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## **Northern Region (N)**

### **General**

The Northern Region encompasses an area of over 1.4 million acres, of which state-owned and state-selected land comprises approximately 1.1 million acres. The region is sparsely populated with the largest community being the village of Mentasta Lake located in the far northwest corner of the region. The large undeveloped areas provide opportunities for recreation and mining as well as constitute significant habitat areas, particularly for caribou, bear, and moose. The region boundary runs from the intersection of the Richardson and Glenn Highway-Tok Cutoff in the south, then heads northwest from that intersection, runs west following the Richardson highway, heads northeast from the intersection, and follows the Glenn Highway-Tok Cutoff in the east.

Like most areas in Alaska, waterbodies are important for access, recreation, and subsistence uses. The Chistochina, East Fork Chistochina, Gakona, Middle Fork Chistochina, and West Fork Chistochina Rivers are the largest in this region. Chisna River, Gunn Creek, Mabel Creek, Mentasta Creek, Natat Creek, Slana River, Slana Slough, Suslota Creek, and Tulsona Creek are a partial list of the tributaries in the region. The region is also dotted with lakes. Some of the larger ones include Mankomen Lake and Mentasta Lake. These waterbodies are a source of food, recreation, and transportation for the local communities and visitors.

### **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 989,394 acres of patented or tentatively approved state land and 113,263 acres of selected land. State-owned lands are mostly located in the region’s interior, with most selected lands along the region borders. Blocks of selected lands occur near the communities of Mentasta Lake and Slana towards the east. The plan also applies to approximately 50,689 acres of state-owned shorelands within this region. There are no tidelands within this region. Most of the recommendations of area plans affect the surface uses of land.

### **Access, Resources, and Uses of State Land**

This region is one of the least populated in the planning area. Most of the development within the region is located close to the Richardson and Tok Cutoff highways that frame the region on its west and east boundaries. These are both regional routes providing access to

1 the rest of the state road system. The rest of the region is remote with limited access served  
2 by off-road vehicles using local and regional trails, or frozen rivers in the winter. There are  
3 RS 2477 trails in the region, but their physical existence or condition cannot be confirmed  
4 (See Table 3-2 for a list of RS 2477's in the region). Other access options are float or  
5 wheeled fixed wing aircraft using either private airstrips, waterbodies, or gravel bars for  
6 landing. Fly-in access is often limited by local weather conditions.

7  
8 The Northern area generates a demand for recreation and in large part that recreation takes  
9 place on state land within the planning area. Recreation activities include fishing, boating,  
10 hiking, climbing, snowmachining, and cross-country skiing. All Generally Allowed Uses  
11 under 11 AAC 96.020 are permitted within the region; this plan does not recommend the  
12 creation of areas of special use designation in this region that could restrict such uses.<sup>6</sup>

13  
14 The resources of this region, related to economic resources, are limited. The region is not  
15 conducive to agriculture, grazing, or forestry. Land in the upper Chistochina River drainage  
16 has moderate to high mineral potential. The Slate Creek - Chisana River area is intensively  
17 mined and has numerous patented mineral surveys and state mining claims. The area has  
18 been mined since the early 1900's; primary minerals produced are gold and silver.

19  
20 A significant portion of the region's resources are related to its wildlife and associated  
21 habitat. Brown bear can be found throughout with spring concentrations throughout the  
22 northern half and near the banks of the Gakona River. Caribou are distributed throughout  
23 with rutting, wintering, and calving habitat in the southern half of the region. Dall Sheep are  
24 found within the northern mountainous regions. Moose are found throughout the unit, with  
25 calving, rutting, and wintering habitat interspersed throughout. Trumpeter Swan can be  
26 found here during summer and breeding habitat can be found throughout.

## 27 28 29 **Management Planning Constraints**

30  
31 There is one state land use plan that affects this region: the 1986 Copper River Basin Area  
32 Plan, which is being revised with this update. Many of the land uses recommended in the  
33 1986 Copper River Basin Area Plan are still applicable.

## 34 35 36 **Management Summary**

37  
38 The overall management intent for this region is similar to the original recommendations of  
39 the 1986 Copper River Basin Area Plan with changes to overall unit configurations. This  
40 revision maintains the balance of land that should be available for settlement and the  
41 preservation of habitat, recreation, and other values on other lands. Land throughout this

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<sup>6</sup> This statement is not intended to preclude the creation of such special use designations in the future, should they be warranted.

1 region will be managed for multiple use with emphasis on mining, wildlife habitat, hunting,  
2 and dispersed recreation. The focus of management is the continuation of the present  
3 patterns of land development, multiple and sustained yield of state land resources, and the  
4 protection of key habitats, fisheries, and wildlife populations. The entire region, except for a  
5 few segments of a few rivers and streams, is open to mineral entry, and mining is recognized  
6 as an allowed use.

7  
8 The plan identifies which areas are to be retained in and conveyed out of state ownership.  
9 Areas that are designated Settlement may be conveyed out of state ownership. The  
10 remaining areas are to be retained in state ownership unless otherwise stated in the  
11 management intent.

12  
13 The areas of state land that are designated Settlement or Minerals should experience some  
14 level of use and development during the planning period. The amount of use will depend on  
15 cost, demand levels, and the availability of similar resources at lower cost. The use of these  
16 areas will, similarly, be affected by access, the proximity of infrastructure, and the level of  
17 demand for such types of land. The development of these areas will also be a function of the  
18 availability of similar types of land that are better situated and are closer to infrastructure.  
19 Settlement activity that does occur on state land is likely to be focused on areas with good  
20 access, the presence of suitable soils and terrain, and the presence of attractive features such  
21 as access to streams and lakes or that have excellent views, such as the immediate vicinity of  
22 Mankomen Lake.

23  
24 The remaining lands in this region are designated Habitat, Public Recreation and Tourism-  
25 Dispersed, Minerals, Reserved Use, and Resource Management. These areas are to be  
26 managed for their recreation, habitat, or mineral values, for multiple uses, or to serve some  
27 other state or public interest. Areas designated Habitat are to be managed to protect their  
28 important wildlife and habitat resources and are to be retained in state ownership. Areas  
29 designated Habitat generally coincide with the principal hydrologic features within the region  
30 and with the distribution of moose rutting, wintering and calving areas, and caribou calving  
31 and wintering areas in those parts of the region. Areas designated Public Recreation and  
32 Tourism-Dispersed are important for recreation and tend to coincide with areas important for  
33 habitat. Areas designated Public Recreation and Tourism-Dispersed are to be retained by the  
34 state. Areas designated Minerals are considered to have mineral potential and are appropriate  
35 for mineral exploration and development. Areas designated Minerals are to be retained in  
36 state ownership. Areas designated Reserved Use are sites reserved to serve state or other  
37 public interests and are to be retained by the state. Areas designated Resource Management  
38 do not have a dominant resource value, or there is a lack of resource, economic, or other  
39 information used to assign a specific designation and are considered multiple use.  
40 Nonetheless, these areas are usually remote (in comparison to the other units in the region),  
41 lack access, and often contain terrain and soils that are not conducive to development. These  
42 areas may be retained in state ownership with only limited, public or utility improvements  
43 considered appropriate when stated in the management intent. Multiple use development that  
44 entails some amount of disposal may be appropriate in these areas. Other forms of

1 development may be appropriate if in the best interest of the state, but widespread  
 2 development of areas designated Resource Management is not intended.  
 3 State land will be managed consistent with its designation(s); as specifically articulated  
 4 through management intent found in the Resource Allocation Table in Chapter 3 and the  
 5 applicable goals and management guidelines found in Chapter 2. Some lands have one  
 6 designation while other lands are co-designated for a variety of uses. Table 3-1 provides a  
 7 quick reference of the designations and co-designations used in this region, and the acreages  
 8 of designation(s).

9  
 10 **Table 3-1: Unit Designations and Acreages - Northern Region**

<b>Designation or Co-Designations</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Habitat, Harvest	8,218
Minerals	29,405
Public Recreation-Dispersed, Habitat	863,826
Reserved Use	1
Resource Management	215,215
Settlement	10,066

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**Resource Allocation Table - Northern Region (N)**

Unit #	Designation(s)	Acres	Map(s)	Management Intent	Resources and Uses
N-1	Rm	147,457	3-2	<p>This unit is to be managed for a variety of uses, including protection of fish and wildlife habitats, dispersed recreation, and minerals exploration and development. Some forms of recreation use, including commercial recreation and tourism, may be appropriate subject to the fish and wildlife habitat and harvest protections in Chapter 2.</p> <p>Development projects that provide a general public benefit may be authorized subject to the guidelines in Chapter 2. Intensive development is not intended within this unit during the planning period except occasionally and at specific locations associated with recreation uses and mineral exploration and development. This unit is not appropriate for Settlement. Retain in state ownership.</p> <p>Protect known heritage sites and cultural resources.</p> <p>RS 2477 routes are to be retained.</p>	<p>This unit is split into two sections located along the northern boundary of the planning area. The land is steep, mountainous terrain with many small glaciers and a few large glaciers that feed major rivers including the Chistochina and Gakona Rivers. Multiple RS 2477 trails provide access within the unit.</p> <p>Brown bear spring concentration areas are found throughout the unit. Caribou are concentrated in the southern half of the westerly section of the unit. Moose are generally distributed in the southern half of the unit, with rutting habitat concentrated along the rivers and valleys. Dall sheep are localized in the eastern portion of the unit. Trumpeter swan summer around Lower Fish and Gunn lakes. Gunn creek and the Gakona river are anadromous.</p> <p>The Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS) indicates cultural resources within the unit.</p> <p>Important anadromous stream beds and adjacent state-owned riparian uplands are closed to mineral entry as prescribed in MCO 511.</p>
N-2	Mi	29,405	3-2	<p>Unit is to be managed for the exploration and development of mineral values and resources, while ensuring the protection of important habitat and harvest areas, subject to state permitting requirements. Mineral development should not interfere with dispersed recreation, or the use of RS 2477 routes. Any proposed development authorization must consider potential impacts to moose rutting areas and either avoid such areas or include stipulations that will reduce impacts to the maximum extent practicable. Retain in state ownership.</p> <p>Protect known heritage sites and cultural resources.</p> <p>RS 2477 routes are to be retained.</p> <p>See Chapter 2 for specific guidelines related to Minerals.</p> <p>Portions of this unit include private and federal land; review land status prior to any management or disposal action.</p>	<p>This unit is situated southwest of Mount Kimball on the headwaters of the Chistochina River with the Chistochina glacier at the northeast corner. Historical and active mining activities comprise much of the region, including Big Four Creek, Miller Gulch, Slate Creek, and Treasure Gulch. Geological surveys have identified mineral deposits dispersed throughout the unit, including gold, silver, and copper. This unit has strong potential for future discoveries and mining activity.</p> <p>Spring concentrations of brown bear can be found throughout the entire unit and caribou are generally distributed throughout the southern half. Moose are generally distributed throughout most of the unit with rutting habitat concentrated in the river valleys. Moose subsistence occurs in this unit.</p> <p>Numerous RS 2477 trails provide access throughout the unit.</p> <p>The Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS) indicates cultural resources within the unit.</p>

Unit #	Designation(s)	Acres	Map(s)	Management Intent	Resources and Uses
N-3	Rd, Ha	863,826	3-2	<p>Unit is to be managed for dispersed recreation, and the protection of fish and wildlife resources and their habitats. Retain in state ownership.</p> <p>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 recreation functions can be maintained and would be in the best interest of the state.</p> <p>Authorizations shall consider siting requirements that avoid or minimize impacts to principal recreation areas as well as to caribou and moose rutting and calving areas. Such authorizations shall also ensure that impacts to anadromous streams are minimized and consistent with the requirements for such uses in Chapter 2. Adjudicators shall consult with ADF&amp;G to identify sensitive habitat prior to issuing an authorization.</p> <p>Protect known heritage sites and cultural resources.</p> <p>RS 2477 routes are to be retained.</p> <p>Portions of this unit are in selected status and include private and federal lands; review land status prior to any management or disposal action.</p>	<p>This large unit is framed by the Richardson highway from mile post 139 to 193 on the west and the Tok Cutoff in the south. The southern and central portions are flat and slopes form moving north and northeast. Several rivers, including the Gakona and Chistochina, flow southward through the unit. The unit occupies varied riverine forests and mountains that support many habitat and recreational values, such as rafting, dog mushing, and hiking. There are multiple RS 2477 trails within the unit and several 17(b) easements providing access to and within the unit.</p> <p>Brown bear can be found throughout with spring concentrations throughout the northern half and near the banks of the Gakona River. Caribou are distributed throughout with rutting, wintering, and calving habitat in the southern half of the unit. Dall Sheep are found within the northern and eastern mountainous regions. Moose are found throughout the unit, with calving, rutting, and wintering habitat interspersed throughout. Trumpeter Swan can be found here during summer and breeding habitat can be found in the southern corner of the unit. Landbird habitat is found throughout the southern half of the unit.</p> <p>This unit contains multiple anadromous streams, including The Gakona River, Eagle Creek, the East Fork Chistochina River, the Chistochina River, Spring Creek, and Fish Creek.</p> <p>Subsistence berry picking in primarily the Chistochina river valley area as well as around Gunn Lake, Swampy Lake, Rock Lake and Upper Fish Lake. Black and brown bear hunting around Gunn Lake, Swampy Lake, Rock Lake and Upper Fish Lake. Caribou hunting along the western and southern boundaries of the unit. Dall sheep hunting in the mountains north of Mankomen lake. Moose hunting throughout the unit. Small land mammals are hunted in the central portion and upland game birds along the Chistochina river valley as well as the Gunn Lake, Swampy Lake, Rock Lake and Upper Fish Lake area.</p> <p>The Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRs) indicates cultural resources within the unit.</p> <p>A reservation of water exists for Sinona Creek within this unit.</p> <p>Important anadromous stream beds and adjacent state-owned riparian uplands are closed to mineral entry as prescribed in MCO 511.</p>

Unit #	Designation(s)	Acres	Map(s)	Management Intent	Resources and Uses
N-4	Se	10,066	3-2	<p>This unit is to be managed for remote settlement consistent with existing land offerings for Mankomen Lake RRCS (ADL 231542). New project development and staking programs must ensure that recreational values and public access are not compromised. Staking areas or land offerings shall exclude wetland areas. See the Settlement Section in Chapter 2 for additional information.</p> <p>Development shall not impede public access to the East Fork of Chistochina River. Appropriate riparian buffers shall be observed around Mankomen Lake and the Chistochina River. For building setback information see Table 2-1 of the Shorelands and Stream Corridors section in Chapter 2.</p> <p>Impacts to moose rutting and Trumpeter swan habitat are to be taken into consideration during the development review phase. Adjudicators should consult with ADF&amp;G prior to issuing an authorization.</p> <p>RS 2477 routes are to be retained.</p> <p>Portions of this unit contain private land; review land status prior to any management or disposal action.</p>	<p>This unit is in the immediate vicinity of Mankomen Lake and contains the Mankomen Lake RRCS area. Terrain is hilly and vegetation consists of both evergreen and deciduous cover with areas that are flat and clear of vegetation. Access is by means of ORV or floatplane.</p> <p>The Mentasta - Slate Creek trail RST 440 runs north of Mankomen Lake, east to west through the unit.</p> <p>Spring concentrations of brown bear are found throughout the unit, as well as general distributions of caribou. Moose are found throughout, with moose rutting and wintering habitat present. Trumpeter swan summering habitat is found throughout the unit.</p> <p>The East Fork of the Chistochina River is anadromous.</p> <p>Important anadromous stream beds and adjacent state-owned riparian uplands are closed to mineral entry as prescribed in MCO 511. The unit is closed to mineral entry under MO 1209.</p>
N-5	Ha, Hv	8,218	3-2	<p>This unit is to be managed in its natural state in order to protect habitat resources and maintain subsistence uses. Dispersed recreation uses are considered appropriate. Retain in state ownership.</p> <p>Development is unlikely within this unit and is generally inappropriate except for certain utilities, roads, and similar projects that provide a general public benefit. Authorizations shall consider siting requirements that avoid or minimize impacts to caribou and moose rutting and calving areas. Uses inconsistent with this management intent are not to be authorized, including leases, land disposal, and other uses and structures requiring a permanent structure. Adjudicators shall consult with ADF&amp;G prior to issuing an authorization.</p> <p>See Chapter 2 for specific management guidelines, especially those related to Fish and Wildlife Habitat. RS 2477 routes are to be retained.</p> <p>Portions of this unit are in selected status, include priority selections, federal land and Native allotments; review land status prior to any management or disposal action.</p>	<p>This unit occupies the remote, mountainous northeast corner of the planning area south of Burnt Lake. The Sikonsina Pass RST 1693 provides access through the western boundary of the unit.</p> <p>Spring concentrations of brown bear are found throughout the unit. Caribou are found throughout the unit, with calving and wintering habitat located in the south. Dall sheep are found in the mountainous portions. Moose are found throughout the unit, with calving and wintering habitat located southward and rutting habitat northward. Trumpeter swan breeding and summering habitat are in the southern portion of the unit.</p> <p>Subsistence use of caribou and moose occurs throughout the unit. Migratory waterfowl and upland game bird subsistence use takes place in the lower elevations in the southern portion of the unit. Non-salmon fishing in Fish Creek and an unnamed lake in the west side of the unit, and upland game birds occur here.</p>

Unit #	Designation(s)	Acres	Map(s)	Management Intent	Resources and Uses
N-6	Rs	1	3-2	This unit is to be managed consistent with the standards and conditions given in the Management Agreement for ADL 68018. Retain in state ownership.	This unit comprises the Mentasta Lake school site.
N-7	Rm	67,758	3-2	<p>This unit is to be managed in its natural state in order to protect habitat values, riparian areas, and subsistence opportunities. Dispersed recreation is an appropriate use. Retain in state ownership.</p> <p>Development is unlikely in this unit and generally inappropriate except for certain types of projects that provide a general public benefit such as utilities, communication facilities, and roads. Authorizations shall consider siting requirements that avoid or minimize impacts to caribou and moose rutting and calving areas. Such authorizations shall also ensure that impacts to anadromous streams are minimized and consistent with the requirements for such uses in Chapter 2. Adjudicators shall consult with ADF&amp;G to identify sensitive habitat prior to issuing an authorization. See the Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Harvest section in Chapter 2 for additional information.</p> <p>Protect known heritage sites and cultural resources.</p> <p>RS 2477 routes are to be retained.</p> <p>Portions of this unit are in selected status and include priority selections; review land status prior to any management or disposal action.</p>	<p>This remote unit consists of three parts located in the Mentasta mountains. The Mentasta-Slate Creek RST 440 runs east to west across the northern region of the unit. The Slana-Tanana Crossing RST 188 runs north to south through the center of the unit, intersecting the Tok Cutoff highway. Several 17(b) easements provide access to the unit.</p> <p>Brown bear can be found in the eastern regions with spring concentrations towards the west. Caribou are found throughout the west regions while calving and winter habitats are more eastward. Dall Sheep are found in the mountains north of the Slana river, south of the West Fork and east of Suslota lake. Moose are found throughout the unit, with rutting and wintering habitat interspersed. Trumpeter Swan summering habitat occur throughout the center of the unit.</p> <p>Subsistence use of caribou takes place in the southern and eastern portions of the unit alongside and north of Suslota creek. Dall sheep are hunted west of the Tok Cutoff between milepost 67 and 72, and subsistence use of migratory waterfowl occurs east of the Tok Cutoff between milepost 73 and 76. Moose subsistence hunting occurs throughout the unit. Fishing for non-salmon fish in numerous lakes along the Tok Cutoff between milepost 73 to 76.</p> <p>Suslositna Creek, Slana River, and Suslota Creek are anadromous.</p> <p>The Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS) indicates cultural resources within the unit.</p> <p>Important anadromous stream beds and adjacent state-owned riparian uplands are closed to mineral entry as prescribed in MCO 511.</p>



1 **Table 3-2: RS 2477 Trails - Northern Region**

RST File Number	Name
48	Chistochina-Slate Creek
188	Slana-Tanana Crossing
248	Paxson-Slate Creek
253	Ahtell Creek Trail
307	Mentasta-Tetlin Trail
437	Chistochina-Mankomen Lake Trail
440	Mentasta-Slate Creek
609	One Mile Trail
1554	Indian Creek Trail
1555	Canyon Creek Trail
1674	Delta River Trail
1693	Sikonsina Pass
1717	Richardson Highway-Fish Lakes Trail
1819	Chisana - Slate Creek

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**Table 3-3: Northern Region Reservations of Water**

Region/Unit	Waterbody	LAS	Plan Map No.	Customer/ Cert holding/ Applying agency	Description
N-3	Sinona Creek	26216	3-2	Cheesh'Na Tribal Council	<b>Application Pending</b> Sinona Creek and its associated sloughs and floodplains, from the mouth at Copper River up stream to where the east and west forks enter the creek.

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**Map 3-2: Northern Region Boundary and Unit Boundaries**

