

RECREATION

A. GOALS

1. Provide opportunities for dispersed public recreation.
2. Manage public recreational use so that the level and type of use does not adversely affect moose populations and habitat and/or interfere with moose rehabilitation activities.

B. MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Moose Range will be managed as undeveloped open space to provide dispersed public recreation activities to the extent this does not cause significant conflicts with the overall goal of supporting moose populations. The primary management actions to provide recreation opportunities are summarized below.

C. GUIDELINES

1. PUBLIC FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

a. Location of Facilities

- (1) Location of Development. Development of recreational facilities on state lands will be limited to areas outside of or adjacent to the edge of the Moose Range. Trailhead facilities will be located within the Moose Range, at the beginning of major, important trails. The purpose of these developments is to provide for needed camping and picnicking opportunities and to provide parking. The management intent is to direct public use to developed facilities and specific locations while limiting the amount of development within the Range.
- (2) Expansion and New Development Likelihood. Expansion of existing facilities or development of new recreation sites in the future will be based on public demand and use patterns, as well as funding and staffing constraints.
- (3) Priorities for Upgrading Established Sites. There is already a concentration of recreational use occurring along the Glenn Highway. Therefore, upgrading existing recreational facilities will be a high priority along the Glenn Highway to meet current and projected recreational demand near the Moose Range. DOPOR will emphasize the management of existing public facilities for overnight camping at Long Lake, King Mountain and Moose Creek State Recreation Sites rather than develop new facilities in the Moose Range. The only new area that may be developed for overnight camping in the Range is at the mouth of the Kings River.

(4) Trailhead Facilities. Trailhead facilities will be developed to provide parking and restroom facilities at key access points in the Range. Trailhead facilities are covered in the Recreation section of Chapter Four, on pages 180 and 181, 3a(1)(b) and 3a(4)(a) and (b), and pages 192 and 193, 3a(2) and (3).

2. COMMERCIAL AND NON-COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- a. Commercial. Commercial recreational facility developments will not be permitted on state land within the Moose Range due to their potential impacts on wildlife habitat enhancement objectives. Permit or lease applications for the use of the public lands for commercial recreational purposes (in conjunction with a development located on non-state land) within the Moose Range will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and require interagency review and approval. Permits or leases will be issued only if the activity is found to be consistent with the Moose Range Plan by DNR and ADF&G.
- b. Non-commercial. Non-commercial recreational developments may be considered on a case-by-case basis. These developments must be for the public benefit and be consistent with the intent of the management plan and enabling legislation. Non-commercial developments require DNR and ADF&G approval.

3. PUBLIC SAFETY

- a. Discharge of Firearms. Discharge of firearms will be prohibited for public safety reasons in administratively designated areas such as campgrounds, picnic areas and trailheads.
- b. No Facilities in Hazard Areas. Many of the creeks and rivers in the Range are subject to flooding and steep mountainous areas are subject to avalanche. Site selection and design of any new recreation facilities will be located to avoid flood and avalanche hazards.
- c. Enhancement Near Facilities. Big game, such as bears and moose, will not be considered as target species for habitat enhancement in or near recreation campgrounds or picnic areas because they bring a high level of hazard and conflict to people.

4. PUBLIC-USE CABINS

- a. Likelihood and Location. Public-use cabins will not be located within the Moose Range at this time. In the future, if the state adequately funds a public-use cabin program, and funding is available to operate and maintain public-use cabins within the Moose Range, public-use cabins may be reconsidered. Public review of any future proposals is required. Establishment of public-use cabins also requires DNR and ADF&G approval. Public-use cabins will not be encouraged in remote areas, particularly where habitat values are high or timber/wildlife enhancement is occurring.

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- b. Potential Locations. The areas within the Moose Range that may be considered for the establishment of public-use cabins are along the Lower Boulder Creek Trail, the Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail near Sawmill Gorge, the Chickaloon River Trail and the Old 98 Trail on the Chickaloon Bench. Note: These sites are located on what was formerly mental health lands. (See explanation in Chapter One, pages 3 and 4.) Before public-use cabins could be established on any of these sites, notice would have to go to the plaintiffs and intervenor in Weiss vs. Alaska.
- c. Existing Cabins. Existing unauthorized cabins in these areas will be evaluated for possible conversion to public-use cabins.
- d. Funding Necessary. DNR will only manage public-use cabins if there are adequate funds available to construct new cabins or upgrade unauthorized use cabins, and to maintain and operate the facilities.
- e. Volunteer Assistance. To support and supervise use of public-use cabins, the Department may work with volunteer organizations. Members of volunteer organizations that assist the state in maintaining cabins will not be given exclusive use.

5. INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

- a. Displays. To educate the public about the Moose Range, information displays will be developed in camping, picnicking and trailhead facilities servicing the Moose Range (funding permitting). These displays may include an explanation of the legal access, public natural resource values, recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat enhancement efforts and the multiple use concept being used to manage the Moose Range, wildlife viewing opportunities, unique ecosystems and geological features and natural hazards in the Range. ADF&G and DNR shall jointly develop the wording of information signs concerning the Moose Range.
- b. Brochures. To educate the public about the above listed topics, informational brochures may be prepared by ADF&G, DNR and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. The Borough can apply for grant monies to assist in this effort. DNR and ADF&G shall jointly develop the wording of informational brochures concerning the Moose Range.
- c. School and Group Involvement. To educate the public and encourage research on multiple use management and habitat enhancement procedures, DNR and ADF&G will encourage area grade and high schools, community schools and the University of Alaska systems to use the Moose Range as an outdoor laboratory. DLWM, Southcentral Region Office, and ADF&G, Habitat Division, should be contacted before any field study projects, or use of the area as an outdoor laboratory, take place. Use of the range by outing clubs, scouts, 4-H groups, etc. does not require a permit at this time.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RECREATIONAL USES

In areas where recreational use may cause significant adverse effects on wildlife populations and their habitats, some site-specific restrictions on certain recreational activities may be necessary. Areas that are particularly sensitive to recreational activity may require restrictions on use. These areas may include, but are not limited to, areas where habitat enhancement efforts are occurring, and specific sites ADF&G determines to be critical habitat for wildlife. ADF&G will monitor the effects of recreation on fish and wildlife values and where appropriate, suggest restrictions to mitigate the impacts. Any restrictions will require interagency review. (See also Transportation and Access Section of this chapter, guideline 3g, Trail Management: Recreation Trail Use Conflicts, page 123.)

7. SCENIC VALUES

- a. Views From Glenn Highway and Major Trails. Although habitat enhancement areas may be scarified, cleared of timber and controlled burned in areas viewed from the Glenn Highway, such operations should be done in a manner that minimizes, where possible, the contrast between natural and enhanced areas. The intent is to maintain the scenic values of the important viewed areas (shown on Map 6, page 39,) while allowing for habitat enhancement to occur. In enhancement areas, standing vegetation and topography should be used to screen affected areas where possible. Other techniques to blend in enhancement and rehabilitation projects should be applied where applicable and practical. This guideline applies to Arkose Ridge, Wishbone Hill, Granite Peak, Little Granite Creek Bench, and Castle Mountain, and to the major view of Puddingstone Hill from the Chickaloon River Trail and Chickaloon-Knik-Nelchina Trail (see Map 6 on page 39).
- b. Foreground Scenery of Travelled Routes. The quality of foreground scenery along roads, trails and floatable waterways should be maintained during habitat enhancement or timber harvesting efforts wherever possible.
- c. Communication Sites, Utility Lines. Scenic values will be maintained by properly locating and constructing telecommunication sites, power lines and other large structures to reduce visual impact. Where possible, power and telephone lines will be placed in a manner to reduce the visual impact from the Glenn Highway. For example, in certain situations power lines create less of a visual impact if placed on the uphill side of the highway where they blend with the background than if placed on the downhill side of the highway where they stand out against the sky or create a line across the distant view of mountains.

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8. RECREATIONAL MANAGEMENT ON NON-STATE LAND

- a. Borough Involvement. The recreational needs of local communities should, in part, be provided for by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. The Department of Natural Resources will work with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough to ensure that the demand for recreational opportunities is met on either state, borough or other land where appropriate. Both Sutton and Chickaloon communities have recreational needs which could be met through the use of borough lands within or adjacent to the Moose Range. The borough is encouraged to consult with DNR and ADF&G prior to the development or dedication of a recreational area within the Moose Range.
- b. Private Citizen Involvement. DNR encourages the borough to undertake a program with local landowners to promote voluntary protection of visual quality on private lands. Such a program might include restrictions on removal of vegetation and incentives to remove junk cars and similar refuse.

9. TRAILS, ACCESS AND MANAGEMENT OF OFF-ROAD VEHICLE USE

See the Transportation and Access section in this chapter on page 118 for policies regarding trails, access for public recreation and off-road vehicle use.