

Department of Natural Resources

Division of Mining, Land and Water



Fact Sheet: Public Access in the Dalton Highway Corridor

Portions of lands that were withdrawn under Public Land Order 5150 have been selected by the State of Alaska (State) and are expected to be conveyed to the State as part of the State's remaining entitlement under the Alaska Statehood Act.

These lands are located along the Dalton Highway north of the Yukon River and were originally withdrawn in 1971 to protect lands associated with the development and operation of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System and the Dalton Highway Corridor (DHC).

With much of the infrastructure development completed and operational for decades, and the revocation of this withdrawal effective February 25, 2026, portions of the withdrawn lands are now eligible for conveyance to the State.

What this Means for Communities along the DHC

If these lands are conveyed to the State:

- The lands will transition from federal management to state management.
- State lands and state selected lands are no longer a part of federal subsistence units.
- ADF&G regulations for method and means for hunting will apply on state lands.
- Federally qualified subsistence users will continue to have winter snowmachine access across the Dalton Highway Corridor on RS2477s to federal public lands.
- The State of Alaska will continue to recognize the importance of access to subsistence resources and will engage with affected communities along the corridor to ask where they would like to see additional access provided to federal public lands across the newly acquired state land.

State Land Entitlement

The State of Alaska continues to work with the federal government to complete its remaining land entitlement under the Alaska Statehood Act. Conveyance of lands within the PLO 5150 withdrawal area would provide:

- Continuous state ownership of the DHC to advance state infrastructure projects such as Dalton Highway maintenance and potential realignment.
- State ownership of existing and potential future oil and gas infrastructure (TAPS, AKLNG, ASAP).
- Adequate land for installation of broadband and electrical grid expansion.
- Access to adjacent state lands for hunting, fishing, recreation, mineral development, and other uses allowed or authorized on state lands.
- Motorized access across state lands where federally qualified subsistence users will be able to continue to access adjacent federal lands to hunt, fish, and trap under federal regulations.
- Ownership of mineralized lode and rare earth element prospects within the corridor and access to other mineralized areas outside of the corridor.

Once conveyed, these lands will be managed by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources in accordance with Alaska law.

State Land Management and Access

The State of Alaska recognizes that many of the lands within the PLO 5150 withdrawal area are used by rural residents for subsistence activities on surrounding federal public lands. The conveyance of these lands to the State will change how federally qualified subsistence users can access and hunt some lands within portions of Game Management Unit 23. Specifically, under Alaska Statute (AS) 19.40.210 the use of snowmobiles and long guns within five miles of the corridor will no longer be allowed under current state fish and game laws.

AS 19.40.210 prohibits motorized use in the DHC with some limited exceptions, however AS 19.40.210(c) also provides DNR the authority to authorize easements on state land within the DHC from the Yukon River Bridge north to the North Slope Borough boundary, and to declare existing easements open to motorized use. RS 2477s are valid, existing easements managed by the State regardless of the underlying landowner. Because the State manages RS 2477s even when not the underlying landowner, the State has committed to authorizing snowmachine access on ten existing RS 2477 trails within the DHC as a first step for mitigating impacts to subsistence opportunities.

As lands are conveyed to the State, Alaska will engage with local communities as part of a commitment to ensuring continued access for rural federally qualified subsistence users. This commitment will include a public engagement process that seeks to gather information related to access for subsistence users in the PLO 5150 area. This information will be used to identify existing travel routes and access points used by federally qualified subsistence users to access federal public lands, and to inform decisions on whether to issue easements on those routes to provide for motorized access.

All routes, RS 2477s, and new easements identified for motorized use will be open to the public. Motorized use will be limited to winter snowmachine use. Limiting use to snowmachines is consistent with AS 19.10.210(3) and is consistent with existing federal subsistence hunting regulations. DNR may expand the types of motorized use in the future

All state land outside the DHC within the Umiat Meridian, north of the North Slope Borough boundary, is within the North Slope Special Use Area. Any motorized vehicle use within the special use area requires a permit unless that use is for subsistence purposes or is on a graveled road. Subsistence purposes in this context refers to the harvest and processing of wild resources for food, raw materials, and other traditional uses by Alaskan residents.

The State of Alaska is committed to completing its Statehood Act land entitlement while ensuring continued access to federal public lands, adjacent state lands, and Native Corporation Lands for hunting, fishing, recreation and other uses allowed or authorized on state lands.

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