

Fact Sheet



Division of Mining, Land & Water
April 2004

Title: Hatcher Pass Public Use Area

In 1986, the Alaska State Legislature created the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area, located approximately fifteen miles north of Palmer on the Little Susitna River. The area is open to a variety of recreational activities, including recreational mining. This fact sheet concentrates on recreational mining within the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area.

The Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation is the primary manager of the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area. The Divisions of Mining, Land & Water also have land and resource management responsibilities, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game is responsible for the management of the fish and game resources within the Hatcher Pass Area.

Where is the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area located?

Approximately two miles north of Palmer, on the Glenn Highway, follow the signs showing a left turn to the Independence Mine Historical Park and Hatcher Pass. After turning off the Glenn Highway onto the Palmer Fishhook Road the public use area begins at approximately mile 7.8 of the Palmer Fishhook Road.

Where can I mine recreationally within the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area?

Anywhere within the boundaries of the Public Use Area except for several valid (active) mining claims. There are many vehicle pull-offs along the road next to the Little Susitna River for easy river access to recreationally mine. We recommend using the Gold Mint Trail, which runs north, along the Little Susitna River from the gravel parking lot at the Gold Mint Trailhead. The trail continues north along the Little Susitna River for approximately eight miles. You may also pan for gold in the Independence Mine State Historical Park. Before panning please obtain an Independence Mine brochure and speak with the park staff at the mine visitors center.

What methods of recreational mining are allowed in the public use area?

Recreational gold panning using light portable field equipment, such as a hand operated pick, shovel, and pan. You may also use a suction dredge with a nozzle intake of six inches or less, powered by an engine of 18 horsepower.

Do I need a permit?

You may. The Little Susitna River has been specified as important for the spawning, rearing, or migration of anadromous fish. You must have a dredging permit from the DNR Office of Habitat Management & Permitting (OHMP) if you wish to use a suction dredge in the Little Susitna River. If you wish to use equipment other than that specified above, you will need a permit from the Division of Mining and/or the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

What facilities are available in or near the public use area?

Except for the Independence Mine Visitor Center, the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area is relatively undeveloped. Privately owned facilities offering food and lodging are within walking distance of the Gold Mint Trailhead. Outhouses are available at the Gold Mint trailhead parking lot and at the Independence Mine Visitor Center.

What other activities are allowed within the public use area?

Recreational activities such as hiking, picnicking, photography, berry picking, camping, skiing, snow machining, and snow boarding are allowed within the Hatcher Pass Public Use Area. Other activities such as fishing, grazing, hunting, and trapping are also allowed.

For additional information on dredging permits for anadromous steams, OHMP at the following address:

Department of Natural Resources
Office of Habitat Management & Permitting
550 W 7th Ave., Suite 1420
Anchorage, AK 99501
Phone: 907-269-8690

For additional information on Hatcher Pass Public Use Area contact:

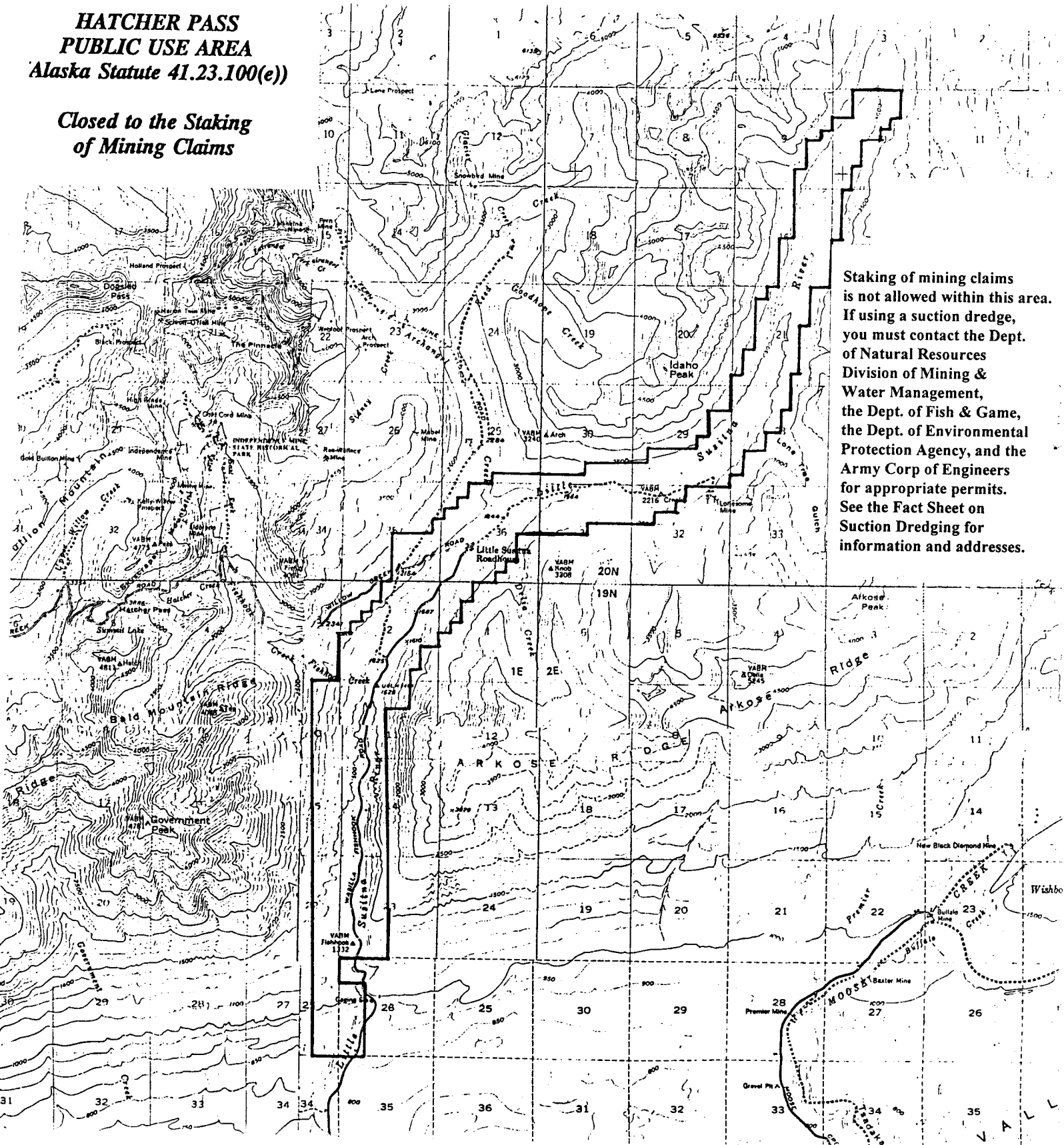
Department of Natural Resources
Public Information Center
550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1260
Anchorage, AK 99501-3557
Phone: 907-269-8400 TDD: 907-269-8411

Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation
Mat-Su/Copper Basin Area Office
Finger Lake State Recreation Area
HC 32 Box 6706
Wasilla, AK 99687
Phone: 907-745-2827

Hatcher Pass Recreational Mining Area

**HATCHER PASS
PUBLIC USE AREA**
Alaska Statute 41.23.100(e)

**Closed to the Staking
of Mining Claims**



Staking of mining claims is not allowed within this area. If using a suction dredge, you must contact the Dept. of Natural Resources Division of Mining & Water Management, the Dept. of Fish & Game, the Dept. of Environmental Protection Agency, and the Army Corp of Engineers for appropriate permits. See the Fact Sheet on Suction Dredging for information and addresses.