

## Recreation and Scenic Resources

### Goal

**Recreation Opportunities.** Lands will be provided for accessible outdoor recreational opportunities with well-designed and conveniently located recreational facilities. In addition, undeveloped lands should be provided for recreation pursuits that do not require developed facilities. These opportunities shall be realized by:

- providing recreation opportunities on state land and water that serves multiple purposes such as habitat protection, timber management, and mineral resource extraction;
- assisting communities through cooperative planning, conveyance of state lands, and grants-in-aid for parks and trails within population centers;
- encouraging commercial development of recreational facilities and services through concession contracts, land sales, leases, and permits where public recreation needs can most effectively be provided by private enterprise, while minimizing environmental impacts and conflicts with the existing users of an area;
- protection of recreation resources including public access, visual resources, fish and wildlife important for recreation, and, where appropriate, the isolation and unique wilderness characteristics of the planning area;
- management of recreation to avoid or minimize user conflict, provide for a quality experience for all user groups, and protect the natural values and attributes of the area within which the recreation occurs; and,
- protection of ecosystems and habitat from damage caused by inappropriate recreation use.

### Management Guidelines

**A. Coordination with Other Landowners and Users of an Area.** Recreation management, including the location and management of recreation facilities, will take into account the current and projected future uses of lands owned by local governments and private landowners, and should strive for compatibility with adjacent current and projected uses.

**B. Roles of Different Public Land Owners in Providing Public Recreational Opportunities.** Generally, the state's role is to retain and manage land supporting recreational opportunities of regional or statewide significance. The state and federal governments are most capable of providing recreational opportunities that require large land

areas, while local government is generally best suited for providing and managing community recreation opportunities. To recognize local government's role in providing community recreation needs, the state may transfer state land designated Public Recreation-Dispersed (Rd) or state recreation sites within or near existing communities, if the municipality has parks and recreation powers and if this action is in the overall best interest of the state (AS 38.05.810). The selection of these sites shall be agreed to by local government and the state, and shall be contingent on the local government's commitment to develop and maintain the recreation uses, facilities, and values of these areas.

**C. Public Use Sites.** Uses that adversely affect public use sites or areas should not be authorized. Uses that are made available to the public, recreational or other sites (such as airstrip development or docks) may be authorized if consistent with the management intent for the public use site or area and if there is a demonstrated public need.

**D. Private Commercial Recreation Facilities and Operations on State Land.** Lodges or other private commercial facilities and operations designed to be run as or to support private commercial recreation facilities may be authorized if the facility or operation fulfills the conditions outlined in this section, conforms to the requirements of AS 38.05.850, AS 38.05.070 and .075 or AS 38.05.073, or a management plan is prepared in accordance with AS 41.21.302(c) authorizing the facility.

If so authorized, the facility or operation should be sited, constructed, and operated in a manner that creates the least conflict with natural values and existing uses of the area. The commercial facility and the use it generates should avoid significant adverse impacts on fish and wildlife habitat and existing uses of an area. For facilities supporting recreational fish and wildlife harvest, ADF&G should be consulted on the possible effects of increased harvest on fish and wildlife resources, and on established commercial, recreation, and subsistence users.

**E. Commercial Recreation Leasing Processes.** There are several processes for leasing state land for commercial recreational facilities under the following Alaska Statutes (AS): AS 38.05.070, 38.05.073, 38.05.075, and 38.05.810. The first three are used for commercial recreation facilities and the last is used for not-for-profit entities that provide some type of recreational use or service.

In particular, AS 38.05.073 is designed for creating recreational facility leaseholds. This statute requires that the regional land use plan identify areas suitable for recreational facility leasing. Given the broad scope of the SMAP, the determination of particular sites is impractical, although such uses are generally appropriate within most plan designations, except Agriculture and Water Resources. Authorizations under AS 38.05.073 must evaluate the adequacy of the proposed recreation facility, and a final site determination and best interest finding must support this determination. Any amendments to the SMAP to accommodate a .073 commercial lease shall be reviewed by the Director of DMLW prior to or concurrent with the adjudication process.

**F. Permits, Easements, and Leases Adjacent to Recreation Facilities.** Permits, easements, and leases may be issued adjacent to recreation facilities if the land manager determines that the two uses can be made compatible by design, siting or operating guidelines; or if the land manager determines there is no feasible and prudent alternative for the activity. This guideline also applies to sites reserved for future recreation facilities. The land manager's determination will be made after consultation with the facility manager.

**G. Management of Recreation Use on State Lands.** To the extent provided by law (AS 38.04.200 and 11 AAC 96), DNR is to manage recreation use and activities to accommodate a variety of uses, including motorized and non-motorized, while ensuring that adverse impacts to fish and wildlife species and habitats are avoided or minimized, and to avoid the creation of user conflicts and if in existence, to minimize their impact.

**H. Consultation with ADF&G.** Consult with ADF&G in the siting of facilities where fish and wildlife species or important habitats are likely to occur.

**I. Recreational Importance of Major Rivers.** State land adjacent to rivers that are important for recreation use, in addition to their habitat functions, are to be retained in state ownership within plan designations of Forestry, General Use, Habitat, Mineral, and Public Recreation. Where riverine areas are specifically identified by management unit (Skwentna, Hayes, Happy, and Kichatna Rivers in R-02) the area of this management unit is to be retained. In instances where a specific management unit does not exist, a minimum of width 300' is to be retained in those areas affected by Forestry, General Use, Habitat, Mineral, or Public Recreation designations adjacent to the Kahiltna, Chulitna, Susitna, and Yentna Rivers, and Peters Creek (as well as portions of the Skwentna, Hayes, Happy, and Kichatna rivers not within R-02). In areas where land may be conveyed out of state ownership (areas affected by the plan designations of Settlement and Agriculture), land within 200-300' of Ordinary High Water of the aforementioned rivers is either to be retained in state ownership or protected through a management buffer. (The amount of this buffer either to be a minimum of 200' or as specified in a management guideline.) Consult the requirements of the section 'Buffer, Easement, and Building Setback Widths' of 'Shorelands and Stream Corridors' for guidance and more detail.

Certain river segments that have important recreation functions may be appropriate for inclusion as a State Recreation River (SRR), which is a Legislatively Designated Area. This plan does not make specific recommendations of this type, but, in general, areas of state land within the aforementioned rivers may be appropriate for consideration as a SRR, either as part of the revision of the Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Management Plan or as a separate legislative action.

**J. Other Guidelines that Affect Recreation and Scenic Resources.** Other guidelines may affect recreation and scenic resources. See other sections of this chapter.