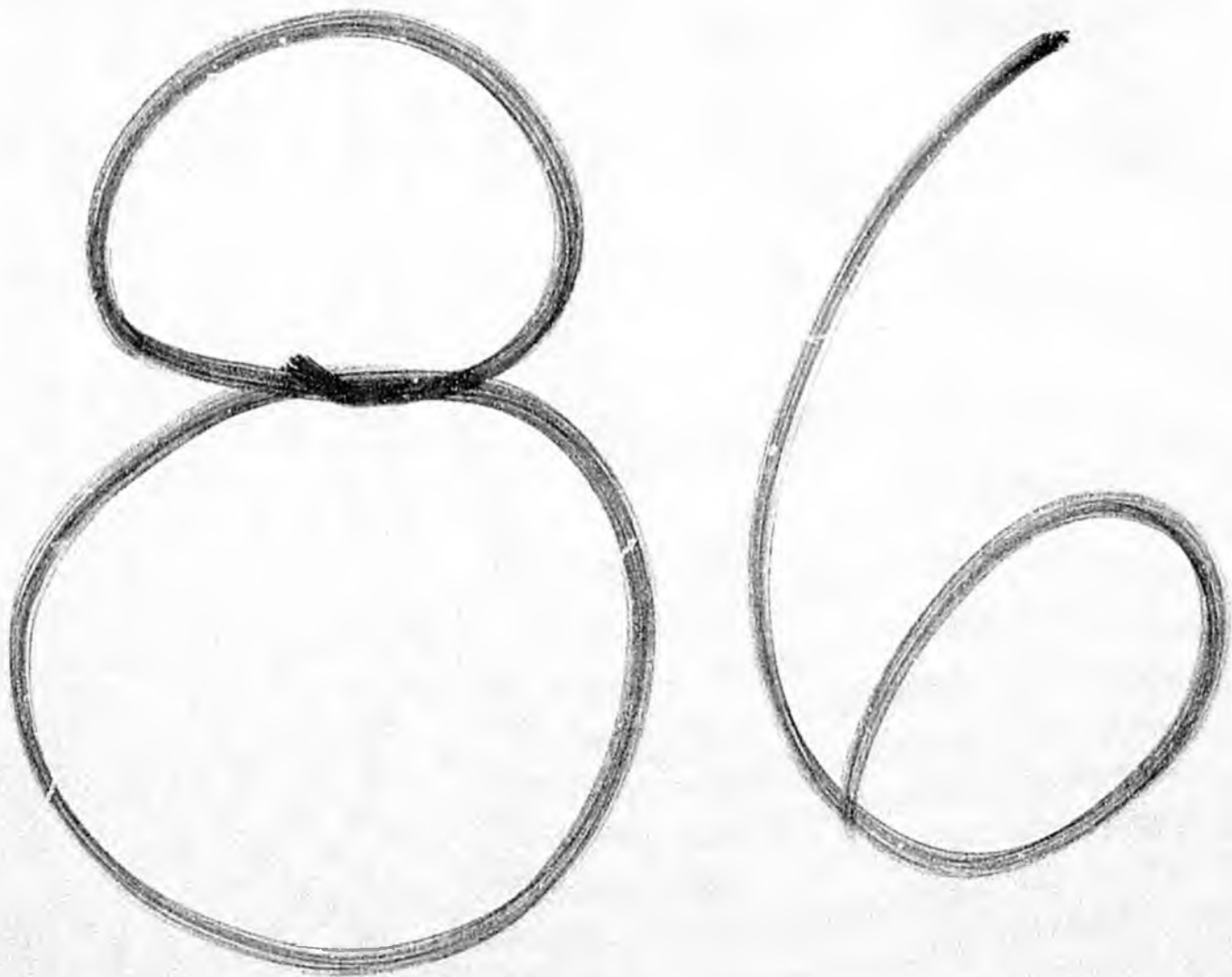


HB





STATE OF ALASKA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
JUNEAU

January 18, 1985

The Honorable Ben Grussendorf  
Speaker of the House  
Alaska State Legislature  
Pouch V  
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Representative Grussendorf:

Under the authority of art. III, sec. 18, of the Alaska Constitution, I am transmitting a bill to establish the Willow Creek State Recreation Area.

This bill would place approximately 4,000 acres of land along Willow Creek near the Parks Highway in state recreation area classification. About 60 percent of the land is owned by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the borough supports the designation and management of the area as a state recreation area.

The area would be managed in accordance with a comprehensive plan developed in consultation with the borough. Primary emphasis would be on recreational uses and associated development. The state and borough have begun work on a joint plan that includes a road to the mouth of Willow Creek. This road will alleviate conflict between use of the creek by motorized and non-motorized boats. Designation as a state recreation area will allow increased compatibility among the various recreational uses of the creek while minimizing any harm to fish and wildlife resources and habitat.

I urge your favorable action on this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Sheffield".

Bill Sheffield  
Governor

**STATE OF ALASKA 1985 LEGISLATIVE SESSION  
FISCAL NOTE**

HB 86

Revision Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**REQUEST**

Bill/Resolution No.: HB 86  
 Title: Willow Creek State Recreation  
 Area: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Requestor: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Request: \_\_\_\_\_

**FISCAL DETAIL**

Agency Affected: Natural Resources  
 Program Category Affected: NOMEK  
 BRU, Program or Subprogram(s) Affected: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parks and Recreation

**EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)**

	FY 85	FY 86	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90
<b>OPERATING</b>						
100 PERSONAL SERVICES		28.3	48.7	77.0	77.0	77.0
200 TRAVEL		7.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
300 CONTRACTUAL		5.0	23.0	23.0	23.0	23.0
400 SUPPLIES		1.5	3.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
500 EQUIPMENT		16.2	11.2	11.2	2.0	2.0
600 LAND & STRUCTURES						
700 GRANTS, CLAIMS						
800 MISCELLANEOUS						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>		<b>53.0</b>	<b>86.9</b>	<b>114.2</b>	<b>105.2</b>	<b>105.2</b>

<b>CAPITAL</b>		143.0	4,237.0	3,598.0		
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<b>REVENUE</b>						
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**FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)**

	FY 85	FY 86	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90
GENERAL FUND		196.0	4,323.9	3,712.2	105.2	105.2
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>196.0</b>	<b>4,323.9</b>	<b>3,712.2</b>	<b>105.2</b>	<b>105.2</b>

**POSITIONS:**

	FY 85	FY 86	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90
FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME		1	2	3	3	
TEMPORARY						

**ANALYSIS:** Attach a separate page if necessary

ATTACHED

Prepared By: Peter Panarese Phone: 265-4517  
 Division: Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation Date: 1-16-85

Approved by Commissioner: Wm. J. Zimark Date: 1-16-85  
 Agency: Natural Resources

Distribution (by Agency preparing fiscal note):  
 Legislative Finance  
 Legislative Sponsor  
 Requestor  
 Office of Management and Budget

Willow Creek State Recreation Area - Fiscal Analysis

FY 86

100	-	Park Ranger I / 8 months
200	-	Travel for training, regional coordination
300	-	Vehicle mileage, janitorial maintenance
400	-	Hand tools, commodities
500	-	Pick-up truck, mobile radio, law enforcement equipment
Capital	-	Design and engineering for road/campground/parking

FY 87

100	-	Add Natural Resource Technician I/3 mos.
300	-	Add maintenance/services contract
500	-	Additional truck radio
Capital	-	Construction of boat launch, road and parking

FY 88

100	-	Add Park Ranger I/8 mos.
500	-	Additional truck, radio
Capital	-	Continue FY 87 construction; includes car and walk-in, camping and trails and trail heads.

NOTE TO READERS, JANUARY 1985:

The appendices, which are now outdated, are not attached to this copy for distribution. The recommendations in this version of the plan embody recommendations only and actions taken in response to the plan will reflect changes made during policy discussions in December and January.

# SOUTHCENTRAL RECREATION ACTION PLAN

Presented to Governor Bill Sheffield

December 1, 1984

By

Esther C. Wunnicke, Commissioner  
Alaska Department of Natural Resources

Don W. Collinsworth, Commissioner  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recognizing the intense, and growing, recreational demands of southcentral Alaskans, this action plan makes a variety of recommendations for legislative designations, land acquisitions and exchanges, facilities development, habitat and fisheries enhancement, land management priorities, and future planning. Implementation could take several years.

If implemented, legislative designations (Table One) would include:

- State Recreation Rivers, 6 units, 250,000 acres
- State Forest, 1 unit, 450,000 acres
- Public Use Areas - 2 units, 1 million acres
- State Recreation Areas - 2 units, 10,000 acres
- Wildlife Refuge Addition - 1 area, 1,200 acres

The plan also presents funding proposals for recreation-related projects, many of which are already proposed within departmental budget requests for FY 86. Tables Two, Three, and Four provide more budget information on these proposals. Each category of proposals is ranked by priority as decided by the interagency group and members of the public who worked on the plan, but because the lists focus only on regional recreation needs late in the budget process, they cannot displace departmental or community budget priorities already submitted to the Governor's Office. Possible land acquisitions include:

- Ninilchik River, 300.0
- Cottonwood Creek, 40.0
- Crooked Creek-Kasilof River, 200.0
- Kashwitna Landing, 500.0
- Wasilla Creek, 180.0
- Anchorage Urban - Belm Lake, 600.0
- Funny River - Kenai Confluence, 1,300.0
- Little Willow Creek, 180.0
- Clam Gulch, 65.0
- Whiskey Gulch, 200.0
- Neil Lake (Deshka River), 300.0
- Moose Creek (Deshka River), 300.0
- Bishop Creek, 200.0
- Bird Creek, 100.0
- Deep Creek, 500.0
- Nancy Lakes inholdings, 250.0

Facilities development could include the following:

### 1. River-related facilities:

- Willow Creek State Recreation Area (proposed): 7,735.0
- Little Susitna River, 400.0
- Kenai Peninsula Recreation Units, 1,155.0
- Ninilchik/Deep Creek Marine Launch Feasibility Study, 20.0
- Talkeetna Boat Launch and Campground, 173.0
- Kepler-Bradley Lakes, 500.0
- Anchorage Fishing Pier Facilities, 1,500.0
- Kenai River Development, 1,000.0
- Anchor River Development, 400.0
- Whiskey Gulch Development, 200.0
- Sheep Creek Access Development, 200.0

2. Park and recreation facilities (non-riverine):
- Chugach State Park Access, 1,420.0
  - Safe Water Supplies, 150.0
  - Independence Mine State Historic Park, 600.0
  - Thunderbird Falls Recreation Site, 420.0
  - Public Use Rental Cabins, 225.0
  - Park Location Signing, 155.0

Wildlife, fisheries, and enhancement could include:

- Wildlife Enhancement
  - Moose Habitat Enhancement - Anchorage Bowl, 12.0 cont
  - Kenai Refuge Habitat Enhancement, 85.0 cont
  - Moose Creek Range Habitat Enhancement, 35.0 cont
- Fish Enhancement
  - Susitna King Salmon Rehabilitation, 116.7 cont
  - Big Lake Hatchery, 85.4 cont
  - Elmendorf Hatchery, 475.5 cont
  - Fort Richardson Hatchery, 825.9 cont
  - Kenai River Juvenile King Studies, 137.3 cont
  - Kasilof Hatchery, 78.3 cont
  - Trail Lakes Hatchery, 197.8 cont
  - Fort Richardson Fish Transport, 500.0 cont
  - Elmendorf Completion, 1,520.0 cont
- Wildlife Observation - Potter Marsh, 525.0
- Wildlife Observation - Anchorage Bowl, 250.0
- Anchorage Trap and Skeet Range, 500.0

The proposed trade-out of Seldovia Native Association lands in Kachemak Bay State Park remains the state's highest land exchange priority.

This action plan represents the recommendations of the group that prepared it for possible short-term steps to improve recreation opportunities in southcentral Alaska. Other proposals were also studied and documented and could be implemented in the future. To maximize continuity in southcentral recreation management and to continue coordinated planning and management, it is recommended that you establish a steering group on southcentral recreation, composed of the agencies that developed this action plan and representatives of affected governments. No funding would be necessary for this action.

Development at South Denali should proceed within several years but hinges largely on federal appropriations. Next year (FY 87) the state should begin to budget special planning and development funds in accord with the federal schedule.

## II. INTRODUCTION

In 1983, responding to the growing recreational demands of residents of southcentral Alaska, Governor Sheffield recommended the immediate legislative protection of one of the state's finest recreational resources, the Kenai River. As a result, the Legislature established the Kenai River Special Management Area, and planning and management for the Kenai River have already begun.

Protection of the Kenai River was clearly merited. Visitor use of the river grew from 122,000 recreation days in 1977 to 230,000 recreation days in 1983 -- almost doubling in five years. Today, it is estimated that 14% of all sport fishing in Alaska occurs on the Kenai River. The use is attributable to the river's accessibility by road from major population centers, including Anchorage and Kenai/Soldotna, and the availability of healthy fish resources.

In the course of managing the Kenai River and conducting area planning for the Matanuska-Susitna region, state agencies have found that the problems of recreation management on the Kenai River are not unique. Instead they are symptomatic of the burgeoning recreation demand throughout southcentral Alaska -- a demand that creates pressures on recreation users, local governments, and the state and federal governments. Careful recreation management is necessary both to meet this demand and to protect Alaska's land and natural resources.

Governor Sheffield, recognizing the need for a recreation management strategy in southcentral Alaska, asked the Departments of Natural Resources and Fish and Game to cooperate in the development of an "action plan" for southcentral Alaska. The Governor directed that the plan include recommendations for:

- 1) legislative proposals for designating state recreational rivers, recreation areas, habitat/recreation areas, and other multiple use areas;
- 2) land acquisitions and exchanges that will increase public access to recreational resources in southcentral Alaska, including the Kenai Peninsula;
- 3) capital budget requests for facilities development, especially those with local or federal participation or support;
- 4) operating budget requests for land management and planning to support the recreational program;
- 5) future priorities for recreation planning and development; and, in addition,
- 6) analysis of the costs and benefits of the proposed actions in the plan.

### III. BACKGROUND

Rapidly intensifying recreational use is creating a new, major demand for opportunities for sport fishing, hunting, hiking, river running, and camping in southcentral Alaska. This growing use has been concentrated in accessible areas, so that patterns of use are uneven and damage to some resources is a possibility. There are new pressures on local services, and on the state and federal governments to provide recreation opportunities and recreation management.

The growth in southcentral recreation demand has been identified in several major planning and management efforts recently undertaken by government agencies in close consultation with the public. Planning efforts have included "Alaska State Park System: Southcentral Region Plan" (1982); the Susitna Area Plan, released in draft in July 1984 and expected to be finalized in January 1985; and sport fisheries and game studies produced by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Additionally, the Governor's study group on the Kenai River, headed by the Office of Management and Budget in 1983, identified the need for dispersal of recreation uses from heavily used areas on the Kenai Peninsula and better management of these areas.

The Susitna and Kenai areas feature a wide variety of recreational resources that provide exceptional opportunities for public use. The recreational potential is large and diverse: many recreational experiences are available (fishing, hunting, camping, hiking) and there are numerous accessible recreational areas, mostly along the Seward, Glenn, Parks, and Denali highways. Large population centers, with unusually high recreation use patterns, are within the southcentral area. Additionally, a number of federal conservation units within the region provide excellent opportunities for recreational use by Alaska residents and visitors to the state. Increased access and transportation development within the region will lead to new recreation demands in some areas in future years.

Meeting recreational demands is, of course, very important to potential users. But recreation also contributes significantly to Alaska's economic vitality. Recent studies in support of planning for state parks and other recreation sites have indicated that recreation use in southcentral Alaska contributes tens of millions of dollars annually to local economies. Tourism and recreation play an increasing role in economic development planning throughout Alaska.

Major recreational uses that need special consideration by the state are sport fishing, recreational vehicle camping, tent camping and hiking, picnicking, boating, kayaking/canoeing, cross-country skiing, hunting, and snowmobiling. Recreational uses can be combined with habitat protection, forest management, mineral development, and other uses in a multiple use context, but planning for recreational pressures is needed throughout the state's public lands to assure compatibility of recreation and other land management activities.

#### IV. ISSUES

Recreation issues include the following concerns, some of which were identified in the recreation element of the draft Susitna Area Plan and by the state Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation and Department of Fish and Game.

##### Recreational Land Base

Because of southcentral Alaska's accessibility to major population centers and transportation routes, demands on recreational resources are higher and present more competition with other land uses such as urban growth, resource development, and habitat protection than they do in most other parts of Alaska. Specific problem areas include popular river corridors and lakeshores.

Although accessible sites receive more use than remote areas, they often have a lower proportion of land in public ownership. In addition, there is relatively little federal land in accessible recreation areas in southcentral Alaska: most prime recreation areas are in private, borough, or state ownership. The different landowners and managers can and should cooperate in providing recreational opportunities -- for example, in some areas the state will have to assist local communities in providing local recreation opportunities and meeting growing demands on local resources from outside the communities. The need for cooperative management is accentuated by the likelihood that state revenues will decline in the future, and funding for development and maintenance of recreation sites will tighten. However, cooperative management will require coordination of planning, management, and budget priorities.

##### Growth in Recreational Use

The demand for recreational use of our state land, fish, and game resources will continue to grow with the upper Cook Inlet area. Recognition of current demands and projected future growth requires that the state begin immediately to provide dispersed recreation opportunities for recreational use in the southcentral area.

The growth in recreation use new areas will necessitate intensive management for resource conservation. Remote areas, newly opened for recreational and multiple use, will be affected by large numbers of new resource users. A major concern in the public comment on the Susitna Area Plan and in other forums has been the need for more intensive state land and resource management, and the action plan is intended to address these current and future management needs.

In the course of public comment on the Susitna Area Plan, recently completed after three years and over 40 public meetings, there was evident concern that recreational use of public land has intensified without commensurate land and resource management by the state. New uses, including all-season off-road vehicle use, are giving greater accessibility into the public lands but are not being managed.

### Sport Fishing

The southcentral region bears by far the greatest amount of sport fishing in the State of Alaska. Approximately 55% of Alaska sport fishing occurs in the Cook Inlet watershed, amounting to 950,000 angler days a year and about 150,000 persons sport fishing. Use has been increasing about 7.8% per year.

Today about two-thirds of this southcentral sport fishing effort is concentrated on the Kenai Peninsula. The Matanuska-Susitna and Anchorage areas support the remainder.

Two areas could accommodate substantial additional growth in recreational use: the Matanuska-Susitna Valley and marine waters along the Kenai Peninsula.

Access to waters in northern Cook Inlet is primarily limited by the lack of developed surface transportation and facilities. Even though there is acknowledged to be an adequate fishery resource to support increased sport fishing use, access is in most cases restricted to river boats and aircraft. For instance, there are no public launch facilities on the Susitna River below Talkeetna. Even rivers crossing the Parks Highway from Willow to Talkeetna, draining into the Susitna River, have limited access. Most of these rivers are bordered by private lands with little or no access. Most use occurs in the highway corridors, and results in congestion and uneven resource use.

### Sport Hunting

Most of the recreational hunting by Alaskans occurs in southcentral Alaska and the greater part of projected increases in demand for hunting opportunities will occur in this region. Because the habitat base is finite and potentials for manipulating increases in productivity are limited, future demands for recreational hunting can best be met by retaining productive wildlife lands in public ownership and by assuring public access to wildlife resources. Habitat enhancement measures included in this plan can be an important tool in providing sport hunting opportunities on public lands.

### Other Recreational Uses

There is a large demand in southcentral Alaska for accessible land and facilities that accommodate other types of recreation such as hiking, picnicking, snowmobiling, skiing, and camping. Often these types of uses can be accommodated with other multiple use activities and the recreation activities listed above. These uses are likely to be enhanced by protection of lands for the recreation activities listed above.

### Multiple Use Management

Proposals to provide for recreation and habitat protection generally recommend retention or acquisition of public land and management that

permits recreation, forest management, mineral development, access, and other multiple uses in balance together. In some cases, it will be the joint decision of the Departments of Fish and Game and Natural Resources in the planning process to restrict multiple use in critical areas within a legislatively designated unit. However, the action plan's premise is that coordinated multiple use management of state lands and resources can provide adequately for recreation and habitat protection together with other uses.

## V. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

To provide the foundation for a permanent system of lands and waters that offer diverse opportunities for public recreation in southcentral Alaska, this action plan makes recommendations for legislative designations, land acquisitions and exchanges, facility development, land planning and management, and priorities for future recreation development and planning. These actions will help relieve the recreational pressures faced by the public, local governments, and land and resource managers in southcentral both today and in the future.

These recommendations are designed to accommodate rapid growth in sport fishing, hunting, boating, and other recreational activities in the Matanuska and Susitna basins and on the Kenai Peninsula, and to allow for orderly development of the region's fisheries and recreational facilities.

State agency staff have met to discuss the recreation action plan proposal with representatives of affected local governments. A summary of these discussions is included in the appendix (APPENDIX ONE). The government representatives believed that the recreation action plan has significant potential for relieving recreational pressures and meeting future needs.

Local government representatives have indicated support for our integrated recreation planning and management to meet the variety of recreation demands. They regard this proposed action plan as a package to address "average" recreation demands, not a package likely to provide for wealthy recreationists. They also see the potential economic benefits of the action plan, with little or no adverse impact on other resource development. The local government representatives agreed on three commendable criteria for selecting alternatives from the action plan: a) emphasize projects that provide more benefits for fewer dollars; b) emphasize projects that the public will be aware of; and c) emphasize protection and retention of critical areas, with a later focus on development and maintenance.

Development of the Willow Creek State Recreation Area, as proposed in this plan, will have the largest single impact on recreational use of any proposed project in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley. The Willow Creek project will greatly improve boat access to the west side of the Susitna River and

road access adjacent to Willow Creek. The project is expected to accommodate an additional 40,000-60,000 recreation days annually.

### Legislative Designations

The action plan proposes seven legislative designations of lands with outstanding values including public recreation. All of these proposals are high priorities in state area plans that have had thorough public review and comment. APPENDIX TWO contains drafts of legislation and fiscal notes for each proposed action. Table One summarizes each action and fiscal impact.

#### 1. State Recreation Rivers.

Six rivers have been proposed for designation as state recreation rivers, including a total of approximately 250,000 acres of public lands:

Alexander Creek  
Kroto Creek/Moose Creek (Deshka River)  
Lake Creek  
Little Susitna River  
Talachulitna River  
Talkeetna River

Common factors militating in favor of these designations include:

- Very high priority for designation as state recreation rivers in the Susitna Area Plan; Little Susitna identified for protection in Willow Subbasin Plan; closure to new mineral entry per these plans and public comment
- High multiple use and recreation values, particularly sport fishing, hunting, moose winter range, spawning grounds for Cook Inlet fishery
- Fiscal impact: \$130,000 first year, dropping to \$79,000 after two years

#### 2. Susitna State Forest.

Five areas in the vicinities of Kashwitna, Kroto-Creek-Kahiltna River, Lake Creek, Mt. Susitna, and Peters Creeks are proposed for designation as the Susitna State Forest (450,000 acres).

These areas share:

- High priority for legislative designation in the Susitna Area Plan
- Prime multiple use potential for recreation, forestry, and habitat management
- Fiscal impact: \$81,000 in operating costs for two years, dropping to \$66,000 afterwards

#### 3. Yentna-Susitna Public Use Area.

Approximately 54,000 acres of public domain lands along the lower Yentna and Susitna Rivers and Kroto Slough are proposed as the Yentna-Susitna Public Use Area.

## Table One - Proposed Legislation and Fiscal Impacts

NOTE: The symbol \* indicates a Fish and Game budget request  
 The symbol ‡ indicates a Natural Resources budget request

PROPOSAL	1986		1987		1988		1989	
	CIP	OPER	CIP	OPER	CIP	OPER	CIP	OPER
1. State Recreation Rivers	...	277.4‡	...	229.8‡	...	252.7‡	...	277.9‡
2. Susitna State Forest	...	81.0‡	...	81.0‡	...	66.0‡	...	65.0‡
3. Yentna-Susitna Public Use Area	Fiscal impact included with Nelchina proposal, below No. 5							
4. Willow Creek State Recreation Area	7,735.0‡	212.5‡	...	145.0‡	...	158.7‡	...	174.5‡
5. Nelchina Public Use Area	...	129.8‡ 40.0*	...	129.8‡ 40.0*	...	78.5‡ 29.0*	...	78.5‡ 20.0*
6. Jim-Swan Lakes State Recreation Area	500.0‡	122.1‡	...	93.6‡	...	102.7‡	...	112.9‡
7. Palmer Hay Flats Refuge Additions	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

Draft legislation is included in Appendix Two, except for Palmer Hay Flats Additions, No. 7.

This area has:

- High priority for legislative designation in the Susitna Area Plan
- Moose winter range, large concentration of trumpeter swan nesting sites, and 25,000 acres of land with potential for commercial forestry
- Fiscal impact: included with Nelchina designation, below

#### 4. Willow Creek State Recreation Area.

This area includes 3,440 acres of accessible, high-quality recreation lands. It was identified for protection and recreation management in the Willow Subbasin Plan and planning for the site has been conducted jointly with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, with very strong public and agency support. A detailed master plan is available. Designation and funding will:

- contribute significantly to dispersal of sportfishing efforts in southcentral away from areas where use is now too heavy
- provide important public recreation infrastructure near areas of intense urban growth
- Fiscal impact: \$7,735,000 CIP, \$212,500 oper'g dropping to \$145,000 after one year

#### 5. Nelchina Public Use Area.

A core area of 1,000,000 acres of public land is proposed for designation as a multiple use area with special habitat management and planning. The designation of this area has strong public support and proposed legislation has been carefully prepared over several years by the Departments of Natural Resources and Fish and Game. Senator Kerttula has previously introduced similar legislation and has recently expressed interest in the Administration's plans for the Nelchina.

This area features:

- High priority for legislative designation in the Susitna Area Plan
- Critical calving grounds for the Nelchina caribou herd
- Significant opportunity for hunting, hiking, and other recreational activities, mining, and possibly transportation
- Proposed legislation provides for DNR management with ADF&G concurrence on the management plan
- Fiscal impact: \$169,000 for two years, dropping to \$98,500

NOTE: A larger area, including another 1.5 million acres, has been proposed for special designation and management in addition to the core acreage. If this is added to the proposed Nelchina Public Use Area by the Legislature we recommend acceding to the addition if management is for multiple use. Stricter habitat protections are necessary in the core area.

#### 6. Jim-Swan Lakes State Recreation Area.

This area of public land has critical importance for habitat and already attracts intensive recreational use from Anchorage and Palmer residents (7,600 acres). It has:

- High priority for legislative designation in the Susitna Area Plan
- Valuable waterfowl and moose habitat and hunting area, with a scenic buffer along the Glenn Highway
- Fiscal impact: \$122,100 first year, dropping to \$93,600; 500.0 CIP

#### 7. Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge Addition (bill not drafted).

The proposal is to add 1,200 acres on the Glenn Highway to the existing state game refuge. This was a high priority in the Susitna Area Plan, protecting valuable waterfowl and moose habitat and hunting area, with a scenic buffer on the Glenn Highway. There would be no fiscal impact.

Additionally, per public comment in the Susitna Area Plan, Bird Island at Lake Louise will be provided protection by Interagency Land Management Assignment from the Department of Natural Resources to the Department of Fish and Game.

This concludes our recommended package of legislative designations.

#### Funding for Recreation-Related Purposes

The Departments and many local governments have already presented the Governor's Office with proposed Capital Improvement Project priority lists which include statewide priorities for a variety of purposes including recreation. The following categories of recreation-related spending are proposed as the consensus of the two Departments after some discussion with local governments. Neither the Departments nor the local governments would expect this list, providing recreation funding priorities for southcentral Alaska, to displace their lists of capital spending priorities (though many of the items are the same).

##### 1. Land Acquisitions (Table Two).

To reduce crowding conditions and accommodate increases in the number of anglers on intensively used waterways, the action plan recommends state acquisition of the lands listed in Table Two. This list is in order of priority. Detailed information on parcel identification, use, and benefits is provided in APPENDIX THREE. The list has been agreed upon by the two departments, reviewed by local governments, and discussed with interested members of the public.

## 2. Facilities Development (Table Three).

To provide adequate public facilities to support existing recreational use in heavily used recreation areas, the action plan proposes investment in development of the facilities listed in Table Three. Each category of proposals is ranked by priority, but no priority is assigned among the categories. These lists have been agreed upon by the departments and reviewed with local governments. Further information on the proposals is provided in APPENDIX FOUR.

## 3. Wildlife, Fisheries, and Enhancement (Table Four).

A list of possible wildlife and fisheries projects is provided in Table Four, with description of the proposed projects in APPENDIX FIVE. These projects would enhance the resource base for observation and sport hunting and fishing.

## Land Management and Planning.

There should be no additional costs for planning and management beyond those presented in the fiscal notes for proposed legislation. However, this funding is important to allow land management agencies to conduct planning for these highly used areas and to prevent degradation of lands and resources and threats to public safety. A major concern in public comment on the Susitna Area Plan has been that planning should result in more intensive land management. This land management should be funded appropriately. Other recommended actions and activities include the following proposals.

Land Exchanges. The Administration has placed special emphasis on the acquisition by land exchange of Seldovia Native Association inholdings in the Kachemak Bay State Park. In fact, last year the first phase of the exchange was completed after years of deliberation. About 25,000 acres of private land remain in the Park, and the Department of Natural Resources has continued negotiating with Seldovia Native Association with the target of completing the trade-out. The state is pursuing the possibility of exchange in good faith as a high priority, and the administration hopes that the inherent difficulties of negotiating and implementing large land exchanges will not prevent the near-term trade-out of Seldovia's lands.

Although purchase of the inholdings has been proposed and considered, the state is not in a position to buy out private lands in Kachemak Bay State Park. It is estimated that such an action would cost over \$20 million, which would amount to a very large portion of the shrinking capital budget.

Smaller land exchanges are being pursued by the state to increase the size and integrity of significant state park and refuge areas. The land exchange option should be pursued where landowners are willing to trade and where land acquisition needs allow time for the land exchange process. The state intends to continue using land exchanges where appropriate to protect recreational opportunities in southcentral Alaska.

South Denali Development. The state is cooperating closely with federal agencies to develop a major visitor facility on the south slope of the Alaska Range in Denali State Park. Planning funds should be made available next year to begin implementing facility development plans for the area. The state expects the development to result in a variety of recreational opportunities for Alaska residents and visitors. See APPENDIX SIX.

Future Planning. The agencies involved in preparing the action plan have also brought together proposals for future legislative designations, funding, and recreation enhancement. We recommend the establishment of a southcentral recreation steering group, composed of the agencies that have contributed to this effort, to assure that the initial coordination of recreation management embodied in this action plan is continued in future years.

#### SUMMARY

The proposed southcentral recreation action plan contains a variety of possible legislative and executive actions to help relieve the pressures for recreational opportunities in the region. Most of the proposals have been advanced from prior planning studies and agency budget proposals, with special attention to those action items that have had public review and comment.

Implementation of parts of this plan is sure to benefit Alaskans today and protect our lands and resources for future use. We recognize that it is an ambitious project, and one that needs considerable analysis prior to wholesale adoption. But we are relatively convinced that the priorities for legislative designation and the higher ranking capital projects deserve attention during the coming legislative session.

## Table Two - Proposed Land Acquisitions

NOTE: The symbol \* indicates Fish and Game budget request  
 The symbol # indicates Natural Resources budget request

CURRENTLY  
REQUESTED

NEW  
REQUEST

PROJECT	FEATURES/BENEFITS	CIP	OPER	YEAR	CIP	OPER	YEAR
1. Ninilchik River	King, coho, pink, steelhead 12,000 fishing days/year	300.0	...	FY 86*	...	...	...
2. Cottonwood Creek	Fishing/hunting near Wasilla 9,000 fishing days/year, significant hunting	40.0	...	FY 86*	...	...	...
3. Crooked Creek/Kasilof R.	Major king salmon fishery 25,000 fishing days, 5,000 kings	200.0	...	FY 85	...	...	...
4. Kashwitna Landing	Boat launch on lower Susitna R.	135.0	...	FY 86#	65.0#	...	...
5. Wasilla Creek	Coho fishery access, hunting	...	...	...	500.0+	...	...
6. Anchorage Urban - Behm Lk.	Potential rainbow fishery	180.0	...	FY 86*	...	...	...
7. Funny River/Kenai R.	Bank fishery, public access	...	...	...	600.0*	...	...
8. Little Willow Creek	Access from Parks Hwy to fishery	...	...	...	1,300.0*	...	...
9. Clam Gulch	Parking area near clamming flats	...	...	...	180.0*	...	...
10. Whiskey Gulch	Near four major sport fisheries	65.0	...	FY 86#	...	...	...
11. Neil Lake	Floatplane access to Deshka River	200.0	...	FY 86*	...	...	...
12. Moose Creek	Road access for river use	...	...	...	600.0*	...	...
13. Bishop Beach	Tidal spit, fishing, marine access	...	...	...	200.0*	...	...
14. Bird Creek	Sport fishing, access to Chugach	200.0	...	FY 86#	...	...	...
15. Deep Creek	Overcrowded beach fishery	...	...	...	100.0*	...	...
16. Nancy Lakes	Inholdings acquisition for trails	...	...	...	300.0*	...	...
		...	...	...	250.0+	...	...

Descriptive narrative for each proposed expenditure is included in Appendix Three.

## Table Three - Proposed Facilities Development

NOTE: The symbol \* indicates a Fish and Game budget request  
 The symbol † indicates a Natural Resources budget request

CURRENTLY  
REQUESTED

NEW  
REQUEST

PROJECT	FEATURES/BENEFITS	CIP	OPER	YEAR	CIP	OPER	YEAR
<u>Category One: River-related facilities</u>							
1. Willow Creek S.R.A.	Major southcentral fishing	...	...	...	7,735.0#	212.5#	86
2. Little Susitna River	50 parking units and boat launch	400.0	...	FY 86#	...	...	...
3. Kenai Peninsula Recreation	Rehabilitate existing units	1,115.0	...	FY 86#	...	10.0#	...
4. Ninilchik/Deep Creek	Boat launch feasibility study	...	...	...	20.0*	...	...
5. Talkeetna Boat Launch	Campground/access/launch	...	...	...	173.0*	...	...
6. Kepler-Bradley Lakes	Fishing/recreation/barrier-free	...	...	...	500.0#	10.0#	...
7. Anchorage Pier	Pier sportfishing/barrier-free	...	...	...	1,500.0*	...	...
8. Kenai River Development	Facilities for high-use areas	...	...	...	1,000.0#	10.0#	...
9. Anchor River	Rehabilitate beach campground	...	...	...	400.0*	...	...
10. Whiskey Gulch	Beach access, parking, facilities	...	...	...	250.0#	50.0#	...
11. Sheep Creek	Trails, fishing near Parks Hwy	...	...	...	200.0*	...	...
<u>Category Two: Park and recreation facilities (non-riverine)</u>							
1. Chugach State Park Access	Trailheads, trails, parking	1,420.0	...	FY 86#	...	60.0#	...
2. Safe Water	Public water in six locations	150.0	...	FY 86#	5.0#	...	...
3. Independence Mine Devel.	Enhance historic structures	600.0	...	FY 86#	...	...	...
4. Thunderbird Falls	Trails, facilities on Glenn Hwy	420.0	...	FY 86#	...	...	...
5. Park Public Cabins	Construct or rebuild 14 cabins	225.0	...	FY 86#	...	...	...
6. Park Signs	Information for visitors	135.0	...	FY 86#	...	...	...

Descriptive narrative for each proposed expenditure is included in Appendix Four.

## Table Four - Wildlife, Fisheries, and Enhancement

NOTE: The symbol \* indicates a Fish and Game budget request  
 The symbol † indicates a Natural Resources budget request

CURRENTLY  
REQUESTED

NEW  
REQUEST

PROJECT	CIP	OPER	YEAR	CIP	OPER	YEAR
1. Fisheries Enhancement Proposals:						
- Susitna King Salmon Rehabilitation	...	116.0	Cont*	...	..	...
- Big Lake Hatchery	...	85.4	Cont*	...	...	...
- Elmendorf Hatchery	...	475.5	Cont*	...	...	...
- Fort Richardson Hatchery	...	825.9	Cont*	...	...	...
- Kenai River Juvenile King Salmon Studies	...	137.3	Cont*	...	...	...
- Kasilof Hatchery	...	78.3	Cont*	...	...	...
- Trail Lakes Hatchery	...	197.8	Cont*	...	...	...
- Fort Richardson Fish Transport	500.0	...	FY 86*	...	...	...
- Fort Richardson Backup Water	300.0	...	FY 86*	...	...	...
- Elmendorf Completion	1,520.0	...	FY 86*	...	...	...
2. Wildlife Enhancement Proposals:						
- Moose Habitat - Anchorage Bowl	...	12.0	Cont*	...	...	...
- Kenai Refuge Habitat - Moose	...	85.0	Cont*	...	...	...
- Moose Creek Range Improvement	...	35.0	Cont*	...	...	...
3. Wildlife Observation - Potter Marsh	...	...	...	520.0*	5.0*	86
4. Wildlife Observation - Anchorage Bowl	...	...	...	250.0*	10.0*	...
5. Anchorage Trap and Skeet Range	...	...	...	300.0*	100.0*	86

Descriptive narrative of most proposed expenditures is included in Appendix Five.