

SB 159
Susitna State Forest

The proposed Susitna State Forest includes 14 management blocks totaling approximately 760,000 acres. The blocks have previously been classified Forestry in the Susitna Matanuska and the Southeast Susitna Area Plans. The Division of Forestry worked with the Division of Mining, Land, and Water Management to identify and exclude lands that are priorities for the state land disposal program.

The effect of legislatively designating these lands as State Forest is as follows:

Current Condition	Proposed State Forest
Lands may be designated for disposal through agency action.	This would provide for long term forest management planning. Lands would need to be withdrawn from the State Forest system through legislative action.
Revised area plans may further subdivide the existing forest.	Existing private inholdings would remain. All state land designated for settlement in the current Area Plans would remain available for purchase by the public. Any changes in land classification or use would be addressed in the Susitna State Forest Management Plan.
Reluctance by forest managers to invest public funds if the lands are subject to disposal.	Forest Managers would have the opportunity to invest in long term land management projects without having the lands converted to other uses. For example, the DOF would have the opportunity to collaborate with the Department of Fish and Game on long term wildlife enhancement projects, silvicultural treatments for stand improvement, and other activities that show benefits over time.
Lands are managed for multiple use.	No Change.
Existing mineral entry rights.	The lands would be managed for multiple use and would be open for mineral development as it currently exists.
The Susitna Forestry Guidelines, adopted over 20	The Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act and

years ago and prior to the final revision of the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act (AS 41.17), are used for planning timber harvests in the Susitna Valley.	other guidelines will be incorporated into the Susitna State Forest Management Plan and after adoption will be the basis for timber harvests in the State Forest.
Forests are managed on a sustained yield.	AS 41.17.220 requires the management of State Forests occur on the sustained yield principle.
Access for recreation is limited.	A forest management plan would include a transportation plan that addresses recreational opportunities as roads are developed.
Multiple Area Plans are used for the current management of State land.	A Forest Management Plan as required under AS. 41.17.230 must be adopted within 3 years of the establishment of a state forest. The plan requires a forest inventory and must consider other uses such as mineral extraction, recreation, fish and wildlife, and other traditional uses.