

RECREATION, CULTURAL, AND SCENIC RESOURCES

Goals

Recreation Opportunities. Alaska's residents and increasing numbers of out-of-state visitors desire and expect accessible outdoor recreational opportunities. Conveniently located public recreation areas; well designed, maintained, and safe recreation facilities; and opportunities to appreciate Alaska's history and diverse cultures should be provided to aid the physical and mental health of a highly competitive society:

1. Develop a state park system of parks, recreation areas, trails, historic parks, rivers, and sites that provide a wide range of year-round outdoor recreation opportunities for all ages, abilities, and use preferences near population centers and major travel routes.
2. Provide recreation opportunities on land and water areas that serve multiple purposes such as habitat protection, timber management, and mineral resource extraction.
3. Assist communities through cooperative planning, conveyance of state lands, and grants-in-aid for parks and trails within population centers.
4. Encourage commercial development of recreational facilities and services through land sales, leases, loans and technical assistance where public recreation needs can most effectively be provided by private enterprise.

Recreation Resource Protection. Alaska's natural and cultural resources are the foundation of Alaska outdoor recreation and they must be protected. Soil, forests, prehistoric and historic sites and objects, fish and wildlife habitat, scenic areas and access to open space must be preserved if Alaska's scenic and recreation values are to be maintained for future generations. Long-term public appreciation of Alaska's natural and human history and perpetuation of Alaska's distinctive identity can be accomplished:

1. Protect and portray natural features of regional or statewide significance and cultural features representative of major themes of Alaska history in historic sites, parks, and preserves of the State Park System.
2. Assist other land management agencies to perpetuate natural and historic features on other state lands, in community park systems, and on private property by providing technical assistance and grants-in-aid.

Economic Development. Alaska is an international tourist attraction. Outdoor recreation has grown dramatically since statehood and is now the state's third largest industry; its economic potential has just begun to be realized. Areas developed and managed primarily for outdoor recreation and the appreciation of scenic and historic values fulfill expectations of tourists. One-fifth of the visitors to Alaska's state parks come from out of state. In addition to the influx of tourism dollars, many jobs and services are created for Alaska residents. Recreation industry employment can be increased:

1. Rehabilitate and maintain recreation facilities that enable greater appreciation of Alaska's scenic and historic resources.

2. Increase the number of attractions through additions to the Alaska State Park System.
3. Develop cooperative interagency information centers for visitors.
4. Maintain viable wildlife populations.

Cultural Resources. Preserve, protect, and interpret the historic, prehistoric, and archaeological resources of Alaska in accordance with the Alaska Historic Preservation Act.

Management Guidelines

A. Public Use Cabins. A system of public use cabins should be established. The Department will develop administrative procedures for managing a state public use cabin program, set priorities for cabin sites, and seek a budget for construction, maintenance, and program management. Cooperation will be sought with municipal or federal governments or nonprofit organizations for construction or maintenance of cabins. General locations for cabins have been identified by this plan.

B. Private Recreational Facilities on Public Land. Lodges, tent camps, ski areas, or other private facilities designed to be run as private, profit-making recreation facilities will be permitted or leased if the facility fulfills the following conditions set by a management plan or a finding in accordance with AS 38.05.035:

1. Private recreation development adds to or enhances public recreation opportunities.
2. The amount of use generated by the facility will not exceed the best available calculation of the recreation carrying capacity of the area. This calculation will be based on management intent and guidelines of this or subsequent plans for the area.
3. The facility will be sited, designed, constructed, and operated in a manner that creates the least conflict with natural values and traditional uses of the area.
4. The facility will be sited and designed in accordance with stream corridor, access, wetlands, and other guidelines of this plan.

Final approval of a permit or lease for the facility will be given only after consultation with the Department of Fish and Game and the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

C. Maximum Use of Sites. Achieve optimum use of recreation sites consistent with maintaining high quality recreation experiences, environmental quality, and safety.

D. Identify and Determine the Significance of All Cultural Resources on State Land Through:

1. Cultural resources surveys will be conducted by the Department of Natural Resources personnel.
2. Qualified individuals and organizations will be encouraged to conduct cultural resource surveys on state lands.

3. Planned surveys and inventories will be conducted as a cooperative effort among state, federal, and local or Native groups.

E. Protect Significant Cultural Resources:

1. Review construction projects or land uses for potential conflict with cultural resources.
2. Cooperate with concerned government agencies, statewide or local groups, and individuals to develop guidelines and recommendations on how to avoid or mitigate identified or potential conflict.

F. Scenic Resources. All development along the Glenn (including Tok cut-off), Richardson, and Edgerton Highways should be located and designed to maximize views from the highway.

G. Other Guidelines Affecting Recreation and Cultural Resources. Several other guidelines may affect recreation management practices. See the following sections of this chapter:

- Fish and wildlife habitat
- Forestry
- Public access
- Stream corridors and instream flow
- Trail management
- Lakeshore management
- Wetlands management

Land Allocation Summary

Recreation. Dispersed recreation activity such as snowmachining, cross-country skiing, hiking, all-terrain vehicle use and canoeing occur throughout the basin. Developed recreation facilities on state land are limited to small recreation sites at Little Nelchina, Tolsona Creek, Dry Creek, Squirrel Creek, Little Tonsina, Mt. Billy Mitchell, Worthington Glacier, Blueberry Lake, Liberty Falls, and Porcupine Creek.

Most high value recreation lands will be retained in public ownership and managed for multiple use. This includes state land near Tazlina Lake, St. Anne Lake, Kaina Lake, High Lake, Tonsina Lake, Tonsina River, McCarthy, Long Lake and Summit Lake. Three areas that will be actively managed for recreation are the Kettlehole Lakes - Mendeltna Creek area, Nelchina-Tazlina recreation rivers, and Thompson Pass. The plan recommends that these areas be considered for legislative designation to ensure long-term retention in public ownership and management for recreation. The plan explicitly provides for transportation and utility routes through the Thompson Pass area. An adequate land base will be reserved (through Inter-agency Land Management Agreements) at existing recreation sites. The Gulkana River (state-owned land under the river) will also be designated as a State Wild and Scenic River to complement the National Wild and Scenic River designation.

Public Use Cabins. Public use cabins may be built (or acquired), contingent on funding, at these locations:

1. North end of Tonsina Lake [management unit (MU) 14]
2. Tazlina Lake (MU 1 and 8)
3. Kaina Lake or Upper Kaina Valley (MU 8)
4. Upper Klutina Valley (MU 11)

Recommended Legislative Designations. The State Legislature should consider designating certain state land for long-term retention in public ownership. This land would be managed for recreation. Areas proposed for consideration are listed below:

1. Kettlehole Lakes - Mendeltna Creek
2. Thompson Pass
3. Nelchina-Tazlina recreation rivers
4. Gulkana River (state-owned submerged lands and water column)