

AGENDA ITEM \_\_. PUBLIC HEARINGS

\_\_. Proposed Recreational Classifications of Approximately 1,185 acres of Borough Land Located in the Moose Pass/ Crown Point Area, Pursuant to KPB Code of Ordinances, Chapter 17.10.080(F)

STAFF REPORT

PC Meeting August 8, 2016

**Petitioner:** KPB Land Management proposes to classify certain borough land.

**Basis for Proposed Classification:** Classification provides direction for the management of KPB land. Classifying this land is also a condition imposed by the state prior to conveyance to the borough.

**Current Classification:** This land is not classified (undesigned)

**Proposed Classification:** Recreational

Recreational means land located in an area where the potential for recreational use exists. This may include both indoor and outdoor uses such as gun ranges, archery ranges, camping, golf courses, snow machine trails, cross country trails, skiing, boating, fishing or which may provide access to those activities. Recreational does not include use of lands for amusement parks. Site conditions for any authorized use must be appropriate and suited for such uses. Recreational lands disposed of to private parties must allow public use unless specifically waived by ordinance. If recreational lands are for sale or lease then restrictions may be imposed for appropriate uses given conditions and surrounding use. Not all activities are suitable for all sites.

**Description of Borough Land Proposed for Classification:** The land proposed for classification is located south of Moose Pass in the Crown Point area. The land is composed of 7 units which are described in more detail below and are shown on attached maps.

**Public Notice:** Public notice was published in the Peninsula Clarion Newspaper, July 7 and 10, 2016; Seward Journal July 13 and 20, 2016. Public notice is sent to all land owners and/or leaseholders within a one-half mile radius of the land proposed to be reclassified. The notice consists of a cover letter, map, and list of land classification definitions. Written public comments were requested to be returned by 5:00 p.m., July 25, 2016 to be included in the Planning Commission mail-out packets.

**Public Comment:** As of the writing of this report, one written comment was received (attached). This comment is opposed to the proposed classification and expressed concern for the classification leading to trespassing onto private land. Comments received by the Planning Department after the writing of this report will be presented at the Planning Commission Hearing.

**Moose Pass Advisory Planning Commission (MPAPC) Review:** The MPAPC has scheduled a public meeting on August 3, 2016. A recommendation from the MPAPC will be considered by the Planning Commission.

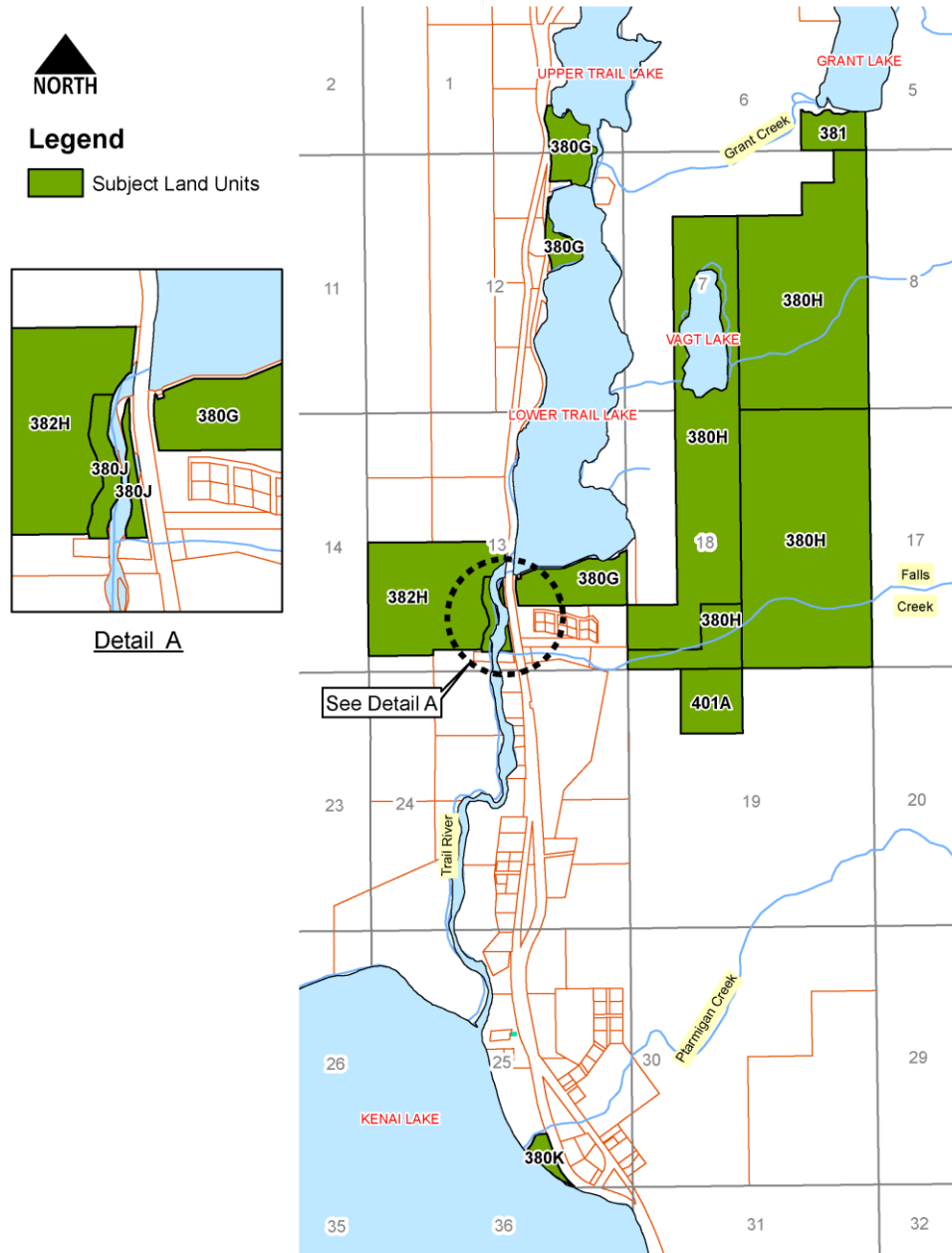
**Department / Agency Review:** Written comments were received from the following agencies:

- Alaska Department of Fish and Game State of Alaska, expressed concern for these lands to remain mostly undeveloped to protect the riparian habitat and anadromous fish species associated with subject lands. (Per letter of July 25, 2016 from Marla Carter, Habitat Biologist III)
- Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation expressed recommendations for general construction projects associated with, or near, a public water system. (Per notification of July 8, 2016, from Charley Palmer, Hydrologist III)
- Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) expressed concern that the proposed classification will exacerbate trespassing and safety problems within the railroad right-of-way. (Per letter of July 25,

2016 from Doug Stephens, Land Services Manager)

- Other agencies/departments had no objection to the proposed classification.

**Basis for Proposed Classification:** Classification provides direction for the management of KPB land. Classifying this land is also a condition of Municipal Entitlement Final Decision ADL 2013



## FINDINGS OF FACT FOR KENAI AREA PLAN UNIT 380K

KPB Parcel ID No.	Property Unit Description	Acreage	Location
12512032	Kenai Area Plan Unit 380K State ADL 201306  T4N, R1W, Seward Meridian, Alaska Section 25: Government Lot 8,	8.14	Moose Pass Area  Near Mile Post 23 Seward Highway
<p><b>Overview and Historical Background:</b> This land is located approximately six miles south of Moose Pass near Mile Post 23 of the Seward Highway. This land is bordered on the southwest by 1,200 feet of Kenai Lake shoreline, on the east by the Alaska Railroad, and on the north by 630 feet of Ptarmigan Creek. This land lies west of the railroad tracks whereas the historic site of “Alaska Nellie’s Homestead” lies east of the railroad tracks and is entered into the National Register of Historic Places. Alaska Nellie’s Homestead served as a railway station and roadhouse, providing room and board for visitors and travelers. Historically there is a nexus between subject land and Nellie’s Homestead, both of which hold a position of significance in the local community. While Nellie’s Homestead is the focus in historic archives, subject land, at one time, provided a boat dock and a two story log house/museum that was used by guests and visitors as part of “Nellie’s Homestead/Roadhouse” campus.</p>			
<p><b>Land Status:</b> The Municipal Entitlement Final Decision ADL 201306 (Table 3) conditionally approves subject land, conditioned upon classification for public recreation. Once conditions are met the borough will have full management authority for this land under ADL 201306.</p>			
<p><b>Encumbrances:</b>  <b>Public Access:</b>  Conveyance of this land from the state is subject to a 50-foot wide public access easement upland of and along the mean high water line of Kenai Lake and Ptarmigan Creek per AS 38.05.127 and Title 11, AAC 51.045.</p>			
<p><b>Kenai Area Plan Designations for Unit 380K:</b> Habitat and Public Recreation and Tourism - Public Use Site (p. 3-45).</p>			
<p><b>Kenai Area Plan Classifications for Unit 380K:</b> Wildlife habitat land, Public recreation land (p. 4-4 &amp; 4-5; Table 4.1 and 4.2).</p>			
<p><b>Adopted Plans:</b>  Management of this land is guided by the Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan (2005), Comprehensive Plan Moose Pass (1993), Seward Highway Corridor Partnership Plan (1998), and influenced by the Iditarod National Historic Trail Management Plan (1986).</p>			

**KPB Code of Ordinances:**

Management of this land is guided by the following KPB codes.

21.18.040: “There is established an anadromous waters habitat protection district. Except as otherwise provided in this section, this district includes all lands within 50 horizontal feet of the waters set forth in KPB 21.18.025.”, i.e. Kenai Lake and Ptarmigan Creek.

21.18.081: Special uses or structures within the 50-foot habitat protection area of Kenai Lake or Ptarmigan Creek would require a KPB Conditional Use Permit.

21.06.040 requires a development permit before construction or development begins within flood hazard areas as defined in 21.06.030b.

**Floodplain:** Flood Zone A is mapped along the shoreline of this land by FEMA map panel 020012-2525A dated 1981. Flood Zone A is subject to inundation of the 1% annual chance flood. This determination is neither site specific nor project specific and does not eliminate the need for further study.

**Existing Use of Subject Land:** This land is primarily used by the general public for recreational purposes: hiking, fishing, and day use of the shoreline. This land provides access to both Kenai Lake and Ptarmigan Creek.

**Surrounding Land Use:** Surrounding land use includes residential, commercial, and undeveloped land. Surrounding development includes Alaska Railroad to the east, a BLM complex of several buildings (U.S. Forest Service – “Kenai Lake Work Center”) to the north, and single family homes to the east. Kenai Lake to the west and Ptarmigan Creek on the north provide fishing opportunities for the general public. Ptarmigan Creek Campground and Trail River Campground are in close proximity to subject land.

**Surrounding Land Ownership:** Federal, state, and private ownership. This land is bordered on the north by BLM, on the east by the Alaska Railroad and private homes, and on the southwest by the shoreline of Kenai Lake.

**Access:** Access to this land is primarily by pedestrian mode or by watercraft. Lawing Drive is across the railroad tracks. Subject land contains a 50-foot wide public access easement upland of and along the mean high water line of Kenai Lake and Ptarmigan Creek.

**Utilities:** Electric and phone service is in the general vicinity.

**Water Bodies:** Kenai Lake and Ptarmigan Creek.

**Trails:** Ptarmigan Creek Trail and the shoreline of Kenai Lake.

**Soils:** No third order soil survey currently exists. Based on field inspection, soil appears to be well-drained alluvium subject to inundation at high lake level.

**Topography:** Gently sloping alluvial fan with wave swept lakeshore beach.

**Vegetation:** Heavily treed primarily with spruce.

**Wetlands:** Mostly upland.

**Salient Resource Values:**

- **Historic / Social / Cultural:** Portion of Nellie’s Homestead/Roadhouse Campus. Some debris present.
- **Recreation:** Hiking trails, fishing, and day use activities.
- **Water Bodies:** Access to Kenai Lake and Ptarmigan Creek.
- **Wildlife Habitat:** Salmon, trout, and dolly varden.
- **View Shed/Scenic Qualities:** Kenai Lake and nearby mountains.
- **Subsistence:** Fishing and berry picking.

## ANALYSIS

**Historical Background:** Historically there is a clear connection between “Alaska Nellie’s Homestead” property and subject land. Both of these properties hold a position of significance in the local community. While Alaska Nellie’s Homestead, which is privately owned, is the focus in historic archives, subject land, at one time, provided a boat dock and a two story log house/museum that was used by guests and visitors as part of the “roadhouse” campus. This land is located within a historically active corridor served by Iditarod trail and railroad routes and lies within the Moose Pass-Hope Mining District. A main thread of the original Iditarod Trail is thought to be along the path of the present day railroad line.

### **Adopted Plans:**

Managing this land for public recreational use and for its historic value is supported by the following plans.

#### **Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan (2005):**

Goal 4.10, Objective 2, Implementation Acton A: “Identify borough land with recreational value that provide access to coastlines or recreational areas.”

Goal 4.10, Objective 2, Implementation Acton B: “Establish management procedures for borough recreational land. Procedures could include lease or sale to private operators with provisions to ensure continued public use.”

#### **Comprehensive Plan Moose Pass (1993):**

Section 1.D.3(c) supports recognition and preservation of any sites listed on the Alaska DNR Alaska Heritage Resource Survey, National Register of Historic Places, or of local historical value.

#### **Seward Highway Corridor Partnership Plan (SHCPP) 1998:**

The SHCPP is incorporated as an element of the borough’s 2005 Comprehensive Plan. This land lies within the “Communities and Lakes” segment of the corridor (p. 21, SHCPP). Keystone Strategy K.2-G Historic Sites Inventory. This strategy recommends historic sites may serve as visitor resource or interpretative centers (p. 47, SHCPP).

#### **Iditarod National Historic Trail Management Plan (1986):**

The INHT Comprehensive plan is adopted as a management guide by a Memorandum of Agreement between the Bureau of Land Management and the Kenai Peninsula Borough dated March 29, 1989. This land is not within the Iditarod plan, but it has the potential to be connected to the Iditarod National Historic Trail.

### **Related Plans:**

#### **Kenai River Comprehensive Management Plan (KRCMP) 1997:**

Chapter 4.5.4.5: Provides recommendations supporting public management of land having recreational and habitat significance to the Kenai River and its tributaries.

### **Related Reference:**

#### **Alaska Nellie (Seattle, Chieftain Press, Copyrighted 1940):**

This book is an autobiography by Nellie Neal Lawing which describes subject land and the surrounding area and her home life here. Her homestead served as a railway station and roadhouse, providing room and board for visitors and travelers. And her writings unpretentiously

brings notoriety to this land with the mention of the notable people of the day who became her guests while traveling to Alaska. (Chapters 23 and 24)

**Lawing, Alaska Nellie's Stabilization Plan (2003):**

By Diane Olthuis, historian

**Moose Pass-Hope Mining District, Kenai Peninsula, Alaska, U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 849-I, 1931:** USGS inventory and characterization of mining in the area of the Kenai Peninsula south of Turnagain Arm.

**Access:** Access to this land is by pedestrian mode or by watercraft. Subject land contains a 50-foot wide public access easement upland of and along the mean high water line of Kenai Lake and Ptarmigan Creek. Pedestrian access is via Ptarmigan Creek Trail originating at Ptarmigan Creek Campground, or by watercraft on Kenai Lake, or along the shoreline of Kenai Lake from the USFS Work Center. Currently there is no dedicated public right-of-way that provides vehicular access to this land nor is there any designated railroad crossing that provides public access. The feasibility of developing vehicle access would require further study. This land also may have potential capacity to support an Alaska Railroad stop or interpretative point.

**Water Bodies:** Ptarmigan Creek contains important fish habitat and public recreation value. Ptarmigan Creek is catalogued by ADF&G as important habitat for king, sockeye, coho, chum, and pink salmon. This creek is popular for sport fishing (p. 45, Municipal Entitlement Preliminary Decision ADL 201306). Kenai Lake contains important fish habitat and public recreation values (p. 8, Municipal Entitlement Preliminary Decision ADL 201306). Fish habitat includes salmon, trout, and dolly varden. Public recreation values include sport fishing, boating, and day use of the lakeshore/beach.

**Trails:** Ptarmigan Creek Trail provides recreational opportunity for hiking and access to the creek for sport fishing. The trail along the shoreline of Kenai Lake has no official status but provides recreational opportunity hiking, boating, and sport fishing.

**Topography:** The alluvial fan of Ptarmigan Creek forms a smooth eyebrow feature into Kenai Lake that extends views in the two major directions of Kenai Lakes' orientation. The intersection of river gravels with the lake's fetch sets a broad beach that is wave swept and at times collects driftwood from the Snow River. The gentle slope of the land feature makes for easy use, both by the rail and for settlement, but also has an inherent long-term instability due to the reoccurring water processes that feed and shape the land feature. The most significant recent event that altered the topography at this location is the Good Friday earthquake of 1964 which reportedly raised the lake level relative to this land leading to the destruction of several docks and improvements that were along the water's edge.

**Salient Resource Values:**

- **Historic / Social / Cultural:** Lakeside site of Alaska Nellie. This location is well documented and can be seen in the 1939 MGM short documentary travelogue *Land of Alaska Nellie*. Nellie Lawing wrote of this location in her autobiography titled *Alaska Nellie*. Additionally the book provides accounts of the construction and early use of the rail road. Diane Oltheus prepared a restoration plan that documents historic features in this area. The rail road alignment is thought to be along the general location of the historic Iditarod Trail.
- **Recreation:** Hiking along the shoreline of Kenai Lake and along Ptarmigan Creek. Fishing on Kenai Lake and the mouth of Ptarmigan Creek for resident sportfish. Accessible by boat and trail for day use.
- **Water Bodies:** Kenai Lake and Ptarmigan Creek are anadromous waters providing important fish habitat, scenery, and recreation values.
- **Wildlife Habitat:** Forested lakeshore and anadromous mouth creek provide habitat, feeding area, and movement for a variety of wildlife.
- **View Shed/Scenic Qualities:** Prominent views of Kenai Lake and an open mountain landscape. Alaska Nellie wrote of the scenic quality of this location.
- **Subsistence:** Berry picking.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the findings of fact and analysis are the following conclusions.

- 1) The characteristics of this land make it highly suited for recreational purposes and day use activities by the general public. Such characteristics include existing trails, its proximity to Kenai Lake, Ptarmigan Creek, Ptarmigan Creek Campground, and Trail River Campground. Other characteristic such as being well treed, good soils, and relatively level topography would make it suitable for day use by the general public.
- 2) Preserving the historical significance of this land is important to the community and regional identity of its place in history.
- 3) Preserving the historical significance of this land provides opportunity for tourism.
- 4) Access limitations significantly influence the scope of use for this land.
- 5) Management of this land should consider measures that would not encourage trespass onto private property.
- 6) The goals of the Moose Pass Comprehensive Plan are consistent with a recreational classification.

**CLASSIFICATION RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the findings of fact, analysis, and conclusions, staff recommends a recreational classification for KAP Unit 380K (KPB Parcel ID No. 12512032) as shown on the attached map.





## FINDINGS OF FACT FOR KENAI AREA PLAN UNIT 381

KPB Parcel ID No.	Property Unit Description:	Acreage	Location
12532101 (portion of)	Kenai Area Plan Unit 381 (portion of) State ADL 201306  T4N, R1E, Seward Meridian, Alaska That portion of Government Lot 11, Section 6, lying south of Grant Creek	26±	Moose Pass Area
<b>Overview and Historical Background:</b> This land is located approximately two miles south of Moose Pass and is situated at the south end of Grant Lake, a scenic setting. This land is bordered on its north boundary by 1,400 feet of Grant Lake shoreline and its east boundary sits at the base of Crown Point mountain. Grant Creek lies to the north and west, and an abandoned sawmill (Al Solar's Sawmill) lies to the north. This sawmill was active from the late 1920's to 1941 and was driven by a waterwheel. Subject land provides for trail and lake orientated recreation. Subject land includes the location of the planned water intake for the proposed Grant Lake Hydroelectric Project (FERC 13212), subject to FERC Licensure.			
<b>Land Status:</b> The Municipal Entitlement Final Decision ADL 201306 (Table 3) conditionally approves subject land, conditioned upon classification for public recreation. Once conditions are met the borough will have full management authority for this land under ADL 201306.			
<b>Encumbrances:</b> <b>Public Access:</b> Conveyance of this land from the state is subject to a 50-foot wide public access easement upland of and along the mean high water line of Grant Lake and Grant Creek per AS 38.05.127 and Title 11, AAC 51.045.			
<b>Kenai Area Plan Designations for Unit 381:</b> Habitat and Public Recreation and Tourism – Dispersed Use (p. 3-46).			
<b>Kenai Area Plan Classifications for Unit 381:</b> Wildlife habitat land, Public recreation land (p. 4-4 & 4-5; Table 4.1 and 4.2).			
<b>Adopted Plans:</b> Management of this land is guided by the Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan (2005), Comprehensive Plan Moose Pass (1993), and influenced by the Iditarod National Historic Trail Management Plan (1986).			
<b>KPB Code of Ordinances:</b> Management of this land is guided by the following KPB codes.  21.06.040 requires a development permit before construction or development begins within flood hazard areas as defined in 21.06.030b.			
<b>Floodplain:</b> Flood Zone A is mapped along the shoreline of this land by FEMA map panel 020012-2525A dated 1981. Flood Zone A is subject to inundation of the 1% annual chance flood. This determination is neither site specific nor project specific and does not eliminate the need for further study.			

**Existing Use of Subject Land:** This land is primarily used by the general public for recreational purposes: hiking, hunting, and day use of the shoreline of both Grant Lake and Grant Creek. Subject land can be accessed from, or provide access to, the lake and creek.

Note: On April 15, 2016 Kenai Hydro, LLC submitted its final license application for the proposed Grant Lake Hydroelectric Project (FERC 13212). This project would divert water from Grant Lake and deliver the flow to a powerhouse to generate 5-megawatts of renewable energy. The project proposes development of an access road to/through this land and installation of a water intake and upper tunnel at this location. It can be anticipated that the project would impact the use and management of subject land.

**Surrounding Land Use:** Surrounding area is undeveloped. Grant Lake to the north and Grant Creek to the north and west provide scenic front-country opportunities for the general public.

**Surrounding Land Ownership:** Federal, state, and borough. This land is bordered on the west and south by state and borough land, on the east by the U.S. Forest Service, and on the north by the shoreline of Grant Lake.

**Access:** Access to this land is primarily by pedestrian mode, by watercraft or by floatplane. Subject contains a 50-foot wide public access easement upland of and along the mean high water line of Trail Lakes per AS 38.05.127 and Title 11, AAC 51.045.

**Utilities:** None

**Water Bodies:** Grant Lake and Grant Creek. A small unnamed mountain stream runs through this land from south to north outletting into Grant Lake.

**Trails:** Grant Creek Trail is in close proximity.

**Soils:** No third order soil survey currently exists. Soil appears to be shallow to bed rock in the west half and alluvial fan or lakebed deposit along the east half.

**Topography:** Varied from steep to moderately sloping near shorelands.

**Vegetation:** Mature Spruce/ Western Hemlock Forest.

**Wetlands:** Fen or drainageway wetlands in eastern portion.

**Salient Resource Values:**

- **Historic / Social / Cultural:** Al Solars sawmill lies to the north across Grant Creek.
- **Recreation:** Hiking, hunting and day use activities.
- **Water Bodies:** Access to Grant Lake and Grant Creek.
- **Wildlife Habitat:** Brown bear and mountain goat- see notes below.
- **View Shed/ Scenic Qualities:** Grant Lake and nearby mountains. Outlet of Grant Lake flowing downstream to cascading falls of Grant Creek.
- **Subsistence:** Hunting and berry picking.

## ANALYSIS

**Historical Background:** Subject land has no known historical significance itself. However, the abandoned Al Solars Sawmill site lies within close proximity, on the north side of Grant Creek near Grant Lake. Solars sawmill was active from the late 1920's to 1941, consists of several collapsed buildings, ceramic and glass and metal artifacts, several pulleys, and timber framework. In 1922 the sawmill was moved to this location to provide lumber for the construction of buildings for mining activities. (p. 177; A History of Mining on the Kenai Peninsula, Alaska; 1997; Barry)

**Adopted Plans:**

Managing this land for its public recreational use and scenic quality is supported by the following plans.

**Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan (2005):**

Goal 4.10, Objective 2, Implementation Acton A: "Identify borough land with recreational value that provide access to coastlines or recreational areas."

**Comprehensive Plan Moose Pass (1993):**

Section 1.B.1: "Moose Pass has, historically, been a crossroads of travel. The Historic Iditarod Trail runs through Moose Pass along the east shore of Trail Lake. It connects with other historic trails including the Hope Wagon Road, Al Solars' Mill Road and many old mining roads. The public now values these trails for recreation and for access to scenic backcountry areas. The public has traveled freely through local connecting valleys and passes and continues to do so."

**Iditarod National Historic Trail Management Plan (1986):**

The INHT Comprehensive plan is adopted as a management guide by a Memorandum of Agreement between the Bureau of Land Management and the Kenai Peninsula Borough dated March 29, 1989. This land is not within the Iditarod plan, but it has the potential to be connected to the Iditarod National Historic Trail.

**Access:** Access to this land is primarily by pedestrian mode, by watercraft or by floatplane. Subject land contains a 50-foot wide public access easement upland of and along the mean high water line of Trail Lakes. The east end of Grant Creek Trail terminates at Grant Lake and is in close proximity to subject land. Subject land is bordered on the south and east by a 50-foot wide section-line easement. Currently there is no dedicated public right-of-way that provides vehicular access to this land. Pending the improvement of the Iditarod National Historic Trail and a proposed access road for the Grant Lake Hydroelectric Project this land could become more accessible and a high quality destination for "front country" recreation. It is important to recognize management actions on the north end of KAP Unit380G could include trailhead features to serve this accessibility.

**Utilities:** Utility service is not available as the land is located in a remote location.

**Water Bodies:** Grant Lake drains into Grant Creek which has cascading waterfalls. Grant Creek is used by early run Chinook salmon for spawning (p. 20, KRCMP) below the falls. Grant Lake reportedly has no sport fish. Grant Creek contains resident dolly varden, grayling, and rainbow trout below the falls and runs of sockeye, coho, and chinook. Public recreational values include hunting and day use of the scenic lakeshore.

**Trails:** The Iditarod National Historic Trail is planned for improvement which could generate new public uses of this location for tourism and public uses.

**Topography:** The topography of subject land provides vantage of Grant Lake and the outlet to Grant Creek.

**Salient Resource Values:**

- **Wildlife Habitat:** Bears are known to feed along Grant Creek below the falls. This land is within brown bear country and may be within mountain goat wintering range. At this time the Kenai Peninsula Borough has no specific information relating this location to use patterns of these important wildlife species. The borough will invite ADF&G and the Chugach National Forest to supply any specific data on managed wildlife species including brown bears and mountain goats. Additionally, Land Management will monitor and gather any data that becomes available, and incorporate that information into management plans for the unit. Wildlife habitat compliments the subsistence and recreation values associated with hunting and wildlife viewing.

- **View Shed/Scenic Qualities:** The setting of this property is diverse with scenic features. Water spilling off the mountain walls of Solars Mountain down to Grant Lake is both visual and audible. The lake's end landscape provides a viewing lane down the turquoise waters of Grant Lake and turns up to Lark Mountain which houses the old and new activities of the Case Mine. Grant Creek tumbles out of Grant Lake and leads to scenic waterfalls. The introduction of a hydro intake would bring about a new aesthetic with its own modern sights and sounds.

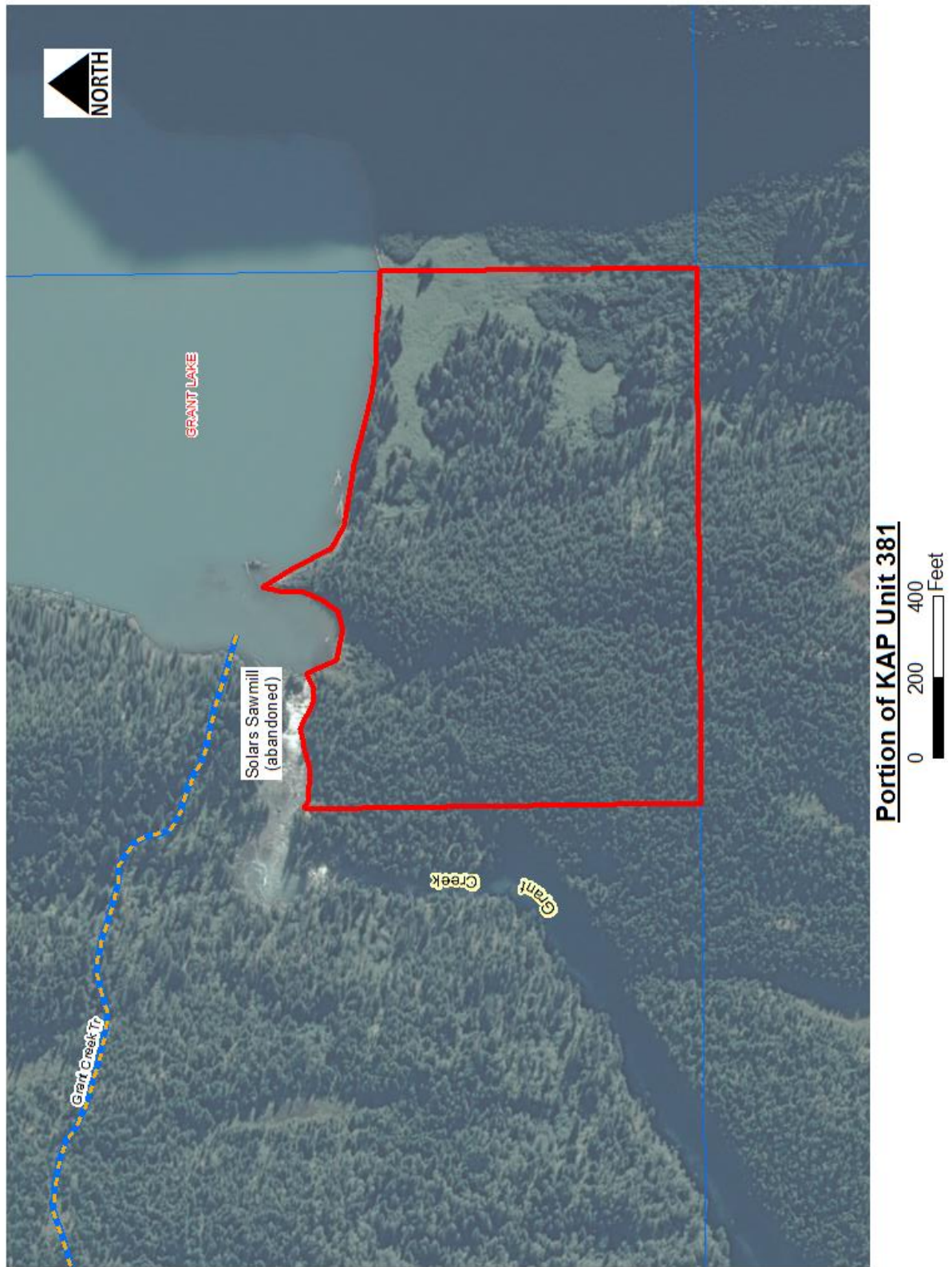
## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of fact and analysis are the following conclusions.

- 1) The characteristics of this land make it highly suited for recreational purposes and day use activities by the general public.
- 2) The varied topography, habitat features, and scenic aspects provide a range of possible benefits fitting with recreation.
- 3) Access limitations significantly influence the scope of use for this land at this time.
- 4) The goals of the Moose Pass Comprehensive Plan are consistent with a recreational classification.

## CLASSIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of fact, analysis, and conclusions, staff recommends a recreational classification for KPB Parcel ID No. 12532101 as shown on the attached map.



## FINDINGS OF FACT FOR KENAI AREA PLAN UNIT 380G (portion of) North Sub-Unit

KBB Parcel ID No	Property Unit Description:	Acreage	Location
12532315	Kenai Area Plan Unit 380G (portion of) State ADL 201306  T4N, R1W, Seward Meridian, Alaska Section 12: Government Lot 2	9.19	Moose Pass  Near Mile Post 27 Seward Highway
Portion of 12532330	T4N, R1W, Seward Meridian, Alaska Section 1: That portion of Government Lot 3 (Note: This boundary will be more particularly described when conveyed by patent, surveyed, and shown by ASLS plat.)	26	
<b>Overview and Historical Background:</b> This land is located approximately 2 miles south of Moose Pass near Mile Post 27 of the Seward Highway. It is bordered on its west boundary by the Alaska Railroad and bordered on its north, east, and south boundaries by 2,800 feet of Trail Lakes shoreline including the narrows between Upper and Lower Trail Lakes across from the mouth of Grant Creek, containing a variety of scenic settings. Subject land provides for trail and lake orientated recreation. Subject land includes the location of a planned electric transmission line and access road for the proposed Grant Lake Hydroelectric Project (FERC 13212), subject to FERC Licensure. KPB research has not discovered any historical records unique to this location as of the writing of this report.			
<b>Land Status:</b> The Municipal Entitlement Final Decision ADL 201306 (Table 3) conditionally approves subject land, conditioned upon classification for public recreation. Once conditions are met the borough will have full management authority for this land under ADL 201306.			
<b>Encumbrances:</b> <b>Public Access:</b> Conveyance of this land from the state is subject to a 50-foot wide public access easement upland of and along the mean high water line of Trail Lakes per AS 38.05.127 and Title 11, AAC 51.045.			
<b>Kenai Area Plan Designations for Unit 380G:</b> Habitat and Public Recreation and Tourism – Dispersed Use (p. 3-43).			
<b>Kenai Area Plan Classifications for Unit 380G:</b> Wildlife habitat land, Public recreation land (p. 4-4 & 4-5; Table 4.1 and 4.2).			
<b>Adopted Plans:</b> Management of this land is guided by the Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan (2005), Comprehensive Plan Moose Pass (1993), Seward Highway Corridor Partnership Plan (1998), and influenced by the Iditarod National Historic Trail Management Plan (1986).			
<b>KPB Code of Ordinances:</b> Management of this land is guided by the following KPB codes.  21.18.040: “There is established an anadromous waters habitat protection district (habitat protection district). Except as otherwise provided in this section, this district includes all lands within 50 horizontal feet of the waters set forth in KPB 21.18.025.”, i.e. Trail Lakes.  21.18.081: Special uses or structures within the 50-foot habitat protection area along Trail Lakes would			

require a KPB Conditional Use Permit.
21.06.040 requires a development permit before construction or development begins within flood hazard areas as defined in 21.06.030b.
<b>Floodplain:</b> Flood Zone A is mapped along the shoreline of this land by FEMA map panel 020012-2070A dated 1981. Flood Zone A is subject to inundation of the 1% annual chance flood. This determination is neither site specific nor project specific and does not eliminate the need for further study.
<b>Existing Use of Subject Land:</b> This land is primarily used by the general public for recreational purposes: hiking, hunting, and day use of the shoreline of Trail Lakes. Subject land can be accessed from, or provide access to, the lake.
Note: On April 15, 2016 Kenai Hydro, LLC submitted its final license application for the proposed Grant Lake Hydroelectric Project (FERC 13212). This project would divert water from Grant Lake and deliver the flow through a tunnel to a powerhouse to generate 5-megawatts of renewable energy. The project proposes development of an electric transmission line and access road through this land. It can be anticipated that the project would impact the use and management of subject land.
<b>Surrounding Land Use:</b> This land is bordered on the west by the Alaska Railroad and bordered on the north, east, and south by Trail Lakes shoreline which provides lakeshore use for the general public. A private cabin property is adjacent to the south. The private property owner has expressed concerns regarding trespass on private property.
<b>Surrounding Land Ownership:</b> Largely state owned land. One privately owned parcel is situated along the south boundary of this land. This land is bordered on the north, east, and south by the shoreline of Trail Lakes.
<b>Access:</b> Access to this land is primarily by pedestrian mode, by watercraft or by floatplane. Alaska Railroad runs between this unit and the Seward Highway. Subject land contains a 50-foot wide public access easement upland of and along the mean high water line of Trail Lakes.
The adjacent Seward Highway is being planned for improvement in DOT's Mile 25.5 to 36 rehabilitation project, with the planning and design schedule extending from 2015-2019.
<b>Utilities:</b> None.
<b>Water Bodies:</b> Trail Lakes including the narrows between Upper and Lower Trail Lakes across from the mouth of Grant Creek.
<b>Trails:</b> Shoreline of Trail Lake with unmarked connections to the Seward Highway.
<b>Soils:</b> No third order soil survey currently exists. Soil appears to be a rolling mixture of shallow bed rock and glacial till.
<b>Topography:</b> Rolling terrain.
<b>Vegetation:</b> Mature Spruce/ Western Hemlock Forest.
<b>Wetlands:</b> Mostly upland with an isolated kettle as well as shoreline features.
<b>Salient Resource Values:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Historic / Social / Cultural:</b> No site specific records have been uncovered.</li> <li>• <b>Recreation:</b> Hiking trails, birdwatching, fishing, hunting and day use activities.</li> <li>• <b>Water Bodies:</b> Upper and Lower Trail Lakes including narrows.</li> <li>• <b>Wildlife Habitat:</b> Near a brown bear feeding area. Swans and other waterfowl inhabit this area year round.</li> <li>• <b>View Shed/Scenic Qualities:</b> An overlook of the mouth of Grant Creek and the Trail Lakes narrows. Lake and mountain views.</li> <li>• <b>Subsistence:</b> Hunting, fishing and berry picking.</li> </ul>

## ANALYSIS

**Historical Background:** This land is located within a historically active corridor served by Iditarod trail and railroad routes and lies within the Moose Pass-Hope Mining District. A main thread of the original Iditarod Trail is thought to be along the route of the present day railroad line. No specific historical accounts of this land have been uncovered as of the writing of this report.

### Adopted Plans:

Managing this land for its public recreational use and scenic quality is supported by the following plans.

#### **Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan (2005):**

Goal 4.10, Objective 2, Implementation Acton A: "Identify borough land with recreational value that provide access to coastlines or recreational areas."

#### **Comprehensive Plan Moose Pass (1993):**

Section 1.B.1: "Moose Pass has, historically, been a crossroads of travel. The Historic Iditarod Trail runs through Moose Pass along the east shore of Trail Lake. It connects with other historic trails including the Hope Wagon Road, Al Solars' Mill Road and many old mining roads. The public now values these trails for recreation and for access to scenic backcountry areas. The public has traveled freely through local connecting valleys and passes and continues to do so."

#### **Seward Highway Corridor Partnership Plan (SHCPP) 1998:**

The SHCPP is incorporated as an element of the borough's 2005 Comprehensive Plan. This land lies within the "Communities and Lakes" segment of the corridor (p. 21, SHCPP). Keystone Strategy K.3-D Corridor Preservation Areas. This strategy recommends defining corridor preservation areas that offer a feeling of openness and escape (p. 52, SHCPP). Utility and other public infrastructure projects should be carefully designed to avoid or minimize visual intrusions [i.e. The proposed Grant Lake Hydroelectric Project] (p. 53, SHCPP).

**Iditarod National Historic Trail Management Plan (1986):** The INHT Comprehensive plan is adopted as a management guide by a Memorandum of Agreement between the Bureau of Land Management and the Kenai Peninsula Borough dated March 29, 1989. This land is not within the Iditarod plan, but it has the potential to be connected to the Iditarod National Historic Trail.

Recognizing HEA's Kenai Hydro project design is supported by the following plans.

#### **Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan (2005):**

Goal 4.8 "To facilitate the provision of reliable and accessible utility services to borough residents", Objective 1: "To establish and maintain appropriate utility rights of way or easements to serve existing or future utility needs."

### Related Plans:

#### **Kenai River Comprehensive Management Plan (KRCMP) 1997:**

Chapter 4.5.4.7: Recommends additional state waters to be included in the Kenai River Special Management Area which includes Upper and Lower Trail Lake.

Chapter 4.5.4.5: Provides recommendations supporting public management of land having



recreational and habitat significance to the Kenai River and its tributaries.
<p><b>Access:</b> Access to this land is primarily by pedestrian mode, by watercraft or by floatplane. Subject land contains a 50-foot wide public access easement upland of and along the mean high water line of Trail Lakes. Subject land is bisected by a 100-foot wide section-line easement which is undeveloped (50-feet on each side of the section line). Currently there is no dedicated public right-of-way that provides vehicular access to this land. In the event of the improvement of a proposed access road for the Grant Lake Hydroelectric Project this land could become more accessible and a take-off point to the Iditarod National Historic Trail and Grant Lake. This land also may have potential capacity to support an Alaska Railroad stop. DOT's Mile 25.5 to 36 rehabilitation project, currently being planned, would result in roadway improvements that increase pedestrian and traffic safety adjacent to this land.</p>
<p><b>Utilities:</b> 800 feet to the west is a Chugach Electric Transmission line that runs in a north-south direction. Other utility services for subject land are not available.</p>
<p><b>Water Bodies:</b> Upper and Lower Trail Lakes supports resident lake trout, whitefish, rainbow trout, dolly varden. Spawning, rearing, and migrating sockeye, chinook, and coho utilize Trail Lake and its tributaries including lower Grant Creek on the east side of this land.</p> <p>The water of Trail Lakes is heavily laden with suspended glacial silts translating to high ambient turbidity and giving the water a grey-blue-green appearance. The high concentration of suspended solids limits light penetration, limits visibility through the water column, and limits production of aquatic plants and invertebrates. Clear water inputs, such as Grant Creek, contribute localized areas of water column with increased transparency and visible mixing zones. The characteristic of water clarity affects how and where people perceive uses of the lake, possibly giving a higher weight to scenic qualities than fishing opportunities for instance.</p> <p>Trail Lakes are flowing water bodies fed by a number of tributaries and the Trail Glacier which contributes to seasonal water level variation and rapid lake level rise in summer months and low lake levels in winter months.</p> <p>Trail lakes are considered a part of the upper Kenai River system and are included in the scope of the Kenai River Comprehensive Management Plan 1996 which includes recommendations for management upon, within, and along the surface waters.</p> <p>Public recreation values include boating, sport fishing, scenic viewing, birdwatching, and day use of the lakeshore.</p>
<p><b>Trails:</b> An unnamed, unmarked, trail exists along the lakeshore and ties to an informal highway pull-off area.</p>
<p><b>Topography:</b> The rolling topography of subject land provides excellent vantage of Trail Lakes and overlooks along the narrows.</p>

**Salient Resource Values:**

- **Wildlife Habitat: Brown bears** are known to feed at Grant Creek within proximity to this land along Grant Creek below the falls. This unit is within brown bear country. At this time the Kenai Peninsula Borough has no specific information relating this location to use patterns of brown bears. The borough will invite ADF&G and the Chugach National Forest to supply any specific data on managed wildlife species including brown bears. Additionally, Land Management will monitor and gather any data that becomes available, and incorporate that information into management plans for the land.  
Waterfowl are commonly found on Trail Lakes in the nesting, rearing and migration seasons. Waterfowl, including tundra swans, also overwinter in available pockets of flowing open water along the narrower sections of Trail Lakes within view of this land.
- **View Shed/Scenic Qualities:** Each direction of the lakeshore has scenic views of the lake and surrounding mountain landscape. A vantage of the mouth of Grant Creek at the narrows draws visitors year round.

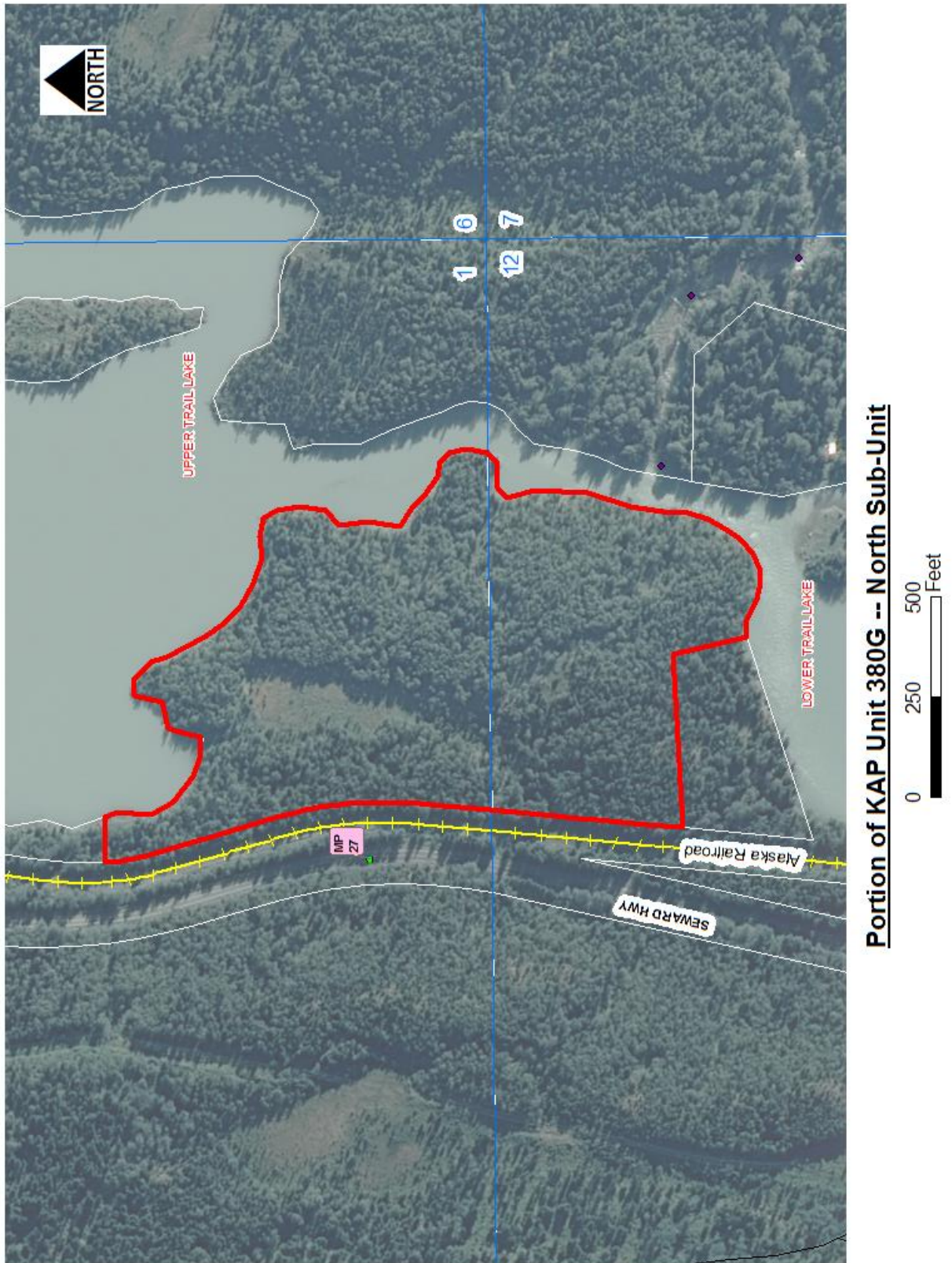
**CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the findings of fact and analysis are the following conclusions.

- 1) The characteristics of this land make it highly suited for recreational purposes and day use activities by the general public.
- 2) The varied topography, habitat features, and scenic aspects provide a range of possible benefits fitting with recreation.
- 3) Access limitations significantly influence the scope of use for this land at this time.
- 4) The characteristics and location of this land has the potential to become a railroad stop for tourism, recreation, and day use activities. Such characteristics include a large acreage parcel with a scenic lakeshore setting bordered by the Alaska Railroad and potentially connected to the Iditarod National Historic Trail.
- 5) HEA Kenai Hydro's proposed access through this land, bridging to the east side of Trail Lakes, would significantly affect the management potentials of the land.
- 6) Management of this land should consider measures that would not encourage trespass onto private property.
- 7) The goals of the Moose Pass Comprehensive Plan are consistent with a recreational classification.

**CLASSIFICATION RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the findings of fact, analysis, and conclusions, staff recommends a recreational classification for KPB Parcel ID No. 12532315 and 12532330 (portion of) as shown on the attached map



Unit 380G North Sub-unit

## FINDINGS OF FACT FOR KENAI AREA PLAN UNIT 380G Middle Sub-Unit

KBB Parcel ID No	Property Unit Description:	Acreage	Location
12532320	Kenai Area Plan Unit 380G (portion of) State ADL 201306  T4N, R1W, Seward Meridian, Alaska Section 12: Government Lot 7	7.62	Moose Pass  Near Mile Post 26.5 Seward Highway
<b>Overview and Historical Background:</b> This land is located approximately 2½ miles south of Moose Pass near Mile Post 26.5 of the Seward Highway. It is bordered on the west by the Alaska Railroad, and bordered on the north, east, and south by 2,000 feet of Lower Trail Lake shoreline, a scenic setting. Subject land provides for hiking and lake orientated recreation.			
<b>Land Status:</b> The Municipal Entitlement Final Decision ADL 201306 (Table 3) conditionally approves subject land, conditioned upon classification for public recreation. Once conditions are met the borough will have full management authority for this land under ADL 201306.			
<b>Encumbrances:</b> <b>Public Access:</b> Conveyance of this land from the state is subject to a 50-foot wide public access easement upland of and along the mean high water line of Trail Lakes per AS 38.05.127 and Title 11, AAC 51.045.			
<b>Kenai Area Plan Designations for Unit 380G:</b> Habitat and Public Recreation and Tourism – Dispersed Use (p. 3-43).			
<b>Kenai Area Plan Classifications for Unit 380G:</b> Wildlife habitat land, Public recreation land (p. 4-4 & 4-5; Table 4.1 and 4.2).			
<b>Adopted Plans:</b> Management of this land is guided by the Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan (2005), Comprehensive Plan Moose Pass (1993), Seward Highway Corridor Partnership Plan (1998).			
<b>KPB Code of Ordinances:</b> Management of this land is guided by the following KPB codes.  21.18.040: “There is established an anadromous waters habitat protection district (habitat protection district). Except as otherwise provided in this section, this district includes all lands within 50 horizontal feet of the waters set forth in KPB 21.18.025.”, i.e. Trail Lakes.  21.18.081: Special uses or structures within the 50-foot habitat protection area along Trail Lakes would require a KPB Conditional Use Permit.  21.06.040 requires a development permit before construction or development begins within flood hazard areas as defined in 21.06.030b.			
<b>Floodplain:</b> Flood Zone A is mapped along the shoreline of this land by FEMA map panel 020012-2525A dated 1981. Flood Zone A is subject to inundation of the 1% annual chance flood. This determination is neither site specific nor project specific and does not eliminate the need for further study.			

<b>Existing Use of Subject Land:</b> This land is primarily used by the general public for recreational purposes: hiking, hunting, and day use of the shoreline of Lower Trail Lake. Subject land can be accessed from, or provide access to, the lake.
<b>Surrounding Land Use:</b> One residential parcel lies to the southwest across the railroad tracks. This land is bordered on the west by the Alaska Railroad and bordered on the north, east, and south by the shoreline of Lower Trail Lake which provides fishing opportunities for the general public.
<b>Surrounding Land Ownership:</b> Largely state owned land. One privately owned parcel lies to the southwest across the railroad tracks. This land is bordered on the north, east, and south by the shoreline of Lower Trail Lakes.
<b>Access:</b> Access to this land is primarily by pedestrian mode, by watercraft or by floatplane. Alaska Railroad runs between this land and the Seward Highway. Subject land contains a 50-foot wide public access easement upland of and along the mean high water line of Lower Trail Lake per AS 38.05.127 and Title 11, AAC 51.045. The adjacent Seward Highway is being planned for improvement in DOT's Mile 25.5 to 36 rehabilitation project, with the planning and design schedule extending from 2015-2019.
<b>Utilities:</b> N/A
<b>Water Bodies:</b> Lower Trail Lake.
<b>Trails:</b> Shoreline of Lower Trail Lake.
<b>Soils:</b> No third order soil survey currently exists. Soil appears to be an alluvial deposit possibly sourced from the Grant Creek drainage.
<b>Topography:</b> Relatively level.
<b>Vegetation:</b> Mature Spruce/ Western Hemlock Forest.
<b>Wetlands:</b> No wetlands have been mapped. The land is ringed by low lands with lake-level influenced hydrology which are possibly former stream channels. Characteristics of these areas require further study and assessment of importance, including possible utilization by salmon smolt.
<b>Salient Resource Values:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Historic / Social / Cultural:</b> No specific historical, social, or cultural accounts of this land have been uncovered as of the writing of this report.</li> <li>• <b>Recreation:</b> Hiking, fishing, hunting, birdwatching, and day use activities.</li> <li>• <b>Water Bodies:</b> Lower Trail Lake.</li> <li>• <b>Wildlife Habitat:</b> Swans and other waterfowl inhabit this area year round.</li> <li>• <b>View Shed/Scenic Qualities:</b> Lake and mountains.</li> <li>• <b>Subsistence:</b> Hunting, fishing and berry picking.</li> </ul>

## ANALYSIS

<b>Historical Background:</b> This land is located within a historically active corridor served by Iditarod trail and railroad routes and lies within the Moose Pass-Hope Mining District. A main thread of the original Iditarod Trail is thought to be along the route of the present day railroad line. No specific historical accounts of this land have been uncovered as of the writing of this report.
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**Adopted Plans:**

Managing this land for its public recreational use and scenic quality is supported by the following plans.

**Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan (2005):**

Goal 4.10, Objective 2, Implementation Acton A: "Identify borough land with recreational value that provide access to coastlines or recreational areas."

**Comprehensive Plan Moose Pass (1993):**

Section 1.B.1: "Moose Pass has, historically, been a crossroads of travel. The Historic Iditarod Trail runs through Moose Pass along the east shore of Trail Lake. It connects with other historic trails including the Hope Wagon Road, Al Solars' Mill Road and many old mining roads. The public now values these trails for recreation and for access to scenic backcountry areas. The public has traveled freely through local connecting valleys and passes and continues to do so."

**Seward Highway Corridor Partnership Plan (SHCPP) 1998:**

The SHCPP is incorporated as an element of the borough's 2005 Comprehensive Plan. This land lies within the "Communities and Lakes" segment of the corridor (p. 21, SHCPP). Keystone Strategy K.3-D Corridor Preservation Areas. This strategy recommends defining corridor preservation areas that offer a feeling of openness and escape (p. 52, SHCPP).

**Related Plans:****Kenai River Comprehensive Management Plan (KRCMP) 1997:**

Chapter 4.5.4.7: Recommends additional state waters to be included in the Kenai River Special Management Area which includes Lower Trail Lake.

Chapter 4.5.4.5: Provides recommendations supporting public management of land having recreational and habitat significance to the Kenai River and its tributaries.

**Access:** Access to this land is primarily by pedestrian mode, by watercraft or by floatplane. Subject land contains a 50-foot wide public access easement upland of and along the mean high water line of Lower Trail Lake. An improved access appears to exist along the lakeshore at the southwest corner of the land within the public access easement. Currently there is no dedicated public right-of-way that provides vehicular access to this land. DOT's Mile 25.5 to 36 rehabilitation project, currently being planned (2015-2019), would result in roadway improvements that increase pedestrian and traffic safety adjacent to this land.

**Utilities:** 900 feet to the west is a Chugach Electric Transmission line that runs in a north-south direction. Other utility services for subject land are not available.

**Water Bodies:** Lower Trail Lake contains resident lake trout, whitefish, rainbow trout, dolly varden. Spawning, rearing and migrating sockeye, chinook, and coho utilize Lower Trail Lake.

The water of Trail Lakes is heavily laden with suspended glacial silts translating to high ambient turbidity and giving the water a grey-blue-green appearance. The high concentration of suspended solids limits light penetration, limits visibility through the water column and limits production of aquatic plants and invertebrates. The characteristic of water clarity affects how and where people perceive uses of the lake, possibly giving a higher weight to scenic qualities than fishing opportunities for instance.

Trail Lakes are flowing water bodies fed by a number of tributaries and the Trail Glacier which

contributes to seasonal water level variation and rapid lake level rise in summer months and low lake levels in winter months.

Trail lakes are considered a part of the upper Kenai River system and are included in the scope of the Kenai River Comprehensive Management Plan 1996 which includes recommendations for management upon, within, and along the surface waters.

Public recreation values include float plane landings, boating, sport fishing, scenic viewing, birdwatching, and day use of the lakeshore.

**Trails:** General hiking and lakeshore use.

**Topography:** The topography is relatively level, ringed by channels.

**Salient Resource Values:**

- **Wildlife Habitat:** This land is within brown bear country. At this time the Kenai Peninsula Borough has no specific information relating this location to use patterns of brown bears. The borough will invite ADF&G and the Chugach National Forest to supply any specific data on managed wildlife species including brown bears. Additionally, Land Management will monitor and gather any data that becomes available, and incorporate that information into management plans for the land.  
Waterfowl are commonly found on Lower Trail Lake in the nesting, rearing and migration seasons. Waterfowl, including tundra swans, also overwinter in available pockets of flowing open water along the narrower sections of Lower Trail Lake within view of this land.
- **View Shed/Scenic Qualities:** Each direction of the lakeshore has scenic views of the lake and surrounding mountain landscape.

## CONCLUSIONS

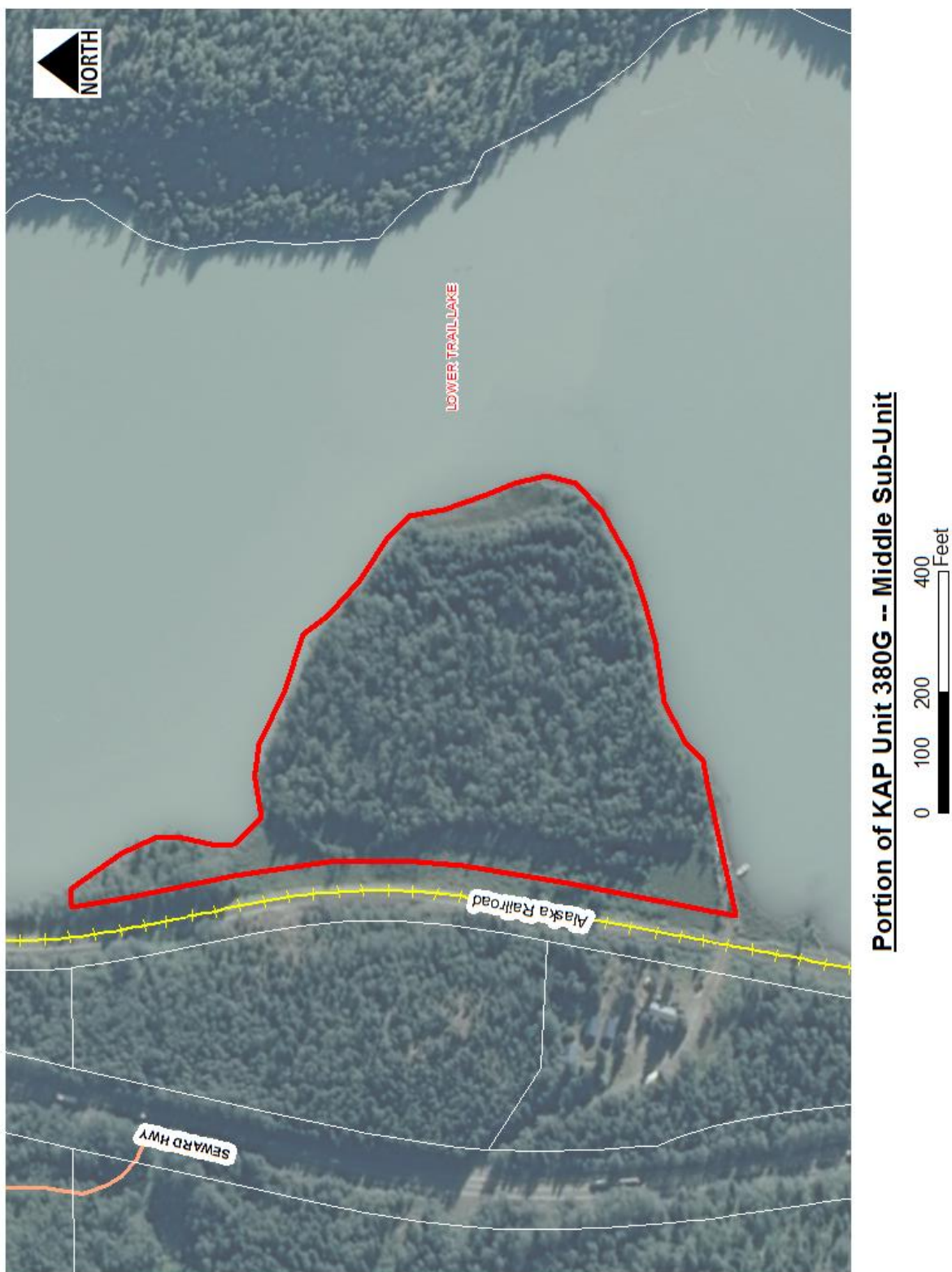
Based on the findings of fact and analysis are the following conclusions.

- 1) The characteristics of this land make it highly suited for recreational purposes and lake oriented day use activities by the general public.
- 2) The semi-isolated location and scenic aspects provide a range of possible benefits fitting with recreation.
- 3) Access limitations significantly influence the scope of use for this land at this time.
- 4) Management of this land should consider measures that would not encourage trespass onto private property.
- 5) The goals of the Moose Pass Comprehensive Plan are consistent with a recreational classification.

## CLASSIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of fact, analysis, and conclusions, staff recommends a recreational classification for KPB Parcel ID No. 12532320 as shown on the attached map.







## FINDINGS OF FACT FOR KENAI AREA PLAN UNIT 380G South Sub-Unit

KBB Parcel ID No	Property Unit Description:	Acreage	Location
Portion of 12516022 Portion of 12516023	Kenai Area Plan Unit 380G (portion of) State ADL 201306  T4N, R1W, Seward Meridian, Alaska Section 13: That portion of USS 7391 in the NE¼SE¼ and that portion of USS 1778 in the N½SE¼	45	Moose Pass  Near Mile Post 25 Seward Highway
<b>Overview and Historical Background:</b> This land is located approximately 4 miles south of Moose Pass near Mile Post 25 of the Seward Highway. It is situated at the south end of Lower Trail Lake. It is bordered on the west by the Alaska Railroad, and bordered on the north by 2,400 feet of Lower Trail Lake shoreline, a scenic setting. Vagt Lake Trail and Trailhead are on this land and is primary connecting trail to the Iditarod National Historic Trail. The land supports a popular lake access that is important locally and for tourism. Subject land provides for trail and lake orientated recreation.			
<b>Land Status:</b> The Municipal Entitlement Final Decision ADL 201306 (Table 3) conditionally approves subject land, conditioned upon classification for public recreation. Once conditions are met the borough will have full management authority for this land under ADL 201306.			
<b>Encumbrances:</b> <b>Public Access:</b> Conveyance of this land from the state is subject to a 50-foot wide public access easement upland of and along the mean high water line of Lower Trail Lake per AS 38.05.127 and Title 11, AAC 51.045.  Iditarod National Historic Trail- The designated Iditarod National Historic Trail, including its primary connecting trails (Vagt Lake Trail), will be granted a 100' wide easement, and will have a 1,000 foot management corridor in accordance with the Iditarod National Historic Trail Management Plan.			
<b>Kenai Area Plan Designations for Unit 380G:</b> Habitat and Public Recreation and Tourism – Dispersed Use (p. 3-43).			
<b>Kenai Area Plan Classifications for Unit 380G:</b> Wildlife habitat land, Public recreation land (p. 4-4 & 4-5; Table 4.1 and 4.2).			
<b>Adopted Plans:</b> Management of this land is guided by the Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan (2005), Comprehensive Plan Moose Pass (1993), Seward Highway Corridor Partnership Plan (1998), and the Iditarod National Historic Trail Management Plan (1986).			

**KPB Code of Ordinances:**

Management of this land is guided by the following KPB codes.

21.18.040: "There is established an anadromous waters habitat protection district. Except as otherwise provided in this section, this district includes all lands within 50 horizontal feet of the waters set forth in KPB 21.18.025.", i.e. Lower Trail Lake.

21.18.081: Special uses or structures within the 50-foot habitat protection area along Lower Trail Lake would require a KPB Conditional Use Permit.

21.06.040 requires a development permit before construction or development begins within flood hazard areas as defined in 21.06.030b.

**Floodplain:** Flood Zone A is mapped along the shoreline of this land by FEMA map panel 020012-2070A dated 1981. Flood Zone A is subject to inundation of the 1% annual chance flood. This determination is neither site specific nor project specific and does not eliminate the need for further study.

**Existing Use of Subject Land:** This land is primarily used by the general public for recreational purposes: hiking, hunting, fishing, boat launching, and day use of the shoreline of Lower Trail Lake. Subject land can be accessed from, or provide access to, the lake. At the west end of this land is the primary publicly used boat launching area for Lower Trail Lake and trailhead for Vagt Lake Trail.

**Surrounding Land Use:** Surrounding land use is largely undeveloped. This land is bordered on the west by the Alaska Railroad and bordered on the north by the shoreline of Lower Trail Lake which provides fishing, boat launching, and recreating opportunities for the general public. A residential subdivision lies to the south with single family homes. Land to the east is used for hiking by the continuation of the Vagt Lake Trail.

**Surrounding Land Ownership:** Borough and State land. Privately owned parcels lie to the south along Mine Road. This land is bordered on the north by the shoreline of Lower Trail Lake. Alaska Railroad right-of-way is along the west border.

**Access:** Access to this land is primarily from Mine Road and informal parking areas along the railroad Right-of-way. Alaska Railroad runs between this land and the Seward Highway. Subject land contains a 50-foot wide public access easement upland of and along the mean high water line of Lower Trail Lake per AS 38.05.127 and Title 11, AAC 51.045. Subject land is bordered on the east by a 50-foot wide section-line easement.

**Utilities:** N/A

**Water Bodies:** Lower Trail Lake.

**Trails:** Vagt Lake Trail and the shoreline of Lower Trail Lake.

**Soils:** No third order soil survey currently exists. Soil appears to be a rich organic mat several inches thick on alluvial fan deposition as part of the Falls Creek drainage. Soils appear to be well drained with intermittent surface and near-surface channeling.

**Topography:** Relatively level, gently sloping toward the lake.

**Vegetation:** Mature Birch/ Spruce/ Western Hemlock Forest.

**Wetlands:** No wetlands are mapped on this land.

**Salient Resource Values:**

- **Historic / Social / Cultural:** No specific historical, social, or cultural accounts of this land have been uncovered as of the writing of this report.
- **Recreation:** Hiking, fishing, boat launching, ice skating, skiing, hunting, and day use activities.
- **Water Bodies:** Lower Trail Lake.
- **Wildlife Habitat:** Lake edge and mature open-understory forest habitat supports animal movement and a wide range of species in a general distribution.
- **View Shed/Scenic Qualities:** Lake and mountains.
- **Subsistence:** Hunting, fishing and berry picking.

**ANALYSIS**

**Historical Background:** This land is located within a historically active corridor served by Iditarod trail and railroad routes and lies within the Moose Pass-Hope Mining District. A main thread of the original Iditarod Trail is thought to be along the route of the present day railroad line. No specific historical accounts of this land have been uncovered as of the writing of this report.

**Adopted Plans:**

Managing this land for its public recreational use and scenic quality is supported by the following plans.

**Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan (2005):**

Goal 4.10, Objective 2, Implementation Acton A: "Identify borough land with recreational value that provide access to coastlines or recreational areas."

Goal 4.10, Objective 3: "To maintain information about and support other groups in establishing and maintaining a network of trails to provide recreation and transportation opportunities."

**Comprehensive Plan Moose Pass (1993):**

Section 1.B.1: "Moose Pass has, historically, been a crossroads of travel. The Historic Iditarod Trail runs through Moose Pass along the east shore of Trail Lake. It connects with other historic trails including the Hope Wagon Road, Al Solars' Mill Road and many old mining roads. The public now values these trails for recreation and for access to scenic backcountry areas. The public has traveled freely through local connecting valleys and passes and continues to do so."

**Seward Highway Corridor Partnership Plan (SHCPP) 1998:**

The SHCPP is incorporated as an element of the borough's 2005 Comprehensive Plan. This land lies within the "Communities and Lakes" segment of the corridor (p. 21, SHCPP).

**Iditarod National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan (1986):**

The INHT Comprehensive plan is adopted as a management guide by a Memorandum of Agreement between the Bureau of Land Management and the Kenai Peninsula Borough dated March 29, 1989. Additionally the KPB has adopted Resolution 85-9 "Officially Designating the Route of the Iditarod National Historic Trail Through the Kenai Peninsula Borough", Resolution 92-97 "Affirming Support For Public Use And Establishing A Management Corridor For That Portion Of The Iditarod National Historic Trail On Borough Managed Land", and Resolution 2000-035 "Supporting Completion Of The Iditarod National Historic Trail From Seward To Girdwood".

**Related Plans:****Kenai River Comprehensive Management Plan (KRCMP) 1997:**

Chapter 4.5.4.7: Recommends additional state waters to be included in the Kenai River Special Management Area which includes Lower Trail Lake.

Chapter 4.5.4.5: Provides recommendations supporting public management of land having recreational and habitat significance to the Kenai River and its tributaries.

**Related Reference:**

**Moose Pass-Hope Mining District, Kenai Peninsula, Alaska, U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 849-I, 1931:** USGS inventory and characterization of mining in the area of the Kenai Peninsula south of Turnagain Arm.

**Access:** Access to this land is primarily by pedestrian mode, by watercraft or by floatplane. Subject land contains a 50-foot wide public access easement upland of and along the mean high water line of Lower Trail Lake. Currently there is no dedicated public right-of-way that provides vehicular access to this land. A formerly open-to-the-public boat launch & trailhead access exists to the lakeshore at the west end of the land. The access route to the boat launch area is within the railroad right-of-way and is regulated by the Alaska Railroad. The USFS is developing plans to construct a new trailhead on the subject land as part of the Iditarod National Historic Trail to replace the former public access. Subject land is bordered on the east by a 50-foot wide section-line easement which is undeveloped.

**Utilities:** A Chugach Electric Transmission line runs in a north-south direction on the west side of the Seward Highway adjacent to this land. Other utility services for subject land are not available.

**Water Bodies:** Lower Trail Lakes contains naturally reproducing resident lake trout, whitefish, rainbow trout, dolly varden. Spawning and rearing sockeye, chinook, and coho utilize Trail Lake and its tributaries including lower Grant Creek on the east side of this land.

Trail Lakes are flowing water bodies fed by a number of tributaries and the Trail Glacier which contributes to seasonal water level variation and rapid lake level rise in summer months and low lake levels in winter months.

Trail lakes are considered a part of the upper Kenai River system and are included in the scope of the Kenai River Comprehensive Management Plan 1996 which includes recommendations for management upon, within, and along the surface waters.

The outlet of Lower Trail Lake into Trail River (near the bridge) is a popular area for bank fishing and launching watercraft.

Public recreation values include boating, sport fishing, swimming, scenic viewing, birdwatching, ice skating and day use of the lakeshore.

**Trails:** The shoreline of Lower Trail Lake provides recreational opportunities for the general public for hiking, boating, sport fishing, and hunting. Vagt Lake Trail runs in an east-west direction across this land to Vagt Lake, a popular destination for swimming and fishing. Vagt Lake Trail is also a connecting trail to the Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT) system which further connects to Crown Point Mine Trail/Road (Mine Road). This system provides access to popular destinations such as historic mines, Falls Creek, and Vagt Lake. Note: The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) currently has plans to develop a Vagt Lake trailhead on this land including interpretive and informational signs and a vault toilet. The USFS is also working towards full construction of the INHT, including a series of bridges, that will connect Seward to

Girdwood.

**Topography:** The topography is relatively level, providing feasible access to Lower Trail Lake.

**Salient Resource Values:**

- **Wildlife Habitat:** This unit is within brown bear country. At this time the Kenai Peninsula Borough has no specific information relating this location to use patterns of brown bears. The borough will invite ADF&G and the Chugach National Forest to supply any specific data on managed wildlife species including brown bears. Additionally, Land Management will monitor and gather any data that becomes available, and incorporate that information into management plans for the unit. Bear awareness signs are maintained by the U.S. Forest Service at the Vagt Lake Trailhead.
- **View Shed/Scenic Qualities:** The lakeshore has scenic views of the lake and surrounding mountain landscape. This land is within the Seward Highway viewshed.
- **Recreation:** This land provides important access to recreational opportunities along Lower Trail Lake and connects to other important recreational areas. Hiking, fishing, boat launching, ice skating, skiing, hunting, and day use activities are popular at this location with a high degree of local and regional interest.

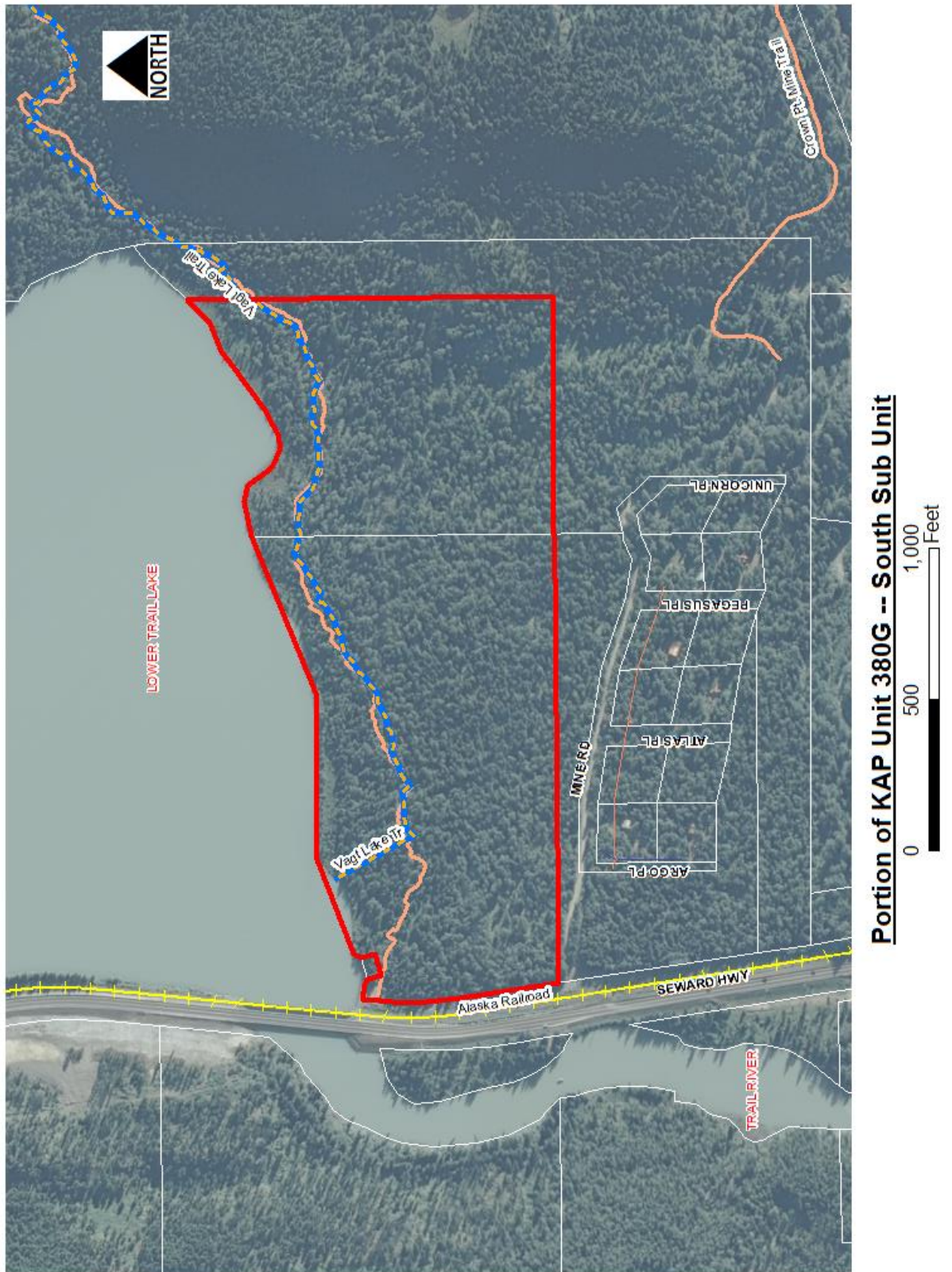
## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of fact and analysis are the following conclusions.

- 1) The characteristics of this land make it highly suited for recreational purposes and lake oriented day use activities by the general public.
- 2) The topography, habitat features, and scenic aspects provide a range of possible benefits fitting with recreation.
- 3) Management supporting the Iditarod National Historic Trail, namely supporting the work of the USFS in the development and maintenance of the INHT including establishment of a new Vagt Lake Trailhead, and the goals of the Moose Pass Comprehensive Plan are consistent with a recreational classification.
- 4) The characteristics and location of this land has the potential to become a railroad stop for tourism, recreation, and day use activities. Such characteristics include a large acreage parcel with a scenic lakeshore setting bordered by the Alaska Railroad and at a gateway to the Iditarod National Historic Trail (a work in progress).
- 5) This land unit hosts a major gateway to the Iditarod National Historic Trail, which is of regional significance and local importance.

## CLASSIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of fact, analysis, and conclusions, staff recommends a recreational classification for KPB Parcel ID No. Portion of 12516022, Portion of 12516023 as shown on the attached map.



## FINDINGS OF FACT FOR KENAI AREA PLAN UNIT 380H and 401A

KBB Parcel ID No	Property Unit Description:	Acreage	Location
12532102 (portion of)	Kenai Area Plan Unit 380H (portion of) State ADL 201306  T4N, R1E, Seward Meridian, Alaska Section 7: Gov. Lots 3, 7, and Lot 5 in the NE¼SW¼ excluding Vagt Lake, SE¼, S½NE¼, S½NE¼NE¼, NE¼NE¼NE¼	380±  498±	Moose Pass  Vagt Lake to Falls Creek Area
12532103 (portion of)	Section 18: E½, E½NE¼, NE¼SW¼, Gov. Lots 4 & 5	9.55	
12516018	Lot 2 of USS 8666		
12532104 (portion of)	Kenai Area Plan Unit 401A (portion of) State ADL 201306  T4N, R1W, Seward Meridian, Alaska Section 19: NE¼NW¼	40	Moose Pass  South of Falls Creek, north of Falls Creek Mine Trail
<b>Overview and Historical Background:</b> This land is a large unit, over 900 acres, east of Lower Trail Lake in the Vagt Lake area extending south across Falls Creek. Subject land provides for trail and lake orientated recreation in a “front-country” network of prominent non-motorized and motorized trails. Historic and active mining activities are along Falls Creek.			
<b>Land Status:</b> The Municipal Entitlement Final Decision ADL 201306 (Table 3) conditionally approves subject land, conditioned upon classification for public recreation. Once conditions are met the borough will have full management authority for this land under ADL 201306.			
<b>Encumbrances:</b>  <b>Public Access:</b> Conveyance of this land from the state is subject to a 50-foot wide public access easement upland of and along the mean high water line of Vagt Lake and Falls Creek per AS 38.05.127 and Title 11, AAC 51.045.  A 60-foot road easement has been reserved for Crown Point Mine Trail/Road per Federal Patent No. 50-92-0639  Iditarod National Historic Trail- The designated Iditarod National Historic Trail, including its primary connecting trails (Vagt Lake Trail), will be granted a 100’ wide easement, and will have a 1,000 foot management corridor in accordance with the Iditarod National Historic Trail Management Plan.			
<b>Kenai Area Plan Designations for Unit 380H:</b> Public Recreation and Tourism – Dispersed Use (p. 3-43).			
<b>Kenai Area Plan Designation for Unit 401A:</b> Habitat and Public recreation and Tourism – Dispersed Use (p. 3-54).			
<b>Kenai Area Plan Classifications for Unit 380H:</b> Public recreation land (p. 4-4 & 4-5; Table 4.1 and 4.2).			
<b>Kenai Area Plan Classifications for Unit 401A:</b> Wildlife habitat land, Public recreation land (p. 4-4 & 4-5; Table 4.1 and 4.2).			

<p><b>Adopted Plans:</b> Management of this land is guided by the Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan (2005), Comprehensive Plan Moose Pass (1993), Seward Highway Corridor Partnership Plan (SHCPP) 1998, and the Iditarod National Historic Trail Management Plan (1986).</p>
<p><b>KPB Code of Ordinances:</b> Management of this land is guided by the following KPB codes: This land lies within the unrestricted zone, no overlay districts affect this area.</p>
<p><b>Floodplain:</b> This land is primarily mapped as Flood Zone X by FEMA map panel 020012-2070A dated 1981, a minimal risk flood area except as to localized terrain.</p>
<p><b>Existing Use of Subject Land:</b> This land is primarily used by the general public for recreational purposes: hiking, hunting, fishing, visitation of mining relics, and day use of the shoreline of Vagt Lake. Active mining claims exist along Falls Creek.</p>
<p><b>Surrounding Land Use:</b> Surrounding land use is undeveloped. Several hiking trails cross this land creating recreational opportunities for the general public. Recreational mining activities have been established toward the southern end of this land.</p>
<p><b>Surrounding Land Ownership:</b> State owned land lies to the north, south, and west. USDA Forest Service land lies to the east.</p>
<p><b>Access:</b> Access to this land is primarily from a network of trails that include Vagt Lake Trail, Crown Point Mine Trail/Road, and the Iditarod National Historic Trail. Subject land contains a 50-foot wide public access easement upland of and along the mean high water line of Vagt Lake per AS 38.05.127 and Title 11, AAC 51.045. The entire south and east boundaries of subject land are bordered by a 50-foot wide section-line easement and a small portion of the north and west boundaries are bordered by a 50-foot wide section-line easement. These easements are undeveloped.</p>
<p><b>Utilities:</b> N/A</p>
<p><b>Water Bodies:</b> Vagt Lake, Falls Creek.</p>
<p><b>Trails:</b> Vagt Lake Trail, Crown Point Mine Trail/Road, and the Iditarod Historic National Trail.</p>
<p><b>Soils:</b> No third order soil survey currently exists. Soils appear to be primarily shallow to bedrock along glacial scoured ridges in a north-south orientation parallel to the valley with a thin organic mat, localized valleys between ridges with some till deposits and organic mats several inches thick, depositional wetland areas with highly organic peat and fine sediments, weathered talus slopes with subalpine organic layer along the lower mountain slope, and incised drainageways primarily running east to west bounded by shale bedrock.</p>
<p><b>Topography:</b> Varied with mountain benchlands, lower mountain slope, contains a depressional lake (Vagt Lake) and incised drainages including Falls Creek.</p>
<p><b>Vegetation:</b> Mature Birch/ Spruce/ Western Hemlock Forest. Transitional sub-alpine above 1000' elevation.</p>
<p><b>Wetlands:</b> Mostly upland with an isolated kettles.</p>
<p><b>Salient Resource Values:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Historic / Social / Cultural:</b> No specific historical, social, or cultural accounts of this land have been uncovered as of the writing of this report. Historic mining relics along Falls Creek.</li> <li>• <b>Recreation:</b> Hiking, camping, fishing, hunting, and day use activities.</li> <li>• <b>Water Bodies:</b> Vagt Lake, Falls Creek.</li> <li>• <b>Wildlife Habitat:</b> Mixed forest habitat supports animal movement and a wide range of species in a general distribution. Likely brown bear movement area. Loons and waterfowl on Vagt Lake.</li> <li>• <b>View Shed/Scenic Qualities:</b> Lake, mountains, gorge and waterfalls on Falls Creek.</li> <li>• <b>Subsistence:</b> Hunting, fishing, berry picking, firewood collecting.</li> </ul>



## ANALYSIS

**Historical Background:** This land is located within a historically active corridor served by Iditarod trail and railroad and lies within the Moose Pass-Hope Mining District. Mining relics along Falls Creek. Crown Point Mine Road is historic access to Crown Point Mine, a well documented mine, active from about 1906 and reportedly produced 3,125oz of gold.

### Adopted Plans:

Managing this land for its public recreational use and scenic quality is supported by the following plans.

#### **Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan (2005):**

Goal 4.10, Objective 2, Implementation Acton A: "Identify borough land with recreational value that provide access to coastlines or recreational areas."

Goal 4.10, Objective 3: "To maintain information about and support other groups in establishing and maintaining a network of trails to provide recreation and transportation opportunities."

#### **Comprehensive Plan Moose Pass (1993):**

Section 1.B.1: "Moose Pass has, historically, been a crossroads of travel. The Historic Iditarod Trail runs through Moose Pass along the east shore of Trail Lake. It connects with other historic trails including the Hope Wagon Road, Al Solars' Mill Road and many old mining roads. The public now values these trails for recreation and for access to scenic backcountry areas. The public has traveled freely through local connecting valleys and passes and continues to do so."

#### **Seward Highway Corridor Partnership Plan (SHCPP) 1998:**

The SHCPP is incorporated as an element of the borough's 2005 Comprehensive Plan. This land lies within the "Communities and Lakes" segment of the corridor (p. 21, SHCPP). Strategy K.3-D addresses areas that provide easy visual and physical access to the type of features and resources of Alaska that are increasingly blocked or obscured by roadside development throughout the state (p. 52, SHCPP). Some elevated terrain with western aspect and along ridgelines on this land are part of the Seward Highway viewshed.

#### **Iditarod National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan (1986):**

The INHT Comprehensive plan is adopted as a management guide by a Memorandum of Agreement between the Bureau of Land Management and the Kenai Peninsula Borough dated March 29, 1989. Additionally the KPB has adopted Resolution 85-9 "Officially Designating the Route of the Iditarod National Historic Trail Through the Kenai Peninsula Borough", Resolution 92-97 "Affirming Support For Public Use And Establishing A Management Corridor For That Portion Of The Iditarod National Historic Trail On Borough Managed Land", and Resolution 2000-035 "Supporting Completion Of The Iditarod National Historic Trail From Seward To Girdwood".

**Access:** Pedestrian access to this land is primarily gained from Vagt Lake Trail or Crown Point Mine Trail/Road (Mine Road). Pedestrian modes includes hiking, biking, or skiing. Motorized access can be gained seasonally by snow machine. Vehicular access to this land begins at the intersection of Crown Point Mine Trail/Road (Mine Road) and the Seward Highway which is about a half mile west of subject land. The first half mile is a gravel road maintained by the KPB. The easterly extension of this road is then better suited for off-road vehicles, mountain bikes or pedestrian mode up to the Crown Point Mine area. In the future the Iditarod National Historic Trail will provide access to and through this land from points between Seward and Girdwood. Subject land contains a 50-foot wide public access easement upland of and along the mean high water line of Vagt Lake and Falls Creek. The entire south and east boundaries of subject land are bordered by a 50-foot wide section-line easement and a small portion of the north and west boundaries are bordered by a 50-foot wide section-line easement. These easements are undeveloped.

**Utilities:** N/A

**Water Bodies:** Vagt Lake is a popular destination for recreational opportunities, i.e. fishing, lakeside camping, swimming, birdwatching, and scenic viewing. ADF&G stocks this lake with rainbow trout.

Falls Creek is a scenic waterway with gorges, waterfalls, and cliff banks. Falls Creek hosts a number of mining claims, active and former.

**Trails:** Vagt Lake Trail, Crown Point Mine Trail/Road (Mine Road), and the Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT) create a network across this land that provide recreational opportunities for the general public, i.e. hiking, berry picking, hunting, lake access, and backcountry access. Vagt Lake Trail is also a connecting trail to the INHT system which further connects to Crown Point Mine Trail/Road (Mine Road). This system provides access to popular destinations such as historic mines, Falls Creek, and Vagt Lake. Note: The U.S. Forest Service is currently working towards full construction of the INHT, including a series of bridges, that will connect Seward to Girdwood.

**Topography:** With more than 900 acres subject land encounters a wide range of mountain valley topography from gentle slopes to steep terrain along with lake, wetland meadow, and mountain streams.

**Salient Resource Values:**

- **Wildlife Habitat:** This unit is within brown bear country. At this time the Kenai Peninsula Borough has no specific information relating this location to use patterns of brown bears, however this land likely hosts brown bear movements between feeding areas and mountain valleys. The borough will invite ADF&G and the Chugach National Forest to supply any specific data on managed wildlife species including brown bears. Additionally, Land Management will monitor and gather any data that becomes available, and incorporate that information into management plans for the unit. Bear awareness signs are maintained by the U.S. Forest Service at trailheads.  
This land supports hunting and access to hunting areas for a variety of important game species.
- **View Shed/Scenic Qualities:** Several scenic viewpoints exist on this land each with their own distinctions. Multiple locations around Vagt Lake offer exposure to the surrounding mountain landscape. The Iditarod trail traverses some elevated terrain that looks over Lower Trail Lake and Kenai Lake. Along Falls Creek scenic gorges, waterfalls, and cliff banks provide a contrasting wild river experience. The planned Iditarod Trail bridge over falls creek will offer spectacular views of these river features. Parts of this land are also with in the Seward Highway view shed.
- **Subsistence:** Access to areas for hunting, fishing, berry picking, and firewood collecting which are important to the community.

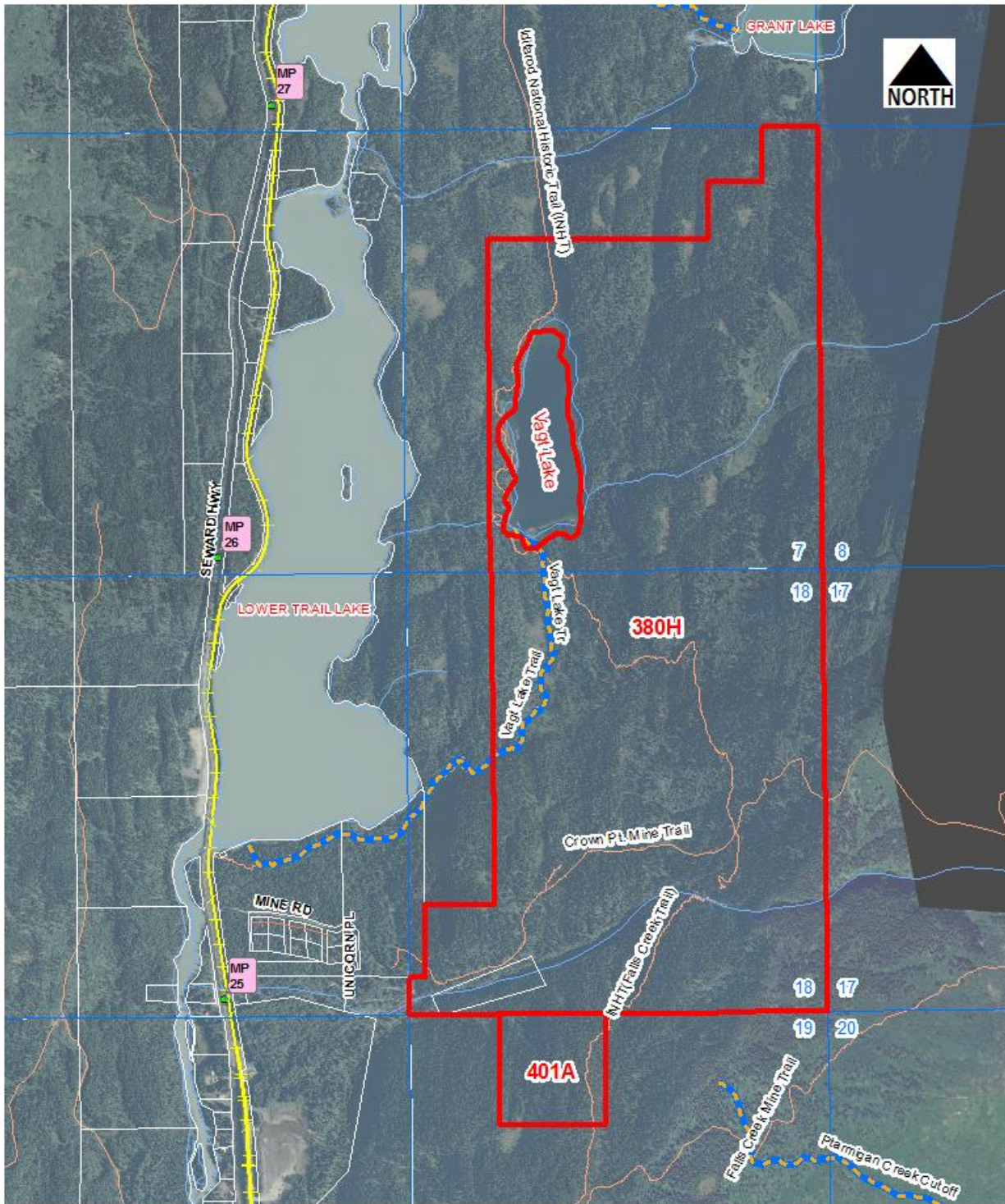
## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of fact and analysis are the following conclusions.

- 1) The characteristics of this land, and the quality and character of its trails and water features, make it highly suited for recreational purposes by the general public.
- 2) The topography, habitat features, and scenic aspects provide a range of possible benefits fitting with recreation.
- 3) This land unit contains spaces that are of particular importance to Moose Pass area residents providing traditional access to areas for hunting, swimming holes, gold mining, firewood collecting, berry picking, backcountry access, winter recreation, scenic points, and other uses which are compatible with a recreational classification.
- 4) Management supporting the Iditarod National Historic Trail, namely supporting the work of the USFS in the development and maintenance of the INHT from Seward to Girdwood, and the goals of the Moose Pass Comprehensive Plan are consistent with a recreational classification and are of economic importance locally and regionally.
- 5) The section of the Iditarod National Historic Trail running through this land is of very high quality and is strongly connected to the Moose Pass Community, the Moose Pass area history, and the eastern peninsula economy. Opportunities to support those valuable connections within the “Seward to Girdwood”, “Seward to Nome”, INHT experience should be promoted in the management of this land.

## CLASSIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of fact, analysis, and conclusions, staff recommends a recreational classification for KPB Parcel ID No. portion of 12532102, portion of 12532103, portion of 12532104, and 12516018 as shown on the attached map.



**KAP Unit 380H & Portion of 401A**

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Feet

## FINDINGS OF FACT FOR KENAI AREA PLAN UNIT 382H and 380J

KBB Parcel ID No	Property Unit Description:	Acreage	Location
12532420 (portion of) 12532421 (portion of) 12532422 (portion of) 12532425 (portion of)	Kenai Area Plan Units 382H and 380J(portion of) State ADL 201306  T4N, R1W, Seward Meridian, Alaska Section 13: Gov. Lots 7 & 8, North 2/3 portion of Gov. Lot 9, NW¼SW¼, N½SW¼SW¼, N½S½SW¼SW¼	137±	Moose Pass  Near Mile Post 25 Seward Highway
<b>Overview and Historical Background:</b> This land is situated at the base of Madson Mountain and is located approximately 4 miles south of Moose Pass near Mile Post 25 of the Seward Highway. Trail River Campground and Kenai Lake lie one mile to the south. Lower Trail Lake lies adjacent to the northeast. The outlet of Fall Creek into Trail River lies to the south. This land is bordered on its east boundary by 2,000 feet of Trail River and on its west boundary by the Chugach National Forest. Both the Seward Highway and the Alaska Railroad lie adjacent to the east boundary of this land. Subject land provides for both motorized and non-motorized access along the base of Madson Mountain.			
<b>Land Status:</b> The Municipal Entitlement Final Decision ADL 201306 (Table 3) conditionally approves subject land, conditioned upon classification for public recreation. Once conditions are met the borough will have full management authority for this land under ADL 201306.			
<b>Encumbrances:</b> <b>Public Access:</b> Conveyance of this land from the state is subject to a 50-foot wide public access easement upland of and along the mean high water line of Trail River per AS 38.05.127 and Title 11, AAC 51.045.			
<b>Kenai Area Plan Designations for Unit 382H:</b> Habitat and Public Recreation and Tourism - Public Use Site (p. 3-49).			
<b>Kenai Area Plan Designation for Unit 380J:</b> Public recreation and Tourism – Dispersed Use (p. 3-44).			
<b>Kenai Area Plan Classifications for Unit 382H:</b> Wildlife habitat land, Public recreation land (p. 4-4 & 4-5; Table 4.1 and 4.2).			
<b>Kenai Area Plan Classifications for Unit 380J:</b> Public recreation land (p. 4-4 & 4-5; Table 4.1 and 4.2).			
<b>Adopted Plans:</b> Management of this land is guided by the Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan (2005), Comprehensive Plan Moose Pass (1993), Seward Highway Corridor Partnership Plan (SHCPP) 1998, and influenced by the Iditarod National Historic Trail Management Plan (1986).			

**KPB Code of Ordinances:**

Management of this land is guided by the following KPB codes:

21.18.040: "There is established an anadromous waters habitat protection district. Except as otherwise provided in this section, this district includes all lands within 50 horizontal feet of the waters set forth in KPB 21.18.025.", i.e. Trail River.

21.18.081: Special uses or structures within the 50-foot habitat protection area of Trail River would require a KPB Conditional Use Permit.

21.06.040: Requires a development permit before construction or development begins within flood hazard areas as defined in 21.06.030b.

**Floodplain:** Flood Zone A is mapped between Trail River and the Seward Highway by FEMA map panel 020012-2525A dated 1981. Flood Zone A is subject to inundation of the 1% annual chance flood. The remainder of this land is primarily mapped as Flood Zone X by FEMA map panel 020012-2070A dated 1981, a minimal risk flood area except as to localized terrain.

**Existing Use of Subject Land:** Part of this land along the logging road have been logged but areas upslope and downslope of the logging road still contain stands of mature hemlock, spruce and birch. This land is primarily used by the general public for recreational purposes: hiking, hunting, fishing, firewood collecting, berry picking, skiing and ATVing.

**Surrounding Land Use:** Surrounding land use is undeveloped. The Chugach National Forest lies to the west. A logging road crosses this land providing recreational opportunities for the general public for hiking, skiing and motorized use. Trail River Campground lies one mile to the south. Residential land uses exist along Trail River to the south.

**Surrounding Land Ownership:** Borough approved State land lies to the north and south. US Forest Service land lies to the north and west. Private lands lie to the south on the east side of Trail River.

**Access:** Land contains a logging road which is a spur off of the Trail River Campground road. Subject land contains a 50-foot wide public access easement upland of and along the mean high water line of Trail River per AS 38.05.127 and Title 11, AAC 51.045. The west boundary of subject land contains a 50-foot wide section-line easement which is undeveloped. The Seward Highway runs along the eastern boundaries providing limited access due to terrain and highway safety guardrails.

**Utilities:** Utility services for subject land are not available. Electric transmission is adjacent.

**Water Bodies:** Trail River.

**Trails:** A logging road provides a north south trail at the base of Madson Mountain.

**Soils:** No third order soil survey currently exists. Soils west of Trail River appear to be primarily shallow to bedrock along glacial scoured ridges in a north-south orientation parallel to the valley with a thin organic mat; localized valleys between ridges with some till deposits and organic mats several inches thick; depositional wetland areas with highly organic peat and fine sediments; weathered talus slopes with forested organic layer along the lower mountain slope. Mountain slope soils may have shallow sheet flow with a tendency to generate glaciation in winter if exposed by cuts. Soils east of Trail River appear to be alluvial fan deposits originating from the Falls Creek drainage.

**Topography:** Lower mountain slope terrain with an eastern aspect, to riverine.

**Vegetation:** Mature Birch/ Spruce/ Western Hemlock Forest, partially logged.

**Wetlands:** No wetlands have been mapped.



**Salient Resource Values:**

- **Historic / Social / Cultural:** No specific historical, social, or cultural accounts of this land have been uncovered as of the writing of this report.
- **Recreation:** Hiking, skiing, motorized trail, firewood collecting, berry picking, fishing, hunting, and day use activities.
- **Water Bodies:** Trail River.
- **Wildlife Habitat:** River edge and mixed forest habitat supports animal movement and a wide range of species in a general distribution. Likely brown bear movement area.
- **Fish Habitat:** Trail River (Anadromous Waters Catalogue # 244-30-10010-2225 referred to as Trail Creek) is important habitat for the spawning, rearing, and migration of salmon and supports resident sportfish species.
- **View Shed/Scenic Qualities:** Trail River, forested lower mountain terrain.
- **Subsistence:** Hunting, fishing, berry picking, firewood collecting.

**ANALYSIS**

**Historical Background:** This land is located within a historically active corridor served by Iditarod trail and railroad and lies within the Moose Pass-Hope Mining District. Remains of an old bridge abutment exists 1000' downstream of the Seward Highway's Trail River Bridge.

**Adopted Plans:**

Managing this land for its public recreational use and scenic quality is supported by the following plans.

**Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan (2005):**

Goal 4.10, Objective 2, Implementation Acton A: "Identify borough land with recreational value that provide access to coastlines or recreational areas."

**Comprehensive Plan Moose Pass (1993):**

Section 1.B.1: "Moose Pass has, historically, been a crossroads of travel. The Historic Iditarod Trail runs through Moose Pass along the east shore of Trail Lake. It connects with other historic trails including the Hope Wagon Road, Al Solars' Mill Road and many old mining roads. The public now values these trails for recreation and for access to scenic backcountry areas. The public has traveled freely through local connecting valleys and passes and continues to do so."

**Seward Highway Corridor Partnership Plan (SHCPP) 1998:**

The SHCPP is incorporated as an element of the borough's 2005 Comprehensive Plan. This land lies within the "Communities and Lakes" segment of the corridor (p. 21, SHCPP). Strategy K.3-D addresses areas that provide easy visual and physical access to the type of features and resources of Alaska that are increasingly blocked or obscured by roadside development throughout the state (p. 52, SHCPP). Some terrain with eastern aspect and the bank of Trail River are part of the Seward Highway viewshed.

**Related Plans:**

**Kenai River Comprehensive Management Plan (KRCMP) 1997:**

Chapter 4.5.4.7: Recommends additional state waters to be included in the Kenai River Special Management Area which includes Trail River.

Chapter 4.5.4.5: Provides recommendations supporting public management of land having recreational and habitat significance to the Kenai River and its tributaries.

**Access:** Access to the land west of Trail River is gained primarily from the logging road originating from Trail River Campground Road. The logging road provides for both non-motorized and motorized modes of travel. The logging road connects borough managed lands (approved State lands) to the north and south of this land. The connectivity of this route is important for the management of all these lands. The logging road connects with a powerline trail to the north.

Access to the land between Trail River and the Seward Highway is from the Seward Highway but is limited due to terrain and highway safety features.

The land contains a 50-foot wide public access easement upland of and along the mean high water line of Trail River. The entire west boundary of this land is bordered by a 50-foot wide section-line easement. This easement is undeveloped.

**Utilities:** A Chugach Electric Transmission line runs adjacent to the east boundary of this land. Utility services for subject land are not available.

**Water Bodies:** Trail River is a major tributary of Kenai Lake and the Kenai River watershed. Trail River provides important fish habitat and fish migration for salmon and resident fish species. Trail River provides quality habitat and feeding areas for a variety of wildlife. Trail River is highly scenic and is partly viewable from the Seward Highway. Trail River affords recreational opportunities for fishing and scenic visitation. Trail River is regulated under the KPB 21.18 Habitat Protection District and is included in the Kenai River Comprehensive Management Plan. Falls Creek, an anadromous tributary, feeds into Trail River downstream of this land on adjacent borough approved land.

**Trails:** The logging road originating at Trail River Campground Road which runs north through this land is used as a recreational trail. The eastern shore of Trail River receives public foot traffic.

**Topography:** This land has steep terrain rising nearly 700 feet from its eastern boundary up to its western boundary with the Chugach National Forest. The riverine topography is high-banked along the western river edge and low-banked on the eastern river edge.

**Salient Resource Values:**

- **Wildlife Habitat:** This unit is within brown bear country. At this time the Kenai Peninsula Borough has no specific information relating this location to use patterns of brown bears, however this land likely hosts brown bear movements between feeding areas and mountain valleys. The borough will invite ADF&G and the Chugach National Forest to supply any specific data on managed wildlife species including brown bears. Additionally, Land Management will monitor and gather any data that becomes available, and incorporate that information into management plans for the unit.

Waterfowl, shorebirds, and aquatic mammals, including harlequin ducks, American dippers, mink, and river otter utilize Trail River indicating high-quality, low-disturbance, riparian habitat conditions.

**Fish Habitat:** Trail River (AWC# 244-30-10010-2225) is important habitat for the spawning, rearing, and migration of coho, chinook, pink and sockeye salmon and resident species including



rainbow trout, dolly varden, lake trout, and whitefish. River bank habitats are of high quality and are in good condition.

- **View Shed/Scenic Qualities:** Trail River is highly scenic with “wild river” characteristics and is partially viewable from the Trail River Bridge. Portions of this land provide a forest backdrop to the river as part of the Seward Highway view shed.
- **Subsistence:** Provides access to area for hunting, berry picking, and firewood collecting which are important to the community.

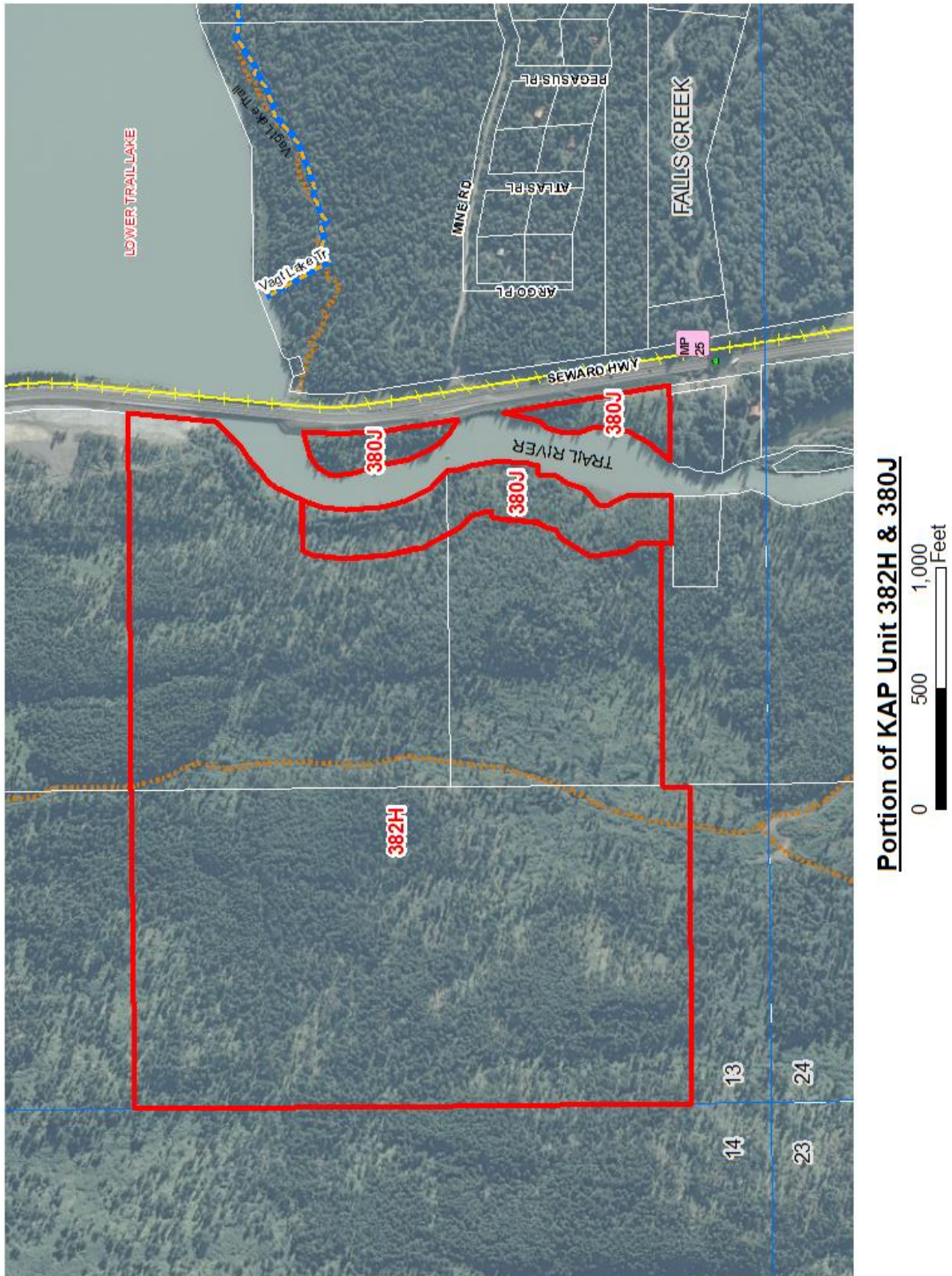
## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of fact and analysis are the following conclusions.

- 1) The characteristics of this land, with its logging road and river features, make it well suited for recreational purposes by the general public.
- 2) The topography, habitat features, and scenic aspects provide a range of possible benefits fitting with recreation.
- 3) Future management of Borough land to the north and south should integrate subject land as a component of a larger and more comprehensive planning effort. Considerations should include its proximity, shared access, common resource values, and community goals.
- 4) This land unit contains spaces that are of importance to Moose Pass area residents for traditional access to areas for hunting, firewood collecting, berry picking, winter recreation, scenic points, and other uses which are compatible with a recreational classification.

## CLASSIFICATION RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of fact, analysis, and conclusions, staff recommends a recreational classification for KPB Parcel ID No. portion of 12532420, portion of 12532421, portion of 12532422, and portion of 12532425 as shown on the attached map.



STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Based on the findings of fact, analysis, and conclusions, staff recommends the KPB Planning Commission find that it is in the borough's best interest to recommend adoption of Resolution 2016-\_\_\_\_ classifying the subject lands as Recreational