

TRAIL MANAGEMENT

Goals

Public Use Opportunities. Ensure continued opportunities for public use of important recreation, public access, and historic trails of regional and statewide significance.

Local Trails. Assist in establishing local trail systems that provide access to community recreation areas.

Trail Corridors. Protect or establish trail corridors to meet projected future use requirements as well as protecting current use.

Management Guidelines

A. Corridors for Special Trails. Some trails require unusual widths or management practices because of historical significance or unique values. Management guidelines should be developed for such trails on a case-by-case basis. As a general policy, special trails will be protected by publicly owned corridors. These corridors will generally be wider than the 100-foot minimum trail buffer width established for trails of regional or statewide significance in Guideline B below.

B. Corridors for Trails of Regional or Statewide Significance. This category includes the majority of trails on state land that are identified in the Tanana Basin Trail Mapping Project. These trails provide foot, dogsled, horse, or sometimes vehicle access for a variety of purposes, some of which may require authorization from DNR. Most have a history of public use, and increased use can be expected as the state's population increases.

Trail Buffer Width. Trails of regional or statewide significance on state land will be protected by publicly owned corridors that have a minimum width of 100 feet (50 feet each side of centerline). These corridors should be designed to protect the quality of the experience of the user and to minimize negative effects, such as noise or dust, from adjacent land uses. Corridor widths may be increased to minimize land use and ownership conflicts, to protect the privacy of adjacent landowners, to separate motorized from non-motorized uses, to allow

future siting of public facilities, to allow flexibility for rerouting, or to adapt a trail to allow specific public uses or aesthetic or environmental concerns. Corridor widths may vary along the length of a trail because of the above considerations. The width of a corridor on any portion of a trail should also be based on the management intent for adjacent public land as expressed through applicable land use plans. However, in no case should the width of the buffer be less than 100 feet. Trail corridors should be designed in consultation with affected divisions of DNR, DF&G, DOT&PF, and local trail committees. Activity areas of 10-40 acres may be identified along trails for activities such as camping areas and rest areas.

C. Corridors for Neighborhood and Community Trails. Local trails that are not of regional or statewide significance will be identified and protected through management plans or disposal design under guidelines recommended in the department's subdivision design manual. The following criteria should be used to determine whether a local trail should be protected by easement or public ownership:

- 1. Neighborhood Collector Trails.** If the local trail serves as a neighborhood collector trail that connects to a public open space system or a regional statewide trail, it will be kept in public ownership.
- 2. Use By Neighborhood Residents.** If the trail is to be used mostly by neighborhood residents for their own use, it should be dedicated to the public or local government.
- 3. Local Pedestrian Access.** If the objective is to provide local pedestrian access that is not part of an integrated neighborhood or community trail system, an easement may be used. This would typically occur when the purpose is to establish access between two lots in order to improve pedestrian circulation within the subdivision where a greenbelt and neighborhood trail system does not provide adequate access or where it is impractical to establish such an integrated trail system.
- 4. Buffers and Easements.** In cases of land disposals where lots are not pre-designated, either a publicly owned buffer or an easement

will be used to protect designated trails. If a trail has the characteristics described in 1 or 2 above, it will be retained in public ownership. If it has the characteristics described in 3 above, an easement will be reserved.

D. Identification of Trails. Prior to lease or disposal of public lands, trails that merit protection by one of the methods described in guidelines A through C, above, should be identified. The Division of Land will be the lead agency for identification of trails and will consult with the other divisions of DNR, DOT&PF and DF&G. In addition, any agency, organization, or individual may identify public trails to be considered for protection.

E. Land Use in Trail Corridors. To the extent feasible and prudent, land use activities within a trail corridor--for example, permits, leases, timber sales, and material sales--will be managed and permits and leases issued so as to not adversely affect trail use or the aesthetic character of the trail. This does not preclude trail crossings or rerouting of trails as described below.

F. Rerouting Trails. Rerouting trails for a short distance may be authorized to minimize land use conflicts or to facilitate use of a trail if alternate routes provide opportunities similar to the original. If trails are rerouted, provision should be made for construction of new trail segments if warranted by type of use. Rerouting trails should be done in consultation with affected divisions of DNR, DOT&PF, DF&G, and local trail committees. Historic trails that follow well-established routes should not be rerouted unless necessary to maintain trail use.

G. Trail Crossings. When it is necessary for powerlines, pipelines, or roads to cross trail corridors, crossings should be at 90° angles when feasible. An exception is when a trail corridor is deliberately combined with a public utility or transportation corridor. Where feasible, vegetative screening should be preserved when a utility crosses or co-locates within a trail corridor.

H. Other Guidelines Affecting Trail Management. Other guidelines may affect trail management. See in particular the following sections of this chapter:

- Agriculture and Grazing
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Harvest
- Forestry
- Lakeshore Management
- Materials
- Public Access
- Recreation and Tourism
- Settlement
- Stream Corridors and Instream Flow
- Subsurface Resources
- Transportation
- Wetland Management