

TANANA VALLEY STATE FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

2024 REVISION

DRAFT

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF FORESTRY & FIRE PROTECTION



This page intentionally left blank

DRAFT

[INSERT DNR COMMISSIONER SIGNATURE PAGE]

DRAFT

This page intentionally left blank

DRAFT

PREFACE

In July of 1983 the Alaska Legislature created the Tanana Valley State Forest. It was the second of three forests in the Alaska State Forest System, created just one year after the Haines State Forest. It was in 2010, nearly three decades later, that the Southeast State Forest was added to the system.

The Tanana Valley State Forest encompasses almost 1.8 million acres of boreal forest. It is the largest of Alaska's state forests and stretches the length of the Tanana Valley from Tok to Manley Hot Springs. It lies adjacent to the main roads and waterways of the Tanana Valley and is near the majority of the population that lives in the area. As a result, it has consistently been managed with a focus on multiple uses.

Management of the region's forest resources has occurred in varying degrees since the 1960's, but the creation of the State Forest in 1983 ushered in a new era of forest management for Interior Alaska. A region-wide forest inventory was initiated in 1983 and the first forest management plan was completed in 1988. Since the 1960s, the commercial timber sale program has grown slowly. The number of harvested acres has varied on an annual basis from a few hundred acres to over a thousand acres in some years due to a high market demand for white spruce sawtimber.

The previous Tanana Valley State Forest Management plan was completed in 2001 and guided activities for more than two decades. The effort to revise the 2001 plan began in 2020 and has been a collaborative effort involving numerous stakeholders.

PLANNING TEAM

This document was created by a stakeholder planning team coordinated by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Audra Brase

Julie Hagelin,

Todd (Nik) Nichols

Tom Paragi

Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Environmental Health, Drinking Water Program

Charley Palmer

Kalah Statz

Chris Miller

Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry & Fire Protection

Jeremy Douse

Matt Stevens

Trevor Dobell-Carlsson

Kato Howard

Geneva Preston

Miho Welton

Ashley List

Jason Moan

Kevin Meany

Dan LaBarre

Andrew Allaby

Elizabeth Fernandez

Bret Foster

Department of Natural Resources, Division of Mining, Land and Water, Northern Region Lands Section

Dianna Leinberger

Nikki Potter

Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

Ian Thomas

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection (DOF) is grateful to those collaborators who provided content, feedback, and attention to this revision process. Many thanks to the Tanana Valley State Forest Citizen’s Advisory Council for their time and participation in the planning and review process, and to all the Alaskans who made time to participate in public meetings and share your comments and help us refine this document.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction 1

 Purpose of the Tanana Valley State Forest 1

 Purpose of the Management Plan..... 2

 Relationship to other Management Plans..... 2

 Process Used To Develop the Plan 5

Chapter 2: Forestwide Management Policies 7

 Introduction..... 7

 A. Cultural Resources..... 9

 B. Water Resources 12

 C. Riparian and Instream Flow Management..... 14

 D. Fish and Wildlife Habitat 18

 E. Forest Health and Climate Change 24

 F. Carbon Offset Projects..... 29

 G. Hazardous Fuels and Prescribed Fire Management 30

 H. Grazing and Agricultural Activities 33

 I. Private Land 36

 J. Scientific Resources..... 36

 K. Subsurface Resources..... 40

 L. Timber Management Including Forest Resources Protection 45

 M. Non-Timber Forest Products 56

 N. Tourism 57

 O. Recreation..... 60

 P. Trails 65

 Q. Public Access 68

 R. Transportation..... 71

Chapter 3: Management Policies for Each Management Unit 78

 Introduction..... 78

 Management Unit 1: Dugan Hills 79

 Management Unit 2: Lower Tanana..... 84

 Management Unit 3: Tatalina River 90

Management Unit 4: Chatanika River, Cache Creek, Goldstream Valley 94

Management Unit 5: Nenana Ridge 100

Management Unit 6: Chena 107

Management Unit 7: Salcha 113

Management Unit 8: Shaw Creek..... 119

Management Unit 9: Rapid Creek 125

Management Unit 10: Gerstle River..... 115

Management Unit 11: Healy River 122

Management Unit 12: Tower Bluffs 128

Management Unit 13: Porcupine Creek..... 134

Management Unit 14: Tok River 139

Chapter 4: Implementation 146

 Agency Land Management Responsibilities..... 146

 Citizens’ Advisory Committee for the Tanana Valley State Forest..... 146

 Process for Reviewing Applications for Permits, Leases, Disposals, and Easements..... 149

 Plan Modification 150

 Forestwide Implementation Activities 151

 Recommendations for Additions and Withdrawals from the Tanana Valley State Forest 153

 Research Needs 163

Appendices..... 1

 Appendix A: Glossary of Terms..... 1

 Appendix B: Finding of Incompatibility 10

 Appendix C: Mineral Orders 12

 Appendix D: Bonanza Creek Experimental Forest Lease..... 16

 Appendix E: Research Natural Area Report..... 20

 Appendix F: Commercial Forest types of the Tanana Valley State Forest 31

 Appendix G: Bibliography 34