

Recreation and Scenic Resources

Goal

Recreation Opportunities. Lands will be provided for accessible outdoor recreational opportunities with well-designed and conveniently located recreational facilities. In addition, undeveloped lands should be provided for recreation pursuits that do not require developed facilities. These opportunities shall be realized by:

- providing recreation opportunities on state land and water that serves multiple purposes such as habitat protection, timber management, and mineral resource extraction;
- assisting communities through cooperative planning, conveyance of state lands, and grants-in-aid for parks and trails within population centers;
- encouraging commercial development of recreational facilities and services through concession contracts, land sales, leases, and permits where public recreation needs can most effectively be provided by private enterprise, while minimizing environmental impacts and conflicts with the existing users of an area;
- protection of recreation resources including public access, visual resources, fish and wildlife important for recreation, and, where appropriate, the isolation and unique wilderness characteristics of the planning area;
- management of recreation to minimize user conflict, provide for a quality experience for all user groups, and protect the natural values and attributes of the area within which the recreation occurs; and,
- protection of ecosystems and habitat from damage caused by inappropriate recreation use.

Management Guidelines

A. Coordination with Other Landowners and Users of an Area. Recreation management, including the location and management of recreation facilities, will take into account the current and projected future uses of lands owned by local governments and private landowners, and should strive for compatibility with adjacent current and projected uses.

B. Roles of Different Public Land Owners in Providing Public Recreational Opportunities. Generally, the state's role is to retain and manage land supporting recreational opportunities of regional or statewide significance. The state and federal governments are most capable of providing recreational opportunities that require large land

areas, while local government is generally best suited for providing and managing community recreation opportunities. To recognize local government's role in providing community recreation needs, the state may transfer state land designated Public Recreation-Dispersed (Rd) or state recreation sites within or near existing communities, if the municipality has parks and recreation powers and if this action is in the overall best interest of the state (AS 38.05.810). The selection of these sites shall be agreed to by local government and the state, and shall be contingent on the local government's commitment to develop and maintain the recreation uses, facilities, and values of these areas.

C. Public Use Sites. Uses that adversely affect public use sites or areas should not be authorized. Uses that are made available to the public, recreational or other sites (such as airstrip development or docks) may be authorized if consistent with the management intent for the public use site or area and if there is a demonstrated public need.

D. Private Commercial Recreation Facilities and Operations on State Land. Lodges or other private commercial facilities and operations designed to be run as or to support private commercial recreation facilities may be authorized if the facility or operation fulfills the conditions outlined in this section, conforms to the requirements of AS 38.05.850, AS 38.05.070 and .075 or AS 38.05.073, or a management plan is prepared in accordance with AS 41.21.302(c) authorizing the facility.

If so authorized, the facility or operation should be sited, constructed, and operated in a manner that creates the least conflict with natural values and existing uses of the area. The commercial facility and the use it generates should avoid significant adverse impacts on fish and wildlife habitat and existing uses of an area. For facilities supporting recreational fish and wildlife harvest, ADF&G should be consulted on the possible effects of increased harvest on fish and wildlife resources, and on established commercial, recreation, and subsistence users.

E. Commercial Recreation Leasing Processes. There are several processes for leasing state land for commercial recreational facilities under the following Alaska Statutes (AS): AS 38.05.070, 38.05.073, 38.05.075, and 38.05.810. The first three are used for commercial recreation facilities and the last is used for not-for-profit entities that provide some type of recreational use or service.

In particular, AS 38.05.073 is designed for creating recreational facility leaseholds. This statute requires that the regional land use plan identify areas suitable for recreational facility leasing. Given the broad scope of the ETAP, the determination of particular sites is impractical, although such uses are generally appropriate within most plan designations, except Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Resources. Authorizations under AS 38.05.073 must evaluate the adequacy of the proposed recreation facility, and a final site determination and best interest finding must support this determination. Any amendments to the ETAP to accommodate a .073 commercial lease shall be reviewed by the Director of DMLW prior to or concurrent with the adjudication process.

F. Permits, Easements, and Leases Adjacent to Recreation Facilities. Permits, easements, and leases may be issued adjacent to recreation facilities if the land manager determines that the two uses can be made compatible by design, siting or operating guidelines; or if the land manager determines there is no feasible and prudent alternative for the activity. This guideline also applies to sites reserved for future recreation facilities. The land manager's determination will be made after consultation with the facility manager.

G. Management of Recreation Use on State Lands. To the extent provided by law, DNR is to manage recreation use and activities to enable a variety of uses and vehicle types, while ensuring that adverse impacts to fish and wildlife species and habitats are avoided or minimized, and to avoid the creation of user conflicts and if in existence, to minimize their impact.

H. Scenic Areas of Exceptional Value. To the extent feasible and prudent, areas of exceptional scenic value are to be retained by the state or protected through the use of easements, setbacks, or other management techniques. Authorizations issued by DNR shall consider scenic values and such areas during the process of adjudication, and if found to be in the state's best interest, should retain or protect these areas through appropriate stipulations or management requirements.

I. Consultation with ADF&G. Consult with ADF&G in the siting of facilities where fish and wildlife species or important habitats are likely to occur.

J. Other Guidelines that Affect Recreation, Tourism, and Scenic Resources. Other guidelines will affect recreation, tourism, and scenic resources. See other sections of this chapter.