Unit 15b - Snettisham

Background

This subunit includes Port Snettisham, Gilbert Bay, and Stephens Passage adjacent to the Snettisham Peninsula.

Recreation. The marine waters in this area are used for viewing marine mammals. The south end of Gilbert Bay is particularly popular for viewing waterfowl and bears, and for sport fishing. The mouth of Port Snettisham is popular for viewing humpback whales in summer. The mouth of the Whiting River is popular for viewing seals. There are protected anchorages in Subunits 15b5, 15b6, and 15b7.

Mineral Potential. The U.S. Bureau of Mines has identified two areas in this unit with high mineral potential. The first is the north end of the Snettisham Peninsula, and includes the Crystal, Friday, and Snettisham mines. There are federal mining claims surrounding these mines. The second area extends from "the Gorge" at the mouth of the Whiting River, southeast to Tracy Arm. This second area includes Sweetheart Ridge (between Gilbert Bay and Tracy Arm).

Resource Transfer Facilities. Possible areas for resource transfer sites for minerals include the mouth of Gilbert Bay adjacent to the Snettisham, Friday, and Crystal mines and the area between Point Styleman and Mallard Cove. In addition, another possible resource transfer facility site was identified by the USFS at the south end of Gilbert Bay. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a log transfer site was completed in 1981 by the USFS. However, the proposed timber sale on adjacent uplands was not bid and trees were never cut. The timber is likely to be resold and a transfer facility needed during the life of the plan.

Management Intent

The unit will be managed consistent with its primary designations: Fish and Wildlife Habitat (Ha), Fish and Wildlife Harvest (Hv), and Dispersed Recreation (Rd). However, tideland support facilities for upland mining and timber development are allowable uses within Subunit 15b6. Specific sites have not been identified and designated for these facilities at this time. Designating a large area as one subunit (15b6) provides the flexibility to work with an applicant to identify a site that will minimize significant adverse impacts on the other resources and uses for which these subunits are co-designated. An amendment to the plan or reclassification for these types of uses is not required since these types of uses are allowable under this management intent.

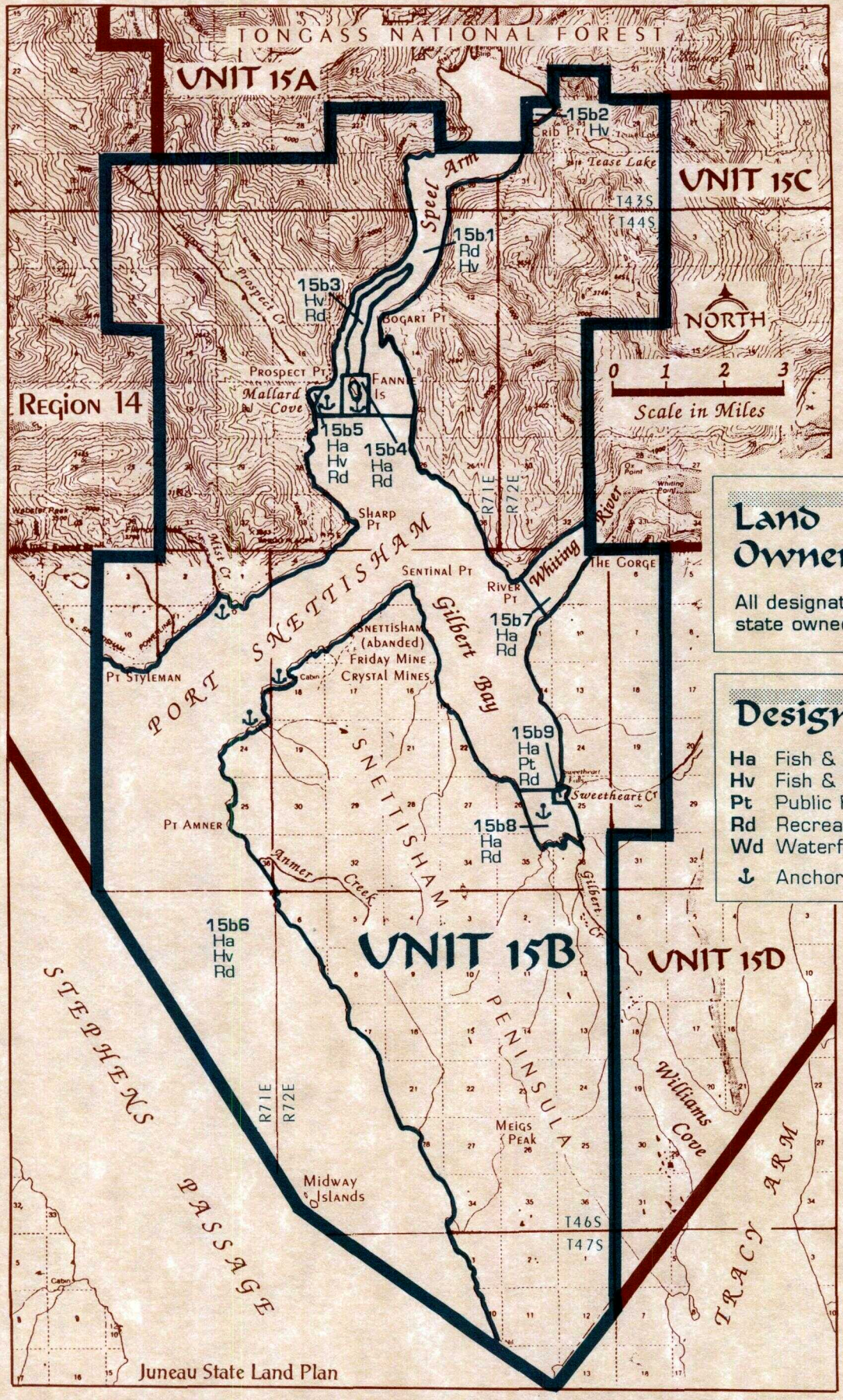
Management Guidelines

Mineral Closures. The estuarine area, from mean high water to a water depth of 40 feet (measured at mean low low water), at the mouth of Sweetheart Creek will be closed to new mineral location to protect important rearing areas for anadromous fish. The maintenance of the high-quality estuarine rearing-habitat adjacent to these streams and avoiding impacts to the associated water quality and marine plant and animal communities are essential to sustain the productivity of the Juneau area commercial- and community-harvest fisheries.

Approximately forty (40) acres of tidelands and submerged lands within the estuarine area of Gilbert Bay will also be closed to new mineral location because it surrounds a net pen site for the remote release of hatchery-raised salmon. 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 15b: Port Snettisham						
Area no. & name	***DNR designation***	***CBJ zoning district***	***Land type***	***Adjacent ownership***	***Resource or use***	***Other comments***
15b1 Speel Arm	Rd Hv	RR	T/SU	State/ USFS	Scenic; used by recreational boaters; commercial salmon gillnet fishery, primarily on Snettisham hatchery stocks; anadromous rearing	
15b2	Hv	RR	T/SU	State/ USFS	Commercial and personal use Dungeness crab harvest, commercial gillnet harvest	
15b3 Bogart Point	Hv Rd	RR	T/ SU	State/ USFS	Commercial shrimp harvest; commercial gillnet harvest	
15b4 Fannie Island	Ha Rd	RR	T/ SU	State/ USFS	Harbor seals; commercial shrimp harvest; anchorage	
15b5 Mallard Cove	Ha Hv Rd	RR	T/ SU	State/ USFS	Commercial Dungeness crab and shrimp harvest; anadromous stream mouth; anchorage; scenic; harbor seal haul-out; personal use Dungeness crab harvest; brown and black bear hunting	
15b6	Ha Hv Rd	RR	T/ SU	State/ USFS	Check habitat and harvest maps for precise locations of the following resources and uses located within this subunit: Commercial Shrimp, Dungeness crab, Tanner crab, and gillnet harvest; anchorages; 10 anadromous stream mouths; sand lance spawning; migratory waterfowl habitat; marine nearshore rearing and enhancement site; harbor seals; black and brown bear hunting	
15b7 The Gorge	Ha Rd	RR	T/ SU	State/ USFS	Scenic, anadromous stream mouth	Mouth of the Whiting River
15b8 Sweet-heart Flats	Ha Rd	RR	T/ SU	State/ USFS	Waterfowl habitat; anadromous stream mouth; anchorage	Tide flats, possible site for resource facility for mining and logging
15b9	Ha Pt Rd	RR	T	State/ USFS	Migratory waterfowl habitat; ADF&G FRED Division field camp, net pens and weir at tidewater at mouth of Sweetheart Creek	Field camp; net pens

UNIT 15B - Port Snettisham