

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

D4225 Alaska
(W&SRS)

TO : Assistant Director Eastman

DATE: May 22, 1973

FROM : Alaska Task Force Leader

*For your review &
comment*

SUBJECT: Wind Wild and Scenic River Report

Enclosed are two copies of a preliminary draft of Chapters IV and V of the subject report. A copy of this report has been provided to NWRO and BLM, BSFGW, NPS and FS planning teams in Anchorage. Chapter IV will be distributed to study team participants.

It is emphasized that the conclusions and recommendations are based upon a single aerial examination of June 13, 1972, and upon office review of available information. On-site field examination is scheduled for this summer.

Following field work, the preliminary draft will be revised as appropriate and the remaining portions of the report completed.

Jules V. Tileston

Jules V. Tileston

2 enclosures

cc: WASO/Fred Strack



WIND RIVER

A Wild and Scenic River Analysis

PRELIMINARY

Bureau of Outdoor Recreation

Alaska Task Force

V.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The Wind River meets the criteria for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in that:

- The river is free-flowing.
- The river and its immediate environment possess outstandingly remarkable values
- There is sufficient volume of water to permit full enjoyment of these values.
- The river is of sufficient length to provide a meaningful high quality recreational experience
- Water quality is excellent
- The river and its immediate environment are capable of being managed to protect and interpret special values and protect the user.

The special values and resources of the Wind River include the following:

- The 80 mile long river and its immediate environment are pristine and untouched in character. No habitation, lumbering, mining or other development is presently taking place in the river.
- Located amid the Philip Smith Mountains of the Brooks Range, the scenic qualities of the Wind River valley

are exceptional. Glacial features, rugged mountains, and a variety of rock and vegetation patterns and colors provide high aesthetic values.

- The river is exceptional for river floating and adjacent lands offer outstanding hiking opportunities.
- Big game animals, especially Dall sheep, are abundant in the river area.
- A major area of shrub thickets along the river is unique in Interior Alaska. This vegetative type, in addition to the wide variety of other types found along the river, offers outstanding opportunities for scientific study.
- Aircraft presently is the only practical means of access to the river area.
- The entire river is presently owned by the federal government and managed by the Bureau of Land Management. A block of land surrounding the upper 25 miles is withdrawn under Section (d)(2) of ANCSA. The middle 40 miles is located within a two-mile corridor withdrawn under Section (d)(2). The lower 15 miles is withdrawn as regional deficiency lands for potential Native selection under the terms of ANCSA.
- No water resources projects have taken place or are proposed for the river.
- No potential for mining or lumbering development has been identified.

- A potential extension to the state highway net has been identified which would cross the Wind River somewhere in the lower 15 miles of the river.
- Some subsistence hunting and trapping uses by Native peoples may be taking place along the river.

Recommendations

- It is recommended that the upper 65 miles of the Wind River be included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System by Congress.
- It is recommended that the river segment be managed by the Bureau of Land Management. If in the case the lands surrounding the upper portions of the Wind River are included in a component of the National Wildlife Refuge System by Congress, it is recommended that the river segment flowing through these lands be managed by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. It is recommended that should such action be taken, the BLM and BSF&W should cooperate fully in their respective management of the downstream and upstream segments.
- It is recommended that the river segment be classified as a "wild river area" as defined in section 2 (b)(1) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act:

"Wild River areas -- Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines, essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America."

It is recommended that:

- Boundaries of the wild river area be from the headwaters in T. 10 S., R. 20 E., (Umiat Meridian), to a point approximately 15 miles above the mouth (the eastern border of T. 35 N., R. 6 E., Fairbanks Meridian).

Precise lateral boundaries should be determined by the land manager(s) within one year of inclusion of the Wind River segment in the national system by Congress. In general, lateral boundaries should not exceed an average of 1 1/2 miles to either side of the river. It is recommended that the entire drainage in the headwaters area be included.

- It is recommended that approximately 75,000 acres to the immediate river environment be included in the National System.

- Approximately 15 miles of river lie between the lower recommended river boundary and the confluence. This segment of river has been withdrawn as regional deficiency lands for potential selection by Native corporations under the terms of ANCSA. Ownership, public access, navigability, and other land questions will not be settled in this area for several years. However, this segment of river has been found to have outstanding values and would be a logical extension to a wild and

and scenic river designation upstream. Thus, although not proposed for inclusion at this time, it is recommended that this section be studied at a later date for inclusion in the National System. Any lands not selected by Native corporations should be included in the National System where appropriate.

- It is recommended that, subject to valid existing rights, the minerals in Federal lands which are made part of this wild river area be withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under the mining laws and from operation of the mineral leasing laws. Minerals (including oil and gas) have not been identified within the immediate river environment in commercially exploitable amounts. However, even small "try-your-luck" prospecting and extraction activities could seriously detract from the existing primitive values of the river environment.
- It is recommended that any traditional Native subsistence uses of the river and its immediate surroundings be protected by the administering agency (ies) in order to help preserve the cultural heritage and lifestyle of local residents.

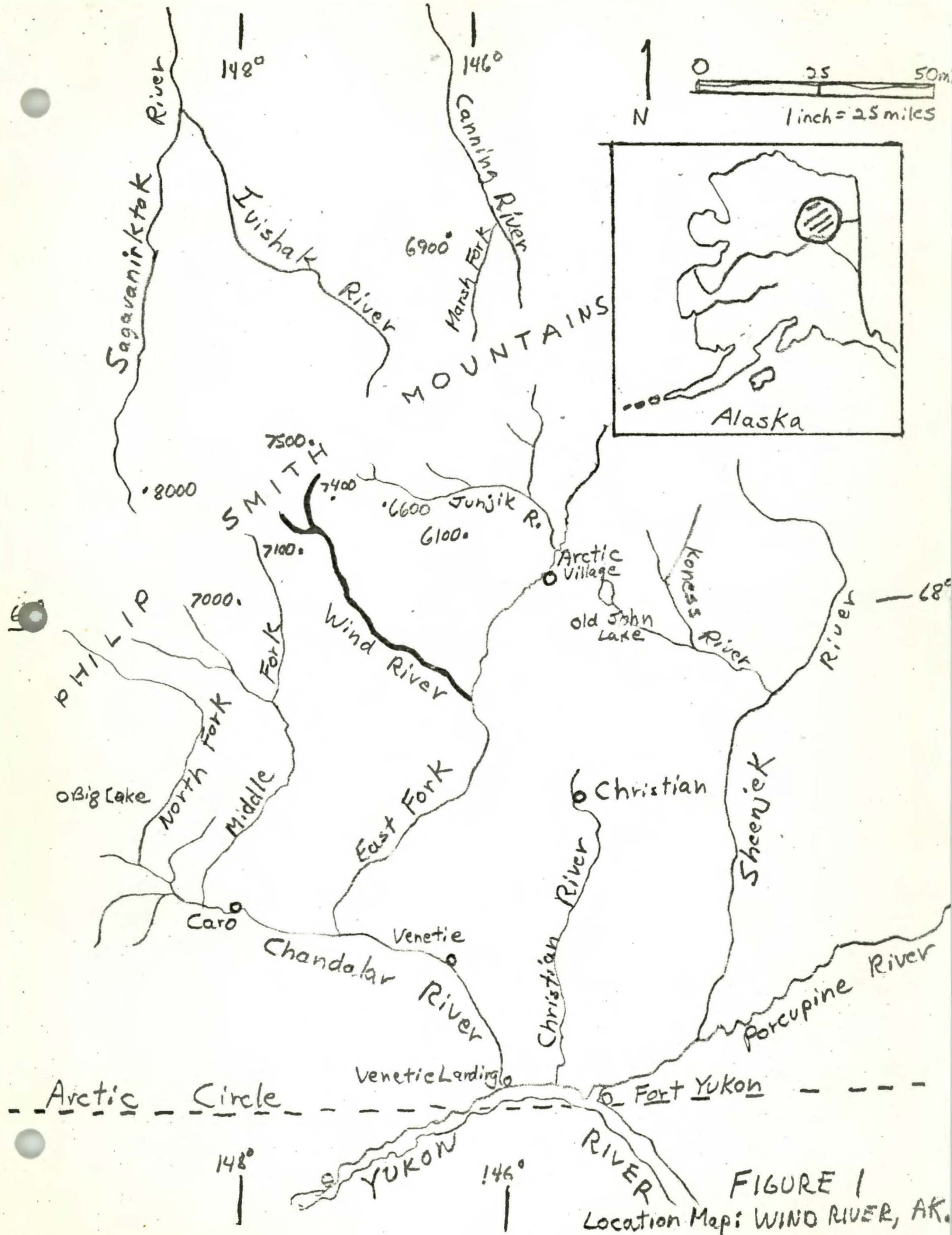
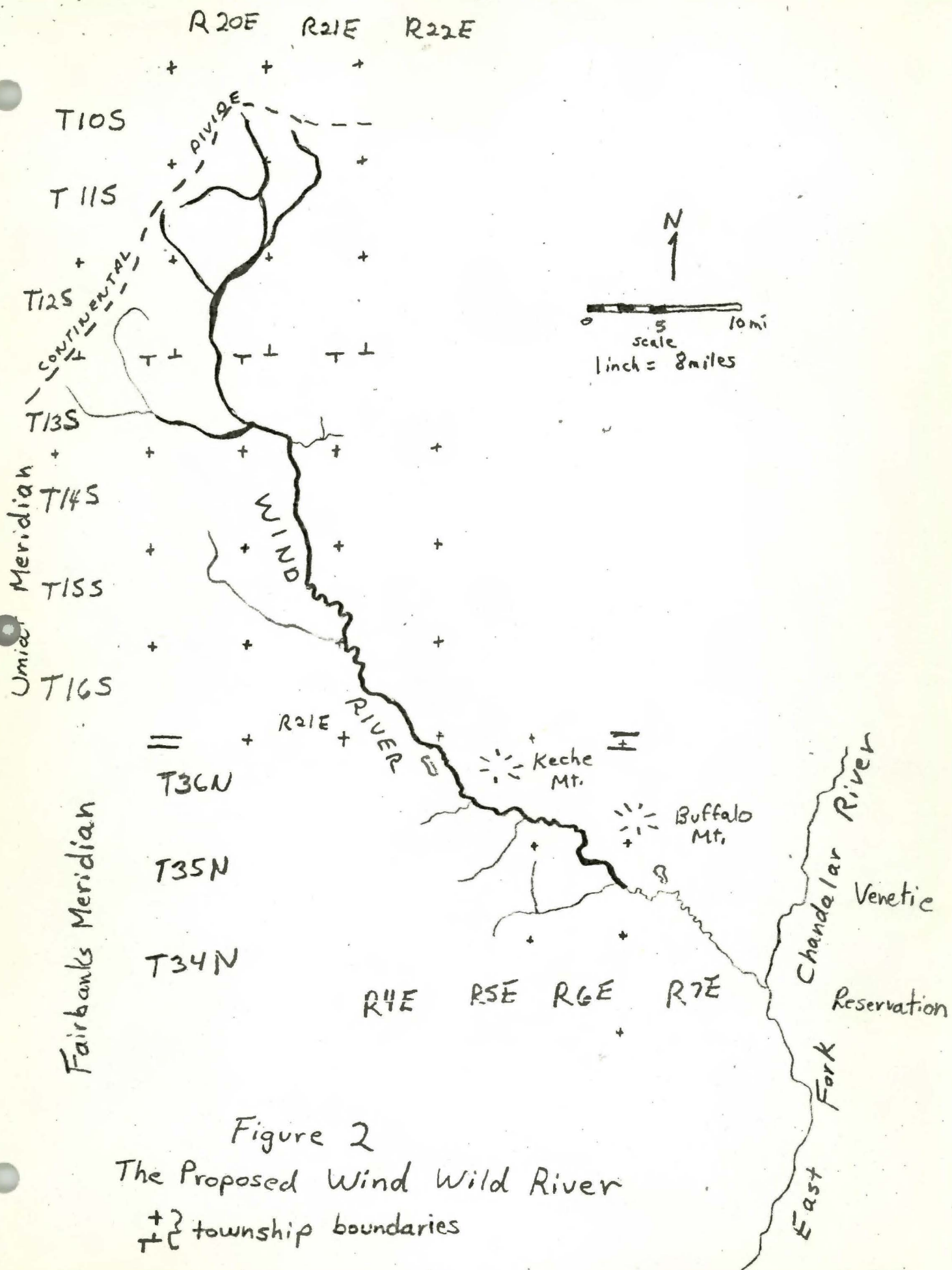


FIGURE 1
Location Map: WIND RIVER, AK.



DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

The River and its Setting

The Wind River rises in the Philip Smith Mountains of the eastern Brooks Range and flows southward approximately 80 miles to its confluence with the East Fork of the Chandalar River. The Wind River lies approximately 230 air miles north of Fairbanks, 120 miles northeast of Ft. Yukon, Alaska, and 100 miles above the Arctic Circle. The segment under study is approximately 65 miles long, running from the headwaters (T. 10 S., R. 20 E., Umiat Meridian) to a point roughly 15 miles above the mouth near Buffalo Mountain (T. 35 N., R 6 E., Fairbanks Meridian).

Over much of its length, the river is flanked by steep-sided mountains often rising over 3000 feet above the flat valley floor (2-3 miles wide). The U-shaped configuration of the old glacial valley offers outstanding vistas up and down the river. Tributaries are generally small but are accompanied by wide intersecting valleys further expanding the visual horizons from the Wind River valley. In the middle and lower stretches many small lakes lie to either side of the river.

The river draws its initial waters from the melting snows and several tiny remnant glaciers in

mountains exceeding 7000 feet in elevation. The river begins forming at approximately 3500 feet and leaves the study segment at an elevation of slightly more than 1800 feet -- an average drop of approximately 26 feet per mile. The lower 15 miles drops another 200 feet (13 feet per mile) before its confluence with the East Fork of the Chandalar River. The gradient is generally uniform and thus, the current is swift over much of the river's length (5-6 m.p.h.).

A spruce forest tongue protrudes up the river valley. From a dense broad forest surrounding the river in the lower reaches, this tongue tapers to an ever-narrowing band of small, sparse trees which finally merge with shrub thickets and tundra vegetation about half-way up the study segment. In the upper reaches the sweeping treeless landscape extends from peak to peak across the breadth of the river valley.

The Wind River is a nonglacial river with very clear waters. Because the river flows over old glacial till and because of active erosion in adjacent mountain areas, spring run-offs and heavy summer rains can temporarily cause heavy amounts of sediment in the river, thus lessening the transparency of the waters. The bottom is generally gravelly to stoney in character. No major rapids or falls exist along the river.

In the upper reaches the river averages 10-15 yards wide with depth of 1-2 feet. In the lower portions of the study segment the river averages 50 yards wide with depths of 4-10 feet. The river gently meanders over much of its length with occasional stretches of braided channels. The immediate river bank is generally low -- 4-6 feet -- and channel changes are common.

No stream flows have been measured, but maximum discharge of the river is usually reached after spring break-up in mid to late May and also sometimes after heavy summer showers generally in August. Water temperatures range from near 32° F. during the winter to around 55° F. in July. Ice begins forming in October and by mid-winter thicknesses can reach 4 feet or more.

Water Quality

No water quality studies have been done on the Wind River. However, there are presently no known sources of sewage or chemical pollution in the drainage that could significantly degrade water quality. Thus, the river's waters are believed to be of exceptionally high quality.

Low temperature conditions have been reported to be conducive to prolongation of the life of

pathogenic bacteria. Although present low use of the river area appears to pose no health problems, indiscriminate disposal of wastes by larger numbers of river users could lead to health risks in the future.

Land Use

The entire river flows through an extremely primitive environment showing almost no evidence of man. Very little human use is presently taking place in the river drainage.

A small amount of hunting and fishing occurs in the river area. Most of this is by fly-in hunters primarily seeking grizzly bear and Dall sheep in the adjacent mountain areas.

Some subsistence hunting and trapping may be taking place in the lower river area by Native peoples associated with the Venetie Indian Reservation lying to the east of the East Fork of the Chandalar. Such use, if taking place, is probably occurring in the river area below the study boundary.

At least one and probably several registered guides (hunting) are operating in the Wind River area. A cabin and camp near Keché Mountain in the lower study segment is presently being used for guiding purposes. A Trade and Manufacutring site application for this camp site lapsed in 1971. ATV tracks can be seen from the air around this cabin.

No other cabins or developments are known to exist in the immediate river area. No mining has taken place or is occurring along the river. In 1971 30 lode claims of copper were filed approximately 6 or 8 miles from the river along a major tributary in the upper drainage. No work on these claims is known to have taken place.

Water Resources Developments

No dams, channel improvements, or stream diversions have taken place or are proposed on the Wind River.

Land Ownership

The entire river flows through lands owned by the Federal government and presently managed by the Bureau of Land Management. There are no known mining claims or mineral leases in the immediate river area. A T&M site application filed in 1966. for a tract on a lake within 1/2 mile of the river near Keche Mountain lapsed in 1971.

Downstream from the study segment on Native Allotment application for 80 acres exists approximately 1/2 mile north of the river.

The entire drainage of the upper 25 miles of the river has been withdrawn from all forms of appropriation

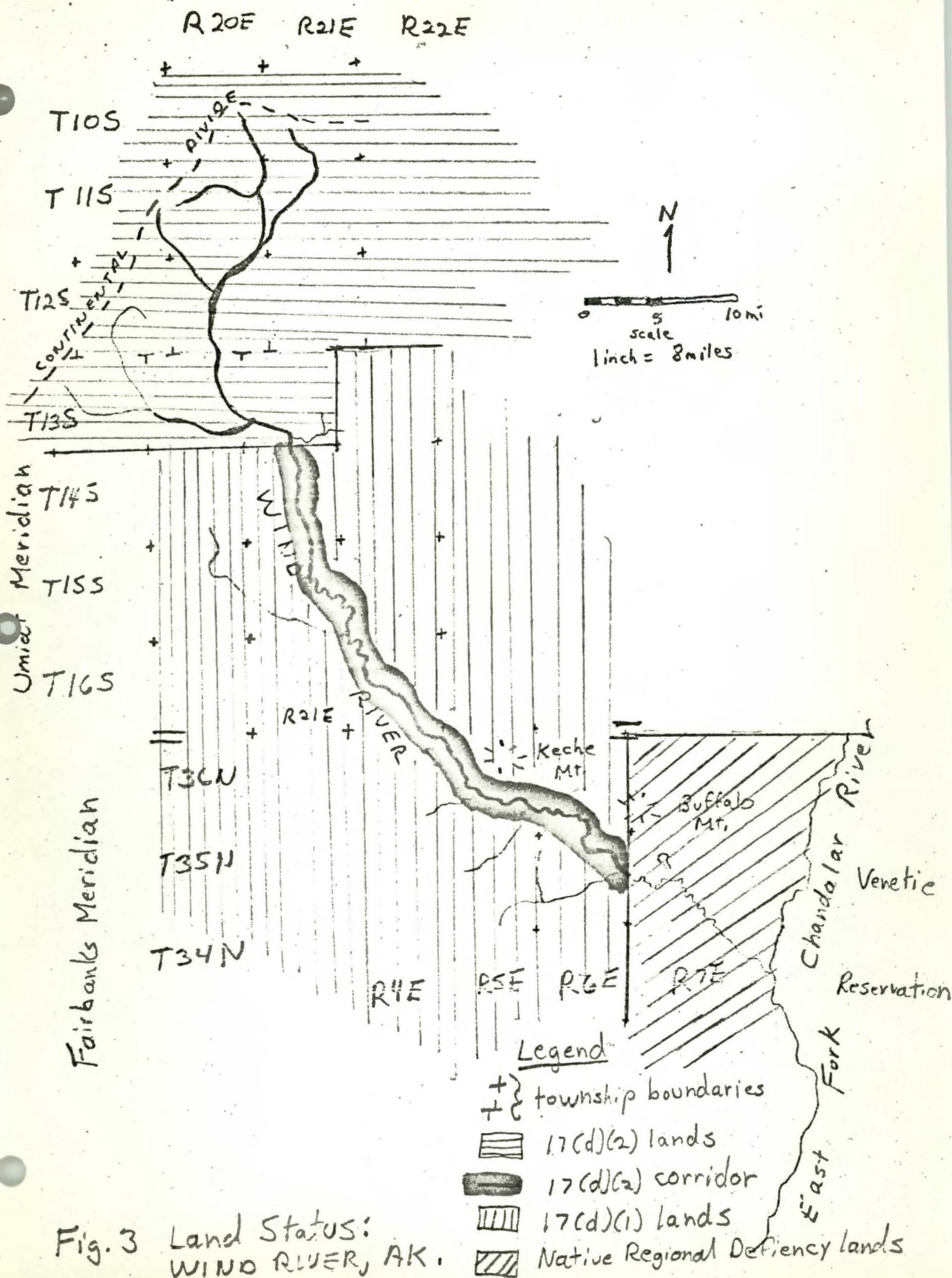


Fig. 3 Land Status:
WIND RIVER, AK.

under Sec. 17(d)(2) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA, P.L. 92-203). This area is being studied by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife and will be proposed as an extension to the Arctic National Wildlife Range. Similarly, a two-mile wide (d)(2) corridor has been withdrawn surrounding 40 miles of river downstream from the upper (d)(2) block of land. The land adjacent this corridor has been withdrawn from all forms of appropriation except metalliferous mining claims under Sec. 17(d)(1) of ANCSA.

The lower 15 miles of river below the 65 mile long study segment has been withdrawn as regional deficiency lands for potential Native selections under the terms of ANCSA. (For land status, see Figure ____.)

Water Rights, Navigability and Riverbed Ownership

No rights to water in the Wind River have been applied for or granted by the State of Alaska.

Under the Alaska Statehood Act, the State owns the river bottom of all "navigable" streams and rivers. The question of which streams are "navigable" has not yet been determined in Alaska. However, under criteria being developed by the State of Alaska to determine streambed ownership, the Wind River would appear to be "navigable" most of its length.

It is almost certain the river has never been used as a "navigable" stream in terms of trade or the movement of goods. There is no permanent habitation along the river and no easy passes or portages from the upstream reaches to other rivers or regions. In addition, swift current and periodic shallow places prevent motorized craft from traveling very far up river.

Access

Existing

There are no roads or maintained trails to or near any point of the river. The nearest segment of the state highway net lies south of the Yukon River over 150 miles away.

Primary access to the river is by aircraft. Although there are no developed airstrips, gravel bars provide natural landing strips for small planes at many locations along the river. In the middle and lower sections of the river small lakes adjacent the river could accommodate small float planes.

Access by motorboat is possible but long and difficult. Boats coming up from the Yukon would have to travel up several hundred miles of the Chandalar and its East fork before reaching the Wind. Above the mouth of the Wind there is a large stretch of fast rocky

water in the East Fork of the Chandalar. Thus, boat travel downriver from Arctic Village is difficult except with very high water. There is no known motorboat use up the Wind River, although travel especially with jet units would be possible in the lower reaches.

Access during the winter by snowmachines, ATV's, or dog sled would be possible.

Potential

The Alaska State Department of Highways is currently studying and locating potential routes for future extensions of the state highway system. One such extension links a potential road to the North Slope through Bettles with another potential road to the north slope through Arctic Village (see figure ____). This road is labeled a "supplemental road" and would cross the Wind River at roughly the downstream study boundary. No specific future needs for this road are known at this time. No feasibility studies have been done for such a road, and it is considered a long-range development by the State Department of Highways.

Soils

The severe winters, short growing season and decaying season, and low year-round temperatures of the Wind River area result in extremely thin and fragile soils. Except immediately adjacent the river and

on some south-facing slopes, the entire area is underlain by permafrost. Disturbance of the shallow overlying soils can cause extensive damage to the terrain due to melting permafrost and slow revegetation times.

The valley floor is susceptible to marshiness and/or flooding and soils are largely composed of reworked glacial debris. Some areas contain poorly drained bog soils.

The stoney soils on the adjacent slopes are exceptionally fragile and are subject to solifluction. Disturbance of the vegetative cover can result in severe erosion as evidenced by landslides in the area.

Vegetation/Timber

Major vegetation types identified for the river area include closed spruce-hardwood forests, shrub thickets, moist tundra and alpine tundra (Alaska Trees and Shrubs, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Handbook No. 410).

Fires are a dominant influence on vegetative types in Interior Alaska; millions of acres being burned over every summer. Because of extensive burns, large areas of the interior are in various stages of forest succession. The succession that follows fire is varied and depends

upon topography, previous vegetation, severity of burn, and available seed source at the time of burn. Although the Wind River area has not experienced any significant fires in the recent times, the vegetation still reflects historic burns due to the slow plant growth under the harsh climatic conditions.

The closed spruce-hardwood forest covers the valley floor along the lower half of the river. As the elevation increases on sideslopes and up river, the forest cover becomes markedly sparser and trees become smaller. The dominant tree of this forest is white spruce but other tree types include paper birch, quaking aspen, balsam poplar, and black spruce. Common shrubs associated with these trees include several varieties of berries, willows, alders, and roses. Treeline extends generally from 2000-2500 feet in elevation.

The best stands of white spruce are found in the warm, dry southfacing hillsides and adjacent to the river where drainage is good and permafrost lacking. Some of the larger spruce may average 10-20 inches in diameter. Following fire and a willow stage, fast-growing aspen stands develop in upland areas on southfacing slopes. The aspen mature in 60-80 years and are eventually replaced by white spruce, except in excessively dry sites. Paper birch is the common invading tree after

fire on east and west-facing slopes and occasionally on north slopes and flat areas. Balsam poplar are sparsely located in the river floodplain and may reach 20 inches in diameter. On north-facing slopes and in poorly drained lowlands open black spruce occasional break the white spruce forest. These trees are slow growing and seldom exceed 8 inches in diameter and are widely separated by thick moss mats and hummocks of sphagnum mosses, sedges, and grasses.

Some of the white spruce, paper birch and balsam poplar may be considered of commercial size. However, the extremely small stands of such trees and the remoteness of the area preclude any economic marketing of these trees.

Shrub thickets is the major vegetative type along the river on the valley floor upstream from the spruce forest. This extends approximately 20 miles along the river and is quite significant in that this is identified as the only major area in Interior Alaska where this vegetation type is dominant. These thickets are similar to those found on the Alaska and Seward peninsulas and consist of resin birch, alder and several willow species, usually growing 3-10 feet in height. The thickets are generally open

and interspersed with reindeer lichens, low heath type shrubs, and patches of alpine tundra. The alders tend to occupy the wetter sites, the birch the mesic sites, and the tundra openings the drier or wind exposed areas.

Moist tundra is found on the valley floor in the upper reaches of the Wind River. This type consists of continuous developed cottongrass tussocks with sparse growth of other sedges and dwarf shrubs.

In the upper half of the river area the slopes above the immediate river floodplain are covered by alpine tundra. Much of this type consists of barren rocks, but interspersed between these rocks and rubble are low mat plants, both herbaceous and shrubby. Low mats of white mountain-avens cover extensive areas along with moss-campion, black oxytrope, arctic sandwort and several grasses and sedges up to elevations of 3000-4000 feet.

The great variety of vegetative zones and the presence of interior birch-alder-willow thickets give the Wind River area exceptional biologic values.

Geologic and Mineral Resources

An extremely small amount of geologic work has been done in the Wind River area. The U.S. Geologic Survey has mapped the geology of this area by photointerpretation aerial reconnaissance.

The immediate river area is generally thought to be exposed sedimentary rock and surficial deposits. In the upper reaches the adjacent slopes appear to be composed of rock of the Lisburne group and kayak shale of Permian age. In the middle and lower section adjacent slopes appear to be Devonian or Older Skagit limestone, sandstone and slate. The valley floor is largely Quaternary stream alluvium, glacial till, and reworked glacial debris.

The entire length of the river was subjected to Pleistocene glaciation and several terminal moraines exist in the area around the mouth of the river.

No minerals have been located in commercial quantities and no mining claims exist in the river area. Because the river valley was scoured by glaciers, the potential for placer precious metals is very low even if a source is present. The absence of placer deposits (e.g., gold) and the remoteness of the river has undoubtedly discouraged prospecting in the area.

Five to 10 miles west of the river easterly trending belts of metamorphic rocks and intrusive rocks come into near north-south contact with the sedimentary rocks of the Wind River area. This complex of rocks lying between the Middle Fork of the Chandalar River and the Wind is mineralized and untested lode occurrences of copper,

silver, lead, and gold have been reported. It is in this area that 40 lode claims of copper have been filed. 30 of these claims lie approximately 6 to 8 miles west of the Wind River along one of its tributaries.

From a layman's standpoint the limestone and shale outcroppings above the valley floor are of exceptional aesthetic value. Distinctive shades of reds, buffs, and greys highlight the already impressive grandeur of the mountain setting.

Glaciation has also given the river area aesthetic values and geologic landmarks. The typical U-shaped valley offers outstanding vistas and moraines, cirques, scour marks and other features stand as evidence of the awesome power of the recent ice invader.

Wildlife and Fishery Resources

Wildlife

Big game animals are abundant and varied in the river area. Grizzly bear, moose, Dall sheep, caribou, and wolves are all found.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has identified the lower and middle sections of the river as an area of winter moose concentrations (Alaska's Wildlife and Habitat, 1973). Part of the Porcupine caribou herd which numbers over 140,000 animals utilizes the area and winters

over in the lower river areas. One spring migration route of this herd crosses the Wind River just below the lower adjacent the middle section of the river. A mineral lick has also been identified adjacent the middle section of the river. This lick is probably used primarily by Dall sheep and is an important concentration point.

Fur-bearing animals common to the river include wolves (also a big game animal) wolverine, lynx, beaver, marten, mink, weasel, and fox.

The many lakes, ponds and backwaters adjacent the middle and lower section of the river are used as nesting and moulting areas by a variety of waterfowl. These include: white-fronted geese, harlequin ducks, lesser scaups, American widgeons, mallards, pintails, white-winged scoters, green-winged teal, shovelers, canvasbacks, and others.

No bird studies have been done in the area but a variety of smaller birds and several raptors are believed to be common residents.

Rare and Endangered Species

The following wildlife species associated with the Wind River are listed in the Department of the Interior's 1968 "Red Book of Rare and Endangered Species":

Timber wolf (Canis lupus lycon) - endangered
(only in conterminous 48 states)

Grizzly bear (Ursus arctos) - endangered
(only in conterminous 48 states)

Wolverine (Gulo luscus) - Status undertermined

Canada Lynx (Lynx candensis) - status undetermined
Fishery

No fish counts or sampling has been reported for the Wind River. However, grayling, northern pike, and whitefish and burbot are common to the region and are believed to be abundant in the rivers and adjacent lakes.

Historical and Archeological Resources

No historic trails or explorations are known to have crossed this drainage and no signs of early trappers or gold seekers have been reported along the river.

Although it is assumed Athabascan peoples hunted, trapped, and traveled on occasion up this river before the coming of the white man, no archeological work has been done in this area and no evidence of early man has, as yet, been found here.

Recreation

Resources

The lack of man's presence, the remoteness of the area, and the pristine environment of the Wind River make this a true wilderness area. Its value from a wilderness recreation standpoint is exceptional-even in Alaska. The recreational resources of the river and its immediate environment include the magnificent alpine scenery, the free-flowing character of the river,

abundant wildlife, a variety of vegetative eco-systems, interesting geology, and other characteristics.

The recreational activities best suited to the Wind River environment are notably wilderness-oriented where primary focus is on observation of the natural features and plant and animal communities rather than direct use of these resources. These would include hiking, canoeing (or rafting, kayaking) nature or geologic study, wildlife photography, primitive camping and others.

For the hiker or river floater the river provides an experience of wilderness isolation. Towering mountains rise above the river valley creating a small inner world untouched and untrammled by man. Moose, bear, Dall sheep, and other game can be observed in their natural can be observed by the recreationist, each corresponding to the changing eco-zones found from the headwaters to the mouth of the river and from the river banks, across the valley floor, and up the adjacent alpine slopes.

The river itself offers outstanding recreation potential for intermediate canoeists, kayakers, or raft users. Small stretches of Class III whitewater (see Appendix B for International whitewater ratings) exist in the upper reaches while most of the middle and lower sections would be considered Class I or II. The current throughout the river is swift and paddling optional. The gentle

meanders offer continually changing vistas of high mountain peaks, glacial features, colorful rock outcroppings and occasional wildlife. Fishing is excellent and firewood (below treeline) and campsites abundant.

Some consumptive recreational uses are also offered in the river area. Limited hunting and fishing could probably take place in the area without significant changes in fauna populations. However, hunting pressures could change local game distribution and their "visibility."

Existing Use

The hunting of grizzly bear and Dall sheep probably constitutes the only recreational activity presently occurring in the area. Fewer than 50 trips per season into the area probably are taking place. Most of this hunting is taking place on slopes and ridges above the valley floor. Some fishing adjunctive to this hunting probably occurs.

Future Use

Because of the remoteness of this area and the lack of access, recreational uses are not expected to change significantly in the near future. Some increase can be expected for hunting, hiking, and river floating with the increasing demand for quality, primitive recreation experiences, but this increase in use will be minimal in terms of absolute numbers.

In recent years more remote areas of Alaska have been frequented by aircraft and off-road vehicles in increasing numbers. As the frontier is pushed further and further from population centers, modern-day explorers travel further and further into the "bush". It can be expected that the Wind River area will be subject to increased numbers of aircraft landings and off-road vehicle penetrations in future years.

Should a road ever be constructed across the lower segment of the river, much more recreation use can be expected. However, the construction of such a road is probably 50 to 100 years away.

Limitations to Recreation

Higher levels of recreation use are primarily limited by access. Presently, aircraft is the only practical method of access to the river and the river is located several hours flying time from the nearest charter services (Ft. Yukon). Consequently, relatively high costs are incurred in getting to the river area. Although landing sites for float planes exist in the lower and middle reaches access into the headwater areas is limited to small air-craft on wheels. Consequently only rafts, kayaks or fold-boats could be brought into the upper reaches (assuming helicopters would not be available to the public.)

Other limitations are due to the harsh sub-Arctic climate. A "summer" season from June through August allows only a brief period of time for most recreational uses. Freezing temperatures have been reported in all months of the year. Water temperatures remain cool all summer, prohibiting any prolonged body contact. Winters are extremely severe with cold temperatures (down to -60 degrees and lower) and deep snows (50 to 60 inches), limiting winter sports use.

Because of permafrost soils, much standing water is present in the area. These waters give rise to hordes of mosquitoes and flies which at times can seriously limit recreational use because of the great intensity of the winged attack.

Future recreational activities are also limited by the natural conditions. Off-road vehicle uses may be limited by soil conditions, especially in times of no-snow cover. Disruption of the thin soil can cause surface damages which may persist for long periods of time. Most surface damages occur during summer thaw periods.

Potential limitations to recreation include the users themselves. It is quite possible that larger numbers of recreationists in the river area should degrade or destroy the pristine environment and the primitive experience of the user. The most outstanding value of the river area could be lost through overuse.

PRELIMINARY

Wind River

Based upon aerial reconnaissance and available information, it is concluded that the Wind River meets the criteria for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System in that:

- The river is free-flowing
- The river and its immediate environment possess outstandingly remarkable values
- There is sufficient volume of water to permit full enjoyment of these values
- The river is of sufficient length to provide a meaningful high quality recreational experience
- Water quality is good
- The river and its immediate environment are capable of being managed to protect and interpret special values and protect the user

The outstanding values of the Wind River include its scenic, recreational, wildlife, and geologic qualities. In addition, the river and its adjacent lands excellently typify the environments found in the southern drainage of the northeast Brooks Range.

The Wind River rises in the Philip Smith Mountains of the northeastern Brooks Range and flows southward some 80 miles to its confluence with the East Fork of the

PRELIMINARY

JAN 8 1973

Chandalar River about 85 miles northwest of Fork Yukon.

In its headwaters this medium sized clearwater river is swift with many small, rugged rapids. The geology is outstanding with many colorful rock outcroppings.

Distinctive colors include reds, buffs and greys. Panorama views of surrounding mountains are spectacular and abundant.

Perched water tables and pingos due to permafrost are common in the lower area. Tundra vegetation in headwaters converts to spruce forests as one proceeds downstream.

Wildlife is abundant and varied.

The upper 25 miles of the river flows through lands classified under section 17(d)(2) of ANCSA. Downstream from this (d)(2) block, a two-mile wide (d)(2) corridor is withdrawn along approximately 40 miles of the river. The land adjacent this corridor is classified under section (d)(1) of ANCSA. The lower 15 miles of river flow through lands withdrawn as regional deficiency areas for Native selections.

No highways, dams or utility lines are known to be proposed for this river area.

An interagency field team is being formed to make an on-the-ground inspection in the early summer of 1973. A detailed report evaluating the river area and its values will be prepared in the next several months and will be concluded upon completion of this field work.

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A wild and scenic river analysis of the Wind River will be limited to river sections flowing through lands designated under section (d)(2). The lower 15 miles in regional deficiency lands will only be studied with the full cooperation and support of concerned Native groups.