

Growing Alaska's State Forest System:

Gauging Community Interest in Establishing a Kenai Peninsula State Forest



Division of Forestry & Fire Protection
Alaska Department of Natural Resources



Purpose



Why We're Here

- ✓ To explore the idea of a Kenai Peninsula State Forest.
- ✓ To explain what state forest designation would mean for long-term forest management, access, and stewardship.
- ✓ To gather your feedback as we assess community support before any legislative proposal.



Purpose



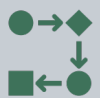
Important Clarifications



Only the Legislature can create a state forest.



Public input will inform whether DFFP develops a proposal in the future.



No active proposal at this time — this is an exploratory process.

Purpose



Why Now?

- State priority to expand active forest management and reforestation work.
- Leadership interest in strengthening Alaska's forest products industry.
- State forests support reforestation and long-term forest management more effectively than general state lands.
- Public input at this early stage will guide whether a proposal should move forward.



Current State Forest System



Alaska's Designated State Forests

- **Haines State Forest (1982)** – 286,000 acres
- **Tanana Valley State Forest (1983)** – 1.8 million acres
- **Southeast State Forest (2010)** – 46,592 acres
- Together represent ~2% of Alaska's state-owned land
- 2025 proposal: expand TVSF by ~600,000 acres



What is a State Forest?



- ✓ Designated by the Alaska Legislature.
- ✓ Permanently retained in public ownership.
- ✓ Managed by DFFP for **timber production, regeneration & active management** that is compatible with other uses.
- ✓ Governed by a **forest management plan** developed with public, stakeholder & agency input.
- ✓ Regulated under **Forest Resources and Practices Act** to protect fish habitat & water quality.
- ✓ Managed by multiple use and sustained yield principles.

What is a State Forest?



Multiple Use: Allows for **other beneficial uses** of public land and resources.

- ✓ Motorized and non-motorized access
- ✓ Hunting & fishing
- ✓ Recreation & tourism
- ✓ Trapping & gathering
- ✓ Subsistence practices
- ✓ Forest products harvesting & wood utilization
- ✓ Mineral/resource development (if in the best interest of the state)



Why Have State Forests?



State Forests Provide Long-Term Certainty

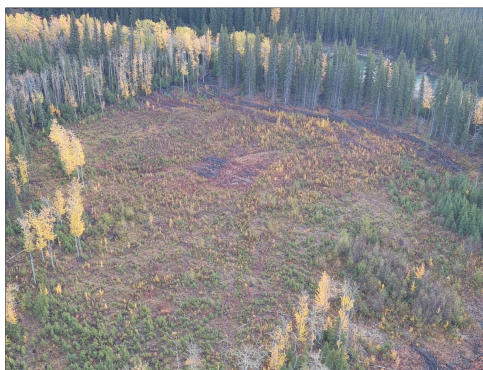
- ✓ Retains lands for long-term forest stewardship
- ✓ Provides certainty for investments in reforestation, forest roads & road infrastructure (e.g. bridges, culverts, etc.)
- ✓ Supports local jobs, timber markets, and working forest economies
- ✓ Sustains healthy, resilient forests for future generations



Why Have State Forests?



State Forests = A Working Forest for the Next 100+ Years



How is a State Forest Managed?



Forest Management Plan – Primary Framework

- A forest management plan must be developed within 3 years if a state forest is created.
- Defines management guidance specific to the area (e.g., Kenai Peninsula).
- Describes how to meet objectives in more detail than statute & regulation.
- Public input occurs during scoping and draft review.
- May include a Citizens Advisory Committee

How is a State Forest Managed?



Multiple Use + Sustained Yield

- Managed under multiple use & sustained yield.
- Cannot undermine either principle.
- Required by Alaska Constitution & FRPA.
- Must accommodate resource uses valued by Alaskans.



How is a State Forest Managed?



Active management may include:

- ✓ Timber harvest
- ✓ Reforestation & planting seedlings
- ✓ Pre-commercial & commercial thinning
- ✓ Road construction for access & wildfire response
- ✓ Fuel breaks & wildfire mitigation
- ✓ Habitat enhancement & age-class diversity



How is a State Forest Managed?



Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act (FRPA)

- Alaska's forest management law (AS 41.17).
- Governs commercial timber harvest, access, and reforestation on state, private & municipal land.
- Federal lands must meet or exceed FRPA standards.
- Regulating agencies are ADF&G, DEC, and DFFP (DNR).



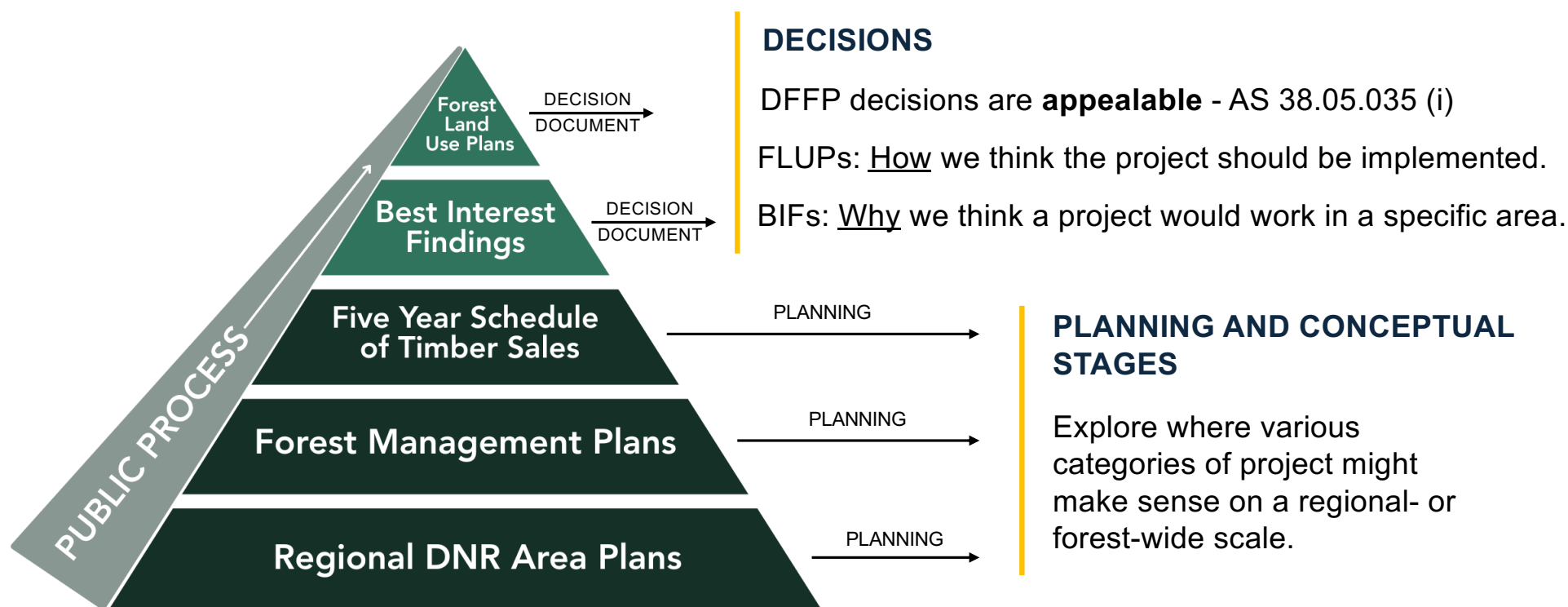
Why it Matters

- ✓ Balances timber industry economic needs with habitat & water quality protection.
- ✓ Protects fish habitat & water quality.
- ✓ Ensures timely reforestation.
- ✓ Provides clear expectations for landowners, operators, and agencies.

How is a State Forest Managed?



Public Process & Transparency - Public Review at Every Step



Location Considerations



Kenai Area Plan (2001)

Defines land classifications & management intent.
DNR planning is public and agency-reviewed.

Land Classifications within KAP include:

Forest

Agricultural

Grazing

Heritage Resources

Reserved use

Public Recreation

Water Resources

Resource Management

Coal

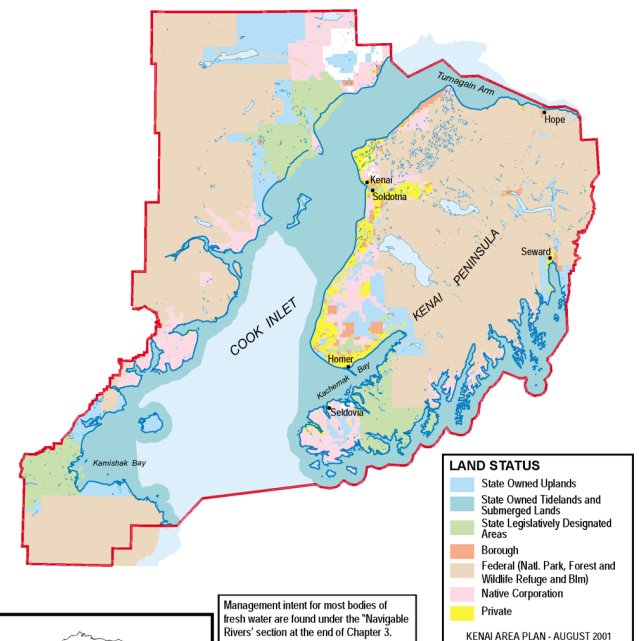
Wildlife Habitat

Material

Settlement

Transportation Corridor

Map 1.1 KENAI AREA PLAN - BOUNDARY



Location Considerations



What lands would be considered for a state forest?

Potential consideration would focus on:

- ✓ **Forest classified lands**
- ✓ **Resource Management classified lands**

Would ***not* consider** lands already reserved for special use:

- **State Parks**
- **Habitat Management Areas**
- **Other Legislatively Designated Areas (LDAs)**

Location Considerations



Why These Lands?

Lands are evaluated based on:

- ✓ Existing forest classification
- ✓ Past timber activity
- ✓ Site productivity characteristics
- ✓ Reforestation & regeneration potential
- ✓ Beetle-impacted stands needing renewal

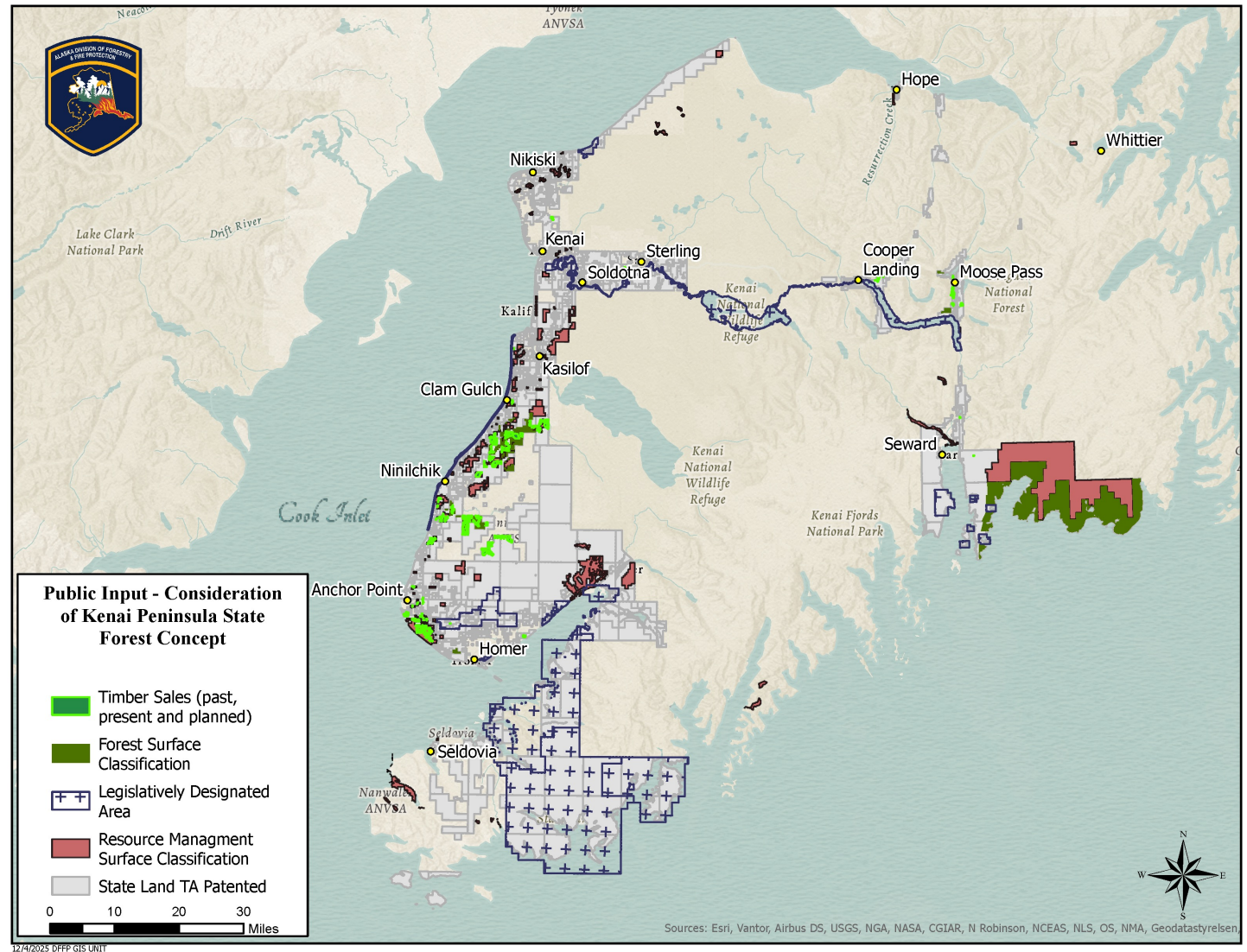
Goal: Assess long-term suitability for a working forest.

Maps

- This is **not** a proposed state forest boundary

Maps shows locations of:

- General State land
- State land classified for forest and resource management
- Previously conducted forest management activities

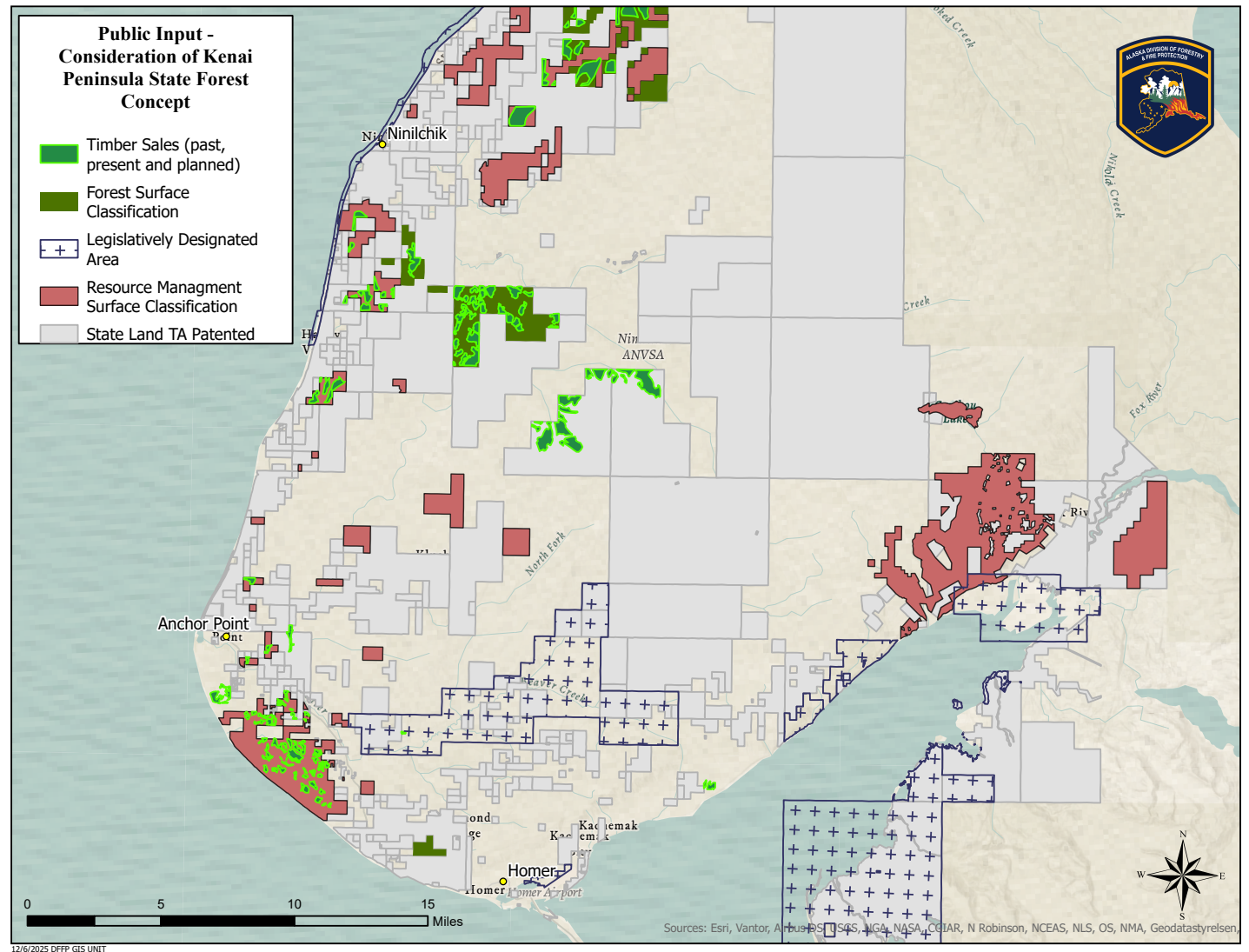


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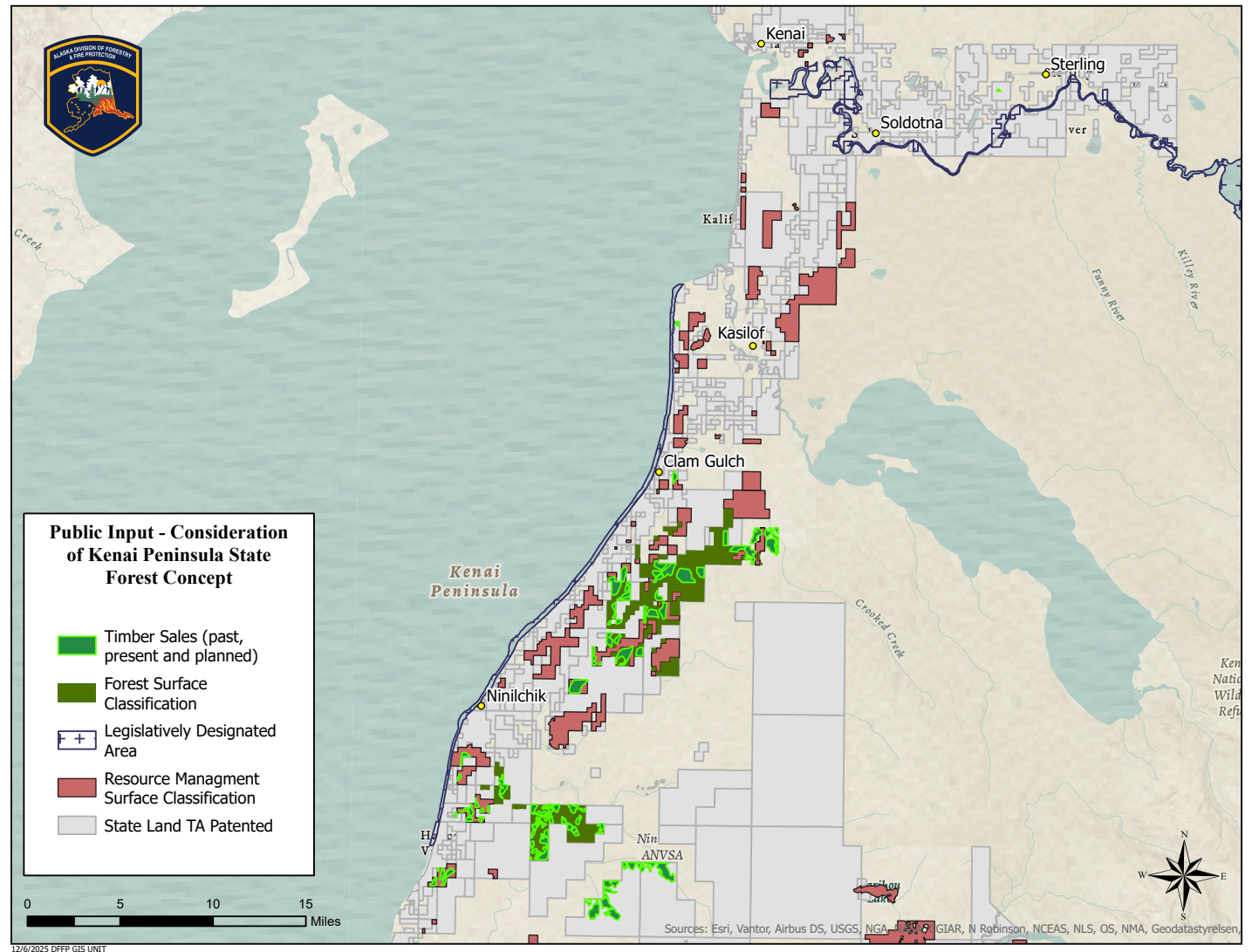


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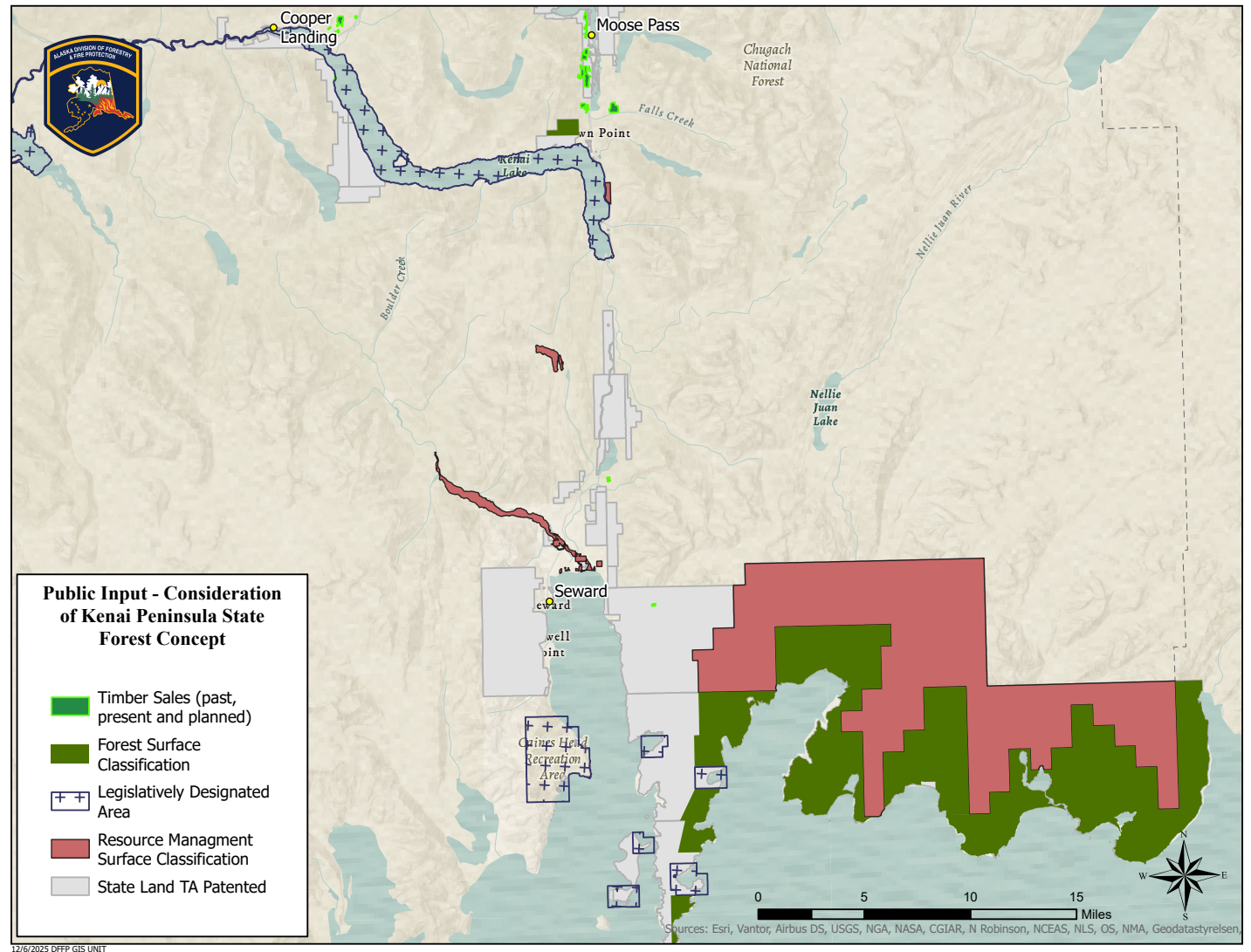


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What Happens Next?



- There is **no active proposal** at this time.
- Next steps **depend on public input**.
- If there is community, stakeholder & industry support, DFFP may consider developing a proposal for the Legislature.
- Only the Legislature can designate a state forest.

How You Can Participate



Submit a Comment!

- ✓ Attend public meetings and share information with community
- ✓ Ask questions + share your perspective
- ✓ Submit written input (or verbal at public meetings)
- ✓ Subscribe for updates & notices



Online Public Notice

[Http://notice.alaska.gov/221814](http://notice.alaska.gov/221814)

Send written comments to

STATEFORESTS@ALASKA.GOV

**Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection
ATTN: Special Projects Coordinator
550 W. 7th Ave. Ste. 1450
Anchorage, AK 99501**



State Forest Proposal Website

[https://forestry.alaska.gov/proposals/
stateforestexpansion](https://forestry.alaska.gov/proposals/stateforestexpansion)

Thank You



Division of Forestry & Fire Protection
Department of Natural Resources

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