
FLOATING RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES⁴

Goals

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Provide opportunities to increase personal income and diversify the state's economy by accommodating residential uses needed to support commercial and industrial development.

SETTLEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Provide a range of options for using state land for residential and commercial purposes.

Management Guidelines

A. FLOATHOMES INSIDE MUNICIPALITIES

Within the corporate boundaries of municipalities, DNR will work with the local government and floathome owners to locate areas suitable for floathome use and to establish management guidelines, if necessary.

B. HIGHEST ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Where there are conflicts between floathomes and other uses, the department generally will decide in favor of the applicant with the greatest economic benefit to the state. Except for areas designated for floathome settlement, competing applications between floathomes and other uses will favor the economically viable use unless the regional manager determines it is in the state's interest to permit the floathome or there are more reasonable and prudent alternatives for the other user. Where a floathome is already permitted at a site proposed for another use, the regional manager will determine if there are feasible and prudent alternatives for the other use and weigh the impacts on the permitted floathome owner. Unpermitted floating residential facilities will not be given any standing in the permit adjudication process.

C. SITING AND ANCHORING FLOATING RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES TO AVOID CREATING HAZARDS

The placement of floating residential facilities will avoid blocking or otherwise adversely impacting waterway channels used by waterborne traffic. Floating residential facilities will be securely anchored so the facility will not break loose or create a hazard to other users or habitats.

⁴ Floating structures for human occupancy. Includes floathomes, floatcamps, floating caretaker facilities, and floatlodges. These structures require a DNR tideland authorization if moored within a bay or cove for more than 14-days. Areawide policies for log rafts and aquatic farming facilities (other than caretaker facilities) are addressed in other sections of this chapter. See definitions of individual terms in the glossary, Appendix A.

D. SITING FLOATING RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES TO ENSURE ADEQUATE UPLAND ACCESS

Where the need for upland access to the floating residential facility is anticipated, the facility should be moored where there is legal and environmentally acceptable upland access to the site. U.S. Forest Service does not allow private residential use of National Forest uplands. This includes use of the uplands for shorelines.

E. SITING FLOATING RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES NEAR A SOURCE OF WATER

When roof catchment or desalinization is not the source of freshwater, floating residential facilities should be sited near a legal source of freshwater. It is the owner's responsibility to apply for water rights.

F. SITING FLOATING RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES NEAR A SOURCE OF FIREWOOD

When wood is to be the source of heat for the floating facility, the facility should be sited near an approved, legal source of firewood.

G. FUEL USE AND STORAGE

To ensure future use of tidelands, fuel use, and storage shall occur in a manner that avoids toxic discharge and run-off.

H. TEMPORARY FLOATING COMMERCIAL FACILITIES

Floating camps and related facilities should be temporary, with full occupancy restricted to the time when resource development is occurring. Camps and associated facilities should be consolidated to minimize impacts. Temporary floating commercial facilities should not be allowed in designated recreation or intensive harvest areas unless they are a designated use, they are needed to support a designated use, or the applicant demonstrates to the satisfaction of the department that there is no feasible and prudent alternative. Authorizations for floating residential facilities associated with a resource development activity, such as a floatcamp needed to support mineral development, should terminate when the resource development activity ends or when the need for the supporting floating facility ends.

I. PERMANENT FLOATING COMMERCIAL FACILITIES

Permanent floating commercial facilities (more than two years) are allowed in areas where there is no significant competing use. Permanent floating commercial facilities will not be allowed in designated recreation or intensive harvest areas unless: they are a designated use; they are needed to support a designated use; or, the applicant demonstrates to the satisfaction of the department that there is no feasible and prudent alternative. Authorizations for floating residential facilities associated with a resource development activity, such as a floatcamp needed to support mineral development, should terminate when the resource development activity ends or when the need for the supporting floating facility ends.

J. FLOATHOMES ADJACENT TO RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Floating residential facilities will not be authorized adjacent to residential subdivisions unless the area is designated for floathomes as a primary or secondary use. However, a short-term authorization, not to exceed two years, may be given on an individual basis to the upland owner if the floathome is to be occupied while the upland owner is constructing a residence on his upland parcel.

K. SITING RESIDENTIAL FLOATHOMES IN CRUCIAL HABITATS

To protect the most valuable habitats, residential floathomes will not be authorized in an area designated crucial habitat or harvest (Ha) unless the area is designated for floathomes as a primary or secondary use or ADF&G determines that the specific area does not meet the criteria for crucial habitat.

L. SITING RESIDENTIAL FLOATHOMES TO AVOID CONFLICTS

To protect existing resources and uses, unless an area is designated for floathomes as a primary or secondary use, residential floathomes should not be authorized in:

- Areas designated prime habitat or harvest areas (Hb) or recreation (r, R, Ra, Rc, Rd, Ru),
- near a permitted aquatic farming operation,
- or near known cultural or historic sites

M. AUTHORIZATIONS FOR FLOATING RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

To maintain management flexibility while providing limited security to floathome residents, residential floathomes outside designated floathome areas may be permitted, rather than leased, for up to five years. Short-term leases may be allowed on an individual basis within designated floathome areas.

To provide security to the applicant and economic return to the state, the department should use leases, rather than permits, to authorize floating commercial facilities. The potential for conflicts with other resources or uses may be a consideration for initial authorization by permit. Floating facilities within state parks will be authorized in a management plan prepared pursuant to AS 41.21.302(c) and subject to the concession contract requirements of AS 41.21.

N. POST AUTHORIZATIONS IN A CONSPICUOUS PLACE

Authorizations by permit or lease for floating residential facilities will be posted in a conspicuous place that is visible from the most common access route.

O. ANCHORING OF FLOATING FACILITIES

See Public and Private Access guideline K, page 2-34.

P. GROUNDING OF FLOATING FACILITIES

See Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Harvest Area guideline L, page 2-15.

Q. COMMERCIAL RECREATION FACILITIES ON STATE LAND

For floatlodes, see Recreation, Tourism, and Scenic Resources guideline C, page 2-38.

R. OTHER GUIDELINES AFFECTING FLOATING RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

Other guidelines will affect floating residential and commercial facility management practices. See in particular the following sections of this chapter:

- Coordination and Public Notice
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Harvest Areas
- Materials
- Public and Private Access
- Recreation, Tourism, and Scenic Resources
- Transportation and Utilities