Unit 7b - Thane

Background[14]

State land in this management unit has primarily been used for access to and support of facilities for mining activity, dispersed recreation, marine transportation, fishing, and fish and wildlife habitat. A strip of private land separates the state tidelands and submerged lands from the state uplands in this unit. Facilities on private lands include the DIPAC Sheep Creek Hatchery, the power transmission line from Snettisham, structures from previous mining activities, Thane Road, and other facilities.

Subunit 7b1 includes the Echo Bay Exploration offices and the Thane Ore House Salmon Bake, located on existing tideland fill. There are pending applications for State tidelands for these two facilities. Both are located on ATS 1328.

Subunits 7b3 and 7b4 include state tidelands adjacent to many private homes along Thane Road. There are a number of mooring buoys on state submerged lands in these subunits.

Subunit 7b8 includes the mouth and delta of Sheep Creek. This subunit receives intensive sport fishing for Dolly Varden and pink salmon from the beach and from small boats. The area is also popular for sightseeing and beachcombing. The delta is a feeding and resting area for waterfowl. Scuba diving also occurs in the area. Subunit 7b8 includes a personal-use gravel extraction area (ADL 101858) where material extraction up to 100 cubic yards per-person per-year may be authorized. This has been one of the few easily accessible material sites for public use since it was established in 1981. The site is located more than 200 feet west of the active channel of Sheep Creek.

In Subunit 7b10, DIPAC has a permit (SET-92-041) for floating net pens. The pens are used to raise salmon fry. The DIPAC hatchery is on private uplands on the east side of Sheep Creek.

Approximately 1,300 acres in Subunits 7b25, 7b26, 7b27, 7a30, and 7a34 were recently closed to new mineral location (MCO 576).

Subunit 7b26, the lower part of the Sheep Creek valley, includes the portal and maintenance building for the Sheep Creek adit, a mining access road, the Sheep Creek Trail, an old wood-crib dam, and rock dumps. The Sheep Creek Trail, which passes through this unit, is managed by DPOR under the authority of an ILMT (ADL 65585).

The powerline that traverses Subunits 7b26 and 7b27, is 12.5 miles long, and transports power from Annex Lake to Juneau. Portions of the powerline are proposed for relocation if the A-J Mine reopens. There is potential for a 4.9 MW hydroelectric plant that could be built in conjunction with the proposed Sheep Creek tailings facilities.

Subunit 7b26 contains black bear spring habitat, migratory birds, and Dolly Varden char. Fishing for char also takes place.

Pending Applications. Most of the pending applications in this unit are for support or access facilities for reopening the A-J Mine. The ore body is on patented mining claims located to the northwest of Sheep

14 For a more thorough description of the existing and potential resources, hazards, issues, and concerns in this unit, see *"A-J Mine Project FEIS, BLM 1992"*.

Pending Applications. Most of the pending applications in this unit are for support or access facilities for reopening the A-J Mine. The ore body is on patented mining claims located to the northwest of Sheep Creek. Specific developments applied for by Echo Bay Exploration on state land are:

Subunit 7b1 - Settling ponds, gas storage, barge facilities, pumps, processing plants, an LPG-fueled electric generating plant and substation pipeline, and other support facilities.

Subunit 7b26 - Tailings dam, impoundment, and outlet pipeline (penstock).

Subunits 7a28, 7a29, 7a30, and 7b34 - Bradley millsite, adits, ramp, and waste rock adit.

Land Ownership. With the exception of some patented mining claims, most lands in Unit 7b are state owned. CBJ recently withdrew its land selections in the Sheep Creek Valley.

CBJ Designations. All of Subunit 7b1 and parts of Subunit 7b8 are designated as a Special Waterfront Area in the revised Juneau Coastal Management Plan as a Special Waterfront Area. CBJ has zoned these two subunits as Waterfront Industrial. The CBJ Comprehensive Plan designated the Sheep Creek Valley as a Sensitive Area due to gravel extraction potential and flood hazards. The CBJ Comprehensive Plan has also designated lower Sheep Creek as a Conceptual New Growth Area.

Recreation. The submerged lands in this unit are frequently traveled by pleasure boats, cruise ships, commercial fishing boats, and charter boats. The Pt. Bishop trail is located on USFS uplands adjacent to Subunit 7b9. This is a historic trail, and a potential RS2477 ROW. The trail is used for hiking and access for fishing, camping, and picnicking. The Sheep Creek trail traverses Subunits 7b26 and 7b27 provide access to hiking and recreation opportunities in the Sheep Creek Valley. The trail is also used for access to Dolly Varden fishing.

Mining and Mineral Potential. Most state uplands and tidelands in this unit have high mineral potential. There are numerous patented mining claims, particularly in the Sheep Creek Valley and near Thane. Adjacent USFS uplands also have high mineral potential.

Subunit 7b26 includes the southern edge of the historic A-J Mine which opened in 1890 and produced until 1944 when World War II brought about its closure. The valley once supported intensive development to support mining, including: a railroad, camps, adit, mill, crib dam, flume, penstock, aerial tram, and powerline. Remnants of the large Thane mill complex can still be seen on the hillside northwest of Thane.

Heritage Resource Sites. There are a number of heritage resource sites in this unit related to mining and the settlement of Juneau.

Management Intent

State Tidelands and Submerged Lands[15]. Subunit 7b1 will be managed primarily for water-dependent and water-related commercial/industrial uses. Access to the delta for these uses will be maintained or improved. To support the management intent for Subunit 7b1 to maintain water quantity and water quality for protection of the hydroelectric potential, the hatchery, and the anadromous fishery, uses and activities that conflict with these needs may be authorized if: there is a significant public need for the use of activity; there is no feasible and prudent alternative to meet the public need; and all feasible and prudent steps to meet this intent have been taken. The Sheep Creek delta (Subunit 7b8) will be managed to provide opportunities for recreation, habitat, harvest, and personal-use materials extraction.

Subunit 7b1 includes the existing Echo Bay Exploration offices and the Thane Ore House restaurant. Additional leasing for industrial and commercial facilities, including continued use of the site for the restaurant and offices, are consistent with the management intent for this subunit. Opportunities to maintain and/or upgrade Thane Road to provide for existing and future uses, including access to residences, recreation resources, Sheep Creek facilities, and a transportation corridor to Taku Inlet is consistent with the management intent for this unit. A road connection through the Taku River drainage could provide access to support mineral development projects in British Columbia, as well as a surface link between Juneau, Canada, and the "lower 48" states.

Tideland Subunits 7b3, 7b4, 7b9, and 7b10 are designated Shoreline Use (Sh) are adjacent to private residences and will be managed to support residential uses on the uplands while maintaining habitat, harvest, and recreation values for which these subunits are co-designated.

State Uplands, including the Sheep Creek Valley. State lands will be managed to provide a mix of opportunities for mining, recreation, water resources, and habitat. The Sheep Creek trail is an important recreation resource and any development in the valley will accommodate or improve the trail. If development activity would preclude use of a portion of the trail, the trail will be relocated, and trailhead access, including parking, should be provided. A route for a powerline to Annex Lake will be maintained. To support the intent for Subunit 7b26 to maintain water quantity and water quality for protection of the hydroelectric potential, the hatchery, and the anadromous fishery, uses and activities that conflict with these needs may be authorized if there is a significant public need for the use or activity; there is no feasible and prudent alternative to meet the public need; and all feasible and prudent steps to meet this intent have been taken.

State lands in this unit are open to new mineral location unless specifically closed by a mineral closing order.

15 Decisions on individual permits and leases are not made in this plan. Rather, these decisions are made by DNR based on the management intent, land-use designations and management intent in this plan, statutes, regulations, and information developed during the permitting process.

Management Guidelines

Access Corridors along the Taku River. Before DNR authorizes any phase or segment of a regional road corridor along Gastineau Channel, appropriate agencies and the public will have the opportunity to comment.

Mineral Closures. The area around the mouth of Sheep Creek will be closed to new mineral location to protect important rearing areas for anadromous fish. This includes approximately 40 acres of tidelands and submerged lands adjacent to the fish hatchery at Sheep Creek; 40 acres surrounding net pen sites for the release of hatchery salmon, and the estuarine area, from mean high water to a water depth of 40 feet (measured at mean low low water). The maintenance of the high-quality estuarine rearing habitat adjacent to this stream and the avoiding impacts to the associated water quality and marine plant and animal communities is essential to sustain the productivity of the commercial- and community-harvest fisheries in the Juneau area. The hatchery and the fisheries it supports are critically dependent on this estuarine rearing habitat. The closure is also intended to protect the significant state and private investment in the hatchery and net pens. This closure will also protect a material site on the Sheep Creek delta by preventing conflicts between using the site for materials and new mineral locations. 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 7B: THANE						
Area no. & name	**DNR designation**	**CBJ zoning district**	**Land type**	**Adjacent ownership**	**Resource or use**	**Other comments**
7b1 Proposed AJ mine tideland facilities	Wd	WI Conceptual new growth area JCMP-SWA	T	Private	Proposed Echo Bay tideland facilities including settling ponds, gas storage, barge facilities, etc. Potential for hydroelectric facilities; DIPAC net pen site	
7b2	Hb Hv	RR	SU	State	Herring overwintering; Tanner, king and Dungeness crab personal use harvest; Sheep Creek hatchery cost recovery fishery; salmon and Dolly Varden sportfishing	
7b3	Ha Hv Sh	D-1	T	Private	Salmon and Dolly Varden sport-fishing; Dungeness crab personal use harvest; estuarine rearing areas for DIPAC fish	
7b4	Hv Sh	D-1	T	Private	Halibut sportfishing; Sheep Creek hatchery cost recovery fishery	
7b5	Hb Hv	RR	SU	State	Halibut sportfishing; king, Dungeness and Tanner crab personal use harvest; Sheep Creek hatchery cost recovery fishery; herring overwintering; Dolly Varden and salmon sportfishing	
7b6	Hb Hv	RR	SU	State	Herring overwintering; halibut sportfishing; king and Tanner crab, and shrimp personal use harvest; Sheep Creek hatchery cost recovery fishery	
7b7	Hb	RR	SU	State	Herring overwintering	
7b8 Mouth of Sheep Creek	Ha Hv Rp	RR JCMP-partially within SWA	T	Private	Dungeness crab personal use harvest; salmon, Dolly Varden sportfishing; anadromous stream; DIPAC hatchery cost recovery fishery; estuarine fish rearing	DIPAC fish hatchery on Sheep Creek, fish release site; personal use materials extraction site
7b9	Ha Hv Rd Sh	D-1	T	Mental Health Trust	Halibut sportfishing; Dungeness crab personal use harvest, waterfowl habitat	
7b10	Hv Sh	D-1	T	Private	Dungeness and Tanner crab personal use harvest; DIPAC net pens and cost recovery fishery	
7b11	Ha Hv	RR	SU	State	Dungeness, Tanner and king crab personal use harvest; herring overwintering; Sheep Creek hatchery cost recovery fishery; salmon and Dolly Varden sportfishing; waterfowl concentrations	

Land-Use Designation Summary (continued)

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

UNIT 7B: THANE						
Area no. & name	**DNR designation**	**CBJ zoning district**	**Land type**	**Adjacent ownership**	**Resource or use**	**Other comments**
7b25	Rd W	RR C-Watershed Protection Area	UP	State/ Private		
7b26 lower Sheep Creek	Ha M Rd	RR C-Watershed protection Area	UP	State/ Private	Black bear spring habitat; proposed Echo Bay facilities including mine adit, dam tailings pond. Potential hydroelectric facility.	Sheep Creek Trail passes through area
7b27	Ha Rd W	RR C-Watershed protection Area	UP	State/ USFS/ Private	Black bear spring habitat; goat winter habitat	Sheep Creek Trail passes through area
7b28	Ha Rd W	RR C-Watershed protection Area	UP	State	Black bear summer habitat; goat winter habitat	New trail potential between Hawthorne, Middle, and West peaks and Thane area
7b29 upper Sheep Creek	Ha Rd W	RR	UP	State	Black bear summer habitat; wolf habitat; goat winter habitat	New trail potential between Hawthorne, Middle, and West peaks and Thane area
7b30	Rd	RR	UP	State/ Private/ Mental Health Trust		New trail potential between Hawthorne, Middle, and West peaks and Thane area
7b31	Ha Rd	RR	UP	State/ Private	Black bear summer habitat; wolf habitat; goat winter habitat	New trail potential between Hawthorne, Middle, and West peaks and Thane area
7b32	Ha Rd W	RR C-Watershed protection Area	UP	State/ Private	Goat winter habitat area	
7b34	Ha Rd	RR C-Watershed protection Area	UP	State/ private	Black bear spring and fall habitat	

Unit 7B - Thane

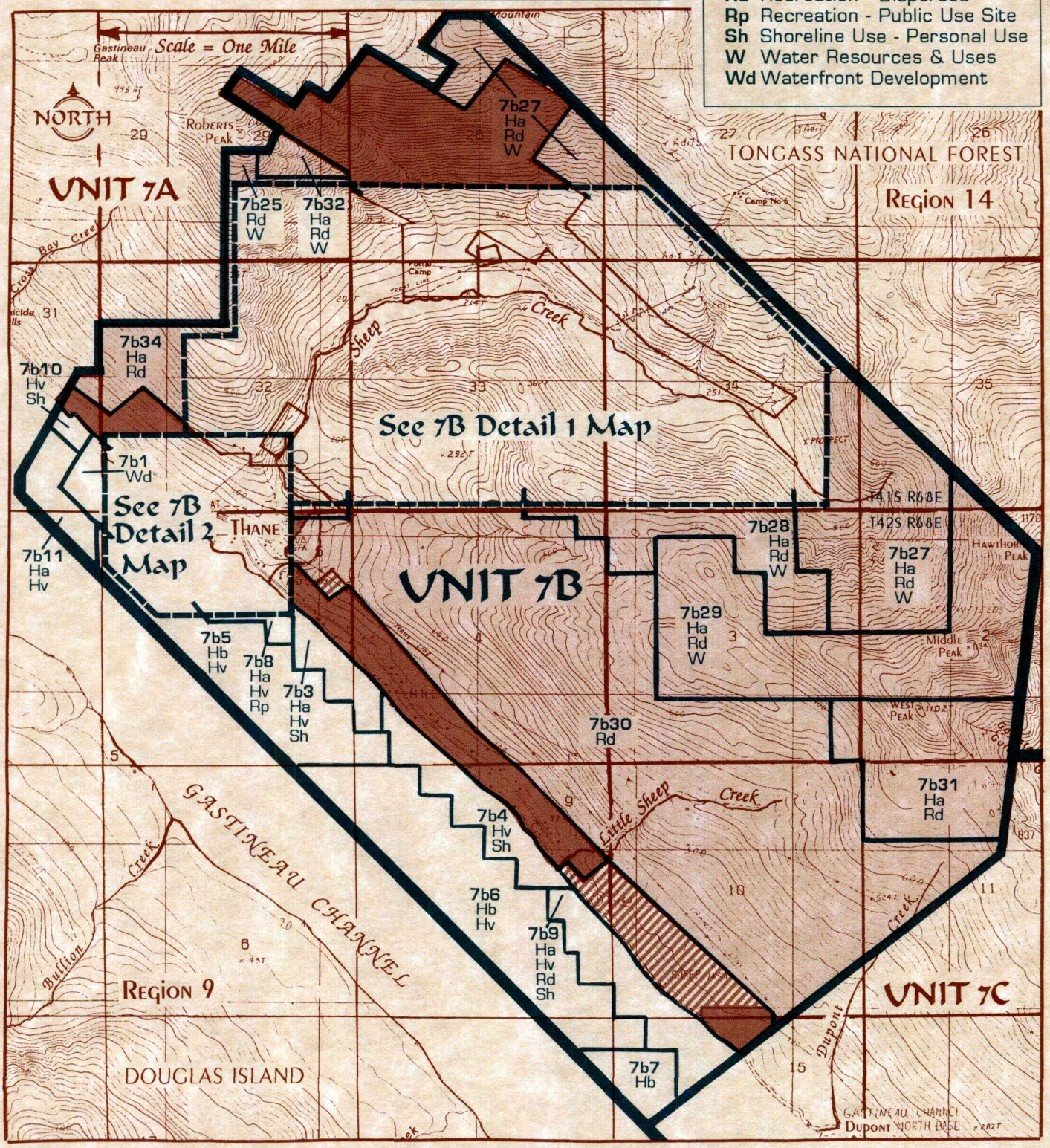
Land Ownership

- State Owned
- Mental Health
- Private

For a map of Mineral Closing Order 576 that covers this area, see Appendix B.

Designations

G	General Uses
Ha	Fish & Wildlife Habitat
Hb	Fish & Wildlife Habitat
Hv	Fish & Wildlife Harvest
Pr	Public Facilities - -Reserved
Rd	Recreation - Dispersed
Rp	Recreation - Public Use Site
Sh	Shoreline Use - Personal Use
W	Water Resources & Uses
Wd	Waterfront Development



UNIT 7B DETAIL 1 - Upper Sheep Creek

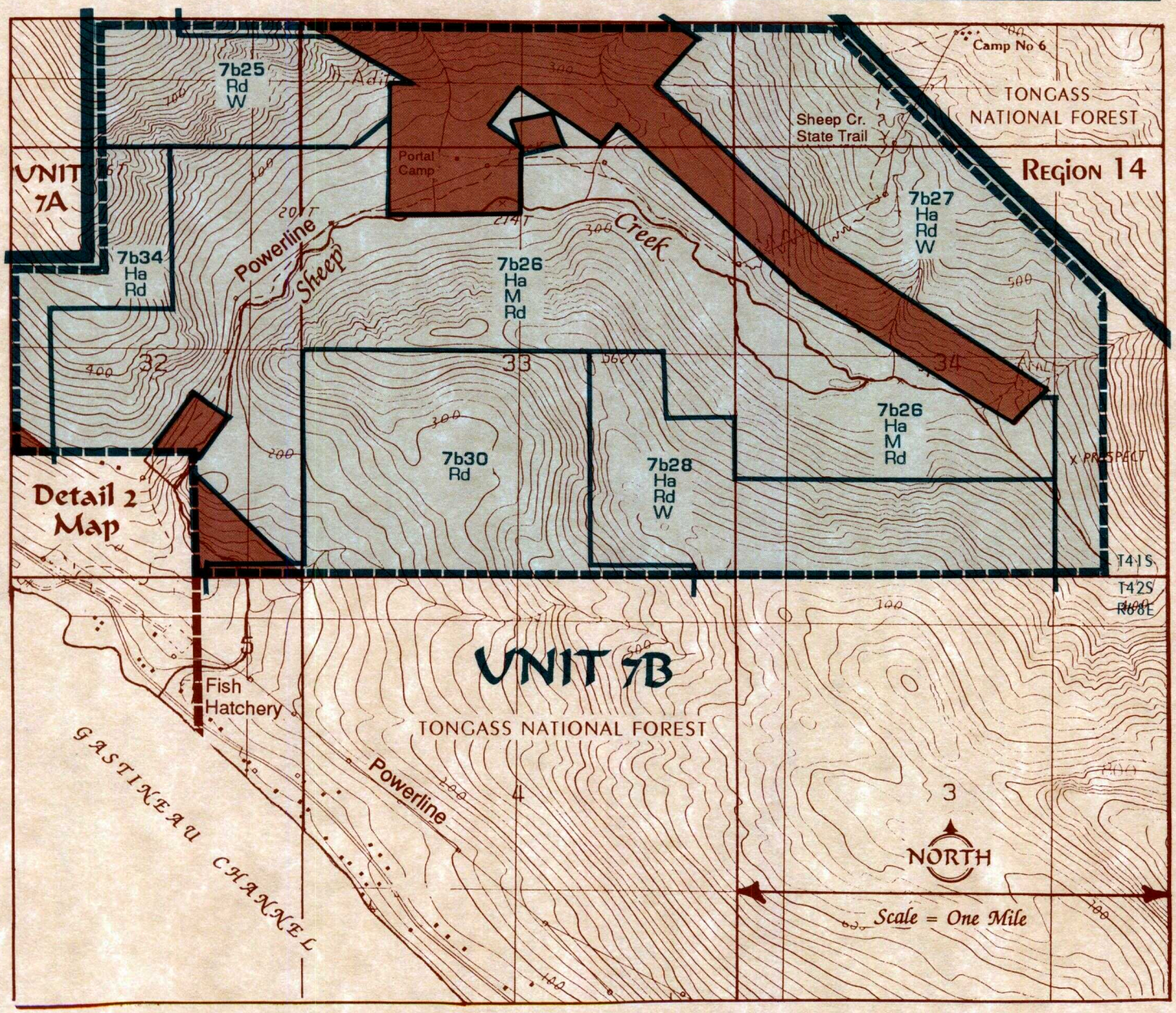
Land Ownership

- State Owned
- Private

For a map of Mineral Closing Order 576 that covers this area, see Appendix B.

Designations

Ha	Fish & Wildlife Habitat
M	Minerals Development
Rd	Recreation - Dispersed
W	Water Resources & Uses

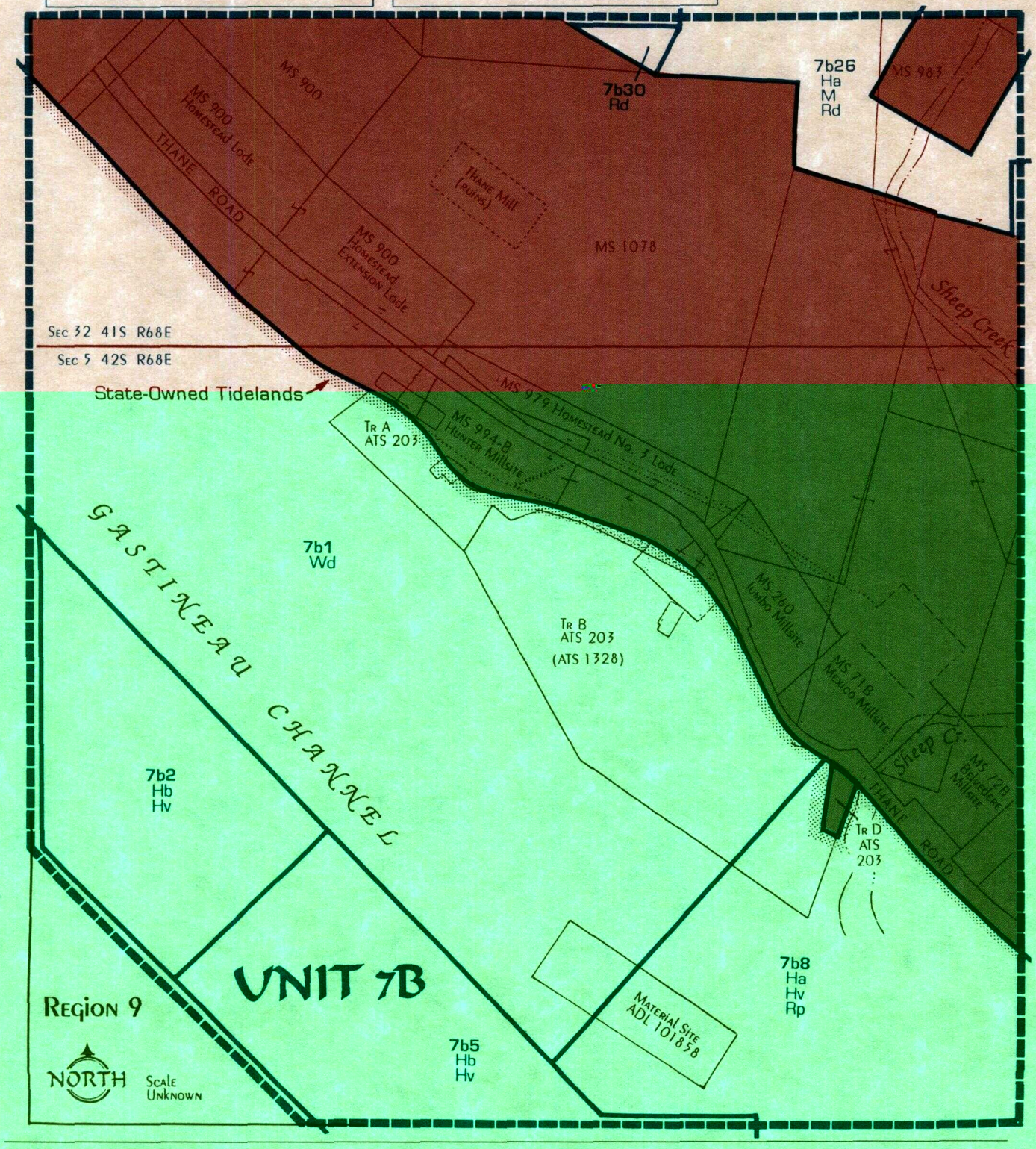


Unit 7B Detail 2 - Sheep Creek

Land Ownership

Private

All designated areas are state owned

Designations

Ha Fish & Wildlife Habitat
Hb Fish & Wildlife Habitat
Hv Fish & Wildlife Harvest
M Minerals Development
Rd Recreation - Dispersed
Rp Recreation - Public Use Site
Wd Waterfront Development