



Fiscal Impacts of Federal Land Transfer in Alaska

Final Report

Prepared for
The Nature Conservancy

August 2026

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Abbreviations

ADF&G	Alaska Department of Fish and Game
ADNR	Alaska Department of Natural Resources
AICC	Alaska Interagency Coordination Center
ANC	Alaska Native Corporation
ANCSA	Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act
ANILCA	Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BLM-AFS	Bureau of Land Management – Alaska Fire Service
DFFP	Department of Forest and Fire Protection
DOI	U.S. Department of the Interior
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act
FMAG	Fire Management Assistance Grant
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FSB	Federal Subsistence Board
FWS	Fish and Wildlife Service
FY	Fiscal Year
NEPA	National Environmental Protection Act
NFR	National Federal Receipts
NPR-A	National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska
NPS	National Park Service
PILT	Payment in Lieu of Taxes
PLO	Public Land Order

RAC	Regional Advisory Council
RMP	Resource Management Plan
SOA	State of Alaska
SRS	Secure Rural Schools Program
TAPS	Trans-Alaska Pipeline System
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFS	United States Forest Service
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service

Executive Summary

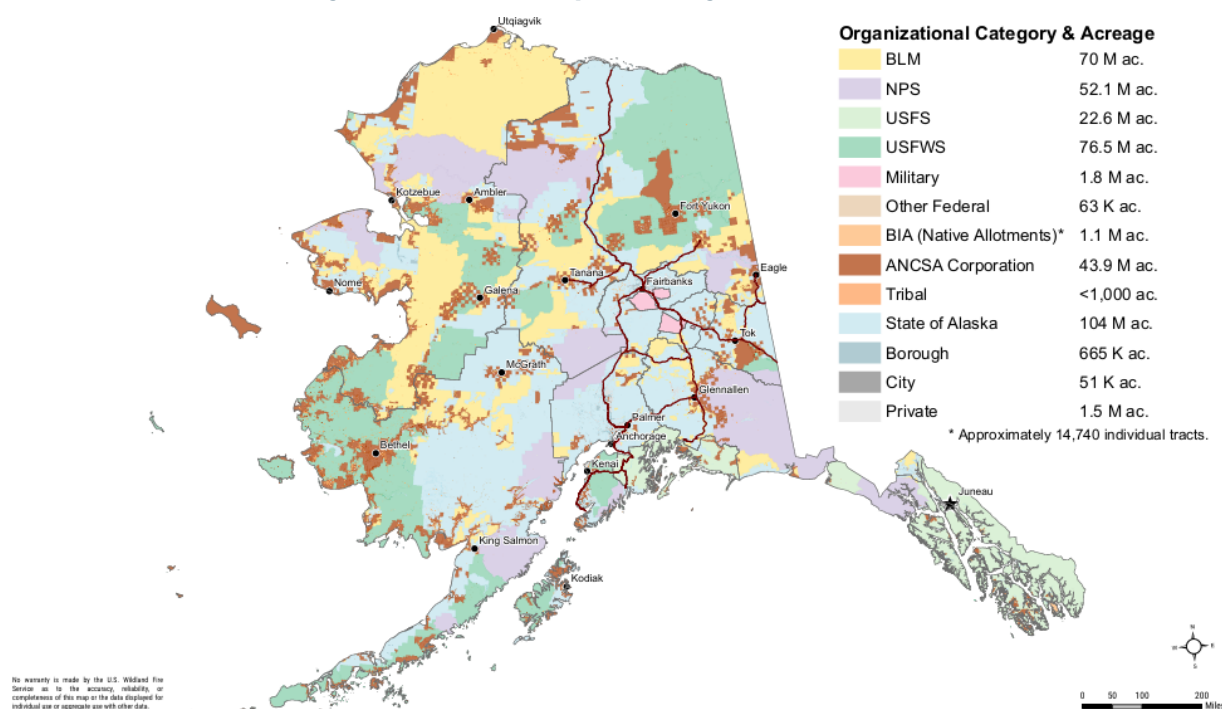
This report examines the fiscal implications for the State of Alaska, of a potential transfer of selected federal lands in Alaska to state ownership and management. The analysis focuses on lands currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and evaluates how such a transfer could affect land management costs, federal payments to state and local governments, subsistence management, and wildfire management responsibilities. The report does not take a position for or against land transfer; rather, it discusses important fiscal impacts if ownership and management were to be considered.

Land Ownership and Management

Alaska's lands are managed by a mix of federal agencies, the State of Alaska, Alaska Native corporations, Tribes, local governments, and private landowners. Each system operates under different laws, policies, and decision-making processes. Federal lands account for the majority of Alaska's land base (about 57%), and BLM and USFS lands represent a large portion of the lands that would be considered for transfer discussions.

- The BLM manages about 70 million acres across the state. Management of these areas is guided by resource management plans (RMPs). Plans are created for areas of public lands that tend to have similar resource characteristics, and they typically contain areas specially designated to focus on public recreation or to conserve a valuable resource. The BLM is also involved in implementing Federal subsistence hunting and fishing regulations and permits in the state, and also has a significant role in wildfire management.
- The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) manages the Chugach National Forest and Tongass National Forest, encompassing about 23 million acres in Southcentral and Southeast Alaska. These forests provide essential wildlife habitat, support recreation, and sustain the traditional ways of life of Alaska Native peoples. Most management actions by the USFS are site-specific and guided by a land management plan, which provides direction of uses within each national forest. The plans describe resource management practices, levels of resource production and management, and the availability and suitability of lands for different kinds of resource management. Like the BLM, the USFS also has subsistence programs and wildfire management responsibilities in the state.

ES Figure 1. Land Ownership and Management Areas in Alaska



Note: This map was generated to show the various land management agencies within the various U.S. Wildland Fire Service, U.S. Forest Service and Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection zones and areas.

Data source: U.S. Department of Interior, Alaska Wildland Fire Services, 2026.

Land Management Costs

Publicly available budget data indicate that federal land management expenditures in Alaska are substantial and vary by agency, management responsibility, and year. **The State of Alaska could face higher management costs if it were expected to assume activities currently funded and performed by federal agencies without continued federal support.** These costs would not be limited to routine land administration; they would include planning, permitting, resource management, subsistence administration, and wildfire preparedness and emergency response. Because publicly available datasets differ across agencies and do not consistently report costs by geography or program, the estimates should be interpreted as high-level indicators rather than direct, apples-to-apples comparisons.

- In FY 2024, BLM Alaska spent an estimated \$139.5 million across approximately 71 million acres, or about \$1.96 per acre. On a per acre basis, the historical land management costs trended upwards, ranging from \$1.27 per acre in FY 2020 to \$1.96 per acre in FY 2024.
- Identifiable Alaska-specific USFS spending totaled about \$24.8 million across approximately 22 million acres, or about \$1.12 per acre, although these figures likely understate total USFS management costs because complete Alaska operating expenditures were not consistently available. The historical estimated costs fluctuated from approximately \$0.83 per acre in FY 2023

to \$1.12 per acre in FY 2024, before declining to \$0.60 per acre in FY 2025 and increasing again to \$0.88 per acre in FY 2026.

- By comparison, selected Alaska Department of Natural Resources land management spending totaled about \$83.4 million across approximately 100 million acres, or about \$0.83 per acre.

Federal Payments

In addition to land management costs, federal payments associated with federal landownership would be an important fiscal consideration in land transfer discussions.

Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) help boroughs and census areas across Alaska offset the presence of nontaxable federal lands and support public services such as firefighting, policing, roads, schools, and search and rescue. These areas have received substantial PILT payments over the period reviewed.

Transfer of federal lands could reduce eligible federal acreage and affect PILT payments across boroughs and census areas.

- \$667 million in nominal PILT payments were distributed to boroughs and census areas in Alaska from 1999 to 2025 (or \$908 million in real 2025 dollars). The annual payments increased from \$8.7 million in 1999 to \$38.9 million in 2025.
- The Mat-Su Borough, Kenai Peninsula Borough, and the Bethel Census Area were the top 3 recipients in FY 2025. The distribution of payments is based on the number of acres of federal entitlement land within each borough/census areas, prior year federal revenue sharing payments, and limits based on population.

National Forest Receipts/Secure Rural Schools Program-related payments are important to Southeast and coastal communities and school districts near the Tongass and Chugach National Forests. The NFR/SRS program money flows from the USDA Forest Service to the State of Alaska, which then distributes funds to eligible school districts and local governments (boroughs) near the Tongass and Chugach National Forests. These entities generally receive NFR/SRS funds under Title I, which is designated for the benefit of public schools and public roads. Payments to school districts are based on student enrollment (using average daily membership); schools receive a proportional share of funds based on their total eligible student count. For local governments, payments are distributed based on eligible road miles maintained (calculated as the proportion of the number of road miles within their municipal boundaries plus the number of state road miles maintained by the municipality under agreement with the state compared to the total number of road miles); communities that are responsible for maintaining a larger share of qualifying roads receive a larger portion of the funding to help offset infrastructure costs associated with nearby tax-exempt federal lands.

- NFR/SRS payments to communities totaled about \$9.1 million in 2024 and \$101.3 million cumulatively from 2013 through 2024, with Valdez, Ketchikan Gateway Borough, and Wrangell among the largest recipients.
- NFR/SRS payments to school districts amounted to \$1.2 million in 2024 and \$13.7 million cumulatively from 2013 and 2024. In 2024, the Annette Island School District received 46% of total payments to school districts; three other school districts received SRS payments.

Subsistence Management

Subsistence management presents both fiscal and policy implications. Federal public lands are governed by ANILCA's rural subsistence priority, while state lands are managed under Alaska law, which does not provide the same rural preference following the McDowell decision.

A transfer of federal lands to the state could therefore change not only which entity bears management costs, but also the regulatory framework governing subsistence access.

- Federal subsistence management costs are estimated at about \$37.5 million per year, or roughly \$0.17 per acre, compared with direct State subsistence management costs of about \$7.6 million, or roughly \$0.054 per acre. If indirect State management costs are included, total costs are estimated to amount to \$29 million per year or about \$0.205 per acre.

Wildfire Management

Wildfire management is another area where fiscal responsibilities could shift materially. Alaska's wildfire system relies on interagency coordination among the Alaska Division of Forestry and Fire Protection, BLM Alaska Fire Service, USFS, and other partners. Wildfires are managed according to designated fire management options that guide suppression actions based on factors such as public safety, resource values, land management objectives, and available resources. This approach allows agencies to allocate firefighting resources where they are most needed across Alaska's vast landscape. Although the agencies work closely together, the Department of Forest and Fire Protection (DFPP), the BLM-Alaska Fire Service, and the USFS are responsible for protecting specific geographic areas.

Fire activity and costs vary widely by year, and suppression expenses can increase sharply during severe fire seasons. In FY 2025, the State of Alaska spent \$177 million on forest management and development, fire preparedness and fire activity in the areas where it has management and fiscal responsibilities.

If federal lands were transferred, the state would assume additional preparedness, mitigation, suppression, and coordination responsibilities and costs unless federal wildfire support and cost-sharing arrangements continued.

Conclusions

Overall, the analysis suggests that land transfer would involve more than a change in ownership. It could shift recurring management costs, reduce or reallocate federal payments to local governments, affect subsistence priorities and administration, and alter wildfire management obligations.

The magnitude of these impacts would depend on which lands were transferred, whether federal funding or cooperative agreements continued, how the state chose to manage transferred lands, and how local governments and affected communities were treated under any implementing legislation. The land management activities for a given area can be driven by a host of factors, but state lands are by default general, multiple-use lands, while federal lands can have more limited or active management.

The BLM and USFS have significant landholdings in Alaska and their fiscal contributions to managing the resources on their lands, including subsistence and forest resources (for wildfire management) are also substantial. If land transfers were to occur, these costs and responsibilities would be incurred by the State of Alaska. Furthermore, federal payments to local and regional governments would decline if federal acreage declined within their jurisdictions.

1 Introduction

There have been recent efforts by the current administration and proposals by lawmakers in certain states for state governments to take over ownership and management of federal lands. Proponents have cited the need for more land to build housing and allow for more economic development. Opponents have argued this is intended to privatize public lands and limit public access.

The Alaska Constitution's Article VIII mandates that natural resources be developed for the maximum benefit of Alaskans. This directive influences state land decisions. However, the federal agencies managing federal lands operate under different statutory directives. A common theme among industry groups and the current Governor in Alaska is that federal ownership of a majority of Alaska's land inhibits economic development. Advocates of federal public land sale or transfer often argue that the state government would be better stewards and owners of the land since any activity within their lands directly impacts its residents and that these lands should be managed for the benefit of its residents. Public lands advocates often argue that the sale or transfer of federal public lands would be irreversible, would end public access including hunting and fishing, and would cost states significant amounts in management costs.

This report is not intended to make the case for a land transfer or otherwise. This report examines the fiscal implications and potential changes in management of public lands in Alaska if there were to be a transfer of ownership from federal agencies to the State of Alaska. This report is intended to be a resource that provides data and analysis regarding fiscal implications to the State of potential land transfers. This study was requested by The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Similar studies were conducted in Idaho and Arizona.

1.1 Scope of Work

The main objectives of this study are to provide a high-level estimate of the change in land management costs if federal lands were transferred to the State of Alaska (SOA) and to identify and assess specific federal programs and areas of land management that merit attention due to their economic impact and fiscal repercussions. This study included three case studies of key programs where shifting federal lands to state ownership could result in significant financial implications: 1) Federal Payments to the state and local governments which include Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) and National Forest Receipts which fund Secure Rural Programs; 2) Wildfire Management; and 3) Subsistence Management.

This study focused only on lands owned and managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the US Forest Service (USFS). Federal lands under the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the National Park Service (NPS), and the Department of Defense are less likely to be considered part of any near-term land transfer efforts.

1.2 Approach

Research and analysis for this study involved the following specific tasks:

Task 1: Review of land ownership and management plans

The first task was to look at land ownership in Alaska and review the different land management plans and programs that are currently in place and being implemented by state and federal agencies. This research provides information on how the different agencies currently manage lands in different parts of the state and what activities they undertake to manage these lands.

Key management activities and programs under each management agency by geographic area were summarized in a matrix that includes agency (federal, state), management areas (acreage), geographic location, resources being managed, and key management activities and programs.

Task 2: Conduct interviews with federal and state agency staff

This task involved reaching out by e-mail and making follow-up calls to contacts in the different state and federal agencies to get their insights into how management regimes might change with transfer of ownership and what management responsibilities might be recognized or maintained by the State of Alaska. Efforts were focused on contacting the following agencies and offices:

- State of Alaska, Alaska Department of Natural Resources (Office of the Commissioner; Division of Forestry and Fire Protection; Division of Mining, Land and Water)
- State of Alaska, Office of Management and Budget (Office of the Director; Policy Advisors for Natural Resources, Environmental Conservation, Revenue Analysis, and Environmental Conservation)
- US Forest Service (Alaska Regional Office: Offices of the Forest Supervisor, Regional Forester, and Public Affairs Department).
- Bureau of Land Management (Alaska State Office: Offices of the State Director, Associate State Director; Departments of Communications, Resources, Lands and Cadastral Survey, Support Services, Fire and Aviation).

Task 3: Collect data on land management costs

Data were compiled from publicly available federal and state agency operating budgets, the Office of Management and Budget, agencies, and other published documents including budget justification documents. While the intent was to develop a high-level estimate of land management costs for each agency, efforts under this task also involved tracking more detailed information to determine if there was a way to provide land management costs on a per acre basis by specific geographic areas or regions in Alaska.

Task 4: Examine three key programs where transferring federal lands to state ownership could result in significant fiscal impacts

This task involved conducting research on the following:

1. Payments received by the state and local governments from federal programs. Data on historical Payment-in-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILT) and National Forest Receipts/Secure Rural Schools Program were collected and summarized to show which boroughs would be most impacted and how much boroughs and school districts might lose in funding if these payments were lost.
2. Wildfire Management. Data on state and federal agency budgets on wildfire management costs were collected to determine how much the federal government currently contributes to wildfire mitigation and response in Alaska, and what it could cost the state to provide wildfire mitigation and response on the areas managed by the federal agencies.
3. Subsistence Management. Efforts involved reviewing information on the existing dual management system in Alaska and identifying the management responsibilities of the entities involved. The analysis involved determining if and how responsibilities, costs and subsistence access would change given a change in landownership.

1.3 Organization of Report

The rest of this report is organized into the following major sections:

Land Ownership and Management Activities: This section presents an overview of land ownership in Alaska and summarizes key land management activities and programs of the BLM, the USFS, and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR).

Land Management Costs in Alaska: This section presents agency budget information, evaluates opportunities to disaggregate costs geographically, develops management cost-per-acre estimates, and assesses the potential scale of federal management funding that could be affected if federal lands were transferred to the State of Alaska.

Fiscal Impacts of Selected Federal Programs: This section examines three important land management topics in Alaska that could have significant fiscal repercussions given a change in land ownership from the federal agencies to the State of Alaska: i) current federal receipts from payments-in lieu of taxes and national forest receipts/Secure Rural Schools program; ii) subsistence management; and iii) wildfire management.

2 Land Ownership and Management Activities

2.1 Overview of Land Ownership in Alaska

Land ownership in Alaska has evolved through several major events, beginning with the arrival of Russian traders in the mid-1700s, when they established small trading posts and settlements. Before and during Russian occupation, Alaska Natives were the primary landholders. In 1867, the United States purchased Alaska from Russia, and the federal government became the owner of the Alaska Territory. When Alaska became a state in 1959, the federal government conveyed 28 percent of the state's total area, or approximately 105.8 million acres, to the new State of Alaska. In 1971, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) granted 44 million acres and \$1 billion to village and Native corporations established under the Act; these selections were given priority over state land selections (ADNR, 2021). Land transfers and exchanges continue today. The most recent example is the transfer of 1.4 million acres of federal land in the Dalton Utility Corridor to the State of Alaska. This corridor is a critical strip of land that contains the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) and the Dalton Highway (BLM, 2026). Approximately 3.8 million acres still remain to be conveyed and patented to the State of Alaska under its entitlement. The BLM is working with the State of Alaska on prioritizing and resolving the complex top-filed land selections for the remaining entitlement. Many selected lands are "top filed" on currently unavailable lands¹(BLM, 2026). These lands are outside the scope of this analysis.

Today, the federal government still owns majority of the lands in Alaska. Federal land is largely managed by four principal agencies: the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the National Park Service (NPS), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The BLM manages the largest share of federal acreage in Alaska. The Department of Defense also owns some lands in the state.

State land is primarily managed through the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR). Within ADNR, there is also a special unit attached, the Trust Land Office, which is specifically responsible for managing 1 million acres of land owned by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority².

The Alaska Native Corporations (ANC) own most of the private lands in Alaska (about 68% of privately owned lands and 12% of total Alaska acreage). As noted above, ANCs were initially granted 44 million acres through ANCSA; to date ANCs own 45.5 million acres (ADF&G, 2026). These

¹ This was an option provided to the State of Alaska in ANILCA. These lands may be unavailable due to a withdrawal, selected but not yet conveyed under ANSCA or the Native Allotment Act, or some other land status which could change in the future.

² In 1956, Congress passed the Alaska Mental Health Enabling Act, entitling the Territory of Alaska to select one million acres of federal land to be used for revenue generation to support mental health services after Alaska became a state. Revenue-generating uses of Trust land include land leasing and sales; real estate investment and development; commercial timber sales; mineral exploration and production; coal, oil and gas exploration and development; sand, gravel and rock sales and other general land uses (Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, 2026).

corporations manage land for profit and reinvest their earnings in housing, infrastructure, and community development projects to benefit their shareholders. Tribal lands are distinct from Alaska Native Corporation lands. Tribal lands are typically reservations or land parcels placed into trust by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Governance of these lands are under tribal government authority (CRS, 2021).

Table 1 shows landownership in Alaska. Note that land ownership acreage cited throughout this report varies depending on source of information and date of publication. The data shown in Table 1 are from a web-based tool used by the BLM and USFS for research. Acreage data were calculated using the U.S. Geological Survey's Protected Areas Database (published in 2024) and the Census Bureau's TIGER/Line County Boundaries.

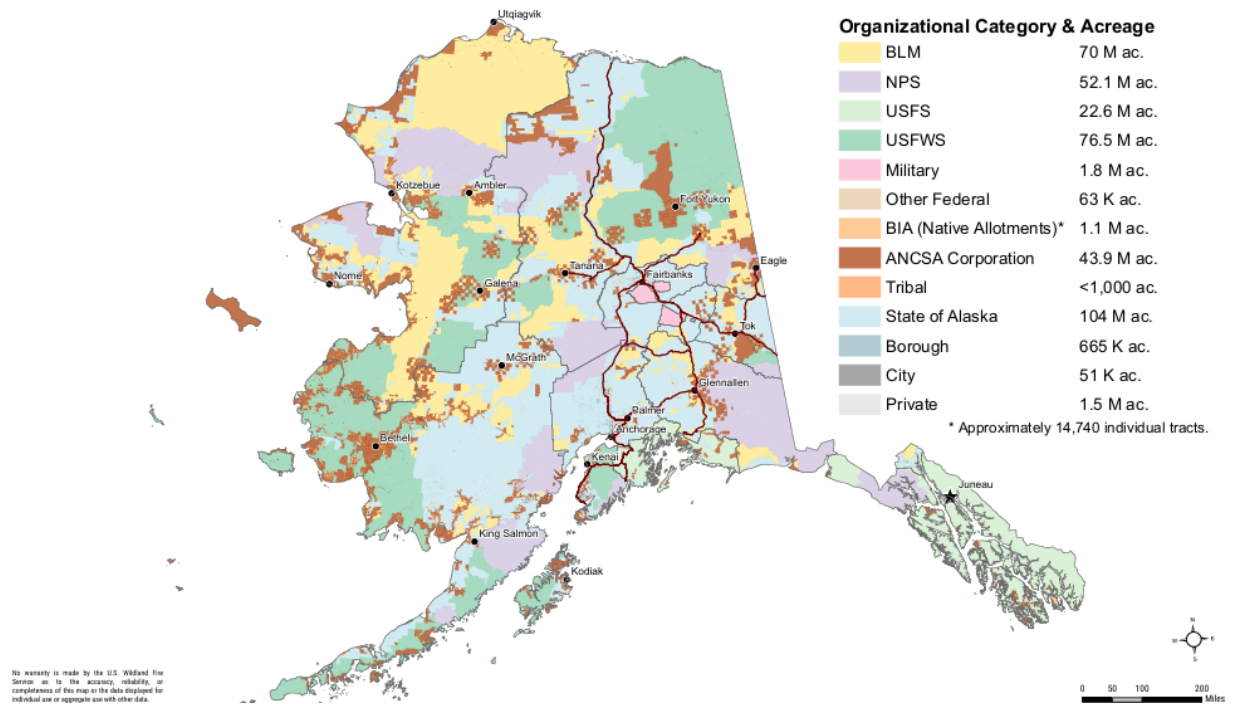
Figure 1 shows the land management entities and jurisdictions across the state. The map and associated acreage shown on the map were generated by the U.S. Department of Interior, Alaska Wildland Fire Services (published in May of 2026) to show wildfire management jurisdictions which are based on land ownership.

Table 1. Land Ownership in Alaska

Description	Total Acreage (millions)	Share of Total Acreage
Privately Owned Lands	66.79	17.8%
Alaska Native Corporation	45.50	12.1%
Federally Owned Lands	214.91	57.2%
U.S. Forest Service	21.72	5.8%
Bureau of Land Management	68.60	18.3%
National Park Service	50.81	13.5%
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	72.98	19.4%
Military	0.75	0.2%
State Owned Lands	89.80	23.9%
Tribally Owned Lands	4.23	1.1%
City, County, Other	0.01	0.0%
Total	375.75	100.0%

Note: Acreage does not include water.

Data source: Headwaters Economics, 2026. Economic Profile System developed in collaboration with BLM and USFS. Alaska Native Corporation acreage

Figure 1. Map of Land Ownership across Alaska

Note: This map was generated to show the various land management agencies within the various U.S. Wildland Fire Service, U.S. Forest Service and Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection zones and areas.

Data source: U.S. Department of Interior, Alaska Wildland Fire Services, 2026.

As noted earlier, this study is focused on lands owned and managed by the BLM and the USFS. The following sections describe the land management activities within their jurisdictions.

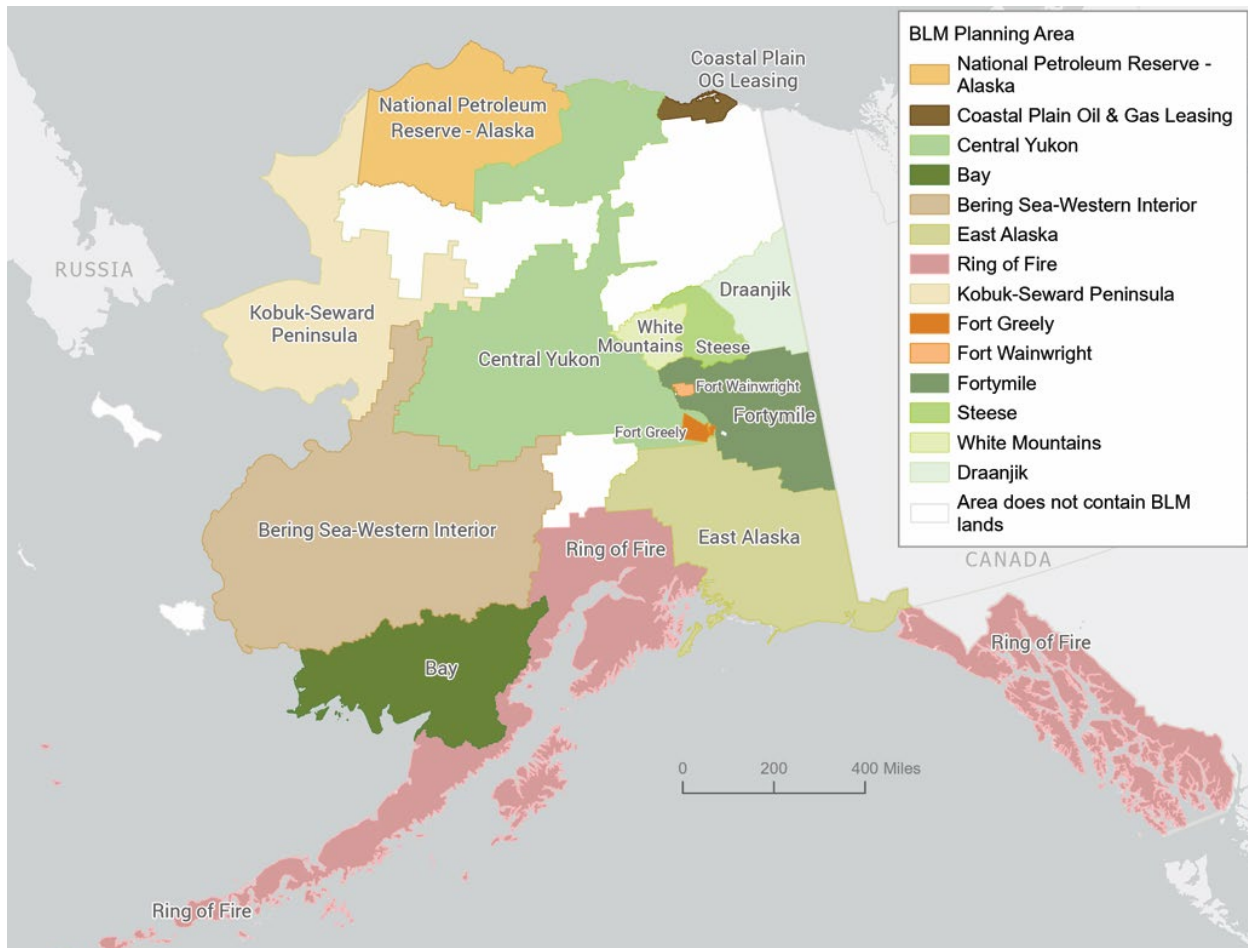
2.2 Bureau of Land Management

The BLM manages about 70 million surface acres and 220 million subsurface acres (federal mineral estate) in Alaska, including various national conservation land units, a national recreational area (White Mountains), 22 million acres of surface (and subsurface) estate plus the subsurface mineral rights to an additional 650,000 acres in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A) (BLM, 2026). Alaska has the highest BLM-managed surface acreage nationwide (71 million), accounting for 29 percent of the total BLM-managed surface acreage in the country (244 million acres) (BLM, 2026).

Figure 2 shows the BLM planning areas across the state, which encompass most parts of the state, except for a few areas (shown in white) that are mostly USFWS, NPS, and State of Alaska lands. These planning area boundaries contain BLM owned or administered lands. For example, the exterior boundary of the Ring of Fire planning area encompasses about 61 million acres and within this boundary, 1.3 million acres are under BLM's jurisdiction or management (2% of the planning area boundary). Similarly, the East Alaska planning area encompasses 30.9 million acres and 7.1 million acres within this area are BLM-administered lands. BLM-administered lands include BLM public

lands (lands most likely to be retained in long-term Federal ownership, 5% of planning area), lands that have been selected by the State (10% of planning area) or by Native corporations or villages (1% of planning area), and lands that are dual-selected (selected by both the State and by the Native corporations, 7% of planning area). In addition, the BLM administers 12,874 acres of subsurface mineral estate beneath the private surface within the planning area (BLM, 2026).

Figure 2. Bureau of Land Management Planning Areas in Alaska



Data source: BLM, 2026.

BLM performs land-use planning, issues permits and rights-of-way, authorizes grazing, supports both recreation and conservation programs, oversees timber and fuel projects, and administers energy and mining activity. The BLM develops resource management plans (RMPs) for each management area in Alaska. These plans serve as a blueprint for management and also provide information on the different management programs – energy and minerals, planning and NEPA, land and realty, recreation and visitor services, etc. Plans are created for areas of public lands that tend to have similar resource characteristics, and they typically contain areas specially designated to focus on public recreation or to conserve a valuable resource. The BLM is also involved in implementing

Federal subsistence hunting and fishing regulations and permits, as well as fire management. These are described in more detail in Section 4.2 and 4.3 of this report.

It should be noted that the NPR-A is distinctive and unlike most BLM management areas in the state – and in the country, for that matter. The NPR-A contains vast petroleum resources and was formerly established as the Naval Petroleum Reserve No. 4, set aside as an emergency oil supply for the U.S. Navy. Unlike other management areas, the BLM conducts planning within the NPR-A with an Integrated Activity Plan, mandated under the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act of 1976. The area also has ecological and cultural importance; covering approximately 23.6 million acres, it is the largest tract of undisturbed public land in the country. Management of the NPR-A has been complex and contentious at times as conservationists and Indigenous groups have raised concerns about the ecological and cultural impacts of petroleum development. Furthermore, legal challenges and changes in federal leasing policies or plans have contributed to additional planning requirements and longer NEPA review processes, which has increased the time and resources required for management of the area.

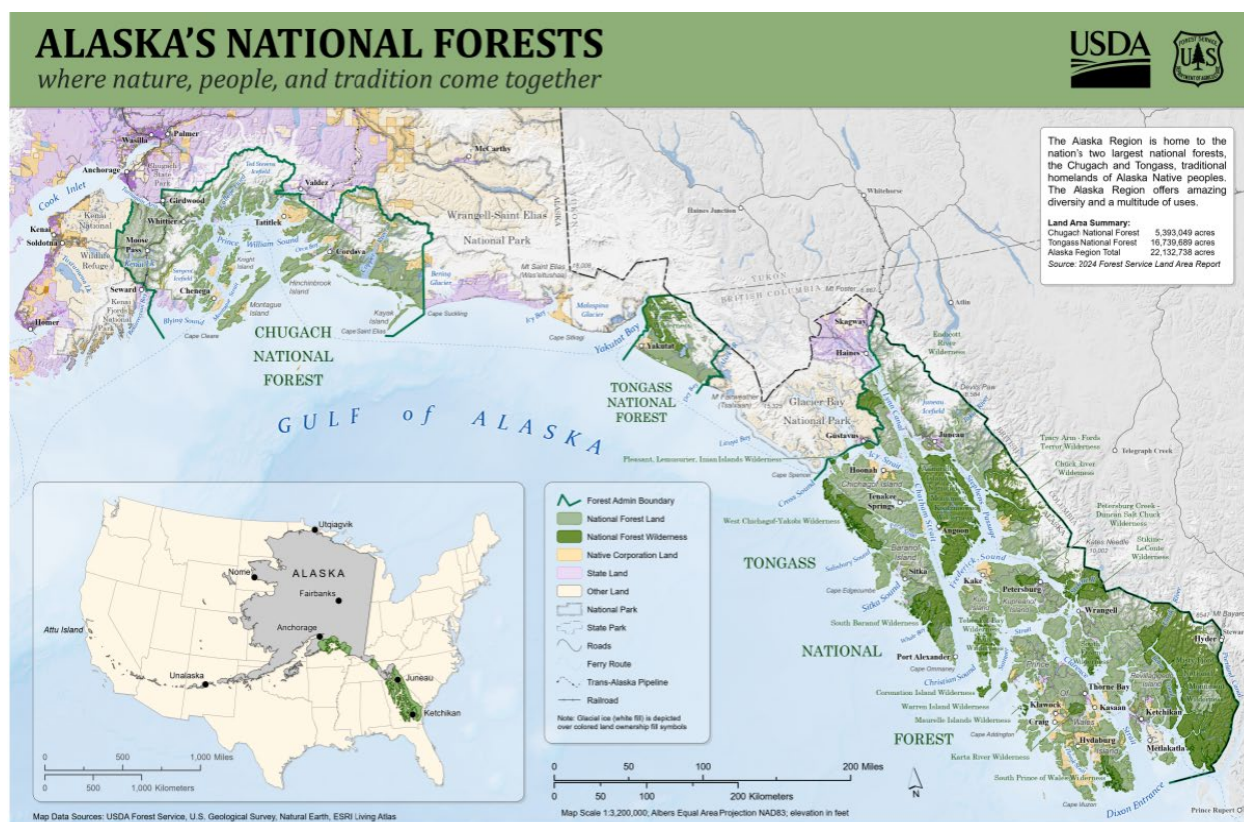
All the other BLM planning areas are managed under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) whereby management is guided by the RMPs. FLPMA requires BLM to prepare land-use plans (RMPs) that set allowable uses, conservation measures, and priorities for an area. Individual project decisions (permits, leases, mine approvals) must conform to these plans. Separate mining statutes control the right to explore and develop particular mineral types. For locatable hardrock minerals, the General Mining Law of 1872 remains relevant; for leasable minerals (coal, oil and gas, trona, uintaite, and some uranium) and saleable minerals (sand, gravel), other statutes and regulations apply.

Information from the RMPs guiding BLM management in Alaska is summarized in Attachment A. This summary is presented in matrix form and contains the acreage, municipal jurisdiction (Borough and Census Area and House/Senate district area), resources being managed, key management activities, and list of recent activities for each management area. The BLM management areas included are: 1) Bay, 2) Bering Sea Western-Interior, 3) East Alaska, 4) Kobuk-Seward Peninsula, 5) the Ring of Fire, and 6) the Central Yukon.

2.3 U.S. Forest Service

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) in Alaska manages the two largest national forests in the country - the Chugach National Forest and Tongass National Forest, encompassing approximately 23 million acres in Southcentral and Southeast Alaska, respectively (see Figure 3). These National Forests provide essential wildlife habitat, support recreation, and sustain the traditional ways of life of Alaska Native peoples.

Figure 3. National Forest Areas Managed by the U.S. Forest Service in Alaska



Data source: USFS, 2026.

The Chugach National Forest covers approximately 6 million acres of large, intact ecosystems across coastal and inland landscapes. The communities within the area include Whittier, Hope, Cooper Landing, Moose Pass, Tatitlek, Chenega Bay, and Eyak. The Chugach National Forest is also adjacent to major population centers including Anchorage, Seward, Girdwood, Valdez, Sterling, Kenai, and Soldotna. Nearly all of the forest (99%) is managed as Wilderness Areas, with the intent to allow natural ecological processes to continue with limited human influence. The remaining area, primarily on the Kenai Peninsula, includes the forest's most concentrated level of active management and human use. USFS issues approximately 250 permits annually for activities such as guided summer and winter recreation, fishing, hunting, flightseeing, boat charters, rafting, kayaking, and wildlife viewing. The Chugach National Forest hosts more than half a million visitors each year (USDA, 2026).

The Tongass National Forest is in Southeast Alaska and covers about 17 million acres with nearly 11,000 miles of shoreline. Federal lands make up about 95 percent of Southeast Alaska as a whole, with about 80 percent of this region's land within the Tongass National Forest. A large portion of the remaining acreage is in Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, and the rest is held by the State, Alaska Native entities, local communities, and private owners. Most of the Tongass remain undeveloped and sparsely populated; only Haines, Skagway, and Hyder are connected to the mainland road system. Other communities within and around the Tongass National Forest include

Yakutat, Port Alexander, Hoonah, Sitka, Kake, Angoon, Craig, Hydaburg, Ketchikan, Petersburg, Wrangell, and Juneau (see Figure 3). About 35% of the total Tongass National Forest area is designated as wilderness³. There are two national monuments (the Misty Fjords and Admiralty Island), 13 campgrounds, 19 wilderness areas, 142 reserve-able cabins, and 450 miles of hiking trails within the Tongass National Forest. (USDA, 2022).

These national forests are managed under the principles of sustainable multiple-use management. The goal is to balance ecological health with recreational and economic needs in typically a vast and remote area. The USFS sells timber annually to fund wildlife habitat improvements, wildfire risk reduction, and provide commercial timber for lumber, paper, and firewood production (GAO report, 2024). In FY 2025, timber sales in the Tongass and Chugach National Forests amounted to about \$84,600. Besides timber sales, national forest receipts in Alaska include amounts collected from sale of minerals, permit fees, recreation user fees, and payments for land and recreation uses. A portion of these receipts are distributed to communities and school districts (via the Secure Rural School program) to maintain local roads and schools (see Section 4.1.2).

Most management actions by the USFS are site-specific and guided by a land management plan, which provides direction of uses within each national forest unit. The plans describe resource management practices, levels of resource production and management, and the availability and suitability of lands for different kinds of resource management. In areas with mineral resources, USFS generally has limited discretion and authority over surface use for developmental activities associated with outstanding mineral rights. The agency recognizes that there are mineral reservations and outstanding mineral rights, and that the mineral owner may decide to exercise their mineral right, but any action is subject to applicable federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to mining, real property, and environmental protection (USFS, 2026). This is also consistent with BLM management of mineral estate whereby mineral access is possible and allowed but conditioned on planning, environmental review, and post-operation reclamation.

Information from the Tongass National Forest and the Chugach National forest plans is summarized in Attachment B.

2.4 State of Alaska

The State of Alaska owns and manages approximately 104 million acres of land. The Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) is the primary state agency responsible for managing state-owned lands, and its decisions operate within a layered framework of federal statutes, state constitutional mandates, and Native land rights. Within the ADNR, the Division of Mining, Land, and

³ Areas designated by congressional action under the 1964 Wilderness Act or subsequent Acts. Wilderness is defined as undeveloped federal land retaining its primeval character and influence without permanent improvements or human habitation. Wilderness areas are protected and managed to preserve their natural conditions.

Water manages all state-owned land except for trust property and units of the Alaska State Park system. Attached to the ADNR is a special unit, the Trust Land Office, which specifically manages 1 million acres of land owned by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation manages Alaska's state park system which encompasses 123 sites including state parks, state marine parks, state recreation sites, state recreation areas, state historical parks, state historical sites, state trails, and wilderness parks (ADCCED, 2026).

In addition to the ADNR, other departments with prominent roles in managing the lands, waters, and resources of Alaska include the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (habitat management), the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, and to some extent the Department of Transportation. The University of Alaska also owns and manages approximately 183,000 acres of land for investment and educational purposes.

While the State does have to comply with certain federal statutes, the State of Alaska overall manages lands under different laws, regulations, and processes than those of the BLM and the USFS. The State develops land use and management plans for different planning areas across the state. It is the policy of the State of Alaska "...to establish a balanced combination of land available for both public and private purposes. The choice of land best suited for public and private use shall be determined through the inventory, planning, and classification processes..." Land use plans provide the basis for management of state-owned lands, state-selected and top-filed lands, and affects all authorizations issued by ADNR.

A planning area is further separated into smaller geographic units called management units (areas with similar characteristics and management direction). A management plan for each unit establishes goals, objectives, management guidelines, and land classifications with management intent that apply to all state lands. The plan establishes policy for ADNR to manage principles of multiple use and sustained yield on all public domain lands. The plans establish guidelines that allow various uses to occur and minimize conflict. The State also develops site-specific plans. These are land use plans that establish goals, policies, management intent, and guidelines for the use of state land in areas that are outside of the boundaries of existing area plans. These site-specific plans are used in areas that generally have a small amount of state-owned land, have historically seen little to no use, or under certain contexts, may be associated with authorizations or disposals.

All activities on state land must be conducted in a responsible manner that will minimize or prevent disturbance to land and water resources. 11 AAC 96.020 set out a list of generally allowed uses that can occur on public domain land without a permit from the division. At times there are special uses that warrant the division to require a permit for what would otherwise be generally allowed on public domain land. The designation of "special use lands" is for the protection of scenic, historic, archeological, scientific, biological, recreational, or other special resource values warranting additional protections or other special requirements (ADNR, 2021).

3 Land Management Costs

3.1 Summary and Comparison of Land Management Costs by Agency

This section presents information on land management costs in Alaska obtained from publicly available budget and expenditure data for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service. Information on Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) spending is also presented for comparison.

The budget and expenditure data provide a high-level indication of the scale of federal management funding currently supporting public lands in Alaska. The amount of federal spending on land management provides general estimates of the cost that might have to be incurred by the State of Alaska for management of the BLM or USFS lands in the event of a land transfer.

Table 2 shows estimated land management cost data available for the BLM, USFS, and the ADNR for FY 2024. This is the latest year with publicly available data for all agencies.

BLM Alaska region spent \$139.5 million for agency operations across 71.1 million acres in FY 2024, equivalent to \$1.96 per acre. In comparison, the USFS had an estimated \$24.8 million in identifiable Alaska-specific spending across 22.2 million acres, equivalent to an estimated cost of \$1.12 per acre.

The ADNR managed a larger land base (100.5 million acres) with lower estimated spending (\$83.4 million) and a cost of approximately \$0.83 per acre. Differences in cost per acre reflect variation in agency responsibilities, land management priorities, and types of land being managed. As described in the previous section, land management activities in Alaska vary by ownership and vary year to year, even within an agency.

Table 2. Land Management Spending and Costs per Acre by Agency, FY 2024

Agency	Estimated Spending (Millions of \$)	Land Area (Millions of Acres)	Cost per Acre (\$)
Bureau of Land Management	\$139.5	71.1	\$1.96
U.S. Forest Service	\$24.8	22.2	\$1.12
State of Alaska (Department of Natural Resources)	\$83.4	100.5	\$0.83

Note: Values represent estimated land management costs (statewide) for each agency which has varying management activities and responsibilities. Cost per acre estimates were calculated using agency spending divided by managed acreage. DNR and BLM estimates reflect reported statewide expenditures, while USFS estimates reflect spending on identifiable Alaska-specific activities from budget documents.

Data source: "The BLM: A Sound Investment for America, FY 2024; USDA (USFS) Congressional Budget Justification Reports for FY 2024; State of Alaska, Office of Management and Budget FY 2024.

BLM's comparatively higher cost per acre likely reflects the agency's broader federal management responsibilities, including oil and gas oversight, mineral leasing, land-use planning, recreation management, and other resource management activities on public lands. ADNR's lower estimated

cost per acre (\$0.83) reflects both its larger acreage base (100.5 million) and differences in management priorities and activities. Land management activities for a given area can be driven by different factors, but State lands are by default, general, multiple use lands while federal lands can have more active management. It should also be noted that many remote areas of Alaska see little active management and the costs associated with management are limited.

These figures suggest that the State of Alaska could assume higher land-management costs if federal lands were transferred without continued federal financial support. However, these estimates should be interpreted cautiously. BLM and USFS expenditures reflect publicly available agency spending and identifiable Alaska-specific expenditures rather than the full cost of federal land management activities.

BLM expenditures were available at the Alaska state office level (for agency operations), allowing for statewide estimates but without details regarding cost per planning area (or per regional jurisdiction) or type of activity). USFS data provides geographic specificity through project-level expenditures for the Tongass and Chugach National Forests, including deferred maintenance, fisheries monitoring, and subsistence management programs. However, complete regional operating expenditures for Alaska were not consistently identifiable.

Historical data on land management costs shows that there is significant variation in costs per year and per agency. However, publicly available cost data are not broken out by geographic region and not all of the agency data have adequate specificity on spending by program or type of activity⁴. The data therefore do not provide enough detail to provide an apples-to-apples comparison of costs per acre for a specific geographic region or program type/activity.

The subsections below present historical data on land management costs by agency.

3.2 BLM Land Management Costs

Land management costs for BLM Alaska were obtained from annual reports published by the BLM entitled “The BLM: A Sound Investment for America”. The reports contain direct BLM expenditures for each fiscal year. The values represent total statewide BLM expenditures in Alaska.

BLM agency operations data includes spending on employees’ wages and salaries, purchases of supplies and services, construction costs, and other program spending to complete on-the-ground work. However, some nonlabor spending categories, such as fire suppression and all hazard emergency response, were excluded due to differences in the location/year in which accounting and spending occur.

⁴ The study team requested cost/budget data from the BLM and the USFS Alaska region staff. The BLM did not provide any data. USFS indicated that the request would need to go through a FOIA request.

Activities on BLM lands in Alaska heavily involved leasing, exploration, and development of oil and gas, nonenergy saleable mineral materials, such as sand, gravel, and soil, and locatable minerals (e.g., copper, gold).

As shown in Table 3 and in Figure 4, BLM spending on land management costs in Alaska increased from about \$91 million in FY 2020 to \$140 million in FY 2024. On a per acre basis, land management costs trended upwards ranging from \$1.27 per acre in FY 2020 to \$1.96 per acre in FY 2024; an increase of roughly 54 percent over the time period shown. In the past few years, funding on programs such as the Alaska Subsistence Program, Cultural Resources Program, the Alaska Conveyance Program, and the Oil and Gas Management Program which includes remediation efforts for Alaska legacy wells. More recently operational funding has increased for activities that include monitoring habitat and population conditions, modernizing field communications, and developing and implementing updates to the regulations regarding oil and gas waste prevention and the leasing processes in the Alaska North Slope, particularly the oil and gas leasing program in the NPR-A and the Coastal Plain (BLM, 2025).

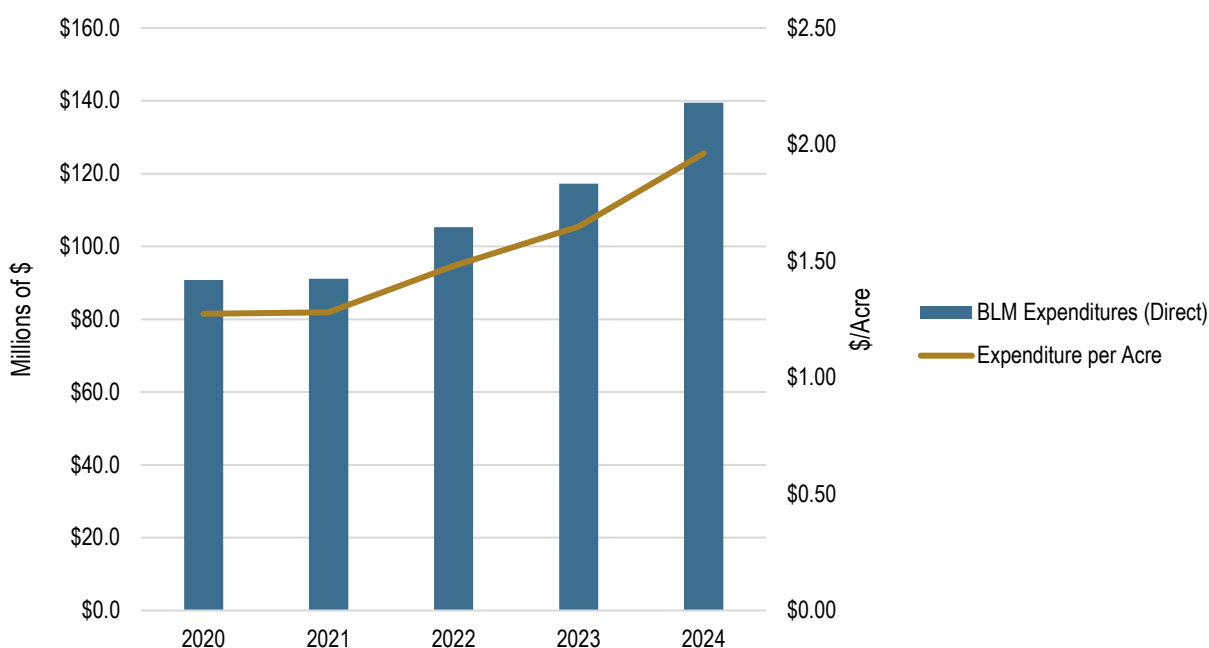
Table 3. Historical BLM Spending, Land Area, and Estimated Land Management Costs per Acre

Fiscal Year	Spending (Millions of \$)	Land Area (Millions of Acres)	Cost per Acre (\$)
2020	\$90.8	71.29	\$1.27
2021	\$91.1	71.15	\$1.28
2022	\$105.3	71.18	\$1.48
2023	\$117.2	71.12	\$1.65
2024	\$139.5	71.11	\$1.96

Note: Cost per acre was calculated by dividing total spending by land area.

Data source: Spending data are from "The BLM: A Sound Investment for America Annual Reports" for fiscal years 2020 to 2024; Land area data are from BLM Public Land Statistics.

Figure 4. Historical Trends: BLM Expenditures in Alaska



Note: Cost per acre was calculated by dividing total spending by land area.

Data source: Spending data are from "The BLM: A Sound Investment for America Annual Reports" for fiscal years 2020 to 2024; Land area data are from BLM Public Land Statistics.

3.3 US Forest Service Land Management Costs

USFS Alaska operating costs were difficult to estimate because the spending and budget documents are mostly reported at the national level and do not consistently show total Alaska spending. This study explored various approaches to estimating USFS spending in managing lands in Alaska, which includes the Chugach National Forest and the Tongass National Forest. Attempts were made to request budget information from the Alaska USFS Region staff. USFS staff responded to budget information requests by directing the study team to the FOIA process, which was prohibitive for the scope of this analysis.

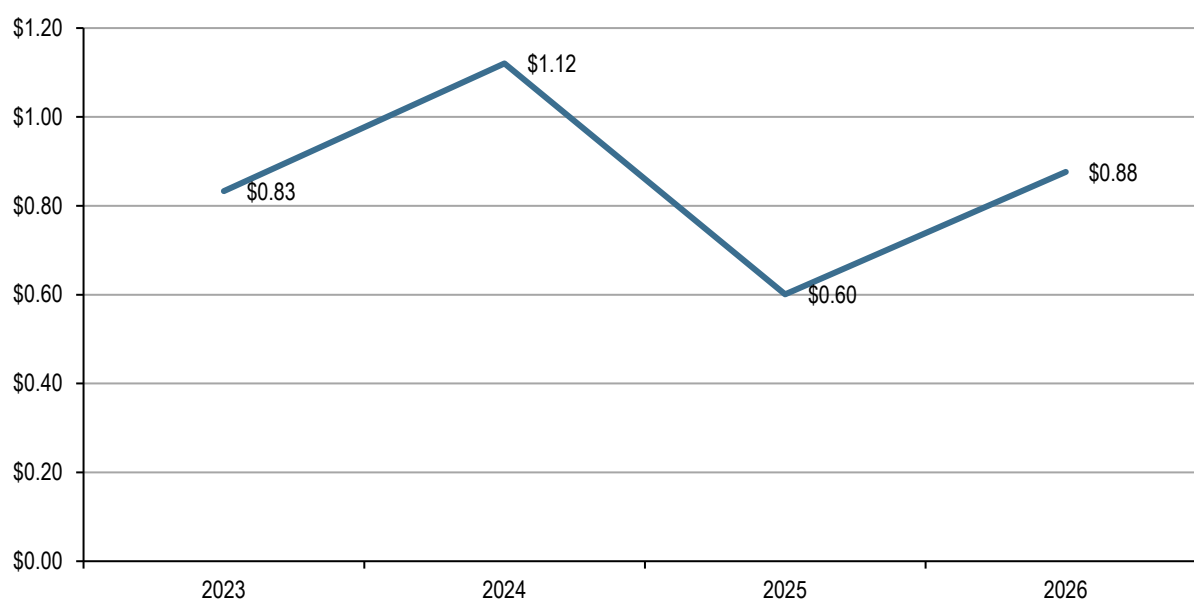
One source of information that is publicly available was the USDA Forest Service, Congressional Budget Justifications for fiscal years 2023 to 2026. Alaska-specific program related expenditures were reported for-- 1) fisheries monitoring; 2) subsistence management activities; and 3) deferred maintenance for the Tongass National Forest and the Chugach National Forest.

Table 4. Alaska-Specific U.S. Forest Service Program Level Spending, FY 2023 to FY 2026

Fiscal Year	Fisheries Monitoring (FRMP)	Subsistence Program	Tongass Deferred Maintenance	Chugach Deferred Maintenance	Total Funds
2023	\$878,397	\$1,097,000	\$14,398,000	\$2,085,000	\$18,458,397
2024	\$878,397	\$1,093,000	\$20,918,000	\$1,948,000	\$24,837,397
2025	\$878,397	\$1,111,000	\$6,223,000	\$5,104,000	\$13,316,397
2026	\$872,369	\$849,000	\$8,370,000	\$9,331,000	\$19,422,369

Data source: USDA (USFS) Congressional Budget Justification Reports for FY 2023 to FY 2026.

Figure 5 shows the estimated U.S. Forest Service Alaska management costs per acre between FY 2023 and FY 2026 based on identifiable Alaska-specific expenditures. Estimated costs fluctuated from approximately \$0.83 per acre in FY 2023 to \$1.12 per acre in FY 2024, before declining to \$0.60 per acre in FY 2025 and increasing again to \$0.88 per acre in FY 2026.

Figure 5. U.S. Forest Service Estimated Land Management Cost per Acre, FY 2023 to FY 2026

Unlike ADNR and BLM, statewide Alaska operating expenditures were not consistently reported; therefore, estimates were based on identifiable expenditures for the Tongass and Chugach National Forests. This inconsistency likely explains the higher volatility observed when compared to other agencies.

USFS cost-per-acre estimates should be interpreted cautiously because statewide operating expenditures were not consistently identifiable in publicly available budget materials. Instead, this analysis relied on identifiable Alaska-specific expenditures, including Tongass and Chugach deferred

maintenance, subsistence management, and fisheries monitoring programs. As a result, reported USFS cost per acre estimates are likely to understate total land management costs in Alaska.

3.4 State of Alaska Land Management Costs

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) is the primary state agency responsible for managing state-owned lands. Within ADNR, the divisions of Mining, Land and Water; Forestry and Fire Protection; and Parks and Outdoor Recreation carry out key land management responsibilities.

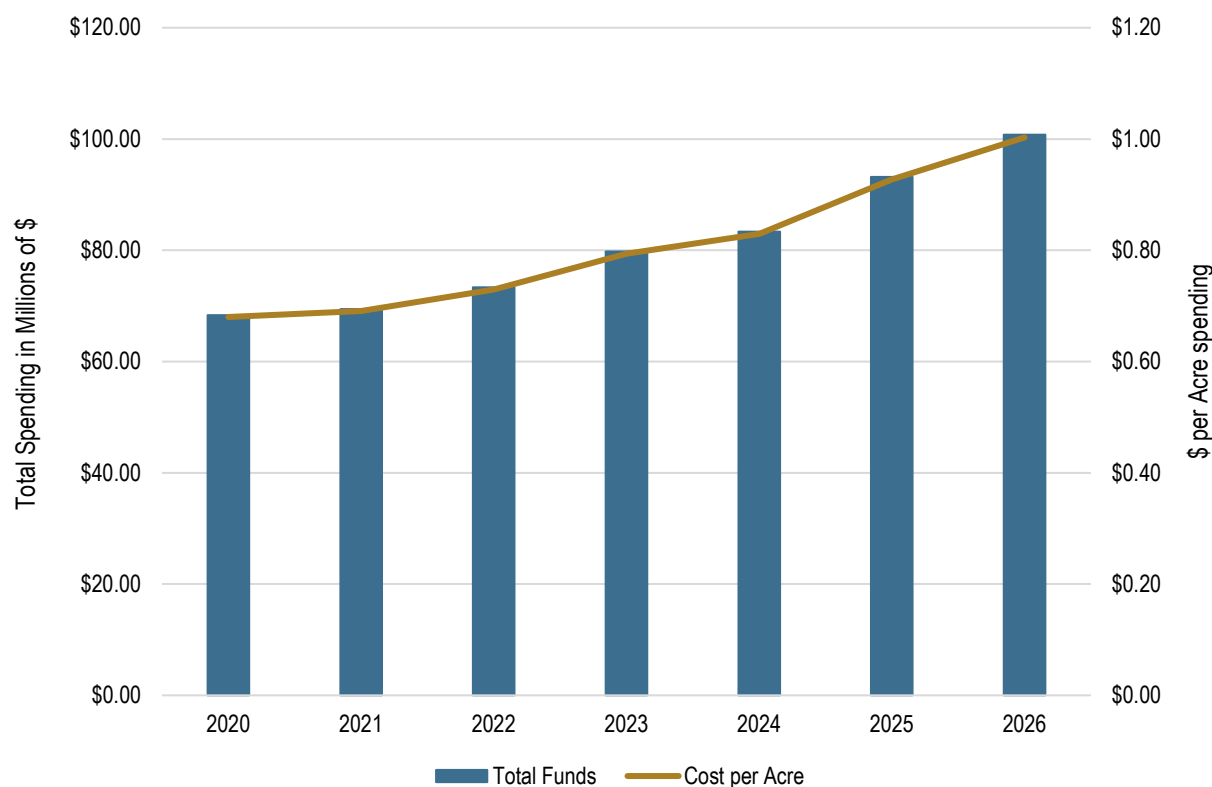
Table 5 shows historical spending by ADNR divisions with land management responsibilities. Total spending by these divisions increased every year from \$68.35 million in FY 2020 to \$100.78 million in FY 2026. The Mining, Land, and Water budget accounts for 38% of the total spending which covers management of all state-owned lands, waters, including uplands, tidelands/shorelands, and freshwater resources. Land management responsibilities include among others, authorizing and regulating the use of state-owned lands, including easements, leases, permits, and material sales, as well as processing mining claims, issuing mineral leases, and overseeing reclamation. The Division of Forestry and Fire Protection responsibilities include year-round activities for protecting life, property, and investments within Alaska from the threat of wildland fire. The fire preparedness activities start each fall with after-action reviews of the fire season and off-season work involves cooperator outreach, training development and implementation, equipment refurbishment, aircraft and equipment contract renewals, policy and procedural updates, fire planning, and recruitment. During fire season, preparedness activities ensure necessary firefighting and support resources are available to respond to new fire starts, based on expected fire danger. The operating budget for fire preparedness account for 30% of total spending, and the spending on this budget component increased 63% between FY 2020 and FY 2024. ADNR has noted in its budget document that with current trends of increasing fire season duration and severity, rising value of property to be protected, and issues with recruitment and retention of firefighters, ADNR has been challenged in handling a moderate fire load without assistance from non-Alaskan firefighting resources (ADNR, 2023). Finally, ADNR is also responsible for parks management and access, this accounts for 20% of the total spending from FY 2020 to FY 2024.

Figure 6 shows the total spending of these divisions and spending cost per acre of State managed lands. Note that the increased fire management costs caused by the higher number, duration, and severity of fires have driven not only total management costs over the years but also the per acre management cost. On a per acre basis, an increase in acreage of state-owned lands would likely continue to be impacted by fire preparedness and suppression activities, more so than the more routine land management responsibilities and activities of the ADNR.

Table 5. State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources Spending (in millions of \$), FY 2020 to FY 2026

Fiscal Year	Mining, Land & Water	Forest Management & Development	Fire Preparedness	Parks Management & Access	Total Spending
2020	\$27.50	\$7.89	\$19.66	\$13.30	\$68.35
2021	\$28.06	\$8.00	\$19.72	\$13.67	\$69.44
2022	\$30.38	\$8.27	\$20.37	\$14.29	\$73.32
2023	\$30.61	\$9.02	\$24.80	\$15.34	\$79.77
2024	\$31.61	\$9.51	\$25.93	\$16.31	\$83.37
2025	\$34.07	\$11.44	\$29.72	\$17.97	\$93.20
2026	\$36.22	\$11.55	\$32.05	\$20.97	\$100.78

Data source: Alaska Office of Management and Budget, Department of Natural Resources Enacted Component Detail Reports (FY 2020–FY 2026) and Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Mining, Land and Water, Land Ownership in Alaska Fact Sheet (2021). Annual spending and federal receipt estimates were derived from enacted operating budget component detail reports, while managed acreage estimates were obtained from the DNR land ownership fact sheet.

Figure 6. Alaska Department of Natural Resources Spending, FY 2020 to FY 2026

Data source: Alaska Office of Management and Budget, Department of Natural Resources Enacted Component Detail Reports (FY 2020–FY 2026) and Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Mining, Land and Water, Land Ownership in Alaska Fact Sheet (2021). Annual spending and federal receipt estimates were derived from enacted operating budget component detail reports, while managed acreage estimates were obtained from the DNR land ownership fact sheet.

Note that there are also other departments besides the ADNR within the state government that have different roles in managing state lands and resources including the Department of Transportation, the Department of Fish and Game (habitat management), and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation. However, it is difficult to identify spending for specific land management activities.

Also, as mentioned earlier, within the ADNR is a special unit called the Trust Land Office, which is specifically responsible for managing 1 million acres of land owned by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority.

4 Fiscal Impacts of Selected Federal Programs

This section examines three specific federal programs and areas of land management that merit attention due to their economic impact and fiscal repercussions-- i) current federal receipts from payments-in lieu of taxes and national forest receipts/Secure Rural Schools program; ii) subsistence management; and iii) wildfire management.

4.1 Federal Receipts

This section presents information on the benefits that accrue to the state and local governments from programs associated with federal ownership of lands in Alaska, specifically the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program and the National Forest Receipts/Secure Rural School program.

4.1.1 Payments in Lieu of Taxes

The Department of the Interior's Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program provides compensation for certain tax-exempt federal lands, known as entitlement lands⁵. PILT payments are made annually to local government units that contain entitlement lands. PILT entitlement lands include most federal lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, all in the U.S. Department of Interior, as well as lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

According to a recent Congressional Research Service report, the PILT program was enacted in response to a shift in federal policy from one that prioritized disposal of federal lands (in which federal ownership was considered to be temporary) to one that prioritized retention of federal lands (in perpetuity) for public benefit. Because these lands were exempt from state and local taxation and were no longer likely to return to the tax base in the foreseeable future, some compensation should be provided to the impacted local governments. Hence, PILT payments are intended to help offset losses in property taxes due to the existence of nontaxable federal lands within the local government jurisdictions. The PILT Act (Chapter 69, Title 39 of the U.S. Code) acknowledges that local governments should be compensated for forgoing tax revenues from federal lands and for providing support for national parks, wildlife refuges, and recreation areas (Congressional Research Service, 2025).

PILT payments may be used by local jurisdictions for any governmental purpose. Payments are typically made directly to the eligible local government. Historically, these payments have been used

⁵ Entitlement lands are statutorily defined federally owned lands that are exempt from state and local taxes and are eligible to be the basis for determining a county's eligibility for PILT payments. This term is defined in statute at 31 U.S.C. §6901(1) (CRS, 2025).

by local governments for providing services like firefighting and police protection, construction of public schools and roads, and search-and-rescue operations in areas where there are federal lands.

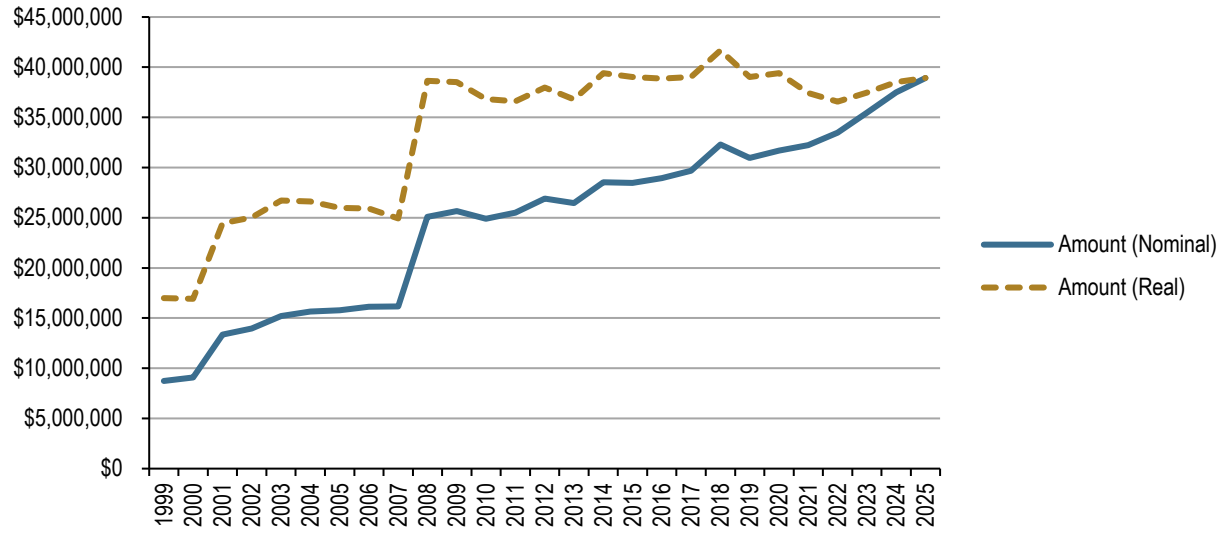
Annual PILT payments are determined based on the number of acres of federal entitlement land within each county (or in the case of Alaska, boroughs and census areas), prior year federal revenue sharing payments⁶, and limits based on population. The primary calculation multiplies the number of eligible federal acres within a local jurisdiction by a per-acre rate then subtracts any prior-year federal revenue sharing payments (i.e., such as oil and gas leasing or timber harvesting). A second calculation establishes a minimum payment by applying a lower per-acre rate without any deductions. The higher of these two values is selected. The selected payment is then subject to a limitation based on population. This limitation caps the maximum payment a local government can receive based on its population size. All per-acre and population-based rates are adjusted annually for inflation using the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Historical PILT data for Alaska were obtained from the U.S. Department of the Interior's publicly available database, which only includes data from 1999 onwards. Earlier data exists but is not available in a digital format. Total accumulated Alaska PILT payments received by local governments over the past 26 years (1999 to 2025) have amounted to \$666.7 million in nominal terms, or \$907.7 million in real 2025\$⁷.

Historical annual data (Figure 7) shows a clear upward trend in nominal payments over time, rising from \$8.7 million in 1999 to \$38.9 million in 2025. When adjusted for inflation, payments have been relatively stable, generally ranging from \$35 million and \$40 million in real terms for most years after 2008.

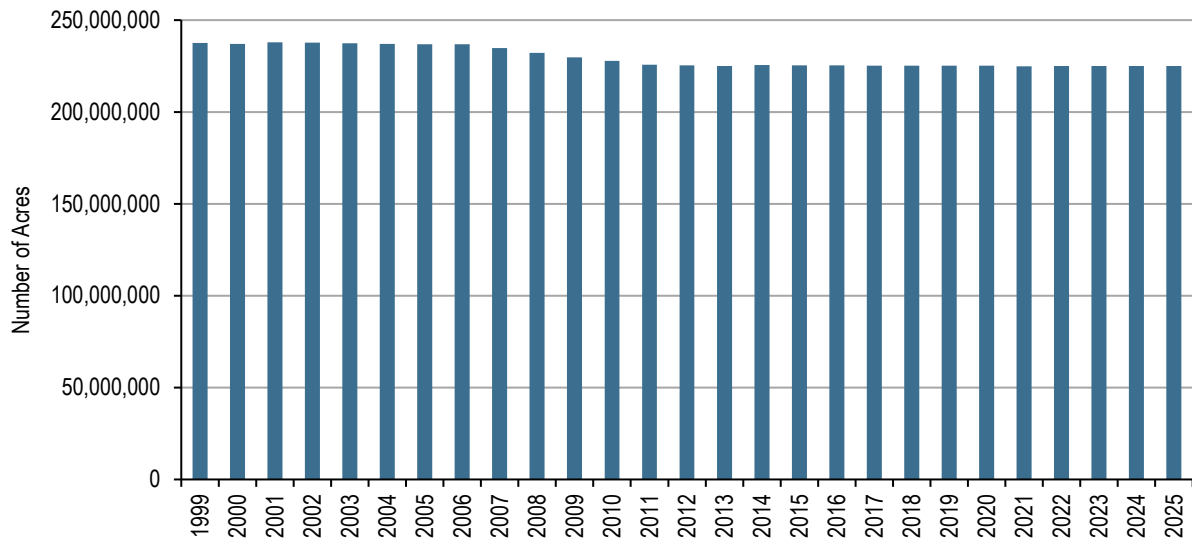
⁶ Qualifying prior year payments are those payments from the federal payment programs listed in statute: the Act of June 20, 1910 (ch. 310, 36 Stat. 557); • Section 33 of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act (7 U.S.C. §1012); the Act of May 23, 1908 (16 U.S.C. §500), or the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. §§7101 et seq.); Section 5 of the Act of June 22, 1948 (16 U.S.C. §§577g–577g-1); Section 401(c)(2) of the Act of June 15, 1935 (16 U.S.C. §715s(c)(2)); Section 17 of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. §810); Section 35 of the Act of February 25, 1920 (30 U.S.C. §191); Section 6 of the Mineral Leasing Act for Acquired Lands (30 U.S.C. §355); Section 3 of the Act of July 31, 1947 (30 U.S.C. §603); and Section 10 of the Act of June 28, 1934 (known as the Taylor Grazing Act) (43 U.S.C. §315i).

⁷ Value adjusted for inflation using the CPI and expressed in constant December 2025 dollars (CPI=324.054).

Figure 7. Historical Total Alaska (Statewide) PILT Payments, 1999 to 2025

Source: U.S. Department of Interior, *Payments in Lieu of Taxes*, 2026.

Figure 8 shows the total Alaska PILT acreage by year. The total statewide acreage eligible for PILT payments has been trending downward but the year-to-year fluctuations particularly in the past 15 years have been relatively marginal.

Figure 8. Historical Alaska PILT Acreage, 1999 to 2025

Source: U.S. Department of Interior, *Payments in Lieu of Taxes*, 2026

Table 6 below shows regional PILT data in FY 2025 (latest available year). The top 5 regions that received the most PILT payments were the Mat-Su Borough, Kenai Peninsula Borough, Juneau City and Borough, Bethel Census Area, and the Kodiak Island Borough. However, on a per acre basis, the

top 5 regions were the Fairbanks Northstar Borough, Anchorage Municipality, Bristol Bay Borough, Juneau City and Borough, and the Mat-Su Borough. As noted above, payments to local governments are determined based on eligible acreage, prior federal payments, and population-based limits.

In 2025, the formula and rates for computing PILT payments used the greater of the following two alternatives: i) \$3.46 times the number of acres of qualified Federal land in the unit of local government, reduced by the amount of funds received by the locality in the prior fiscal year under certain other Federal land revenue-sharing programs, such as Secure Rural Schools and the Mineral Leasing Act; or (ii) \$0.50 times the number of acres of qualified Federal land in the unit of local government, with no deduction for prior-year payments. Both alternatives are subject to a population ceiling limitation computed by multiplying the rounded county population figure times a dollar amount. For example, if the population is less than or equal to 5,000, the maximum payment amount is computed by multiplying population by \$232.73 and at the other end, for populations of 50,000 or more, the payment amount equals the population multiplied by \$93.09.

Change in land ownership therefore will impact Alaska regions differently, but all regions could expect to see changes to PILT payments if federal land within the region was transferred to state ownership.

Table 6. PILT Payments and Eligible Acres by Borough and Census Areas, FY 2025

Region: Alaska Boroughs/Census Areas	PILT Payment	Share of Payment	Total Acres	Share of Acres	Amount per Acre
Aleutians East Borough	\$804,988	2.1%	2,663,160	1.2%	\$0.30
Aleutians West Census Area	\$1,162,940	3.0%	2,341,559	1.0%	\$0.50
Bethel Census Area	\$2,397,757	6.2%	15,557,265	6.9%	\$0.15
Bristol Bay Borough	\$196,304	0.5%	63,125	0.0%	\$3.11
Chugach Census Area	\$1,435,664	3.7%	4,217,314	1.9%	\$0.34
Copper River Census Area	\$621,940	1.6%	10,899,378	4.8%	\$0.06
Denali Borough	\$368,419	0.9%	4,610,483	2.0%	\$0.08
Dillingham Census Area	\$1,071,533	2.8%	3,005,519	1.3%	\$0.36
Fairbanks Northstar Borough	\$576,354	1.5%	166,678	0.1%	\$3.46
Haines Borough	\$477,976	1.2%	956,536	0.4%	\$0.50
Hoonah-Angoon census area	\$526,114	1.4%	4,648,159	2.1%	\$0.11
Juneau City & Borough	\$3,060,632	7.9%	1,670,084	0.7%	\$1.83
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$4,081,995	10.5%	6,695,276	3.0%	\$0.61
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	\$1,524,318	3.9%	3,050,495	1.4%	\$0.50
Kodiak Island Borough	\$1,924,386	4.9%	2,816,119	1.3%	\$0.68
Kusilvak Census Area	\$1,522,671	3.9%	9,546,777	4.2%	\$0.16
Lake & Peninsula Borough	\$309,575	0.8%	8,535,520	3.8%	\$0.04
Matanuska Susitna Borough	\$4,630,584	11.9%	2,952,203	1.3%	\$1.57
Municipality of Anchorage	\$904,700	2.3%	286,818	0.1%	\$3.15
Municipality of Skagway	\$218,939	0.6%	192,583	0.1%	\$1.14
Nome Census Area	\$1,627,607	4.2%	8,344,338	3.7%	\$0.20
North Slope Borough	\$1,744,635	4.5%	40,134,684	17.8%	\$0.04
Northwest Arctic Borough	\$1,435,664	3.7%	16,397,763	7.3%	\$0.09
Petersburg Borough	\$797,080	2.0%	1,798,378	0.8%	\$0.44
Prince of Wales Census Area	\$1,306,902	3.4%	2,742,030	1.2%	\$0.48
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	\$1,435,664	3.7%	4,481,178	2.0%	\$0.32
Sitka City and Borough	\$951,539	2.4%	1,819,667	0.8%	\$0.52
Wrangell Borough	\$480,062	1.2%	1,597,694	0.7%	\$0.30
Yakutat Borough	\$159,788	0.4%	4,435,125	2.0%	\$0.04
Yukon Koyukuk Census Area	\$1,162,940	3.0%	58,350,747	25.9%	\$0.02

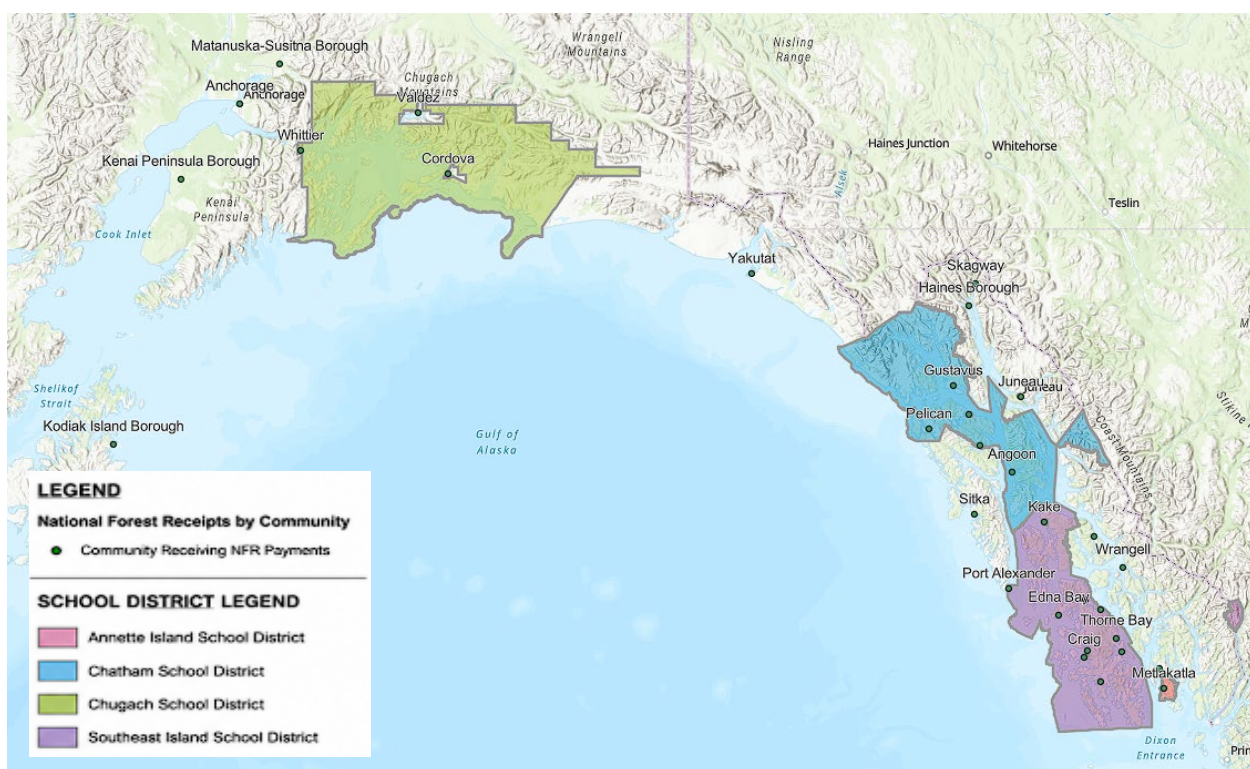
Data source: U.S. Department of the Interior, Payments in Lieu of Taxes Program, FY 2025.

4.1.2 National Forest Receipts/Secure Rural School Program

Timber harvesting on national forest lands generates revenues that benefit communities. These funds are especially important in communities where federal land is extensive and property tax bases are small. Historically, these revenues were distributed under a 1908 federal law (16 U.S.C. § 500), which requires that 25 percent of revenues generated from National Forest activities, including timber harvesting, be shared with the state for distribution to counties (or in Alaska boroughs and census areas), cities, and school districts. As timber production declined across the country, Congress enacted the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (SRS), which modified the traditional revenue-sharing system by basing payments on historical averages rather than current timber receipts. The policy shift was intended to stabilize funding for communities that historically relied on timber-related revenues (National Forest Receipts, 2025).

Figure 9 illustrates the geographic distribution of NFR/SRS payments across Alaska communities and participating school districts. The colored regions represent school districts, and the dots identify communities receiving direct payments. The four highlighted school districts include the Annette Island School District, Chatham School District, Chugach School District, and Southeast Island School District.

Figure 9. National Forest Receipts Payments by Community and School District

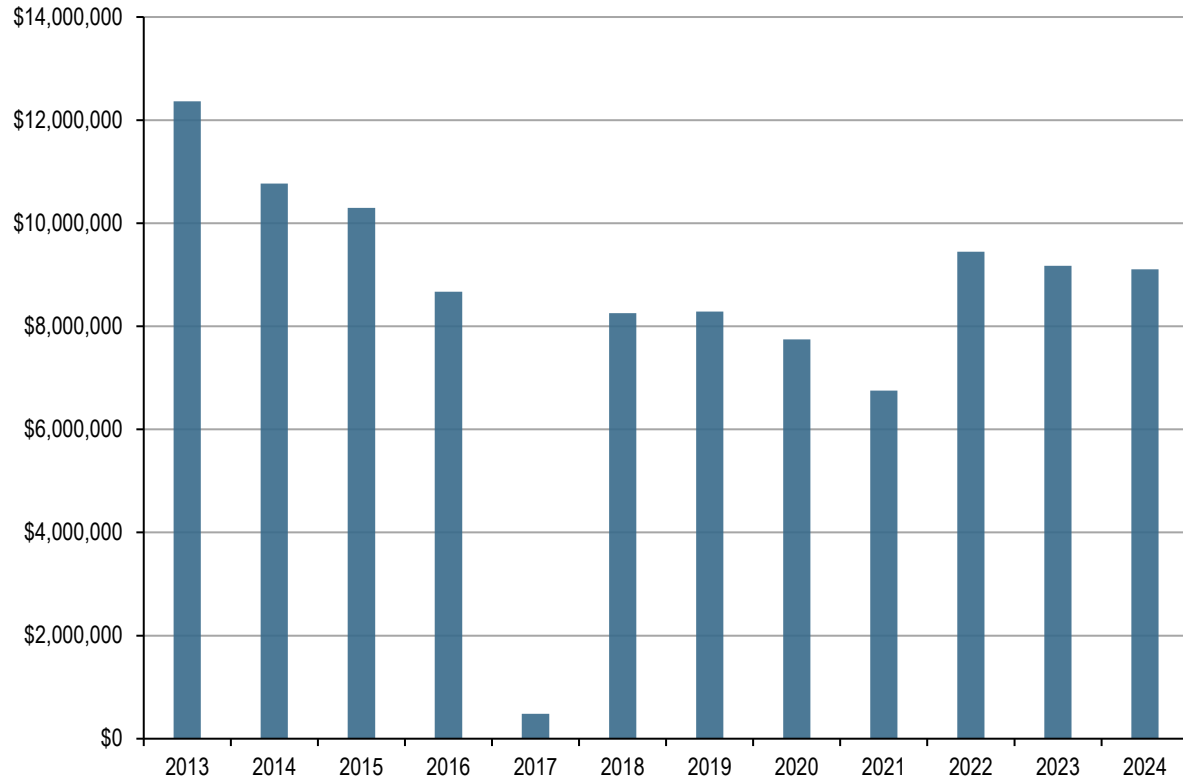


Source: ADCCED, National Forest Receipts (NFR)/Secure Rural Schools Program Story Map, 2026.

The NFR/SRS program money flows from the USDA Forest Service to the State of Alaska, which then distributes funds to eligible school districts and local governments near the Tongass and Chugach National Forests. These entities generally receive NFR/SRS funds under Title I, which is designated for the benefit of public schools and public roads. Title I payments to organized boroughs are received by the State and passed through to the organized borough. Payments can be used by the borough at their discretion for schools and/or roads. For the unorganized boroughs (or census areas), the State of Alaska receives the payment on their behalf and distributes a calculated portion of the payment to local governments and the State's regional educational attendance areas⁸ (REAA) located in the Tongass and Chugach National Forests. School payments to first class cities and REAAs are based on student enrollment (using average daily membership); schools receive a proportional share of funds based on their total eligible student count. For local governments, payments to first- and second-class cities are calculated as the proportion of the number of road miles within municipal boundaries plus the number of state road miles maintained by the municipality under agreement with the State compared to the total number of road miles. Under AS 41.15.180 (j), the portion of the unorganized borough's road payment remaining unobligated and unexpended on June 30 is deposited into the State's general fund to offset expenses for school and road maintenance. According to ADCCED, during the past few years, the legislature in the State's annual operating budget has chosen to appropriate the excess funds back to the cities and REAAs in the unorganized borough (ADCCED, 2026).

Figure 10 shows historical total NFR/SRS payments to eligible local governments/communities in Alaska from 2013 to 2024. Figure 10 shows a steady decline in payments from 2013 to 2024, with 2013 payments amounting to about \$12.4 million and 2024 payments totaling \$9.1 million. Note that the notable drop seen in 2017 was due to Congress failing to reauthorize the SRS in time. Without SRS, payments temporarily reverted to the traditional revenue-sharing system based on current timber receipts, which was minimal in Alaska. In December 2025, Congress enacted the Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization Act of 2025, which reauthorized SRS payments through FY 2026, including retroactive payments for FY 2024 and FY 2025 (USDA Secure Rural Schools Program, 2026).

⁸ In 1975, the Alaska State Legislature enacted landmark reforms that led to the establishment of the Regional Educational Attendance Areas (REAAs) across the Unorganized Borough. The REAAs were created as a means to provide locally governed public education across rural Alaska that reflected integrated communities of similar socioeconomic, linguistic, and cultural characteristics. Unlike city, borough, and municipal school districts, REAAs have no local funding base, relying on the state's foundation formula (AS 14.17) and pass-through federal funding to fund their operations and facilities.

Figure 10. Historical Total NFR Payments to Communities, FY 2013 to FY 2024.

Source: ADCCED, National Forest Receipts (NFR)/Secure Rural Schools Program Story Map, 2026

Table 7 breaks down NFR payments by community/local government for FY 2024 (most recent year available data). Valdez, Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Wrangell, Cordova, and Petersburg were among the largest recipients, collectively accounting for more than 50% share of the SRS payments in FY 2024.

Table 8 shows the total cumulative payments by community from FY 2013 to FY 2024. Over the entire period shown, Valdez alone received more than \$15.4 million, representing 15.3% of all NFR payments.

Table 7. Total FY 2024 NFR Payments by Community

Community/Local Government	Amount	Share
Valdez	\$1,310,777	14.4%
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	\$1,126,025	12.4%
Wrangell	\$837,848	9.2%
Cordova	\$742,561	8.2%
Petersburg	\$721,311	7.9%
Juneau	\$593,820	6.5%
Sitka	\$571,480	6.3%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$570,014	6.3%
Yakutat	\$561,671	6.2%
Craig	\$490,640	5.4%
Klawock	\$259,684	2.9%
Haines Borough	\$257,332	2.8%
Hoonah	\$228,323	2.5%
Kake	\$216,790	2.4%
Hydaburg	\$125,999	1.4%
Metlakatla	\$93,345	1.0%
Anchorage	\$87,138	1.0%
Thorne Bay	\$58,425	0.6%
Gustavus	\$45,017	0.5%
Skagway	\$35,766	0.4%
Whittier	\$26,802	0.3%
Pelican	\$25,719	0.3%
Coffman Cove	\$25,005	0.3%
Whale Pass	\$23,597	0.3%
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	\$21,090	0.2%
Angeon	\$14,304	0.2%
Kasaan	\$12,676	0.1%
Edna Bay	\$11,835	0.1%
Tenakee Springs	\$5,890	0.1%
Port Alexander	\$2,762	0.0%
Total	\$9,103,645	100%

Source: ADCCED, National Forest Receipts (NFR)/Secure Rural Schools Program Story Map, 2026

Table 8. Total Cumulative NFR Payments by Community, FY 2013 to FY 2024

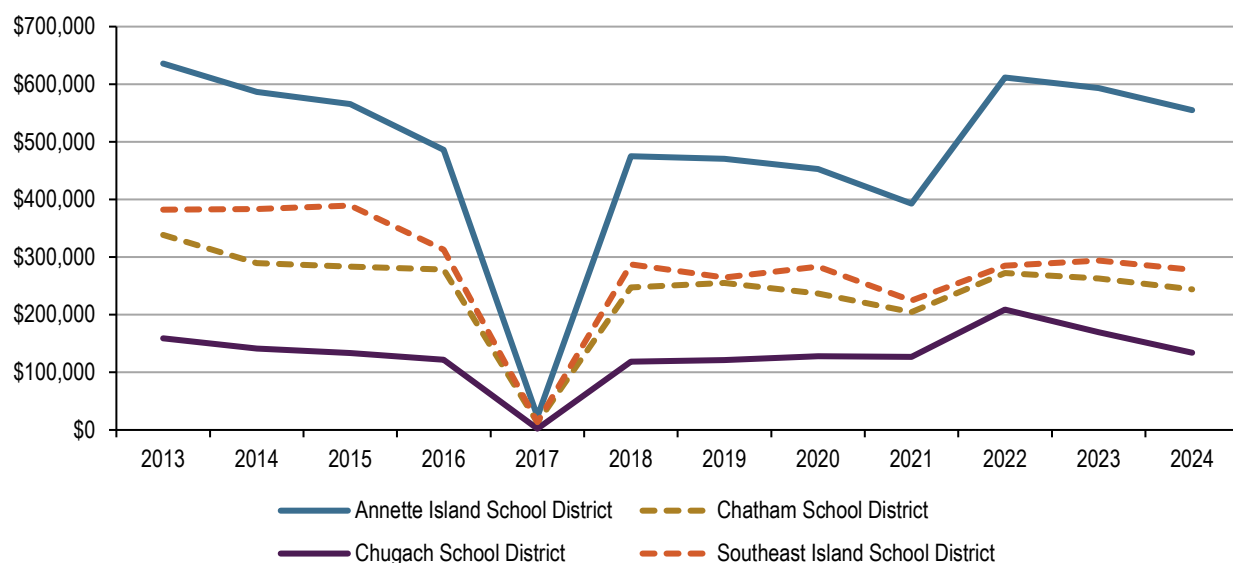
Community	Amount	Share
Valdez	\$15,494,374	15.3%
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	\$11,056,869	10.9%
Wrangell	\$10,772,649	10.6%
Petersburg	\$8,010,962	7.9%
Cordova	\$7,832,416	7.7%
Sitka	\$6,933,451	6.8%
Juneau	\$6,624,146	6.5%
Craig	\$5,945,946	5.9%
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$5,898,150	5.8%
Yakutat	\$5,727,877	5.7%
Klawock	\$2,733,889	2.7%
Haines Borough	\$2,510,689	2.5%
Hoonah	\$2,508,499	2.5%
Kake	\$2,319,678	2.3%
Hydaburg	\$1,430,804	1.4%
Metlakatla	\$991,624	1.0%
Anchorage	\$822,257	0.8%
Thorne Bay	\$775,934	0.8%
Gustavus	\$667,088	0.7%
Coffman Cove	\$400,682	0.4%
Whittier	\$352,818	0.3%
Pelican	\$294,133	0.3%
Skagway	\$272,975	0.3%
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	\$246,417	0.2%
Kasaan	\$184,028	0.2%
Angoon	\$181,315	0.2%
Whale Pass	\$164,802	0.2%
Edna Bay	\$93,345	0.1%
Tenakee Springs	\$66,367	0.1%
Port Alexander	\$33,337	0.0%
Kodiak Island Borough	\$2,432	0.0%
Total	\$101,349,954	100%

Source: ADCCED, National Forest Receipts (NFR)/Secure Rural Schools Program Story Map, 2026

Figure 11 shows the payments made to the eligible school districts in the same time frame. Total payments to school districts in FY 2013 totaled \$1.5 million. In FY 2024, total payments amounted to \$1.2 million. The Annette Island School District consistently received the largest share of school district funding, accounting for 46% in FY 2024.

Total cumulative SRS payments to school districts from FY 2013 to FY 2024 amounted to \$13.7 million. Of this amount, 43% went to the Annette Island School District.

Figure 11. NFR Payments by School District



Source: ADCCED, National Forest Receipts (NFR)/Secure Rural Schools Program Story Map, 2026

4.2 Subsistence Management

Subsistence rights in Alaska are bifurcated by land jurisdiction. On federal public lands, ANILCA's rural preference applies. Under ANILCA Section 804, Alaskans living in rural areas—including, but not limited to, Alaska Natives—receive a priority for subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on federal public lands when resources are limited. On state lands, state law governs—and since the McDowell decision, Alaska state law does not apply a rural preference, so access is open to any Alaskan, regardless of where they live. In *McDowell v. State* (1989), the Alaska Supreme Court held that this rural preference violated the Alaska Constitution's equal access guarantee. The result is subsistence management is split by land jurisdiction: federal rules apply on federal lands, while state rules apply on state lands, with those boundaries often contested in practice and in court. The practical result is that a person's subsistence access can change depending solely on which agency owns the land they are standing on. As a result, if federal lands are transferred to the State, these lands will no longer have a federal rural subsistence priority; and the State must take on subsistence management on these lands.

Since 1994, there have been a series of cases known as the Katie John cases, which sought to address where the rural priority applies to fishing. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the subsistence fisheries provisions under ANILCA extended to navigable waters adjacent to federal lands. Since that ruling, the State of Alaska has appealed the decision multiple times, and ultimately the rural priority for fishing on federal lands was upheld. As a result, federal subsistence priority applies on federally owned lands for hunting and waters appurtenant to federal lands for fishing, and elsewhere in the state, waterways are subject to state regulations.

This long and complicated history of legislation results in a few key takeaways as they relate to subsistence. ANCSA was unique because it created privately held Native Corporation land, as opposed to the lower 48 where the federal government held that land in trust. Since land under ANCSA is privately held, it is subject to state regulations like any other private land (instead of federal law). However, ANCSA was a compromise focused on land ownership not resources on that land. The question of where and when mobile resources (such as fish and game) can be harvested was not settled under ANCSA. Since ANCSA, a patchwork dual management system has come into existence, explained in more detail below.

4.2.1 Overview of Existing Subsistence Management Framework

As a result of the legislative history, the existing subsistence management framework is a multi-faceted management structure based on location, species, purpose of harvest, and status of species. Federal lands and waters are managed in accordance with ANILCA, including rural subsistence priority, and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires federal agencies to analyze and disclose the impacts of proposed actions on the human environment, including subsistence activities. There are also resource-specific federal statutes such as the Marine Mammal Protection Act, Endangered Species Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Whaling Convention Act, and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act that protect some specific animals, but each of these acts has provisions to exempt Alaska Natives or Indigenous peoples so that subsistence activities are generally allowed.

ANILCA also resulted in the creation of a federal management structure, which includes a federal subsistence board (FSB). The FSB establishes all federal subsistence hunting, trapping, and fishing regulations for species under ANILCA. The FSB is comprised of 11 members: a chair, five public members (appointed by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture), and the Alaska Regional Directors (or their designees) of the National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Bureau of Indian Affairs. The public members are people who possess personal knowledge of and direct experience with subsistence uses in rural Alaska (including Alaska Native subsistence), and three of five public members are selected from individuals nominated or recommended by federally recognized Tribal governments in Alaska. Alaska is divided into 10 subsistence resource regions, each with a Regional Advisory Council (RAC), and the RACs advise the FSB. RAC members are local residents with knowledge of subsistence practices and uses in their specific area. RACs hold at least two public hearings per year to gather local information and

make recommendations to the FSB on subsistence issues. FSB is required to defer to recommendations of each RAC unless it is not supported by substantial evidence, it violates principles of fish and wildlife conservation, or it would otherwise be detrimental to subsistence needs.

State lands are subject to a different set of policies. On State of Alaska land and privately held land in Alaska, Alaska has general management authority for fish and wildlife unless modified or diminished by acts of Congress. As a result of the McDowell decision, rural priority does not exist on state-controlled lands, and the state definition of subsistence refers broadly to “all residents of the state” and does not specify different provisions for Alaska Native peoples:

“the noncommercial, customary and traditional uses of wild, renewable resources by a resident of the state for direct personal or family consumption as food, shelter, fuel, clothing, tools, or transportation, for the making and selling of handicraft articles out of inedible by-products of fish and wildlife resources taken for personal or family consumption, and for the customary trade, barter, or sharing for personal or family consumption...”

If someone is an Alaska resident for 12 consecutive months, they can participate in subsistence harvests regardless of whether they live in an urban or rural area. However, subsistence harvests are not authorized in “nonsubsistence areas”, which are defined as “where dependence on subsistence is not a principal characteristic of the economy culture and way of life”. This primarily refers to areas like Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Ketchikan, and Valdez (see Figure 12).

Figure 12. Map of Nonsubsistence Use Areas in Alaska



Source: ADF&G, 2026.

Alaska manages fish and wildlife through the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, including the Board of Game and Board of Fish. Each board is comprised of seven members, and purpose is to conserve and develop Alaska's wildlife and fishery resources. Regulatory changes are considered on region-based, three-year cycles. Additionally, there are 84 local advisory committees across Alaska that provide local forums for fish and wildlife issues, develop and evaluate regulatory proposals, and make recommendations to boards. Each board identifies fish stocks or game populations that are customarily and traditionally taken by Alaska residents for subsistence uses based on eight criteria. If harvests can occur consistently and with sustainable yield, each board determines the amount of harvest that is reasonably necessary for subsistence uses. Additionally, each board adopts subsistence regulations that provide "reasonable opportunity" for subsistence uses before providing for other uses of harvestable surplus ("subsistence priority"). If the harvestable portion is insufficient for subsistence use, the board will limit subsistence users based on: customary and direct dependence on the resource by the subsistence user for human consumption as a mainstay of livelihood, and the ability of the subsistence user to obtain food if use is restricted or eliminated. While State law mandates a subsistence preference, local users and tribal groups often argue that the Board of Fisheries heavily favors commercial and sport fishing activities.

4.2.2 Subsistence Management Costs on Federal Land

The previously described multi-agency approach to federal subsistence management is known as the Federal Subsistence Management Program (FSMP). The Program is a U.S. Department of the Interior program that, while federal, exclusively serves Alaskans. In February of 2022, the Interagency Staff Committee and Office of Subsistence Management prepared a report providing an overview of the FSMP budget, incorporating information from each of the relevant federal agencies regarding the budgets for their specific subsistence-related activities. While this report did not include detailed information at the time for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) subsistence-related budget, BLM reports an annual subsistence cost for Alaska on their website as of 2024.

Table 9 summarizes the information in the budget report and BLM's website, adjusting for inflation to 2025 dollars. As can be seen in the table, the total cost of managing subsistence on federal land is \$37.5 million per year, which equals roughly \$0.17 per acre (with federally owned lands encompassing 219.41 acres, see Table 1).

Table 9. Subsistence Management Costs on Federal Land

Department of Interior Agency	Amount (2025\$)
National Park Service	\$2,833,752
Fish and Wildlife Service	\$13,950,342
Forest Service	\$3,101,539
Bureau of Land Management	\$1,542,562
Bureau of Indian Affairs	\$3,991,982
Office of Subsistence Management Funding	\$12,111,345
Total	\$37,531,522
<i>Federally Owned Lands (million acres)</i>	<i>219.41</i>
<i>Estimated Cost per Acre</i>	<i>\$0.17</i>

Source: U.S. Department of the Interior, 2022 and BLM, 2025.

4.2.3 Subsistence Management Costs on State Land

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) manages subsistence on state-owned land and privately owned land. ADF&G has a dedicated Division of Subsistence that conducts research and analysis on subsistence. The Division of Subsistence supports the Boards of Fisheries and Game, who ultimately make policy decisions about subsistence alongside decisions about other user group access. Additionally, the advisory committees are also involved in policy-making decisions related to subsistence management. The most current budgets available for the Division of Subsistence (reported in budget documents as “State Subsistence Research”), Advisory Committees, and Boards of Fisheries and Game were from fiscal year 2023. Table 10 shows what the 2023 budgets for these specific ADF&G services most directly involved in subsistence management were after adjusting for inflation. Since ADF&G manages subsistence on all non-federal land, that means ADF&G manages subsistence on roughly 141.5 million acres of land in Alaska.

As can be seen in the table, the total cost of direct subsistence management services was \$7,602,287, which equals roughly \$0.054 per acre per year. It is worth noting that a direct cost estimate excludes general statewide support services that are not explicitly related to subsistence management (Commissioner’s Office, Administrative Services, and State Facilities Maintenance), so it is likely that this cost estimate per acre is low since some of these expenses could be affiliated with subsistence management.

If you were to attribute 100 percent of the indirect general statewide support services to subsistence management (which is very unrealistic), then it would be roughly a management cost of \$0.205 per acre per year. However, subsistence hunting and fishing only represents 0.9% of all resource harvests (by weight) overseen by ADF&G, so it is likely that management of those resources also represents a relatively small share of ADF&G’s general budget. Even if half of the indirect general statewide support services were attributable to subsistence management, the cost would be \$18,302,855 or \$0.129 per acre per year. Given that this is a conservative cost estimate, it appears that the cost of

subsistence management on a per acre basis is likely marginally lower for the State of Alaska than for the federal government.

Table 10. Subsistence Management Costs on State Land

ADF&G Expense	Amount (2025\$)
Direct Management Expenses	
Boards of Fisheries & Game	\$1,288,636
State Subsistence Research	\$5,734,097
Advisory Committees	\$579,544
Total Direct Management	\$7,602,287
<i>State Lands (million acres)</i>	<i>141.5</i>
<i>Cost Direct Cost per Acre</i>	<i>\$0.054</i>
Indirect Management Expenses	
Commissioners	\$1,254,278
Administrative Services	\$14,672,764
Facilities Maintenance	\$5,474,094
Total Indirect Management	\$21,401,135
Total Direct + Indirect	\$29,003,423
<i>State Lands (million acres)</i>	<i>141.5</i>
<i>Total Direct and Indirect Cost per Acre</i>	<i>\$0.205</i>

Source: State of Alaska Office of Management and Budget⁹

4.3 Wildfire Management

4.3.1 Alaska Wildfire Management History

Alaska's modern wildfire management system developed through several decades of interagency planning and coordination. Before the 1980's, wildfire management was largely focused on suppression, with individual agencies operating under separate management approaches. In 1982, the Alaska Wildland Fire Coordinating Group began developing 13 regional fire management plans that collectively covered the entire state. These plans introduced four fire management options: Critical, Full, Modified, and Limited. These management options allowed the agencies to prioritize suppression efforts based on public safety, infrastructure, and cultural resources.

In 1998, the regional plans were consolidated into the Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan, creating a unified statewide framework for wildfire management. The plan established a coordinated approach among the state's primary wildfire management organizations, including the Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection (DFFP), The Bureau of Land Management Alaska Fire Service (BLM-AFS), and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). Together, these agencies are responsible for wildfire prevention, preparedness, suppression, and resource management across millions of acres

of state, federal, municipal, private, and Alaska Native Lands. This is a unique model for managing wildfire across jurisdictional boundaries, and one that is not common across the United States.

Since its adoption, the Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan has been periodically updated to improve interagency coordination, resource sharing, fire planning, and mapping capabilities. The most recent comprehensive revision of the Alaska Interagency Wildland Fire Management Plan was completed in 2021. While the plan retained the state's four fire management options and overall framework, it incorporated updates reflecting changes in wildfire policy, planning, and coordination. Recent revisions have put more emphasis on community protection, wildfire mitigation, firefighter protection, and hazardous fuel reduction.

4.3.2 Organizations and Responsibilities

Alaska utilizes a cooperative interagency wildfire management system involving the Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection, the Bureau of Land Management Alaska Fire Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and other federal, state, local, and tribal organizations. Alaska employs a fire management system that prioritizes the protection of communities and infrastructure. Wildfires are managed according to designated fire management options that guide suppression actions based on factors such as public safety, resource values, land management objectives, and available resources. This approach allows agencies to allocate firefighting resources where they are most needed across Alaska's vast landscape.

Although the agencies work closely together, the DFFP, the BLM-AFS, and the USFS are responsible for protecting specific geographic areas.

Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection

The DFFP, a division within the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, serves as the state's primary wildfire management agency. DFFP is Alaska's primary state wildfire agency and is responsible for wildfire prevention, preparedness, and suppression activities. The agency also conducts public outreach and education and supports hazardous fuel reduction projects. DFFP also plays a key role in wildfire prevention through aviation support, firefighter training, and community assistance programs. The agency works closely with federal, tribal, and local partners to ensure wildlife resources can be mobilized quickly and efficiently during periods of elevated fire activity.

Bureau of Land Management Alaska Fire Service

The BLM-AFS is the primary federal wildfire management organization in Alaska and serves as the lead agency for BLM Alaska's statewide fire and aviation program. The Alaska Fire Service was created in 1982 to address changes in Alaskan land ownership following the Alaska Statehood Act, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, and the Alaska National Interest Conservation Act. Rather than establishing separate fire programs for different agencies, AFS allows for a centralized model to better allow shared resources and better communication.

AFS provides fire suppression and operations across Department of the Interior and Native lands in Alaska. In addition to responding to wildfires, the agency manages the Alaska Interagency Coordination Center (AICC), oversees aviation programs, and conducts fire ecology research. Through its operation resources and interagency partnerships, AFS plays a key role in coordinating wildfire response and supporting wildfire management efforts throughout Alaska.

U.S. Forest Service

The USFS is responsible for wildfire management within national forest lands in Alaska. Figure 1 shows the protection areas managed by the USFS, primarily surrounding the Tongass and Chugach Forests. In addition to protecting lives and property, the agency is responsible for managing forest resources, maintaining ecological health, and protecting important recreational, cultural, and environmental assets located within national forest lands.

Similarly to the other two agencies, USFS wildfire management emphasizes a combination of prevention, preparedness, and suppression activities. USFS maintains the personnel, equipment, and aviation resources necessary to respond to wildfire incidents within its protection area. The agency also conducts fuel management projects and forest health initiatives to reduce the likelihood and severity of future wildfires. Through cooperation with DFFP, BLM-AFS, and other federal partners, the agency contributes to the broader state interagency wildfire management system.

Figure 13 illustrates the distribution of wildfire responsibilities among Alaska's primary Wildfire management agencies.

Figure 13. Alaska Fire Protection Responsibilities by Agency



Source: U.S. Department of Interior, Alaska Wildland Fire Services, *Alaska Wildland Fire Jurisdictions*, 2026.

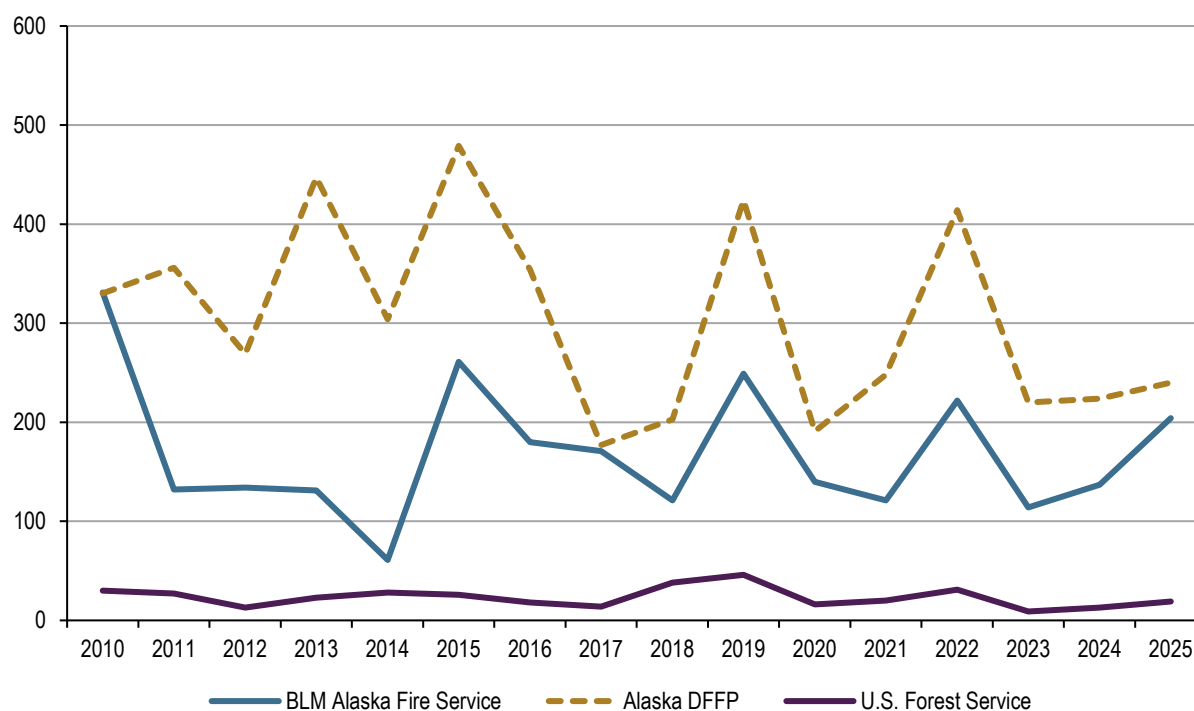
4.3.3 Historical Wildfire Activity and Spending

Figure 14 shows the annual number of wildfires managed by each agency between 2010 and 2025. Wildfire incident counts varied over the period shown, with no consistent long-term upward or downward trend. DFFP generally managed the largest number of fires, with notable peaks in 2013, 2015, 2019, and 2022. BLM-AFS activity also fluctuated significantly, reaching its highest level in 2010, while USFS consistently managed comparatively fewer fires. The apparent decline in 2023 should be interpreted with caution because wildfire statistics for that year were reported only through September 15 and do not represent a complete fire season.¹⁰

Differences in annual wildfire counts among agencies also reflect variations in geographic coverage.

¹⁰ 2023 wildfire statistics were reported through September 15, 2023, and may not be directly comparable to full-year totals reported for other years.

Figure 14. Number of Wildfire Managed by Agency, 2010 to 2025



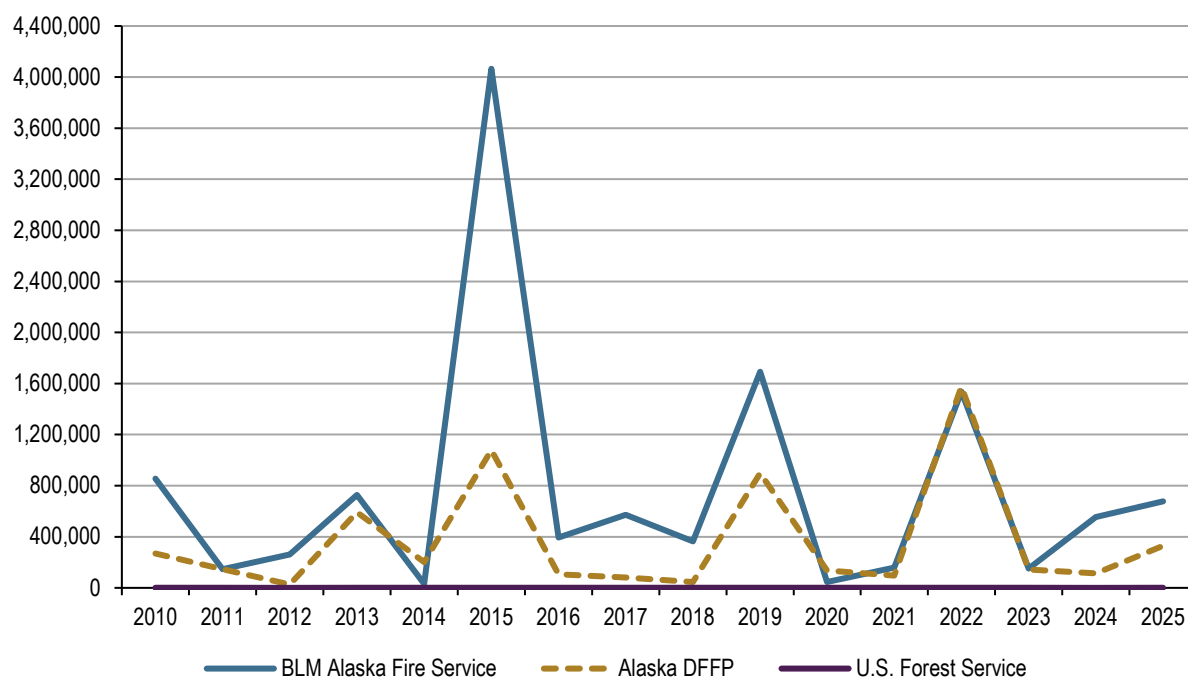
Source: ADNR, Division of Forestry Annual Reports, 2010 to 2025.

Figure 15 illustrates the number of acres burned within each agency's protection area between 2010 and 2025. Burned acreage showed substantially greater variability between years than wildfire incident counts. Acreage reached its highest level in 2015, when approximately 5.1 million acres burned statewide, followed by other high-acreage years in 2019 and 2022.

BLM-AFS protection areas accounted for the largest share of acreage burned in many of the most active fire years. Following the 2022 peak of approximately 3.1 million acres, acreage declined sharply in 2023 before increasing again in 2024 and 2025. Again, the 2023 acreage values should be interpreted with caution because wildfire statistics for that year were reported only through September 15 and do not represent a complete fire season.

These fluctuations demonstrate that the number of acres burned in Alaska can change dramatically from year to year and does not always correspond with the number of reported fires.

Figure 15. Acres Burned by Protection Agency, 2010 to 2025

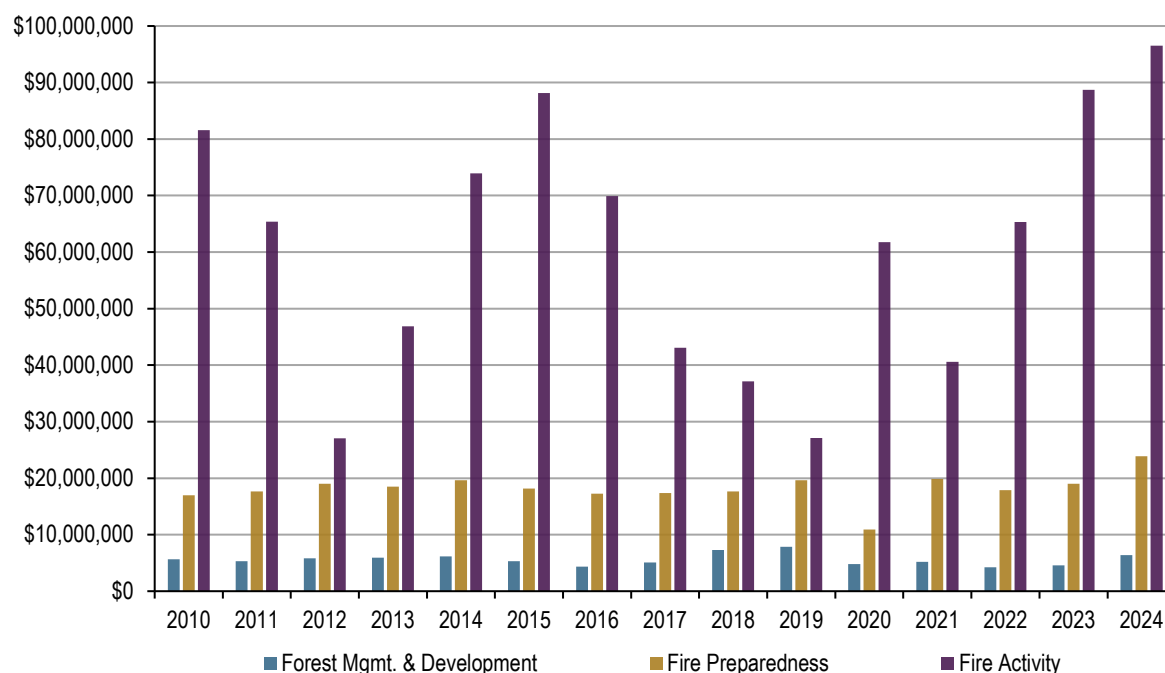


Source: ADNR, Division of Forestry Annual Reports, 2010 to 2025.

Figure 16 shows historical DFFP expenditures by program area.

DFFP spending is strongly influenced by the resources required to respond to wildfire activity in a given year. Fire activity consistently represented the largest expenditure category and accounted for the majority of annual spending fluctuations, as suppression costs vary considerably depending on fire severity and seasonal conditions. Fire Preparedness spending was comparatively stable throughout much of the period before increasing in recent years, indicating investment in personnel, equipment, training, and readiness activities. In contrast, Forest Management and Development expenditures remained relatively stable, representing a smaller but consistent component of DFFP's overall wildfire management strategy.

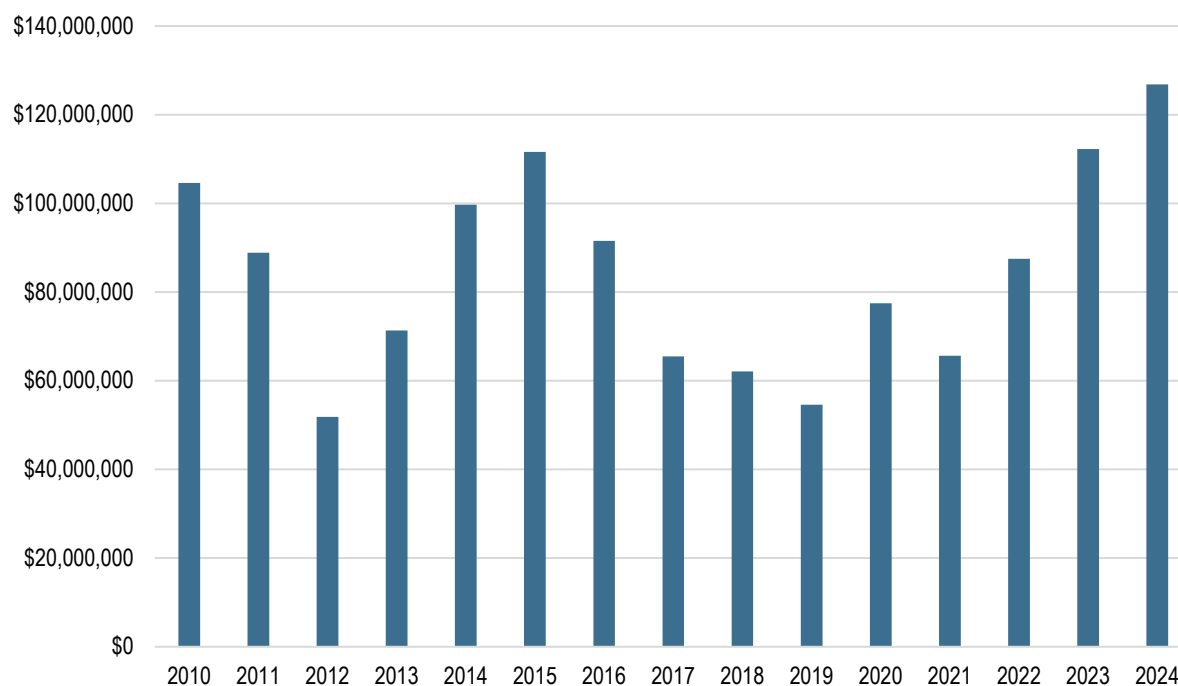
Figure 16. State of Alaska Spending by Program Type, 2010 to 2024



Source: ADNR, Division of Forestry Annual Reports, 2010 to 2024.

Note: Expenditures are presented in nominal dollars and are not adjusted for inflation

Figure 17 shows total combined expenditures. Total expenditures fluctuated considerably over the period, largely because Fire Activity spending varied with annual fire conditions and suppression needs. Together, these trends demonstrate the significant financial commitment required to support wildfire prevention, preparedness, and suppression efforts across Alaska.

Figure 17. Total State of Alaska Spending on Wildfire Management, 2010 to 2024

Source: ADNR, Division of Forestry Annual Reports, 2010 to 2024.

Note: Expenditures are presented in nominal dollars and are not adjusted for inflation. FY 2010 and FY 2011 total expenditures include Non-Emergency Mitigation expenditures of \$350,200 and \$527,600, respectively, which are not displayed as separate program categories.

There is no publicly available wildfire management spending information specific to the BLM or the USFS. However, State of Alaska budget data provides information on federal sources of funds for each program activity. Table 11 and Table 12 show data for FY 2024 and FY 2025.

Table 11. State and Federal Funds used for Wildfire Management in Alaska, FY 2024

Program	SOA Funds (in \$ thousands)	Share	Federal funds (in \$ thousands)	Share
Forest Management and Development	\$6,372.70	93%	\$474.90	7%
Fire Preparedness	\$23,886.40	99%	\$175.10	1%
Fire Activity	\$96,543.00	91%	\$9,063.60	9%
Total	\$126,802.10	93%	\$9,713.60	7%

Source: ADNR, Division of Forestry and Fire Protection 2024 Annual Report.

Table 12. State and Federal Funds used for Wildfire Management in Alaska, FY 2025

Program	SOA Funds (in \$ thousands)	Share	Federal funds (in \$ thousands)	Share
Forest Management and Development	\$11,442.60	75%	\$3,785.80	25%
Fire Preparedness	\$29,724.00	94%	\$1,768.20	6%
Fire Activity	\$136,077.00	87%	\$20,500.00	13%
Total	\$177,243.60	87%	\$26,054.00	13%

Source: ADNR, Division of Forestry and Fire Protection 2025 Annual Report.

The following is an example of cost allocation from reported 2025 season fire suppression costs:

“The Bear Creek Fire north of Healy burned about 35,000 acres, with a total suppression bill of roughly \$10 million. About 40% of the acreage was on federal land and 60% on state land, making the state’s direct responsibility about \$6 million. The state expects \$4 million in federal reimbursement, with FEMA’s Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) potentially covering ~75% of qualifying state-land costs”

At any rate, if the State were to acquire more federal land, the State of Alaska will incur more expenses for fire suppression.

5 Summary

Overall, the study's analysis suggests that land transfer would involve more than a change in ownership. It could shift recurring management costs, reduce or reallocate federal payments to local governments, affect subsistence priorities and administration, and alter wildfire management obligations.

The magnitude of these impacts would depend on which lands were transferred, whether federal funding or cooperative agreements continued, how the state chose to manage transferred lands, and how local governments and affected communities were treated under any implementing legislation. The land management activities for a given area can be driven by a host of factors, but, state lands are by default general, multiple use lands, while federal lands can have more specific or active management.

The BLM and USFS have significant landholdings in Alaska and their fiscal contributions to managing the resources on their lands, including subsistence and forest resources (for wildfire management) are also substantial. If land transfers were to occur, these costs and responsibilities would be incurred by the State of Alaska. Furthermore, federal payments to local and regional governments would decline if federal acreage declined within their jurisdictions.

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Attachment A		BLM Management Areas		
Management Area	Planning Area Boundary	BLM Acreage	Borough/Census Area	House District/Senate District/Region
Bay Resource Management Area	23 million	1.2 million	Bethel Census Area	38/S/Region IV
			Dillingham Census Area	37/S/Region IV
			Lake and Peninsula Borough	37/S/Region IV
Bering Sea-Western Interior Resource Management Area	62.3 million	13.5 million	Bethel Census Area	38/S/Region IV
			Nome Census Area	39/T/Region IV
			Northwest Arctic Borough	40/T/Region IV
			Kusilvak Census Area	39/T/Region IV
			Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	36/R/Region III
East Alaska Resource Management Area	30.9 million	1.6 million	Denali Borough	30/O/Region V
			Matanuska-Susitna Borough	29/O/Region V
			Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	36/R/Region III
			Chugach Census Area	29/O/Region V
			Yakutat City and Borough	2/A/Region I
Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Resource Management Area	30 million	5.3 million	Nome Census Area	39/T/Region IV
			North Slope Borough	40/T/Region IV
			Northwest Arctic Borough	40/T/Region IV
			Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	36/R/Region III
Ring of Fire Resource Management Area	61.4 million	1.3 million	Anchorage Municipality	9-24/E-L/Region II
			Haines Borough	3/B/Region I
			Hoonah-Angoon Census Area	2/A/region 1
			Kenai Peninsula Borough	6-8/C-D/Region I and V
			Ketchikan Gateway Borough	1/A/Region I
			Lake and Peninsula Borough	37/S/Region IV
			Matanuska-Susitna Borough	29/O/Region V
			Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	1/A/Region I
			Skagway Municipality	3/B/Region I
			Copper River Census Area	36/R/Region III
			Chugach Census Area	29/O/Region V
Central Yukon Resource Management Area	56 million	13.3 million	Northwest Actic Borough	40/T/Region IV
			North Slope Borough	40/T/Region IV
			Denali Borough	30/O/Region V
			Fairbanks North Star Borough	31-35/P-R/Region III
			Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	36/R/Region III

Attachment A.2

Management Area	Resources	Key Management Activities/Programs
Bay Resource Management Area	Fish and Fish habitat (salmon streams, lakes, wetlands)	Protect wildlife habitat and sensitive species, including Steller's eider habitat.
	Wildlife and wildlife habitat (caribou, migratory birds, endangered species e.g. Steller's eider)	Manage wildfire prevention, prescribed burns, and smoke mitigation efforts.
	Vegetation, wetlands, and riparian habitat	Monitor and protect fish habitat, water quality, and aquatic resources.
	Mineral Resources (coal, oil shale, sulphur, phosphate, etc.)	Regulate mining, oil/gas leasing, and land use permits with environmental safeguards.
	Environmental quality for air, water, soils, and floodplains	Maintain public access, subsistence opportunities, and recreation management on BLM lands.
	Forest and forest products	
Bering Sea-Western Interior Resource Management Area	Air quality	Protect air and water quality through environmental compliance and BMPs.
	Soil and water	Manage fish and wildlife habitat, including high-value watersheds and migration areas.
	Fisheries and aquatic species	Regulate mining and mineral development with reclamation requirements.
	Wildlife and wildlife habitat	Conduct wildfire prevention, fuel reduction, and fire suppression planning.
	Vegetation	Protect cultural resources and historic sites through monitoring and surveys.
	Mineral resources (oil, natural gas, tar sands, coal bed methane, geothermal steam, coal)	
	Recreation and subsistence	
	Cultural resources	
East Alaska Resource Management Area	Wildland fire/invasive species management	
	Air quality	Manage wildfire prevention, prescribed burns, and fuels reduction programs.
	Cultural resources	Protect fish habitat and maintain stream/riparian health.
	Fish and wildlife habitat	Regulate mining, oil/gas leasing, and mineral development.
	Forest/vegetation resources	Maintain recreation areas, trails, and public access facilities.
	Mineral resources (leasing, locatable, saleable, abandoned mine lands)	Protect cultural, historic, and paleontological resources.
	Water and soils	
	Recreation/subsistence	
Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Resource Management Area	Paleontological resources	
	Air quality, soil, and water resources	Manage wildfire response, fuels treatment, and fire prevention programs.
	Cultural resources	Protect fish habitat and aquatic ecosystems.
	Fire and fuels management	Regulate mineral leasing, mining, and exploration activities.
	Fish and wildlife habitat	Maintain recreation areas and public access/trail systems.
	Forest and vegetation resources	Protect subsistence opportunities and cultural/paleontological resources.
	Mineral resources (Coal, Oil shale, potassium, sodium, phosphate, Gilsonite)	
	Recreation/subsistence	
Ring of Fire Resource Management Area	Paleontological resources	
	Air resources	Protect fish habitat and monitor riparian/aquatic ecosystems.
	Cultural resources	Regulate mineral leasing, mining, and exploration activities.
	Fisheries and water resources	Manage wildfire and fuels reduction programs.
	Forestry/vegetation	Maintain recreation areas, trails, and public use facilities.
	Mineral resources (Coal, Oil shale, potassium, sodium, phosphate)	Protect wetlands, wildlife habitat, and cultural resources.
	Wildlife habitat	
	Recreation/subsistence	
Central Yukon Resource Management Area	Wetlands/riparian areas	
	Air Quality and Climate	Collaborate with adjacent landowners, federal and state agencies, tribes, communities, other agencies, and individuals and organizations
	Soils	Maintain water quality to prevent the listing of any streams on BLM-managed lands as impaired pursuant to Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act
	Water, Fish, and Riparian and Wetland Vegetation	Ensure that watersheds are in, or are making substantial progress toward, a properly functioning physical condition, which includes their soils in upland, riparian, wetland, and aquatic areas.
	Vegetation (Including Nonnative Invasive Species)	Manage resources for sustained yield through landscape resilience, connectivity, and adaptability; support multiple-use activities, while maintaining functional landscapes.
	Species of Special Concern (Including Special Status Species, Golden Eagle)	Maintain or improve resource and resource use conditions related to subsistence.
	Wildland Fire	Prioritize survey and monitoring of resources and resource areas that could be evolving due to climate change and implementation of mitigation to address those impacts.
	Cultural Resources	
	Paleontological resources	
	Visual Resources	

Attachment A.3

Management Area	Management Activities	Recent Management Actions
Bay Resource Management Area	2004 - BLM begins RMP and EIS process	
	2006 - Draft plan and EIS published, followed by public comment and stakeholder input	
	2007 - Proposed RMP and final EIS released incorporating reedback	
	2008 - Final RMP approved establishing long-term management direction	
	2008-present - implementation phase with site specific projects reviewed through environmental anlysis and public input	
Bering Sea-Western Interior Resource Management Area	2019 - BLM begins planning process for the region	Conducted extensive public and Tribal consultation (2013-2020), including meetings, hearings, and comment periods
	2021 - Draft RMP and EIS released; opens up public comment period and stakeholder engagement to shape management alternatives	Reviewed and denied most protests, confirming compliance with NEPA, FLPMA, and other laws, allowing the plan to move forward
	2023 - Final plan approved, establishing long-term management direction for land use, habitat protection, and development	
	2024 - Management actions take effect, including land allocations, conservation designations, and guidelines for energy/mineral development	
	2024 - Present - Site-specific projects (mining, infrastructure, habitat protection) undergo NEPA review	
East Alaska Resource Management Area	2003 - BLM publishes a notice of intent to prepare an RMP and IES for the East Alaska planning area	2021 - Conducted public review and protest process, receiving and evaluating 8 protest letters
	2005 - Draft plan and environmental analysis published, followed by public comment and stakeholder input	Denied protests and confirmed compliance with laws (FLPMA, NEPA), finalizing the amendment with no changes
	2006 - Final EIS issued	
	2007 - Final RMP approved, establishing long-term management direction for land use, development, and conservation	
	2007 -2020 - BLM implements plan carried out through project-level actions (infrastructure, resource extraction, recreation management) under the RMP framework	
Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Resource Management Area	2021-2021 - BLM begins plan amendment process, including public scoping and environmental assessment	
	2021-current - Ongoing updates through amendments and project-level NEPA reviews rather than a full plan revision	
	2004 - BLM publishes notice of intent and begins RMP/EIS process for planning area	2025 - NANA Regional Broadband Network Project
	2006 - Draft RMP and EIS released with public comments and stakeholder input collected	The National Telecommunications and Information Administration published a Draft EA for a broadband project affecting BLM-managed lands (Kobuk-Seward area)
	2007 - Final EIS completed	
Ring of Fire Resource Management Area	2008 - Final RMP approved, establishing long-term management direction for land use, subsistence, and development	
	2008 - 2020 - Management carried out through project-level decisions (mining access, infrastructure, grazing) consistent with RMP framework	
	2020-2021 - BLM signs Public Land Order 7899 to potentially open lands to development. The PLO eventually got rescinded in 2024 following legal review	
	2022-present - BLM conducts new environmental analysis and public review to address earlier legal issues; ongoing adaptive management and project-level decisions continue	
Central Yukon Resource Management Area	2006 - proposed RMP and EIS released	2020 - Completed environmental review for the Haines Amendment, analyzing impacts on wildlife and land use
	2008 - Final RMP approved establishing long-term management direction for land use	2023 - Completed Environmental Assessment and RMP Amendment review for the Campbell Tract OHV (off-highway vehicle) designation
	2009-2012 - Haines area amendment process begins	2023 - Evaluated public protests and determined they were invalid or lacked sufficient justification
	2020 - Record of decision signed, formally amending the Ring of Fire RMP for the Haines area	
	2022-2023 - BLM revises 2020 amendments through additional updates and clarification	
Central Yukon Resource Management Area	2024 - Campbell Tract SRMA amendment	
	Current - Ongoing implementation, NEPA decisions and monitoring through project-level environmental reviews and recreation and land-use adjustments	
	2013- Notice of Intent to prepare Central Yukon RMP	2025- In accordance with Congressional Review Act, 5 U.S.C. §§ 801-808, the President signed a joint resolution into law disapproving the November 2024 Central Yukon Record of Decision and Approved
	2018- Visual Resource and lands with wilderness characteristics inventory	2025- Public Law 119-50. A rule nullified under the Congressional Review Act must be treated as though it had never taken effect.
Central Yukon Resource Management Area	2018- Mineral Occurrence and Development Potential Report- Leasable	2025- The 2024 RMP Revision should be treated as though it never took effect.
		2025- The Utility Corridor RMP, dated January 11, 1991, the Central Yukon RMP, dated September 26, 1986, and the 1981 Southwest Management Framework Plan are in effect for the Central Yukon Planning Area
	2020- Draft RMP EIS published for public comment	
	2024- Porposed RMP Final EIS published	
	2024- Record of decision/Approved RMP published	
Central Yukon Resource Management Area	2025- Congressional Review Act, disapproved ROD and RMP	

Attachment B.1

USFS Manamnet Areas- The Chugach National Forest

Management Area	Geographic Area	Acreage	Management Areas	House District/Senate District/Region	Resources Being Managed	Key Management Activities/Programs	Recent Management Activities
Chugach National Forest	Kenai Peninsula	1,154,011	Area 1: Wilderness Study Area Area 2: Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers Area 3: Research Natural Areas Area 4: Backcountry Areas Area 8: Front Country	6-8/C-D/Region I and V	Fish and aquatic habitat Wildlife and old-growth habitat Recreation and scenic resources Timber/vegetation resources	Protect fish-bearing streams and watershed health Conduct vegetation and habitat restoration projects Manage recreation, trails, and visitor access	2012-2018 - USFS conducts plan revision process using public engagement and environmental analysis May 2020 - New forest plan approved
	Prince William Sound	2,593,651	Area 1: Wilderness Study Area Area 2: Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers Area 3: Research Natural Areas Area 4: Backcountry Areas Area 5: ANILCA 501(b) Areas Area 6: EVOS-Acquired Lands Area 8: Front Country	5/C/Region 1; 29/; 9/E/Region II; 29/O/Region V		Maintain wildlife habitat and biodiversity	October 2020 - Chugach Forest Plan administrative changes
	Copper River Delta	1,667,487	Area 1: Wilderness Study Area Area 2: Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers Area 3: Research Natural Areas Area 4: Backcountry Areas Area 5: ANILCA 501(b) Areas Area 6: EVOS-Acquired Lands Area 8: Front Country	36/R/Region III			2022 - Administrative changes 2 and 3 with maintenance updates to monitoring indicator updates and Dusky Canada goose nesting restrictions
	Total	5,415,149					

Attachment B.2

USFS Manament Areas- The Tongass National Forest

Management Area	Acreage	Geographic Area	House District/Senate District/Region	Resources Being Managed	Key Management Activities/Programs	Recent Management Activities
Tongass National Forest	16.7 million	Yakutat	2/A/Region 1	Old-growth and young-growth forests	Manage timber harvest and forest restoration	2023 - Forest Service begins plan revision with stakeholder engagement (communities, tribes, industry)
		Skagway	3/B/Region 1	Fish and wildlife habitat	Protect salmon streams and aquatic ecosystems	2025 - Assessment reports released identifying key management needs, including habitat protection, infrastructure, and community collaboration
		Hoonah-Angoon	2/A/Region 1	Watersheds and wetlands	Maintain wildlife habitat and biodiversity	February 2026 - Notice of intent issued; 30-day public comment period opens to gather input on management issues and alternatives
		Petersburg	2/A/Region 1	Timber resources	Provide recreation and tourism access	March 2026 - Preliminary Draft Plan Content published, followed by a 45 day comment period. The draft outlines strategies for timber, conservation, recreation, and land use
		Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area	1/A/Region 1	Recreation and scenic areas	Protect subsistence use and cultural resources	Expected Fall 2026 - Full Draft Plan and Environmental Impact Statement released with a 90 day public review period
				Cultural/heritage resources		Expected 2027 - Final Tongass Forest Plan and EIS completed and implemented
						June 2025, the USDA announced intent to rescind the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule.
						August 2026- USDA announced that the proposed rule and draft EIS that recommends removing the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule will publish in the Federal Register