Unit 15a - Upper Speel Arm

Background

This unit includes the head of Port Snettisham, Crater and Long lakes, and the Speel River. Most of the state lands in this unit are tidelands and shorelands, with some state-selected uplands around the Snettisham Power Plant and Long and Crater lakes. The uplands around the power plant were selected by the state from the USFS for community development. The primary concern at the time of selection was increased USFS fees for use of the area for hydroelectric power.

Pending Authorizations. ADFG has applied for an ILMA for state-selected uplands to encompass the existing hatchery building in Subunit 15a26 (ADL 104393) for employee housing.

Snettisham powerplant trailrace water that is surplus to the needs of the hatchery has been identified as having potential for export. What facilities are needed to export water are undefined at this time.

Fish and Wildlife. Crater Cove (Subunit 15a2) has sheltered marshes and mud flats that are used by migratory birds as a stopover and by bears in the spring. High eagle concentrations (up to 30) have been observed during hooligan runs. Subunit 15a26 includes an ADFG king, chum, and sockeye salmon hatchery.

Snettisham Power Plant. Subunit 15a26 includes the Snettisham power plant, outfall, dam, pipe, employee housing, airstrip, borrow pits, and roads. The power plant uses water channeled into tunnels from Long and Crater lakes, and generates power for Juneau. The Snettisham Hydro Project was completed in two phases. The initial phase (Long Lake) was completed in 1975 and the second phase (Crater Lake) was completed in 1990. The project supplies Juneau with 80 percent of its energy needs. The 78 Mega-watt Snettisham power project is located on Federal land. The power project is managed by Alaska Power Administration of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). DOE has requested permission from Congress to sell these facilities in 1992 to the Alaska State Energy Authority. DOE has prepared an environmental assessment to evaluate the consequences of this proposed action. If Congress agrees to the sale, the state will receive the powerhouse, power tunnel, and other facilities. Whether or not the sale of the facilities occurs, the state will retain its selection of the 2,666 acres of land upon which these facilities and reservoirs are located.

Management Intent

This unit will be managed to retain its semi-primitive character, fish and wildlife habitat and harvest values, continued marine recreation use, a fish hatchery, and continued operation and possible future expansion and improvement of the Snettisham powerplant. If the state acquires the Snettisham lands and facilities from the federal government, they will be managed consistent with the Snettisham Purchase Agreement.

Shipping water from this area is an allowable use within this unit, if an evaluation of its effects on the aquatic, marine, and estuarine habitat in this unit determines that the water proposed to be shipped is surplus to the freshwater needs of those habitats. In addition, within Subunit 15a3 and Section 13, T43S, R71E, within Subunit 15a26, consistent with management for fish and wildlife habitat, recreation, and other values; this area will be managed to allow access to the trailrace water for appropriation by the state (or its political subdivision, or other public entities) and development of the necessary infrastructure to bulk load water onto vessels for shipment.

Management Guidelines

Mineral Closures. Approximately forty (40) acres of tidelands and submerged lands adjacent to the Snettisham fish hatchery and forty (40) acres around the net pen site for the release of hatchery salmon in the cove south of the hatchery, will be closed to new mineral location to protect important rearing areas for anadromous fish. The hatchery and the fisheries it supports are critically dependent on this estuarine rearing habitat. The closure is also to protect the significant state and private investment in the hatchery and net pens. Maps of these closures can be found in Mineral Order 653 in Appendix B.

Land-Use Designation Summary

For keys to the one-letter and two-letter abbreviations used in this table, see the beginning of this chapter.

UNIT 15A: UPPER SPEEL ARM						
Area no. & name	**DNR designation**	**CBJ zoning district**	**Land type**	**Adjacent ownership**	**Resource or use**	**Other comments**
15a2 Crater Cove	Ha	RR	T	State/ USFS	Eulachon spawning; brown and black bear spring habitat; eagle concentration in spring; migratory waterfowl habitat	
15a3 Upper Speel Arm	Ha Hv Rd Wd	RR	T/SU	State/ USFS	Eulachon spawning and Dungeness crab commercial and personal use harvest; anadromous stream mouth; anchorage; anadromous fish rearing habitat	Existing outfall for power plant, dock. Fish hatchery release site
15a26 Crater & Long Lakes & Snettisham facilities	W Pr	RR	SL/ UP	State/ USFS		Snettisham power station, lake taps, road, air strip, dock, fish hatchery
15a40 Speel Lake	Ha	Ha	SL	State/ USFS	Significant sockeye escapement	ADFG facility on lake
15a41 Speel River	Ha	RR	SL	State/ USFS	Anadromous stream	
15a43 Indian Lake	G	RR	SL	State, state selected & USFS		
15a44 Speel Lake	Ha	RR	SL	State/ USFS	The FRED and Commercial Fisheries Divisions of ADF&G have a camp at the exit of Speel Lake on USFS land and state tidelands for over 10 years. Facilities include a salmon counting weir and field camp; cutthroat trout and char over- wintering area; salmon spawning and rearing habitat	
15a45 Lower Speel River	Ha	RR	SL	State, state selected & USFS	Migratory waterfowl habitat; anadromous fish stream	
15a46 Lower Speel River	Ha	RR	SL	State/ USFS	Eulachon spawning and migratory waterfowl habitat; anadromous fish stream; brown and black bear spring habitat	

UNIT 15A - Upper Speel Arm

Navigability

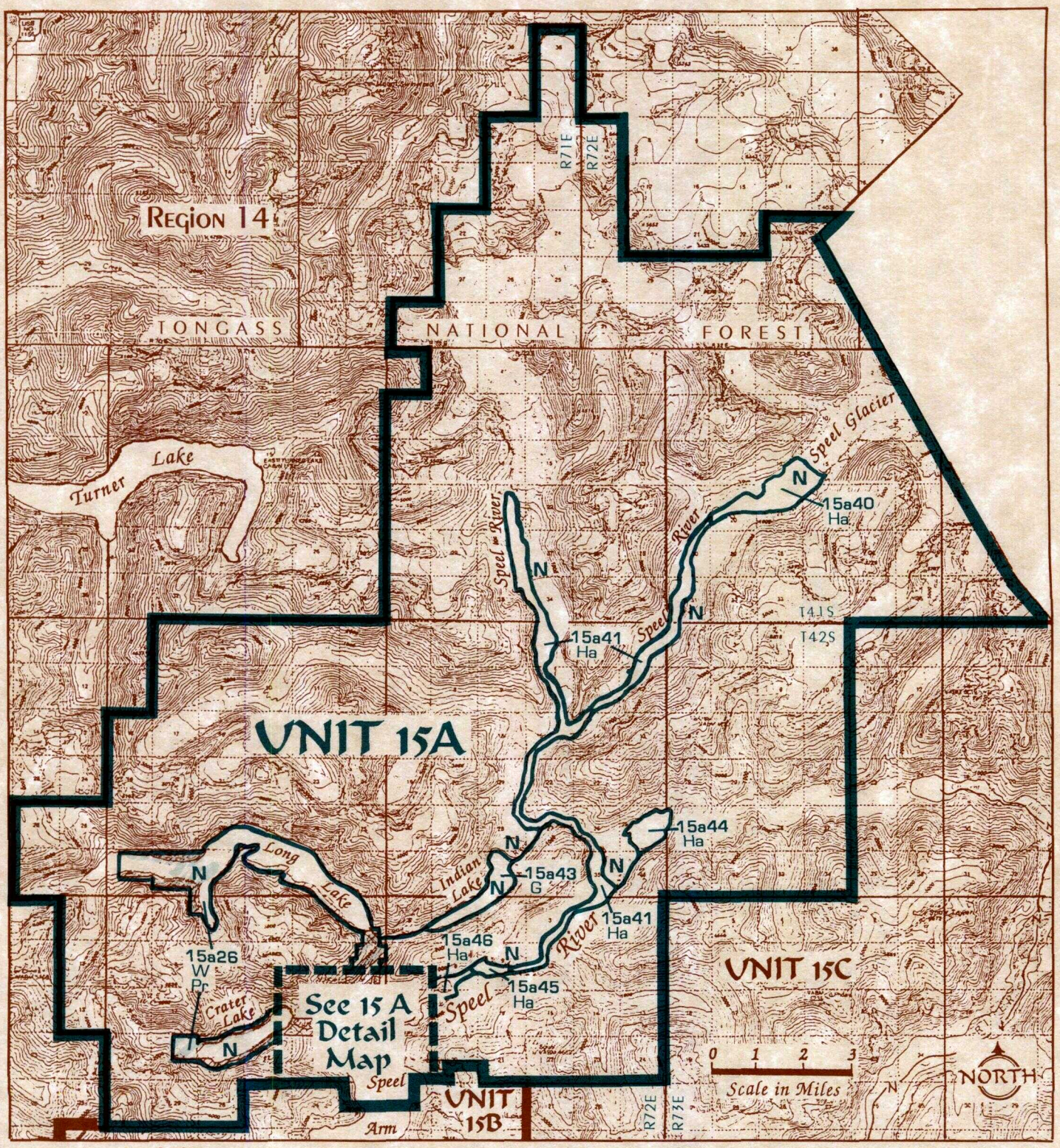
N Rivers & lakes susceptible to navigation

Land Ownership

State Selected

Designations

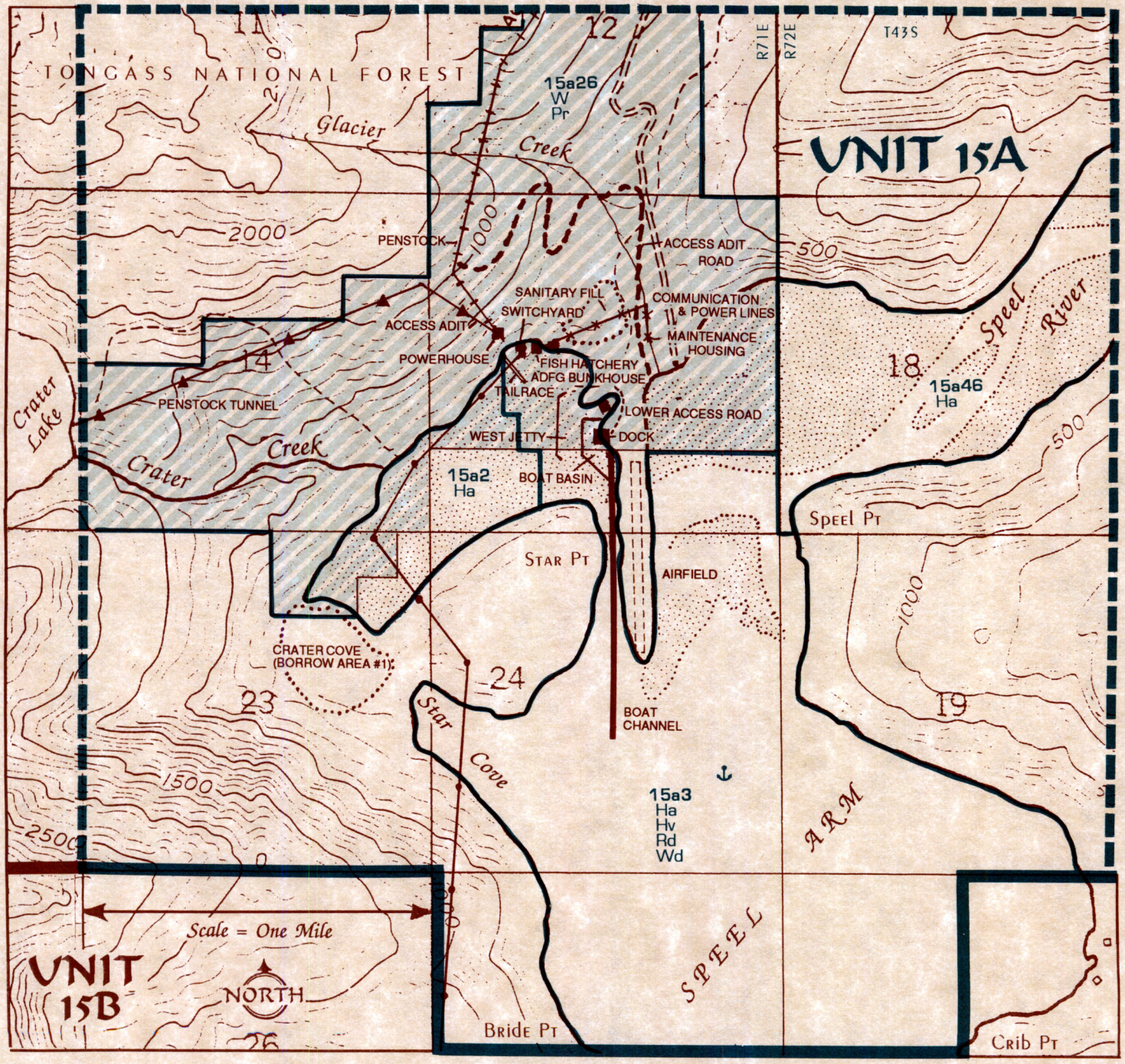
G General Uses
Ha Fish & Wildlife Habitat
Pr Public Facilities - -Reserved
W Water Resources & Uses



UNIT 15A DETAIL - Snettisham

Land Ownership

State Selected

Designations

- **Ha** Fish & Wildlife Habitat
- **Hv** Fish & Wildlife Harvest
- **Pr** Public Facilities - -Reserved
- **Rd** Recreation - Dispersed
- **W** Water Resources & Uses
- **Wd** Waterfront Development
- ⚓ Anchorage