

52. VISUAL RESOURCES

52.1 Introduction

The visual analysis was done to analyze the existing landscape character and quality in potentially viewed areas in the Cook Inlet drainages study area (Figure 1-4 in Chapter 1).

Based on landform patterns, hydrology, vegetation, and cultural elements, four landscape units were identified in the study area: Williams Creek Valley, Coastline, Y Valley, and the Inskin Peninsula. The landscape units were divided into subunits based on distance zones.

Landscape visibility and scenic attractiveness, and their derivative scenic classes, are used to assess existing visual condition. Mapping for the scenic inventory takes into account the landscape visibility, the concern levels of users and residents, scenic attractiveness, scenic class, and scenic integrity. Scenic attractiveness measures the scenic importance of a landscape based on human perceptions, and scenic integrity is a measure of the completeness of a landscape.

The research was done in summer 2004 using the methodology outlined in the U.S. Forest Service document *Landscape Aesthetics, A Handbook for Scenery Management* (USFS, 1995). Researchers traveled by helicopter to document landscape character and views.

52.2 Results and Discussion

The landscape setting of the study area is characterized by mountains of varying topographic relief, fast-flowing rivers, tundra, marshy lowlands, and ponds. Depending on elevation and location, most of this land is covered by alpine tundra, low or tall shrubs, or areas of mixed broadleaf and spruce trees.

Viewers comprise seasonal residents of Williamsport or Camp Point, hunters and fishermen (including subsistence users), recreational visitors to Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, and travelers by boat and air. Though limited in number, these viewers are expected to have a high level of concern with regard to visual characteristics and to changes to the landscape; however, based on observations, most of this study area is visible only from the air and only as background views.

Scenic attractiveness is categorized into three classes: Class A—distinctive, Class B—common, and Class C—indistinctive. The landscape in the study area is of distinctive (Class A) scenic attractiveness and is almost fully intact, with a few exceptions, providing very high scenic integrity.

Scenic class is a measure of the value of scenery using a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being the highest value. Scenic class considers scenic attractiveness, landscape visibility, and public concern level. The entire study area has a rating of Class 1.

52.3 References

U.S. Forest Service (USFS). 1995. Landscape Aesthetics: A Handbook for Scenery Management.

Visual Resources—Cook Inlet Drainages



Unit 1, Williams Creek: View of Williams Creek Valley.



Unit 2, Cook Inlet Coastline: View of Iliamna Bay.



Unit 3, Y Valley.

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Unit 4, Iniskin Peninsula: View near the Head of Chinitna Bay.