

Agriculture

Goals

Food Security. Provide a reserve of land for agricultural use to support the local and regional production of foodstuffs necessary to support the citizens of Alaska in the future. Known as ‘food security’, this goal recognizes the uncertainty of worldwide production in the future and indicates the state’s intent to ensure a continuing agricultural land base.

Economic Development. Diversify and strengthen the state’s economy by increasing the availability of Alaska food products by:

- Encouraging expanded production and availability of farm products from agricultural lands within Alaska;
- Increasing the acreage available as demand or market opportunities warrant;
- Preserving the ability to produce agricultural products as a future option.

Agrarian Lifestyle. Provide the opportunity for Alaskans to pursue an agricultural lifestyle.

Agricultural Land Disposals. The primary purpose of future agricultural land disposals is to bring land into agricultural production and/or preserve it for agricultural use by future generations. All such disposals are to meet the objectives for agricultural sales described in 11 AAC 67.160, and are to occur in a manner that minimizes the diversion of agricultural land to other uses, the impairment of agricultural land for agricultural use and development, and enhances the economic operation of viable farm units.

Conservation of Agricultural Resources. Agricultural land disposals shall be designed to maintain or enhance the productivity of the soil.

Protection of Environment. Agricultural land disposals shall minimize adverse impacts to the off-site environment.

Management Guidelines

A. Agricultural Sales: Classification. Agricultural land disposals under AS 38.05.321 may only occur within areas designated Agriculture Land¹.

¹ There may be instances where areas classified Settlement may also be appropriate, within specific areas of the site, for agricultural land disposals. The determination of whether a management unit is appropriate for the collocation of these two forms of disposal shall be made in the written decision process under AS 38.05.035(e). The decision shall specify which areas of the unit are appropriate for each type of disposal.

B. Agricultural Sales: Type and Size. Within the planning area, agricultural sales shall be limited to those authorized under 11 AAC 67. Such sales must have a minimum area of 40 acres.

C. Agricultural Land Disposals. Agricultural land disposals shall be consistent with the requirements of 11 AAC 67.

- Land conveyed under this authority may only be used for agricultural purposes or for purposes that do not conflict with the use of the land for agriculture.
- Approved Farm Conservation Plans shall be provided as a condition of an agricultural sale and shall meet all other requirements of 11 AAC 67.185.
- In addition to the requirements of 11 AAC 67.180 or as part of an AS 38.05.035(e) decision, agricultural sales adjoining areas designated Habitat shall evaluate the need for wildlife movement corridors or other measures needed to protect adjacent habitat, and shall incorporate these features into the Preliminary/Final Finding and Decision or Farm Conservation Plan (FCP). Agricultural sales adjoining lands designated Settlement shall evaluate the need for buffering and other measures necessary to minimize adverse impacts to areas of land disposals and shall similarly incorporate such measures into the Preliminary/Final Finding and Decision or FCP. It is not intended that mitigation measures will always be required in these instances, but that the need for such measures be carefully assessed and required where necessary.
- Remote state land with good agricultural potential and designated Agriculture, but not scheduled for sale within the next 15 year period shall remain in public ownership, continue in an Agriculture designation, and shall not be used for other purposes except through a plan amendment that redesignates such areas into another land use designation.
- Generally, agricultural land disposals should not occur within mapped floodways or within the 10-year floodplain. Where neither of these features have been mapped, the best available information will be used to identify areas where flooding is likely to be a severe limitation on agriculture. Agricultural disposals in such areas should be avoided.

D. Site Specific Requirements. Agricultural land sales within the planning area are subject to the following additional requirements:

- A riparian buffer of undisturbed vegetation of 100' to 150', the width depending on FRPA standards, shall be retained in state ownership (or otherwise protected so that riparian functions are not impaired) adjacent to all anadromous waterbodies and high value resident fish streams. See the standards for riparian areas in the section *Shorelands and Stream Corridors* in this Chapter.
- Areas of reported historic, archaeological, or paleontological sites should not be disturbed. Agricultural operations shall not be authorized within 300 feet of the boundaries of known sites unless OHA determines, in coordination with the Division

of Agriculture, that agricultural activities can occur without significant impact to the cultural resource. OHA shall work with the Division of Agriculture to develop site-specific mitigation measures to protect known cultural sites while allowing agricultural operations. A buffer (or other management mechanism sufficient to protect the cultural resource) of 50' or greater shall be established around significant cultural resources identified by OHA as part of agency review.

E. Other Guidelines Affecting Agriculture. Other guidelines may affect agriculture. See other sections of this chapter.