

STATE OF ALASKA
Department of Natural Resources
Division of Forestry and Fire Protection
Kenai-Kodiak Area Office

Preliminary Written Finding under AS 38.05.035 and AS 38.05.945

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Fire Protection (DOF), gives formal notice under AS 38.05.945 (a)(3) that the Division has made Preliminary Decisions under AS 38.05.035(e) regarding the **Nash Road Sale (SC-3265K)**.

Before the sale may be held, the Director of the DOF must make a written Final Decision that each sale best serves the interest of the State. These Decisions will lay out the facts and applicable policies upon which the Director bases his determination that the proposed timber sales will or will not best serve the interest of the State. The Final Decisions are expected to be available to the public after **April 27, 2026**.

The public is invited to comment on any aspect of the Preliminary Decision Written Finding and these proposed timber sales. Comments should be mailed to the Division of Forestry and Fire Protection, Kenai-Kodiak Office, 46499 Sterling Hwy, Soldotna AK 99669 and/or emailed to: diane.campbell@alaska.gov. Comments must be received at the Division of Forestry no later than **April 27, 2026** in order to be considered in the Final Decision of whether or not these sales will be held in whole or in part. To be eligible to appeal a Final Decision, a person must have provided written comment by **April 27, 2026**. Copies of the Preliminary Decision are available by contacting the Division at the above physical address, email address, or by telephoning the office at (907) 260-4200.

Copies of the Preliminary Decision are available for review at the Division of Forestry at the above address and on the world wide web at: <https://forestry.alaska.gov/timber/kenai-kodiak>

The State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Individuals with disabilities who may need auxiliary aids, services, or special modifications to participate in this review may contact the number above.

Diane Campbell
Area Forester

STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF FORESTRY & FIRE PROTECTION



KENAI-KODIAK AREA FORESTRY
PRELIMINARY BEST INTEREST FINDING
NASH ROAD TIMBER SALE
SC-3265-K

March 2026

Abbreviations

ADEC	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
ADF&G	Alaska Department of Fish and Game
ADNR	Alaska Department of Natural Resources
BIF	Best interest finding
CCF	100 cubic feet (timber volume)
DMLW	Division of Mining, Land and Water
DFFP	Division of Forestry and Fire Protection
FLUP	Forest Land Use Plan
FRPA	Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act
FYSTS	Five-year Schedule of Timber Sales
KEAP	Kenai Area Plan
MBF	Thousand board feet
OHA	Office of History and Archeology
ROW	Right-of-way
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
USFS	United States Forest Service

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I. PROPOSED ACTION

The Division of Forestry and Fire Protection (DFFP) is proposing to offer approximately 55 acres of Sitka spruce saw logs from state lands near milepost 2 of Nash Road in Seward (see Appendix A, Nash Road Timber Sale Map). Unit 1 will be 45 acres, and Unit 2 will be 10 acres. The volume to be offered totals approximately 829 MBF (1,974 CCF). DFFP would sell the timber as a sealed bid for commercial use under provisions of AS 38.05.120. For this timber sale, a Draft Forest Land Use Plan (FLUP) will also be issued for review.

The management objectives for the proposed timber sale are:

1. To follow the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) constitutional mandate to encourage the development of the State's renewable resources, making them available for maximum use consistent with public interest.
2. To provide state timber for production of wood products for commercial and personal use.
3. To help the state's economy by providing royalties to the state from stumpage receipts, and adding to the state's economy through wages, purchases, jobs and business.
4. To develop the area to meet multiple management objectives and enhance wildlife habitat.
5. Provide fuelwood for residential heating needs of local communities.
6. Harvesting timber from areas to reduce future developmental costs.

II. STATUTORY AND REGULATORY AUTHORITY

The Division is taking this action under the authority of

- AS 38.05.035(e) Best Interest Finding;
- AS 38.05.110-120 and 11 AAC 71, Timber Sale Statutes and Regulations; and
- AS 41.17.010-950 and 11 AAC 95 Forest Resources and Practices Statutes and Regulations.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD

The Division will maintain an administrative record regarding the decision of whether or not to proceed with the action as proposed. This record will be maintained at the DFFP's Kenai- Kodiak Area Office filed as SC-3265-K PBIF.

IV. SCOPE OF DECISION

This preliminary best interest finding (PBIF) is the first part of step three of a six-step process to design, sell, and administer timber sales. The following list summarizes the overall process:

Step 1: Regional planning. The Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) develops area plans and state forest management plans to designate appropriate uses for state land, classify the land accordingly, and establish management guidelines for multiple use. These plans determine where timber sales are an allowed use, and what other uses must be considered when designing and implementing sales. Subsequent land use decisions must be consistent with the area plans. The area in this PBIF is covered by the Kenai Area Plan (2001). The finding also considers the Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan and Kenai Peninsula Borough Community Wildfire Protection Plan (2022). The proposed area is within the Kenai Peninsula Borough, and this finding considers the Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Management Plan (2019).

Step 2: Five-year Schedule of Timber Sales (AS 38.05.113). The Kenai-Kodiak Area Office prepares a Five-year Schedule of Timber Sales (FYSTS) every other year. The Schedule identifies proposed sales, including their location, volume, and main access routes. The Five-year Schedules are scoping documents that provide an opportunity for public, agency, and industry to identify potential issues and areas of interest for further consideration in the best interest finding and Forest Land Use Plan. A proposed timber sale must appear in at least one of the two Five-year Schedules preceding the sale. This timber sale has been identified in the 2026-2030 FYSTS.

Step 3: Best Interest Finding. A best interest finding is the decision document that:

- Establishes the overall area within which the timber sale may occur,
- Determines the amount of timber that will be offered for sale and the duration of the sale,
- Sets the overall harvest and reforestation strategy for the sale area,
- Determines whether the sale proposal complies with the Constitutional requirement to manage sustained yield by evaluating the amount of timber in the sale and the annual allowable cut for the affected area,
- Selects the appropriate method of sale (i.e., competitive or negotiated sale), and
- Determines the appraisal method that will be used to determine the sale price.

The Preliminary Best Interest Finding (PBIF) is intended to provide sufficient information for reviewers to ensure that the best interest of the State will be served by the proposed action.

After public and agency review of the PBIF, DFFP will review comments, make changes as appropriate, and issue a final best interest finding (BIF). DFFP must adopt a final BIF before selling timber. A person affected by the final decision who provided timely written comment or public hearing testimony on the preliminary decision may appeal it, in accordance with 11 AAC 02.

Step 4: Forest Land Use Plans (AS 38.05.112). Prior to authorizing harvest of timber on any area greater than 10 acres, the DFFP must adopt a site-specific Forest Land Use Plan (FLUP) for the harvest area. DFFP will prepare a FLUP for the harvest area within the overall sale area covered by this best interest finding. FLUPs specify the site, size, timing, and harvest methods for harvest units within the sale area. FLUPs also address site-specific requirements for access construction and maintenance, reforestation, and multiple use management. Draft FLUPs will be based on additional field work, agency and community consultation, and site-specific analyses by the DFFP, and will be subject to public and agency review.

Step 5: Timber sales and contracts. Following adoption of the final best interest finding, and completion of the FLUP, DFFP will offer timber for sale by auctioning competitive sales and/or negotiating some sales with purchasers. The Division will sign a contract with the winning bidder for each sale. The contract will include stipulations to ensure compliance with the best interest finding, FLUP, and statutory requirements.

Step 6: Sale administration. DFFP administers timber sales and conducts field inspections to ensure compliance with the final best interest finding, FLUP, timber sale contract, and applicable laws, including the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act and regulations (AS 41.17 and 11 AAC 95), and forest management statutes and regulations in AS 38.05 and 11 AAC 71.

V. PROJECT LOCATION, LAND STATUS, AND DESCRIPTION

A. Location

The proposed sale area covers state land near milepost 2 of Nash Road in Seward. The legal description of this proposed sale is Township 1 North, Range 1 West, Section 36. The area is on the United State Geological Survey 1:63.360 Quadrangle maps titled Seward A-7.

Sawmill Creek (AWC 231-30-10096) is west of the timber sale area which flows into Resurrection Bay. The area's Alaska Native regional corporation is Cook Inlet Regional Inc. and has adjacent property. Qutekcak Native Tribe is the nearest native group.

The attached map in Appendix A depicts the sale units.

B. Title status

The proposed sale area is owned and managed by the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources. The land is part of State Patent 1221953. There are no known title restrictions.

SCH 5 – ALL PREVIOUS SCHOOL LAND LITIGATION HAS BEEN RESOLVED, AND AS OF 11/7/2017 D.O. 143 HAS BEEN RESCINDED AND NO LONGER APPLIES.

C. Land use planning, classification, and management intent

The proposed sale area is within the Kenai Area Plan (KEAP Unit 450 and Unit 364A). The land use classifications include Settlement and Resource Management – High Value.

-KEAP Unit 450 (Unit 1) management intent includes the following information applicable to the proposed sale area:

- Manage unit consistent with Settlement designation.
- Maintain retention area from trail.
- Forestry riparian standards apply (AS 41.17.115 and AS 41.17.118) for riparian areas adjacent to anadromous and high value resident fish streams.
- DFFP will consult DMLW and ADF&G during agency review of this PBIF and the Draft FLUP.

The unit is relatively flat terrain along tributaries of Sawmill Creek with potential for development. Parts of the unit are prone to flooding from Sawmill Creek.

-KEAP Unit 364A (Unit 2) management intent includes the following information applicable to the proposed sale:

- Manage unit consistent with Resource Management – High Value designation.
- Maintain retention area from trail.
- Forestry riparian standards apply (AS 41.17.115 and AS 41.17.118) for riparian areas adjacent to anadromous and high value resident fish streams.
- DFFP will consult DMLW and ADF&G during agency review of this PBIF and Draft FLUP.

Also, there is evidence of salvage cutting of trees in Sawmill Creek accumulated from the fall 1995 flood. DOTPF materials site # MS-495-396-1 is in this unit.

The Interagency Fire Management Plan designated these lands in the Critical protection category.

No specific forestry/timber harvest requirements are stated in the Kenai Peninsula Borough Comprehensive Plan.

D. Current access and land use:

The sale area is accessed from the north side of Nash Road. Located east of the Sawmill Creek bridge, this access point is also used as a trailhead by the public for recreation. The Kenai Peninsula Borough Seward-Bear Creek Flood Service Area has an active material sale contract to obtain gravel from Sawmill Creek (ADL 233112). A footbridge crosses the unnamed stream. Non-designated campsites are scattered throughout the proposed sale area and multiple abandoned vehicles are along the trail.

E. Background and description of proposal

1. Background: The demand for state timber is significant in Southcentral Alaska with the degree of sawtimber impacted by a spruce beetle outbreak. With limited Forestry classified land on the Kenai Peninsula, there is opportunity to harvest timber that will be economically beneficial to the state by coordinating with DMLW Land Sales Section. A right-of-way permit was issued in 1984 to Division of Forestry for winter access to the “River View” timber sale along the trail segment (ADL 217939). The Nash Road timber sale is intended to make use of state-owned saw timber, improve trail conditions for recreation, and assist in developing land for multiple management objectives.
2. Timber volume and sustained yield: The project area has an estimated volume of 829 MBF on 55 acres of forested land. The annual allowable harvest for timber in the KEAP is 455 acres/year. This sale will be within the Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) for the management area. The AAC is the amount that can be harvested from forest land managed for forestry purposes in a year under sustained yield management. Settlement and Resource Management designations in the KKAP contribute to the AAC determination.
3. Harvest unit design: The sale area will be designed with 50-foot retention areas from the trail, private ownership, and municipal entitlement. Due to flat topography, the harvest will not impact any scenic viewshed. Riparian areas adjacent to the creek will be maintained. Unit perimeters will be uneven to give the sale a mosaic pattern. Snags, cottonwood, western hemlock, and pole sized Sitka spruce (<9” DBH) will also be retained.

- a. Reforestation and site preparation: The sale area will be reforested in compliance with the Forest Resources and Practices regulations (11 AAC 95.375-.390) unless it is converted to another use. DFFP will conduct post-harvest reforestation inspections of all areas of commercial timber harvest to ensure that the stocking level meets or exceeds FRPA reforestation requirements.

Natural regeneration is the preferred regeneration method for this sale, and it is anticipated that adequate stocking levels will be achieved within five years after harvest. Logging operations disturb the vegetative mat, break down residual slash, expose the area to more sunlight which warms the soil, accelerates decomposition and will provide a more receptive seed bed for new growth. Sitka spruce is a moderately shade tolerant species and opening the stand canopy with the proposed harvest method is expected to improve natural regeneration of Sitka spruce.

- b. Access design and construction: Access design, construction, and maintenance will comply with the Forest Resources and Practices regulations (11 AAC 95.285-.355).
 - The proposed access will be an all-season road, beginning at Nash Road and following the existing trail. The installation of a culvert at the stream will provide for fish passage and safe access to the sale area (see map in Appendix A).
 - The access will pass through the ROW easement of Resurrection Bay LLC property's northwest corner (previously known as the Darling property).
 - Temporary spur roads will branch from the all-season road into each unit.
- c. Appraisal method: DFFP will appraise the timber value in compliance with 11 AAC 71.092. The sale will be appraised using similar sales from Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Region I, Kenai-Kodiak area forest inventory data collected by Terra Verde, and field sample plots. The minimum bid required by the state must meet the cost of the administration of the timber sale contract after purchase.

F. Resources and management

1. Timber

- a. Timber stand composition and structure:
The proposed harvest area is Sitka Spruce dominant. The mature spruce component seems to be residual from a past timber harvest in the 1960's and some of this timber has significant visual defects. The immature spruce component, with less defect, will contribute to the local saw log market and provide the focus of the sale volume. Stand composition for each unit will be described in the sale FLUP.

The understory is composed mainly of alder, devil's club, ferns, and mosses.

- b. Stand Silvics:
The stand is composed of primarily Sitka spruce and black cottonwood with western hemlock sparsely present throughout. This stand shows historic evidence of flooding and most likely developed following a shift in the main channel of Sawmill Creek.

The even-age harvest method and the declining mature cottonwood will allow for sunlight to reach the forest floor promoting Sitka spruce regeneration. Other

understory species will benefit from harvest methods and continue to be a component of the stand such as devils club, blueberry, ferns and mosses.

c. Topography and Soils:

The proposed sale will be designed and managed to prevent significant impairment of the land and water with respect to renewable resources (AS 41.17.060(c)(5)).

The timber sale area is situated on relatively flat terrain (0-10% slope) with a slight southwestern aspect with elevations ranging from 50 feet to 150 feet above sea level. Small intermittent drainages are present in the harvest units.

Though alluvial deposits from past flooding and colluvial deposits along the mountain base are present, some areas are covered with a thick accumulation of organic material. The soils are described as very poorly drained, loamy-skeletal textured Cryosaprists, formed from many kinds of plant materials, including wood, moss, grass, and herbaceous materials (NRCS).

2. Agriculture.

There are currently no agricultural uses of the state-owned land in the sale area or adjacent properties.

3. Wildlife habitat and harvest.

Wildlife typical of the Kenai Peninsula are found in the proposed harvest area including moose, black bear, brown bear, grouse, red squirrel, and lynx. No bear dens were identified in the harvest areas during the reconnaissance and timber cruise of either unit. There are no known raptor nests within the proposed area. If an eagle nest tree is discovered in the sale area, it will be marked on the ground, and a 330-foot no-harvest radius will be established to protect the area.

Timber harvest creates forest diversity by creating a successional multispecies stand. The proposed treatments of these stands are expected to enhance habitat conditions for ruffed grouse, moose, and small furbearers, ultimately increasing the food source for predators.

Snags will be retained to provide wildlife habitat for cavity-nesting birds, woodpeckers, small mammals, and other species. The units will be laid out with uneven edges with cottonwood, small diameter spruce, and hemlock also retained throughout the units to provide cover for larger wildlife.

4. Fish Habitat, water resources, and water quality.

The proposed sale will be designed and managed to protect fish habitat and water quality in compliance with the Forest Resources and Practices Act and regulations (AS 41.17 and 11 AAC 95). As required by AS 41.17.098, DFFP provides due deference to ADF&G to ensure all fish and wildlife habitat issues are addressed by the proposed timber sale design. DFFP provides due deference to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) for all water quality issues.

The riparian retention area between the harvest area and Sawmill Creek (AWC 231-30-10096), along with the flat topography, will greatly reduce the likelihood of introducing sediment into the creek.

The stream crossing used to access the proposed harvest areas connects Sawmill Creek to unnamed stream 231-30-10104-2001 (see attached map in Appendix A). This crossing will be inspected by ADF&G for fish habitat prior to culvert installation.

5. Recreation, tourism, and scenic resources.

The existing trail is used for recreation throughout the year. Off-road highway vehicles (OHV's), hiking, biking, cross country skiing, and hunter access are the most common forms of recreation for the area.

Installation of a culvert, along with trail grading and brushing, is expected to have a positive long-term effect on the trail system. For safety reasons, harvest activities may temporarily restrict or modify access routes to the area while harvest operations are ongoing. The restrictions will be short in nature with prior public notice provided and associated signage for safety.

6. Cultural Resources.

DFFP works with the Office of History and Archeology (OHA), who serves as the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to identify and avoid known cultural, historic and archeological sites in planning the proposed access routes and harvest areas. If additional sites are identified, DFFP will immediately inform SHPO and take action to protect the findings. Harvest operations will be appropriately adjusted to avoid conflicts.

The proposed access into the sale area is adjacent to a series of uneven berms, ditches and pits. The features are reported to be historic flood diversion efforts by the residents of Seward (AHRS - SEW-01310).

The trail segment was associated with the Kenai Lumber Company as early as the 1960's and may be a recent trail used to connect to the Forest Service Iditarod commemorative trail system but not historically associated with the Iditarod National Historic Route (AHRS - SEW-01191). The sale area will have a 50-foot retention area from the trail segment.

7. Subsurface Resources. There is no known current mining activity in the proposed sale area.

G. Costs and benefits

In addition to timber revenue generated from stumpage to the State, the proposed sale will create economic benefits to the Kenai Peninsula Borough and to other locations in Alaska. The local business community will receive direct economic benefits from providing support services to the operators through sales of fuel, food, housing, and miscellaneous supplies. This timber sale will have a positive impact on statewide employment by generating work directly associated with the harvest and wood processing of the timber from this sale.

The current market for high value-added forest products includes rough cut lumber and cabin logs. Kiln-dried lumber for construction, flooring, trim, paneling, novelty wood products, cabinetry, and furniture may also be produced from the timber.

VI. PUBLIC REVIEW

The public and agencies are invited to comment on this Preliminary Best Interest Finding. Objections or comments pertaining to the proposed action must be received in writing by the DFFP Kenai-Kodiak Area Office **by 4:00 pm April 27, 2026** in order to ensure consideration for review. Comments should be mailed to the State of Alaska, Division of Forestry & Fire Protection, 42499 Sterling Highway, Soldotna, Alaska 99669 or by email to diane.campbell@alaska.gov. For more information you may contact Diane Campbell, Kenai-Kodiak Area Forester, at diane.campbell@alaska.gov or (907) 260-4210. To be eligible to appeal the final decision, a person must have provided written comments on this Preliminary Best Interest Finding by **4:00 pm April 27, 2026**.

VII. PUBLIC NOTICE

This PBIF is publicly noticed in compliance with AS 38.05.945. Notice was posted on the Alaska Online Public Notice System website <https://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/> and Division of Forestry & Fire Protection's website <https://forestry.alaska.gov/decisiondocs> on **March 27, 2026**. Mailed notices were distributed to Kenai Peninsula Borough post offices and libraries. Notices were also emailed to interested parties on a list maintained by the Kenai-Kodiak Area Office and DFFP.

VIII. RECOMMENDATION AND PRELIMINARY DECISION

After due consideration of all pertinent information, the ADNR has reached the following preliminary decision: To offer for sale approximately 55 acres of Sitka spruce from state owned land to provide saw timber from Settlement and Resource Management classified lands as proposed in this PBIF. DFFP finds that this preliminary decision satisfies the objectives stated in this document and it is in the best interest of the State to proceed with this action under its authority of AS 38.05.035(e) (Powers and Duties of the Director) and AS 38.05.110-120; 11 AAC 71 (Timber Sale Statutes and Regulations); and AS 41.17.010-.950 and 11 AAC 95 (Forest Resources and Practices Statutes and Regulations).

IX. SIGNATURE

Diane Campbell
Diane Campbell, Kenai-Kodiak Area Forester
Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection

3/27/2026
Date

X. APPENDICES

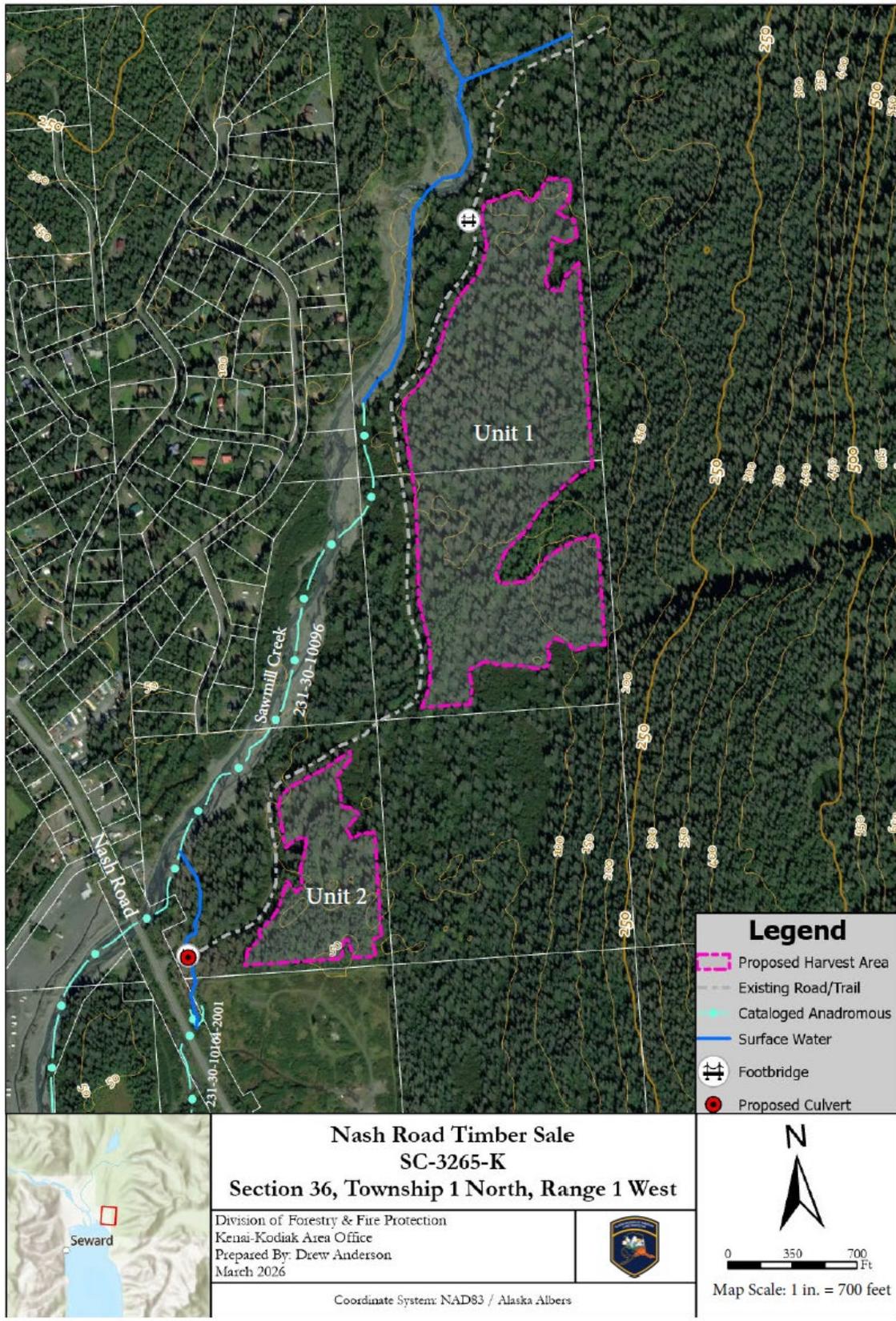
Appendix A SC-3265-K Nash Road Timber Sale Maps

Appendix B References

Appendix C Appeal Regulations (reserved)

Appendix D SC-3265-K Nash Road Timber Sale Comments and Responses (reserved)

Appendix A SC-3265-K Nash Road Timber Sale Maps





Legend

-  Proposed Harvest Area
-  Existing Road/Trail
-  Cataloged Anadromous
-  Surface Water
-  Footbridge
-  Proposed Culvert



Nash Road Timber Sale Access
SC-3265-K
Section 36, Township 1 North, Range 1 West

Division of Forestry & Fire Protection
 Kenai-Kodiak Area Office
 Prepared By: Drew Anderson
 March 2026

Coordinate System: NAD83 / Alaska Albers

N



0 55 100
Ft

Map Scale: 1 in = 100 feet

Appendix B References

Burns, Russell M., and Honkala, Barbara H., 1990. *Silvics of North America, Volume 1. Conifers.* Agriculture Handbook 654. USDA Forest Service, Washington, D.C.

Deal, Robert L., Management strategies to increase stand structural diversity and enhance biodiversity in coastal rainforests of Alaska, *Biological Conservation*, Volume 137, Issue 4, 2007, Pages 520-532.

Harris, Arland S.; Farr, Wilbur A. 1974. The forest ecosystem of southeast Alaska: 7. Forest ecology and timber management. Gen. Tech. Rep. PNW-GTR-025. Portland, OR: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station. 116 p

Ruth, Robert H.; Harris, A.S. 1979. Management of western Hemlock-Sitka spruce forests for timber production. Gen. Tech. Rep. PNW-GTR-088. Portland, OR: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station

Soil Survey Staff. (2015). *Illustrated Guide to Soil Taxonomy, Version 2.* U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Soil Survey Center, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Appendix C Appeal and Request for Reconsideration Regulations (reserved)

Appendix D SC-3265-K Nash Road Timber Sale Comments and Responses (reserved)