

Appendix F

Special Management Area Objectives

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
OHV	Off-Highway Vehicle
PRMP	Proposed Resource Management Plan
ROS	Recreation Opportunity Spectrum
SMA	Special Management Area
SRMA	Special Recreation Management Area
SRMP	Special Recreation Management Plan
SRP	Special Recreation Permit
VRM	Visual Resource Management

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The following goals and objectives for each of the three special management areas (SMAs) will contribute to the development of their future implementation-level plans. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will work with all interested stakeholders during the development of these plans. The planning process will include additional opportunities for the public to comment. Per BLM policy, this work normally should be completed within five years of the signing of the Record of Decision for the Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (PRMP/FEIS). SMAs will not encumber either State or Native selected lands, and further planning processes are unlikely to take place until selections are adjudicated.

2.0 KNIK RIVER SPECIAL RECREATION MANAGEMENT AREA

The area of the proposed Knik River Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) consists of 80,000 acres of State and Native selected lands approximately 30 miles north of Anchorage (Figures 2.3-1 and 2.3-5 in Appendix A). The Knik River flows through these lands and is used by recreational and commercial boaters. Various drainages flowing into the Knik River support anadromous fisheries. Dall sheep are found in the upper reaches, and bear and moose are common in the valley. Dispersed recreation, including hunting, fishing, hiking, and horseback riding is common in the area. Small aircraft pilots practicing take-offs and landings routinely use portions of the valley floor. The area receives heavy off-highway vehicle (OHV) use of all types. Because of the ease of access, these lands are subject to the dumping of stolen vehicles, and are at times used as an unregulated shooting range.

These conditions have created a risk to public health and safety, the potential for habitat damage, and challenges for management of both public and private property. BLM recommends creating a SRMA for BLM lands in the Knik River Area. The community-based Special Recreation Management Plan (SRMP), or implementation-level plan, for the Knik area would be completed with the involvement of the surrounding land managers, the communities, and user and conservation groups, and would consider the various recreational uses (including non-motorized uses) of the lands as well as the area's habitat and wildlife resources. Any SMA designation would not carry forward if lands in this area were transferred out of BLM ownership.

- a. Goals
 - i. *Manage recreation to maintain a diversity of opportunities*
 - ii. *Provide opportunities for commercial recreation consistent with area objectives for recreation management*
- b. Preliminary Management Objectives
 - i. *Manage SRMA to maintain existing recreation opportunities, including maintaining designated Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classifications*
 - ii. *Maintain area for designated Visual Resource Management (VRM) classifications*
 - iii. *Develop further guidance for management to OHV use, either by opening, further limiting, or closing areas to OHV use*
 - iv. *Manage recreation activities to maintain the quality of user experience, minimize adverse effects on fish and wildlife resources, reduce refuse and unauthorized dumping, and minimize disturbance to adjacent communities*
 - v. *Work collaboratively with other landowners in the area, recreation users, and adjacent communities to develop management strategies and define enforcement responsibilities*

3.0 HAINES BLOCK SPECIAL RECREATION MANAGEMENT AREA

The Haines Block SRMA comprises 273,000 acres (Figures 2.3-2 and 2.3-4 in Appendix A) of mountainous snow and ice fields. The entire area is selected by the State of Alaska. Several rivers within the Haines Block were evaluated as potential Wild and Scenic Rivers. The area also includes the Ferebee, Nourse, Chilkoot, and Chilkat Glaciers. The Haines Block provides habitat for a variety of wildlife species, including mountain goats, brown bear, and wolverine. The area has become increasingly popular for helicopter-supported commercial recreation operations for activities such as hiking, backcountry skiing, and filming. BLM has an ongoing Special Recreation Permit (SRP) program that reviews and authorizes these activities. BLM recognizes the potential for impacts on the community as well as the wildlife populations from proposed and permitted activities; BLM proposes to develop a community-based SRMP to better manage the resources in this area. This plan would consider the relationships between current recreation uses, wildlife, habitat, and the impacts to the community. The SRMP would be developed with extensive public involvement. Any SMA designation would not carry forward if lands in this area were transferred out of BLM ownership.

- a. Goals
 - i. *Manage recreation to maintain a diversity of opportunities*
 - ii. *Provide opportunities for commercial recreation consistent with area objectives for recreation management*
- b. Preliminary Management Objectives
 - i. *Manage SRMA to maintain existing recreation opportunities, including maintaining designated ROS classifications*
 - ii. *Maintain area for designated VRM classifications*
 - iii. *Develop further guidance for management of OHV use*
 - iv. *Manage commercial recreation activities to maintain the quality of user experience, avoid adverse effects on wildlife resources, and minimize disturbance to adjacent communities*
 - v. *Work collaboratively with other landowners in the area, recreation users, and adjacent communities to develop management strategies and define enforcement responsibilities*

4.0 NEACOLA MOUNTAINS AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Located 120 miles southwest of Anchorage, the Neacola Mountains (229,000 acres) rise to 7,900 feet in elevation (Figures 2.3-1 and 2.3-3 in Appendix A). None of the lands within the proposed Neacola Mountains Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) are selected by the State or Native corporations; these lands will remain in long-term BLM ownership. The southern block is extremely scenic, with changes in elevation from 1,000 feet to nearly 8,000 feet. Rugged mountains, hanging valleys, and ice and snow fields dominate the landscape, interspersed with razor sharp ridgelines. At the core of the proposed ACEC are Blockade Glacier and Lake. Seasonally, Blockade Lake melts enough to reveal “apartment sized” blocks of ice floating in the water. This area contains unrivaled scenic and geologic features associated with the natural landscape of mountain peaks, glaciers and spires. It is these scenic qualities that support the ACEC designation.

- a. Goals
 - i. *Create ACEC to preserve identified values and outstanding natural scenery in an unspoiled setting*
 - ii. *Manage ACEC to maintain visual resource and scenic values*
 - iii. *Manage recreation to maintain existing opportunities*
- b. Preliminary Management Objectives
 - i. *Manage ACEC to maintain existing ROS classifications*
 - ii. *Maintain area for designated VRM classifications*
 - iii. *Develop further guidance for limitations to OHV use*
 - iv. *Work collaboratively with other landowners in the area, recreation users, and adjacent communities to develop management strategies and define enforcement responsibilities*

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