capability. The combination of soil type, topography, exposure, climate and accessibility make this one of the few areas in the region that is presently suitable for cultivation and appropriate for additional development. This can be an interesting aspect to interpret for the traveler. At the same time, it is important to make private landowners aware of the scenic resources of the area and how their actions - homebuilding, clearing, and cultivation - contribute to the quality of the surrounding environment. And once they have developed an appreciation for these concerns, it is important to translate this into appropriate development actions. This objective can be approached in



Roadside farms open up areas which would otherwise be enclosed by dense spruce hardwood forest, as on the left side of the road. Barns and homes are interesting features in the landscape.

either of two ways. First, a design and development manual could be prepared and then distributed by the Cooperative Extension Service. This educational and advisory material would contain:

- A discussion of what scenic resource management is and the special qualities of the Kenny Lake area.
- Specific local examples of how development affects the scenic experience, both contributing to it and detracting from it.
- A list of development practices for the area, presented as suggested "dos" and "don'ts".

This manual could be distributed to all area residents independently. It could also be used in conjunction with public informational meetings or a statewide television program on state scenic roadways.

More information may not be enough to motivate people to change their plans for clearing all trees next to the road or to get them to screen a commercial storage area. In many cases, this kind of change must be tied to an incentive. Therefore, a second option is to establish a Roadside Development Bonus. Individuals who developed or improved their property according to standards established to enhance the road's scenic quality would be eligible for a cash bonus. This approach could be part of an overall state program of designating scenic resource management themes for Alaska's road system, defining the management program and establishing the standards for the bonus' along that road.

In Unit 22, private development is encouraged to adopt the following standards:

- Encourage spatial diversity along the road by retaining the alternating pattern of open fields interspersed with dense forests and/or narrow bands of trees. In addition to adding variety, the trees can serve as windrows and dust, fume and noise filters between the road and fields.
- Encourage private landowners to store old cars, equipment, and other items in storage sheds, behind screens of trees, or otherwise out of view from the road. A more "tidy" appearance is generally viewed as an indication of more care for the land. Encourage continued creativity in mailbox design along these rural roads. Bright colors, unique patterns and designs, and gnarled wood or other unusual posts are means of declaring individual identity. For visitors the mailboxes are interesting visual details that are often the only visible sign of human use.

- Encourage home, cabin or barn designs that use wood or other natural materials in a rustic or rural style. For example, a log cabin or a shed roof barn are typical of out-back Alaska. While design should not be dictated, sensitivity to maintaining the rural atmosphere should be promoted. The use of manufactured homes, trailers or typical suburban tract homes is discouraged.
- Encourage sensitive site development to take advantage of views, solar orientation and vegetative screening potential.
- Promote farming and residential use in this unit; discourage commercial use, except near Kenny Lake community, and recreational use, except near Kenny Lake.

Signs for Private Businesses

The few businesses that are located along the road are marked by signs. Because there are only a few of them and they are generally in good taste, they, like the mailboxes, add an element of visual interest. However, if there is further development in the area, an overabundance of signs or out-of-scale advertising would detract from the scenic experience. Therefore, within the right-of-way, it is suggested that commercial signage adhere to the following standards.

- The sign should be no larger than 4 by 6 feet.
- Wood signs - especially hand painted or carved - are preferred.
- Backlit signs should be prohibited. Lighting should be incandescent, from the top or bottom.
- "Trailer Signs" or other signs with changeable vinyl lettering should be prohibited.
- Signs should be set far enough back from the road edge to maintain visibility.



The Kenny Lake wayside can be improved to provide an interpretive exhibit on the surrounding landscape. Not all litter barrels are required - some can be removed and the others relocated in a screened spot.

Turnouts (T) & Rest Areas (Rest)

The Edgerton Road and this management unit in particular, are areas of concentrated private development with limited dramatic views. However, the unit is also typical of the surrounding landscape, and thus a rest area/interpretive site is recommended.

Rest-1 Kenny Lake Rest Area. Just outside the community of Kenny Lake is an existing rest area, located on the lake itself. The site has a large paved parking area, several garbage barrels and lake

access. Because of the minimal cost associated with improving the site, the amenity of the lake and the good expression of the surrounding landscape, this site is suggested as an appropriate rest area/interpretive site for the Copper River lowlands character. In addition to describing the character type, the interpretive information presented here can also describe the historic development of the area and the current local farming activities. The types of crops and level of development could also be placed in the context of other state agricultural areas.

Only minor improvements are necessary for the rest area itself, other than the interpretive signing:

- Provide better access to the lake for walking and birdwatching. A boardwalk could be constructed over the marshy area to the lake's edge.
- Relocate the trash barrels. Although six barrels are now provided, two to three are sufficient. It is also suggested that the orange barrels be replaced by a new receptacle designed to blend better with the natural surroundings. Brown or dark green barrels or a buried receptacle would be acceptable. The receptacle should also be relocated in a screened location but visible enough to promote use.

