

Forestry

The forest resources of the ETAP planning area are a mixture of white spruce, black spruce, paper birch, and quaking aspen in the upland areas. Balsam poplar is commonly found in riparian areas. Black spruce is the dominant species in this boreal forest type. White spruce has commercial value for sawlogs, biomass, fiber and fuelwood. The commercial value of the paper birch is for biomass, fiber, and fuelwood with some sawlog value in birch which contains little or no defect. A significant volume of spruce and birch timber is harvested and utilized for personal use firewood by residents of the Tanana Valley. In addition to white spruce and birch, black spruce and aspen are now recognized as an abundant source of woody biomass. Some communities are beginning to utilize woody biomass for heating public schools.

The Tanana Valley State Forest occupies significant portions of the planning area, except for the East Alaska Range region and the southernmost portions of the Upper Tanana region, chiefly near Nenana. The TVSF, occupying over 1.8 million acres of state land within the Tanana Basin, is managed under the TVSF Management Plan, updated in 2001. The ETAP recommends a number of additions to the TVSF, principally areas similar in character to the lands within the TVSF and generally adjacent to it. These areas are more effectively managed under the TVSF. If these areas are, in fact, determined to be appropriate as additions to the TVSF and are included, there is often a time gap between the date of their inclusion in the TVSF and the time that the TVSF Management Plan is updated and re-adopted⁵. In this circumstance the additions to the TVSF are to be managed according to the management intent of the nearest management unit in the 2001 TVSF Management Plan. In the event that these areas are not added to the TVSF, they remain subject to the requirements of the ETAP.

The recommendations that follow implement constitutional and statutory policies to develop the state's renewable resources, making them available for maximum use, consistent with the principle of sustained yield and with the overall public interest. The primary purpose of the timber management program is timber management that provides for the production, utilization, and replenishment of timber resources while allowing other beneficial uses of public lands and resources. Forestry designated lands are to be managed by DNR as a 'working forest' consistent with the constitutional mandate to encourage the use and development of state's resources, including renewable resources. A 'working forest' refers to actively managed forest lands that provide wood for personal and commercial use, while protecting fish and wildlife habitat, providing the public with recreation and other multiple use of state land, and maintaining public benefits such as clean air, land, and water.

⁵ It was revised in 2001 and is not scheduled for modification for some time. Such plans are usually revised every 15-20 years.

Goals

Personal Use Timber. Provide timber to meet the needs of Alaskans. This program will be provided on a demand basis when the operational costs of administering this program are satisfactory.

Economic Opportunities. Provide for economic opportunities and stability in the forest products industry by allowing the use of state uplands and riverine environments in areas designated Forestry or co-designated Forestry. Also, to benefit the state's and borough's economies by providing royalties to the state from stumpage receipts, and adding to the state's economy through wages, purchases, jobs, and business.

Support Timber Industry. Continue to perform reviews of private timber harvests for adherence to the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act and provide the timber industry with information, technical expertise, and management guidance for utilizing forest resources.

Wildland Fire Suppression. DOF shall continue to provide wildland fire suppression within the planning area consistent with the requirements of the Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan.

Forest Health. To improve forest health and vigor by harvesting and replacing mature aspen stands with healthy new stands of regrowth, while protecting and maintaining other resource values. Replacement of mature aspen stands has also benefited wildlife habitat. Minimize to the extent possible adverse forest health impacts utilizing active forest management techniques.

Wildlife Habitat Management. DNR will seek to create, enhance and maintain wildlife habitat consistent with forest management by providing a mosaic of forest stand areas, reflecting the natural range of species and habitat diversity, for the variety of wildlife species that live in the planning area.

Provision of Biomass for Public Purposes. DNR shall support actions to develop sustainable sources of energy for meeting community needs from renewable woody biomass obtained from state forests or other state lands that are suitable for this purpose and consistent with state and federal permitting standards. Wherever feasible and practical, the by-products of forest land management practices involving harvest or land clearing are to be utilized for biomass.

Non-timber Forest Products. Support Non-Timber Forest Products Industries. In addition to the management of state land for those designations that are delineated in Chapter 3 for specific management units, DNR shall manage state land to support the gathering of natural materials that have commercial value and that provide a basis for employment in areas of the state.

Management Guidelines

A systematic program of scheduled timber harvests is appropriate within the planning area. Timber management activities are subject to the following management guidelines. Another important component of the state forestry program within the planning area is fire management. A management guideline is included that describes the broad aspects of this program. The implementation of the state fire management program is identified and controlled in detail by the Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan.

A. Timber Harvest Guidelines.

1. All timber harvest activities must be compatible with the general management guidelines of this section and with the management intent statements and land use designations identified in specific management units of this plan found in Chapter 3. Systematic timber harvest programs are to be conducted in areas designated Forestry. Forest harvest operations conducted on a parcel of state land intended for subdivision development or agriculture by DNR can precede actual construction. However, these operations must be consistent with the subdivision plan or Farm Conservation Plan for the parcel; consultation with DMLW is required before commencing operations.
2. Timber harvest operations will be conducted in accordance with the stipulations in the Forest Land Use Plan, the Five Year Schedule of Timber Sales, the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act (AS 41.17 & 11 AAC 95), the Alaska Land Act (AS 38.05 & 11 AAC 71), and other pertinent state guidelines and laws. The Forest Practices Act provides statewide policy and regulatory authority for managing forestry related activities. The specific layout and other site-specific requirements of a timber sale is addressed through a Forest Land Use Plan (FLUPs), which is prepared prior to any commercial timber harvest or sale that is greater than ten acres in size (AS 38.05.112).

FLUPs developed for timber sale or harvests in the planning area are to be consistent with the Forestry Management Guidelines of this Chapter and the Management Guidelines specified for particular parcels in Chapter 3. FLUPs shall consider, in their preparation, the sensitive resources and wildlife, or any other significant factors, identified in the Management Guidelines for a parcel.

B. Timber Salvage from Rights-of-way. Timber with commercial or personal use value should be salvaged from lands that are to be cleared for other uses such as roads, transmission lines, material sites, mining, and habitat enhancement projects (AS 41.17.083). The DMLW Regional Manager, or their delegate, shall determine the amount and kind of material that is to be salvaged and shall coordinate with DOF on timber salvage operations having commercial value.

C. Personal Use Wood Harvest. When forested lands are available near communities and where personal use harvest is consistent with other purposes for which the land is being managed, DOF may provide wood products for personal use. This program will only be

undertaken, however, if it can be effectively and efficiently administered by DOF. In areas designated for settlement, personal use forestry permits may be issued by Division of Forestry after consultation with DMLW's Land Sales Section to assure compatibility with future land sales.

D. Sustained Yield of Forest Resources. Forestland will be managed to guarantee perpetual supplies of renewable resources to serve the needs of all Alaskans for the many products, benefits, and services obtained from them. The annual allowable harvest will be calculated using the area control method and the units designated Forestry or co-designated Forestry are to be used for the basis of this calculation. It is appropriate to include the estimates from the management units identified in the ETAP with similar sustained yield estimates for the TVSF, to determine estimates of total allowable (annual) harvest within the DOF planning area.

E. Salvage of Damaged Trees. Trees damaged due to fire, wind throw, insects or disease, or other causes may be salvaged on all land use designations unless management intent statements for specific management units in Chapter 3 specifically prohibit salvage harvest. A Forest Land Use Plan, if required, will provide the rationale for conducting the salvage harvest and describe how the action will not conflict with the management intent for each management unit.

F. Fire Disturbance. The intent of fire management is to identify where wildland fire can be allowed or managed fires can be used to reduce costs of fire suppression, reduce the risk of damaging fires, and maintain the natural diversity and productivity of forest stands. Fire suppression will be a priority near residential areas or other forms of active land use, high value recreation use areas, and areas with infrastructure development. Consistent with AS 41.15.010 and AS 41.15.020, DOF will protect forest resources from destructive agents commensurate with the values at risk identified in the Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan. The Fire Management Plan indicates where suppression operations are likely to occur; generally, such operations are to be limited to decreasing the long-term risk of damaging fires and maintaining the natural diversity of forest stands, stand ages, and habitat types. Fire disturbances, wildland and prescribed, may also be appropriate where soil erosion is not a concern, as habitat enhancement techniques. Fire disturbance may also be appropriate for ground scarification to ensure exposure of mineral soil, a substrate essential to the natural regeneration of early successional browse species. Specific fire suppression levels are identified in the Alaska Interagency Fire Management Plan.

G. Wildlife Habitat. Forest management can be an important tool for improving wildlife habitat. DOF will consult with ADF&G's local biologist during the planning stage of timber harvest layout and in the preparation of the Forest Land Use Plan in order to receive guidance on wildlife habitat enhancement opportunities. Trees and vegetation may be manipulated by cutting, crushing, harvesting, or burning to provide or improve wildlife habitat.

H. Additions to the Tanana Valley State Forest. This plan recommends that consideration be given to adding areas of state land that have significant forest resources and, in some cases, are important access corridors to the TVSF. These areas have important timber resources, are similar in character to parcels within the TVSF, and typically adjoin areas that are currently part of the TVSF. State forests are multiple use in terms of overall management, providing for areas of public recreation and the protection of key habitat areas, while providing a more vigorous approach to the management of forest stand resources as ‘working forests’ within the more productive areas of the Tanana Basin. This recommendation applies to those management units that are designated Forestry or co-designated Forestry and that include the recommendation for inclusion in the TVSF in the unit’s management intent statement. (There are areas that are designated Forestry or co-designated Forestry in the ETAP but are not recommended for inclusion in the TVSF. These areas are usually distant from current areas of the TVSF.) Management units recommended for inclusion in the TVSF are identified in Map 2-1 and Table 2-1 below. A total of 218,101 acres is recommended to be added to the TVSF.

Note: Should areas be added to the TVSF, it is likely that it will be some time before these newly acquired areas are included within an updated TVSF Management Plan. During this transition period, the management intent and management requirements of the closest management unit in the TVSF shall apply.

I. Maintenance of State Land Timber Base. Land designated or co-designated Forestry is to be retained by the state and is not to be converted to another designation. If the latter is considered necessary, a public hearing is to accompany the plan amendment. It is the policy of this plan, and required under 11 AAC 55.030(f)(1)(A), that such conversions not be considered until the plan is revised through a plan amendment process.

J. Coordination with Borough Forest Management Plans and Programs. Prior to the preparation of the (biennial) Five Year Schedule of Timber Sales and the development of a Forest Land Use Plan, DNR should coordinate with local government and major land owners in order to obtain maximum efficiencies and reduce management conflicts over the harvesting of timber and land use.

K. Timber Harvest in Areas Designated Settlement, Agriculture, Materials, Forestry, Coal or Minerals. Timber harvests are considered appropriate in areas designated Settlement if intended to reduce fuel loads to minimize fire potential, support the costs of subdivision development, provide access to the subdivision, or provide ancillary facilities subject to the other requirements of the Forestry standards in this Chapter. Timber harvests may also be appropriate for purposes of forest health or the clearing of right-of-way. The selective harvesting of timber before subdivision development is considered appropriate, after consultation with the Land Sales Section and if authorized by the Regional Manager, NRO. Similarly, the harvesting of timber at material sites may be appropriate, after consultation with the Regional Manager, NRO. Timber harvests are also considered appropriate in areas designated Agriculture if the timber harvest is identified as an appropriate use or activity in the State Farm Conservation Plan that is approved prior to

agricultural production. Division of Forestry shall consult with the Division of Agriculture prior to the initiation of timber harvest in areas designated Agriculture. If the use is consistent with the submitted plan of operations, timber harvests are also considered appropriate in areas designated Minerals or Materials. Prior to timber harvest on areas designated Minerals or Materials, DOF shall consult with staff in the Mining Resources Section and DMLW NRO. Similarly, timber harvest is considered appropriate in areas co-designated Forestry and Habitat but forest management activities are to avoid or minimize impacts to the fishery, wildlife, or habitat resources in such areas. Consult with ADF&G where timber harvests are to occur in co-designated areas as part of the forest land use plan (or similar pre-decisional process).

L. Other Guidelines Affecting Forestry. Other guidelines will affect management practices for timber development support facilities and forestry. See other sections of this chapter.

Table 2-1: Lands to be Considered for Legislative Designation as State Forest Management Units

Region	Unit No.	Acres
Region 1 - Fairbanks	F-21 (part)	2,603
Region 1 - Fairbanks	F-33	69,921
Region 1 - Fairbanks	F-34	62,723
Region 1 - Fairbanks	F-37	2,032
Region 1 - Fairbanks	F-38	3,840
Region 1 - Fairbanks	F-48	2,765
Region 1 - Fairbanks	F-64	14,373
Region 1 - Fairbanks	F-71	640
Region 1 - Fairbanks	F-79	520
Region 1 - Fairbanks	F-99	1,938
Region 1 - Fairbanks	F-100	1,440
Region 1 - Fairbanks	F-101	71
Region 1 - Fairbanks	F-111	824
Region 1 - Fairbanks	F-114	1,172
Region 1 - Fairbanks	F-133	320
Region 2 - Delta	D-18	12,019
Region 2 - Delta	D-19	11,204
Region 2 - Delta	D-46	40
Region 2 - Delta	D-48	980
Region 2 - Delta	D-50	2,560
Region 3 – Upper Tanana	U-21	13,141
Region 3 – Upper Tanana	U-34	2,435
Region 3 – Upper Tanana	U-66	10,540
TOTAL		218,101

**Map 2-1: Lands to be Considered for Inclusion in the
Tanana Valley State Forest**