

**Appendix B**  
**Plan Units (State)**



## **Big Eddy**

River Mile 16.5

Acreage 16.07

### **Legal Description**

Township 5 North, Range 11 West, Seward Meridian

Section 24: Lots 14, 15

NW4NE4SE4

### **Site Description**

Big Eddy is a 16 acre park unit accessible from the River and via the Big Eddy Road, off the Kenai Spur Highway. Big Eddy road bisects the property into two parcels and a small unimproved parking area is located on the north side of the road.

Situated on the outside of a large bend at River Mile (RM) 16.5, the site has 660 feet of Kenai River frontage. The entire site is in the Kenai River's floodplain. According to hydrological analysis, the point of land on which the site rests could conceivably be isolated by a major meander cut-off.

Vegetation on the flat site is a mixed forest of cottonwood, birch and white spruce with under story berries of several types. Soils are well-drained, shallow silt loams underlain by gravel.

A single vault latrine, a floating dock, two picnic tables and 200' of elevated metal walkway are on site. The site is accessible by short road spur off the Big Eddy Road or by boat from the River. The site provides sanitary facilities for boaters and limited sockeye angling.

### **Analysis**

Big Eddy is on the upper end of the intensively-used lower River. Within one mile of the site are three privately-operated campgrounds with capacity for more than 200 camping units. EVOS Restoration and Recreation Restoration funds will allow the Division to upgrade the floating dock facility, install a fishing platform and revegetate approximately 200' of riverbank in the spring of 1997.

### **Recommendations**

#### **1. Access Facilities**

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should continue to closely monitor this site to be sure the new facilities are used appropriately.

#### **2. Bank Restoration**

Once the new revegetation project is in place and the fishing platform is installed, the Division of Parks should close the remainder of the frontage to bank fishing to protect the restoration project from foot traffic.

#### **3. Regulatory/Informational Signing**

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should erect regulatory and informational signs, which identify park boundaries and inform visitors of park regulations and provide information about the restoration project and the importance of riparian resources.

## **Bings Landing**

River Miles 39.5

Acreage 125

### **Legal Description**

Township 5 North, Range 8 West, Seward Meridian  
Section 16: W2SW4, SW4NW4 lying south of the Sterling Highway  
Section 21: Lot 3  
Section 20: Lot 1

### **Site Description**

Bing's Landing is 125 acre parcel at River Mile (RM) 39.5, three miles upstream of the community of Sterling. Bing's Landing is the traditional name of the boat launch at this site, operated for many years by pioneer resident Bing Brown.

A distinguishing feature of this site is the Naptowne Rapids which has traditionally served as a River dividing point, since few boaters travel through this hazardous whitewater. Launching facilities at Bing's Landing are above the rapids.

The site's topography gradually declines from the Sterling Highway south to the Kenai River. This slope is interrupted at several points by relatively flat, east-west benches. A flat terrace extends back 200 feet from the River's edge before the uplands abruptly begin. This terrace is within the 100-year floodplain, which is forested in mature black spruce and cottonwood. Forest vegetation of the uplands is mixed birch and white spruce.

This site is primarily a day use facility with a boat ramp, eighteen day use parking sites, eighteen parking lot campsites, water well, and a single vaulted latrine. Recreational use of this site revolves around boat launching, sockeye salmon fishing and camping associated with the first two activities. A few landowners upriver use the area for long term parking because they do not have road access to their property.

The September 1995 flood damaged the riverfront tent camping area and the downstream river front trail. The tent camping area was closed and the trail was rerouted inland in 1996.

### **Analysis**

The existing park facilities were constructed in 1988, phase one of a two phase proposal. The second phase was the construction of a thirty unit campground. The campground was never built and the current parking lot has been divided in to two sections, one for camping and one for day use parking. On peak days during sockeye season it is not unusual to have over one hundred and fifty excess vehicles parked along the road leading into the park.

The downstream fishing area was also impacted by the September 1995 flood and the river bed was reconfigured. The traditional access points (from the top of the high bluff) are now treacherous and unsafe. The Division attempted to address this problem by re routing the foot traffic and fencing off the dangerous areas during the summer of 1996. This effort was moderately successful, but a long term solution needs to be developed.

The river bank was re-contoured in this area and cultural sites were impacted. The Division of Parks fenced and closed this area to foot traffic in 1996. A new trail was developed from the lower end of the property to the new bluff access point. Fishermen The lower floodplain terrace, downstream of the high bluff was completely inundated by the September 1995 flood. can still access this area by walking on the exposed riverbank in front of the fencing. A long term solution needs to be developed for this area also.

## Recommendations:

### 1. Campground

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should pursue utilizing the EVOS Marine Recreation project funding it has secured to construct a thirty unit campground on the upland portion (between existing development and Sterling Highway) of the Bing's Landing site. The campground should include thirty camping sites, parking spaces, tent pads, firepits, and picnic tables. Sanitary facilities, water wells, interpretation and a picnic shelter should be included.

### 2. Bank Protection, Restoration and Access

The Division should pursue additional EVOS Marine Restoration and Recreation project funding to revegetate the impacted areas both upstream and downstream of the boat ramp. Walkways and fishing platforms are needed to protect riparian vegetation, provide access and boat tie ups.

A stairway that scales the high steep bluff, inland from the river, needs to be constructed. This will allow the park users to travel from one end of the park to the other without climbing up and down the unstable face of the bluff. It will also link all of the new inland trails (away from the bluff and river edge) together and make the area more attractive to use.

### 3. Sanitary Facilities

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should install an additional toilet at the down stream end of the park. The toilet should be sited in the vicinity of the bluff fishing area and the existing east-west section line road.

### 4. Cultural Resources Survey

A detailed survey of the site's cultural resources should be conducted. The survey will inventory and assess the site's resources and a long term management plan will be developed for the cultural sites.

### 6. Cultural Site Stewardship Plan

The Division of Parks should, in conjunction with interested community groups, develop a site stewardship program for this site.

### 7. Closures

The Division of Parks should evaluate the existing bank fishing closures, once the fishing platforms and walkways are installed and determine which areas need to remain closed to protect riparian habitat.

### 8. ADA Accessibility

The fishing platforms, walkways and new campground facilities should be constructed to meet ADA standards. Two ADA parking sites need to be located in the vicinity of the boat launch to provide parking for disabled park users.

### 9. Regulatory and Informational Signing

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should erect regulatory and informational signs, which identify park boundaries and inform visitors of park regulations and provide information about the restoration projects and the importance of riparian resources.

## **Ciechanski**

River Mile 15.5

Acreage 34.18

### **Legal Description**

Township 5 North, Range 11 West, Seward Meridian  
Section 24: Lot 1

### **Site Description**

The Ciechanski site is a 34 acre park unit is land-accessible from Ciechanski Road, off Kalifornski Beach Road. Located at River Mile 15.5, the site is bordered by a private campground, Riverquest and is close to several other private campgrounds. Immediately upstream of the park unit is a 35 acre undeveloped parcel owned by the Kenai Peninsula Borough.

The park unit occupies an upland site, an average of 30 feet above the Kenai River. One corner of the unit slopes off to a terrace a few feet above the River's surface. Vegetation is typical of the area, with the predominant species being birch and white spruce. Several cultural features are located at Ciechanski.

A small floating dock provides access to the toilet facilities from the river. The site has two picnic sites and is used for bankfishing during sockeye season.

For more information on this River stretch, see the River segment descriptions starting on page

### **Analysis**

The Ciechanski unit is located in the most heavily-used section of the River. There are several privately-owned campgrounds and boat launches in the area which provide most of the services typically available at state recreational sites.

For these reasons, facility development at this site should be limited to those types which complement the existing recreational facilities nearby. EVOS Restoration and Recreation funds will allow the Division to upgrade the floating dock facility, install a grate walkway, and revegetate approximately 200 of riverbank in the spring of 1997.

### **Recommendations**

#### **1. Access Facilities**

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should continue to closely monitor this site to be sure the new facilities are used appropriately.

#### **2. Land Acquisition: Lot 2, Section 23, T5N, R11W, S.M.**

The Department of Natural Resources should add the 35 acre parcel located immediately upstream of the Ciechanski site to the Kenai River Special Management Area. The parcel is owned by the Kenai Peninsula Borough.

#### **3. Bank Restoration**

Once the new revegetation project is in place and the fishing platform is installed, the Division of Parks should close the remainder of the frontage to bank fishing to protect the restoration project from foot traffic.

#### **4. Cultural Resources Survey**

A detailed cultural resources survey should be conducted. The survey will inventory and assess the site's resources and a long term management plan will be developed.

**5. Cultural Site Stewardship**

The Division of Parks should, in conjunction with interested community groups, develop a site stewardship program for this unit.

**6. Regulatory and Informational Signing**

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should erect regulatory and informational signs, which identify park boundaries and inform visitors of park regulations and provide information about the restoration projects and the importance of riparian resources.

# Cooper Landing Boat Launch

River Mile 82

Acreage 5

## Legal Description

Township 5 North, Range 3 West, Seward Meridian  
Section 28: Lots 12 and 13

## Site Description

The Cooper Landing Boat Launch is located on a one acre parcel that was administratively transferred to the Kenai River Special Management Area in ----- It is located on the downstream side of Kenai River Bridge (Kenai Lake Outlet) in Cooper Landing. The growing popularity of the existing launch and the lack of public restrooms in the Cooper Landing area are what prompted the Division of Parks (DPOR) and the Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) to investigate the existing facility's potential for expansion. Site analysis clearly showed that the lot was too small to provide for a facility and the only other parcel the state owned in the area was primarily wetlands.

John and Dottie Ingram, local homesteaders, owned 4 acres between the two state parcels and offered to sell them to the state. ADF&G's Sportfish Division purchased the property and funded the ramp improvements using Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Program funds (Wallop-Breaux). DPOR funded the parking area, walkways, restrooms, and interpretation by securing Federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Enhancement Act (ISTEA) funding through the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. The completed facility will be managed by DPOR as a unit of the state park system.

The facility will be constructed during the 1997 season and will be managed to provide boat launching, parking, restrooms, water, walkways and viewing platforms. There will be no bank fishing, overnight camping or picnic facilities on site.

## Analysis

The Cooper Landing Boat Launch will be the first State Park facility that visitors to the Kenai Peninsula will encounter. Viewing stations, platforms and walkways will provide views of the river and the mountain environment and interpretative panels will provide information about River and it's resources. The launch improvements will provide better access and the travelling public will have a much needed rest stop. The river frontage will be closed to bank fishing to prevent impacts to the riparian habitat and trespass on private property.

## Recommendations

### 1. Facility Management

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should continue to closely monitor this site to minimize the conflict between boaters engaged in launching and the visitors wishing to park and use the rest stop facilities.

### 2. Bank Closures

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, in cooperation with the Department of Fish and Game should close the river frontage to bank fishing. Close monitoring will be required to prevent any damage to the nearshore areas.

### 3. Regulatory/Informational Signing

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should erect regulatory and informational signs, which identify park boundaries and inform visitors of park regulations and provide information about the restoration project and the importance of riparian resources.



## **Eagle Rock**

River Miles 9-12

**Acreage 577.43**

### **Legal Description**

Township 5 North, Range 10 West, Seward Meridian

Section 6: Lot 8

Section 7: Lots 5-7

Township 5 North, Range 11 West, Seward Meridian

Section 1: Lot 10

Section 12: Lots 1-3, 7-10, 13

N2SE4

SE4NE4

NE4SW4

Section 13: Lot 1

SW4NW4

Section 14: Lots 2, 7

### **Site Description**

This 577 acre unit is named for Eagle Rock, a prominent landmark at River Mile (RM) 11.5. Three miles of the River's southern shoreline are included in this park unit. Most of the area is wetland, particularly along the shoreline. There are isolated upland areas scattered through the unit, forested with spruce and birch. The River adjacent to the unit is tidally influenced, often resulting in steep and muddy shorelines.

The unit is completely undeveloped. The nearest road is approximately one-quarter mile away. Eagle Rock Campground, privately owned and operated, is located on the north shore directly across the River from the park unit. The Pillars unit of the KRSMA is approximately one mile upriver.

The Eagle Rock area is one of the most heavily used portions of the entire River. Recreational activities in the vicinity take place primarily on the River surface, although tidally exposed gravel bars are used for fishing. Some upland recreation at this site is also oriented towards wildlife viewing. Land ownership in the surrounding area is mixed between public and private entities. The City of Kenai owns substantial acreage on the north shore of the River, as well as several islands immediately adjacent to the unit.

### **Analysis**

This unit is composed largely of wetlands which should not be developed or disturbed. These wetlands provide important habitat for fish, waterfowl and terrestrial animals. This open space also provides a natural and scenic setting for the many boat anglers which use this stretch of the River. This land should be closed to any activity which will threaten the riparian vegetation and the surrounding wetlands. The Dept. of Fish and Game with DNR's concurrence, closed the unit from river mile 10.5 to 12 to bankfishing in 1996, during the second run of sockeye salmon.

### **Recommendations:**

#### **1. Regulatory/Informational Signing**

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should erect regulatory and informational signs, which identify park boundaries and inform visitors of the bank closures and the values of the resources that the land provides.

#### **2. Closure to Camping**

The Division should pursue regulations that will close this undeveloped unit to camping.

### **3. Cultural Resources Survey**

**The Department of Natural Resources should conduct a detailed survey of the site's cultural resources. The survey will inventory and assess the site's resources as a first step in formulating a long term management strategy for this unit.**

### **4. Cultural Site Stewardship Plan**

**The Division of Parks should, in conjunction with interested community groups, develop a site stewardship program for this site.**

## **Funny River**

River Miles 29, 30

**Acreage 336.46**

### **Legal Description**

**Township 5 North, Range 9 West, Seward Meridian Section 28:**

**SE4SE4 Tract 6, Heistand Subdivision Addition No. 2**

**Section 33: Lots 1, 3 SE4NW4 portion of NE4 lying west of the Funny River Road**

### **Site Description**

**Funny River, at River Mile (R) 30 of the Kenai River, is composed of three separate parcels: Funny River State Recreation Site, a 14 acre parcel north of Funny River, a 40 acre parcel bisected by Funny River. These state park lands surround a private subdivision located at the confluence of Funny River and the Kenai River. Total Kenai River frontage is slightly more than one-half mile. The fourteen acre parcel provides sanitary facilities, a floating dock, day use parking and a small camping area.**

**The topography of the Funny River site is rolling and gently slopes north and west toward the Kenai River. At the southeast corner of the site is a steep, forested hill. A well drained bench, approximately 1,000 feet wide, fronts on the Kenai River. For more information on this area, see the River segment descriptions, starting on**

### **Analysis**

**Three river miles upstream of the Funny River unit, a highway bridge over the Kenai River is proposed. The bridge will connect the Sterling Highway with Funny River Road, dramatically shortening travel time and distance to the River's south shore. This bridge will immediately place additional demands on the south shore for recreational access and facilities.**

**Despite it's proximity to the bridge crossing, this property terrain and wetlands make it an unlikely candidate for future recreational development. It should be managed as open space and resource protection land. The 14 acre parcel north of Funny River should be developed to continue provide day use, tent camping and lower impact recreational uses.**

**EVOS funding has been secured to provide an improved floating dock, bank revegetation, walkways and fishing platforms at fourteen acre parcel. this site. Construction of the project should start in the spring of 1997.**

### **Recommendations**

#### **1. Acquisitions**

**Land Acquisition: East half of Section 32 lying south of the Kenai River, T5N, R9W, S.M. This 141-acre parcel, adjacent to the Funny River unit of the KRSMA, is state-owned land with an approved selection by the Kenai Peninsula Borough.**

#### **2. Bank Restoration**

**Once the new revegetation project is in place (Funny River State Recreation Site) and the fishing platforms are installed, the Division of Parks should close the remainder of the frontage to bank fishing to protect the restoration project from foot traffic.**

### **3. Camping Closure**

**The Division of Parks should pursue regulations that would close the two undeveloped parcel downstream of the Funny River confluence to overnight camping.**

### **4. Regulatory and Informational Signing**

**Regulatory and informational signs, which identify park boundaries, inform visitors of park regulations, and provide information about the riparian resources should be developed and installed at this site.**

### **5. Cultural Resources Survey**

**The Department of Natural Resources should conduct a detailed survey of the site's cultural resources. The survey will inventory and assess the site's resources as a first step in formulating a long term management strategy for this unit.**

### **6. Cultural Site Stewardship Plan**

**The Division of Parks should, in conjunction with interested community groups, develop a site stewardship program for this site.**

## **Honeymoon Cove**

River Mile 13

**Acreage 430.68**

### **Legal Description**

Township 5 North, Range 10 West, Seward Meridian

Section 7: Lot 15

Section 18: Lots 4-7, 10-13

NE4SW4

E2NW4

### **Site Description**

This 430 acre unit in the lower River is located on the south shore and encompasses 1 1/4 miles of shoreline. Vegetation is a complex pattern of wetlands, with typical grasses and sedges, and well drained uplands of mixed spruce and birch forest. The floodplain in this River segment is quite narrow, often extending less than 50 feet from the ordinary high water line. The floodplain is wider at several points, attaining a maximum width of 800 feet.

Privately owned lands surround the Honeymoon Cove site. Castaway Cove is a small-lot recreational subdivision. Kenai Riverbend Campground and Riverquest are privately operated campgrounds with camping units and boat launches. These facilities are available to the public on a fee basis. Recreational use of this unit is the heaviest during sockeye season. The River adjacent to the unit is heavily used throughout the fishing season. Three popular fishing spots, Honeymoon Cove, Falling-In-Hole, and The Pillars, are located in the area.

Honeymoon Cove is undeveloped but has two defacto boat-in campsites. A local residential access road traverses the northwest corner of the unit. There are many cultural sites in this area.

### **Analysis**

The number of public boat launches and campgrounds in this area continue to suggest that new facility development on the state land is unnecessary. The unit should continue to be managed for habitat and cultural resource protection.

The Department of Fish and Game, with DNR's concurrence, has closed the river bank from mile 12.5 to mile 13 to bank fishing during the second run of sockeye salmon.

### **Recommendations**

#### **1. Regulatory/Informational Signing**

The Division should erect regulatory and informational signs which identify park boundaries and inform visitors of park regulations and provide information about the importance of the riparian resources.

#### **2. Bank Fishing Closure**

The Division of Parks should request that ADF&G close the river bank from mile 13 to approx. 13.5 to bank fishing during the second run of sockeye fishing.

#### **3. Cultural Resources Survey**

A detailed survey of the sites cultural resources should be conducted, the survey will inventory and assess the site's resources and a long term management plan will be developed for the site.

#### **4. Cultural Site Stewardship Plan**

**The Division should, in conjunction with interested community groups, develop a site stewardship program for this site.**

#### **5. Camping Closure**

**The Division should pursue regulations that would close this parcel to overnight camping.**

## **Izaak Walton**

### **River Miles 36**

#### **Acreage 8.4**

#### **Legal Description**

Township 5 North, Range 8 West, Seward Meridian

**Parcel #1:** Starting at the Southwest corner of Lot 6, Section 7, T5N, R8W, go South 0°08' East a distance of 888.1 feet to the center of road to corner no. 1, which is the true point of beginning; then North 73°5' West along the center of the road a distance of 727 feet to corner no. 2; then in a southwesterly direction a distance of 515.6 feet plus or minus, along the line of mean high water of Moose River to point no. 3; then a distance of 108 feet plus or minus, to point no. 4 along the line of mean high water of Moose River to Kenai River; then a distance of 75.3 feet plus or minus, to point no. 5 along that river; then upstream a distance of 808.6 feet plus or minus, at mean high water along Kenai River to point no. 6; then North 0°08' West 150 feet to point no. 7; then South 89°57' East a distance of 208 feet to point no. 8; then North 0°08' West 213.9 feet to point no. 1, which is the true point of beginning.

**Parcel #2:** Starting at the Southwest corner of Lot 6, Section 7, T5N, R8W, go South 0°08' East a distance of 1,102.0 feet to corner no. 1, which is the true point of beginning; then North 89°57' West 208.0 feet to corner no. 2; then South 0°08' East 150 feet plus or minus to corner no. 3, which is a point at mean high water of the Kenai River, then Southeasterly a distance of 238 feet plus or minus, along the line of high water of that river to corner no. 4, which is a point 268 feet plus or minus, South 0°08' East of corner no. 1, then North 0°08' West 268 feet plus or minus to corner no. 1, which is the true point of beginning, containing one acre plus or minus.

#### **Site Description**

Izaak Walton is located at the confluence of the Kenai and Moose rivers in the community of Sterling and has frontage on both rivers. The facility inventory includes a 25 unit campground, day use parking, sanitary facilities, and a boat launch. Purchased by the Izaak Walton League and resold to the state, it is one of the most highly developed and the most intensively used of the state park units on the Kenai River.

Topography along the waterfront is flat, rising rapidly 40 feet to the level of the Sterling Highway. The flat area is within the 100-year floodplain. The site is forested with mature white spruce approximately 60 feet tall. Foot traffic has damaged much of the brush vegetation along the shoreline, degrading habitat values.

Existing recreational uses center on overnight camping and sport fishing from the bank. The sockeye fishery occurs on both river frontages (Kenai and Moose) and significant bank erosion has occurred as a result of uncontrolled access. The September 1995 flood magnified the existing erosion problem and in 1996 the Division of Parks administratively closed the Kenai River frontage to foot traffic.

Important prehistoric cultural resources are located at this site. Preliminary tests and partial excavations suggest that occupation by Eskimo groups began approximately 2,200 years ago and was followed by Athapaskan occupation which continued until after contact with European explorers in 1780. The site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

For more information on this area, see the River segment descriptions, starting on page

## Analysis

Izaak Walton is a very popular site. In order to reduce the adverse impacts of such heavy visitation, a redevelopment project including revised vehicle circulation, redefined parking, road paving, definition of camping areas, and a system of traffic barriers was completed in 1985. Despite these improvements, demands for camping, day use and boat launch parking far exceeds the available space.

## Recommendations

### 1. Fishing Facilities

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should construct a network of walkways and fishing platforms on both river frontages to protect riparian vegetation and cultural resource. The re-establishment of vegetation is an important component of this plan.

### 2. Closures

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should evaluate the river frontage at Izaak Walton once the fishing platforms and walkways are installed and determine which areas need to be closed to access to further protect riparian habitat.

### 3. ADA Accessibility

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should construct fishing platforms and associated walkways from the existing day use parking area to the Moose River for fishing opportunities.

### 4. Sanitary Facilities

The two aging vaulted latrines at Izaak Walton need replacement. The tanks may be compromised and leaking liquids into the ground.



## **Kenai Keys**

River Miles 43.3, 45

**Acreage 249**

### **Legal Description**

Township 5 North, Range 8 West, Seward Meridian

Section 26: Lot 9

Section 36: Lots 2, 3, 5-8, 12-33, and Tract "B", Stephankie Alaska Subdivision, ASLS #73-146.

A small unmeandered island located within the SE4SE4.

Lots 2 & 3, SW4NE4, NE4NW4, excluding the Kenai Keys Road R/W and Stephankie Alaska Subdivision, ASLS #73-146.

### **Site Description**

Located at River Mile (RM)45 the Kenai Keys is the uppermost state park unit on the River. The major portion of the park is located on the River's north shore and encompasses 249 acres. Kenai Keys also contains a 9 acre parcel on the River's south shore at RM 43.3. This undeveloped park borders the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge to the east, thus providing direct access to recreational resources of those federal lands. Access is by foot from the Kenai Keys Road or by boat.

The park comprises two distinct topographical types. Most of the area is rolling hills elevated an average 20 feet above small, wet depressions. The second topographical type is an extensive wetland, in the unit's southwest portion, between uplands to the east and privately-owned lands to the west.

Fish and wildlife habitat values at Kenai Keys are very high. Riverfront trees are used by resident bald eagles during the winter when open water conditions exist. An eagle-nesting tree has been documented nearby at Torpedo Lake. Because lands in this River stretch are relatively undisturbed by development activities or land-based travel, the local bear population is judged to be stable. The Kenai Keys site is part of an important brown bear migration corridor and provides key seasonal feeding areas for large concentrations of bears during the spring and fall. Moose browse conditions are declining due to aging deciduous species and the advance of white spruce.

Fish habitat values are also very high. Studies indicate that the River in river area in the vicinity of RM 45 is extremely productive for three salmon species. High concentrations of chinook, coho, and sockeye salmon have been observed spawning in this area. These waters are also thought to be important habitat for rainbow trout during their springtime spawning migration from Skilak Lake. Submerged dunes upstream of RM 45 are known to be trout spawning grounds.

### **Analysis**

The bank of the Kenai River in the vicinity of the Kenai Keys unit is composed of actively-eroding gravel bluffs ranging in height from five to 30 feet. In the lower portion of the property, recently uprooted trees known as sweepers, lean out over the River and testify to the erosion. The slope of the upper bank area makes foot access to the River difficult. The Torpedo Creek confluence with the Kenai River has extremely high fish habitat values which must be respected. No improved access should be developed to the River in this area. Because this riverfront area already receives high levels of use during the sockeye fishery, the area should be closely monitored to ensure that habitat natural values are not lost or degraded.

The Kenai Keys unit borders lands that the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge recently purchased from the Kenai Native Association. There is an opportunity for both agencies to manage their lands in a cooperative effort to protect habitat, cultural resources, and outdoor recreation purposes.

The Kenai Keys and Kenai National Wildlife Refuge area supports a large portion of angler effort during the second run of sockeye salmon. It is also a popular area for fall silver salmon fishing. Management of this site should continue to focus on protecting fish and wildlife habitat and continuing to provide access to fishermen.

## **Recommendations**

### **1. Cooperative Management and Day use Facilities**

**The Division of Parks and the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge should consider developing a management strategy for their adjoining lands that combines public access, protection of fish and wildlife habitat, and protection of cultural resources. Appropriate day use facilities to consider would be floating docks, walkways, fishing platforms and sanitary facilities.**

### **2. Closures to Camping**

**The Division should pursue regulations that will close this unit to overnight camping.**

### **3. Bankfishing Closures**

**The river frontage at this unit should be evaluated to determine if portions of the parcel needs be closed to foot traffic (to protect riparian resources).**

### **4. Regulatory/Informational Signing**

**The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should erect regulatory and informational signs, which identify park boundaries and inform visitors of park regulations and provide information about the riparian resources .**

### **5. Cultural Resources Survey**

**The Department of Natural Resources should conduct a detailed survey of the site's cultural resources. The survey will inventory and assess the site's resources as a first step in formulating a long term management strategy for this unit.**

### **6. Cultural Site Stewardship Plan**

**The Division of Parks should, in conjunction with interested community groups, develop a site stewardship program for this site.**

**Kenai River Flats**  
River Miles 5.8

Acreage 685.85

**Legal Description**

Township 5 North, Range 11 West, Seward Meridian

Section 16: Lots 1-10

SE4

NW4NW4

SE4SW4

Township 5 North, Range 11 West, Seward Meridian

Section 15: Lot 8

NW4SE4

N2SW4

N2S2SW4

**Site Description**

This unit consists almost entirely of estuarine wetlands, and is well known for the annual staging of snow geese and other waterfowl during the spring migration. Waterfowl generally first appear in April, remaining in the area until ice-bound areas further north have thawed. As many as 5,000 snow geese congregate here at one time, as well as swans, Canada geese, white-fronted geese, mallards, pintails, widgeons, cranes, and other waterfowl species. The Flats also provides an important resting and feeding area for migratory waterfowl in the fall.

The flats are also a year-round range for a small herd of lowland caribou. Caribou are often seen from roadways and the River, and are a popular attraction for wildlife viewing and photography.

The 100-year floodplain is quite extensive in the Kenai River Flats, averaging one mile in width. The River here is tidally influenced. Daily fluctuations in the water level have produced a steep and muddy shoreline. Large ice floes are deposited in the area during winter months.

The Bridge Access Road (Warren Ames Bridge) traverses the unit, with gravel pullouts at the bridge site serving as wildlife observation points. There are approximately 20 parking spaces here, a public restroom, picnic tables and interpretative signing. Otherwise, the area is undeveloped.

There are two distinct upland areas in the Kenai River Flats unit. One area is immediately upstream of the Warren Ames Bridge, known locally as Birch Island. This "island" of well-drained ground surrounded by wetlands is thought to contain numerous cultural sites and resources. The other upland area is located at River Mile (RM) 8 and consists of approximately 30 acres. It occupies a bench about 50 feet above the River, with mature mixed forest of birch and spruce typical of the region. It contains many cultural sites.

Recreational use of the area is limited. During the spring waterfowl migration, as many as 400 photographers and sightseers visit the area daily. This visitation is confined almost entirely to the highway corridor and the pullouts at the bridge crossing. Sport fishing from boats is increasing during king salmon season (June and July) and silver salmon season (August and September). Shore fishing in the vicinity of the bridge is moderate to heavy for hooligan in May and during personal use dipnetting in June and July. The area is heavily used for waterfowl hunting during the fall, because of its accessibility to local residents.

**Analysis**

This area should be managed for habitat protection, public information/interpretation and continued access for personal use dipnetting. Interpretation should continue to focus on wildlife, waterfowl, estuarine wetlands, estuarine fishery resources, and the marine mammals that use Kenai River.

New facilities should respond to existing demands and activities rather than attract new visitors or

activity types from other areas. The existing facility is adequate but the parking area should be delineated (within the existing fill footprint) and platforms or walkways installed along the perimeter of the parking area to facilitate viewing, picnicking and additional interpretative displays

**Recommendations:**

**1. Cultural Resources Survey**

A detailed cultural resources survey should be conducted. The survey will inventory and assess the site's resources and a long term management plan will be developed.

**2. Facility Improvements at Warren Ames Bridge**

The Division of Parks should install grated platforms adjacent to the existing fill to provide an area for wildlife viewing, day use and access to the dip net fishery. Delineation of parking spaces and new interpretative panels should be included in the project.

**3. Cultural Site Stewardship**

The Division of Parks should , in conjunction with interested community groups, develop a site stewardship program for this unit.

**5. Regulatory and Informational Signing**

Regulatory and informational signs , which identify park boundaries, inform visitors of park regulations and provide information about the estuarine resources should be developed and installed at this site.

## **Kenai River Islands**

River Miles 11-41

**Acreage 63.80**

### **Legal Description**

Township 5 North, Range 8 West, Seward Meridian

Section 27: Lots 10, 17

Township 5 North, Range 10 West, Seward Meridian

Section 6: Lots 9-10

Section 7: Lots 2-4, 8, 11, 16

Section 18: Lots 2, 3, 14

Section 19: Lots 3, 17

Section 30: Lots 2, 8

Section 31: Lots 7, 10

Section 32: Lot 7

Section 33: Lots 5, 8

Section 34: Lot 10

Township 5 North, Range 11 West, Seward Meridian

Section 36: Lot 2 within NE4

### **Site Description**

Seventeen islands, spread between River Miles (RM) 11 and 41, are part of the Kenai River Special Management Area. Parts of two of the islands are owned by Cook Inlet Region, Inc. (River Mile 42.5). The remaining 15 islands are publicly owned in their entirety. They range in size from less than one acre to 9.5 acres. The larger islands are vegetated with typical riparian species, including willow and cottonwood. The small islands are scoured by winter ice and support only small woody and herbaceous vegetation. All islands are subject to flooding.

The islands are important habitat for bald eagle nesting and overwintering. Fish habitat values of the islands are some of the highest found anywhere in the Kenai River. The vegetated shorelines provide cover for rearing fish and the graveled ends of the islands are favored spawning areas.

Most of the islands are in the lower River where the most intense fishing takes place. Existing recreational use consists of random day use and bank fishing. The large forested islands receive more visitation than smaller islands. Access to all of the islands is by boat.

### **Analysis**

The Kenai River islands have traditionally been used for river recreation. Lower levels of use in earlier years, coupled with the cleansing and rejuvenating actions of periodic floods, have allowed the islands to be self-maintaining. The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation closed all of the islands to camping in the mid-eighties in order to protect their valuable riparian areas. Current signing informs visitors that the islands are closed to camping and that open fires are prohibited.

Many of the islands are beginning to show the effects of the expanding sockeye fishery. The Division of Parks, in cooperation with Department of Fish and Game, closed the majority of the forested, heavily vegetated islands to bank fishing in the summer of 1996. This closure was in effect during the sockeye salmon run and was instituted to protect the riparian habitat of the islands. All of the islands are susceptible to flooding at high water periods and no facilities should be located on these islands.

Management should continue to consist of an assertive informational program that informs visitors of the islands sensitive nature and the necessity for a pack-it-in/pack-it-out trash policy.

## **Recommendations**

### **1. Land Acquisition: Lots 10, 17, Section 27, T5N, R8W, S.M.**

**The Division of Parks should investigate the potential for purchasing the other half of the islands (RM 42.5) that are owned by Cook Inlet Region, Inc. (CIRI) for inclusion in the Kenai River Special Management Area.**

### **2. Bank Fishing Closure**

**The Division of Parks, in cooperation with the Department of Fish and Game, should continue to close the islands to bank fishing during the second sockeye salmon run. The Division will continue to monitor the islands and determine if more restrictive closures are needed in the future.**

### **3. Regulatory/Informational Signing**

**The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should erect regulatory and informational signs, which identify park boundaries and inform visitors of park regulations (open fires, camping limits, fishing closures, etc.) and location of facilities.**

## Morgan's Landing

River Miles 30-31

Acreage 299.50

Legal Description

Township 5 North, Range 9 West, Seward Meridian

Section 21: SW4SE4

Section 28: Lots 2, 3, 7-9, 14, 15, NW4SW4, NE4NW4

Section 33: Lot 2

### Site Description

Morgan's Landing, a 300 acre site on the north shore of the Kenai River at Mile 30, is accessible from the road system via Lou Morgan Road. The property was purchased by the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation from the Lou Morgan family in 1980-81.

The landscape is typical of the Kenai lowlands, with well-drained uplands overlooking the River channel and adjacent floodplain wetlands. Each topographic zone has characteristic vegetation and soils: The uplands are mixed forest with spruce, birch, cottonwood and aspen, and a thin under story is present. The lowlands consist of muskegs, mature black spruce forest and several small streams flow from the wetland areas into the Kenai River.

A large portion of the upland forest at Morgan's Landing was cleared for homesteading purposes. The homestead building, which is located in the cleared area now serves as the Kenai Area Headquarters for state park operations. The day use parking area is located below the Headquarters building. The northern end of the airstrip clearing is now the site of a 40 unit campground. Trails lead from the campground and day use areas to the river. Morgan's Landing is the site of a popular chinook fishing area known as Morgan's Hole, but is even more crowded during the sockeye fishery.

Natural hazards at the site are related to the River. Much of the property's lowlands are within the 100-year floodplain, and areas of active bank erosion have been observed. The September 1995 flood completely inundated the floodplain area and many of the old boardwalks and bridges were floated off and scattered throughout the trail system.

Federal disaster assistance funding was allocated to repair and salvage much of the old boardwalk system. The EVOS settlement funded Marine Recreation and Restoration Project allowed the Division improve access to the sockeye fishing areas and to install fishing platforms to protect nearshore riparian areas. In anticipation of future floods the Division has anchored down all of the riverside walkways and bridges.

### Analysis

An outstanding feature of the Morgan's Landing site is the river frontage which offers good bank fishing opportunities. To satisfy demands for shore fishing areas, this site should continue to be managed and developed to take advantage of this feature. Fishing platforms should be continued to be developed, sensitive wetlands and streams need to be protected and areas that are heavily impacted need to be closed and allowed to revegetate. This area should continue to be managed for foot and boat accessed activities such as bank fishing and day use.

The uplands currently support the campground and the day use area. The Division is attempting to secure additional funding to construct a trail system from the day use area to the river that meets the standards of the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA).

The low wetlands are not suitable for summer recreation but become available for winter activities when frozen and beneath protective snowcover. These factors suggest that Morgan's Landing should be developed for a year-round spectrum of opportunities including summer fishing, boating, camping and hiking, and winter cross-country skiing and dog sledding.

The maintenance shop and storage yard for the Kenai Peninsula state parks is located at Morgan's Landing in a fenced compound. Two small housing units are located behind the maintenance shop and are used for volunteer housing.

## Recommendations

### 1. Day Use Area

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should improve the existing day use area by defining parking spaces, picnic sites, signs and a shelter for day-use activities.

### 2. ADA Accessibility

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should construct an accessible trail system from the existing day use area to the river for bank fishing opportunities.

### 3. Fishing Platforms and Walkways

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should construct fishing platforms and associated walkway along the most heavily used portions of the shore fishing area. A platform that meets ADA standards should be constructed at the terminus of the accessible trail route.

### 4. Riverfront Camping Closure

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should close the river frontage at Morgan's Landing to camping. Responsible management of the riparian resources is a high priority at Morgan's and additional impacts (beyond existing fishery) should not be encouraged. Adequate camping facilities and picnicking sites exist in the upland areas.

### 5. Acquisition

Cook Inlet Region, Inc. (CIRI) is the owner of several large parcels adjacent to Morgan's Landing. The property is primarily wetlands and the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should investigate the potential for purchasing this

The wetlands recharge several small streams and seeps in the state park and are important to the continued health of the riparian area. This parcel could also provide winter trails for cross country skiing, ski joring and dog sledding.

### 6. Regulatory/Informational Signing

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should erect regulatory and informational signs, which identify park boundaries, provide information about river resources and park regulations.



## **Nilnunqa**

River Miles 36

Acreage 42.47

### **Legal Description**

Township 5 North, Range 8 West, Seward Meridian

Section 7: Lot 10

### **Site Description**

This 42 acre site contains significant cultural resources, most notably a prehistoric village. The unit is undeveloped, and located on the south shore of the Kenai River at its confluence with the Moose River. It is accessible by road from the Funny River Road.

According to archaeological observations, the village site contains about 40 housepits of undefined origin or function. Detailed description of the area awaits proper archaeological excavation, testing and inventory.

The site is situated on two terraces separated by a small, steep bluff to the River. The lower terrace, immediately above the Kenai River, occupies approximately 12 acres and is entirely within the 100-year floodplain. It is sparsely forested with black spruce and mature cottonwood, and various understory berry bushes are present. The upper terrace is 15 to 25 feet above the Kenai River surface and is forested in white spruce and birch.

This property has been experiencing some recreational use, mainly during the sockeye season. This use has damaged the banks and there has been some erosion occurring. The Division determined that the cultural features and the riparian area were being damaged by this use and a Director's Order closing the banks to foot traffic was issued in 1994.

### **Analysis**

Consistent with the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation's goal of preserving and interpreting Alaska's cultural heritage, the Nilnunqa site should be managed and developed to emphasize Cook Inlet prehistory. This property should be managed for cultural resource objectives and recreational use should occur only if they are compatible with those objectives.

### **Recommendations**

#### **1. Cultural Resources Survey**

The Department of Natural Resources should conduct a detailed survey of the site's cultural resources. The survey will inventory and assess the site's resources as a first step in formulating a long-term management strategy for this unit.

#### **2. Cultural Resource Management Plan**

Based on the findings of the complete survey recommended above, the Alaska Office of History and Archaeology should formulate a Nilnunqa Cultural Resource Management Plan, which details how the site and its resources should be managed. The plan should consider nominating the site for the National Register of Historic Places. The plan should also consider public use of the site, for both cultural appreciation and recreation. Specific interpretive strategies should be developed, including the possibility of archaeological schools, demonstrations, and the reconstruction of the original village.

#### **3. Site Stewardship Program**

The Division of Parks should, in conjunction with interested community groups, develop a site stewardship program for this site. Host should be recruited when a facility is built.

## **Pillars**

River Mile 12.3

Acreage 15 acres

Legal Description

Township 5 North, Range 10 West, Seward Meridian

Section 7: Lot 17

### Site Description

Named for the old Kenai Bridge piers that were placed in the river to protect the boat ramp, the Pillars is located in the one of the busiest stretches of the Kenai River. Mature spruce and birch dominate the site and the area adjacent to the river is relatively undisturbed. Small wetland complexes exist on the property and the area is tidally influenced. This site was identified in the 1986 Kenai River Comprehensive Management Plan as a future location for a public facility. The existing ramp, road access and the undeveloped nature of the property were all reasons this site was recommended for future acquisition and development.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game's (ADF&G) Sportfish Division purchased the property in 1992 as a part of their ongoing Sportfish Access Program. Funding for the Access Program was provided by the Federal Aid to Sport Fish Restoration Act, commonly referred to as Dingell -Johnson funds. The land and future facilities were to be managed by the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR).

DPOR and ADF&G realized that the undisturbed banks would soon be impacted by public use. So a land management strategy was developed that closed the property to bank fishing but allowed the public to access the newly constructed restrooms. A floating dock, improved boat ramp, walkways and interpretative displays were all installed in 1996 and the final phase of construction will take place in 1997. An upgraded access road, parking lot, water well and additional restrooms are all part of final phase. The Pillars facility is designed to provide boat launching, parking and toilet facilities for the boating public. The property remains closed to bank fishing and there are no camping or picnic facilities.

### Analysis

The Pillars is located in a section of the river that experiences heavy boat traffic but the uplands adjacent to the river for many miles upstream or downstream are undeveloped. The boat ramp should improve access to this stretch of the river and the limitation of use to rest stops or boat launching should blend with the existing landscape.

### Recommendations

#### 1. Facility Management

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should continue to closely monitor this site to insure that the boat launching activities do not interfere with the boats docking to use the toilet facility.

#### 2. Acquisition

Cook Inlet Region, Inc. ( CIRI ) is the owner of a large parcel of land upstream of the Pillars. The property is valuable riparian habitat and the Division should investigate the potential for purchasing this parcel

#### 3. Regulatory/Informational Signing

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation should erect regulatory and informational signs, which identify park boundaries and inform visitors of park regulations and provide information about the restoration project and the importance of riparian resources.

## **Pipeline Crossing**

River Mile 17

Acreage 19.97

### **Legal Description**

Township 5 North, Range 10 West, Seward Meridian

Section 19: Lot 16

### **Site Description**

This 20 acre unit is located on the south shore of the River, directly opposite from Poacher's Cove, a private small-lot recreational subdivision. The site is traversed by an underground gas pipeline, and still shows evidence of the land clearing conducted during the pipeline's construction. Second growth vegetation and the surrounding undisturbed vegetation is riparian, composed of willow, alder, cottonwood and other water-tolerant species.

The site is entirely within the 100-year floodplain, occupying a lowland bench several feet above the River's normal water surface elevation.

For more information on this area, see the River segment descriptions starting on

### **Analysis**

The Pipeline Crossing is road accessible, but there is no "legal" road access to the site. The topography of the site and its proximity to the gas line should preclude any development of the site. The Pipeline Crossing should continue to be managed for open space and habitat purposes..

### **Recommendations:**

#### **1. Bank Restoration**

The riverbank in the downstream portions of the property is extremely impacted by bank fishermen. Efforts should be made to secure funding to provide bank restoration.

**Slikok Creek**  
River Mile 19

Acreage 37.14

**Legal Description**

Township 5 North, Range 11 West, Seward Meridian  
Section 36: Tract "A", Slikok Creek Alaska Subdivision

Site Description

The Slikok Creek site is located at River Mile (R) 19 in the lower River, below the Soldotna Bridge. The 40 acre site is accessible by road through a residential neighborhood and by foot trail from Kenai Peninsula Community College.

Slikok Creek bisects this recreational site, and drains neighboring wetlands before emptying into the Kenai River. As the creek passes through the site, it meanders within the Kenai River's floodplain. Slikok Creek is an anadromous stream with a small, returning population of king salmon. Pink salmon use the first 100 yards of Slikok Creek for spawning.

Uplands north and south of the creek descend steep, forested bluffs 40 feet to Slikok Creek and to the Kenai River. The uplands and slopes are densely forested with white spruce, birch and willow. Creek bottomland has old-growth cottonwood and a variety of understory brush species.

The Slikok Creek site is a well known shore fishing area and receives heavy use during the fishing season. Local residents use the site for shore fishing and tent camping; boaters use it for camping and day activities such as picnicking. Improvements on the site include sanitary facilities, stairways, a parking lots and trails to either side of the Slikok/Kenai confluence.

For more information on this area, see the River segment descriptions, starting on

**Analysis**

Slikok Creek is within the Soldotna city limits, in a rapidly expanding area. Land access to the site is via residential roads. Because of its physical configuration, the site is capable of supporting only a moderate level of activity. Despite these limitations, the Slikok Creek site provides an important recreational opportunity for local residents and for boaters.

EVOS Marine Recreation and Restoration funding has been secured and is earmarked for trails, stairways, gratewalks and fishing platforms at Slikok Creek. The design work for the project is underway and the project should start up some time in 1998.

## Recommendations

### 1. Bank Restoration

Additional EVOS funding should be secured to provide for additional bank restoration and revegetation.

### 2. Cultural Resources Survey

The Department of Natural Resources should conduct a detailed survey of the site's cultural resources. The survey will inventory and assess the site's resources as a first step in formulating a long term management strategy for this unit.

### 3. Cultural Site Stewardship Plan

The Division of Parks should, in conjunction with interested community groups, develop a site stewardship program for this site.

