

APPENDIX 4.9-2
LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE DESCRIPTIONS

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE

MID SUSITNA RIVER VALLEY
PHOTO E8.8.1



LANDFORMS

- . Valley is 2 to 6 miles (3 to 10 km) wide with steep slopes.
- . Flat terraced land adjacent to Indian River near confluence with Susitna.

WATERFORMS

- . Moderately braided and silt laden river up to 1/2 mile (0.8 km) wide.
- . Wetland areas are common adjacent to the flat terraced areas, as are islands, sandbars and cobbles.
- . Gold Creek tributary to Susitna here has high aesthetic value - flows through narrow forested canyon.

VEGETATION

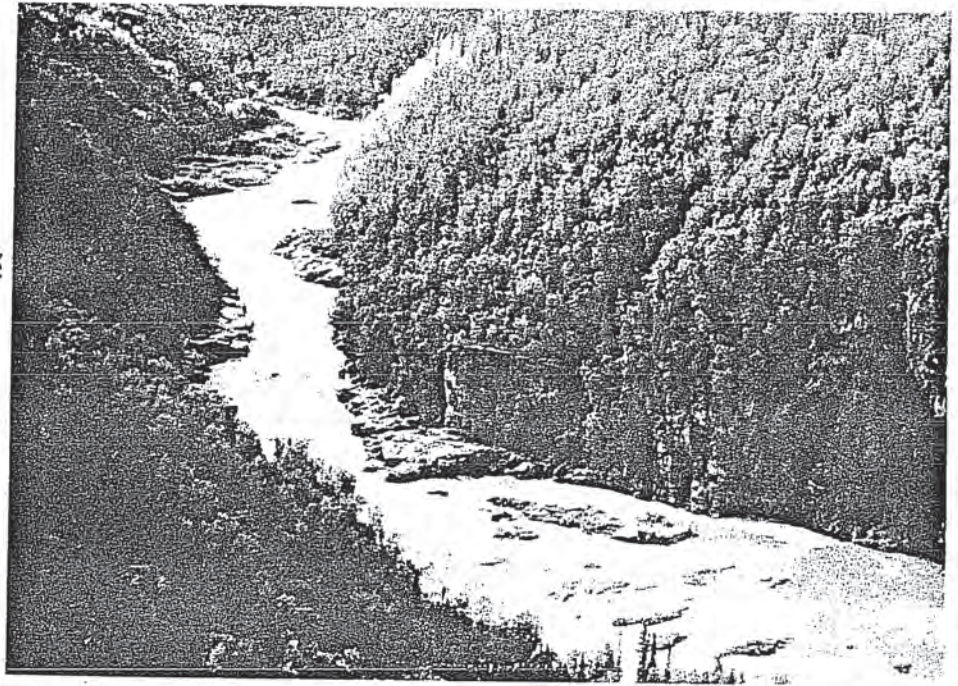
- . Dense mixed forest of spruce and deciduous trees.
- . Tundra and brush species only on steeper valley slopes.
- . Spruce/green is most prominent color - small amount of yellow/gold fall color by deciduous trees and willows.
- . Tundra cover provides good red/orange tones in the fall.

VIEWS

- . Views are directed within the river channel, valley slopes and the commonly snow-capped Chulitna Mountains to the North.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE

SUSITNA RIVER NEAR DEVIL CREEK
PHOTO E8.8.2



LANDFORMS

- . Steep to vertical rock canyon walls - medium to dark brown colors for several miles - nearly 1000 feet (300 m) deep. Unstable environment.
- . Deeply incised valley overall for over 20 miles (33 km).
- . Giant rock shelves and angular boulders in river channel.
- . The canyon is a significant Alaska natural feature.

WATERFORMS

- . High volume and fixed channel river through a deep canyon.
- . Contains an 11-mile (18-km) stretch of world class kayaking whitewater (Class VI).
- . Portage, Cheechako and Devil creeks are all notable - steep to vertical canyoned tributaries.
- . Devil Creek Falls are the most scenic falls in the basin.

- 1.*Devil Canyon Rapids
- 2.*Devil Creek Falls

VEGETATION

- . Slopes are densely covered with a good mixture of spruce and deciduous trees - good fall color.
- . Small pure stands of poplar species provide interesting tree patterns in the fall and winter.
- . High color contrast with foamy gray water.

VIEWS

- . Views are primarily restricted within the immediate canyon/valley.
- . Views are dramatic in the vertical and near vertical rock canyon portions of the river.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE

SUSITNA RIVER
PHOTO E8.8.3



LANDFORMS

- . Broader valley - up to 4 miles (7 km) wide - in comparison with Devil Canyon area.
- . Occasional dark colored rock outcrops or bluffs are found along the valley. Up river from Tsusena Creek on the northside is shear cliff of light colored rock, soil and cobble.
- . The river bottom also has a low terrace before it steeply rises to the uplands.

WATERFORMS

- . Mildly braided river with large islands of cobble and sand.
- . Fog, Tsusena, Deadman, Watana, Kosina and Jay creeks are all significant and scenic tributaries to this portion of the Susitna. All have steep and narrow canyons near their confluences with the river.
- . Tsusena, Deadman and Watana creeks all have notable falls.
- . The tributaries' clear-water confluence with the silt-water river is of visual interest.

- 4.*Tsusena Creek Falls
- 6.*Deadman Creek Falls

VEGETATION

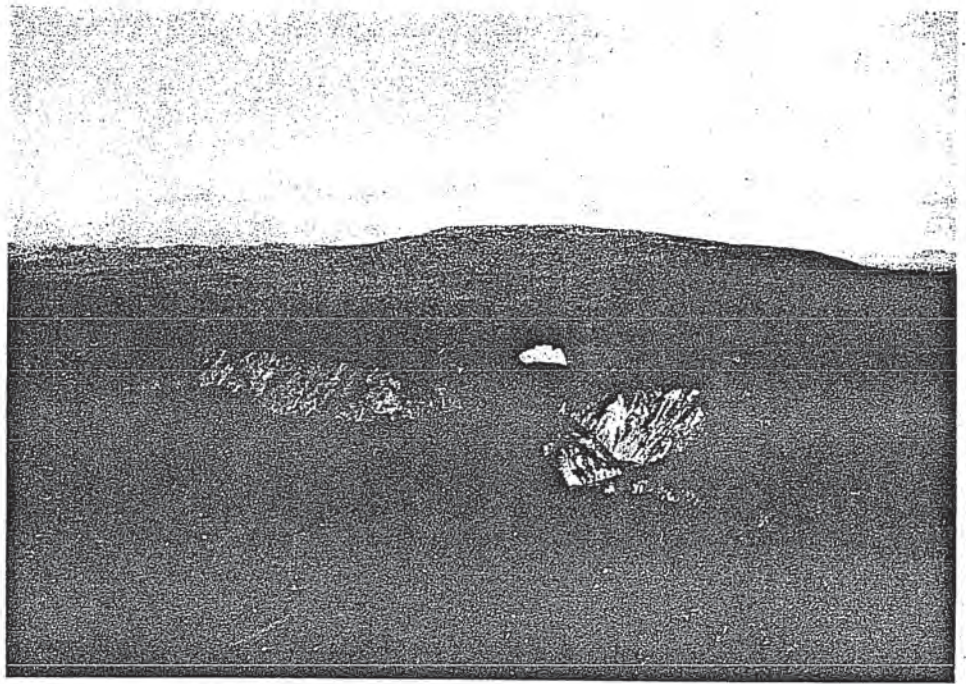
- . Moderately dense to dense spruce-deciduous forest covers much of the river and tributary valleys. Good fall color.
- . Willow and other shrub species are found along the river banks and terraces.

VIEWS

- . The broader valley allows for more expanded views and although mostly river and valley oriented, views out of the valley are possible on the longer-straight portions of the river. High mountain tops can be seen.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE

VEE CANYON
PHOTO E8.8.4



LANDFORMS

- Steep and meandering river valley.
- The 1/4 mile to 1 mile (0.4 to 1.6 km) wide valley rises up over 500 feet (150 m) from the river bottom.
- Vee Canyon displays a unique, very tight v-shaped rock feature in a double hairpin bend of the Susitna River. Colorful.
- Goose Creek, Oshetna River and other smaller tributary creeks have deep valleys themselves near their confluences with the river.

WATERFORMS

- The Susitna flows very fast here through a fixed channel.
- A well known stretch of rough whitewater occurs through Vee Canyon.
- Begins to meander several miles up river from Vee Canyon.
- Numerous islands and sandbars with gravel cobble edge.

13.*Vee Canyon

VEGETATION

- Tundra, brush and rock slopes dominate on the south side while moderately dense to sparse spruce forests cover the northside slopes and river bottom.

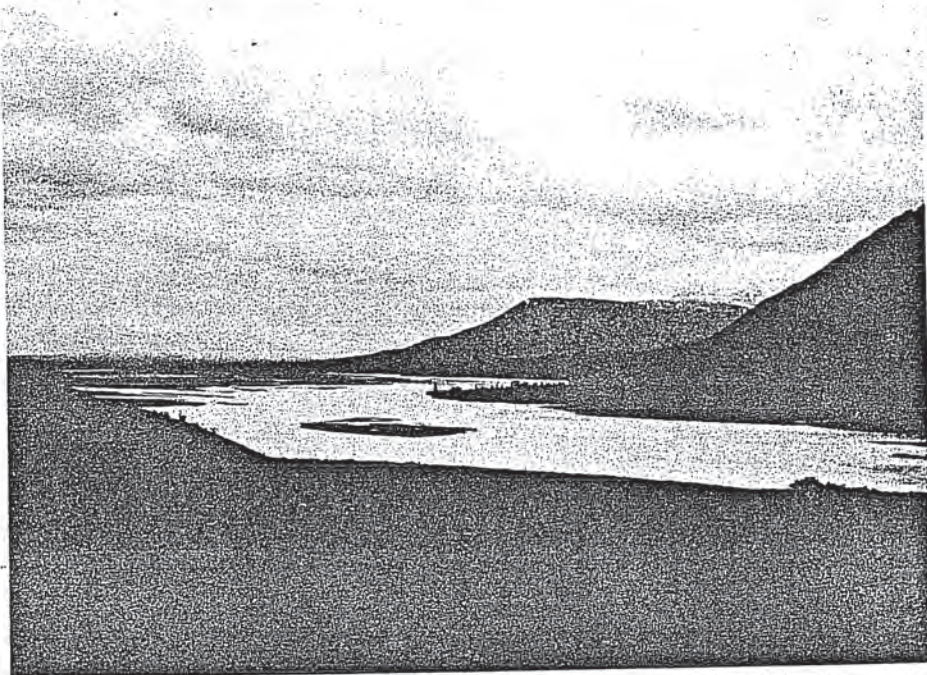
VIEWS

- The deep and narrow nature of the canyon/valley restricts views to the foreground area.
- Some of the higher points adjacent uplands can be seen from the more open areas of the river.
- Adjoining tributary canyons offer additional foreground views of interest.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE

SUSITNA UPLAND WET TUNDRA BASIN

PHOTO E8.8.5



LANDFORMS

- . Low, flat and rolling terrace above the banks of the Susitna River.

WATERFORMS

- . The Susitna River here is mildly to heavily braided. Becomes more braided as it nears its glacial headwaters.
- . River varies from 1/8 mile to over 1 mile (0.2 km to over 1.6 km) wide.
- . Several hundred lakes ranging from very small to over 500 acres (200 ha) in size. Dense patterns.
- . Oshetna, Tyone and Maclaren rivers and Clearwater, Butte, Windy and Valdez creeks are all significant tributaries.

VEGETATION

- . Tundra (wet) is the dominant vegetation type.
- . Sparse stands of spruce are scattered throughout the area.
- . Dense willow and other shrub types are found along the river and many lake banks.
- . The tundra foliage in the fall creates an extensive variety of colorful patterns over the landscape.

VIEWS

- . The wide open character of the river basin allows scenic views of the Alaska Range and the Talkeetna Mountains.
- . Susitna and West Fork glaciers - the source of the Susitna River - can be from 30 to 50 miles (50 to 80 km) distant.
- . Views in the foreground landscape are not particularly scenic - except the fall tundra color.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE

PORTAGE LOWLANDS

PHOTO E8.8.6



LANDFORMS

- The lower portion of Portage Creek forms a distinct winding fixed channel and steep-sloped valley.
- Large eroded sidewalls are common on the many hairpin turns in the river.
- Flat terraced areas along the upper creek are also common.

WATERFORMS

- Portage Creek is a very scenic, fast-flowing and clearwater tributary to the Susitna below Devil Canyon.
- A number of small streams cascade down into Portage Creek.

VEGETATION

- Moderately dense spruce-deciduous forest covers most of the valley up to an average elevation of 2500 feet (757 m).
- The well mixed forest provides scenic fall color.
- Bright green spring foliage of the deciduous trees also provide color.

VIEWS

- Views are generally restricted to the deep and forested valley.
- Overall, the combination of natural features provides a very aesthetically pleasing environment.
- Forest views are in marked contrast to many locations in the region.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE

CHULITNA MOIST TUNDRA UPLANDS

PHOTO E8.8.7



LANDFORMS

- . Wide variety of small and large scale topographic relief.
- . Large, well defined and enclosed lake beds.
- . Long, flat as well as rolling terraces above the Susitna River, with a variety of canyon sizes.
- . Dark brown colored rock outcrops are common along upper terrace, canyon and lake edges.
- . Several long shallow valleys.

WATERFORMS

- . Dozens of irregular shaped lakes up to several hundred acres in size.
- . Bog and wetland areas are common throughout the area.
- . Many small streams flow through the canyons down to the Susitna.
- . Indian River, Portage and Devil creeks are part of this area.

VEGETATION

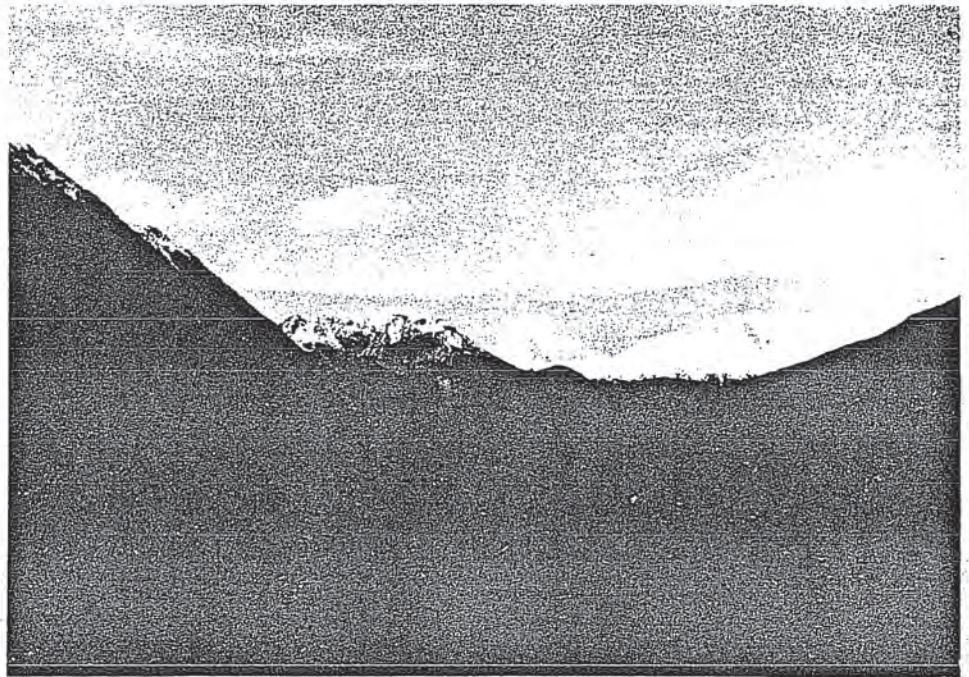
- . The upland area east Portage Creek is predominately tundra.
- . The upland area west of Portage Creek is covered with a moderately dense spruce forest.
- . Willow and other shrub species are commonly found in dense cover near lake banks and wetland areas.
- . Scattered and sparse stands of spruce are found east of Portage Creek and mixed woods in the creek valley.
- . Tundra colors are gold and light brown during winter months - when not covered by snow. Medium to dark green in spring and summer. Bright red, burgundy and yellow tones in the fall.

VIEWS

- . Foreground and middleground views are scenic and common except in the denser forested areas.
- . Vantage points are limitless.
- . Views of the Chulitna and Talkeetna mountains occur often and views of the Alaska Range are possible.
- . In late fall, the brilliant blue color of the lakes are in contrast to the snow covered landscape.
- . Scenic views to adjacent drainages.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE

CHULITNA MOUNTAINS
PHOTO E8.8.8



LANDFORMS

- . Over 900 square miles (2340 square km) of rugged glacially carved mountains.
- . Narrow and broad v-shaped valleys.
- . Glaciers and permanent ice fields. Rock glaciers.
- . Steeply rises up to over 6000 feet (1818 m) in elevation.
- . Many extensive talus slopes.

11.*Caribou Pass
6.*Tsusena Butte Lake

WATERFORMS

- . Cirque lakes of aqua-blue color.
- . Five or six lakes of several hundred acres in size. Largest one is in Caribou Pass.
- . Tsusena, Brushkana, Soule, Deadman and Honolulu creeks and the Jack, Middle and East Fork Chulitna rivers are all significant drainages.

VEGETATION

- . Tundra and shrub species cover the valley floors and slopes creating an interesting edge as they meet the barren steeper rock slopes.
- . Scattered stands of spruce and deciduous trees along Jack, Middle and East Fork Chulitna rivers.
- . Tsusena Creek forms a unique green spruce-deciduous forest over 20 miles (33 km) through the Chulitnas.

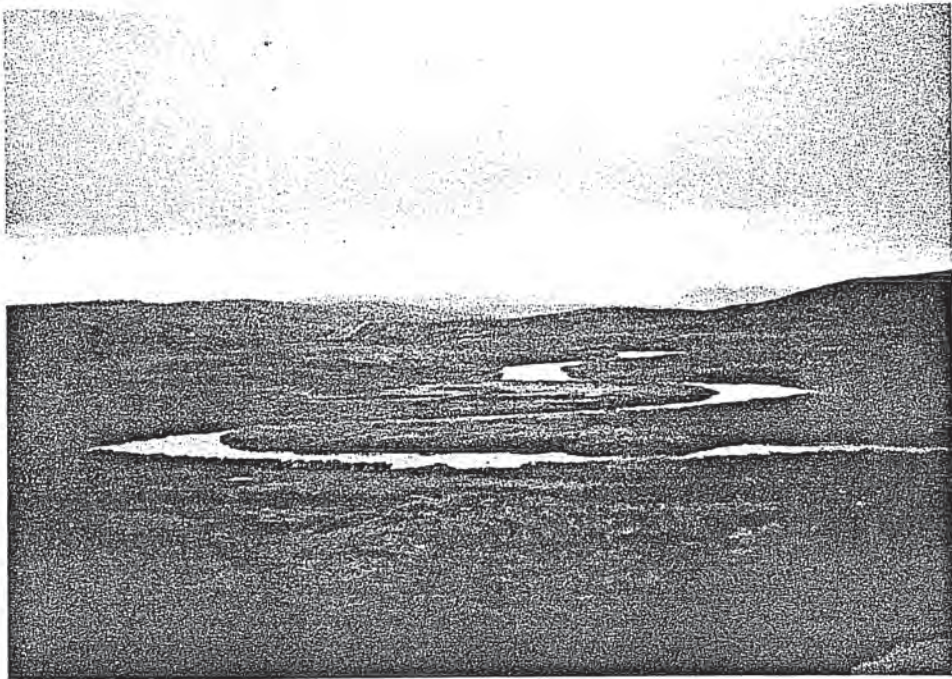
VIEWS

- . Views are scenic most everywhere.
- . Impressive and awesome natural features.
- . Mountain rock colors of light to dark gray (primarily talus slopes) and medium to dark brown (higher mountain tops) provide a variety of textures and patterns with the seasonal color changes of the tundra.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE

WET UPLAND TUNDRA

PHOTO E8.8.9



LANDFORMS

- . Flat to rolling upland area with several large surficial creeks.
- . Gentle to moderately steep gradient slopes from Chulitna highlands to the creeks.
- . Mild to moderately depressed lake beds with adjacent glaciated bluffs and hills.

WATERFORMS

- . Big Lake and Deadman Lake are the largest examples of lakes in the upper basin. Big Lake is approximately 1080 acres (732 ha).
- . Deadman Creek is a unique meandering watercourse.
- . Brushkana and Butte creeks are other significant drainages of the area.
- . Bogs and wetland areas are common and extensively occur in this upland.

10.*Big/Deadman Lakes

VEGETATION

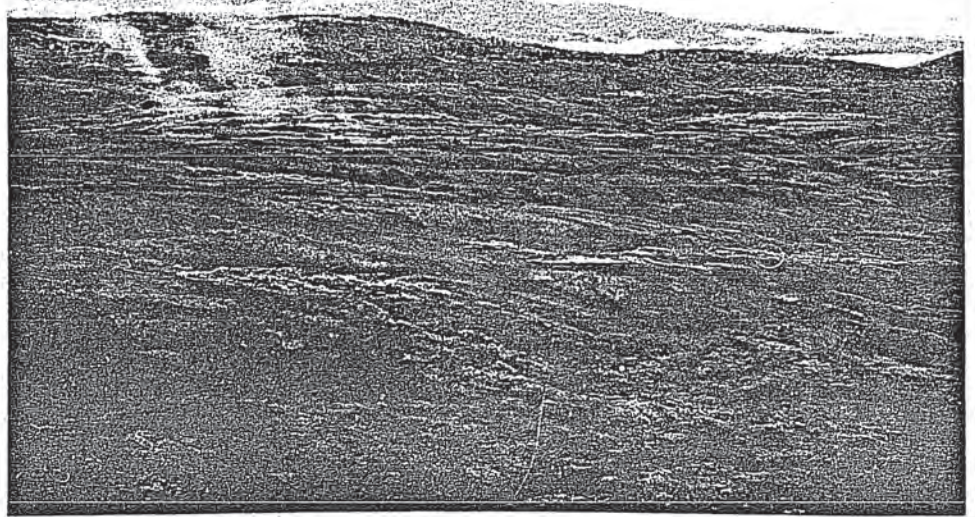
- . Wet tundra cover is prevalent with occasional stands of spruce.
- . Willow and other shrub species are common near creek banks and lake shores and in wetland areas.

VIEWS

- . Panoramic views of the Chulitna, Talkeetna and Clearwater mountains and the Alaska Range are possible.
- . In the fall and early winter, ice forming on Deadman Creek creates very interesting patterns and textures.
- . Fall color of the tundra, combined with all other natural features, is highly scenic.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE

TALKEETNA UPLANDS
PHOTO E8.8.10



LANDFORMS

- . Flat to rolling upland plateau.
- . Slopes are primarily moderately steep to steep.
- . Several knobs rise above 4000 ft (1212 m) with the average elevation of 3000 ft (900 m).
- . Drainages in the area form deep and steep, sloped valleys and canyons.
- . Rugged rocky hilltops and outcroppings are common.

WATERFORMS

- . Tens of lakes which are 20-50 acres (8-20 ha) in size. Simple and complex forms.
- . Massive areas of muskeg bogs.
- . Chunilna Creek is a very significant drainage in the area with many tributaries.
- . Many of the lakes are topographically enclosed.

VEGETATION

- . Moist and wet tundra is dominant.
- . Moderately dense spruce-deciduous tree cover is primarily restricted to drainages.
- . Chunilna Creek valley is densely forested.

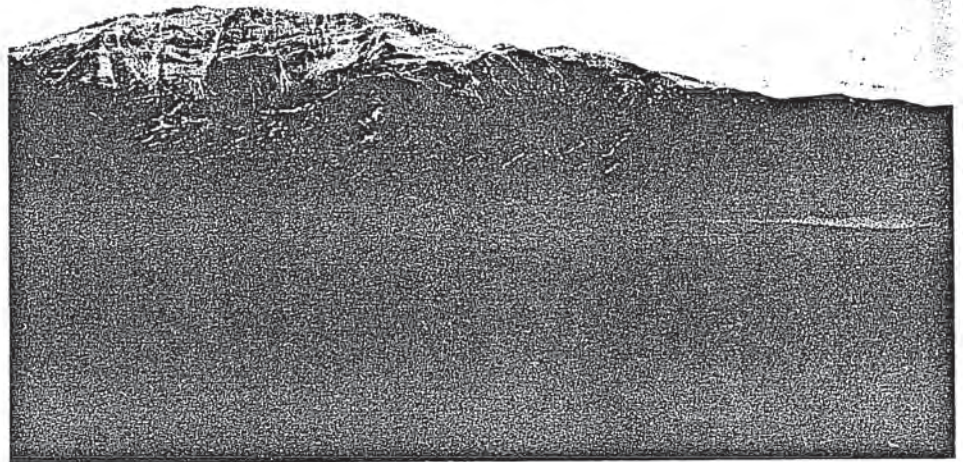
VIEWS

- . Foreground and background views are scenic throughout most of the landscape.
- . Panoramic views are possible from higher points.
- . The Chulitna and Talkeetna mountains and the Alaska Range can be seen.
- . Good views of the Susitna and Talkeetna river valleys are possible.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE

TALKEETNA MOUNTAINS

PHOTO E8.8.11



LANDFORMS

- . Rugged and steep sloped mountain range covering several thousand square miles.
- . Elevations over 8000 ft (2420 m).
- . Large glaciers, permanent ice fields and glacial features.
- . Large moderately sloped terraces.
- . Long, narrow and broad v-shaped valleys.
- . Large talus slopes.

4.*Clear Valley

WATERFORMS

- . Cirque lakes.
- . Numerous lakes up to several hundred acres in size. Scattered to dense concentrations.
- . Over ten rivers and creeks.

VEGETATION

- . Primarily tundra and shrub species throughout the mountains below the steeper rocky slopes and peaks.
- . Except for the drainages on the northeast area of the range, dense spruce-deciduous forests cover the river valleys.

VIEWS

- . Views are scenic and limitless.
- . Views are panoramic to semi-enclosed depending on viewer position.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE

SUSITNA UPLAND TERRACE

PHOTO E8.8.12



LANDFORMS

- . Terraced, flat and rolling terrain.
- . Slopes have gentle gradients.
- . Depressed lake basins.

WATERFORMS

- . Large linear glaciated and irregular formed lakes. Stephan Lake is the second largest in the upper Susitna basin.
- . Fog Lakes (5 adjacent lakes of several hundred acres in size each) create a pattern unique to the area.
- . Fog Creek forms a narrow and deeply incised canyon leaving the Fog Lakes area and flowing into the Susitna.

3.*Stephan Lakes

8.*Fog Lakes

VEGETATION

- . Densely forested with spruce and some deciduous trees, except for an area of approximately 10 square miles (26 square km) northeast of Fog Lakes, which is predominately tundra.
- . Spruce-green is the dominant color for most of the year, white (snow) in the winter.

VIEWS

- . Views are often restricted due to the forest cover and depressed lake beds. However, the higher mountains (Talkeetna and Chulitnas) still rise above the horizon.
- . Open vantage points for panoramic views are present.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE

SUSITNA UPLANDS
PHOTO E8.8.13



LANDFORMS

- Terraced, flat and rolling terrain.
- Elevation range is approximately 3000 - 5600 ft (900 - 1700 m).
- Slopes are primarily flat to moderately steep.
- Larger lake beds are depressed.
- Stream valleys are broad and fixed channel.
- Rock outcrops, cliffs and rocky hilltops are common in the area. Rock colors are light tan to dark brown.

WATERFORMS

- A number of small lakes are scattered throughout the area in dense patterns.
- The two largest lakes, Watana and Clarence, are narrow and linear in form. Both are several hundred acres in size.
- Large number of small creeks.
- Tributaries of the Susitna, Kosina, Tisis, Gilbert and Goose creeks and the silt laden Oshetna River are all scenic and significant to this area.

12.*Watana Lakes

VEGETATION

- Upland moist tundra and shrub species cover most all of the land except for the rock environments.
- Fall colors of this massive tundra area create a variety of patterns.
- Spruce are found within some of the drainages in sparse to moderately dense stands.

VIEWS

- Views are expansive.
- Many areas at the same elevation and higher in the upper basin can be viewed from this high upland.
- Views of the Talkeetnas are particularly scenic.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

PHOTO E8.8.14



LANDFORMS

- . Rolling and flat terraced lowlands of Knik and Turnagain arms (upper Cook Inlet).
- . Rolling and moderately steep slopes of Chugach foothills.
- . Large sunken areas caused by 1964 earthquake.
- . Urbanized town landscape.

WATERFORMS

- . Several small creeks traverse through the area and into Cook Inlet.
- . Several large man-made lakes.
- . Scattered natural lakes - low density.
- . Dominated by the adjacent Cook Inlet and connecting arms.

VEGETATION

- . Denser urban areas have sparse ornamental tree cover with some natural spruce and deciduous trees.
- . Undeveloped areas, lakes and foothills are generally covered with moderately dense to dense forests of spruce-deciduous trees and willow.
- . Natural drainages are usually forested and/or have dense shrub cover.

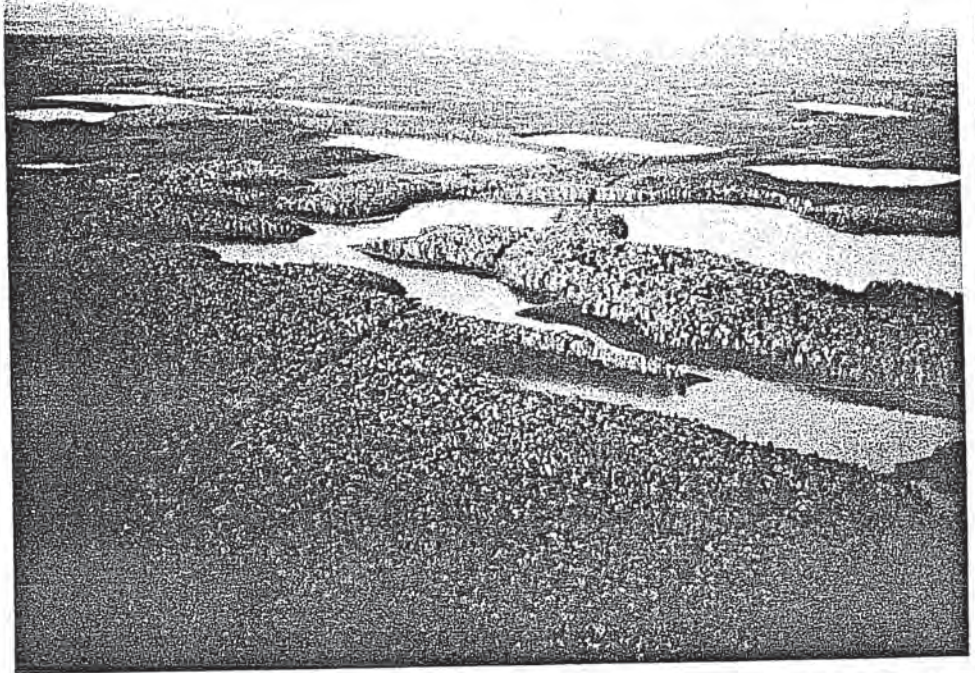
VIEWS

- . Due to the flat to undulating terrain, views are open.
- . The adjacent Chugach Mountains create a high quality aesthetic setting. Covered with snow in the winter, green in the summer and colorful in the fall.
- . The Alaska Range, nearby Mount Susitna, Kenai Mountains and the Cook Inlet, with its unique mud flats, can be seen.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE

SUSITNA RIVER LOWLANDS

PHOTO E8.8.15



LANDFORMS

- . Very flat to gently rolling lowlands.
- . Larger lake areas are enclosed by small hills.
- . Mount Susitna, a flat topped remnant volcano, rises over 3000 ft (900 m) above the lowlands. Adjacent Little Mount Susitna and nearby Beluga Mountain also steeply rise above the landscape.

WATERFORMS

- . Wet bog and wetlands cover a large percentage of the land.
- . Hundreds of small lakes make dense patterns.
- . Numerous topographically enclosed lakes several hundred acres in size.
- . Heavily braided Susitna River varies from 1/2 mile to several miles (0.8 km to over 2 km) wide; many islands.
- . Numerous meandering tributaries to Susitna.

VEGETATION

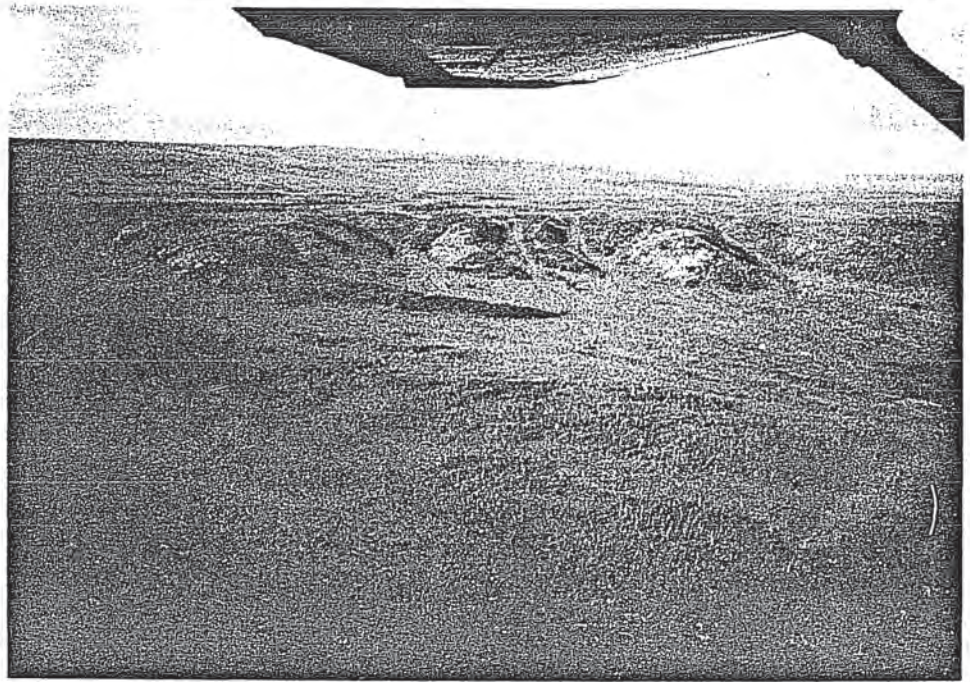
- . Thin stands of black spruce cover many bog areas.
- . Marsh grasses.
- . Moderately dense to dense cover of spruce-deciduous trees around higher relieved and larger lake areas - good fall color - also along Susitna River and tributaries.
- . The dark green color of the spruce is most dominant.

VIEWS

- . Views of the immediate area are generally monotonous because of the expansive commonality and flat topography of the landscape.
- . Views of the Alaska Range, Chugach and Talkeetna mountains and the Mount Susitna landmark are possible from open areas.
- . Weather permitting, Mount McKinley dominates the scene.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE

NENANA UPLANDS
PHOTO E8.8.16



LANDFORMS

- Relatively flat meandering river valley terraces several miles (over 2 km) in width with steep slopes rising up to the Alaska Range foothills.
- Exposed rock and soil cliffs and highly eroded banks are commonly found along the Nenana River.
- Rock outcrops are also common along rising terrace edges; light tan to dark brown in color.

WATERFORMS

- The moderately braided and large Nenana River is the most significant water form; silty glacial water.
- Several relatively small tributaries.
- Scattered small lakes.
- Bog areas and wetlands.
- Many islands, broad floodplain.

VEGETATION

- Variable patterns of sparse to dense spruce and mixed forest over most of the area.
- Scattered open spaces of tundra and bare ground. Soil colors are light.

VIEWS

- Views are oriented to the Alaska Range in the south and the higher relieved foothills in the east.
- Views of the river are not particularly scenic in comparison to mountain views.
- Rock cliffs and outcrops do provide visual interest.
- Transmission lines (existing) are very visible.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE

NENANA RIVER LOWLANDS
PHOTO E8.8.17



LANDFORMS

- . Extremely flat terrain.
- . Numerous small drainages and the Nenana and Teklanika rivers.
- . Sand, gravel and cobbles.

WATERFORMS

- . Braided channels and heavily meandering Nenana and Teklanika rivers create a distinct pattern on the land.
- . Numerous smaller and also meandering tributaries.
- . Adjacent to and tributaries of the larger and heavily braided Tanana River.
- . Many scattered small lakes and expansive wetland areas.
- . Many islands.

VEGETATION

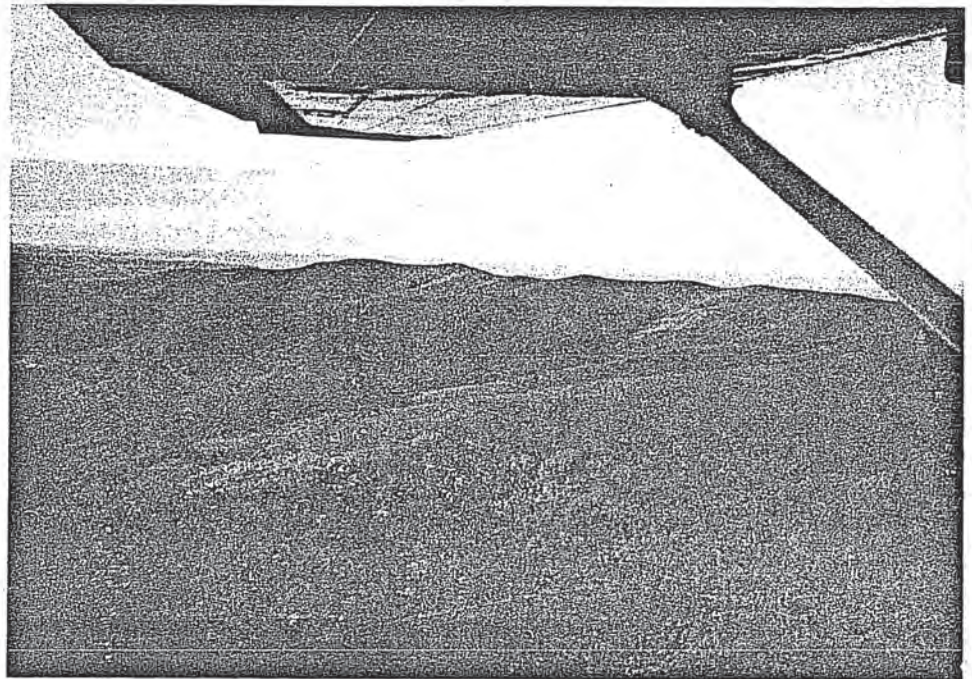
- . Expansive cover of thin to moderately dense spruce forests west of Nenana River.
- . Linear bands of spruce along drainages east of Nenana River.
- . Tundra and wetland-bog species cover most the the area.

VIEWS

- . Views of the immediate area are monotonous because of the lack of relief and lack of distinctive features to view on ground.
- . Views are across river and directed to the high and forested Tanana hills to the north and the Alaska Range to the south.
- . Transmission lines (existing) are very visible.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE

TANANA RIDGE
PHOTO E8.8.18



LANDFORMS

- . Distinct rounded hills interrupted by small valleys.
- . Slopes are moderately steep to steep.
- . Rise several thousand feet above the lowlands.

WATERFORMS

- . Bounded to the south and west by the heavily braided Tanana River (sixth longest in Alaska).
- . Numerous creeks throughout the area.
- . A few small scattered lakes.
- . Goldstream Creek is a very distinctive meandering watercourse dividing Tanana Ridge from the higher hills to the north.

VEGETATION

- . Distinct stands of pure deciduous trees occur here as well as pure stands of spruce and mixed forests.
- . Forest cover is generally dense.
- . Foliage color patterns have high aesthetic value in the spring and fall.
- . The white trunks of the birch also provide interesting winter textures.

VIEWS

- . The views are moderate in scenic quality. However, fall color is an exception.
- . Views are limited due to the dense forest cover.
- . Clear-cut right-of-ways of existing transmission lines and roads are distinctly visible from many areas.