

PUBLIC ACCESS⁴

Goal

Public Access. Maintain, enhance, or provide adequate access to publicly owned land and resources.

Management Guidelines

A. Retain Access. Improve or maintain public access to areas with significant public resource values by retaining access sites and corridors in public ownership, by reserving rights of access when state land is sold or leased, by acquiring access, or by asserting rights of way through Revise Statute (RS) 2477. (See Appendix D.) No potential RS 2477 trails are recommended for assertion to implement this plan. Generally, section line easements should not be vacated unless alternative, physically useable access can be established or DNR has determined that state lands in the area should be roadless.

B. Management of 17(b) Easements. Generally, DNR will not accept management of 17(b) easements unless it already actively manages a portion of the trail or easement or state management will best protect public access to state lands.

C. Access for Development. When an access route is constructed for resource development, existing public access should be maintained or improved to mineralized areas, recreation, fish, wildlife, and forest resources, agriculture areas, and other public resources.

D. Adequate Access Rights. Where practical and within the limits of available funding, full public rights of access should be provided when roads are constructed by state or local governments. Perpetual exclusive easements should be acquired and recorded when the state acquires access rights across property in other ownerships.

E. Coordination With the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT/PF). Access needs, such as right-of-way widths or road locations, should be coordinated with DOT/PF.

F. Limiting Access. Access to public lands may be curtailed at certain times to protect public safety, allow special uses, and prevent harm to the environment. Examples of conditions that may justify limiting public access are fire management, timber harvest operations, and high soil moisture content when traffic may cause extensive damage to roads and trails.

G. Purchase of Access Sites. Public appropriations may be requested to purchase access sites, easements, or reservations to public use areas and to proposed settlement and agricultural projects.

H. Access Along and Across The Trans-Alaska Pipeline (TAPS). On state land, access is allowed across and along TAPS under the following conditions.

⁴ Also see pages 2-37 and 2-50.

1. Crossing on foot or by vehicles of less than 1500 lbs. gross weight (GVW) is allowed without a permit.
2. Crossing by vehicles, pickups, four-wheel-drive vehicles, and all-terrain-vehicles over 1500 lbs GVW requires a permit except at designated vehicle crossings.
3. The public may not travel on the TAPS right-of-way parallel to the pipeline except by permit from DNR.

I. Pipeline Access Roads. DNR should work with Alyeska Pipeline Service Company to get Alyeska to open or move barrier gates on certain access roads that cross state land between the Richardson Highway and the pipeline right-of-way. Options such as temporarily opening areas for personal use wood harvest or other short term uses should be explored. Opening roads full-time may create new maintenance costs. This would allow the public more access to state land along service roads.

J. Pipeline Crossings. The department should work with Alyeska Pipeline Service Company to identify options for developing new pipeline crossings to proposed land offerings at Tonsina North (MU 20A) and Tazlina (MU 21A). Future pipelines (such as the Trans-Alaska Gas Line) should provide more places for public crossings to state land for hunting, fishing, recreation, timber harvest, settlement, and other uses or provide a mechanism to improve or develop future public crossings as the need arises.

K. Other Guidelines Affecting Public Access. Several other guidelines may affect public access. See the following sections of this chapter:

- Agriculture
- Fish and wildlife habitat
- Forestry
- Materials
- Recreation, cultural, and scenic resources
- Settlement
- Subsurface resources
- Transportation
- Lakeshore management
- Stream corridors and instream flow
- Trail management
- Wetlands management