

Department of Natural Resources

Division of Mining, Land and Water



Fact Sheet: Wheeled Vehicle Use on State Land

Travel Across State Land Under Generally Allowed Uses

As provided in 11 AAC 96.020, the use of a highway vehicle with a curb weight of up to 10,000 pounds, including a four-wheel-drive vehicle and a pickup truck, or a recreational-type vehicle off-road or all-terrain vehicles with a curb weight of up to 1,500 pounds or less are generally allowed on state land managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Division of Mining, Land and Water (DMLW). These uses and activities may be restricted in legislatively designated areas and special use areas as listed in 11 AAC 96.014 (also listed in this factsheet below). Generally Allowed Uses (GAU) do not require a permit from DMLW, however, vehicle users must adhere to the GAU conditions per 11 AAC 96.025. You may need other state, federal, or borough permits for these uses or activities. Permits may be required from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and/or the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), Habitat Section. The following wheeled vehicles are allowed under GAU.

An **all-terrain vehicle (ATV)** is defined as any motorized vehicle:

- Designed by the original manufacturer for off-highway use
- Having a seat or saddle for the use of the rider
- 55 inches or less in width
- Having a curb weight of 1,500 pounds or less, manufacturer standard weight
- Designed to travel on three or more low-pressure tires

An **off-highway motorcycle (OHM)** is defined as any motorized vehicle:

- Designed by the original manufacturer for off-highway use
- Having a seat or saddle for the use of the rider
- Designed to travel with no more than two wheels in contact with the ground

A **highway vehicle (HV)** is defined as any motorized vehicle:

- Designed by the original manufacturer for on-highway use
- Legally and currently registered for highway use under AS 28.10.011
- Having a curb weight of up to 10,000 pounds

Travel Across State Land Under the General Permit

Pursuant to AS 38.05.850 DMLW issued a General Permit (GP) authorizing use of ATVs and UTVs that exceed the GAU limits, but do not exceed 2,500 pounds. Vehicle users may be required to obtain permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and/or the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), Habitat Section. The following criteria describes wheeled vehicles allowed under the General Permit.

An ATV or UTV may be used under the General Permit provided they meet the following criteria:

- 80 inches or less in width
- Having a curb weight of 2,500 pounds or less
- Designed to travel on four or more non-highway tires

Use of any motorized vehicle that does not meet the criteria for GAU or the General Permit on state land requires an authorization from DNR. Examples would include heavy equipment, former highway vehicles now fitted for sole off-road use, former military vehicles exceeding 10,000 pounds of curb weight, or home-made vehicles. An authorization may be required from ADF&G-Habitat for any motorized travel in fish-bearing water bodies or in a state refuge, sanctuary, or critical habitat area.

List of Special Use Land Designations Excluded from Generally Allowed Uses

Special Use Areas are listed in 11 AAC 96.014. DMLW 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. Special use land designations originate from an area plan, management plan, or are made at the director's discretion to address a certain need. Before a designation is made, however, other agencies and the public are given a chance to comment on the proposal.

For more information about the areas of state land that DMLW has designated as special use land:

<https://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/lands/special-use-areas/>.

- Alyeska Ski Resort
- Baranof Lake Trail
- Caribou Hills
- Exit Glacier Road
- Glacier/Winner Creek
- Hatcher Pass Special Use Area
- Haines State Forest
- Indian Cove
- Kamishak Special Use Area
- Kasilof River Special Use Area
- Kenai Fjords Coastline
- Kenai River Special Management Area Proposed Additions
- Knik River Special Use Area
- Lake Clark Coastline
- Lower Goodnews River
- Lower Talarik Creek
- Marmot Island Special Use Area
- Nenana River Gorge & McKinley Village Subdivisions
- North Slope Area
- Northern Southeast Area, Tidelands
- Nushagak
- Poker Flat North
- Poker Flat South
- Resurrection Bay
- Tangle Lakes Archaeological District
- Thompson Pass

Be aware that this list does not exempt users from the permit requirements of other state, federal, or local agencies. For example, ADF&G - Habitat Section may require a permit for a stream crossing or if the use will take place in a state game refuge. GAU have also been modified for the Knik River Public Use Area.

For assistance determining land status or for additional information, contact DNR:

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