

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF FORESTRY & FIRE PROTECTION



FAIRBANKS-DELTA AREA FORESTRY

**FINAL BEST INTEREST FINDING AND
DECISION FOR**

**Cache Creek Mixed 2025 Timber Sales
NC-1984-F, NC-1989-F, NC-1991-F, NC-1996-F,
NC-1998-F, NC-1999-F, & NC-2069-F**

AUGUST 2025

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Abbreviations

AAC	Alaska Administrative Code
ADEC	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
ADF&G	Alaska Department of Fish and Game
ADNR	Alaska Department of Natural Resources
AS	Alaska Statute
BIF	Best interest finding
CCF	100 cubic feet (timber volume)
DBH	Diameter at breast height (4.5 feet above root collar)
DMLW	Division of Mining, Land and Water
DOF	Division of Forestry & Fire Protection
ETAP	Eastern Tanana Area Plan
FLUP	Forest Land Use Plan
FRPA	Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act
FYSTS	Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales
MBF	Thousand board feet
OHA	Office of History and Archeology
ROW	Right-of-way
TVSF	Tanana Valley State Forest
TVSF MP	Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan

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I. PROPOSED ACTION

DOF is proposing to offer for sale over the next five years approximately 208 acres of mature birch forest and mixed birch & spruce forest from state lands in the Cache Creek Forest Road area. The volume to be offered totals approximately 1,746 Cords (1,571 CCF) of birch & spruce fuelwood and 1,307 MBF (3,189 CCF) of spruce sawlogs. DOF intends to sell the timber as approximately seven commercial sales through the competitive bid ([AS 38.05.120](#)) and/or small negotiated sale ([AS 38.05.115](#)) process. Some of the larger proposed areas may be divided into smaller units, and some small units < 10 acres may be added within the provided legal description should market demand exceed the 7 planned sale areas. For this timber sale, the PBIF and Draft FLUP were issued for review at the same time. The lands covered by this BIF appeared in the 2024 Fairbanks-Delta Five Year Schedule of Timber Sales (FYSTS) or are less than 10 acres (sales under 160 acres are exempt from FYSTS requirements as described in AS 38.05.113)

The management objectives for the proposed timber sales are:

- Provide raw material for the forest industry to produce timber products that provide benefits to the state and local economy through employment opportunities.
- Harvest the commercial sawtimber and fuelwood before a significant decrease in vigor occurs and return the site to a young, productive mixed forest.
- Provide firewood for the residential heating needs of interior Alaska communities.
- Promote multiple use management that provides for the production, utilization, and replenishment of timber resources while perpetuating personal, commercial, and other beneficial non-timber uses of forest resources.

II. STATUTORY AND REGULATORY AUTHORITY

The Division is taking this action under the authority of

- AS 38.05.035(e) Best Interest Finding;
- AS 38.05.110-120 and 11 AAC 71, Timber Sale Statutes and Regulations; and
- AS 41.17.010-950 and 11 AAC 95 Forest Resources and Practices Statutes and Regulations.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD

The Division will maintain an administrative record regarding the decision of whether or not to proceed with the action as proposed. This record will be maintained at the DOF's Fairbanks-Delta Area Office filed as **NC-1984-F, NC-1989-F, NC-1991-F, NC-1996-F, NC-1998-F, NC-1999-F, & NC-2069-F**.

IV. SCOPE OF DECISION

This final best interest finding (BIF) completes step three of a six-step process to design, sell, and administer timber sales. This BIF covers the sale of approximately 208 acres of mature birch forest and mixed birch & spruce forest from state lands in the Cache Creek Forest Road area depicted in the attached maps (see Appendix A). The following list summarizes the overall process:

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Step 1: Regional planning. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) develops area plans and state forest management plans to designate appropriate uses for state land, classify the land accordingly, and establish management guidelines for multiple use. These plans determine where timber sales are an allowed use, and what other uses must be considered when designing and implementing sales. Subsequent land use decisions must be consistent with the area plans. The area in this BIF is covered by the Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan (2025 Update), or the DNR's Eastern Tanana Area Plan (ETAP). The finding also considers the Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan. The Fairbanks North Star Borough Community Wildfire Protection Plan applies to this area, and the BIF is consistent with these plans.

Step 2: Five-year Schedule of Timber Sales (AS 38.05.113). The Fairbanks-Delta Area Office prepares a Five-year Schedule of Timber Sales every other year. The Schedule identifies proposed sales, including their location, volume, and main access routes. The Five-Year Schedules are scoping documents that provide an opportunity for public, agency, and industry to identify potential issues and areas of interest for further consideration in the best interest finding and Forest Land Use Plan. A proposed timber sale greater than 160 acres must appear in at least one of the two Five-year Schedules preceding the sale.

Step 3: Best Interest Finding. DOF must adopt a final BIF before selling timber. A best interest finding is the decision document that:

- Ensures that the best interest of the State will be served by this proposed action,
- Establishes the overall area within which the timber sale may occur,
- Determines the amount of timber that will be offered for sale and the duration of the sale,
- Sets the overall harvest and reforestation strategy for the sale area,
- Determines whether the sale proposal complies with the Constitutional requirement to manage for sustained yield by evaluating the amount of timber in the sale and the annual allowable cut for the affected area,
- Selects the appropriate method of sale (i.e., competitive or negotiated sale), and
- Determines the appraisal method that will be used to determine the sale price.

DOF issued a Preliminary BIF on **6/13/2025** covering the decision to sell approximately 208 acres of mature birch forest and mixed birch & spruce forest from state lands in the Cache Creek Forest Road area in a combination of competitive and negotiated sales for commercial use. DOF considered all written comments received during the 32-day review period. Responses to the comments are listed in Appendix A.

This document is the final BIF for **Cache Creek Mixed 2025 Timber Sales**. An eligible person affected by this decision, and who provided timely written comment or public hearing testimony to the department, may appeal the decision to the DNR Commissioner per AS 44.37.011 and 11 AAC 02.

Step 4: Forest Land Use Plans (AS 38.05.112). Prior to authorizing harvest of timber on any area greater than 10 acres, the DOF must adopt a site-specific Forest Land Use Plan (FLUP) for the harvest area. DOF issued a draft FLUP concurrently with the PBIF and will adopt the final FLUP following review of comments. FLUPs specify the site, size, timing, and harvest methods for harvest unit within the sale area. FLUPs also address site-specific requirements for access

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construction and maintenance, reforestation, and multiple use management. FLUPs are based on additional field work, agency and community consultation, and site-specific analyses by the DOF, and are subject to public and agency review.

Step 5: Timber sales and contracts. Following adoption of the final BIF, and completion of the FLUP, DOF will offer the timber for sale by auctioning competitive sales and/or negotiating some sales with purchasers. The Division will sign a contract with the winning bidder for each sale. The contract will include stipulations to ensure compliance with the best interest finding, FLUP, and statutory requirements.

Step 6: Sale administration. DOF will administer the timber sales and conduct field inspections to ensure compliance with the final BIF, FLUP, timber sale contract, and applicable laws, including the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act and regulations (AS 41.17 and 11 AAC 95), and forest management statutes and regulations in AS 38.05 and 11 AAC 71.

I. PROJECT LOCATION, LAND STATUS, AND DESCRIPTION

A. Location

The proposed sales are located approximately 16 miles northwest of the Fairbanks Area Forestry office in the Cache Creek Forest Road area accessed via Murphy Dome Road. The proposed sales are accessed via spur roads from between 7-10 miles down Cache Creek Road.

- **NC-1984-F / Cache Point Mixed:** a 2-unit 26-acre mixed sale located 7.5 miles down Cache Creek Road, then 0.9 miles down an existing spur. This proposed sale is within Section 34, T1N, R4W, Fairbanks Meridian.
- **NC-1989-F / Keystone Creek Mixed:** a 104-acre 3-unit mixed sale located 10.1 miles down Cache Creek Road, then 3.0 – 4.4 miles up the Keystone Creek spur on the uphill side. This proposed sale is within Sections 11 & 15, T1N, R4W, F.M.
- **NC-1991-F / Fortune Creek Mixed #1:** a 15-acre mixed sale located 10.1 miles down Cache Creek Road, then 0.4 miles down the Fortune Creek spur on the downhill side. This proposed sale is within Section 29, T1N, R4W, F.M.
- **NC-1996-F / Cache 8 Mile Birch:** a 10-acre birch sale located 7.8 miles down Cache Creek Road on the uphill side. This proposed sale is within Section 27, T1N, R4W, F.M.
- **NC-1998-F / Keystone's End Spruce:** a 27-acre spruce sale located 10.1 miles down Cache Creek Road, then 4.0 miles up the Keystone Creek spur on the downhill side. This proposed sale is within Section 27, T1N, R4W, F.M.
- **NC-1999-F / Fortune Creek Mixed #2:** a 19-acre mixed sale located 10.1 miles down Cache Creek Road, then 1.0 miles up the Fortune Creek spur. This proposed sale is within Sections 29-30, T1N, R4W, F.M.
- **NC-2069-F / Cache Creek 9 Mile Spruce:** an 8-acre spruce sale located 8.7 miles down Cache Creek Road, then 0.4 miles up an unnamed spur. This proposed sale is within Sections 11 & 15, T1N, R4W, F.M.

The sale areas are shown on the attached map.

B. Title status

The proposed sale areas are owned and managed by the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources. The acquisition for the land is based on General Selection 29, and the title transferred by Patent 50-73-0017, except **NC-1991-F** and **NC-1999-F**. These two sale areas were acquired in General Selection 27, and the title transferred by Patent 50-73-0017. There are no known title restrictions in these areas.

C. Land use planning, classification, and management intent

The proposed sale areas are mostly within or immediately adjacent to the legislatively-designated Tanana Valley State Forest (AS 41.17.400) as part of Subunit 4C, and are managed according to the Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan, 2025 Update. Subunit 4C will “be managed for dispersed and developed recreation and for commercial and personal use timber production.” Unit 4C will remain open to mineral location and leasing. These sales are

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all within the Cache Creek Management Area and are compatible with the management guidelines described in the TVSF MP.

However, the following three sale areas are on General State Land managed by the DNR through the Eastern Tanana Area Plan (ETAP):

- **NC-1984-F / Cache Point Mixed** and **NC-1991-F / Fortune Creek Mixed #1**: these proposed sales are within ETAP unit F-20, which is classified for Agriculture uses. Per ETAP, “Forestry activities are also appropriate within this area and may occur independently of or can precede an agricultural land disposal...The Division of Agriculture should be consulted prior to any forest management activity, especially commercial timber harvest.” Previous DNR timber sales have been sold within and adjacent to Unit F-20 and appear to be a compatible use.
- **NC-1998-F / Keystone’s End Spruce**: 23 of 27 acres of this proposed sale are within ETAP unit F-17, which is classified for Habitat & Recreation uses. Harvest of this unit will provide early successional browse for wildlife, promoting diverse habitat mosaics. Recreation use within this steep-walled valley is similar to adjacent areas of the State Forest immediately west and north of the sale, though increased road maintenance and upgrades may result in increased public visitation. Previous DNR timber sales have been sold within 100 feet of the proposed sale and appear to be a compatible use.

The Interagency Fire Management Plan includes these lands in the ‘Full’ protection category.

D. Current access and land use

All proposed sales are accessed via the Cache Creek Forest Road system, which is connected to Murphy Dome Road. Except **NC-1984-F**, **NC-1991-F**, and **NC-1998-F**, all sales are within the legislatively-designated boundaries of the Tanana Valley State Forest. **NC-1984-F**, **NC-1991-F**, and **NC-1998-F** are on General DNR Land, and these forested areas currently experience similar public use as adjacent portions of the State Forest.

The Lincoln Creek Subdivision, which includes several dozen private parcels with residences, is within a few miles of the proposed sales. The closest proposed timber sale is **NC-1998-F**, which is 0.44 miles from and 500 feet elevation below Abraham Road.

Some private and FNSB properties utilize segments of the Cache Creek Forest Road for access, particularly between miles 3.0 and 4.7.

The University of Alaska owns and manages a half section of land 200 feet northeast of NC-1984-F Unit 2, and conducted timber sales in the area in 2015.

Existing land uses consist of recreational (motorized and non-motorized) access, dog-mushing, hunting, trapping, and personal use and commercial timber harvest.

E. Background and description of proposal

1. Background: These 7 proposed sales are within or accessed via the Tanana Valley State Forest Subunit 4C. According to the TVSFMP, Subunit 4C shall be “will be managed for dispersed and developed recreation and for commercial and personal use timber production”. Where the proposed sales are on adjacent General DNR Land, the timber sales as proposed appear to be a compatible use. DOF is offering these sales with the intent to maintain a productive working forest while continuing to provide habitat, recreation, and scenic values.
2. Timber volume and sustained yield: The proposed project area has 208 acres of mature birch forest and mixed birch & spruce forest, and the volume to be offered is estimated at approximately 1,746 Cords (1,571 CCF) of birch & spruce fuelwood and 1,307 MBF (3,189 CCF) of spruce sawlogs. Final harvest unit boundaries and timber volume estimates will be determined upon completion of sale preparation activities. The Fairbanks Area Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) is calculated at approximately 4,606 acres of harvest annually. The volumes proposed in these harvests alone, and in combination with timber volumes from other proposed timber sales, will be within the Annual Allowable Cut and comply with sustained yield requirements.
3. Harvest unit design: The 208 acres to be offered will be split between at least seven individual sales, each with one planned cutting unit except **NC-1989-F**. This sale is proposed as three discrete cutting units between 27-45 acres each. Cutting units buffer stand type boundaries and existing harvest units to retain an adequate seed source of mature birch and spruce. Patches of nonmerchantable advanced regeneration and significant snags important for wildlife habitat will be preserved as much as possible. Harvesting will be by the whole tree yarding system. Slash disposal at the landings will be by burning or by salvage for fuelwood use.
 - a. Reforestation and site preparation: The sale area will be reforested in compliance with the Forest Resources and Practices regulations (11 AAC 95.375-.390). The preferred reforestation method for birch and white spruce rotational harvest is via natural seeding from adjacent trees. The harvest unit design described above retains adjacent mature forest to provide an adequate seed source, and birch stump sprouting is expected to contribute a share of regeneration. Mechanical ground scarification will be required on portions of sales < 20% slope to expose mineral soil microsites for birch seedling establishment and limit competition from grasses. Reforestation will be assessed five years post-harvest with a regeneration survey if the site appears to have marginal seedling establishment. If surveys indicate inadequately stocked areas (less than a minimum of 450 evenly distributed trees per acre of commercial species), additional silvicultural actions may be performed to intervene and improve stocking.

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- b. Access design and construction: Access design, construction, and maintenance will comply with the Forest Resources and Practices regulations (11 AAC 95.285-.355).
- Primary access to the sale areas will involve use and maintenance of the Cache Creek Forest Road, with construction of spurs and landings within sale boundaries. Spur road construction up to 0.25 miles is expected to reach the boundaries of **NC-1984-F**, **NC-1989-F** Unit 3, and **NC-1999-F**.
 - The planned access for these timber sales will solely utilize the Cache Creek Forest Road system and associated forest road spurs, and no logging traffic shall utilize the Lincoln Creek Subdivision roads (e.g., Sherman, Abraham, Seward, Emancipation, Reconstruction).
 - It is not anticipated that access to proposed sales would require a Fish Habitat Permit issued by ADF&G for a winter stream crossing (AS 16.05.871 (b)) due to their landscape positions.
 - Between individual sale harvests, spur roads will be inactive and maintained in accordance with 11 AAC 95.315 (f).
 - Generally, DOF applies for public easement rights-of-way for long-term routes, but access spur roads do not qualify.
- c. Appraisal method: DOF will appraise the timber value in compliance with 11 AAC 71.092. Commercial sales will be based on transactional evidence and market demand and DOF will apply a value for those products.

F. Resources and management

1. Timber.

- a. Timber stand composition and structure: Proposed timber sales include mature productive upland forest with mixed birch and white spruce forest.
- **NC-1984-F / Cache Point Mixed**: 26-acre mixed stand in two units. This stand is composed of primarily white spruce sawtimber and birch fuelwood with a minor component of Aspen. This stand has an average estimated age at breast height of 149 years, and the spruce component and degree of canopy closure is highest on the southmost portions of the sale. Typical spruce diameters are between 14-20" and 90 ft tall, with an estimated basal area of 80 ft² /acre. Typical birch diameters were 11-13" and 70 feet tall, with an estimated basal area of 15 ft² /acre. North and east of this proposed sale area are 7 past DOF sales totaling 235 acres that were harvested between the late 1980s and early 2000s, principally under a partial cut harvest system that left significant standing timber. Timber remaining in those harvested areas is largely birch at the very end of its rotation age with accumulating health and form defects.
 - **NC-1989-F / Keystone Creek Mixed**: a 104-acre 3-unit mixed stand with patches of denser mature spruce forest with a closed canopy, surrounded by mature open canopy birch and spruce forest. The stand has an estimated basal area of 70 ft² / acre of spruce sawlogs and 30 ft² /acre of mixed fuelwood. The average age of cored spruce trees was 171 years at breast height. Birch timber

is senescing with high levels of form and health defects. White spruce site indices (average height expected at 100 years) were generally good, between 70-80. Spruce trees averaged 15 inches diameter at breast height (dbh) and 80 feet tall. Birch trees averaged 12 inches dbh and 65 feet tall.

- **NC-1991-F / Fortune Creek Mixed #1:** a 15-acre mixed stand with an estimated basal area of 60 ft² / acre of mixed birch and spruce fuelwood and 30 ft² /acre of sawlog spruce. Spruce sawlog trees averaged 15 inches dbh and 80 feet tall. Birch trees averaged 12 inches dbh and 70 feet tall. Cored spruce trees indicate a stand age around 160 years at breast height, and large aspen and birch appear to be of this cohort. A younger cohort of birch and white spruce fuelwood is estimated around 60 years (the 1958 Murphy Dome W-5 fire likely partially impinged on the sale area). White spruce site indices (average height expected at 100 years) were quite favorable, between 80-90.
 - **NC-1996-F / Cache 8 Mile Birch:** a 10-acre birch stand with an estimated basal area of 90 ft² / acre of birch fuelwood. Average diameter of birch was 11 inches with an average height of 65 feet, and first fork was typically above 40 feet. A small component of mature spruce and senescing aspen is also present. The stand has an open canopy with significant snags and downed logs, as well as spreading alder shrubs in canopy gaps.
 - **NC-1998-F / Keystone's End Spruce:** a 27-acre closed canopy spruce stand with a lesser component of mixed spruce and birch fuelwood. Nearby harvested stands have moderate volumes of white spruce sawtimber (14-22 CCF/acre).
 - **NC-1999-F / Fortune Creek Mixed #2:** a 19-acre mixed stand with an estimated basal area of 70 ft² / acre of birch and 20 ft² /acre of spruce sawlogs. Spruce sawlog trees averaged 14 inches dbh and 80 feet tall. Birch trees averaged 10 inches dbh and 70 feet tall. Cored spruce trees indicate a stand age around 160 years at breast height, and large aspen and birch appear to be of this cohort. A younger cohort of birch and white spruce fuelwood is estimated around 60 years (the 1958 Murphy Dome W-5 fire likely partially impinged on the sale area). White spruce site indices (average height expected at 100 years) were quite favorable, between 80-90.
 - **NC-2069-F / Cache Creek 9 Mile Spruce:** an 8-acre closed canopy spruce stand with an estimated basal area of 130 ft² / acre of spruce sawlogs and 30 ft² /acre of spruce fuelwood.
- b. Stand silvics: Regeneration of birch occurs principally from seed-fall spread by wind, and secondarily from root-collar sprouting. White spruce regeneration occurs principally from seed-fall spread by wind onto favorable microsites. Data and research on regeneration and growth characteristics of these species are compiled within the Resource Analysis of the Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan (TVSFMP). The harvest and reforestation systems available in Interior Alaska are also reviewed and listed in the Resource Analysis. The results of the public and agency discussions for harvest and reforestation are discussed in the TVSFMP. Silvicultural harvest systems that facilitate even-aged (natural) management are generally preferred. They mimic the ecological impact of wildfire and other

disturbances and result in the greatest increase in site productivity. Even-aged management is normally accomplished through clear cuts, patch cuts and heavy partial cuts (such as seed tree or shelterwood systems), which opens up the site to maximum solar gain. This results in the greatest production of both young hardwood that is important to wildlife and the spruce understory valuable years later as timber. Even-aged management techniques are utilized to provide young, vigorously growing stands in juxtaposition to older, undisturbed stands. Such placement of harvest units can optimize natural seeding and the edge effect.

These stands are assessed to be at or just past ideal rotation age, and these productive sites would benefit from a vigorous new stand being established. Except for **NC-1996-F**, these proposed sales shall be harvested via a clearcut system, where all merchantable timber is removed at time of harvest. **NC-1996-F** shall be harvested as a heavy partial cut for birch. Removal of the overstory in conjunction with equipment operation, should provide a high-light and favorable seedbed environment favorable for birch and white spruce to naturally seed and establish, along with adjacent mature stands to serve as a seed source.

- c. Topography and Soils: The proposed sales will be designed and managed to prevent significant impairment of the land and water with respect to renewable resources (AS 41.17.060(c)(5)).
- **NC-1984-F / Cache Point Mixed**: this proposed sale is on the toe of a south-facing slope between 575-675 feet of elevation. The slope is between 8-15%, with a hogback-and-swale topography across the contours. The soil type is mainly Minto silt-loam 7-12% slope. This deep silt soil type is rated as moderately well-drained with a medium run-off potential; permafrost and bedrock are not typically within 80 inches of the surface. The most upslope portions of the stand are underlain by Fairbanks silt-loam 7-12% slope, which is similar to Minto silt-loam with the exception of a deeper water table and is rated as well-drained.
 - **NC-1989-F / Keystone Creek Mixed**: this proposed 3-unit sale is located on a south-facing slope above the Keystone Creek valley.
 - **Unit 1** is between 950-1,250 feet in elevation with slopes between 20-30%. Unit 1 has typical hogback-and-swale topography descending across the contours,
 - **Unit 2** is between 950-1,250 feet in elevation with slopes between 20-30%. Unit 2 is centered around an ephemeral drainage with a steep headwall (<50%) marking the upslope boundary.
 - **Unit 3** is between 1,100-1,350 feet of elevation with 15-20% slopes. Unit 3 has typical hogback-and-swale topography descending across the contours,The sale area is mostly underlain by Fairbanks silt-loam 12-20% slopes. This deep silt soil type is rated as well-drained with medium run-off potential; permafrost and bedrock are not typically within 80 inches of the surface. However, the upper (midslope) portions of Units 1 and 2 are underlain by Steese silt-loam 20-30% slopes. This soil type is rated as well-

drained with high run-off potential; weathered bedrock may be encountered within 40 inches of the surface.

- **NC-1991-F / Fortune Creek Mixed #1:** this proposed sale is on the toe of a south-facing slope above Fortune Creek between 725-800 feet of elevation. The slope is between 8-12% and generally smooth and free of microtopography. The sale area is underlain by Fairbanks silt-loam 12-20% slopes. This deep silt soil type is rated as well-drained with medium run-off potential; permafrost and bedrock are not typically within 80 inches of the surface.
- **NC-1996-F / Cache 8 Mile Birch:** this proposed sale is midslope between 825-1,000 feet of elevation. The west-facing slope is 20-25% and generally smooth and free of microtopography, though some incipient hogback-and-swale topography is present on the lowest portions of the sale. The sale area is underlain by Fairbanks silt-loam, gullied, 7-70% slopes. This deep silt soil type is rated as well-drained with medium run-off potential; permafrost and bedrock are not typically within 80 inches of the surface.
- **NC-1998-F / Keystone's End Spruce:** this proposed sale is located on a south-facing slope above the Keystone Creek valley between 975-1,100 feet in elevation. The slope is between 10-20% with hogback-and-swale topography descending across the contours. The sale area is principally underlain by Fairbanks silt-loam 12-20%. This deep silt soil type is rated as well-drained with medium run-off potential; permafrost and bedrock are not typically within 80 inches of the surface.
- **NC-1999-F / Fortune Creek Mixed #2:** this proposed sale is on the toe of a south-facing slope above Fortune Creek between 750-850 feet of elevation. The slope is between 10-15% and generally smooth and free of microtopography. The sale area is underlain by Fairbanks silt-loam 12-20% slopes. This deep silt soil type is rated as well-drained with medium run-off potential; permafrost and bedrock are not typically within 80 inches of the surface.
- **NC-2069-F / Cache Creek 9 Mile Spruce:** this proposed sale is midslope on a spur ridge between 900-1,000 feet of elevation. The west-facing slope is a steady 15% and generally smooth and free of microtopography. The sale area is underlain by Steese silt-loam 12-30% slopes. This soil type is rated as well-drained with medium-to-high run-off potential; weathered bedrock may be encountered within 40 inches of the surface.

2. Agriculture. The proposed sales are not anticipated to have any impact on current or future agricultural activity in the area, and any effects of any timber sale operations for agricultural uses will be minimal. NC-1984-F and NC-1991-F are within ETAP Unit F-20, which is designated for agricultural uses. As discussed in **Section V.C. Land Use Planning** above, this timber sale proposal appears to be a non-conflicting compatible use.
3. Wildlife habitat and harvest. Should an eagle nest tree be discovered in the sale area, the nest tree will be marked on the ground and a 330-foot no-harvest radius will be established to protect the tree. No critical wildlife habitat has been identified for this area in the TVSFMP or the ETAP.

Treatments proposed for this stand are projected to enhance habitat conditions for moose, voles, hares, and ultimately, lynx, marten and fox. In the past, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation have recommended managing for as much diversity as possible when prescribing harvest unit size, shape and position to mimic the results of wildfire or other stand replacement phases such as insect outbreaks or flood events. To accomplish these objectives snags will be retained wherever feasible to provide late-successional wildlife habitat for hole nesting birds, woodpeckers, small mammals, and other species requiring perching habitat. The unit will be laid out with an uneven edge, along and between timber types. This will create varied edge effect that is beneficial to many wildlife species.

4. Fish Habitat, water resources, and water quality. The proposed sales will be designed and managed to protect fish habitat and water quality in compliance with the Forest Resources and Practices Act and regulations (AS 41.17 and 11 AAC 95). DOF will ensure Best Management Practices are being adhered to by requiring a complete logging plan prior to the start of any harvesting, conducting on-site inspections during logging operations and a final inspection prior to terminating the timber sale.

There are no catalogued anadromous waters in the proposed sale area. **NC-1991-F** and **NC-1999-F** are in the Fortune Creek valley approximately 1,300 feet away from the streamcourse. **NC-1989-F** and **NC-1998-F** are in the Keystone Creek valley at least 400 feet away from the streamcourse. Keystone and Fortune Creeks join to form Cache Creek, and all three are considered FRPA Type III-A waterbodies (non-glacial with resident fish, > 3 feet wide); harvest is restricted within 100 feet of Type III-A waterbodies. **NC-1984-F**, **NC-1996-F**, and **NC-2069-F** are near at least 500 feet distant from distinct seasonal drainages in the hills above Cache Creek.

5. Recreation, tourism, and scenic resources. The State lands within and near TVSF Subunit 4C have high recreational value because of their diversity and easy access from Fairbanks. The Cache Creek Road system sees extensive recreational use by snowmachine, ATV, biking, skiing, and dogmushing, as well as for hunting and trapping. The logging road system provides an excellent infrastructure for recreationists to access trails and waterways.

The proposed harvests in the Keystone Creek valley (**NC-1989-F**, **NC-1998-F**) are expected to have impacts on the viewshed of the Lincoln Creek Subdivision. A viewshed analysis shows that **NC-1998-F** may be partially visible from Abraham Road miles 0.8-1.6, **NC-1989-F** Unit 1 will be visible from most of Abraham Road, **NC-1989-F** Unit 2's western half will be visible from most of Abraham Road, and **NC-1989-F** Unit 3 middle and upper portions will be visible from most of Abraham Road. To mitigate impacts to the scenic viewshed, timber sale cutting units will be designed with irregularly shaped harvest boundaries and total size of any single cutting unit will be kept small (< 50 acres). These actions in addition to the mature forest between the proposed sales and Abraham Road should reduce the impact on scenic resources.

Significant public recreational use of established and casual trails occurs in the Cache Creek area, and trails will be left unblocked by timber harvest activity.

6. Cultural Resources. DOF works with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to identify and avoid known cultural, historic, or prehistoric sites in planning the proposed access routes and harvest areas. If additional archaeological sites are identified, proposed harvest areas and road locations will be appropriately adjusted to avoid conflicts. If any historic or archaeological sites are encountered during road construction or harvest activities, DOF will immediately inform SHPO and take action to protect the findings.
7. Subsurface Resources. All of TVSF Subunit 4C (which includes proposed sales **NC-1989-F**, **NC-1996-F**, **NC-1999-F**, and **NC-2069-F**) is open to mineral entry and is available for leasing, subject to DMLW Mineral Orders. Mineral potential in this Unit has been rated moderate, and mining claims have previously been established within the Left Fork Creek valley. No deleterious effects on subsurface activities are anticipated.

No restrictions on access to subsurface resources were noted in the area of **NC-1998-F**, which is managed within ETAP Unit F-17.

ETAP Unit F-20, which includes proposed timber sales **NC-1984-F** and **NC-1991-F**, is subject to a mineral closing order MCO 262 (initiated 1983) which restricts mineral exploration and mining activities. An MCO closes state land to all forms of mineral entry, making it unavailable for staking mining claims, leasehold locations or prospecting site locations (see AS 38.05.195, 38.05.205 and 38.05.245). Nonetheless, the proposed timber sales are not expected to have any deleterious effects on subsurface activities.

G. Costs and benefits

Local commercial logging operators and their customers will benefit from the inflow of raw timber into the market. In addition to generating royalties to the State's general fund, the proposed sales will create economic benefits for the community of Fairbanks and other locations in Alaska. The local business community will receive direct economic benefit from providing support services for the operators through sales of fuel, food, housing, medical and miscellaneous supplies. Local residents may receive an indirect benefit through any local taxes paid by the operator and employees during the timber harvest operations.

The sales are also expected to benefit the local economy by providing jobs. It will have a positive impact on local employment by generating numerous man-hours of work associated with the harvest and transportation of wood products from this sale. Additionally, the public may benefit from additional access to personal use fuelwood areas, as home heating costs remain high in Interior Alaska.

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Many of the stands proposed for timber sales are at rotation age, and may begin to lose timber value as mortality begins to exceed annual growth and damages and tree health issues accumulate. Stands too far past rotation age may no longer be economically viable for forest management via harvest. Commercial timber sales provide the most cost-effective strategy to initiate a vigorous young stand that provides sustainable harvest opportunities to future generations.

Some of the proposed sales areas may be at least partly visible from about a half-dozen private parcels with structures along Abraham Road. However, over 2,500 acres of TVSF are visible from Abraham Road, and the proposed harvests within the Keystone Creek valley account for less than 1% of the viewshed area.

Minimal negative effects are expected on fish and wildlife habitat or water quality due to the upland landscape position of these sales and the retention of adjacent seed sources which may provide additional travel corridors for wildlife. Some types of wildlife will benefit from early stages of forest development, which may provide additional opportunities for hunters and trappers. Maintenance and upgrades to existing roads may increase areas for recreation, dispersing forest road users over a broader network.

V. PUBLIC NOTICE

The preliminary best interest finding and decision were publicly noticed in compliance with AS 38.05.945. Notice was posted on the Alaska Online Public Notice System, and both physical and electronic notices were mailed to previous timber sale bidders as well as any property owners or business interests known to the Division in the proposed sale area. Notice was also posted on the Division of Forestry public webpage and social media.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT AND RESPONSE


DOF received the following comments:

Commenter	Comment	Response
Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game (ADFG)	No issue of concern.	Noted.
Division of Mining, Land, & Water (DMLW) Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR)	Ensure no access along existing trails is blocked by equipment or brush piles.	DOF will ensure trail access is kept open and unblocked for the public.
Office of History and Archeology (OHA)	Recommend an archeological survey where all-season road construction or ground scarification is planned.	DOF contracts will comply with the Alaska Historic Preservation Act, including prohibitions on the removal or destruction of cultural resources. If, during the course of operations, any physical remains of historic, archaeological, or paleontological nature are discovered, work in that immediate vicinity must cease and the State must be notified.
Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation (DEC)	None.	Noted.
Alaska Division of Agriculture, Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR)	NC-1991-F and NC-1984-F are on land designated for Agriculture. The soil type may be suitable for grazing. No objections to the timber sale. Please leave any constructed roads or skid trails available for future use.	Noted. DOF will ensure constructed access is stored for future use while limiting erosion and ensuring FRPA Compliance.

VII. DISCUSSION AND FINAL FINDING AND DECISION

After due consideration of all pertinent information and alternatives, the DNR has reached the following decision: To offer for sale approximately 208 acres of mature birch forest and mixed birch & spruce forest from state lands in the Cache Creek Forest Road area to provide sawtimber & fuelwood as proposed in Alternative 1 and described in the PBIF. Public notice has been accomplished in accordance with AS 38.05.945. The case file has been found to be complete and the requirements of all applicable statutes have been satisfied. The DOF finds that this preliminary decision satisfies the objectives stated in this document and it is in the best interest of the State to proceed with this action under its authority of AS 38.05.035(e) (Powers and Duties of the Director) & AS 38.05.110-120; 11 AAC 71 (Timber Sale Statutes and Regulations); and AS 41.17.010-.950 and 11 AAC 95 (Forest Resources and Practices Statutes and Regulations).

VIII. SIGNATURE



Kevin Meany

Northern Region Forester
Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection

8/13/2025

Date

IX. APPEALS

An eligible person affected by this decision, and who provided timely written comment or public hearing testimony to the department, may appeal the decision to the DNR Commissioner per AS 44.37.011 and 11 AAC 02. Any appeal must be received within twenty (20) calendar days after issuance of this decision under 11 AAC 02.040. An eligible person must first appeal a decision to the Commissioner before seeking relief in superior court. The Alaska State Courts establish its own rules for timely appealing final administrative orders and decisions of the department. Appeals may be mailed or hand-delivered to the DNR Commissioner's Office, 550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1400, Anchorage, Alaska, 99501; or faxed to (907) 269-8918; or sent by electronic mail to dnr.appeals@alaska.gov. Appeals must be accompanied by the fee established in 11 AAC 05.160(d)(6), which has been set at \$200 under the provisions of 11 AAC 05.160 (a)-(b).]

If no appeal is filed by that date, this decision goes into effect as a final order and decision on **September 2nd, 2025**.

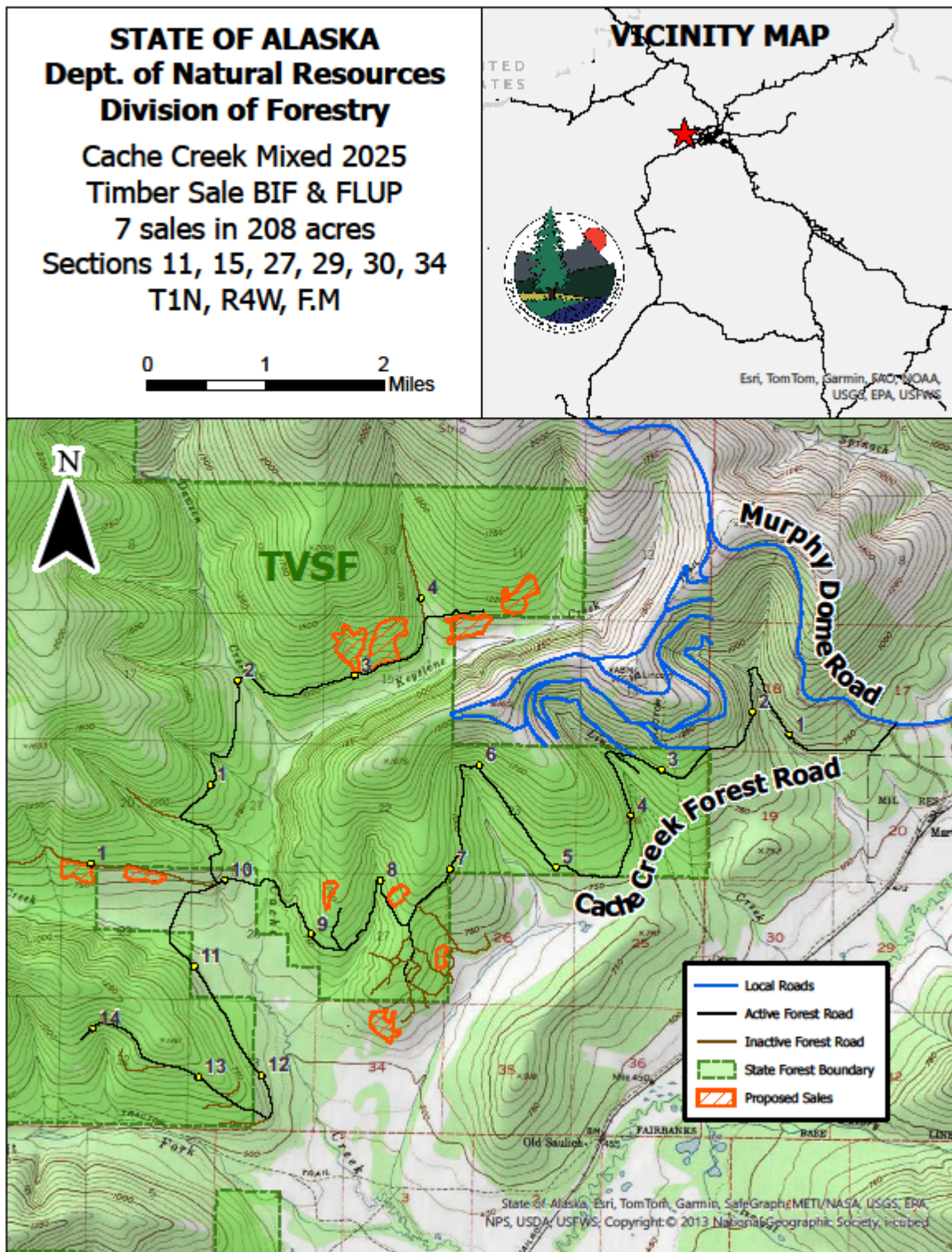
A copy of 11 AAC 02 is enclosed and is also available on the department's website at <https://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/pdf/DNR-11-AAC-02.pdf>.

If you have any questions, please contact Andrew Allaby, Fairbanks-Delta Resource Forester, andrew.allaby@alaska.gov, 907-451-2603, 3700 Airport Way, Fairbanks AK 99709.

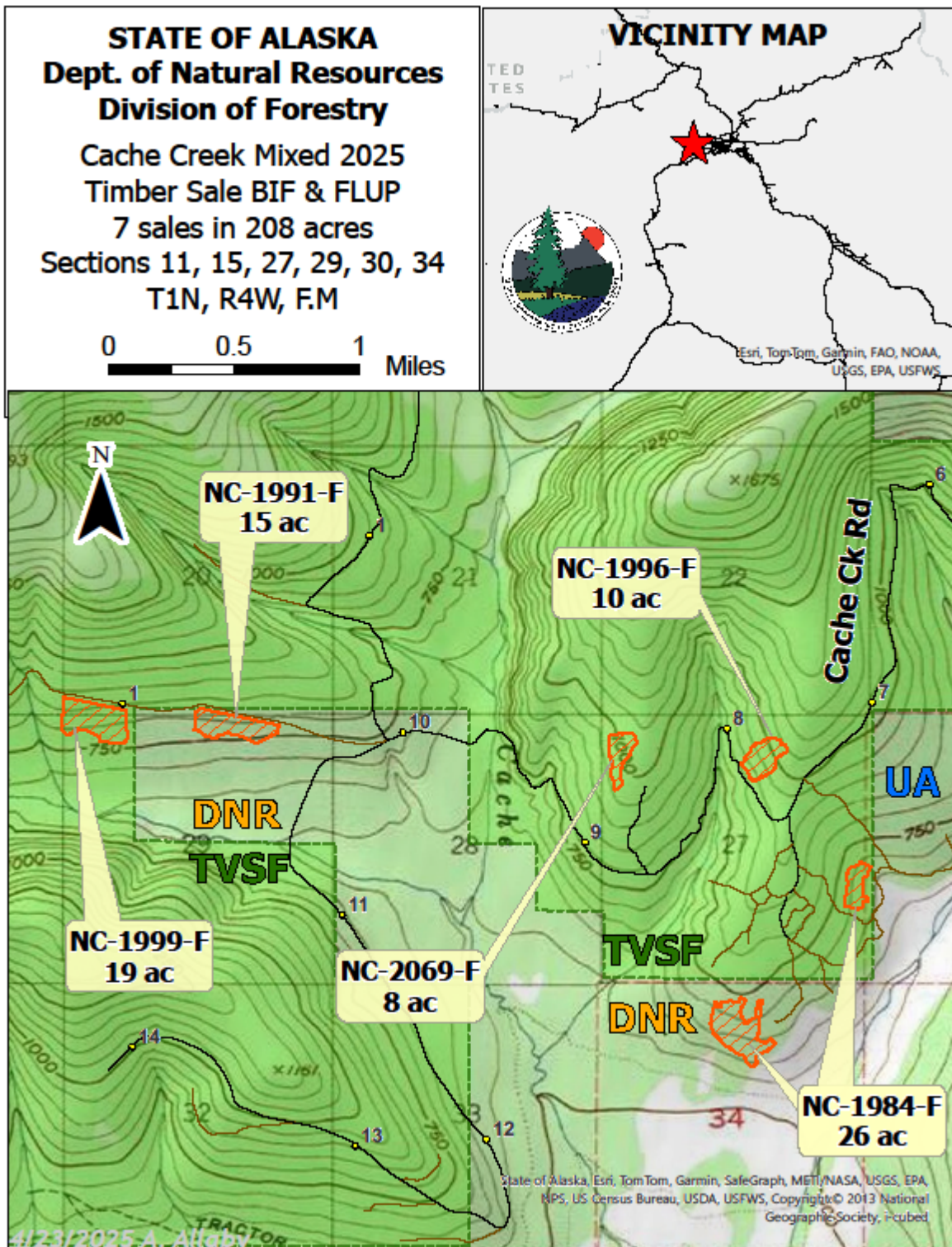
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X. APPENDICES

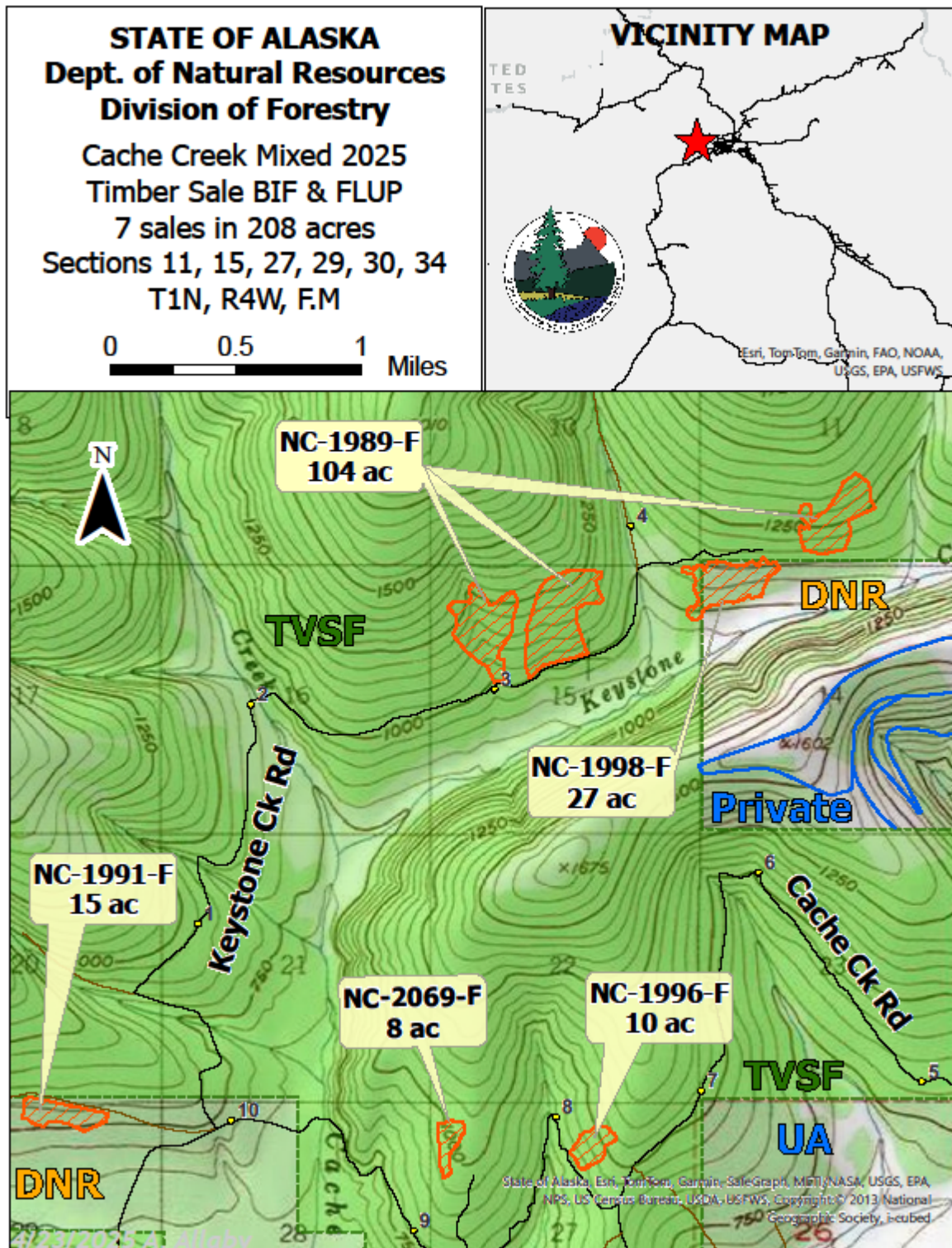
APPENDIX A: MAPS



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APPENDIX B. APPEAL AND REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION REGULATIONS

Note: "Appeal" means a request to the commissioner to review a decision that the commissioner did not sign or cosign. "Request for reconsideration" means a petition or request to the commissioner to review an original decision that the commissioner signed or cosigned.

11 AAC 02 Regulations

11 AAC 02.010. Applicability and eligibility.

- (a) This chapter sets out the administrative review procedure available to a person affected by a decision of the department. If a statute or a provision of this title prescribes a different procedure with respect to a particular decision, that procedure must be followed when it conflicts with this chapter.
- (b) Unless a statute does not permit an appeal, an applicant is eligible to appeal or request reconsideration of the department's decision on the application. An applicant is eligible to participate in any appeal or request for reconsideration filed by any other eligible party.
- (c) If a statute restricts eligibility to appeal or request reconsideration of a decision to those who have provided timely written comment or public hearing testimony on the decision, the department will give notice of that eligibility restriction as part of its public notice announcing the opportunity to comment.
- (d) If the department gives public notice and allows a public comment period of at least 30 days on a proposed action, and if no statute requires opportunity for public comment, the department may restrict eligibility to appeal or request reconsideration to those who have provided timely written comment or public hearing testimony on the proposed action by including notice of the restriction as part of its public notice announcing the opportunity to comment.
- (e) An eligible person affected by a decision of the department that the commissioner did not sign or cosign may appeal the decision to the commissioner within the period set by 11 AAC 02.040.
- (f) An eligible person affected by a decision of the department that the commissioner signed or cosigned may request the commissioner's reconsideration within the period set by 11 AAC 02.040.
- (g) A person may not both appeal and request reconsideration of a decision.

11 AAC 02.015. Combined decisions.

- (a) When the department issues a combined decision that is both a final disposal decision under AS 38.05.035(e) and any other decision, including a disposal decision combined with a land use plan decision, or a disposal decision to grant certain applications combined with a decision to deny others, the appeal process set out for a disposal decision in AS 38.05.035(i) - (m) and this chapter applies to the combined decision.
- (b) Repealed 12/27/2012.

11 AAC 02.020. Finality of a decision for purposes of appeal to court.

- (a) Unless otherwise provided in a statute or a provision of this title, an eligible person must first either appeal or request reconsideration of a decision in accordance with this chapter before appealing a decision to superior court.

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- (b) The commissioner's decision on appeal is the final administrative order and decision of the department for purposes of appeal to the superior court.
- (c) The commissioner may order or deny a request for reconsideration within 30 calendar days after issuance of the decision, as determined under 11 AAC 02.040(c) - (e). If the commissioner takes no action during the 30-day period, the request for reconsideration is considered denied. Denial of a request for reconsideration is the final administrative order and decision of the department for purposes of appeal to the superior court.
- (d) If the commissioner timely orders reconsideration of the decision, the commissioner may affirm the decision, issue a new or modified decision, or remand the matter to the director for further proceedings. The commissioner's decision, other than a remand decision, is the final administrative order and decision of the department for purposes of appeal to the superior court.

11 AAC 02.030. Filing an appeal or request for reconsideration.

- (a) An appeal or request for reconsideration under this chapter must
 - (1) be in writing;
 - (2) be filed by personal service, mail, facsimile transmission, or electronic mail;
 - (3) be signed by the appellant or the appellant's attorney, unless filed by electronic mail; an appeal or request for reconsideration filed by electronic mail must state the name of the person appealing or requesting reconsideration and a single point of contact to which any notice or decision concerning the appeal or request for reconsideration is to be sent;
 - (4) be correctly addressed;
 - (5) be timely filed in accordance with 11 AAC 02.040;
 - (6) specify the case reference number used by the department, if any;
 - (7) specify the decision being appealed or for which reconsideration is being requested;
 - (8) specify the basis upon which the decision is challenged;
 - (9) specify any material facts disputed by the appellant;
 - (10) specify the remedy requested by the appellant;
 - (11) state the address to which any notice or decision concerning the appeal or request for reconsideration is to be mailed; an appellant may also provide a telephone number where the appellant can be reached during the day or an electronic mail address; an appeal or request for reconsideration filed electronically must state a single address to which any notice or decision concerning the appeal or request for reconsideration is to be mailed;
 - (12) identify any other affected agreement, contract, lease, permit, or application by case reference number, if any;
 - (13) include a request for an oral hearing, if desired; in the appeal or request for reconsideration, the appellant may include a request for any special procedures to be used at the hearing; the appeal or request for reconsideration must describe the factual issues to be considered at the hearing; and
 - (14) be accompanied by the applicable fee set out in 11 AAC 05.160.
- (b) At the time an appeal is filed, and up until the deadline set out in 11 AAC 02.040(a) to file the appeal, an appellant may submit additional written material in support of the appeal, including evidence or legal argument.
- (c) If public notice announcing a comment period of at least 30 days was given before the

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decision, an appellant may not submit additional written material after the deadline for filing the appeal, unless the appeal meets the requirements of (a) of this section and includes a request for an extension of time, and the department determines that the appellant has shown good cause for an extension. In considering whether the appellant has shown good cause, the department will consider factors including one or more of the following:

- (1) comments already received from the appellant and others;
- (2) whether the additional material is likely to affect the outcome of the appeal;
- (3) whether the additional material could reasonably have been submitted without an extension;
- (4) the length of the extension requested;
- (5) the potential effect of delay if an extension is granted.

(d) If public notice announcing a comment period of at least 30 days was not given before the decision, an appellant may submit additional written material after the deadline for filing the appeal, if the appeal meets the requirements of (a) of this section and includes a notice of intent to file the additional written material. The department must receive the additional written material within 20 days after the deadline for filing the appeal, unless the appeal also includes a request for an extension of time, and the department determines that the appellant has shown good cause for an extension. In considering whether the appellant has shown good cause, the department will consider factors including one or more of the following:

- (1) comments already received from the appellant and others;
- (2) whether the additional material is likely to affect the outcome of the appeal;
- (3) whether the additional material could reasonably have been submitted without an extension;
- (4) the length of the extension requested;
- (5) the potential effect of delay if an extension is granted.

(e) At the time a request for reconsideration is filed, and up until the deadline to file a request for reconsideration, an appellant may submit additional written material in support of the request for reconsideration, including evidence or legal argument. No additional written material may be submitted after the deadline for filing the request for reconsideration.

(f) If the decision is one described in 11 AAC 02.060(c), an appellant may ask for a stay as part of the appeal or request for reconsideration. The appellant must include an argument as to why the public interest requires a stay.

11 AAC 02.040. Timely filing; issuance of decision.

(a) To be timely filed, an appeal or request for reconsideration must be received by the commissioner's office within 20 calendar days after issuance of the decision, as determined under (c) or (d) of this section, unless another period is set by statute, regulation, or existing contract. If the 20th day falls on a day when the department is officially closed, the appeal or request for reconsideration must be filed by the next working day.

(b) An appeal or request for reconsideration will not be accepted if it is not timely filed.

(c) If the appellant is a person to whom the department delivers a decision by personal service or by certified mail, return receipt requested, issuance occurs when the addressee or the addressee's agent signs for the decision. If the addressee or the addressee's agent neglects or refuses to sign for the certified mail, or if the address that the addressee provided to the department is not correct, issuance by certified mail occurs when the decision is deposited in a United States general or branch post office, enclosed in a postage-paid wrapper or envelope,

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addressed to the person's current address of record with the department, or to the address specified by the appellant under 11 AAC 02.030(a)(11).

(d) If the appellant is a person to whom the department did not deliver a decision by personal service or certified mail, issuance occurs

(1) when the department gives public notice of the decision; or

(2) if no public notice is given, when the decision is signed; however, the department may state in the decision a later date of issuance and the corresponding due date for any appeal or request for reconsideration.

(e) The date of issuance constitutes delivery or mailing for purposes of a reconsideration request under AS 44.37.011(d) or AS 44.62.540(a).

11 AAC 02.050. Hearings.

(a) The department will, in its discretion, hold a hearing when questions of fact must be resolved.

(b) The hearing procedure will be determined by the department on a case-by-case basis. As provided in 11 AAC 02.030(a)(13), any request for special procedures must be included with the request for a hearing.

(c) In a hearing held under this section

(1) formal rules of evidence need not apply; and

(2) the hearing will be recorded, and may be transcribed at the request and expense of the party requesting the transcript.

11 AAC 02.060. Stays; exceptions.

(a) Except as provided in (c) and (d) of this section, timely appealing or requesting reconsideration of a decision in accordance with this chapter stays the decision during the commissioner's consideration of the appeal or request for reconsideration. If the commissioner determines that the public interest requires removal of the stay, the commissioner will remove the stay and allow all or part of the decision to take effect on the date set in the decision or a date set by the commissioner.

(b) Repealed 9/19/2001.

(c) Unless otherwise provided in a statute or a provision of this title, a decision takes effect immediately if it is a decision to

(1) issue a permit that is revocable at will;

(2) approve surface operations for a disposal that has already occurred or a property right that has already vested; or

(3) administer an issued oil and gas lease or license, or an oil and gas unit agreement.

(d) Timely appealing or requesting reconsideration of a decision described in (c) of this section does not automatically stay the decision. However, the commissioner will impose a stay, on the commissioner's own motion or at the request of an appellant, if the commissioner determines that the public interest requires it.

(e) A decision takes effect immediately if no party is eligible to appeal or request reconsideration and the commissioner waives the commissioner's right to review or reconsider the decision.

11 AAC 02.070. Waiver of procedural violations.

The commissioner may, to the extent allowed by applicable law, waive a requirement of this

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chapter if the public interest or the interests of justice so require.

11 AAC 02.900. Definitions.

In this chapter,

- (1) “appeal” means a request to the commissioner to review a decision that the commissioner did not sign or cosign;
- (2) “appellant” means a person who files an appeal or a request for reconsideration;
- (3) “commissioner” means the commissioner of natural resources;
- (4) “decision” means a written discretionary or factual determination by the department specifying the details of the action to be allowed or taken;
- (5) “department” means, depending of the particular context in which the term is used, the Department of Natural Resources, the commissioner, the director of a division within the Department of Natural Resources, or an authorized employee of the Department of Natural Resources;
- (6) “request for reconsideration” means a petition or request to the commissioner to review an original decision that the commissioner signed or cosigned.