

SB

108

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108</subject><comm>SFIN26</comm></target>

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



SENATOR JOE THOMAS

Senate Bill 108 - An Act creating the Stampede State Recreation Area

Sponsor Statement

The Stampede Road corridor, northwest of Healy and flanked on three sides by the Denali National Park, is a traditional place for many Alaskans to hunt, fish, trap, snowmachine, mush and pursue other recreational opportunities. Home to a growing number of Denali Borough residents and businesses, this is a wild and beautiful place that Alaskans from across the state can easily access.

This bill would establish the Stampede State Recreation Area in the vacant and unappropriated state land and water within the corridor as described in the bill and attached maps. The purpose of State Recreation Areas is to manage state-owned land and water in such a way that provides the maximum level of outdoor recreation opportunities without significant adverse effects on the natural system. The goal of this legislation is to protect the area for continued traditional use.

The Stampede mining trail was trail blazed in the 1930s. In 1961, the new State of Alaska upgraded the trail as part of the Pioneer Road Program. The project was halted in 1963 after some fifty miles of road was built, but no bridges were ever constructed over the several rivers it crossed, and the route was shortly rendered impassable by thawing permafrost and floods. While the road is described as being fifty miles long, only the first few miles are paved, and only the first eight miles are passable by standard car.

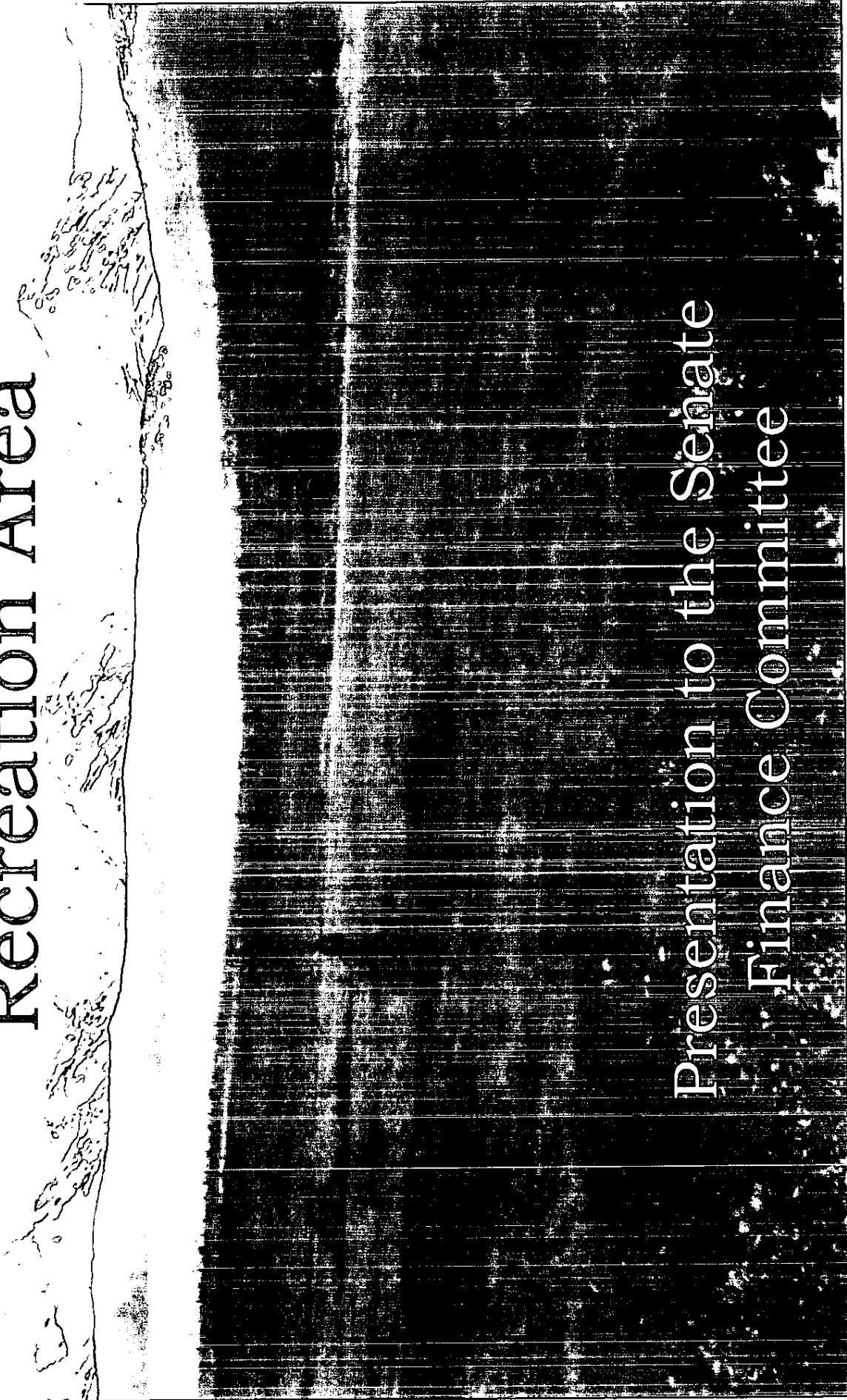
SB 108 will preserve the traditional uses of this area by creating the Stampede Recreation Area within the Stampede corridor. Several years ago, former Governor Murkowski proposed to build a road through this area. This planned road was vehemently opposed by borough residents as well as the recreational and traditional user groups who had an interest in keeping things "the way they are." In an effort to preserve the area for use by residents and visitors, the Denali Borough Assembly passed a resolution calling on the Alaska Legislature to designate the corridor as the Stampede State Recreation Area, with a strong emphasis on self-determination by the residents and users of the area.

The current use of the area includes off-road and all-terrain vehicle use, watercraft use, snowmobiling, horseback riding, hiking, bicycling, dog sledding, cross-country skiing, skijoring, camping, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, and photography. Recreational users of the area come from the Denali Borough, Fairbanks, Mat-Su and Anchorage. Tourists and adventurers travel to the area from across the globe. The area supports several tourism-related businesses including several lodges and a road-touring company that rents all-terrain vehicles for use on the more primitive sections of the road.

This bill is supported by the Denali Borough Assembly (see attached resolution). Additionally, the bill's sponsor has hosted several constituent meetings on the proposed legislation. By and large, the proposed area is supported by local residents and trail users. The main impetus behind the legislation is to protect the area for continued traditional use.

4/19/09

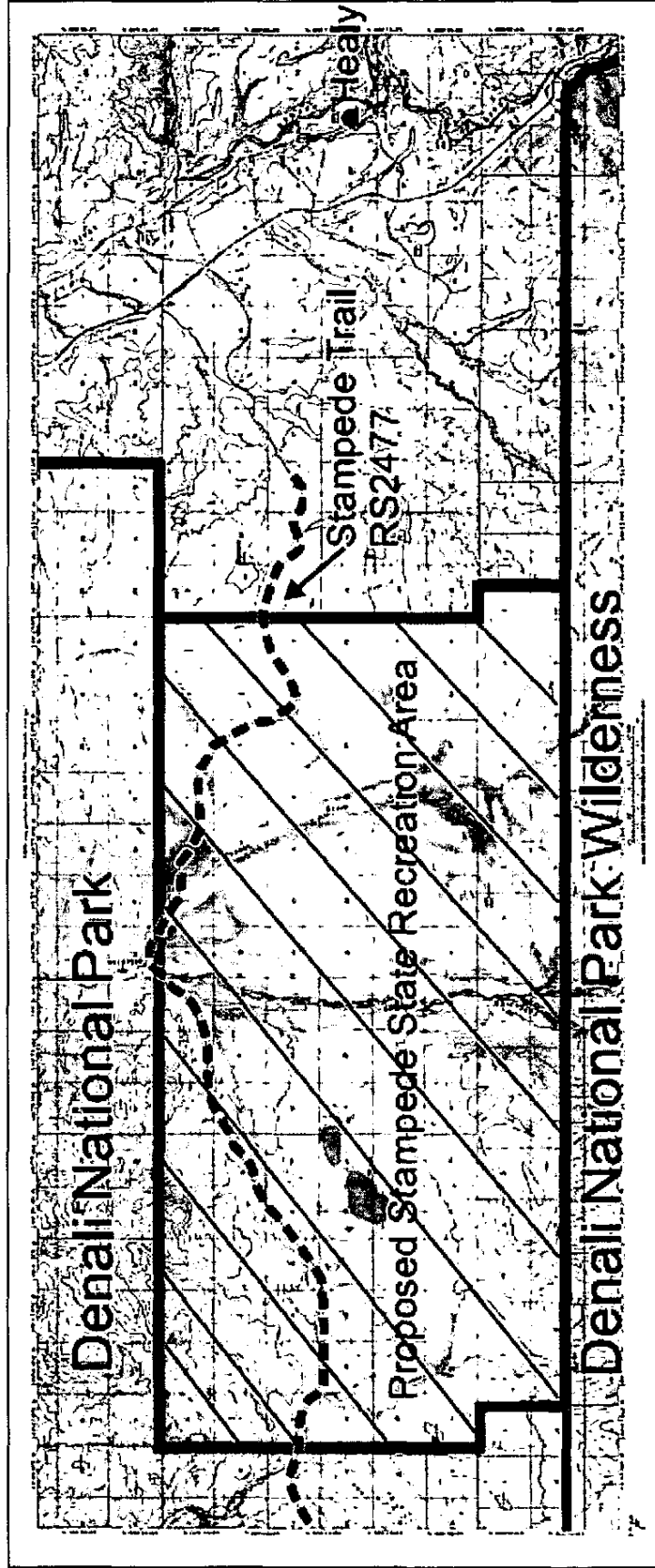
SB 108 - Stampede State Recreation Area



Presentation to the Senate
Finance Committee

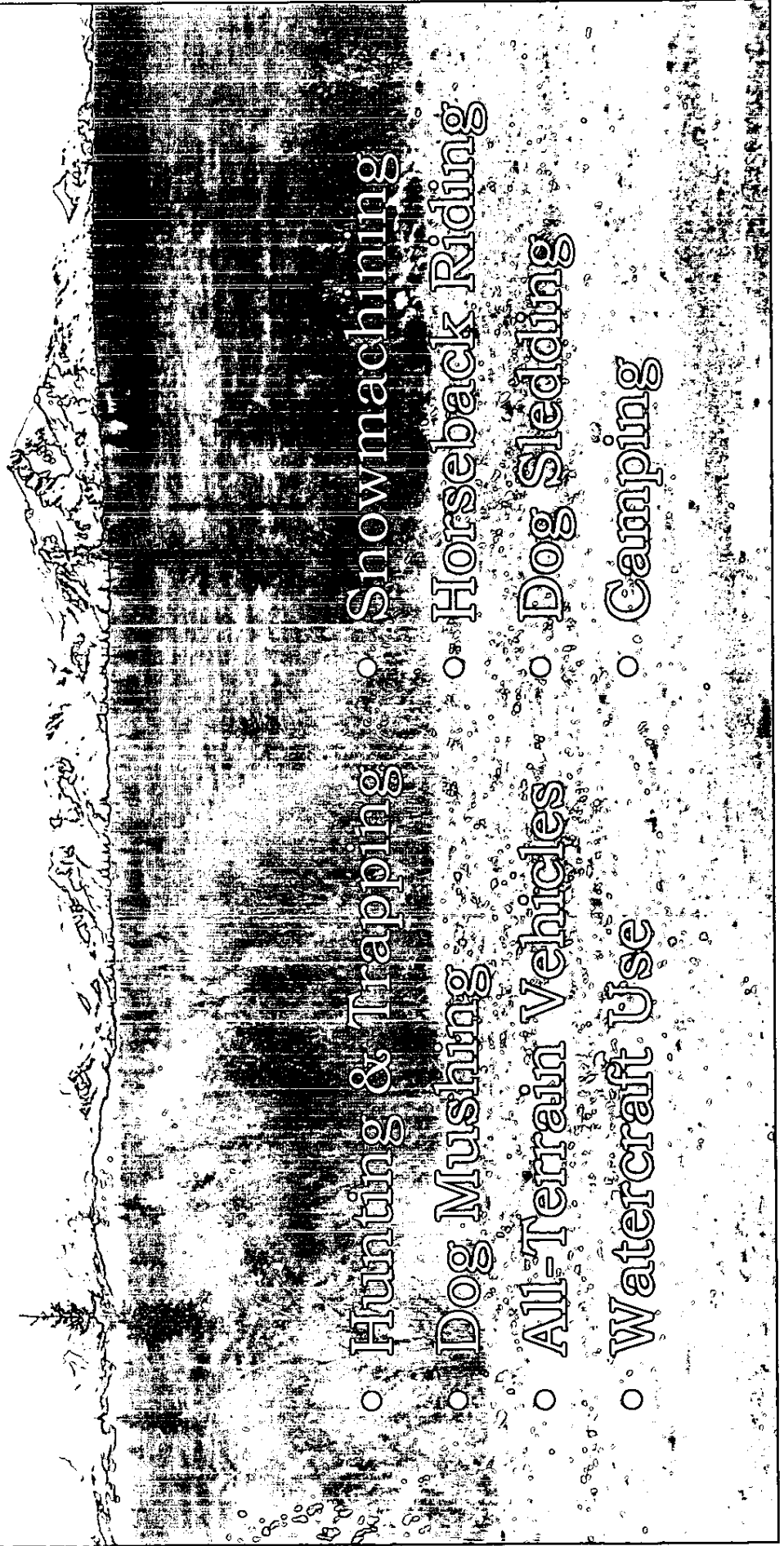
The Proposed Area with Stampede Trail RS2477 Shown

Stampede State Recreation Area—Boundaries per SRA Draft Legislation



Proposed Recreation Area roughly 16 miles x 8 miles

Current Uses of the Area

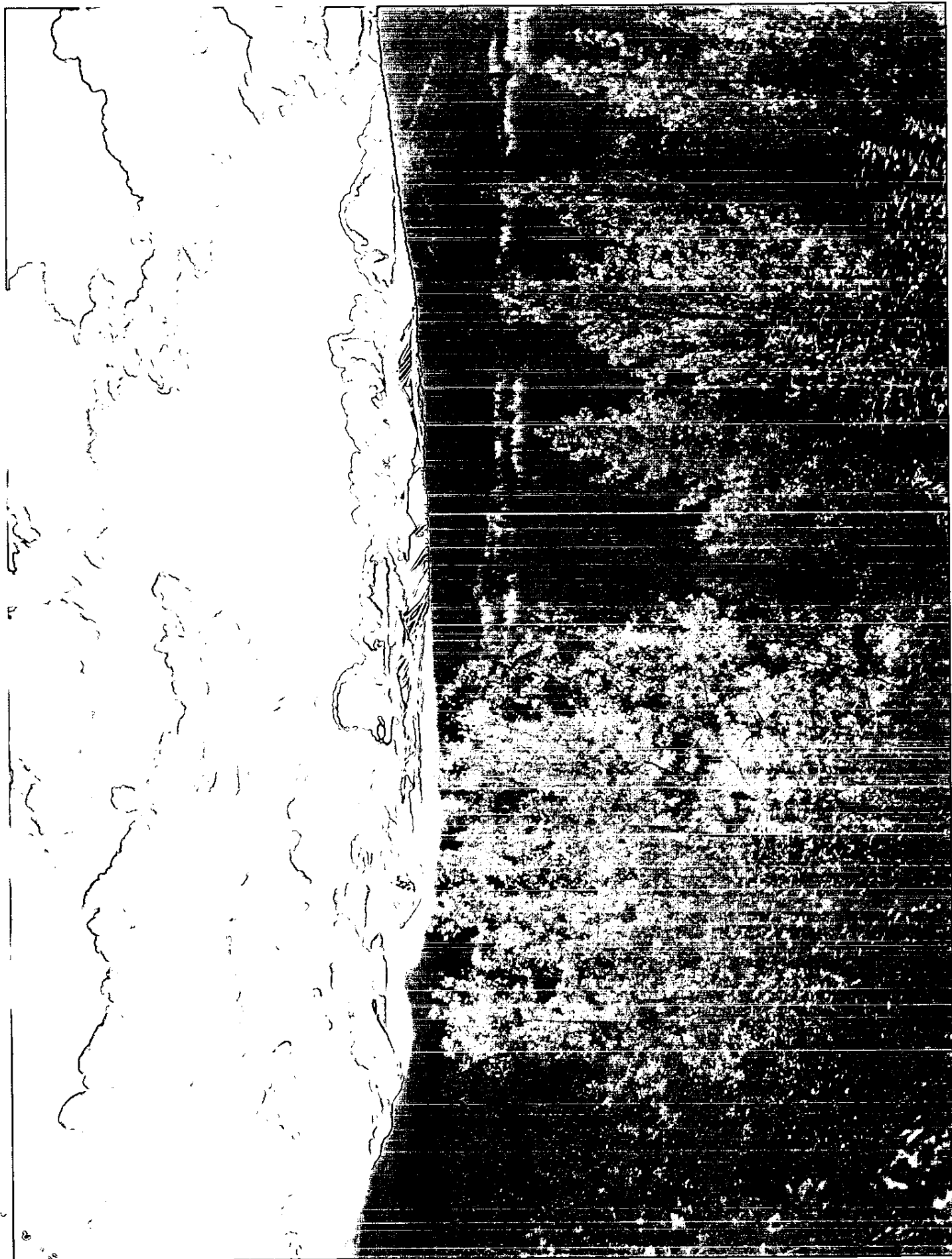


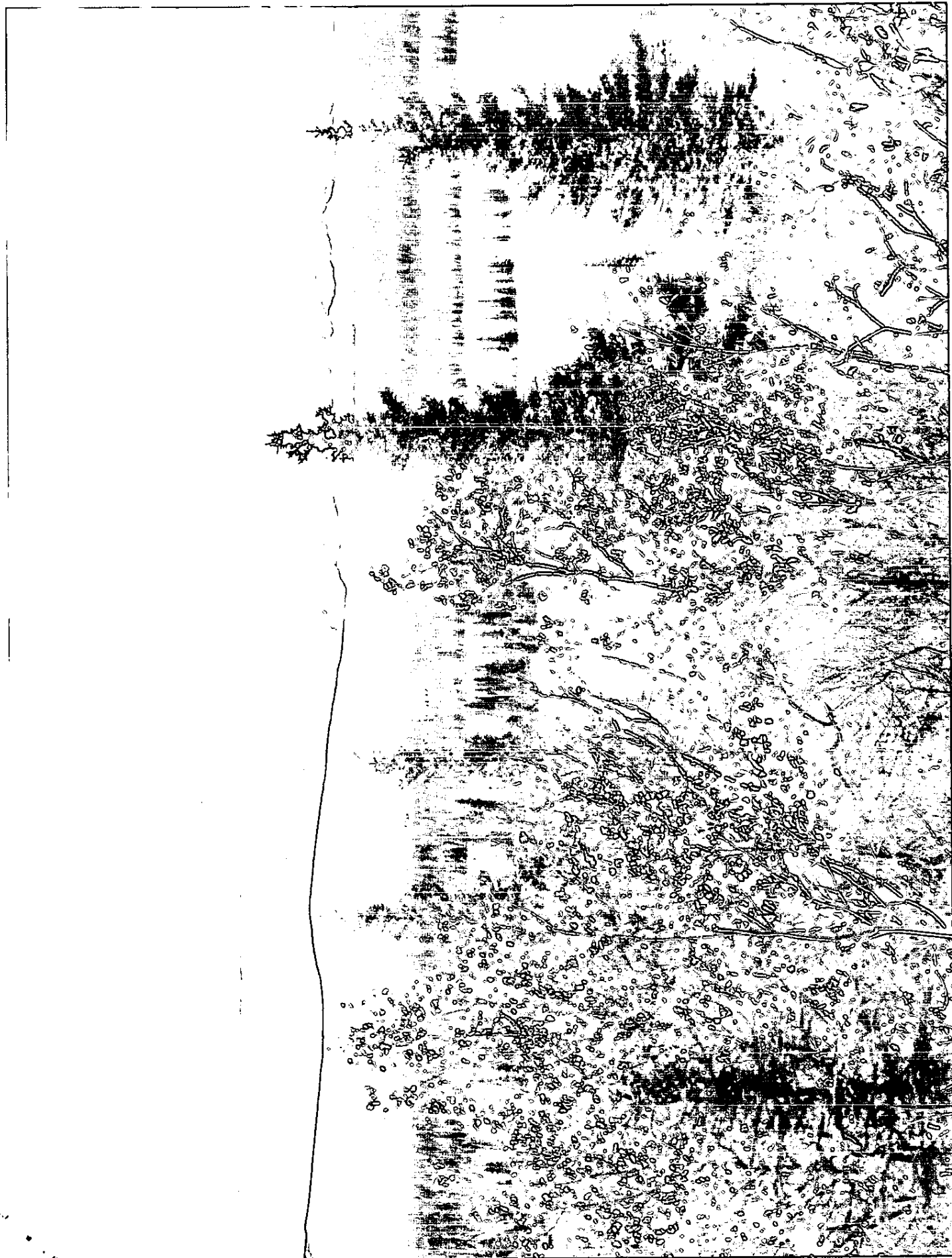
- Hunting & Trapping
- Dog Mushing
- All-Terrain Vehicles
- Watercraft Use
- Snowmachining
- Horseback Riding
- Dog Sledding
- Camping



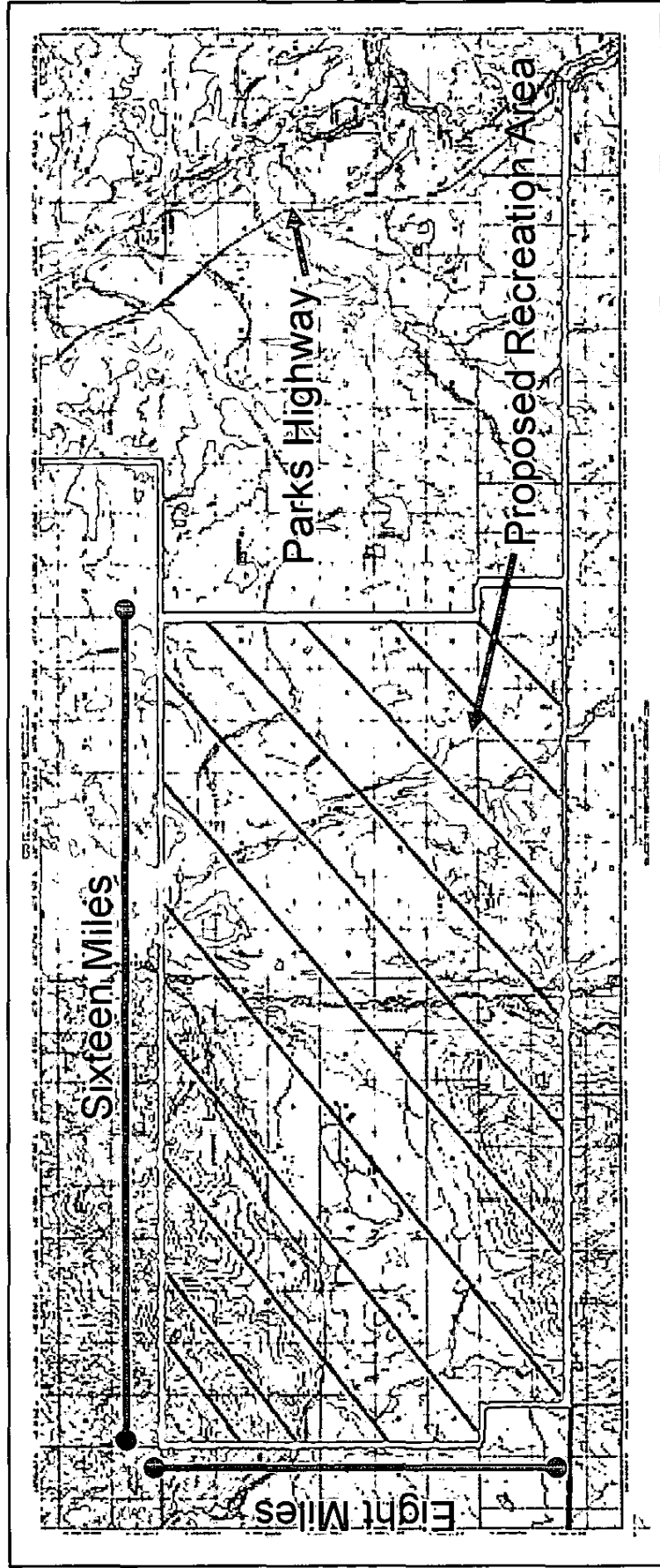
Resolutions of Support

- Denali Borough
- Denali Chamber of Commerce
- Panguingue Creek Homeowners Association
- Denali Citizens Council

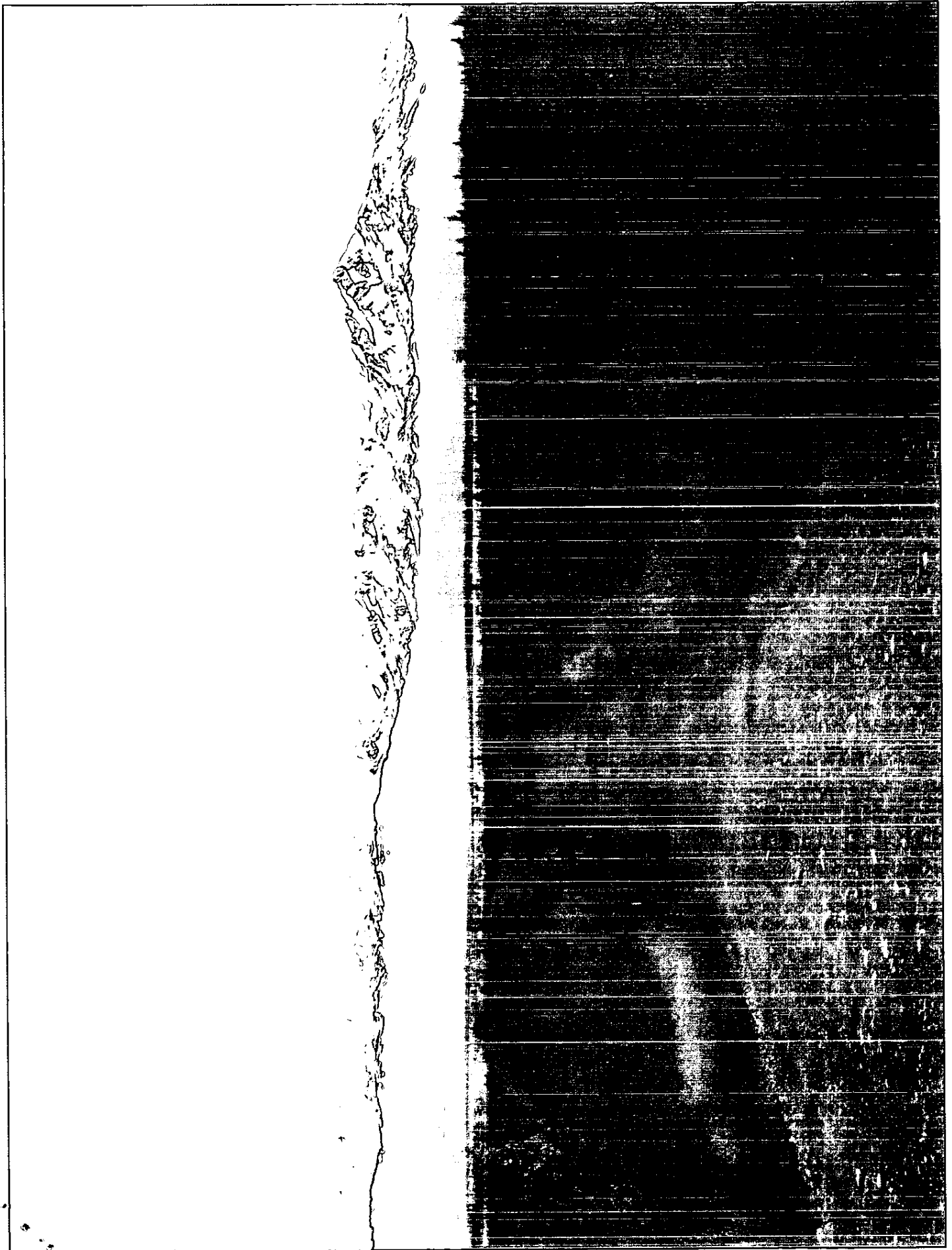


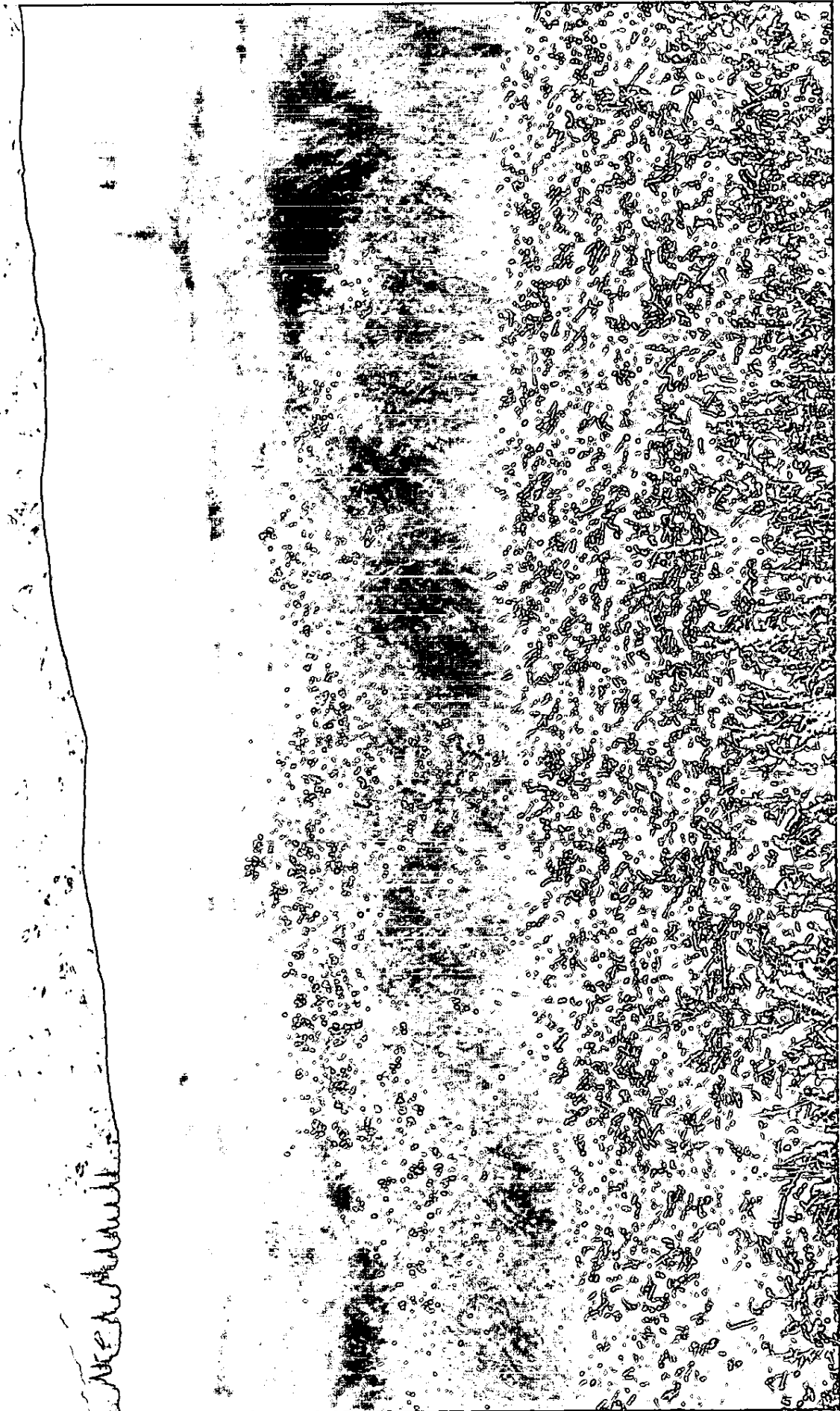


The Proposed State Recreation Area



Stampede State Recreation Area - Boundaries per SRA Draft Legislation



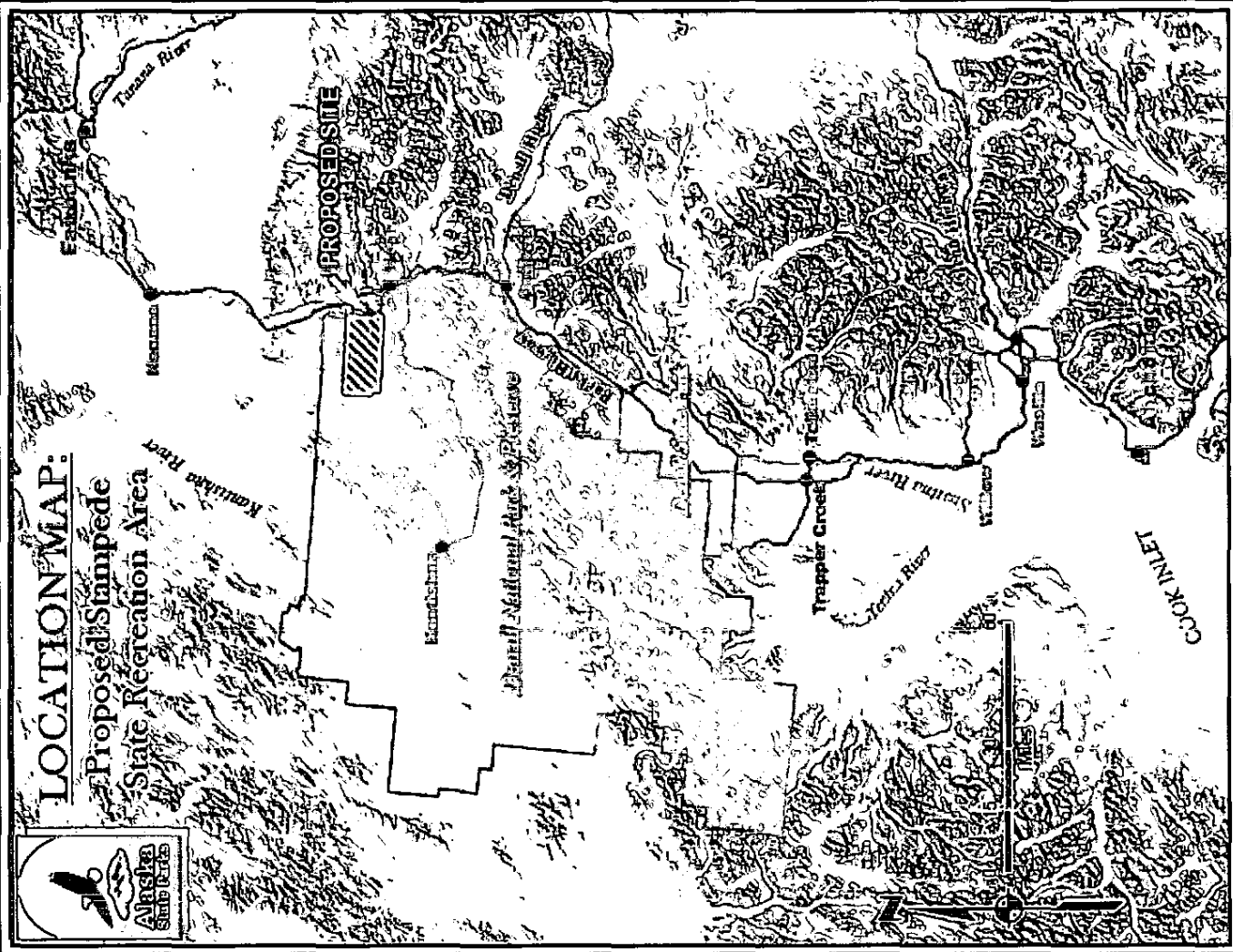


Stampede Road History

1930s: Earl Pilgrim constructs trail to access mining claims in what is now Denali National Park

1960: State of Alaska finances construction of fifty miles of pioneer road. No bridges built

1963: State halts work on road. Within years, road is rendered impassable in many areas



FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 1
Bill Version: CSSB 108(RES)
(S) Publish Date: 4/11/09

Identifier (file name): SB108-DNR-Parks-03-16-09 Dept. Affected: Natural Resources
Title: STAMPEDE STATE RECREATION AREA RDU: Parks & Recreation Management
Component: Parks Management
Sponsor: Senator Thomas
Requester: Senate Resources Committee Component Number: 452

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

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

	Appropriation Required		Information				
	FY 2010	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
OPERATING EXPENDITURES							
Personal Services	86.6		175.4	88.8	88.8	88.8	88.8
Travel	3.0		8.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Contractual	61.0		59.9	26.0	26.0	26.0	26.0
Supplies	15.0		18.0	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5
Equipment							
Land & Structures							
Grants & Claims							
Miscellaneous							
TOTAL OPERATING	165.6	0.0	261.3	131.3	131.3	131.3	131.3

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	165.6		261.3	131.3	131.3	131.3	131.3
1005 GF/Program Receipts							
1037 GF/Mental Health							
Other Interagency Receipts							
TOTAL	165.6	0.0	261.3	131.3	131.3	131.3	131.3

Estimate of any current year (FY2009) cost: 0.0

POSITIONS

Full-time			1	1	1	1	1
Part-time							
Temporary	1		1	0	0	0	0

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

The costs associated with management of this new state recreation area include funding for a limited 2 year public planning process to develop a management plan (FY 2010-2011), followed by funding for a full time Park Ranger providing field management beginning in FY2011. Costs associated with the public planning process include scoping and survey work, draft management plan preparation, maps, displays, public notice advertising, room rentals, printing and distribution of final plan, lease space, computer and office supplies. Field management costs beginning in FY2011 include funding for a park ranger position, lease space, vehicle costs, utilities, and general supplies. One-time start up costs include one new vehicle, office supplies, and law enforcement gear.

Potential infrastructure identified in the management plan such as camping areas could generate park fees in future years.

Prepared by: James King Phone: (907) 269-8701
Division: Parks and Outdoor Recreation Date/Time: March 16, 2009
Approved by: Tom Irwin, Commissioner Date: March 16, 2009
Natural Resources

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



SENATOR JOE THOMAS

MEMORANDUM

March 16, 2009

SUBJECT: Sectional Summary for SB 108

TO: Senators Lesil McGuire and Bill Wielechowski, Co-Chairs
Members of the Senate Resources Committee

FROM: Senator Joe Thomas, Sponsor

This sectional summary is developed based on earlier summaries developed by Legislative Legal, and should not be considered an authoritative interpretation of the bill.

Section 1. Establishes the Stampede State Recreation Area. Describes the purpose for creating the recreation area, the land and water to be included, management responsibilities and incompatible uses. Identifies activities that the commissioner may not restrict within the recreation area. Authorizes the commissioner to purchase real property lying within the boundaries of the recreation area. Prohibits the use of the power of eminent domain to acquire privately owned land for inclusion in the recreation area.

DENALI BOROUGH, ALASKA
RESOLUTION NO. 07-01

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE ALASKA LEGISLATURE DESIGNATING MANAGEMENT OF THE STAMPEDE ROAD AREA WEST OF EIGHT MILE LAKE TO THE STATE OF ALASKA; DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION: TO CREATE THE STAMPEDE STATE RECREATION AREA.

WHEREAS, there are many issues related to the Stampede Trail and surrounding area west of Eight Mile Lake, many of which have brought into question the ability to continue traditional use dating back prior to statehood; and

WHEREAS, the Denali Borough has openly and repeatedly expressed a desire to have recreational opportunities and uses continued in this area; and

WHEREAS, the current use of the area includes motor vehicle access, horseback riding, dog mushing, cross-country skiing, skijoring, hiking, fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, and other outdoor activities; and

WHEREAS, there are no designated Alaska State Parks or Recreation Sites within the Denali Borough; and

WHEREAS, the Stampede Trail and surrounding area are well known critical habitat for caribou, moose and other wildlife; and

WHEREAS, this area is of current and future importance for providing a land base to support Alaska-owned outdoor recreation enterprises at Denali National Park and Preserve and other existing tourism destinations.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Denali Borough Assembly strongly encourages the state of Alaska Legislature to pass legislation designating management of the following area to the state of Alaska, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation the following area: Fairbanks Meridian, Healy Quadrangle, the western half of Township 12S9W, the western half of Township 13S9W, Township 12S10W, Township 12S11 W, Township 13S10W, Township 13S11 W.

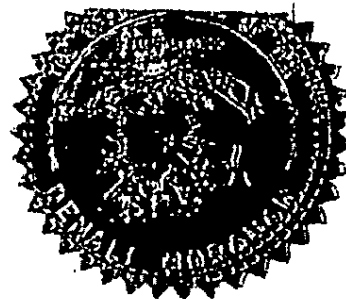
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Denali Borough specifically requests that the aforementioned current uses be included in the management of the area and the Denali Borough Assembly be designated as the Local Advisory Management Council for the Stampede Recreation area.

ED a APPROVED by the DENALI BOROUGH ASSEMBLY this 10th day of January, 2007.

Denali Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

ie. Kestnek
Borough Clerk



RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE STAMPEDE STATE RECREATION AREA
DENALI BOROUGH, ALASKA

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska has recognized the importance of the Stampede townships for habitat and public recreation by classifying most of this area as Wildlife Habitat and/or Public Recreation in the Tanana Basin Area Plan (1991); and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska recently validated the importance of these lands for habitat and recreation by choosing to retain acreage around 8 Mile Lake and near Otto Lake in state ownership when determining the Denali Borough's entitlement conveyances; and

WHEREAS, 8 Mile Lake is a logical gateway to such a State Recreation Area, and is most in need of immediate planning to provide services and avoid negative impacts; and

WHEREAS, local citizens who attended two Stampede Summits and commented on land and resource planning issues have re-iterated their individual interest in maintaining these lands for existing recreational uses; and

WHEREAS, growing numbers of statewide and national visitors enjoy the Denali area, for its landscape, wildlife, and its unique recreational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, in view of increased pressures for visitation, the established purposes of the Stampede townships will best be furthered by use of a management structure that enables all stakeholders to plan the future of this valuable public resource; and

WHEREAS, designation as a State Recreation Area will ensure such management.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD AND MEMBERS OF THE DENALI CITIZENS COUNCIL, that we support the establishment by the State of Alaska of the Stampede State Recreation Area, with boundaries as described in the legislation brought forth by Senator Joe Thomas, but with the ADDITION of nine sections around 8 Mile Lake (see map attached).

March 10, 2009

Denali Citizens Council
PO Box 78
Denali Park, AK
907-683-3396

Panguingue Creek Homeowner's Association
P.O. Box 451, Healy, AK 99743

3/24/2009

Dear Senator Thomas,

The Panguingue Creek Homeowner's Association would like to thank you for sponsoring the bill to create the Stampede State Recreation Area and for your work toward its passage. The Panguingue Creek Subdivision is located along the first few miles of the Stampede Road, so all of our members are very interested in the future of the lands proposed to be a part of the new recreation area.

Many of us that own property in this area and choose to live here do so because of the area's beautiful setting and access to Alaska's wilderness. We live here because we enjoy hiking, camping, berry picking, bird watching, skiing, skijoring, dog mushing, snowmobiling, riding ATV's, hunting, trapping, and fishing, and just about everything you can do to enjoy Alaska's beauty. Indeed, we have given up easy access to groceries and services we travel for over 100 miles to obtain, in order to have easy access to all the Stampede area has to offer.

Already, people from across the state, the country, and the world pass through here to use the state's land for recreation. Creating the Stampede State Recreation Area will help ensure that future generations of Alaskans and visitors will be able to enjoy this area, as well. As homeowner's closest to the proposed area, we know of the need that already exists for some type of management and improvement of this area.

Stampede Road offers vehicle access as far as Eight-mile Lake, one of the area's biggest draws, for the summer months. This area sees the highest use in the summer months, and without any improvements, its quality as a destination will continue to deteriorate as users leave trash and impact the area. The area around Eight-mile Lake already serves as a trail head for the area and begs for its inclusion in the State Recreation Area Proposal.

Two "Stampede Summits" got our community together to think about what we could do to make sure that we will always have access to these lands so near to our homes. The Stampede State Recreation Area is the best way to achieve that goal, and we thank you for taking this issue to Juneau for us.

Sincerely,

Panguingue Creek Homeowner's

William Price, President
Phil Brease, Secretary
Jared Zimmerman, Treasurer



Denali Chamber of Commerce

PO Box 437
Healy, AK 99743
907-683-INFO (4636)

website: <http://denalichamber.com>
email: denali.chamber@gmail.com

March 16, 2009

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

RE: Senate Bill 108, Creation of a Stampede State Recreation Area

Dear Senator Thomas,

The Denali Chamber of Commerce was created for the purpose of cooperating in matters of interest to the public and professional people of the community; to promote and perpetuate the business, commercial, manufacturing and civic interests of the members and the community; to promote and perpetuate the general welfare and prosperity of the Denali area, and to stimulate public interest to these ends; and to develop a uniform public spirit whereby we may put forth the maximum effort in the aid of our area and to make it more prosperous, beautiful and a better place in which to live.

Therefore, in fulfilling the purpose of the Denali Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Directors on behalf of the members of the chamber support the proposed legislation you have introduced in the State of Alaska Senate, for the Creation of the Stampede State Recreation Area.

Our community residents use this area for many recreational purposes such as hiking, bird watching, motor vehicle travel (ATV's and snowmobiling), dog mushing, skiing, skijoring, photography, berry picking, hunting and trapping. Several chamber members own business enterprises on the Stampede Road which provide recreational services to users of the area which include horseback riding, jeep safari tours and sled dog tours along the Stampede Trail, as well as lodging facilities for tourists visiting the area.

The chamber members also support inclusion of lands around the 8-Mile Lake area in the legislation. These lands provide a natural gateway to a recreation area and are most in need of management. Most locals and visitors use this as a parking and/or staging area for access to the Stampede Trail and state lands on which they recreate.



Denali Chamber of Commerce

PO Box 437
Healy, AK 99743
907-683-INFO (4636)

website: <http://denalichamber.com>
email: denali.chamber@gmail.com

We are most appreciative of your efforts to introduce this important legislation which will provide a means of management to encourage stewardship and continued recreation opportunities for all Alaskans and visitors alike. We also appreciate you making the wishes of your constituents known to the legislature.

Best regards,

Denali Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

Josh Wilhour, President

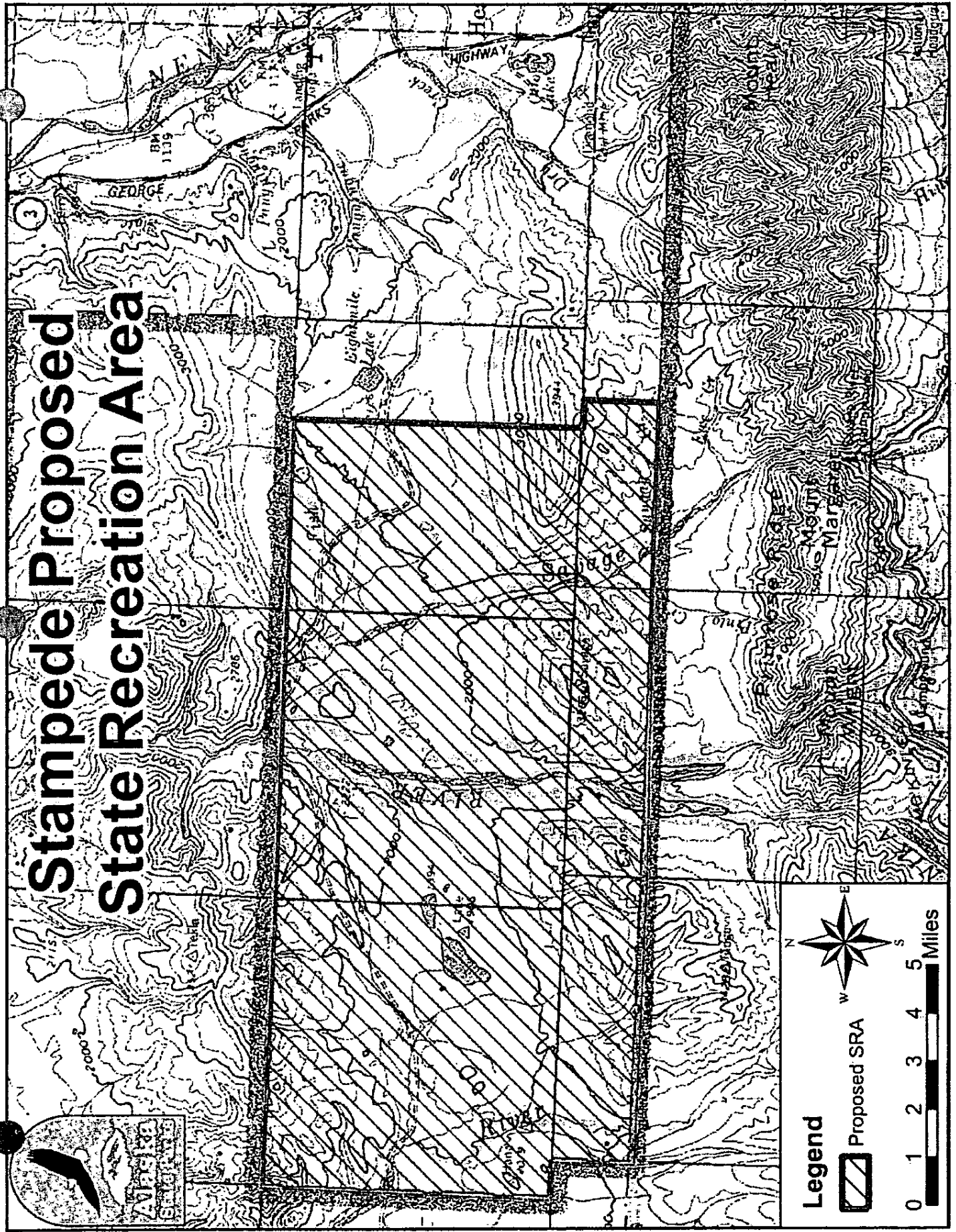
Heidi DeCoeur, Vice President

Julia Potter, Treasurer

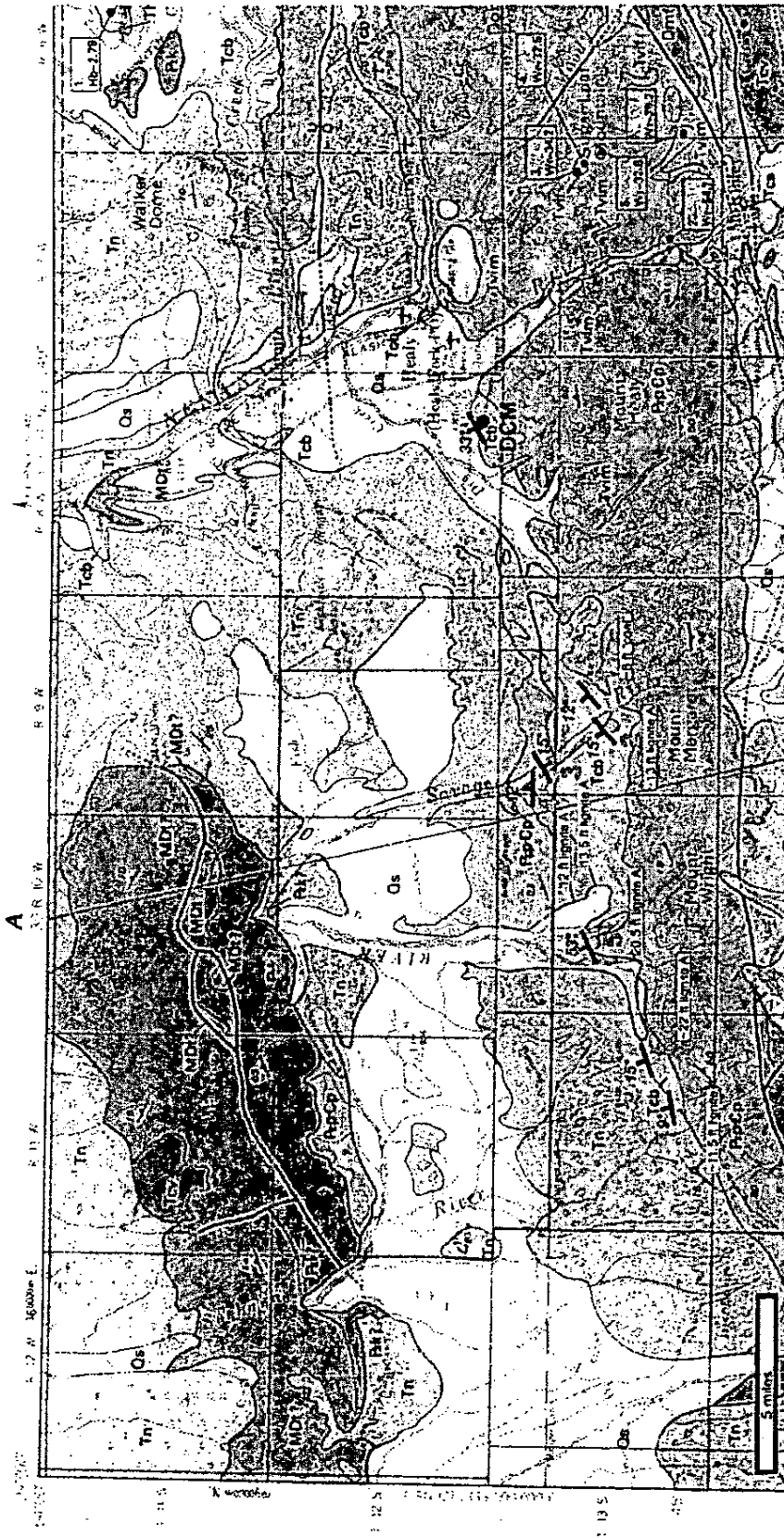
Cathey Peterson-Hall, Correspondence Secretary

Teresa Loegering, Recording Secretary

Stampede Proposed State Recreation Area



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



- Boundary of proposed Stampede State Recreation area
- 1 Approximate localities (1-7) of coal localities with strike and dip, coal analyses, and total coal thickness from Toenges and Jolley, 1949.
- 50°- Strike and dip of bedding (from Toenges and Jolley, 1949)
- ROCK UNITS IN PROPOSED STAMPEDE STATE RECREATION AREA
- Qs Surficial Deposits
 - Tn Nanana Gravel
 - Tcb Coal-bearing rocks Usibelli Group
 - MD Metamorphic schists
 - R, Rp, Cp Metamorphic schists

Fig. 1. Geologic map modified from NW corner of Csejey and others, 1992.

Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys Coal and CBM Resource Assessment for the Proposed Stampede State Recreation Area

Executive Summary

The Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys undertook the following short analysis of available geologic data in an area west of Healy, Alaska, to determine the state's current understanding of the area's coalbed methane (CBM) and other energy resource potential. Figure 1 outlines the acreage that is being considered for designation as a State Recreation Area (SRA). Sedimentary rocks of the coal-bearing Usibelli Group were mapped and analyzed at the southern boundary of the SRA by previous geologists working this region. They noted that the thickest coal seam was 13 feet, 6 inches and the thickest cumulative coal at one locality was 22 feet. Coal quality analyses from these exposures indicate the maturity rank is predominantly Lignite A. If coal bearing strata extending beneath the extensive covered area to the north within the SRA are all of this rank, the potential for commercially viable CBM or other energy resources would be low.

However, coal measures exposed to the east of the SRA, in the vicinity of the town of Healy, contain much thicker coal seams and are of much higher thermal rank. If these strata are present in the subsurface in the area of the SRA, there would be unrealized potential for natural gas and/or coal resources within the area in question. The currently available information does not rule out either interpretation. Gathering subsurface information by drilling a few critically-placed core holes would provide a relatively definitive answer as to the energy resource potential of the area.

Sources of Information

Available resource information for the proposed Stampede State Recreation Area include several regional 1:250,000 scale geologic maps (Csejtey and others, 1992; see Fig. 1); detailed 1:63,360 scale geologic map of the Healy D-5 quadrangle (eastern half of the proposed area, Wahrhaftig, 1970; see Fig. 2), and maps of the Healy D-5 and D-6 quadrangles (Gilbert and Bundtzen, 1976); U.S. Bureau of Mines Report of Investigations 4520 (Toenges and Jolley, 1949); Alaska coal geology, resources, and coalbed methane potential (Flores and others, 2004, see Fig. 3); geologic report on coal investigations in Alaska (Barnes and others, 1951); the Alaska Coal Mine Land Inventory (Plangraphics, Inc., 1983); and the U.S. Bureau of Mines Selected Coal Deposits in Alaska (Meyer, 1990). The RI 4520 contains outcrop descriptions of bed and coal thickness, strike and dip bedding attitude information, and coal quality analyses (11 analyses shown in table 1) at seven sites (1-7 on attached map, Fig. 1) that are at or just below the southern margin of the area. Unfortunately, the locations of these sites are indicated on a single page, hand drafted cartographic map (Fig. 7 from Toenges and Jolley, 1949) so no precise latitude or longitude data are available. However, these locations were approximately located on the map of Csejtey and others, 1992 (our Fig. 1) by using the river drainages as depicted on Fig. 7 in Toenges and Jolley, 1949, and the descriptions given in the text. The discussion that follows is based on the above mentioned **publicly-available** data and relies on the geologic mapping

presented in Csejtey and others (1992) and Wahrhaftig (1970). This discussion will focus on the coal geology and related data that are relevant to the proposed Stampede State Recreation area.

Geology

The proposed Stampede State Recreation area contains Quaternary surficial deposits (**Qt** map unit, Fig. 1), and sedimentary rocks consisting of the Nenana Gravel (**Tcn** map unit, Fig. 1), and the Tertiary-age coal-bearing Usibelli Group (**Tcb** map unit, Fig. 1) exposed on its southern border. These Tertiary rocks were deposited on much older metamorphic rocks of the Yukon-Tanana terrane, that includes Paleozoic and Precambrian (?) pelitic and quartzose schist (**PzpCp**, **Pzk** and **MDt** map units, Fig. 1).

The Usibelli Group (**Tcb** map unit, Fig. 1) is predominantly Miocene-age strata that were deposited in southward-flowing fluvial, lacustrine, and peat bog environments situated north of the present day central Alaska Range (Ridgway and others, 2007). The Usibelli Group sedimentary sequence consists of five formations that are summarized in Fig. 3. These are from bottom to top: 1.) coal-bearing Healy Creek; 2.) noncoaly Sanctuary; 3.) coal-bearing Suntrana; 4.) coal-bearing Lignite Creek; and 5.) noncoaly Grubstake. The Usibelli group is conformably overlain by the Tertiary-age Nenana Gravel (unit 6 described in Fig. 3).

East of the Parks Highway near Healy, Alaska the Usibelli Coal Mine successfully produces annually about 1.5 million short tons of coal. In the immediate area, the only past production west of the Parks Highway and southeast of the proposed Stampede State Recreation area was at the abandoned Diamond Coal Mine (shown as DCM on Fig. 1). Here, a 40 foot thick coal bed that strikes N62° E and dips 33° NW, along the slope of the hill, was mined in 1946, producing 34,911 (short) tons of coal in stripping operations (Toenges and Jolley, 1949). This unit is mapped as **Tcu**, or undifferentiated coal-bearing Usibelli Group by Wahrhaftig (1970, see Fig. 2).

Figure 1 shows outcrops of the Usibelli Group at the southern edge of the proposed Stampede State Recreation area and south into Mt. McKinley National Park as coal-bearing strata (**Tcb**). Strikes and dips of **Tcb** shown on the Fig. 1 are from Toenges and Jolley (1949) and they generally dip from 9° to 33° to the northwest, directly into the proposed recreation area. The total thickness of the exposed coal at these localities ranges from 8 ft to 22 ft (see Fig. 1) with the thickest bed of coal at 13 ft 6 in (data from Toenges and Jolley, 1949; locations approximate). In general, detailed geologic mapping by Wahrhaftig (1970) shows similar directions of bedding attitude (strike and dip) of the coal-bearing Usibelli Group. However, Wahrhaftig's mapping further differentiates the Usibelli Group into the lowermost Healy Creek Formation (unit 1, Fig. 3) and the Lignite Creek Formation (unit 4, Fig. 3). The Lignite Creek Formation is queried (**Tlc?**) indicating uncertainty which formation is present. The intervening Sanctuary Formation (unit 2, Fig. 3) and the Suntrana Formation (unit 3, Fig. 3), the main source of minable coal to the east at the Usibelli Coal Mine are not indicated on the Wahrhaftig 1970 map in the area along the southern border of the proposed Stampede State Recreation area. Additionally, Wahrhaftig's 1970 map of the Healy D-5 quadrangle has structure contours (red-dashed lines, Fig. 2) drawn at the base of the Nenana Gravel that suggest that the local basin may be up to 2500 ft deep. However, his cross sections A to A' (shown on Fig. 2) and B to B' (not

shown) imply that this small basin is filled with ~2500 ft of Nenana Gravel. The base of the Nenana gravel in these cross sections is denoted by question marks (?) indicating what lies beneath the Nenana Gravel is unknown. The 1970 Wahrhaftig map does not indicate the source of the information for the structure contour, or that data that indicates the local "basin" may be 2500 feet deep. On the basis of the general trend of northwest dipping strata it is reasonable to suggest that coal-bearing Usibelli Group rocks might underlie the proposed recreation area at some depth. However, drilling would be necessary to confirm their presence, thickness, and depth.

Coal Quality of Coal Exposed near the Proposed Stampede State Recreation Area

Eleven coal quality analyses reported in Toenges and Jolley (1949) for coal seams sampled at the seven localities (1-7 shown on the map, Fig. 1) were placed into an Excel spreadsheet and Apparent Coal Rank was calculated for each (Table 1). Nine of the samples have an Apparent Rank of Lignite A and have Moist, Mineral Matter Free BTUs between 7536 to 8140. Two samples have "Apparent Ranks" of High Volatile Bituminous C (Locality 1, analysis C- 64425) and Subbituminous C (Locality 5, analysis C-64418). The high moisture content of 26.3% for sample C- 64425 at locality 1 suggests that this sample was highly weathered prior to testing and that the "Apparent Rank" of High Volatile Bituminous C is suspect. The description given on page 22 in Toenges and Jolley (1949) suggests that this 7 ft 10 in thick coal seam is directly beneath the Nenana Gravel and was subaerially exposed for a long period of time. Bacterial action on highly weathered coals results in higher water retention, and the moisture content of High Volatile Bituminous C coals should not exceed 20%. Therefore, discounting the analysis for this sample, all of the other coals are low rank Lignite A (9 samples) to Subbituminous C (1 sample). The low apparent rank of these coals indicates that the original peat bogs were never buried deep enough and for a long enough time to develop into higher rank coals. This is consistent with these coals likely being from the uppermost Lignite Creek formation (unit 4, Fig. 3).