

BACKGROUND I

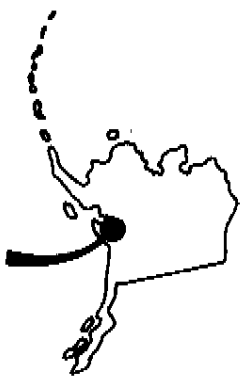
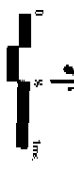
**This copy of the 1974 Far North Bicentennial Park Master Development Plan is made available by Friends of Bicentennial Park.
www.bicentennialpark.info**

LOCATION

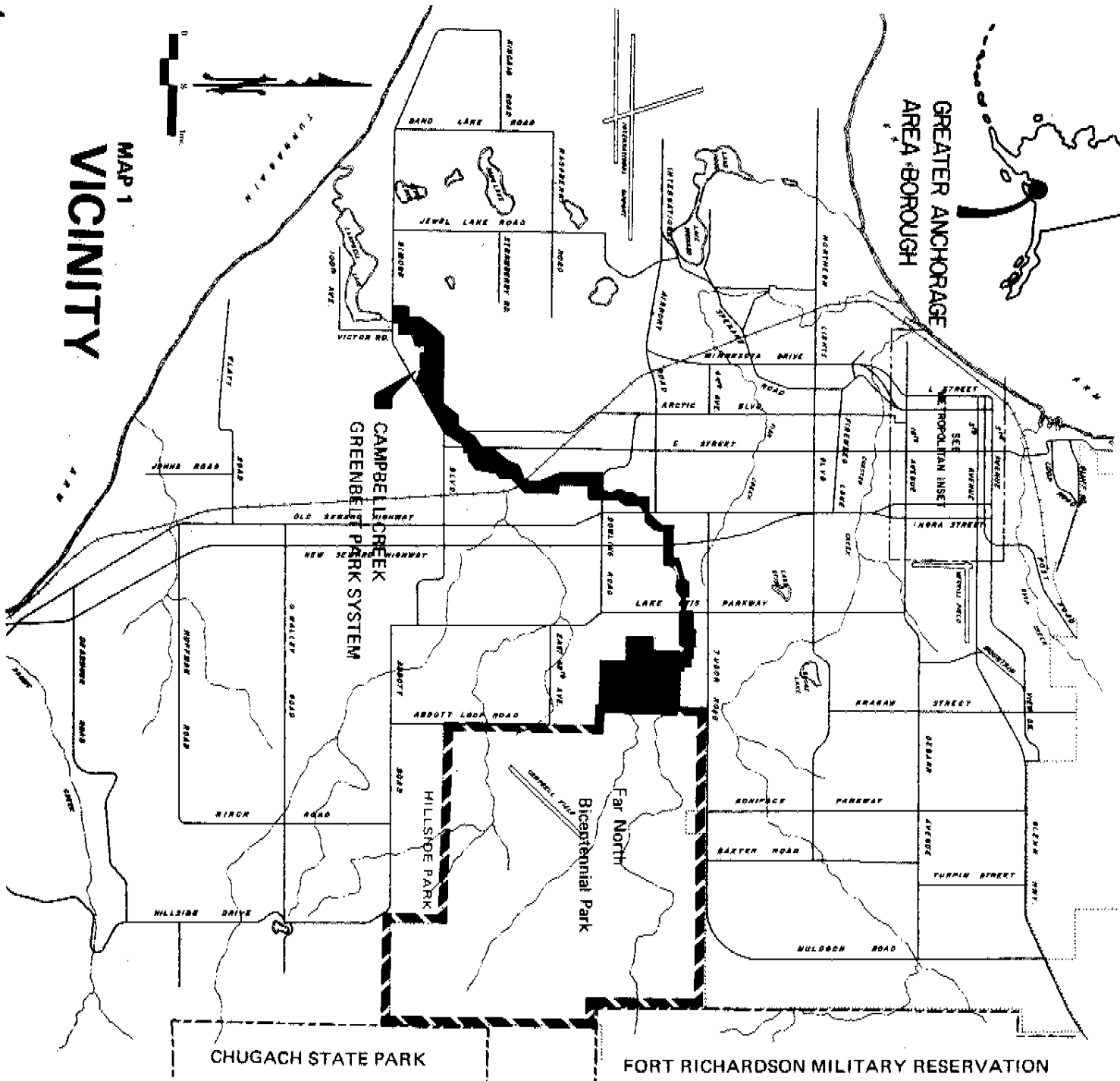
The Greater Anchorage Area Borough occupies 1730 square miles located at the head of Cook Inlet in the Gulf of Alaska. Roughly 85% of the total area of the Borough is covered by the rugged Chugach Mountains. The remainder is a relatively low, flat region along the western and northwestern edge of the Borough. The only significant Borough areas suitable for development are within these lowlands. The extreme western part of the Borough is bounded by the Cook Inlet on three sides and by the mountains on the east. Within this comparatively small area is located the State's largest metropolitan center, known as the Anchorage Bowl.

The Campbell Tract is located in the middle-eastern portion of the Anchorage Bowl in the foothills of the Chugach Mountains. The eastern boundary adjoins the Chugach State Park and a portion of the western boundary adjoins State land proposed for inclusion in the Campbell Creek Greenbelt Park System. Tudor Road, one of the major east-west arterials in the Anchorage Bowl, forms the northern boundary, and the southern boundary abuts the Greater Anchorage Area Borough's Hillside Park and private land. See Map No. 1, Vicinity and Location.

MAP 1 VICINITY



GREATER ANCHORAGE
AREA BOROUGH



CHUGACH STATE PARK

FORT RICHARDSON MILITARY RESERVATION

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

1. Streams and Watersheds

Three streams cross the Campbell Tract in a generally east-west direction. The South Fork of Campbell Creek enters the Tract from a canyon in the southeast corner. It flows diagonally across the Tract, exiting in the northwest corner. The North Fork of Campbell Creek flows westerly from the northeast corner of the Tract, intersecting the South Fork in a large black spruce bog on State land over a half mile west of the Tract. The northernmost branch of Little Campbell Creek originates in the Tract near the Borough's Hillside Park. It flows

westerly from there leaving the Tract near 76th Avenue,

Substantial portions of the North Fork of Campbell Creek traverse flat, wet, spruce bogs, but most of the South Fork flows through well-drained gravels and locally hilly terrain. The flow volume of the South Fork is several times that of the North Fork.

The floodplains of the three streams are broad and irregular where they traverse flat, boggy terrain and are more restricted and uniform in the rolling terrain. All three streams build glaciering ice, which frequently raises their winter levels three or four feet over their normal summer levels. The vegetation in the floodplains, especially shrubs and smaller plants, is vital in diminishing and dispersing flood waters.

In parts of the Campbell Tract the land acts as a sponge in controlling the runoff of waters from the steep mountain slopes. In their study of the Tract, The Bureau of Land Management found that the swampy areas, "even if located outside the floodplains, serve as natural flood control reservoirs. The marshes absorb excess runoff during high-water periods and release water during low-water periods". Because of the potential for downstream flooding from mismanagement of the Campbell Tract, the Bureau recommends preservation of the floodplains and careful management of the adjacent lands.

A special Flood Hazard Report by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has delineated the floodplain of Campbell Creek. In their report they state that the possibility of serious flooding does "provide a serious threat to the stability and integrity of structures built within the Flood Hazard Zone". Preservation of the floodplains of Campbell and Little Campbell Creeks as open space will aid greatly in control of flooding and in maintaining the high water quality.

A large watershed area covers approximately the eastern half of the tract. In this area there is considerable recharging of the deep water system since the confining layer of clay which prevents deep water recharge over most of the Anchorage Bowl does not extend to this area. In addition, the gravel areas along the creek allow some of the water to find its way into the deep water system. This recharge area is of great importance to the entire Anchorage Bowl for its water supply from deep wells.

The Bureau of Land Management has recommended that uses in this area be restricted until "the sources and means of supplying the future water needs of the Anchorage area are developed". Park and open space uses are considered compatible with watershed management.

2. Vegetation

Several different vegetation patterns occur on the Campbell Tract with spruce-birch forest dominant. Most of the streamside vegetation along the South Fork consists of black cottonwood, the largest tree found on the Anchorage peninsula. Found scattered with it are white spruce, birch and a few localized stands of black spruce. Along Little Campbell Creek the black spruce, birch, alder and willow predominate. Scattered groupings of alder and willow are also found along the North and South Forks of Campbell Creek.

Salmon runs still occur in both forks of Campbell Creek, and Dolly Varden trout are native to both streams. Moose inhabit the Tract, increasing in numbers during the winter as heavy snow drives them from the mountains to the lowlands. Beaver, muskrat and mink can be found within the immediate vicinity of the streams. Waterfowl nest and feed in marshy areas and small ponds along the North Fork of Campbell Creek.

In its management studies of the forestry potential, the Bureau of Land Management found that in the lower forest area only salvage removal of dead wood should be permitted and that in the upper forest area there should be no disturbance to the forest cover. They found that "open space, much on the order of parks, has a premium value". It was felt that undisturbed vegetation was critical for a number of reasons:

- forest cover minimizes downstream flooding;
- water quality is high when the forest floor is left undisturbed;
- erosion is minimized;
- wildlife is afforded cover;
- water recharge is protected by slower runoff; and
- pollution is controlled by protection of the airshed.

3. Wildlife

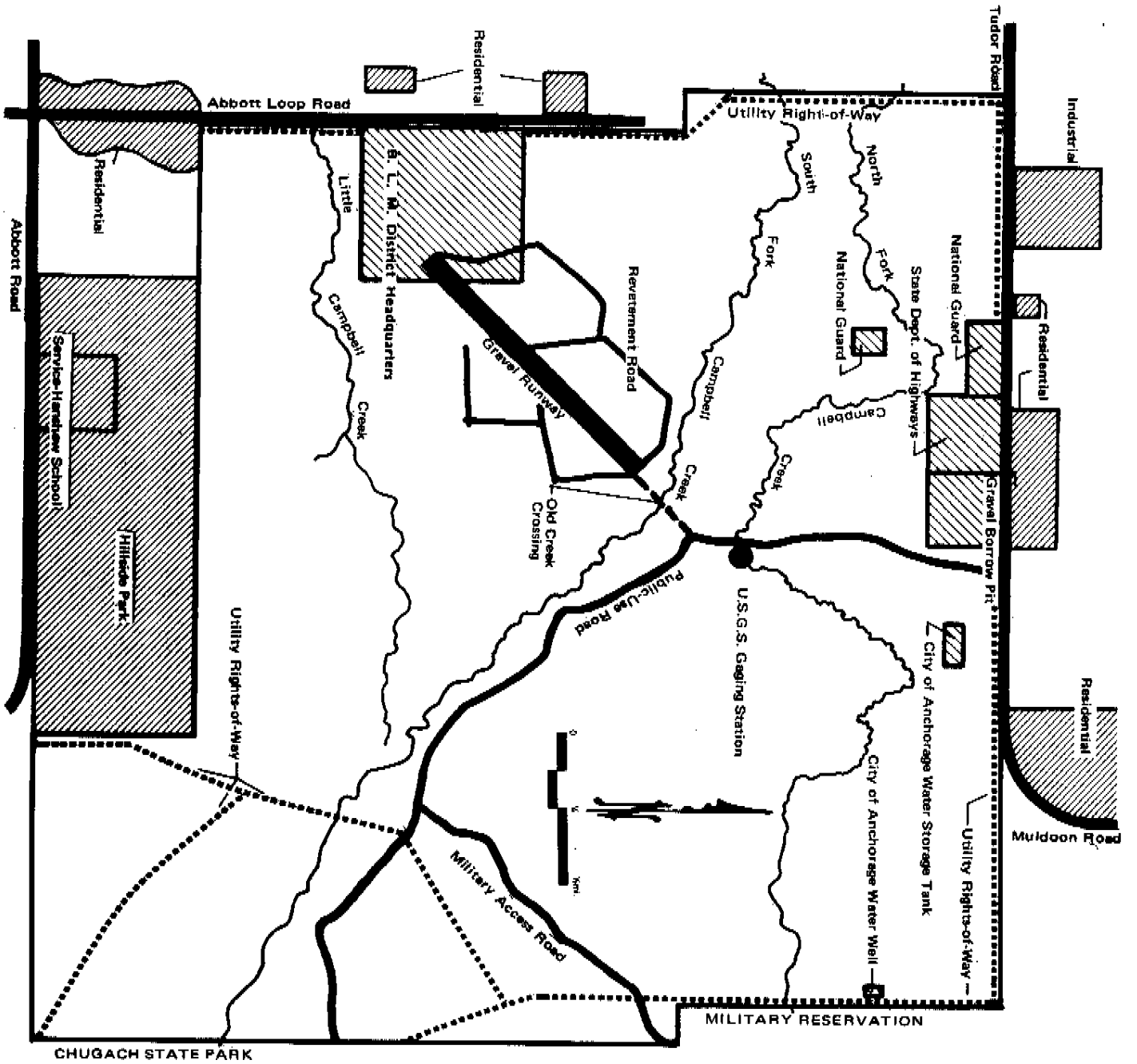
The abundance of wildlife on the Campbell Tract in all seasons of the year is quite remarkable considering its proximity to developed areas.

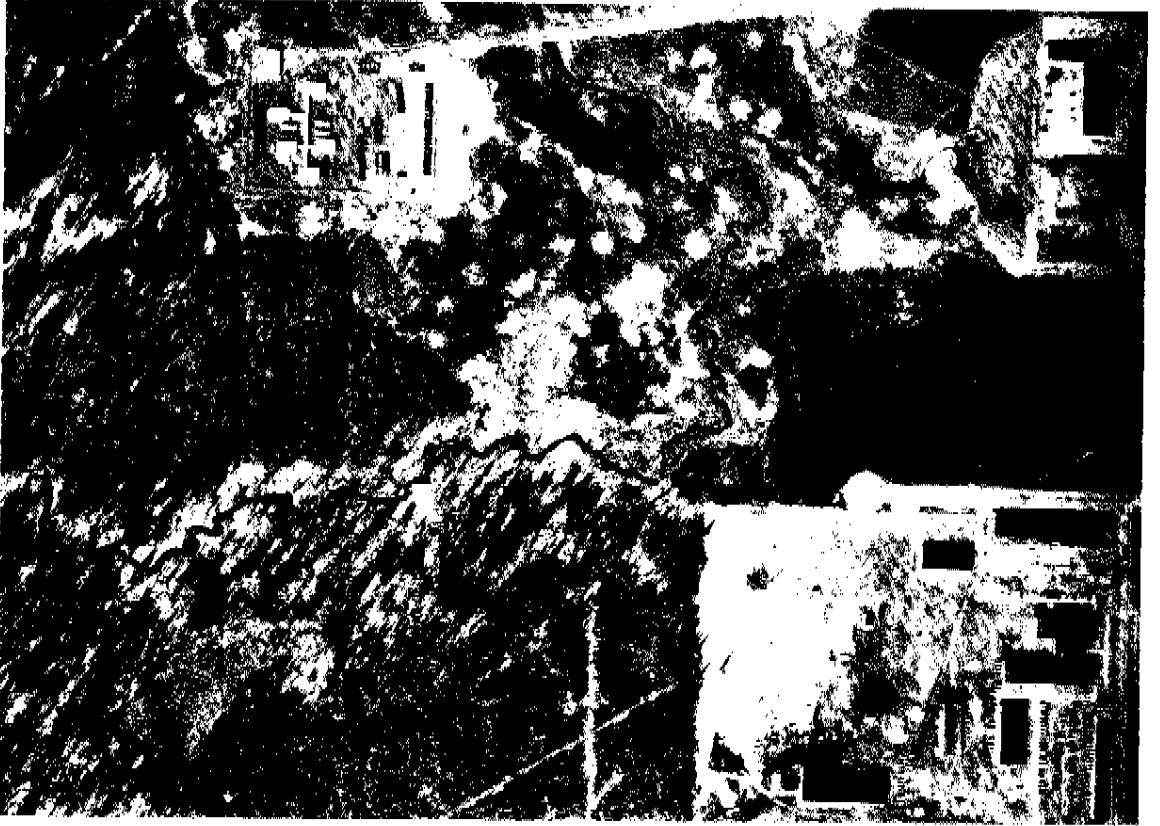
EXISTING USES

The majority of the Campbell Tract is undeveloped and in a natural state. However, a significant amount of development has occurred, primarily around the edges of the Tract. These existing uses are briefly described below and are shown on Map No. 2, Existing Land Use.

1. The South Central Headquarters of the State Department of Highways is located on a 40 acre site on Tudor Road at the intersection of the Boniface Parkway. All of the natural vegetation has been removed from this State-owned site and five major structures have been built. These buildings have a total ground floor area of 90,000 square feet and parking for 365 autos.
 - a. The Alaska National Guard has the use of four sites which total 65 acres. These include the following uses:
 - a. The Anchorage Armory, located on 20 acres of land patented to the State of Alaska. This site has 1,320 feet of frontage on Tudor Road and a 26,000 square foot armory.
 - b. Another 20 acre site is located just south of the armory. The Alaska National Guard has a license to use this land for training purposes. An old antenna field is located there.
 - c. The Guard also has a license on a 10 acre piece further south and across Campbell Creek. This is the site of six old, substandard buildings which have a total of 8,650 square feet. This area is used mainly for storage.
 4. A five million gallon City water-holding tank is located on 5 acres of land near Tudor Road in the northeastern part of the Tract.
 5. The City of Anchorage operates a well which is situated on 2½ acres of land near the eastern boundary of the Tract.
 6. The entire Campbell Tract is crisscrossed by a crude network of trails. These have been used by tanks and other military equipment, dog sleds, skiers, hikers, snowstroers, snowmobilers, and many others. Utility wires and pipelines also cross the Tract and there is a gaging station located on the North Fork of Campbell Creek.
3. The Bureau of Land Management has reserved 160 acres in the west central portion of the Tract. On the site is a building which houses the Anchorage District Office. This complex serves as headquarters for all BLM resource management, communications, and fire control activities for the southern half of Alaska. The 160 acres does not include the 5,000 foot gravel runway used by the Bureau's fire control operations. The runway is located just east of the 160 acre site.
 - d. Two miles south of the armory, the Guard has license to a 15 acre site located on the south side of the Campbell Airstrip runway. The site is not in use at the present time.

MAP 2 EXISTING LAND USE





Above — Aerial showing National Guard buildings on left and Department of Highways facilities on right.

Right — Aerial showing BLM District Headquarters, portion of the gravel runway and some of the reversion roads.

