



Nancy Lake State Recreation Area Management Plan



Planning Update #1

Dear Recreational Enthusiast and Interested Person,

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR) began the planning process to revise the 1983 Master Plan for the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area (NLSRA) late in the fall of 2008. Two public scoping meetings were held (one in Anchorage and one in Wasilla) to provide background information on the planning process and present resource and management concerns identified by DNR staff within the recreation area. More importantly, it was an opportunity for people to voice their concerns or issues affecting the NLSRA and to ask questions related to the planning process. Both meetings were well attended and generated spirited discussions and feedback.

Over 80 people attended the two meetings held in the fall of 2008. Based on the discussions at those meetings, the use of Off Highway Vehicles (OHV's) inside the recreation area on the Butterfly Lake Trail is an issue that many people are concerned about. Discussions related to OHV use on the Butterfly Lake Trail included both opposition and support for that type of use, impacts associated with OHV use, and history of use. Other issues identified at the public meetings included: planning process; need for plan revision; facility development; impacts to resources; signage and mapping; access; and, park values and experience (a complete list of the issues identified at the meetings is available on the NLSRA website). Identification of issues by the public and those identified by park staff has helped us focus our research and data needs related to this process.

Since the meetings were conducted we have been reviewing the comments; reviewing existing park files; discussing and refining issues with park staff; and, identifying additional information needed for the plan. We also conducted several site visits to observe conditions within NLSRA including spending a day with a US Army Corps of Engineers representative reviewing past and present projects. We continue to expand our distribution list to include more individuals and stakeholder groups. We have enhanced your ability to register online to receive information on the planning process and have added an online comment form. The ability to review comments online should be available shortly. The remainder of this update will provide some background information on NLSRA in addition to describing the next steps in the planning process.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the meetings and took time to submit comments. We hope you pass this update to others that are interested in planning for the future of recreation in the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area. Check the website regularly to get updated information.

The NLSRA website is:

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/units/nancylk/planning.htm>

**The Nancy Lake State Recreation Area
Planning Team**

Background Information

NLSRA contains approximately 22,000 acres of rolling hills with mature spruce/birch forests, numerous lakes and ponds, and extensive wetland habitats. It was established in 1966 by an act of the Legislature (AS 41.21.450 – 41.21.465¹). Consistent with these statutes, regulations specific to NLSRA have been adopted (11 AAC 20.540 – 20.555²). These regulations specifically address weapons, aircraft, motorized boats, and snow vehicles in the recreation area. State recreation areas differ from other units managed by DPOR in that they are intended to be managed for a maximum level of recreational opportunities and should provide a diversity of recreational experiences in keeping with regional use patterns and preferences. Modification of the natural environment to enhance recreation is envisioned for recreation areas without significant adverse impacts to the natural systems.

NLSRS contains approximately 36 acres of state owned lands managed for intensive recreational use. A campground, picnic area, and boat launch are located within NLSRS. It was established in 1967 by administrative action. State recreation sites differ from other units in the park system because they are intended to be relatively small units managed for one or more recreational uses or to provide access to adjacent non-park managed land and water. Modification of the natural environment to enhance recreation is envisioned for recreation sites and management objectives generally emphasize recreational use over resource protection. (Previous paragraphs paraphrased from: *Alaska State Park System: Statewide Framework*; 1982 [currently under revision]).

Recreational Opportunities

NLSRA is a popular family destination due to its close proximity to population centers, ease of access, and diversity of recreational opportunities. Best known for its canoe trail system, this area also provides opportunities for family oriented recreation at the South Rolly Lake Campground, the Nancy Lake State Recreation Site (NLSRS), remote campsites, or at the 13 public use cabins. Hiking opportunities are limited to the Red Shirt Lake Trail and the lesser known and minimally developed East Red Shirt Lake Trail and Chicken Lake Cross-

Park trails. Some hiking does occur on the Lynx Lake Road and Butterfly Lake Trail, but this is primarily related to use by local property owners on Lynx, Butterfly, and Delyndia lakes. Picnicking opportunities can be found at Nancy Lake State Recreation Site and at the picnic area on the north end of South Rolly Lake.

Winter recreationists have ample opportunity for skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, skijoring, and dog mushing. The first two miles of the Nancy Lake Parkway and the winter parking area are maintained during the winter to facilitate wintertime use. The land north of the parkway is closed to the use of motorized vehicles with the exception of one motorized corridor that provides a link to the existing regional snowmobile trail system. A network of cross country ski trails is maintained north of the parkway. Cross country skiing, skijoring, and dog mushing occurs south of the parkway on the many trails and routes and on the unplowed portion of the Nancy Lake Parkway. When snow cover is adequate to protect underlying vegetation, the land south of the parkway is open to the use of motorized vehicles.

Hunting and trapping are allowed by regulation in the recreation area; however, the harvest method for hunting is restricted to use of bow and arrow. The use and discharge of a trap or bow and arrow is not allowed within ¼ mile of a developed facility within NLSRA. Several of the lakes are stocked by Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Many others contain both resident and anadromous fish. Fishing is popular during the summer and winter months. Please see current ADF&G hunting, trapping and fishing regulations for open seasons and harvest limits.

Private Property Ownership and Access

Within the legal boundary are approximately 300 acres of private inholdings³ (see map on page 6). Numerous other private parcels are contiguous⁴ or adjacent⁵ to the boundary and are primarily located in the areas of Nancy, Butterfly, Delyndia, and Red Shirt lakes.

³ Inholding is defined for the purpose of this document as private property that is either: 1) wholly within the boundary of the NLSRA; or, 2) the majority of the property is within the boundary of NLSRA.

⁴ Contiguous parcels are defined for the purpose of this document as those parcels that are outside of the NLSRA, but share a common boundary with NLSRA.

⁵ Adjacent parcels are defined for the purpose of this document as those parcels that lie near the boundary of NLSRA but do not share a common boundary line with the NLSRA.

¹ Statutes specific to NLSRA are provided on page 5 of this update.

² Regulations specific to NLSRA are provided on page 5 of this update.

Methods used to access private property within, contiguous, or adjacent to the recreation area vary by season and include: hiking, motorboat, canoe, aircraft, highway vehicle, OHV, snowmobile, skiing, snowshoe, and biking. Many property owners access their property through the recreation area via existing roads, trails, and waterbodies.

Lynx Lake Road provides gated access for a majority of property owners in the areas of Lynx, Butterfly, and Delyndia Lakes. 178 keys to the Lynx Lake Road gate were issued to these property owners allowing full or partial access via highway vehicle. 40 Special Park Use Permits have been issued to property owners authorizing the use of OHV's on Lynx Lake Road and the Butterfly Lake Trail. Special Park Use Permits have also been granted in the past to open specific route(s) for motor vehicle use when conditions did not permit opening the entire area. These limited openings primarily occurred in late fall and were focused on the trails that provide access for property owners on Red Shirt Lake.

Access to private property is not limited to road and trails. Some inholders, contiguous, or adjacent property owners fly aircraft⁶ to their properties while others boat. DPOR maintains a boat launch on Nancy Lake at the NLSRS. Several smaller unmaintained or minimally maintained launches exist on Lynx, Nancy, Butterfly, and Red Shirt Lakes. Some property owners have stored their boats and associated personal property on the park managed lands and waters adjacent to these launch areas. Many property owners have constructed docks and other structures on park managed waters to facilitate access. The majority of these docks and structures were constructed without the required DPOR authorization.

Winter access is primarily by snowmobiles, skiing, or ski equipped aircraft. When snow depth is sufficient to protect underlying vegetation the area south of the Nancy Lake Parkway is opened to the use of snowmobiles. Property owners use the numerous winter trails of the NLSRA and the NLSRS boat launch for access to private property.

Why revise the 1983 plan?

There are two primary reasons for this plan revision: 1) address serious issues identified by park staff and members of the public; and, 2) update park management and facility

recommendations. The revised plan will address issues identified by staff and the public and include:

- Address resource impacts from existing trails and roads.
- Determination of DPOR role in providing access for private property owners within, contiguous, and adjacent to NLSRA. This issue includes OHV and highway vehicle access on the Lynx Lake Road; OHV access on Butterfly Lake Trail; and, storage of boats and personal property on park managed land and water.
- Establish standards for restricted openings on existing trails to allow access when conditions do not permit opening the entire area south of the parkway to snowmobiles.
- Establish standards for opening the entire area south of the parkway to the use of snowmobiles.
- Establish permit standards for dock construction on park managed water and determine a course of action to address the over 200 existing unpermitted docks.
- Establish permit standards for placement of other structures (shoreline revetments, boathouses, boat launches, boat lifts, awnings, etc.) on park managed land and water and determine a course of action to address existing unpermitted structures.
- Establish park specific guidance for abandonment of vehicles and structures on park managed land and water.

The plan is more than a tool to address issues; it is an opportunity to identify new or changing recreational needs and adjust management and facilities recommendations to meet those needs. Facilities recommended in the 1983 plan may be functioning beyond their designed life; inadequate for current use levels; or, need to be re-designed and modernized to enhance use and safety. In case of the canoe trail, boardwalks and other structures were constructed of materials that are now known to have deleterious effects on the natural environment and must be replaced.

Similarly, management recommendations from the 1983 plan will need to be updated to reflect changes in agency policy and management direction. Management recommendations that are no longer applicable will be removed while management recommendations necessary to address identified issues will be included. Due to the extensive anticipated changes to the existing

⁶ Aircraft access in NLSRA is restricted by regulation. See page 5 of this update for regulations affecting NLSRA.

plan document we determined that a plan revision was appropriate. The process to revise the plan includes public participation at several steps in the process.

Public involvement is a key component of the process and will help us identify and understand issues; changes in recreational needs or opportunities; and, impacts to recreation quality. It also provides an opportunity to give us feedback on proposed management guidelines and recommendations. Public input will be considered in the decision making process; however, it is not the sole basis for decision making. Decisions must be consistent with statutory and other authorities of DPOR. These are not easy issues to address and the effects of our decisions may impact both the recreational users and local property owners.

What will be included in the plan?

The NLSRA Management Plan will guide management of the recreation area for the next 15 to 20 years or until the plan is updated or revised. It will include background and overview information, issues, goals and objectives, management and facilities guidelines and recommendations, and a section that deals with implementation of the plan. It will include a trail plan to guide development and use of existing and proposed trails consistent with the recently adopted DPOR Trail Management Policy.

What happens next?

A questionnaire will be distributed to gather specific input on recreational uses and access within the NLSRA and NLSRS. Several questions address alternative ways to manage portions of the recreation area. Following an analysis of the results of the questionnaire an Agency Review Draft plan (ARD) will then be developed. Agency staff will review the ARD for factual information and will provide comments on plan guidelines and recommendations. Following the review and consideration of agency comments, a Public Review Draft (PRD) of the plan will be developed and released for public review and comment. The PRD will include management actions and alternatives (where appropriate) to address serious issues affecting management and use of the recreation area. Following the review and consideration of public comments on the PRD, changes may be made to the plan. The Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources will adopt a Final Plan. A 20 day

request for reconsideration period will follow the adoption of the Final Plan.

Get Involved!

You have many opportunities to get involved in the planning process. You are encouraged to:

- Visit the planning website at: http://www.dnr.alaska.gov/parks/units/nancy_lk/planning.htm to view previous plans and get updated information
- Enroll yourself or your group on the contact list to receive updated information
- Review and comment on materials provided within the public comment period
- Share information with others you feel would be interested in the future of Nancy Lake State Recreation Area and Nancy Lake State Recreation Site.

Contact Information

For information on the planning process contact:

Nancy Lakes SRA Project Manager
550 West 7th Ave., Suite 1050
Anchorage, AK 99501
Phone: 907-269-8536
Email: nlsracomments@alaska.gov

For information on Nancy Lake State Recreation Area and Nancy Lake State Recreation Site contact:

Wayne Biessel, Park Superintendent
Alaska State Parks
Mat-Su / Copper Basin Area
HC 32, Box 6706
Wasilla, AK 99654
Phone: 907-745-8935
Email: wayne.biessel@alaska.gov

John Wilber, Chief Ranger
Nancy State Recreation Area
HC 32, Box 6706
Wasilla, AK 99654
Phone: 907-495-6210
Email: john.wilber@alaska.gov

Ira Edwards, Ranger
Nancy State Recreation Area
HC 32, Box 6706
Wasilla, AK 99654
Phone: 907-495-6211
Email: ira.edwards@alaska.gov

Alaska Statutes 41.21.450 -41.21.465

Sec. 41.21.450. Purpose of AS 41.21.450 - 41.21.465.

The purpose of AS 41.21.450 - 41.21.465 is to restrict state-owned land and water within the boundaries described in AS 41.21.455 to use as a public recreation area. Under the provisions of AS 38.05.300, state land, water, or land and water containing more than 640 acres may be closed to multiple purpose use only by act of the legislature. Inasmuch as the area described in AS 41.21.455 exceeds 640 acres, AS 41.21.450 - 41.21.465 are intended to except the area described from the provisions of AS 38.05.300.

Sec. 41.21.455. Nancy Lake State Recreation Area established.

(a) The presently state-owned land and water and all that acquired in the future by the state, lying within the following described boundary, are hereby designated as the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area, are reserved from all uses incompatible with their primary function as public recreation land, and are assigned to the department for control, development, and maintenance... (legal description omitted)

(b) Nothing in this section affects the right of an organized borough to extract gravel from land that is located within the recreation area and that has been selected by the borough before April 22, 1970 under former AS 07.10.150 - 07.10.160.

Sec. 41.21.460. Incompatible uses.

The commissioner shall designate by regulation incompatible uses within the boundaries of the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area in accordance with the requirements of AS 41.21.450, and those incompatible uses designated shall be prohibited or restricted, as provided by regulation.

Sec. 41.21.465. Purchase authorized.

The commissioner may acquire, by purchase in the name of the state, title to or interest in real property lying within the boundaries of the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area.

is allowed in the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area, except within one-quarter mile of a developed facility.

11 AAC 20.545. Aircraft

(a) Except as provided in (b) and (c) of this section, the use of aircraft is allowed in the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area.

(b) The use of float-equipped aircraft in the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area is prohibited on

- (1) South Rolly Lake;
- (2) Bald Lake;
- (3) Tanaina Lake;
- (4) Milo Lake;
- (5) Ardaw Lake;
- (6) Jackknife Pond;
- (7) Frazer Lake;
- (8) Little Frazer Lake;
- (9) Charr Lake;
- (10) Owl Lake;
- (11) James Lake;
- (12) Chicken Lake;
- (13) Big Noluck Lake;
- (14) Little Noluck Lake;
- (15) Milo Pond;
- (16) the Echo Ponds;
- (17) Candlestick Lake;
- (18) Buckley Lake; and
- (19) Skeetna Lake.

(c) The use of aircraft for the purpose of practice landing is prohibited in the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area.

11 AAC 20.550. Motorized boats

(a) The use of motorized boats is allowed in the Nancy Lake State Recreation Area on

- (1) Nancy Lake;
- (2) Lynx Lake;
- (3) Butterfly Lake;
- (4) Red Shirt Lake; and
- (5) the Little Susitna River.

(b) A person may not use a personal watercraft on Red Shirt Lake.

(c) A person may use an electric trolling motor on South Rolly Lake.

11 AAC 20.555. Snowmobiles

If the director finds that the snow depth is adequate to protect underlying vegetation, the director shall open Nancy Lake State Recreation Area to the use of snowmobiles south of the Nancy Lake Parkway.

Alaska Administrative Code 11 AAC 20.540 – 11 AAC 20.555

11 AAC 20.540. Use of weapons

The use and discharge of a bow and arrow or trap for the purpose of lawful hunting or trapping

