

## Recreation, Tourism, and Scenic Resources

### Background

The Bristol Bay area is known for its world class fishing, hunting and other outdoor recreation opportunities. In part to support these activities, many federal and state parks, refuges, preserves, monuments, and recreation sites have been created. The largest state park in Alaska, the 1.6 million acre Wood-Tikchik State Park, is a major recreational asset of the region. Other significant sites include: Lake Clark National Park, Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve, Katmai National Park and Preserve (Brooks Camp and the Valley of 10,000 Smokes), the Alaska Peninsula, Alaska Maritime, Izembek, Togiak, and Becharof National Wildlife Refuges, as well as several National Wild and Scenic Rivers: the Alagnak, Chilikadrotna, Mulchatna, and Tlikakila Rivers. There are also many private camps and lodges that provide support for recreational users. While many of these private operations are in or adjacent to the public lands mentioned above they also serve other areas. Notable concentrations outside of these dedicated public lands are found in the Iliamna Lake, Naknek Lake, lower Nushagak and Alagnak drainages.

### Goal

**Recreation Opportunities.** Lands will be provided for accessible outdoor recreational opportunities with recreational facilities where the demand warrants such 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 less developed land and water areas that serve multiple purposes such as habitat protection or 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; and
- protecting recreation resources including public access, viewsheds, quiet, fish and wildlife important for recreation, and the unique natural characteristics of the planning area.

## 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 likely, management of lands managed by local governments, Native corporations and other private landowners, and compatibility with the existing uses of an area.

**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. 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 including those designated General Use (Gu), Public Recreation and Tourism-Dispersed (Rd) or Public Recreation and Tourism-Public Use Sites (Rp) within or near existing communities, 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.

In areas where the state is retaining public use sites (management units designated Public Recreation and Tourism-Public Use Site (Rp) the state may consider cooperative management with local government if this would improve management of the resource. Entering into a management agreement with an entity with more direct presence in the area should result in better protection of the resource and enjoyment by the public. This management agreement to operate the public use site should fulfill all of the obligations that the state would normally bear (protecting public safety, habitat, etc.) but will gain the efficiency of having more local control of the site.

**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, are 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. Specific requirements relating to the siting and development of public use sites exist in the Nushagak & Mulchatna Rivers Recreation Management Plan (DNR, April 2005) (RRMP). Consult this plan when authorizing activities at public use sites within the planning area of the RRMP. See also Management Guideline J, which defines the area of application of the RRMP.

### D. Public Recreation Facilities

- 1. Public Use Cabins.** A system of public use cabins should be established in state parks. Generally, such facilities should not be provided on general state land, which is the focus of this plan.

## 2. Location of Recreation Facilities

**a. Preferred Locations.** Recreation facilities, including public use cabins, minimum development campsites, mooring buoys and other low intensity facilities for the general public (i.e. not private commercial facilities), are appropriate at sites that encourage public use at a particular location, direct public use away from inappropriate locations, accommodate competing or conflicting uses, and minimize damage to the environment.

**b. Inappropriate Locations.** Recreation facilities are not appropriate where the management intent of this plan is to maintain the natural condition of the area free from additional concentrations of recreation users or significant evidence of human use. In addition, recreation facilities should not be placed adjacent to cultural resource and archaeological sites that might subject these sites to vandalism or disturbance because of increased public use.

**E. Private Commercial Recreation Facilities and Operations on State Land.** Lodges (including floating lodges), tent camps, floats, 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 38.05.070-.075, AS 38.05.850, or conforms to a management plan prepared in accordance with AS 41.21.302(c) authorizing the facility. The Nushagak & Mulchatna Rivers Recreation Management Plan, April 2005, also has restrictions on structures related to commercial recreation.

**1. Siting, Construction, and Operation.** 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. To the extent practical, floatlodges should be visually and acoustically hidden from main travel routes, frequently used anchorages, regionally important campsites, and frequently used recreation areas.<sup>28</sup> 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.

To protect existing habitats, resources, and uses, floating private commercial recreation facilities should not be authorized in the following areas: designated habitat or harvest areas, anchorages, areas designated recreation (Rp or Rd), or areas adjacent to an upland residential subdivision. In addition, they should not be permitted near an authorized aquatic farming operation, known cultural or historic sites, public use cabins, or where the use is prohibited in the management intent statement for a specific management unit in this plan.

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<sup>28</sup> See the Floating Facilities section in this chapter for additional standards on this use.

Private commercial recreation facilities may be authorized in these areas by DNR if it is determined that the permitting of a floating facility is in the best interest of the state and the use is found consistent with the Alaska Coastal Management Program<sup>29</sup>.

2. **Upland Access to Floatlodges.** Where the need for upland access to a floatlodge is anticipated, the floatlodge should be anchored or tied where there is legal upland access to the site.
3. **Authorizations for Floatlodges.** Floatlodges shall also meet the requirements for these structures under *Floating Facilities*.

**F. Commercial Recreation Leasing Processes.** There are two processes for leasing state land for commercial recreational facilities – one process is described by AS 38.05.073, the other by AS 38.05.070 and .075. Unless Chapter 3 specifically requires the .073 commercial leasing process, applications may be adjudicated under either process. DNR will determine the appropriate process on a case-by-case basis. ADOT/PF has its own leasing process that applies to land it manages in rights-of-way, airports, materials sites, and other lands and facilities it manages.

1. **The .070 / .075 Process.** The .070 / .075 process is simpler and faster, but it offers the state less flexibility in choosing the lessee and in structuring lease payments. It is generally suited to small projects with few anticipated impacts. The management intent for the management unit need not specifically state that this type of leasing is an allowed use for it to be authorized under this process.
2. **The .073 Process.** The .073 process is longer, but it allows submission of alternative proposals for a particular lease, requires more public involvement in reviewing a proposed lease, and offers the state more choices for structuring payments on the lease. The .073 process is generally suited to large projects that are likely to have significant impacts on surrounding areas. Under the .073 process, DNR will give public notice that it intends to solicit proposals for a lease. DNR will then prepare a “request for proposals” that must include specific information on the lease and must be advertised in state and local newspapers. Once a prospective lessee has been chosen, DNR must give public notice and hold public meetings on the preliminary decision to issue the lease.

For a .073 lease to be considered in a management unit, the plan must specifically allow for this type of leasing in a given unit before it can be authorized. Since no management units are identified in this area plan specifically for commercial recreation leasing under the .073 process, a plan amendment will be required to accommodate this use.

DNR may impose eligibility standards, including proof of the developer’s financial backing and capability, experience in this type of development, ability to meet bonding or insurance requirements, and ability to comply with resource and environmental analysis requirements.

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<sup>29</sup> The Alaska Coastal Management Program was terminated on July 1, 2011, pursuant to AS 44.66.030.

The .073 process requires that potential economic, social, and environmental impacts of the proposed project must be evaluated. DNR may require the prospective developer to fund additional studies; the studies must involve the appropriate state agencies, and ADF&G must approve any studies involving fish and game.

**G. Tideland Permits and Leases Adjacent to Recreation Facilities.** Tideland activities may be allowed adjacent to public recreation facilities, including public use cabins, lodges, or fuel stops 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.

**H. Scenic Resources.** Facilities on state-owned uplands and tidelands in areas designated Public Recreation and Tourism-Dispersed (Rd) or Public Recreation and Tourism-Public Use Site (Rp) should be located and designed to blend in with the natural surroundings. Stipulations to accomplish this guideline may be attached to a development plan to address location, size, color, materials, requirements for vegetative or topographic screening, or other measures as appropriate.

**I. Municipal Selections.** Some areas of state land that are designated Public Recreation and Tourism-Dispersed (Rd) or Public Recreation and Tourism-Public Use Site (Rp) may be suitable for selection under the Municipal Entitlement Act. The Resource Allocation Tables in Chapter 3 specify if a management unit is considered suitable for municipal conveyance. In order to protect the public values in these recreational lands, the state may attach stipulations to the conveyance. This may include easements to preserve access (trails and campsites), habitat, wildlife, scenic and other values associated with the recreation resources.

State land designated Rd or Rp affected by a municipal selection considered appropriate for conveyance will maintain a protected area adjacent to anadromous streams or lakes. This protected area, which will be established by an easement, will extend 100 feet upland from the ordinary high water mark. In areas where the river provides a significant corridor for wildlife movement, the size of this easement may be increased to 200 or 300 feet. The intent of this type of easement is to maintain habitat and public use values, including public access. Within the easement there should be no permanent structures or significant alteration of vegetation. See Table 2.3.

**J. Nushagak & Mulchatna Rivers Recreation Management Plan.** The original Nushagak & Mulchatna Rivers Recreation Management Plan (RRMP) was developed by DNR and other entities to provide the basis for the management of recreation uses and

structures on state land within the Nushagak and Mulchatna drainage basin. It was originally adopted in 1990 as an element of the Bristol Bay Area Plan and as an Area Meriting Special Attention in the District Coastal Plan of the Bristol Bay Coastal Resource Service Area<sup>30</sup>.

This plan revision continues the use of the RRMP as an element of the Bristol Bay Area Plan within the navigable waters of the Nushagak-Mulchatna drainage basin and those adjacent uplands designated in the Area Plan as General Use, Public Recreation and Tourism-Dispersed (Rd), Recreation and Tourism-Public Use Site (Rp), or areas co-designated Habitat (Ha) for specific types of recreation activities and facilities. The Revised RRMP is to be used as the basis for decision making for the following types of recreation and related uses: Permanent Facilities, Temporary Facilities, Trapping Cabins, Boat Storage, Airstrip Development, Docks, and 'Other Uses', as more fully described in Chapter 3 of the Revised RRMP.<sup>31</sup> These definitions are also included in the Glossary.

There are a number of restrictions in the application of the Revised RRMP to DNR decision making. It does not apply to areas designated Settlement and Mining in the BBAP, and it does not affect decisions related to municipal entitlement selections, mining or other forms of subsurface use, or oil and gas development. All other types of uses other than those specifically related to recreation are also managed under the auspices of the BBAP. DNR adjudicators should therefore review the management guidelines for specific management units in the BBAP in addition to the listing of allowed and prohibited uses identified in the RRMP.

**K. Other Guidelines that Affect Recreation, Tourism, and Scenic Resources.** Other guidelines will affect recreation, tourism, and scenic resources. See the other sections of this chapter.

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<sup>30</sup> The Alaska Coastal Management Program was terminated on July 1, 2011, pursuant to AS 44.66.030.

<sup>31</sup> The RRMP only covers certain types of activities related to short-term and long-term uses. These are listed in Tables 2.1 and 3.1 of the RRMP. Table 3.1 of the RRMP, for convenience, is also included as Table 2.2 in this Plan; however, adjudicators should read the entire section on allowed uses in Chapter 2 of the RRMP as well as the specific requirements for particular river segments.

**Table 2.2: Nushagak & Mulchatna Rivers Recreational Management Guidelines (same as Table 3.1 in the RRMP)**

<b>Amended Plan (2005) for Nushagak &amp; Mulchatna Rivers Recreation Units</b>				<b>Management Guidelines Related to Recreation Uses and Structures</b>							
<i>RRMP Unit</i>	<i>BBAP Unit</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Management Intent</i>	<i>Perm. Facilities</i>	<i>Temp. Facilities</i>	<i>Trapping Cabins</i>	<i>Boat Storage</i>	<i>Airstrip Development</i>	<i>Docks - Perm.</i>	<i>Docks - Temp.</i>	<i>Other Uses</i>
1	5-20	Lower Nushagak River, Keefer Cutoff to Wood River	Semi-developed	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed
2	5-22, 6-49	Iowithla River Corridor	Primitive	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	May be Allowed
3	6-26	Lower Nushagak River, Ekwok Vicinity	Semi-developed	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed
4	6-35	Kokwok River Corridor	Semi-primitive	Prohibited	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	Prohibited	May be Allowed	May be Allowed
5	6-26	Lower Nushagak and Mulchatna River Corridors, New Stuyahok Vicinity	Semi-developed	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed
6	6-42	Lower Nushagak Uplands	Semi-primitive	Prohibited	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	Prohibited	May be Allowed	May be Allowed
7	6-26, 6-33	Middle Nushagak River Corridor, Koliganek Vicinity	Semi-developed	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed
8	6-25	Nuyakuk River Corridor	Primitive	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited
9	6-26	Middle Nushagak Corridor, Harris Creek to Nuyakuk River	Semi-primitive	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed
10	6-02	Middle Nushagak Corridor, Chichitnok River to Harris Creek	Semi-primitive	Prohibited	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	Prohibited	May be Allowed	May be Allowed
11	6-13	Middle Nushagak Uplands	Semi-primitive	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed
12	6-02	King Salmon River Corridor	Primitive	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	May be Allowed

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RRMP Unit	BBAP Unit	Name	Management Intent	Perm. Facilities	Temp. Facilities	Trapping Cabins	Boat Storage	Airstrip Development	Docks - Perm.	Docks - Temp.	Other Uses
13	6-02	Upper Nushagak and Chichitnok Rivers Corridor	Primitive	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	May be Allowed	Prohibited	Prohibited	May be Allowed
14	6-01	Nushagak Hills	Semi-primitive	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed
15	6-09	Lower Mulchatna River Corridor	Semi-primitive	Prohibited	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	Prohibited	May be Allowed	May be Allowed
16	6-09, 6-41	Stuyahok River Corridor	Primitive	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	May be Allowed
17	6-09, 6-24, 6-30	Koktuli River Corridor	Primitive	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	May be Allowed
18	6-09	Middle Mulchatna River Corridor, Keefer Creek to Koktuli River	Semi-primitive	Prohibited	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	Prohibited	May be Allowed	May be Allowed
19	6-05	Lower Mulchatna Uplands	Semi-primitive	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed
20	6-07, 6-09, 7-06	Middle Mulchatna River Corridor, Chilikadrotna River to Keefer Creek	Semi-primitive	Prohibited	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	Prohibited	May be Allowed	May be Allowed
21	7-06	Chilchitna River and Tutna Lake	Semi-primitive	Prohibited	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	Prohibited	May be Allowed	May be Allowed
22	7-06	Upper Mulchatna River Corridor	Semi-primitive	Prohibited	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	Prohibited	May be Allowed	May be Allowed
23	7-06	Chilikadrotna River Corridor	Primitive	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	Prohibited	May be Allowed
24	7-04	Half Cabin Lakes Area	Semi-developed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed
25	7-02	Upper Mulchatna Uplands	Semi-primitive	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed	May be Allowed