

SB

159

<TARGET><BILL>SB 159</BILL><SUBJECT>SB
159</SUBJECT><COMM>SFIN27</COMM></TARGET>

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: 3/21/12

FURTHER:

DATE TURNED
IN TO OFFICE: _____

Finance Committee considered SENATE BILL NO. 159

SB 159-SUSITNA STATE FOREST

"An Act establishing the Susitna State Forest; and providing for an effective date."

and recommends:

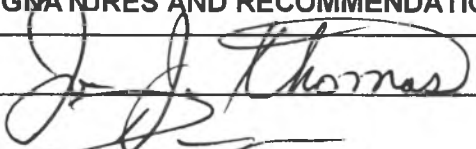
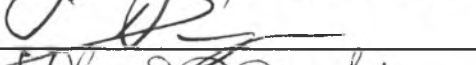
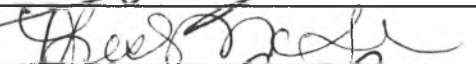
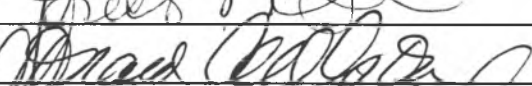



- be replaced with CS _____ (_____) Same Title New Title
- adopt previous CS SB 159 (RES) Same Title New Title
- attached amendment(s)
- adopt _____ Letter of Intent
- further referral to _____ Committee

Dept Abbr.	
ADM	LEG
CED	LAW
COR	LWF
CRT	MVA
EED	DNR
DEC	DPS
DFG	REV
GOV	DOT
DHS	UA

NEW FISCAL NOTE(S)				
Dept.	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN #

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S)				
Dept.	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN #
DNR		X		1

APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:	PRINTED LAST NAME	Do PASS	Do NOT PASS	NO REC	AMEND
	Thomas	✓			
	EGN	✓			
	McClure	✓			
	Olson			✓	
	Ellis	X			
CO-CHAIR: 	Hoffman	✓			
CO-CHAIR: 	Stedman	✓			

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Bill Version CSSB 159(RES)
 Fiscal Note Number 1
 (S) Publish Date 3/21/12

Identifier (file name) SB159-DNR-FMD-3-9-12 Dept. Affected Natural Resources
 Title An Act establishing the Susitna State Forest; and Appropriation Resource Development
providing for an effective date. Allocation Forest Management & Development
 Sponsor Senator Menard
 Requester Senate Resources OMB Component Number 435

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

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

	FY13 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY13 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates					
			FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
OPERATING EXPENDITURES								
Personal Services								
Travel								
Services								
Commodities								
Capital Outlay								
Grants, Benefits								
Miscellaneous								
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	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/Prgm (DGF)							
1037	GF/MH (UGF)							
1178	temp code (UGF)							
TOTAL		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

POSITIONS								
Full-time								
Part-time								
Temporary								

CHANGE IN REVENUES	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	***	***	***
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Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY12) operating costs 0.0 (separate supplemental appropriation required)
 (discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY13) costs 0.0 (separate capital appropriation required)
 (discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version (if initial version, please note as such)

Not applicable, initial version.

Prepared by John "Chris" Maisch, Division Director
 Division Forest Management & Development
 Approved by Daniel S. Sullivan, Commissioner
Department of Natural Resources

Phone 451-2666
 Date/Time 3/9/12 3:00 PM
 Date 3/9/2012

FISCAL NOTE #1

STATE OF ALASKA
2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. CSSB 159(RES)

Analysis

This bill would establish a new Susitna State Forest in the Matanuska and Susitna Valleys from state lands presently classified for forestry management by the two Area Plans for the region. These lands are currently managed by the Division of Forestry for timber harvest and other multiple uses. Designation of these lands as a state forest will ensure the long-term availability of a timber supply to local commercial and personal use customers, support economic opportunities for the region's communities, improve access to the parcels and retain the land in state ownership for multiple uses. The state forest will also directly support a growing interest in wood energy space heating projects by local communities. These projects require a long-term, sustainable supply of wood.

The proposed State Forest includes 33 parcels totaling approximately 763,200 acres and are located in 14 large management blocks. The Susitna State Forest would become part of the State Forest System under AS 41.17.010 - .230 and will continue to be managed under the provisions of the State Forest Resources and Practices Act (FRPA) which is designed to protect fish habitat and water quality. The forest management plan for the region would be updated via a public process per AS 41.17.230.

Implementation of this bill will not require new positions or funding.

The bill will have no short-term impact to the revenue stream, but will provide for long-term increases in forest productivity and subsequent increased timber revenues.

Senator Linda Menard

Session

State Capitol, Room 9
Juneau, Alaska 99801
Phone: (907) 465-6600
Fax: (907) 465-3805



Interim

600 E. Railroad Ave.
Wasilla, Alaska 99654
Phone: (907) 376-3370
Fax: (907) 376-3157

Alaska State Legislature

Sponsor Statement

Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 159

The Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 159 will establish a new Susitna State Forest from state lands presently used for timber harvest and exclude private in-holdings from the proposed forest. Further, this CS includes intent language that urges the governor to work to acquire or purchase forest land in the Tongass National Forest.

With a state forest designation, the Division of Forestry will be able to manage for a long-term supply of timber to local processors, and retain the land in state ownership for multiple uses. The Susitna State Forest would be the fourth state forest established in Alaska, joining the Haines State Forest, the Tanana Valley State Forest and the Southeast State Forest.

The proposed Susitna State Forest includes **33 parcels totaling approximately 763,200 acres**. The parcels are Forestry classified lands located in 14 large management blocks listed below. The Division of Forestry worked with the Division of Mining, Land, and Water Management to identify and exclude lands that are priorities for the state land disposal program.

In the region where the State Forest is proposed, timber sales and personal use sales for fuelwood are growing steadily. Local mills depend on state timber for their raw material supply, and there is a growing interest in the use of wood in the form of roundwood, chips or wood pellets for both commercial and residential space heating.

The state is committed to long-term management solutions by:

- maximizing the sustainable supply of timber from the state timber base;
- developing access and encouraging a broad range of multiple uses on state forest lands including motorized uses;
- providing economic opportunities to the communities, businesses and residents of the region.

Legislatively designating a State Forest would ensure that some land will remain available for long-term forest management and the region will retain large open spaces of public lands for the range of benefits residents of the region currently enjoy. It will also allow for mining on state forest land.

The Susitna State Forest would be managed as part of the State Forest System under AS 41.17.200-.230. Lands in the State Forest would continue to be open for multiple uses, including wildlife habitat and harvest and recreational activities.

Senator Linda Menard

Session

State Capitol, Room 9
Juneau, Alaska 99801
Phone: (907) 465-6600
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Wasilla, Alaska 99654
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Alaska State Legislature

To: Sen. Bert Stedman
Co-Chair, Senate Finance Committee

CC: Darwin Peterson
Finance Committee Aide

From: Sen. Linda Menard

Date: March 22, 2012

Re: Changes in CS SB 159(RES)

There were two changes made to Senate Bill 159 in the Senate Resources Committee:

- (1) The committee substitute added exclusions for private land located within the proposed state forest boundaries. These exclusions prevent the private land from being designated state forest, and codify that in law.
- (2) On page 31, intent language was added to the bill urging the governor to either acquire or purchase land in the Tongass National Forest.

LEGAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY
STATE OF ALASKA

(907) 465-3867 or 465-2450
FAX (907) 465-2029
Mail Stop 3101

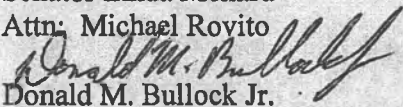
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Deliveries to: 129 6th St., Rm. 329

MEMORANDUM

January 17, 2012

SUBJECT: Sectional summary for SB 159 (Work Order No. 27-LS1179\M)

TO: Senator Linda Menard
Attn: Michael Rovito

FROM: 
Donald M. Bullock Jr.
Legislative Counsel

You have requested a sectional summary of the above-described bill.

As a preliminary matter, note that a sectional summary of a bill should not be considered an authoritative interpretation of the bill and the bill itself is the best statement of its contents. If you would like an interpretation of the bill as it may apply to a particular set of circumstances, please advise.

Section 1. Designates state-owned or acquired land and water lying within the listed parcels as the Susitna State Forest. Requires the commissioner of natural resources to prepare a management plan for the forest, and authorizes the commissioner to establish transportation corridors within the forest.

Section 2. Provides a July 1, 2012 effective date for the Act.

DMB:ljw
12-019.ljw

Expanded Bullets on area plan public processes related to the new Susitna State Forest [1/30/12]

- 1985 Susitna Area Plan identified Forestry designated lands for consideration as legislatively designated areas (LDAs).
- State lands under consideration for a Susitna State Forest are addressed by two area plans: the Susitna Matanuska Area Plan (2011), and the Southeast Susitna Area Plan (2008). These two plans supersede the 1985 Susitna Area Plan.
- The Commissioner of DNR adopted the Southeast Susitna Area Plan (SSAP) on April 28, 2008, following a year-long planning process that included two rounds of public meetings. This plan applies to about 255,000 acres of state land formerly managed by the 1982 Willow Sub-Basin Area Plan and the original 1985 Susitna Area Plan. The SSAP designates 74,855 acres of state land for Forestry. The Division of Forestry actively manages these lands in the Houston and Kashwitna areas for timber production.

A recurring theme during the following processes was the idea of a Susitna State Forest.

- In 2009, DOF engaged in a revision process for the 1991 Susitna Forestry Guidelines (SFG). A citizens' advisory committee and an inter-agency planning team were established and several meetings held. In addition, the SFG process held joint public scoping meetings with the DMLW-led SMAP planning process.
- In 2009, DOF's planner mentioned the Susitna State Forest during his presentation to the Mat-Su Salmon Science and Conservation Symposium in Wasilla.
- During annual (2008-2011) Winter Trails User's meetings between timber operators and Willow area dog mushers, the concept of a state forest in the Susitna was discussed, with broad support for the idea expressed by those attending. Dog mushers enjoy the use of state lands and the associated improved access from logging activities.
- Following a two year planning process, the Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) adopted the Susitna Matanuska Area Plan (SMAP) on August 11, 2011, with a date of issuance of August 17th. The SMAP applies to nine million acres of state land formerly managed under the Susitna Area Plan. About 700,000 acres of these state lands are classified Forestry. This area plan recommends establishment of a legislatively designated State Forest for those lands designated or co-designated Forestry in the SMAP and the 2008 Southeast Susitna Area Plan. Public input received at a series of community meetings held throughout the planning area and during a three and a half month public review (February – May 2011) of the draft SMAP supported the concept of a Susitna State Forest.
- DOF coordinated the public scoping efforts for the SFG with DMLW's area plan scoping and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's land use planning. During April of 2009, six joint open houses were held in communities in the Mat-Su area, and one in Anchorage. An

open house planned for Skwentna in late March was cancelled due to an ash fall in the area from the volcanic eruption of Mt. Redoubt. Approximately 80 people attended the public meetings, and DOF received 22 written scoping comments through the end of July. Many of the written comments supported maintaining or strengthening the Susitna Forestry Guidelines as they are presently written, and keeping its original purpose statement intact. The public comments were generally supportive of forestry. The issues most frequently mentioned were regeneration, timber road access after harvesting, harvest design, riparian standards, and herbicides. Other public outreach efforts that occurred during this period included briefings with the Alaska Outdoor Council, Friends of the Mat-Su, and WACO Trail's Committee.

- The Mat-Su Area Forester reported on the interest in the Susitna State Forest to the Board of Forestry during their August 30-31, 2011 meeting.

*Provided by Division of Forestry.



Public Briefing: SB-159

Proposed Susitna State Forest

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

February 13, 2012

DIVISION OF FORESTRY

Background. The state Department of Natural Resources manages over 9.5 million acres of forest land in the Matanuska and Susitna Valleys. Of this land, timber management is allowed on approximately 2.1 million acres. The state actively manages this timber base to supply wood to local processors. Remaining land is designated primarily for other uses including land sales, recreation, water resources, and fish and wildlife habitat, including over 3.1 million acres of legislatively designated state parks, refuges, and public use areas.

In the region, demand for state timber sales is steady and growing and personal use sales for fuelwood have also increased. Local mills depend heavily on state timber for their raw material supply and there is a growing interest in the use of wood in the form of roundwood, chips or wood pellets for commercial, public school, and residential space heating.

There is also a need to more actively manage lands and vegetation to promote a variety of forest ages to provide for diverse and healthy habitats for wildlife. At the same time, active management will also help reduce wildland fire risk by breaking up large fuel types and encouraging initial regeneration by hardwood species.

The state is committed to long-term management solutions by:

- maximizing the sustainable supply of timber from the state timber base;
- developing access and encouraging a broad range of multiple uses on state forest lands including motorized uses;
- providing economic opportunities to the communities, businesses and residents of the region.

Legislatively designating a State Forest would ensure that some land will remain available for long-term forest management and the region will retain large open spaces of public lands for the range of benefits residents of the region currently enjoy.

Purpose. This bill would establish a new Susitna State Forest from state lands presently used for timber harvest. The Division of Forestry will be able to manage the State Forest for a long-term supply of timber to local processors, and retain the land in state ownership for multiple uses.

Proposed State Forest Land. The proposed Susitna State Forest includes 33 parcels totaling approximately 763,200 acres (see chart). The parcels are Forestry classified lands located in 14 large management blocks listed below. The Division of Forestry worked with the Division of Mining, Land, and Water management to identify and exclude lands that are priorities for the state land disposal program.

State Forest Management. The Susitna State Forest would be managed as part of the State Forest System under AS 41.17.200-.230. Lands in the State Forest would continue to be open for multiple uses, including wildlife habitat and harvest and recreational activities. State Forest lands would be managed consistent with the management intent under the current Susitna Matanuska and the Southeast Susitna Area Plans. Changes to management intent would require public and interagency review through adoption of a State Forest Management Plan under AS 41.17.230. The State Forest Resources Practices Act (FRPA) would apply to management activities on the forest and is designed to protect both fish habitat and water quality. (AS 41.17.010 - .955.) A forestry inventory was completed in 2010 for approximately 75% of the acreage and work is ongoing to complete the project. An interim forest inventory report and maps are available at <http://forestry.alaska.gov/whatsnew.htm>.

PROPOSED SUSITNA STATE FOREST			
Parcel	Acreage	General Location	Block
Susitna-Matanuska Area Plan			
P-13a	18,100	Kroto Creek East	East Petersville
P-13b	49,600	Kroto Creek West	West Petersville
P-13c	3,300	Amber Lake	West Petersville
U-26a	35,400	Yentna River West	Yentna
R-03a	6,500	Nakoshna River	Yentna
R-03b	33,600	Skwentna River North	West Skwentna
U-26b	15,500	Skwentna River North	West Skwentna
R-03c	5,100	Hayes River	West Skwentna
M-07a	24,200	Canyon Creek	South Skwentna
M-07b	187,000	Mount Susitna	Mount Susitna
M-07c	2,500	Theodore River	Mount Susitna
M-07d	5,800	Alexander Creek West	Alexander Creek
U-24a	10,300	Alexander Creek East	Alexander Creek
U-04a	500	Kroto Slough	Susitna
U-04b	155,800	Kahiltna River	Susitna
U-07e	104,100	Skwentna Village	East Skwentna
B-10	15,200	Yenlo Creek	East Skwentna
S-35	12,800	South Fork Montana Creek	Talkeetna
Southeast Susitna Area Plan			
U-01a	1,200	Sheep Creek North	Talkeetna
U-01b	6,500	Sheep Creek South	Kashwitna
U-01c	5,800	Kashwitna River	Kashwitna
U-01d	13,900	Little Willow Creek North	Willer-Kash
U-01e	18,600	Willow Creek North	Willer-Kash
U-01f	10,500	Deception Creek	Houston
W-01g	600	Houston	Houston
H-06a	800	Houston	Houston
H-32	500	Houston	Houston
H-06b	3,000	Houston	Houston
P-03	600	Little Susitna North	Houston
P-02	1,600	Little Susitna North	Houston
S-03a	300	Deshka Landing	Red Shirt Lake
S-03b	13,300	Deshka Landing South	Red Shirt Lake
S-03c	700	Susitna Village	Red Shirt Lake
TOTAL	763,200		

SB 159
Susitna State Forest

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

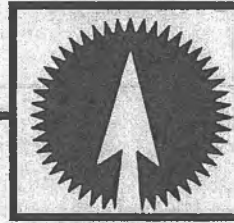
The effect of legislatively designating these lands as State Forest is as follows:

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

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

Provided by the Alaska Division of Forestry

Alaska Forest Association



111 Stedman Street
Ketchikan, AK 99901
Phone: 907-225-6114
Fax: 907-225-5920

March 16, 2012

Senators Joe Paskvan and Bill Wielechowski
Co-Chairs, Senate Resources Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK 99801

The Alaska Forest Association (AFA) is the primary timber industry association in Alaska. Our Association mission is to help sustain and restore a viable timber industry in Alaska and to insure our industry members operate their businesses in a responsible manner. We also maintain a Health Insurance program and a Pension plan for our members. AFA also sponsors the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Program for Alaska and we manage a Scholarship program.

The Alaska Forest Association supports SB 159, which establishes the Susitna State Forest.

There are several sawmills in the Anchorage area that have been struggling to maintain an adequate supply of suitable timber. Some of the mills have been idled, solely due to a lack of timber supply. The State Division of Forestry has done well managing the State Forests and the State timber sale program in Southeast Alaska. In Southeast Alaska, the Forest Service has downsized its timber sale program by about 90% and, without the State timber sales, the last remaining mills in that region would have been lost. We are confident that the State will also properly manage the Susitna State Forest lands and the new State Forest will provide ample opportunity for Alaskans to have additional wealth producing jobs.

We also believe that following the management requirements of the Alaska Forest Practices Act will insure that the water, fish and wildlife in the Susitna State Forest will be maintained and even enhanced. Further, the access that will be provided by the timber sale program will also provide additional opportunities for recreation, fire protection and additional resource development.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Owen Graham
Executive Director
Alaska Forest Association
111 Stedman Street, Suite 200
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

***Alaska Trappers Association
PO Box 82177
Fairbanks, AK 99708***

**Linda Menard
Alaska State Senator
State Capitol, Room 9
Juneau, AK 99801**

February 2, 2012

Re: SB 159 -- Susitna State Forest

Dear Senator Menard:

The Alaska Trappers Association is a statewide organization with nearly one thousand members. We are active in Alaska wildlife issues and other resource conservation efforts. We support a very active trapper education program.

ATA supports the CONCEPT of a fourth state forest, but we have serious concerns about how this might affect other consumptive resource use, particularly trapping. Our concern stems primarily from experience with the way that the planning process for the Tanana Valley State Forest (TVSF) in Interior Alaska was politically manipulated by Governor Knowles.

Title 41 (specifically AS 41.17.200) makes it quite clear that the primary purpose of any state forest is to provide a timber base and the opportunity for active forest management and timber harvest. We support and applaud this goal. However, the TVSF Citizens Advisory Committee (a quasi-public agency) was stacked with non-consumptive users and allowed to corrupt and control the planning process to minimize logging, hunting, trapping and motorized access. That serious and systemic problem was exactly what happened when the TVSF Management Plan was rewritten. Environmental groups (enabled, supported and encouraged by the Governor's Office) tied up the planning process for years and manipulated the process. The Governor's Office, rather than the State Forester's

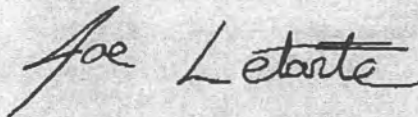
Office, controlled which specific individuals were appointed to the Citizens' Advisory Committee.

Thus, before we can wholeheartedly support your bill, we would prefer to see included some language to prevent or at least minimize this type of political manipulation of the planning process and attempts to preclude the very consumptive uses the State Forest was established to protect. This might entail a slight change to AS 41.17.200. Or perhaps it could be handled with a very clear statement of legislative intent. At a minimum, public discussion during the legislative process regarding this bill should thoroughly air and review the process that took place during the rewriting of the TVSF Management Plan.

Once this concern is addressed, we will be glad to comment on specific acreages and areas proposed for inclusion. However, until we can be sure that trapping (and timber harvest, for that matter) are really protected, we support only the CONCEPT of establishing the Susitna State Forest.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your proposal to establish a Susitna State Forest in South-Central Alaska.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joe Letarte".

**Joe Letarte, President
Alaska Trappers Association**



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

Office of the Borough Manager

350 East Dahlia Avenue • Palmer, AK 99645

Phone (907) 745-9689 • Fax (907) 745-9669

John.Moosey@matsugov.us

January 18, 2012

The Honorable Senator Linda Menard
Alaska State Capitol
Room 9
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Menard,

I am very pleased to send a letter of support for Senate Bill 159 which will establish the Susitna State Forest. This bill will establish a new State Forest from state lands presently used for timber harvest. The Division of Forestry will be able to manage the State Forest for a long-term supply of timber to local processors, and retain the land in state ownership for multiple uses.

The Mat-Su Borough and its residents will benefit from a state forest in the form of an economic boost from a sustainable supply of timber from the state timber base. The Susitna State Forest would be managed as part of the State Forest System and would be open for multiple uses, including wildlife habitat, harvest, and recreational activities.

Demand for state timber sales is steady and growing, and personal use sales for fuel wood have also increased. Local mills depend heavily on state timber for their raw material supply and there is a growing interest in the use of wood in the form of round wood, chips or wood pellets for both commercial and residential space heating. At the same time, active management will also help reduce wild land fire risk by breaking up large fuel types and encouraging initial regeneration by hardwood species.

Thank you for the opportunity to endorse this project. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

John M. Moosey
Borough Manager

JM/al

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**HOUSTON, ALASKA
RESOLUTION 12-05**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE HOUSTON CITY COUNCIL SUPORTING SENATE BILL
159, ESTABLISHING THE SUSITNA STATE FOREST.**

WHEREAS, the Alaska State Department of Natural Resources manages over 9.5 million acres of forest land in the Borough and timber harvesting is allowed on 2.1 million acres of this land; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 159 would establish a new Susitna State Forest from state lands presently used for timber harvest; and

WHEREAS, the Susitna State Forest would include 33 parcels totaling approximately 763,200 acres; and

WHEREAS, demand for state timber sales is growing and personal use sales for fuel wood have increased in this region; and

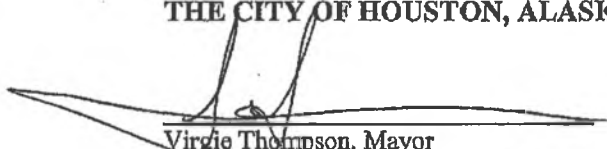
WHEREAS, the lands in the State Forest would continue to be open for multiple uses, including wildlife habitat and harvest and recreational activities; and

WHEREAS, legislatively designating a State Forest would ensure that some land will remain available for long-term forest management.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The Houston City Council supports the adoption of Senate Bill 159 establishing the Susitna State Forest.

PASSED AND APPROVED by a duly constituted quorum of the Houston City Council, Alaska this 9th day of February, 2012.

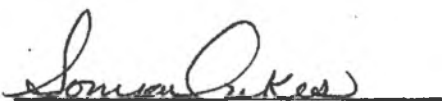
THE CITY OF HOUSTON, ALASKA



Virgie Thompson, Mayor

James Johansen, Deputy Mayor

ATTEST:


Sonya Dukes, City Clerk

Sponsored by: Mayor Virgie Thompson
Attached: SB 159
Attached: SB-159 Public Briefing



RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Growing Alaska Through Responsible Resource Development

Founded 1975

Executive Director

Rick Rogers

2011-2012 Executive Committee

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Phil Cochran, Sr. Vice President

L.F. "Len" Horst, Vice President

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Senator Lisa Murkowski

Congressman Don Young

Governor Sean Parnell

January 19, 2012

Senators Joe Paskvan and Tom Wagoner
Co-Chairs, Senate Resources Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Senate Bill 159, Susitna State Forest

Dear Senators Paskvan and Wagoner:

The Resource Development Council (RDC) is writing to support Senate Bill 159, which would create the Susitna State Forest over 763,200 acres of state land west of the Parks Highway.

RDC is a statewide, non-profit, membership-funded organization founded in 1975. The RDC membership is comprised of individuals and companies from Alaska's oil and gas, mining, timber, tourism, and fisheries industries, as well as Alaska Native corporations, local communities, organized labor, and industry support firms. RDC's purpose is to link these diverse interests together to encourage a strong, diversified private sector in Alaska and expand the state's economic base through the responsible development of our natural resources.

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources currently manages 9.5 million acres of forest land in the Matanuska and Susitna Valleys. Of this land, timber management is allowed on approximately 2.1 million acres. Remaining land is designated for other uses, including land sales, recreation, water resources, and fish and wildlife habitat. Over 3.1 million acres is protected in legislatively-designated state parks, refuges, and public use areas.

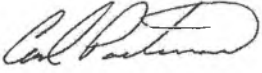
The establishment of the Susitna State Forest would ensure that some land would remain available for long-term forest management. It would allow the Division of Forestry to more actively manage lands and vegetation to promote a variety of forest ages, which in turn would maximize the sustainable supply of timber from the state timber base and provide for more diverse and healthy habitats for wildlife. In addition, active management would also help reduce wildfire risk.

The Division of Forestry would manage the state forest for a long-term supply of timber to local processors and retain land in state ownership for other multiple uses. An enhanced long-term timber supply would help support the forest products industry, provide fuel for sustainable biomass energy projects, and create new jobs. It would also benefit the recreational sector as the state intends to develop access to the new state forest and encourage a broad range of multiple uses. These multiple uses, including annual timber harvests, would provide important economic opportunities to local communities, businesses, and residents.

It is important to keep in mind that SB 159 would establish a new state forest from state lands presently designated for forest management. The Susitna State Forest would be managed consistent with the management intent under the current Susitna Matanuska and the Southeast Susitna Area Plans. Alaska's Forest Resources Practices Act would apply to management activities on the forest and is designed to protect both fish habitat and water quality.

If established, the Susitna State Forest would be the fourth state forest in Alaska. RDC supports SB 159 and believes the proposed state forest will be of much benefit to the local economy – creating and sustaining much needed jobs in the forest products industry while providing many other opportunities. We urge the committee to pass SB 159.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carl Portman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Carl" being more prominent than the last name "Portman".

Carl Portman
Deputy Director

Cc: Senator Linda Menard
Chris Maisch, State Forester



DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT
FOR RUFFED GROUSE, WOODCOCK,
AND OTHER FOREST WILDLIFE

South Central Alaska Chapter
7650 Delridge Circle, Anchorage, Alaska 99507

February 9, 2012

The Honorable Linda Menard
State Capitol Room 9
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Menard,

The South Central Alaska Chapter of The Ruffed Grouse Society would like to thank you for submitting Senate Bill 159, creating a State Forest west of the Susitna River. We support creation of this Forest for a multitude of reasons not the least of which is the ability to manage our forest resources for wildlife.

The area west of the Susitna is one of the last remaining large blocks of state land in Southcentral Alaska. Establishing a state forest will ensure that the ever increasing population of this area has access to the outdoor recreation for which our state is famous and that our timber, land and wildlife resources can be managed for the benefit of all Alaskans. A state forest will also help establish and solidify a timber industry for this area. Managed timber harvests benefit wildlife that needs an age diversified forest to thrive and would help reduce the potential for devastating fires such as the Miller Reach catastrophe.

Designation as a State Forest is, we believe, one of the least restrictive land categories possible. It allows for most uses, but would require planning and thought before implementing changes such as roads, mining, campgrounds, etc. The one restriction we know of is transfer of land into private ownership. In the past, the State has been able to meet the recreational needs of the Southcentral population through land transfers to individuals. However, the population is growing and most land with easy access, such as that bordering lakes and rivers, has already been transferred. The net effect is to block access to the remaining area. We realize there are access corridors reserved, but these are not particularly effective when it means parking your plane in front of someone's cabin to walk the right of way to a stream. Land owners tend to view such as an intrusion and clashes ensue. Additionally, owners of private land tend to want to manage all lands within view of their property. This leads to conflict when trying to manage resources on state land. In the Matanuska Valley it has hobbled the ability of Forestry to conduct timber sales and ADF&G to implement habitat improvement projects.

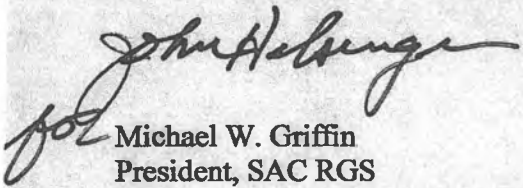
As currently described in SB 159, the State Forest is a convoluted collection of detached parcels taking 16 pages to describe the boundaries. A person out for recreation will have a difficult time trying to determine if they are in or out of the forest. Future disposal of land surrounding these parcels could complicate road development and access to proposed timber sales. Private ownership bounding the forest could result in the NIMBY problems we are already dealing with in other parts of Southcentral.

451 McCORMICK ROAD • CORAOPOLIS, PENNSYLVANIA 15108-9377
(412) 262-4044 FAX (412) 262-9207 (888) 564-6747 TOLL FREE
Email: rgs@ruffedgrousesociety.org www.ruffedgrousesociety.org

We would encourage you to expand the proposed boundaries to incorporate all unencumbered state land west of the Susitna River, south of the Denali Park Boundaries, North of Beluga Lake/Beluga River draining into Cook Inlet. As a minimum, the forest boundaries need to be simplified and expanded to create a buffer against treats to proper forest management by private ownership and to ensure reasonable access to the forest is available. This would preserve public access, ensure multiple use of our land, and enhance our wildlife resources for all Alaskans, now and in the future, while encouraging development of a comprehensive timber industry.

This forest will complement the three other state forests that have been successfully established. We urge the legislature to expand and pass SB 159 this session.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John H. Griffin".

Michael W. Griffin
President, SAC RGS

Alaska Chapter SCI
PO Box 770511
Eagle River, AK 99577
(907) 980-9018



February 9, 2012

The Honorable Linda Menard
Alaska State Senate
120 4th St. Rm 9
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Menard:

The Alaska Chapter of SCI is in support of SB 159 and commends you for your foresight in introducing this necessary piece of legislation.

As you may or may not know, SCI Alaska Chapter is not only the leading hunter-conservationist organization in Alaska, but is also SCI's leading chapter throughout the SCI network which includes over 105 countries and 260 chapters. Our mission is to protect the freedom to hunt through political advocacy and action, support for sound, science based conservation and wildlife management, and through humanitarian services.

In reviewing SB 159 and the applicable statutory guidelines in Title 41, we may wish to suggest amendments as this bill works its way through the process. We have some concerns as to whether the simple set aside of lands into a state forest will bring about desired results.

Our first concern is that suitable habitat is maintained for wildlife upon which rests one of the primary impetuses for recreation in Alaska. This concern leads us to believe that the bill does not go far enough in sequestering the necessary habitat to sustain wildlife populations through the establishment of contiguous parcels of land.

Our other major concern involves management practices. Although some lands may not be suitable for the growth of marketable timber, we maintain that those lands are nonetheless important for this state forest designation. Most of Alaska's wildlife depends heavily upon successional plant life. 'Climax forests do not provide the same level of benefit as does new forest lands. Since we do not encourage the proliferation of fire any longer in this area due to a variety of concerns, it is important that harvest of climax forests be allowed to produce suitable habitat for wildlife.

We look forward to working with you on this legislation and thank you again for introducing it.

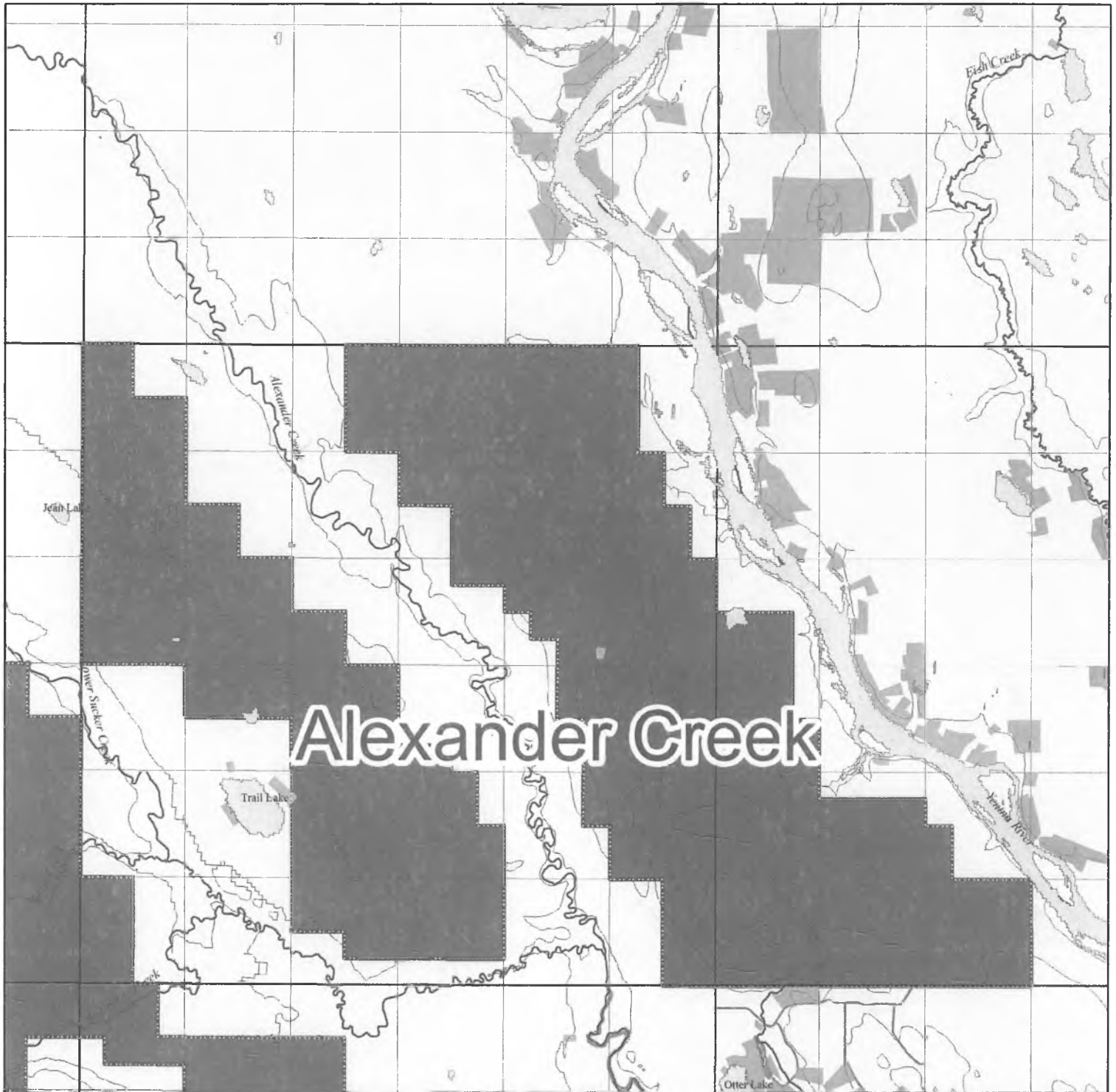
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Eddie Grasser'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

Eddie Grasser
Director of Government Affairs

SCI's Top Gun Chapter

Susitna Valley State Forest, Alexander Creek Block



Alexander Creek

Land Ownership	Proposed Susitna Valley State Forest, Alexander Creek Block
Private Lands	0 0.5 1 2 3 4
ANCSA Native Corporation	
Matanuska Susitna Borough	Miles
University of Alaska, Alaska Mental Health Land Trust	scale = 1:80,000
Federal Government	Land Ownership information provided by the Matanuska Susitna Borough Information Technology Department, January 2012.
State of Alaska	

Alaska Dept of Natural Resources
Division of Forestry
 Forest Resources Program
 550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1450
 Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Susitna Valley State Forest Blocks



Spurr, Mount

Land Ownership

-  Private Lands
-  ANCSA Native Corporation
-  Matanuska Susitna Borough
-  University of Alaska, Alaska Mental Health Land Trust
-  Federal Government
-  State of Alaska



Proposed Susitna Valley State Forest Blocks

0 5 10 20 30

Miles

scale = 1:750,000

Land Ownership information provided by the
Matanuska Susitna Borough Information
Technology Department, January 2012.

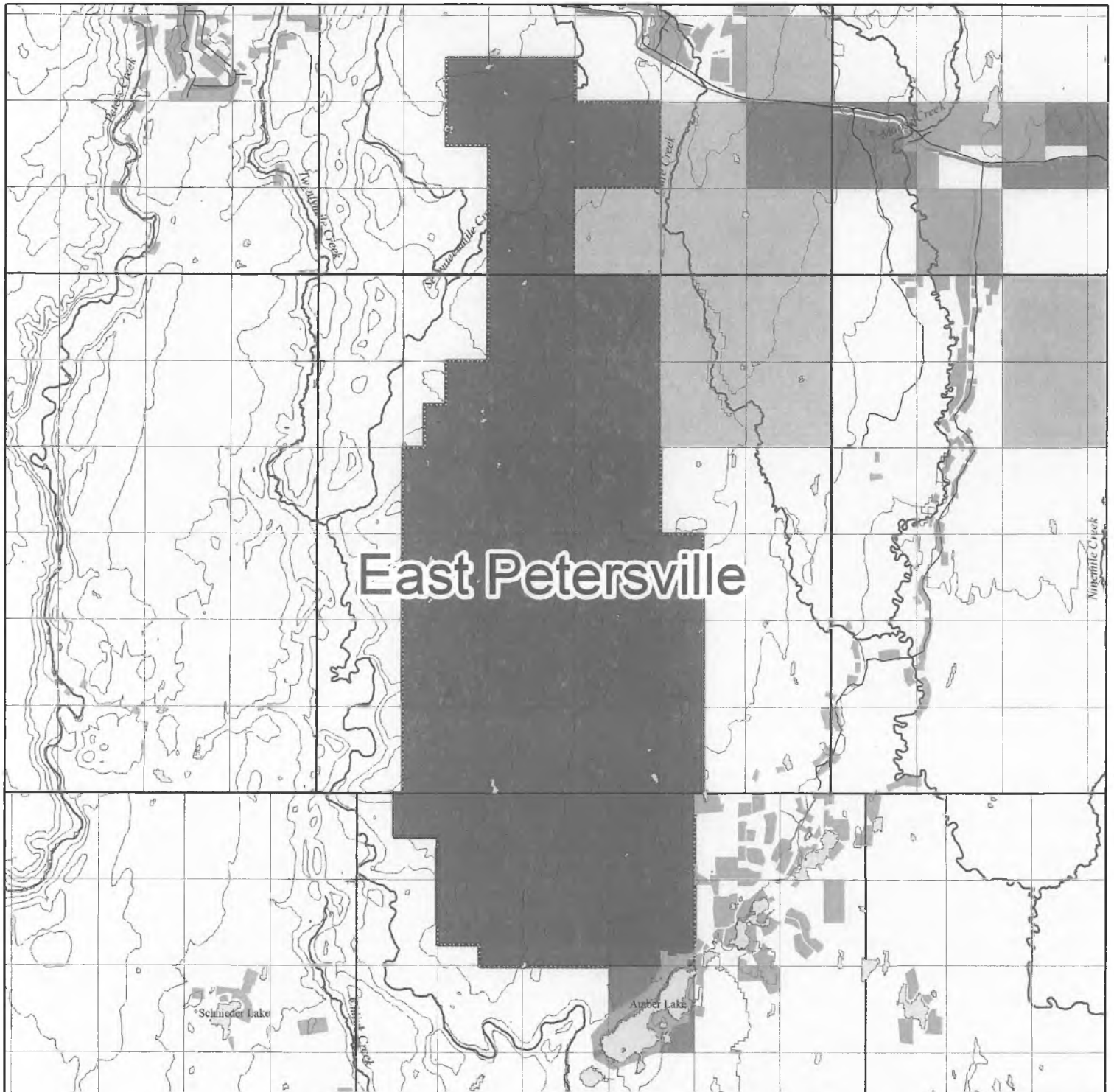


Alaska Dept of Natural Resources

Division of Forestry

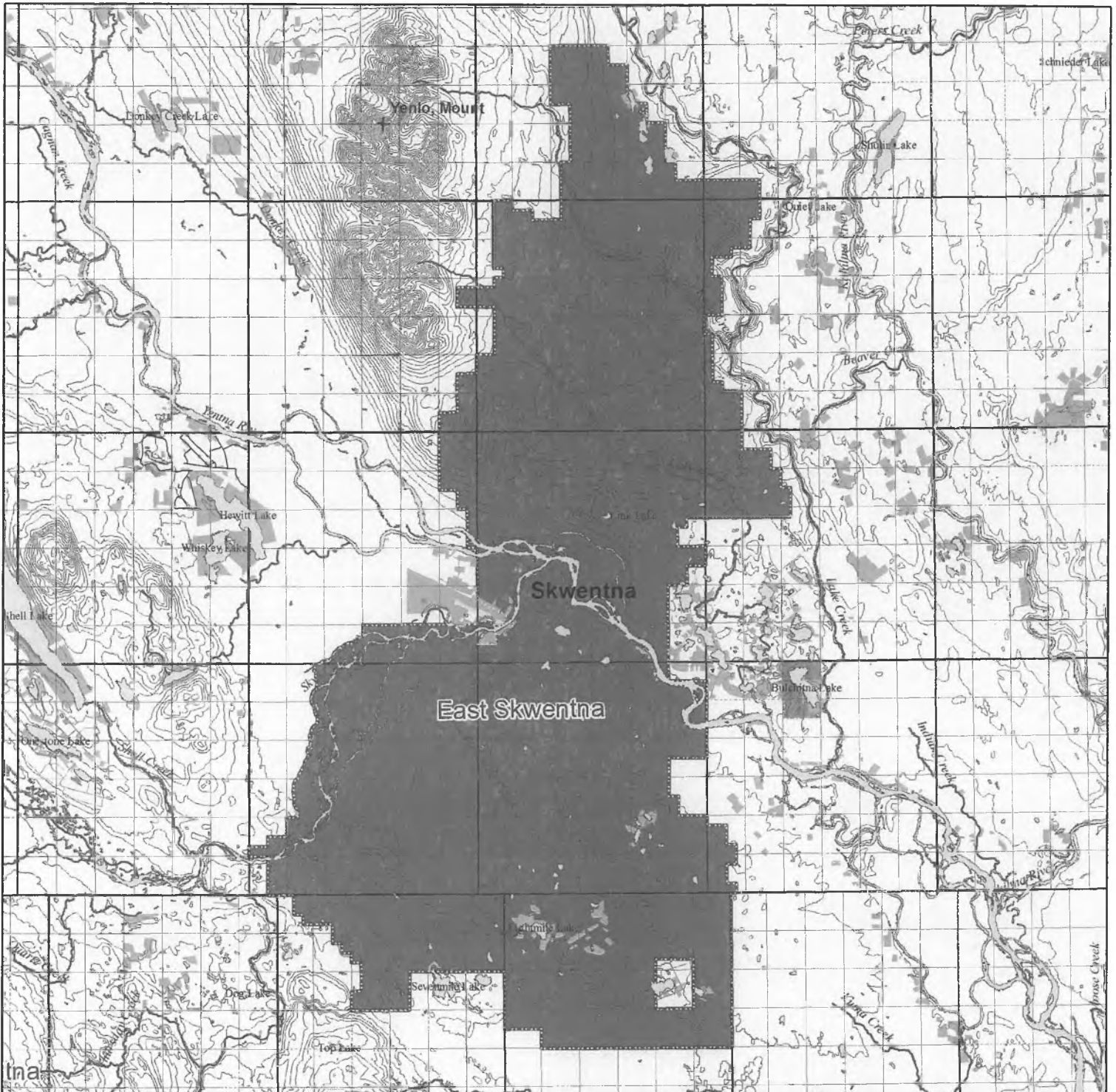
Forest Resources Program
550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1450
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Susitna Valley State Forest, East Petersville Block



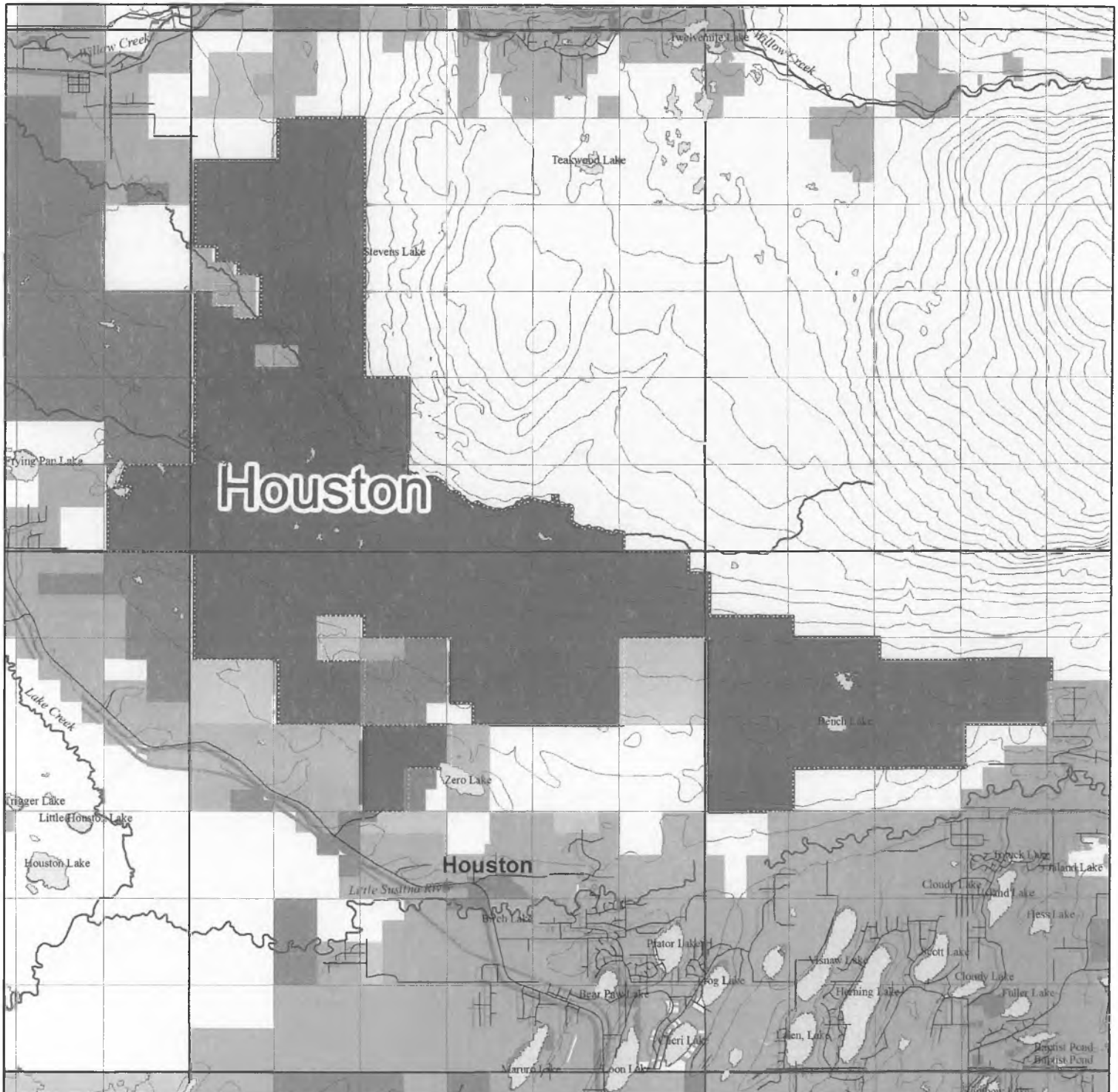
Land Ownership 				<p>Alaska Dept of Natural Resources Division of Forestry Forest Resources Program 550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1450 Anchorage, Alaska 99501</p>
	<p>Miles scale = 1:100,000</p>			
	<p>Land Ownership information provided by the Matanuska Susitna Borough Information Technology Department, January 2012.</p>			
	<p>Proposed Susitna Valley State Forest, East Petersville Block</p>			
	<p>0 0.5 1 2 3 4</p>			











Susitna Valley State Forest, East Skwentna Block



Land Ownership		Proposed Susitna Valley State Forest, East Skwentna Block
Private Lands		
ANCSA Native Corporation	Miles	Alaska Dept of Natural Resources
Matanuska Susitna Borough	scale = 1:225,000	Division of Forestry
University of Alaska, Alaska Mental Health Land Trust	Land Ownership information provided by the Matanuska Susitna Borough Information Technology Department, January 2012.	Forest Resources Program 550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1450 Anchorage, Alaska 99501
Federal Government		
State of Alaska		

Susitna Valley State Forest, Houston Block



Land Ownership		 Proposed Susitna Valley State Forest, Houston Block	
	Private Lands	0 0.5 1 2 3	 Miles scale = 1:100,000
	ANCSA Native Corporation		
	Matanuska Susitna Borough	 	Alaska Dept of Natural Resources Division of Forestry Forest Resources Program 550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1450 Anchorage, Alaska 99501
	University of Alaska, Alaska Mental Health Land Trust		
	Federal Government		
	State of Alaska		
		Land Ownership information provided by the Matanuska Susitna Borough Information Technology Department, January 2012.	

Susitna Valley State Forest, Kashwitna Block



Land Ownership

-  Private Lands
-  ANCSA Native Corporation
-  Matanuska Susitna Borough
-  University of Alaska, Alaska Mental Health Land Trust
-  Federal Government
-  State of Alaska



Proposed Susitna Valley State Forest, Kashwitna Block

0 0.5 1 2 3



Miles

scale = 1:70,000



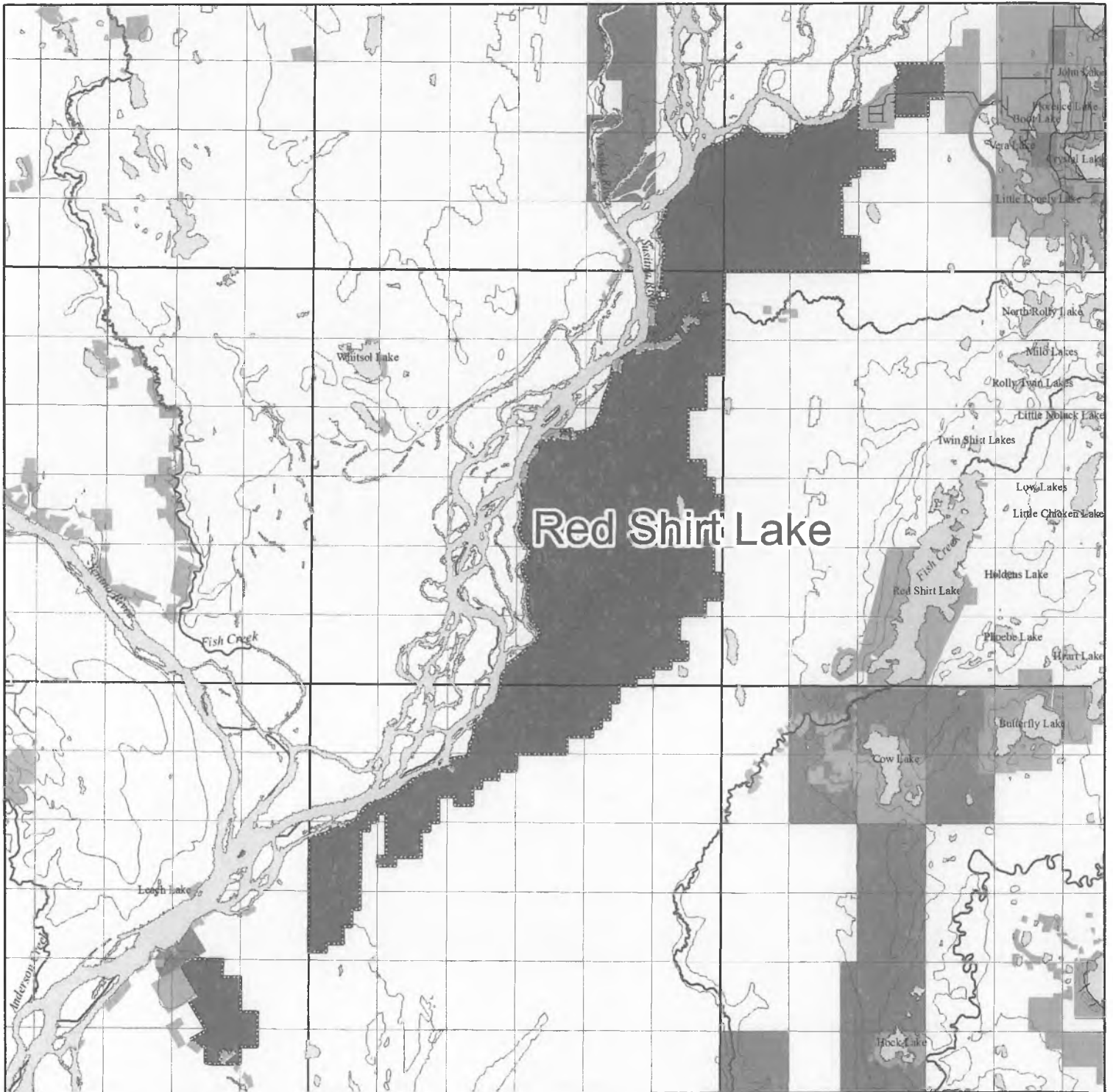
Alaska Dept of Natural Resources

Division of Forestry

Forest Resources Program
550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1450
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Land Ownership information provided by the
Matanuska Susitna Borough Information
Technology Department, January 2012.

Susitna Valley State Forest, Red Shirt Lake Block



Land Ownership

-  Private Lands
-  ANCSA Native Corporation
-  Matanuska Susitna Borough
-  University of Alaska, Alaska Mental Health Land Trust
-  Federal Government
-  State of Alaska

Proposed Susitna Valley State Forest, Red Shirt Lake Block

0 0.5 1 2 3 4



Miles

scale = 1:125,000

Land Ownership information provided by the
Matanuska Susitna Borough Information
Technology Department, January 2012.

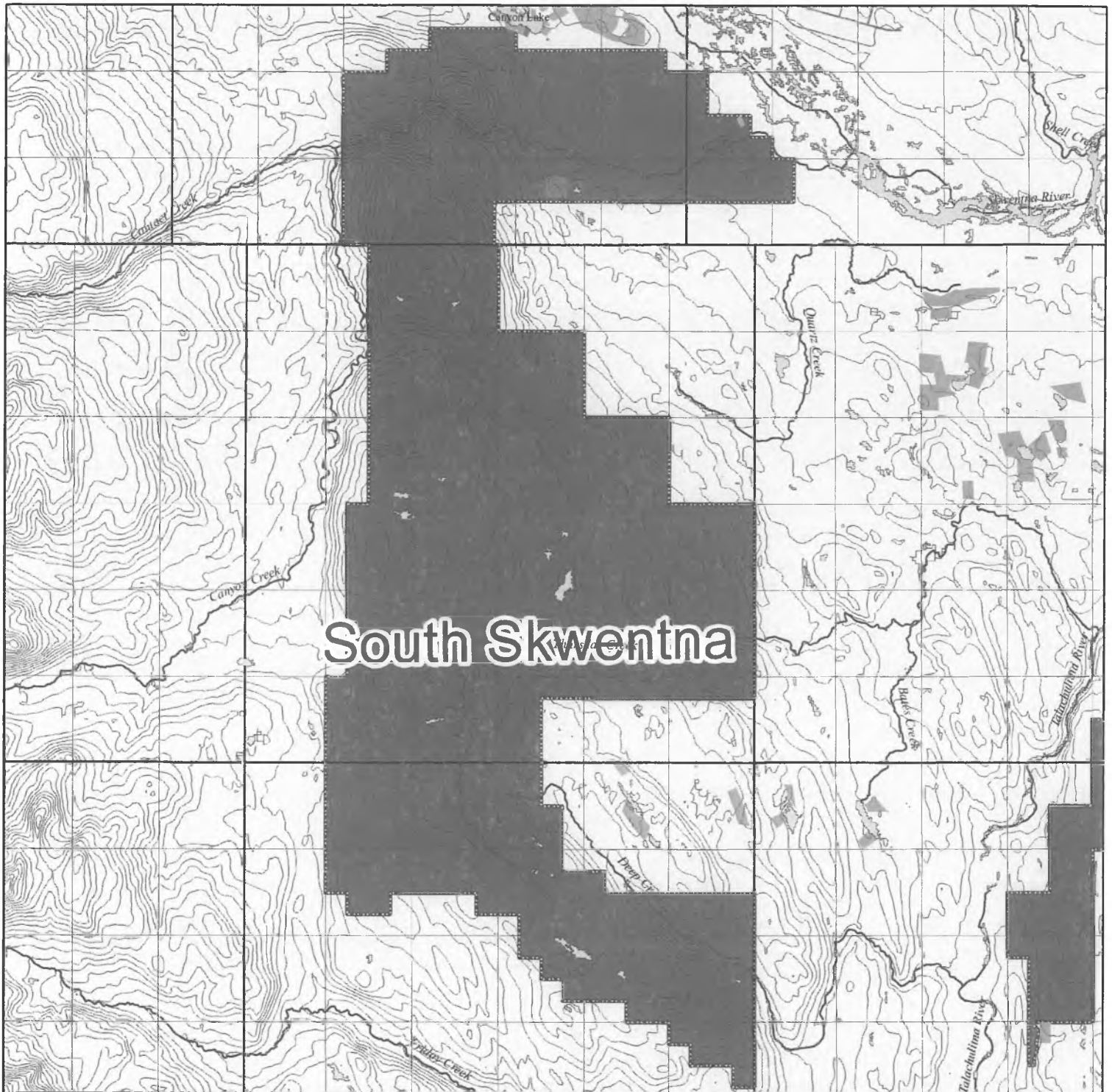


Alaska Dept of Natural Resources

Division of Forestry

Forest Resources Program
550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1450
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

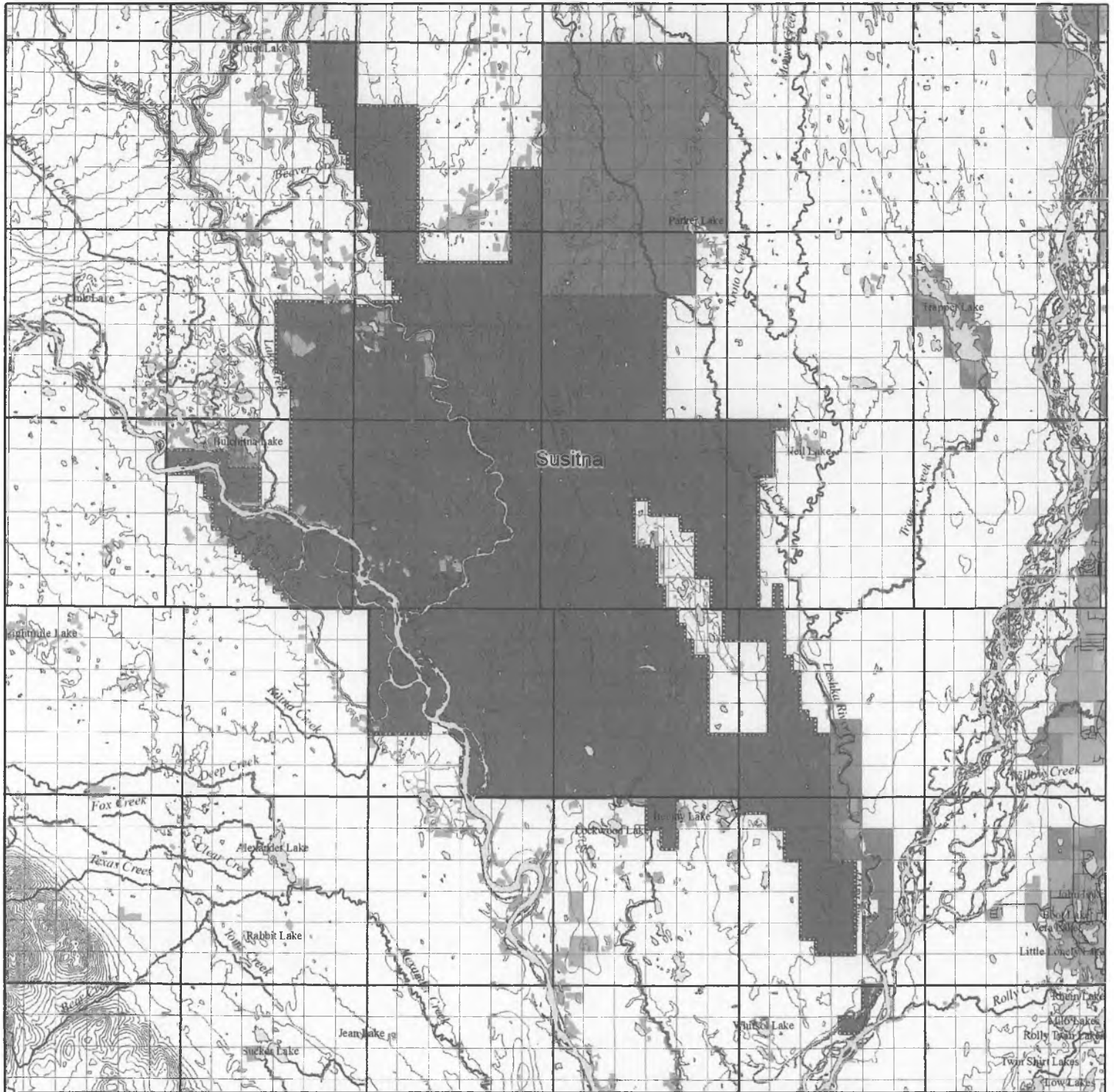
Susitna Valley State Forest, South Skwentna Block



South Skwentna

Land Ownership	Proposed Susitna Valley State Forest, South Skwentna Block	0 0.5 1 2 3	↑
■ Private Lands		Miles	
■ ANCSA Native Corporation	scale = 1:100,000	Land Ownership information provided by the Matanuska Susitna Borough Information Technology Department, January 2012.	Alaska Dept of Natural Resources Division of Forestry Forest Resources Program 550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1450 Anchorage, Alaska 99501
■ Matanuska Susitna Borough			
■ University of Alaska, Alaska Mental Health Land Trust			
■ Federal Government			
■ State of Alaska			

Susitna Valley State Forest, Susitna Block



Susitna

Land Ownership

-  Private Lands
-  ANCSA Native Corporation
-  Matanuska Susitna Borough
-  University of Alaska, Alaska Mental Health Land Trust
-  Federal Government
-  State of Alaska



Proposed Susitna Valley State Forest, Susitna Block



Miles

scale = 1:275,000



Alaska Dept of Natural Resources

Division of Forestry










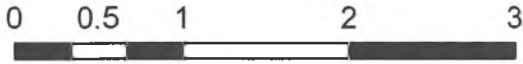
Forest Resources Program
550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1450
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Land Ownership information provided by the
Matanuska Susitna Borough Information
Technology Department, January 2012.

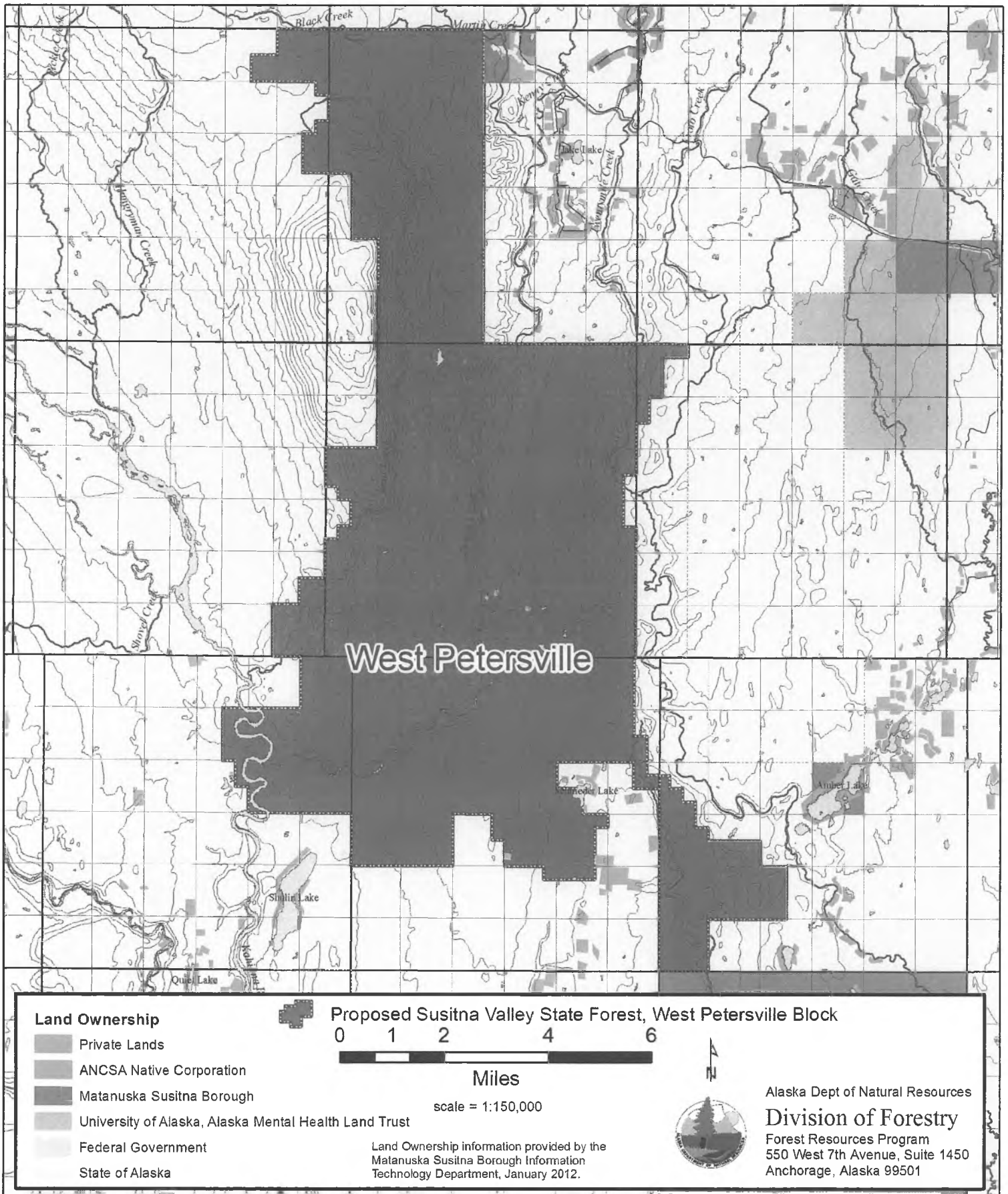
Susitna Valley State Forest, Talkeetna Block



Talkeetna

Land Ownership	 Proposed Susitna Valley State Forest, Talkeetna Block	 
<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Private Lands  ANCSA Native Corporation  Matanuska Susitna Borough  University of Alaska, Alaska Mental Health Land Trust  Federal Government  State of Alaska 	 <p style="text-align: center;">Miles scale = 1:70,000</p>	
<p>Land Ownership information provided by the Matanuska Susitna Borough Information Technology Department, January 2012.</p>		

Susitna Valley State Forest, West Petersville Block



West Petersville

Land Ownership

-  Private Lands
-  ANCSA Native Corporation
-  Matanuska Susitna Borough
-  University of Alaska, Alaska Mental Health Land Trust
-  Federal Government
-  State of Alaska

Proposed Susitna Valley State Forest, West Petersville Block

0 1 2 4 6



Miles

scale = 1:150,000

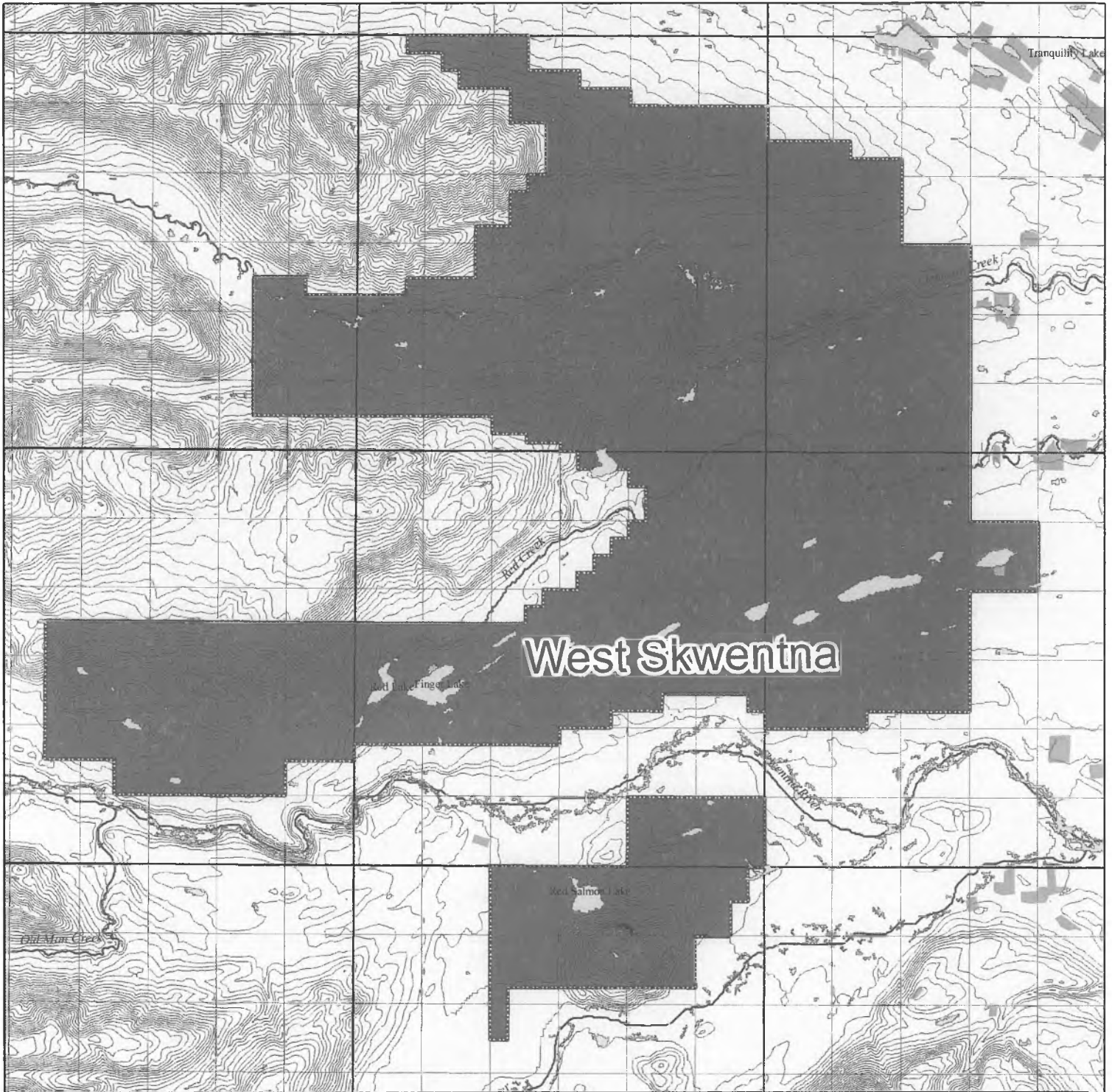
Land Ownership information provided by the Matanuska Susitna Borough Information Technology Department, January 2012.



Alaska Dept of Natural Resources

Division of Forestry
 Forest Resources Program
 550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1450
 Anchorage, Alaska 99501

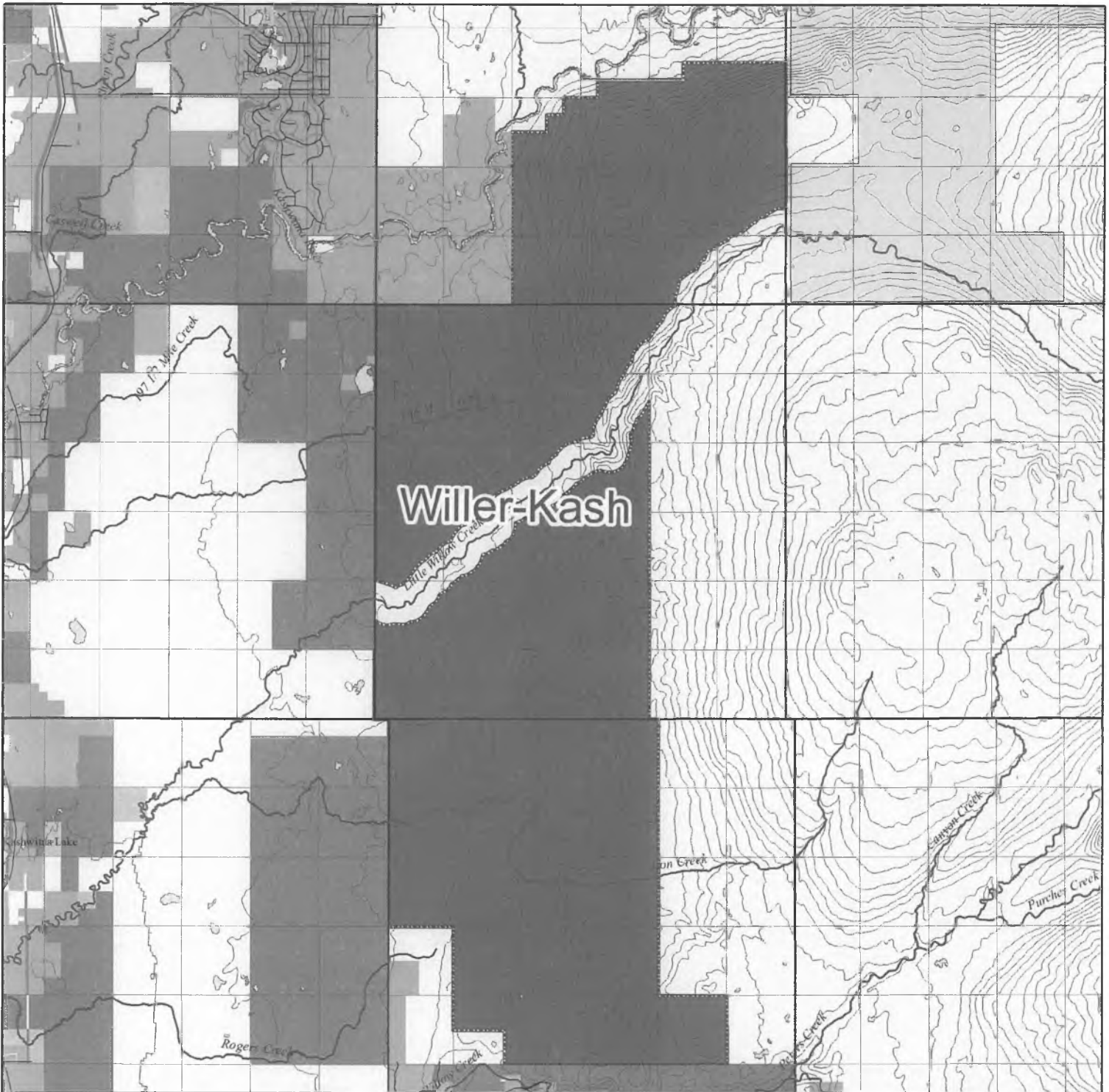
Susitna Valley State Forest, West Skwentna Block



West Skwentna

Land Ownership		Proposed Susitna Valley State Forest, West Skwentna Block	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private Lands ANCSA Native Corporation Matanuska Susitna Borough University of Alaska, Alaska Mental Health Land Trust Federal Government State of Alaska 	<p>0 0.5 1 2 3 4</p>	<p>Miles scale = 1:125,000</p>	
<p>Land Ownership information provided by the Matanuska Susitna Borough Information Technology Department, January 2012.</p>			<p>Alaska Dept of Natural Resources Division of Forestry Forest Resources Program 550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1450 Anchorage, Alaska 99501</p>

Susitna Valley State Forest, Willer-Kash Block

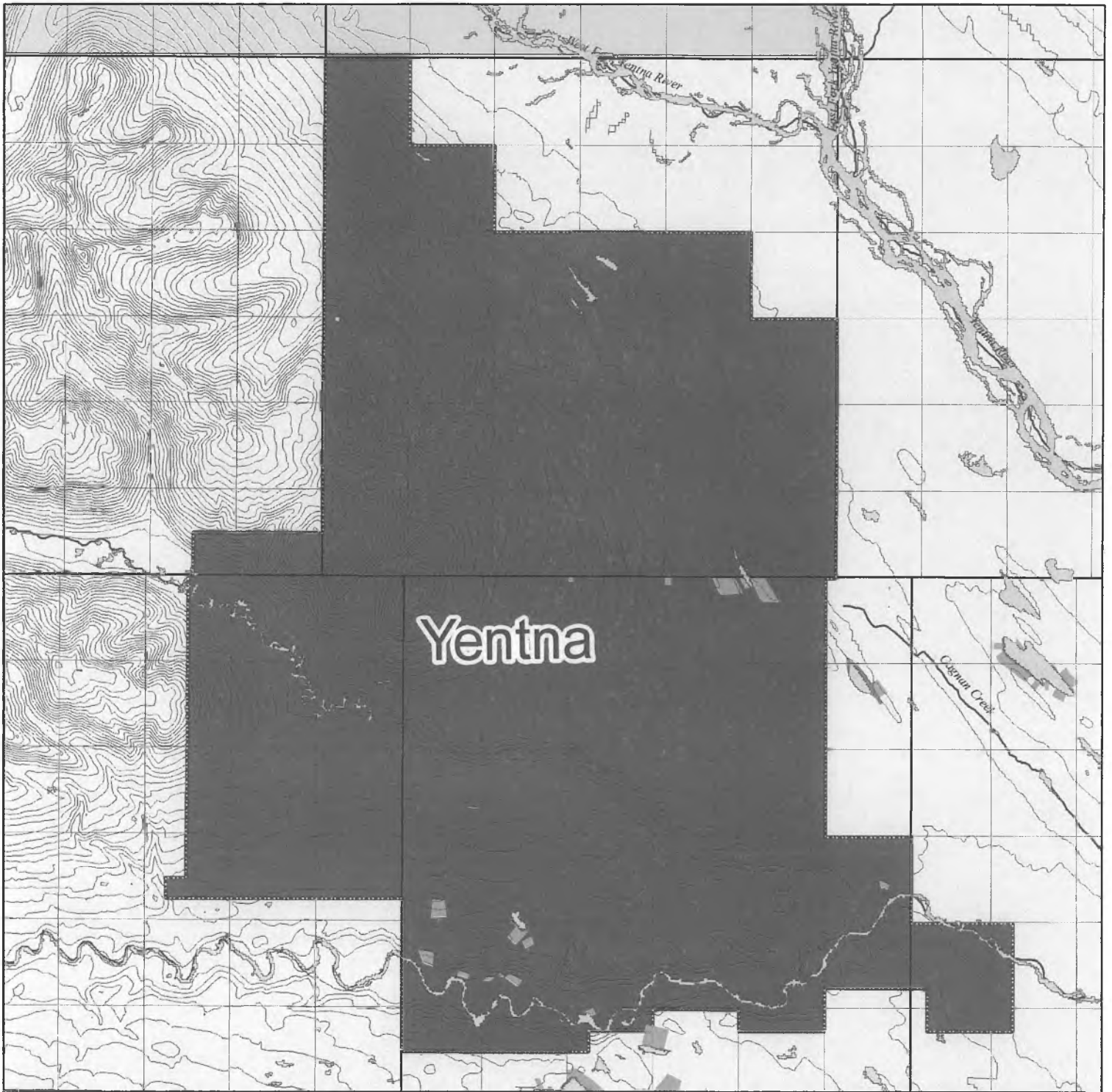


Willer-Kash

Land Ownership	Proposed Susitna Valley State Forest, Willer-Kash Block
■ Private Lands	0 0.5 1 2 3 4
■ ANCSA Native Corporation	
■ Matanuska Susitna Borough	Miles
■ University of Alaska, Alaska Mental Health Land Trust	scale = 1:125,000
■ Federal Government	Land Ownership information provided by the Matanuska Susitna Borough Information Technology Department, January 2012.
■ State of Alaska	

Alaska Dept of Natural Resources
Division of Forestry
 Forest Resources Program
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 Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Susitna Valley State Forest, Yentna Block



Land Ownership		Proposed Susitna Valley State Forest, Yentna Block	N
Private Lands	0 0.5 1 2 3 4	Miles	
ANCSA Native Corporation		scale = 1:100,000	Alaska Dept of Natural Resources Division of Forestry Forest Resources Program 550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1450 Anchorage, Alaska 99501
Matanuska Susitna Borough	Land Ownership information provided by the Matanuska Susitna Borough Information Technology Department, January 2012.		
University of Alaska, Alaska Mental Health Land Trust			
Federal Government			
State of Alaska			