

**APPENDIX 4.9-4**  
**AESTHETIC VALUE AND VISUAL ABSORPTION**  
**CAPABILITY RATINGS**

# AESTHETIC VALUE AND ABSORPTION CAPABILITY RATINGS

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE	AESTHETIC VALUE	ABSORPTION CAPABILITY	COMMENTS
MID SUSITNA RIVER VALLEY	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common Alaskan landscape--nothing which makes it particularly distinctive.</li> <li>• Existing man-made elements (i.e., railroad parallel to river, railroad bridge, cabins and railroad related structures) have not had significant negative aesthetic impacts.</li> </ul>
DEVIL CANYON	High	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinctive Alaskan natural resource feature.</li> <li>• Dramatic but unstable environment because of steep slopes.</li> <li>• Man-made elements must be sensitive to the existing landscapes. A highly aesthetic and recreational resource.</li> </ul>
SUSITNA RIVER	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinctive and impressive deep valley--large-scale.</li> <li>• Good variety of landform, vegetation and water edges.</li> <li>• Variety of scenic large- to small-scale features.</li> <li>• Able to absorb some man-made impacts on semiforested, less steep areas. Small-scale impacts.</li> </ul>
RIVER CANYON	High	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinctive river canyon.</li> <li>• Steep slopes make the area sensitive to development.</li> <li>• Due to the lack of substantial forest cover, the overall open character of the canyon requires highly compatible design solutions.</li> </ul>
SUSITNA UPLAND WET TUNDRA BASIN	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impressive scale but landscape character is common in Alaska.</li> <li>• Distant scenic views to mountains along with a variety of land, water and vegetative edges in foreground gives the area moderate to high aesthetic value.</li> <li>• Flat and open character of land will not easily absorb man-made elements/impacts. However, existing roads and small structures are not distracting.</li> </ul>

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PORTAGE LOWLANDS	High	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinctive deep and winding tributary river canyon to the Susitna River. Variety of vegetation types and river bottom terrain.</li> <li>• Steep erodible slopes would be sensitive to any development.</li> </ul>
CHULITNA MOIST TUNDRA UPLANDS	High	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High aesthetic quality due to diversity of landforms, water and vegetation patterns.</li> <li>• The landform diversity and variety of forest edges and densities will allow for some visual integration and absorption of man-made elements.</li> </ul>
CHULITNA MOUNTAINS	High	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly distinctive area, rich in significant natural attractive features.</li> <li>• Complex glaciated landforms of all scales.</li> <li>• Man-made elements and impacts will be very visible on this predominantly treeless and steep sloped landscape.</li> <li>• Basically a wilderness area.</li> </ul>
WET UPLAND TUNDRA	Moderate	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a variety of water forms and their distinct edges with land and vegetation, along with highly scenic views.</li> <li>• Although the area is basically open, the rolling terrain would not be significantly impacted by man-made elements if they were properly sited and sensitively designed. Elements must be subordinate to the landscape.</li> </ul>
TALKEETNA UPLANDS	Moderate	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The overall aesthetic value of this area is good due primarily to variety of landforms, but is not as scenic (middle and foreground views) in comparison to many of the other character types.</li> <li>• The bisecting forested river valleys create a distinct and interesting pattern.</li> </ul>

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TALKEETNA UPLANDS (contd)	Moderate	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Man-made features would be visible in most areas due to the flat to rolling open terrain.</li> <li>• Sensitive siting is mandatory with the landscape dominating the character of development if any.</li> </ul>
TALKEETNA MOUNTAINS	High	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly distinctive mountain range with a complex variety of land and water forms, and patterns.</li> <li>• As with the Chulitna Mountains, this area can be considered a wilderness area.</li> <li>• Medium- to large-scale man-made features will be highly visible in this treeless steep sloped mountain environment.</li> <li>• Recreation trails here and in the Chulitna Mountains should not be aesthetically disruptive.</li> </ul>
SUSITNA UPLAND TERRACE	Moderate	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This setting of large lakes, dense forest and scenic views to the mountains is basically of moderate aesthetic value.</li> <li>• Distinctive to the basin but not to Alaska.</li> <li>• Clearing of trees for most any type of development would be highly visible in this densely forested area.</li> <li>• Any major man-made impact (medium- to large-scale) must be carefully considered to emphasize site fitness.</li> </ul>
SUSITNA UPLANDS	Moderate	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This landscape character is common in Alaska with the exception of its large number of distinctive streams and rivers. The open landscape is significantly enhanced by the scenic views of adjacent and distant character types.</li> <li>• Other than recreational trails--if properly sited--most all other man-made features would be highly visible.</li> </ul>

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ANCHORAGE, ALASKA	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although the city is in a high quality aesthetic setting, the visual image of the city itself is not high in aesthetic value.</li> <li>• With the exception of the Chugach foothills, the large-scale urban environment should be able to absorb new man-made features. However, proper design, siting and alignment of features will be essential to lessen any-potential aesthetic impact.</li> </ul>
SUSITNA RIVER	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The landscape is continuous and broad in scale with few significant landscape features.</li> <li>• Flat terrain and diverse vegetation patterns should be able to effectively absorb most man-made features. Aesthetic impacts will not be significant.</li> </ul>
NENANA UPLANDS	Moderate	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape has good variety of land-forms and vegetation patterns and a large distinctive river.</li> <li>• Aesthetic value is not high in comparison to many other Alaskan character types.</li> <li>• This rich diversity and patterns of natural elements and generally open landscape will be able to absorb limited man-made features with sensitive planning and design.</li> </ul>
NENANA RIVER LOWLANDS	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This landscape has complex patterns of vegetation and water features but no topographic relief or significantly unique and attractive features to give it a higher aesthetic value.</li> <li>• Man-made features should be visually absorbed by this flat expansive landscape with a variety of vegetative patterns.</li> </ul>
TANANA RIDGE	Moderate	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinctive landscape relative to the general geographic area. The forested hills are at the edge of a large flatlands and visually significant.</li> </ul>

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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPE	AESTHETIC VALUE	ABSORPTION CAPABILITY	COMMENTS
TANANA RIDGE (contd)	Moderate	Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Again, this character has local high aesthetic value but not significant in comparison to other Alaskan landscapes.</li> <li>• The dense forest cover and steep slopes do not provide a condition allowing for visual absorption of medium- to large-scale man-made development. Sensitive siting will be essential to lessen aesthetic impacts.</li> </ul>