

Chugach Mountains Region (M)

General

The Chugach Mountains Region encompasses an area of more than 1.2 million acres of rugged mountainous terrain, of which nearly 1.1 million acres are state-owned or state-selected. The region is a popular year-round recreation attraction for hiking, camping and skiing. The Thomson Pass Special Use area (ADL 226446) is located in this region and is an area that requires land use permits for all special events and commercial transporters of back country skiers under 11 AAC 96.014(b)(13).

Amount and Distribution of State Land

General state lands are public domain lands that are managed consistent with Title 38 of the Alaska Statutes and Title 11 of the Alaska Administrative Code. Consistent with the Constitution of the State of Alaska these lands are managed for multiple use consistent with the public interest. Within this region the state of Alaska has approximately 978,148 acres of patented or tentatively approved land and 119,158 acres of selected land. The region is mostly composed of state-owned lands apart from the area immediately around the Tasnuna River. Blocks of state-selected land are located at the northwest corner of the region, near Prospector's Peak, and around the headwaters of the Lowe River. The plan also applies to 28,145 acres of state-owned shorelands within this region. There are no tidelands in the region.

Access, Resources, and Uses of State Land

The Chugach Mountain range makes up the vast majority of this region. The region is a rugged uninhabited area filled with towering peaks and glaciers. Access into the region depends on the point of entry. The Richardson highway traverses the region from north to south traveling through Thompson Pass. From the highway you can hike in, ski, snowshoe, use an ORV/ATV, snowmachine, horse, or dogsled. Navigable waterways are another point of entry. Tonsina Lake is the largest in the region and there are several large rivers including the Tonsina, Lowe, and Tasnuna.

Given the wild rustic beauty of the area recreation is popular and occurs year-round. Hiking, camping, fishing, boating, backcountry skiing, and snowmachining to name a few. The Thompson Pass Special Use Area (ADL 226446) is within the region. Special rules apply for commercial activities within this area under 11 AAC 96.014(b)(13).

Numerous RS 2477 routes provide overland access throughout the region. Refer to Table 3-17 for a list of RS 2477 trails within the region. Winter travel within the region can be easier than in summer as frozen creeks and rivers offer easy access via snowmachine, dog team, snowshoes, cross-country skis and ski equipped aircraft.

Residential development is sparse within this portion of the planning area. There is a small residential settlement area on the south side of the Richardson at approximately milepost 19.

Extensive areas of habitat exist within this region. Brown bear are commonly found within the region, with the Klutina River valley, Greyling Creek, and Tonsina lake attracting springtime concentrations. The rugged mountain terrain throughout the region provides habitat for Dall sheep and mountain goat. Moose populations tend to concentrate around river valleys, especially around Klanelneechena Creek, Kaina Creek, Hallet River, Greyling Creek, Tiekel River, Tasnuna River, and Tonsina River. Moose rutting habitat primarily occurs along the Klutina River. Trumpeter swan habitat is relatively small within the region, with breeding and summering centralized along the Klutina River, the Tonsina valley, and the Tasnuna River. There are several known anadromous waterbodies within the region, including the Hallet, Klutina, Tasnuna, and Tonsina Rivers along with Greyling and Quartz Creeks. Data on the fish that populate the region is limited. Klutina Lake and its associated waterbodies house Dolly Varden and Sockeye salmon. Chinook, Coho, and Sockeye salmon have been observed in the Tonsina waterways. The Tasnuna water system supports both Coho and Sockeye salmon species.

Management Planning Constraints

There are two state land use plans that affect this region: the 1988 Prince William Sound Area Plan and the 1986 Copper River Basin Area Plan, which are being revised by this update. The 1988 Prince William Sound Area Plan boundary is being adjusted to exclude Thompson Pass and several parcels of contiguous state patented land so that they can be included in the CRBAP and the Thompson Pass Special Use Area can be managed as one whole unit.

Management Summary

Despite the changes in unit configuration, the overall management intent for this region remains similar to that of the 1986 Copper River Basin Area Plan, with some changes to the amount of state land awarded to the state and the distribution of habitat and recreation land. This revision maintains the balance of land that should support the preservation of habitat, recreation, and other values on other lands. All general state land continues to be managed for multiple use and sustained yield consistent with the public interest.

Lands in this region are designated Habitat, Public Recreation-Dispersed, and Resource Management, and are to be managed for their habitat, wildlife values, or are to be managed

for multiple uses. Areas designated Habitat are to be managed to protect their important wildlife and habitat resources and are to be retained in state ownership. Areas designated Habitat generally coincide with the principal hydrologic features within the region and with the distribution of moose rutting, wintering and calving areas, and caribou calving and wintering areas in those parts of the region. Areas important for recreation tend to coincide with areas important for Habitat. Areas designated Habitat or Public Recreation-Dispersed are to be retained by the state. Areas designated Resource Management do not have a dominant resource value and are considered multiple use. Nonetheless, these areas are usually remote (in comparison to the other units in the region), lack access, and often contain terrain and soils that are not conducive to development. These areas are to be retained in state ownership with only limited, public or utility improvements considered appropriate. Other forms of development may be appropriate if in the best interest of the state, but widespread development of areas designated Resource Management is not intended.

State land will be managed consistent with its designation(s); as specifically articulated through management intent found in the Resource Allocation Table in Chapter 3 and the applicable goals and management guidelines found in Chapter 2. Some lands have one designation while other lands are co-designated for a variety of uses. Table 3-16 provides a quick reference of the designations and co-designations used in this region, and the acreages of designation(s).

Table 3-16: Unit Designations and Acreages - Chugach Mountains Region

Designation or Co-Designations	Acreage
Habitat	115,348
Public Recreation-Dispersed	496,382
Resource Management	479,360

1 **Resource Allocation Table - Chugach Mountains Region (M)**

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Unit #	Designation(s)	Acres	Map(s)	Management Intent	Resources and Uses
M-1	Rm	479,195	3-7	Unit is to be managed for multiple use. Management is to focus on maintaining the natural characteristics of the unit, wildlife, habitat, and recreational opportunities. Retain in state ownership. Development is not anticipated in this unit and is inappropriate except for certain types of utilities, communication facilities, roads, and similar types of projects that provide a general public benefit. Other types of projects may be authorized if they are in the best interest of the state. RS 2477 routes are to be retained.	This unit is a large, rugged, glacier-filled, mountainous area of state-owned and federal land centered around the Tazlina Glacier. Snow persists year-round in most of the alpine regions of this unit and the glaciers supply many of the nearby major lakes and rivers. RST 1395 - Tiekel River-Klutina River Trail and RST 633 - Copper Center-Valdez, provide access to the southwestern portion of the unit. Spring concentrations of brown bear are localized in the east along the Klutina River and Stephen's Creek and valley between Mount Ourand, Mount Evans, Sharp Peak and Camp Mountain. General populations are found throughout the unit. Dall sheep and goat are plentiful in this unit. Moose are generally distributed in the unit and rutting habitat occurs throughout the river valleys. Trumpeter swans use the area in the eastern portion of the unit along the Klutina River and Stephe's Creek as breeding and summering habitat. The Klutina River and Hallet River are anadromous.
M-2	Ha	115,348	3-7	Unit is to be managed for its fish and wildlife resources and habitats, especially sensitive habitats for Dall sheep, moose, and Trumpeter swan. Retain in state ownership. Authorizations are not to be considered appropriate unless necessary for public health, safety, or recreation. Utilities, roads, and other uses may be authorized with appropriate design if habitat functions can be maintained and would be in the best interest of the state. Adjudicators shall consult with ADF&G to identify sensitive habitat prior to issuing an authorization. Protect known heritage sites and cultural resources. RS 2477 routes are to be retained. Portions of this unit are in selected status, include priority selections, private and federal land; review land status prior to any management or disposal action.	This large unit spans from Meyer Peak to just beyond Quartz Creek. The varied terrain includes mountains, major lakes such as Tonsina Lake, and rivers such as Klutina River. Multiple RS 2477s provide access throughout the unit. Brown bear populations can be found throughout, with spring concentrations localized to major streams including the Klutina River, Tonsina River, Greyling Creek, and Quartz Creek. Dall sheep and goat habitats occur in the most mountainous portions towards the center of the unit. Moose can be found near Greyling Creek, with known rutting habitat occurring around the valleys by Manker Creek and Klutina River. Moose calving also occurs in the valleys by the Tonsina River, Greyling Creek, and Quartz Creek. Trumpeter swan summering and breeding habitat occur around major streams including Klutina River and Quartz Creek. Subsistence activities in the unit include the hunting of black bear in the center and western portions of the unit. Moose, and caribou can be hunted in the eastern half of the unit and upland game birds harvested in a smaller area in the northeast of the unit. Anadromous streams within the unit include Klutina River, Greyling Creek, Hallet River, Quartz Creek, Tonsina River, and one unnamed creek.

Unit #	Designation(s)	Acres	Map(s)	Management Intent	Resources and Uses
					The Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS) indicates cultural resources within the unit. A reservation of water exists for the Tonsina River within this unit. Important anadromous stream beds and adjacent state-owned riparian uplands are closed to mineral entry as prescribed in MCO 511.
M-3	Rd	496,382	3-7	Unit is to be managed for multiple use with emphasis on expanding recreation opportunities and preserving scenic and habitat values. Authorizations issued shall be consistent with the permitting requirements of 11 AAC 96.014(13) and the Thompson Pass Special Use Area Designation ADL 226446. Public uses, including Generally Allowed Uses under 11 AAC 96 will continue to be allowed in the Thompson Pass Special Use Area (SUA). The SUA will not affect public access or preclude any future land management action deemed to be in the public interest. Authorizations related to commercial recreation, public facilities, or economic activities that are of a recreation type may be appropriate subject to the requirements of Chapter 2 consistent with the management intent for this unit. It is intended that authorizations related to commercial recreation be confined to areas no greater than five acres in size and shall be at least three miles apart, unless site conditions warrant a lesser distance and recreation opportunities can be maintained. See the Recreation and Scenic Resources section in Chapter 2 for additional information. Protect known heritage sites and cultural resources. RS 2477 routes are to be retained. Lands in top filed status should be considered for inclusion in the Thompson Pass Special Use Area should they become state owned land.	The state of Alaska is the primary landowner in the unit with some lands in the south of the unit being in top filed status. There is also a small state priority selection in the northeast corner of the unit. The Thompson Pass Special Use Area (ADL 226446) makes up the majority of the unit and is a popular recreation area with year-round backcountry skiing, snowboarding, climbing, and camping. Access is primarily off the Richardson highway and supplemented by multiple RS 2477 trails. Brown bear are found throughout the entire unit with spring concentrations of brown bear focused around the anadromous stream Greyling Creek and Tonsina Lake. Dall sheep inhabit the mountainous areas north of Tonsina River and Stuart creek. Goat are widespread in this unit and cover most of the mountainous regions excluding the mountainous areas west of Rice Mountain and Mount Tiekkel. Moose forage throughout the valleys within this unit and moose rutting habitat is present in the northwest. Trumpeter swan breeding and summering habitat occurs in the valley area south of Tonsina lake and in the northwest corner of the unit in the Klutina river valley. Additional summering area is in the northeast portion of the unit. Subsistence use of black bear, caribou, moose, and upland game birds occurs in the far north portions of this unit. There are several anadromous waterways in the unit, including Greyling creek, Tonsina river, and one unnamed creek. Mineral Closing Order 511 is in effect for a portion of Greyling creek and Tonsina lake. The Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS) indicates cultural resources within the unit.

Unit #	Designation(s)	Acres	Map(s)	Management Intent	Resources and Uses
M-4	Rm	165	3-7	Unit is to be managed for multiple use. Management is to focus on maintaining the natural characteristics of the emerged islands, hydrological resources, and recreational opportunities. Retain in state ownership. Lands in this unit are undergoing an Emerged Island Determination with BLM; check land status prior to issuing an authorization.	This unit is comprised of emerged islands along the anadromous Tasnuna River. Brown bear range across the unit along the Tasnuna River. Goat habitat also extends towards the Tasnuna River covering some of the emerged islands. Moose can be found throughout the unit as well ranging along the Tasnuna River valley. Two RS 2477 trails traverse the Tasnuna River valley near and around the unit.

1 **Table 3-17: RS 2477 Trails - Chugach Mountains Region**

RST File Number	Name
404	Tasnuna Route
633	Copper Center-Valdez
746	Tonsina Trail (Tonsina L-Richardson Hwy)
1359	Keystone Canyon - Thompson Pass
1365	Hurtle Creek Trail (Squaw Creek Trail)
1395	Tiekel River-Klutina River Trail
1396	Bence Mountain Loop Trail
1397	Tonsina River-Klutina River Trail
1676	Manker Creek Trail
1677	Quartz Creek Trail (Tonsina L-Tiekel R)
1678	Greyling Creek Trail
1790	Boulder Creek-Mills Creek Trail

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4 **Table 3-18: Chugach Mountains Region Reservations of Water**

Region/Unit	Waterbody	LAS	Plan Map No.	Customer/ Cert holding/ applying agency	Description
M-2	Tonsina River	27843	3-7	ADF&G	Certificate Issued Tonsina River, from the Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) of the outer bank (of the outside braid, where braided) of the left bank up to the OHWM of the outer bank (of the braid of the right bank, where braided), including all sloughs, braids, or channels which carry water and are an integral part of Tonsina River, from its mouth at the confluence with Copper River, upstream approximately 42 river miles to the outlet of Tonsina Lake.

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Map 3-7: Chugach Mountains Region Boundary and Unit Boundaries

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