

Recreation, Tourism, 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 less developed land and water areas that serve 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;
- protecting 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 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 likely, management of lands managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, local governments and private landowners, and compatibility with the existing uses of an area.

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 General Use (Gu), 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. Public Recreation Facilities

1. **Public Use Cabins.** A system of public use cabins should be established in state parks. Generally, such facilities should not be provided on general state land, which is the focus of this plan. Refer to the plan maps in Chapter 3 for existing public use cabin sites.

2. **Location of Recreation Facilities**

General:

a. **Preferred Locations.** Recreation facilities, including public use cabins, minimum development campsites, mooring buoys and other low intensity facilities for the general public (i.e., not commercial private facilities), are appropriate at sites that encourage public use at a particular location, direct public use away from inappropriate locations, accommodate competing or conflicting uses, and minimize damage to the environment.

b. **Inappropriate Locations.** Recreation facilities are not appropriate where the management intent of this plan is to maintain the natural condition of the area free from additional concentration of recreation users or significant evidence of human use. In addition, recreation facilities should not be placed adjacent to cultural resource sites that might subject the sites to vandalism because of the increased public use.

Specific – Public Mooring Buoys:

Mooring buoys will not be located: a) in existing natural anchorages unless they would increase the capacity or reliability of the anchorage (for example, make it reliable in different wind or wave conditions); b) adjacent to frequently used campsites, unless intended as a part of the campsite development; c) where they may interfere with commercial fishermen including drift net, purse seine, or set net operations; d) in areas that will conflict with state or federal wilderness management objectives; or e) in or adjacent to sensitive habitats, such as eel grass beds, unless they will help preserve the habitat by minimizing the use of anchors.

E. Private Commercial Recreation Facilities and Operations on State Land. Lodges (including floating lodges), tent camps, floats, 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.

1. **Siting, Construction, and Operation.** 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. To the extent practical, floatlodes should be visually and acoustically hidden from main travel routes, frequently used anchorages, regionally important campsites, and frequently used recreation areas.¹⁴ 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.

To protect existing habitats, resources, and uses, floating private commercial recreation facilities should not be authorized in the following areas: designated habitat or harvest areas, anchorages, areas designated recreation (Rc or Rd), or areas adjacent to an upland residential subdivision. In addition, they should not be permitted near an authorized aquatic farming operation, known cultural or historic sites, public use cabins, or where the use is prohibited in the management intent statement for a specific unit in this plan.

Private commercial recreation facilities may be authorized in these areas by DNR if it is determined that the permitting of a floating facility is in the best interest of the state and the use is found consistent with the Alaska Coastal Management Program.

2. **Upland Access to Floatlodes.** Where the need for upland access to a floatlodge is anticipated, the floatlodge should be tied where there is legal upland access to the site.
3. **Authorizations for Floatlodes.** Floatlodes shall also meet the requirements for these structures under *Floating Facilities*.

F. Commercial Recreation Leasing Processes. There are two processes for leasing state land for commercial recreational facilities – one process is described by AS 38.05.073, the other by AS 38.05.070 and .075. Unless Chapter 3 specifically requires the .073 commercial leasing process for a management unit, applications may be adjudicated under either process. DNR will determine the appropriate process on a case-by-case basis. ADOT/PF has its own leasing process that applies to land it manages in rights-of-way, airports, materials sites, and other lands and facilities it manages.

1. **The .070 / .075 Process.** The .070 / .075 process is simpler and faster, but it offers the state less flexibility in choosing the lessee and in structuring lease payments. It is generally suited to small projects with few anticipated impacts. The management intent for the unit need not specifically state that this type of leasing is an allowed use for it to be authorized under this process.
2. **The .073 Process.** The .073 process is longer, but it allows submission of alternative proposals for a particular lease, requires more public involvement in reviewing a proposed lease, and offers the state more choices for structuring payments on the lease. The .073 process is generally suited to large projects that are likely to have

¹⁴ See the Floating Facilities section in this chapter for additional standards on this use.

significant impacts on surrounding areas. Under the .073 process, DNR will give public notice that it intends to solicit proposals for a lease. DNR will then prepare a “request for proposals” that must include specific information on the lease and must be advertised in state and local newspapers. Once a prospective lessee has been chosen, DNR must give public notice and hold public meetings on the preliminary decision to issue the lease.

For a .073 lease to be considered in a unit, the plan must specifically allow for this type of leasing in a given unit before it can be authorized. Since no units are identified in this area plan specifically for commercial recreation leasing under the .073 process, a plan amendment will be required to accommodate this use.

DNR may impose eligibility standards, including proof of the developer’s financial backing and capability, experience in this type of development, ability to meet bonding or insurance requirements, and ability to comply with resource and environmental analysis requirements.

The .073 process requires that potential economic, social, and environmental impacts of the proposed project must be evaluated. DNR may require the prospective developer to fund additional studies; the studies must involve the appropriate state agencies, and ADF&G must approve any studies involving fish and game.

G. Permits and Leases Adjacent to Recreation Facilities. Tideland activities may be allowed adjacent to public recreation facilities, including public use cabins, lodges, or fuel stops 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.

H. Pasagshak, Lake Miam, and Saltery Drainages. The large area situated generally south of Cape Chiniak Road and north of Ugak Bay has experienced intense dispersed recreation pressure, and this is expected to worsen over time. Most of this is associated with the use of All Terrain Vehicles (ATV) trying to access the wildlife and fishery resources of this area for the purposes of hunting and fishing. Much of this activity occurs along the old Saltery Cove Road, which traverses areas of private land along the American River for the first 4-5 miles before entering state land and then continuing through a valley before ending at Saltery Cove and Saltery Creek/Lake. Other less intense areas of ATV use include the drainage of the Olds River and its extension southward to Lake Miam and Portage Bay. This activity has resulted in increasing pressure for remote recreational cabins, hardened campsites, and various other types of public recreation facilities. It has also resulted in the development of a multitude of individual ATV trails, some of which cross and degrade anadromous fish stream spawning and rearing habitat, and in increasing conflicts between recreation and commercial grazing. All of this area is under grazing leases issued by DNR.

These issues were evaluated in detail during the planning process and a specific management approach affects these areas, reflecting the general community consensus that emerged during the review of the Public Review Draft. The management of state land within the Pasagshak, Lake Miam, and Saltery drainages is to balance, on a long-term basis, the use of these areas for both public recreation and grazing. Management units within these drainages, including units K-50A, K-51A, K-73F, K-74, K-75, and K-76, are to be managed to maintain this balance and are co-designated Grazing and Public Recreation – Dispersed. Grazing operations and recreational uses are to be conducted to avoid conflict between recreational uses and livestock operations, and to avoid impacts to wildlife, sensitive fisheries, and habitat. State land is to be retained, land disposals of all types (residential, commercial, and industrial) are prohibited, and authorizations for residential, general commercial and industrial uses are considered inappropriate with certain exceptions. Lakes Pasagshak, Miam, and Saltery, as well as certain streams, are to be protected through setback and non-disturbance requirements. In those areas where a recreational use could affect grazing and if the use requires an authorization from DNR, such authorizations are to address the actual and/or potential conflict between recreational users and grazing operations. These authorizations shall include best management practices designed to preclude such conflict or mitigate impacts to levels that permit the existing and reasonable levels of new recreation uses to continue. Consult the management intent for units K-50A, K-51A, K-73F, K-74, and K-75 for more detail on these requirements. Also consult also Management Guideline H in Grazing for requirements that pertain to grazing operations.

I. Other Guidelines that Affect Recreation, Tourism, and Scenic Resources. Other guidelines will affect recreation, tourism, and scenic resources. For details of these guidelines, see the following sections of this chapter:

- Coordination and Public Notice
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Harvest Areas
- Floating Facilities
- Forestry
- Material Sites
- Settlement
- Shorelines, Stream Corridors and Coastal Areas
- Subsurface Resources
- Public Access Easements, Neighborhood Trails, and Public Access