

SB

229

SFIN

FILE

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: 2/19/08

FURTHER:

DATE TURNED
IN TO OFFICE: 3/03/08

Finance Committee considered SENATE BILL NO. 229

SB 229 TANANA VALLEY FOREST/MINTO FLATS REFUGE

"An Act relating to the Tanana Valley State Forest and to assignment of certain forest land to the Minto Flats State Game Refuge; and providing for an effective date."

and recommends:

- be replaced with SCS or CS _____ (_____)
- adopt previous SCS or CS _____ (_____)
- attached amendment(s)
- adopt _____ Letter of Intent
- further referral to _____ Committee

SENATE BILL:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Same Title
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Title
<hr/>	
HOUSE BILL:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Same Title
<input type="checkbox"/>	Technical Title Change
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Title w/ SCR # _____

NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN#

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN#
DNR	2/12			✓	1
ADM	2/11			✓	2

APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:	PRINTED LAST NAME	DO PASS	DO NOT PASS	NO REC	AMEND
	E. J. ...	✓			
	Thomas	✓			
	Dyson	✓			
	Huggins	✓			
	OLSON			✓	
CO-CHAIR:	HOFFMAN			✓	
CO-CHAIR:	STEDMAN	✓			

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2008 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 2
Bill Version: SB 229
(S) Publish Date: 2/19/08

Identifier (file name): SB229-DFG-DWC-02-11-08 Dept. Affected: Fish & Game
Title: Tanana Valley Forest/Minto Flats Refuge RDU: Wildlife Conservation
Component: Wildlife Conservation
Sponsor: Senator Thomas
Requester: Senate Resources Committee Component Number: 473

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	Appropriation Required	Information						
		FY 2009	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
OPERATING EXPENDITURES								
Personal Services								
Travel								
Contractual								
Supplies								
Equipment								
Land & Structures								
Grants & Claims								
Miscellaneous								
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES								
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()								
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts								
1003 GF Match								
1004 GF								
1005 GF/Program Receipts								
1037 GF/Mental Health								
Other Interagency Receipts								
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2008) cost: _____

POSITIONS

Full-time								
Part-time								
Temporary								

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)
 Passage of this bill will have no fiscal impact on the Department of Fish and Game

Prepared by: David Thomson, Administrative Manager
 Division: Wildlife Conservation
 Approved by: Tom Lawson, Director
Division of Administrative Services

Phone 465-6194
 Date/Time 2/11/08 4:00 PM
 Date 2/11/2008

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2008 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 1
Bill Version: SB 229
(S) Publish Date: 2/19/08

Identifier (file name): SB229-DNR-For-02-12-08 Dept. Affected: Natural Resources
Title: Tanana Valley State Forest/Minto Flats State Game RDU: Resource Development
Refuge boundary adjustment Component: Forest Management & Development
Sponsor: Sen. Thomas
Requester: Senate Resources Component Number: 435

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	Appropriation Required	Information						
		FY 2009	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
OPERATING EXPENDITURES								
Personal Services								
Travel								
Contractual								
Supplies								
Equipment								
Land & Structures								
Grants & Claims								
Miscellaneous								
TOTAL OPERATING		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
CHANGE IN REVENUES ()		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts								
1003 GF Match								
1004 GF								
1005 GF/Program Receipts								
1037 GF/Mental Health								
Other Interagency Receipts								
TOTAL		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2008) cost: 0.0

POSITIONS

Full-time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Part-time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Temporary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This bill will add approx. 101,610 acres of land to the Tanana Valley State Forest (TVSF), delete approx. 66,218 acres, and redesignate approx. 4,298 acres as part of the Minto Flats State Game Refuge (MFSGR). This better aligns boundaries with the intent of the TVSF and MFSGR, increases land management efficiency, and updates the boundaries to correspond with correct and current land status. This proposal was developed and reviewed through the 2001 update to the TVSF Management Plan. Controversial parcels were removed following interagency and public review, and the package of changes in this bill had broad support and no known opposition. These changes will not require new positions or funding. There is no short-term impact on revenue, but it protects the revenue stream from timber receipts by ensuring that more commercial forest land will remain part of the long-term sustained yield land timber base to provide lumber, fuelwood, wildlife habitat, and recreation and tourism benefits.

Prepared by: Martha Freeman
Division: Forestry
Approved by: Tom Irwin, Commissioner
Natural Resources

Phone 269-8473
Date/Time February 12, 2008
Date February 12, 2008



FAIRBANKS
Economic Development

301 Cushman St., Suite 301, Fairbanks, AK 9970

January 29, 2008

Dear Senator Joe Thomas,

The Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation (FEDC) strives to promote value added product development in Interior Alaska and, therefore, thanks you for your sponsorship of Senate Bill 229: An act relating to the Tanana Valley Forest.

Fairbanks' remote location poses some challenges to economic development. However, when looking to the abundant natural resources found in the Interior, there is also great opportunity for the creation of new, higher paying jobs through responsible development of those valuable resources.

FEDC has long been a supporter of Interior Forest product development and, in partnership with the State Division of Forestry, Tanana Chiefs Conference, and State of Alaska Office of Economic Development, publishes "New Growth"; a prospectus offering information to potential forest industry developers. Our continuing effort is to encourage and support existing & potential businesses aimed at developing local, value added forest products for use here in Alaska. The most crucial need in developing new forest product businesses is ensuring sustainable, easily accessible, high value forest lands for development.

FEDC strongly supports SB 229. Passage of this legislation will add over 100,000 acres of commercially valuable forest land to the State Forest. These lands would increase the amount of valuable forest resources available for the development of value added products for the Interior and the State of Alaska.

This initiative can be a great asset to the State of Alaska, the Interior and to our continued pursuit of a diversified, stable and self-sustaining economy. FEDC thanks you for your time and efforts in sponsoring this bill and is excited about the potential it will bring to our State Forest lands.


Jim Dodson
CEO/President
Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation


Cassie Finkel
Project Manager, Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation

CC: Chris Maisch
Marty Freeman

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

BOARD OF FORESTRY

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1450
Anchorage, AK 99501

February 4, 2008

Senator Joe Thomas
State Capitol, Room 510
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Thomas,

The Board of Forestry represents diverse interests with respect to forestry in Alaska. By law, it provides a forum for forest management issues on state land, and is charged with monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the Forest Resources and Practices Act on all lands (AS 41.17.047).

The Board of Forestry would like to express its support for SB 229, amendments to the boundary of the Tanana Valley State Forest and the Minto Flats Game Refuge. This bill would correct old drafting errors, update the boundaries to be consistent with changes in land status, add productive forest land to the State Forest, and delete wetlands and other non-productive forest land. The revised boundary will better match the purpose of State Forests, and the intent to included primarily commercially valuable forest land (AS 41.17.200,-210).

In the 25 years since it was established, the State Forest has proved its worth as a source of sawtimber and fuelwood, wildlife habitat, and hunting and recreation opportunities for Alaskans.

The changes in this bill were recommended by the 2001 update to the Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan, with wide public support. The Board officially commended the Department of Natural Resources for the broad public process used to draft and revise the Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan update. SB 229 will implement these widely supported recommendations.

We encourage prompt passage of SB 229, and thank you for introducing this bill.

Sincerely,



Chris Maisch, Chair

ALASKA BOARD OF FORESTRY

Rob Bosworth
Matt Cronin
Wayne Nicolls
John DiMarchi

Erin McLarnon
Bill Oliver
Rick Rogers
Ron Wolfe

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



SENATOR JOE THOMAS

Sectional Analysis

SB 229 – Amendments to the Boundary of the Tanana Valley State Forest and Assignment of Certain Forest Land to the Minto Flats State Game Refuge

This bill would implement changes to the boundary of the Tanana Valley State Forest (TVSF) recommended by the 2001 update to the TVSF Management Plan. Some land deleted from the State Forest would be reassigned to the Minto State Game Refuge. These proposals were thoroughly reviewed by the public and agencies during the planning process. The package of proposals was revised following the comment period, and the final package was non-controversial.

Section 1 – Minto Flats State Game Refuge. Section 1 amends the legal description for the Refuge to incorporate three parcels of land deleted from within the TVSF. (See map) These parcels are wetlands adjacent to the existing Refuge that do not contain commercially valuable forest land, and would be better managed as part of the Refuge. They total 4,298 acres.

Section 2 – Tanana Valley State Forest. Section 2 repeals and reenacts the legal description for the TVSF. State Forests consist "primarily of commercially valuable forest land determined by the governor to be necessary for retention in State ownership for management under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield" (AS 41.17.210(a)). Almost all of the 1.78 million acres in the Tanana Valley State Forest are commercially valuable forest land. Some State lands adjacent to the State Forest also contain valuable forest resources, and some land within the TVSF does not have commercial forest potential. The proposed changes to the TVSF would move approximately 101,610 acres of general domain state land into the State Forest, and delete approximately 66,220 acres, for a net increase of approximately 35,390 acres.

Land recommended for addition to the State Forest contains high-value commercial forest land, much of which is easily accessible. Most parcels are already classified for Forestry under the Tanana Basin Area Plan, and all are compatible with the intent of the State Forest. Some have been harvested historically, and provide access to other lands within the State Forest, while other parcels are isolated pieces of State land adjacent to the State Forest. Incorporating these into the TVSF would add to the value of the State Forest and consolidate management authority in these areas. One 160-acre parcel with

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



SENATOR JOE THOMAS

unusual prairie features would be added to the Volkmar Bluffs Research Natural Area within the State Forest.

Land recommended for deletion from the State Forest is not commercially valuable forest land. The deletions include the three wetland parcels recommended for addition to the Minto Flats State Game Refuge, wetlands and high-elevation lands north of Tok and Tanacross, and a parcel of high-value recreation land along the Chatanika River.

Land deleted from the Tanana Valley State Forest would be managed as part of the adjacent management units under the Tanana Basin Area Plan. These lands would remain open for public access and multiple use.



Briefing:

Tanana Valley State Forest changes

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

December 12, 2007

DIVISION OF FORESTRY

Background. The 2001 update to the TVSF Management Plan recommended a package of changes to the boundaries of the State Forest. As a part of that package, the plan recommends some of the deletions from the State Forest to be added to the Minto State Game Refuge. These proposals were thoroughly reviewed by the public and agencies during the planning process, and the proposals in the final plan were non-controversial. There were no comments on these proposals during the final comment period.

A. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDITIONS TO THE TANANA VALLEY STATE FOREST: Amend AS 41.17.400(d)

Alaska Statutes Section 41.17.210 states that State Forest proposals shall consist "primarily of commercially valuable forest land determined by the governor to be necessary for retention in State ownership for management under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield..." Almost all of the 1.78 million acres in the Tanana Valley State Forest is commercially valuable forest land. Some State lands adjacent to the State Forest, however, contain valuable forest resources that would benefit the State Forest by their addition to that legislatively designated area. The lands listed in the following packet, and shown on the accompanying map, are recommended for addition to the State Forest. They total approximately 101,610 acres.

The lands recommended for addition to the State Forest contain high-value commercial forest lands, many of which are easily accessible. Most are already classified Forestry under the Tanana Basin Area Plan, and all are compatible with the intent of the State Forest. Some have been harvested historically, and some provide access to other lands within the State Forest. Some of the smaller parcels are isolated pieces of State land adjacent to the State Forest. Adding them to the State Forest would add to the value of the State Forest and consolidate management authority in these areas.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DELETIONS FROM THE TANANA VALLEY STATE FOREST: Amend AS 41.17.400(d)

The Tanana Valley State Forest contains approximately 66,218 acres of land that do not contain valuable forest resources. On the basis of the statutory criteria in the previous section, DNR recommends several deletions from the Tanana Valley State Forest. Some of the lands are wetlands adjacent to the Minto Flats State Game Refuge that contain no commercially valuable timberland. Another area recommended for deletion contains the shorelands of the Chatanika River, an extremely high value recreation area. The other lands on the deletion list consist of two townships: one comprised of wetlands and the other made up of high-elevation, unforested lands.

C. ADDITIONS TO THE MINTO FLATS STATE GAME REFUGE OF LANDS RECOMMENDED FOR DELETION FROM THE TANANA VALLEY STATE FOREST: Amend AS 16.20.037(a).

Three parcels of land within the TVSF containing wetlands adjacent to the Minto Flats State Game Refuge are recommended to be withdrawn from the State Forest and added to the Refuge. They do not contain commercially valuable forest land, and would be better managed as part of the Refuge. They total 4,298 acres.

List of proposed additions to the Tanana Valley State Forest

The following list summarizes the recommended additions to the State Forest (a total of approximately 101,610 acres):

1. This strip of land, located between Minto Flats and the adjacent State Forest, contains productive upland forests of white spruce and hardwoods. The unit is presently accessed by the Dunbar-Livengood winter trail and will be accessed by an all-season forest road. (4,480 acres within T1N R6W F.M.)

2. These units are on Nenana Ridge, border the State Forest, and have similar values. They are highly productive, easily accessible, upland forests. Adding these units to the State Forest will consolidate the State's highest value forest lands under a single management authority and plan. (14,568 acres within T2S R4W, T2S R5W, and T3S R5W F.M.)

Note: If this subunit is added to the State Forest, the following management guidelines will be added to the entire Subunit 5A. "A 300-foot buffer from centerline on each side of the roadway should be managed to maintain or enhance scenic views along the highway. Development activities such as timber harvesting and land-use authorizations may be allowed within this buffer if the activity is designed to maintain or enhance the scenic values of the highway corridor, and to provide opportunities for viewing background scenery."

3. This unit has several parcels which comprise the bulk of the timberland occurring between Fort Greely and the Tanana River. The timber consists of productive white spruce stands along the Tanana River and mixed white spruce/hardwood stands on uplands to the South. Management goals would emphasize the area's wildlife, recreation, and timber resources. Because of habitat values in the floodplain, the recommended additions to the State Forest are south of the 1000-foot contour line from the Tanana River. (21,189 acres, within T7S R6E, T7S R7E, T7S R8E, T8S R5E, T8S R6E, T8S R7E, and T8S R8E F.M.)

4. This quarter-section lies adjacent to the Tanana Valley State Forest Subunit 10B, the Volkmar Bluffs Research Natural Area. It encompasses a large prairie feature that similar to the prairie system in the adjacent Tanana Valley State Forest research natural area. This amendment is designed to expand the research natural area to include the remainder of the prairie system. (160 acres within T9S R13E F.M.)

5. This unit consists of several small parcels of land near Dot Lake that were not included in the State Forest because of questionable land status. The primary purpose of adding these to the State Forest is to consolidate land management in the area. (9,600 acres within T21N R8E, T22N R8E, T23N R6E, and T23N R7E C.R.M.)

6. These block is located along the Tanana River near Tok between Native lands and the State Forest. The units contain commercial timber, have good access, and would be

valuable additions to the State Forest. (23,033 acres within T18N R13E, T19N R12E, and T19N R13E C.R.M.)

7. This small parcel north of Tanacross was excluded in the legal description of the TVSF because of federal interest. However, the federal interest is no longer valid. (40 acres within T21N R10E C.R.M.)

8. These three parcels of land are located near Dot Lake between Native lands and the State Forest. Their addition to the State Forest will consolidate management authority. (5,600 acres within T21N R8E and T23N R6E C.R.M.)

9. This township, north of Dot Lake, was left out of the TVSF legislation by a mistake in a legal description that substituted a wrong township. Although the unit is currently inaccessible, including it in the State Forest as originally proposed would offer some management efficiency because it shares common access and similar resource values with adjoining State Forest lands to the west and south. (23,040 acres, T25N R7E C.R.M.)

List of proposed deletions from the State Forest

The following list summarizes the recommended withdrawals (a total of approximately 66,071 acres):

1. TVSF Subunit 1C: 1,898 acres within T1N R11W and T2N R11W F.M.
These two parcels of the Minto Flats along the Tolovana River are recommended for withdrawal so as to consolidate most wetlands in Minto Flats under a single management intent. The areas are highly productive wildlife habitat but contain very little timberland. The area borders the Minto Flats State Game Refuge, and is recommended as an addition to the Refuge.
2. TVSF Subunit 3B: 2,400 acres within T4N R7W F.M.
This parcel consists of wetlands bordering the Minto Flats State Game Refuge. The area borders the Minto Flats State Game Refuge, and is recommended as an addition to the Refuge.
3. TVSF Subunit 4B: 2,400 acres within T3N R3W F.M.
This parcel contains shorelands of the Chatanika River. It is recommended as a TVSF withdrawal to be available for designation as part of the Chatanika State Recreation River corridor. In the interim it would be managed for public recreation and wildlife habitat as part of Tanana Basin Area Plan Subunit 1E1. The area is comprised mostly of poorly drained wetlands along the Chatanika River and contains little timberland.
4. TVSF Subunit 12A: 19,200 acres within T21N R10E C.R.M.
This township contains low relief and swampy, noncommercial forest; it was not included in the original administration proposal. The unit's inclusion in the State Forest does not offer any management advantages for adjacent State Forest lands. It would

become part of Tanana Basin Area Plan Subunit 6G1, which is designated for wildlife habitat and forestry.

5. TVSF Subunit 12A: 19,200 acres within T25N R8 C.R.M.

This township was apparently included in the State Forest because of a mistake made in the range. This unit is generally at a high elevation with few significant resources appropriate for the State Forest system. It would become part of Tanana Basin Area Plan Subunit 6J2 which is designated for resource management.

6. TVSF Subunit 13A, 13B: 21,120 acres within T19N R15E and T20N R13E C.R.M.

These two parcels were are underlain entirely by permafrost and forested with noncommercial black spruce. They have no other important resource values or advantages for inclusion in the State Forest. They would become part of Tanana Basin Area Plan Subunit 6J3 which is designated for wildlife habitat.

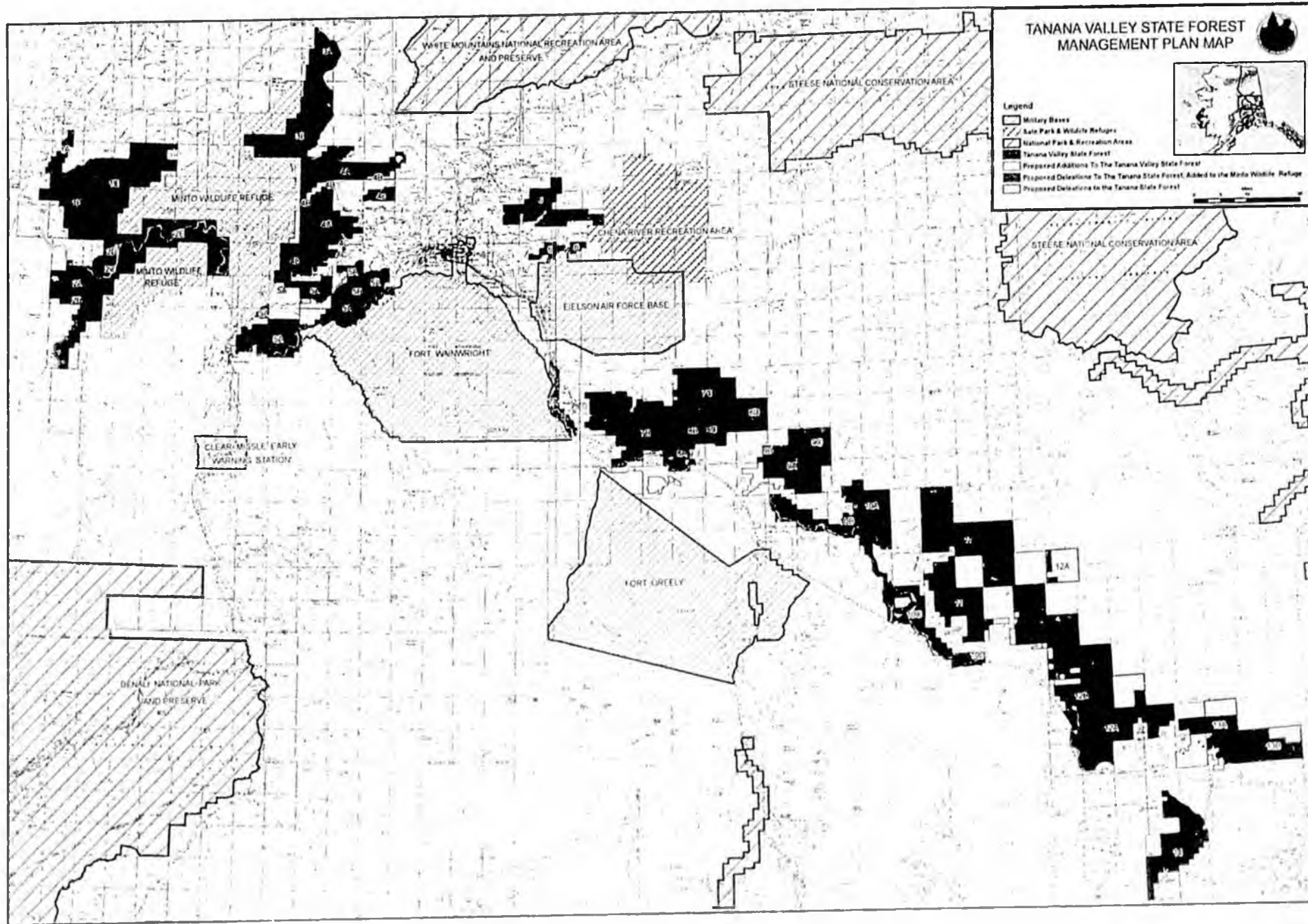
Additions to Minto State Game Refuge

1. TVSF Subunit 1C: 1,898 acres within T1N R11W and T2N R11W F.M.

These two parcels on the Minto Flats in TVSF Subunit 1C along the Tolovana River are recommended to be added to the Refuge. This change would consolidate most wetlands in Minto Flats under a single management intent. The areas are highly productive wildlife habitat but contain very little timberland. The area borders the Minto Flats State Game Refuge.

2. TVSF Subunit 3B: 2,400 acres within T4N R7W

This parcel consists of wetlands bordering the Minto Flats State Game Refuge.



TANANA VALLEY STATE FOREST
MANAGEMENT PLAN MAP



- Legend
- Military Bases
 - State Park & Wildlife Refuges
 - National Park & Recreation Areas
 - Tanana Valley State Forest
 - Proposed Additions To The Tanana Valley State Forest
 - Proposed Deletions To The Tanana State Forest Added to the Minto Wildlife Refuge
 - Proposed Deletions to the Tanana State Forest



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



SENATOR JOE THOMAS

SB 229 – Relating to the Tanana Valley State Forest and to assignment of certain forest land to the Minto Flats State Game Refuge; and providing for an effective date.

Sponsor Statement

Senator Joe Thomas

Senate Bill 229 amends the boundaries of the Tanana Valley State Forest (TVSF) to correct errors in legal descriptions, reflect updated land status, and to better match the management intent for the Forest. This is done by adding and deleting boundary references to the legal descriptions in statute. These changes result in a net increase to the state forest of approximately 40,000 acres. SB 229 also moves approximately 4,300 acres from the state forest to the Minto Flats State Game Refuge.

In 1983 the Legislature created the 1.8 million-acre Tanana Valley State Forest that stretches from Manley to Tok. The forest is open to mining, gravel extraction, oil and gas leasing, and grazing. The Department of Natural Resources manages the state forests for a sustained yield of these resources, with the primary purpose of timber management (AS 41.17.200). The Bonanza Creek Experimental Forest, a 12,400-acre area dedicated to forestry research, is also located within the state forest.

State forests provide fish and wildlife habitat, clean water, opportunities for recreation and tourism, and minerals. In addition to the management of these resources, the Tanana Valley State Forest offers many recreational opportunities including hunting, fishing, trapping, camping, hiking, dog mushing, cross-country skiing, wildlife viewing, snow machining, gold panning, boating, and berry-picking.

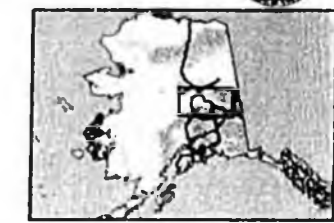
In 1996, the division updated the Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan and established a citizens' advisory committee. The

12-member citizen's advisory committee, representing a variety of state forest users, actively participates in forest planning in the Tanana Basin. This entity has endorsed the recommendations on management of the forest and has carefully crafted the changes in a manner that resulted in support from all affected land users and owners.

SB 229 is supported by the Alaska State Forest Association, the Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation, hunting and recreation groups as well as all surrounding land owners.

Please join me in amending the Tanana Valley State Forest to better align with its original intent and support the passage of Senate Bill 229.

TANANA VALLEY STATE FOREST
MANAGEMENT PLAN MAP



Legend

- Military Bases
- State Park & Wildlife Refuges
- National Park & Recreation Areas
- Proposed Additions To The Tanana State Forest
- Tanana Valley State Forest
- Proposed Deletions To The Tanana State Forest, Added to the Minto Wildlife Refuge
- Proposed Deletions to the Tanana State Forest

