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Health and Safety

Background

Some members of the public avoid using the PUA during certain times or in certain areas because of unlawful activities taking place or activities that are conducted in an unsafe manner. Others, while continuing to use the area, do not feel safe while these unlawful or unsafe uses are occurring. These types of uses are, for the most part, concentrated within a small area of the PUA, mostly near access points near the Old Glenn Highway and the mouth of Jim Creek.

If it weren't for regular cleanup efforts of local residents, individuals, stakeholder groups, the state and the borough, the PUA would have a much larger accumulation of trash than it currently does. Over the years literally hundreds of vehicles have been abandoned in the PUA. These vehicles are often burned and potentially hazardous substances such as oil, battery acid and gasoline gets into the soil and waterbodies. Other trash is brought into the area for disposal whether it is household waste, for shooting practice, or left after parties and at campsites. To add to this problem, throughout the summer and fall, particularly during hunting and fishing seasons, long-term camps are set up and then abandoned at the seasons' end. Because of the large number of users in a relatively small area and the lack of sanitation facilities, human waste and toilet paper are evident throughout the western portion of the planning area. Many of the most popular campsites are too unsightly to attract campers.

Unlawful activities have become prevalent in portions of the PUA. These activities are primarily located adjacent to major access points where access for law enforcement is difficult. For example, large parties, particularly on weekends, are common with underage drinking, operating vehicles while intoxicated, unsafe shooting, use and selling of illicit drugs, bonfires and fireworks. Injuries are not uncommon. The burned and abandoned vehicles recovered in the area are sometimes stolen or in a few instances are vehicles that were vandalized while their owners were recreating in the PUA.

Solutions to many of the issues described above include: an increased DNR field presence and additional law enforcement with the assistance of the Department of Public Safety; educating the public on resources and impacts; working with the District Attorney's on accepting cases from within the PUA; and, working closely with members of the public and users of the PUA. Regulations may need to be promulgated to ensure that the efforts of field and enforcement staff are effective in achieving compliance with PUA regulations.

Goal

- Provide a safe environment for recreation and eliminate discharge of litter and hazardous materials.

Management Guidelines

- Develop regulations to address issues related to public use, health, and safety. See Appendix C for regulations proposed by DNR.*
- Trespass structures will be removed.*
- Develop sanitary and waste disposal facilities in areas of concentrated use such as by parking and camping areas.
- Prohibit burning of materials that will contribute to waste or litter in the PUA.*
- Develop and employ educational strategies to change behavior.

Goal

- Address safety concerns related to discharge of firearms, boat use, and unsafe or unlawful activities.

Management Guidelines

- DNR should restrict shooting in heavily used areas and areas with nearby residences.*
- Shooting areas with specified hours of operation should be designated within the planning area. Areas will be located where shooting can occur in a safe manner and where impacts to fish and wildlife habitat are minimized. Although DNR will identify and designate areas for shooting range development, it is intended that local groups interested in operation of a shooting range would apply to DNR for development and operation of a facility.
- DNR will explore the possibility of developing areas for recreational shooting on state land east of the Pavilion Parking area and at the existing user created shooting area at Maud Road. The recommended shooting areas are depicted on Map 2-1, pp. 2 - 17. Time of use restrictions for shooting area will be designated by DNR.
- DNR should seasonally restrict speed of motorized boats on a segment of McRoberts Creek from the Jim Lake portage to the confluence of Jim and McRoberts creeks to address safety concerns related to use of motorized watercraft at high speeds on a segment of the creek that is narrow and has limited sight distances.
- DNR should seasonally restrict the use of motorized boats, snowmobiles, and OHV's on Manmade Lake and establish a seasonal speed limit around Manmade Lake in order to provide safe recreational opportunities.
- Develop measures that will preclude large unregulated events that often result in lawless activities, damage to the PUA and threats to public safety.*

* This guideline is currently included in phase one proposed regulations (11 AAC 96.15).

- 1 • Discharge of explosives and/or fireworks will be prohibited unless authorized by
- 2 DNR.*
- 3 • Develop and employ educational strategies to change behavior.
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5 **Goal**

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- 7 • Increase DNR and law enforcement presence in the PUA and draft regulations that
- 8 are necessary to implement the plan and manage state resources.
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10 **Management Guidelines**

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- 12 • Initiate and continue DNR field presence in the PUA.
- 13 • Continue to work with the Department of Public Safety to enforce state statutes and
- 14 regulations.
- 15 • Continue to work closely with users of the PUA to obtain information on violations of
- 16 local, state, and federal laws and regulations.
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18 **Goal**

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- 20 • Increase public safety by reducing potential for wildfires.
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22 **Management Guideline**

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- 24 • To prevent wildfires develop regulations that limit where fires may be built, how big
- 25 they may be and what types of materials may be put in them.*
- 26 • Initiate and continue DNR field presence in the PUA.
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Map 2-1: Recommended Designated Shooting Areas