

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ACCESS

Goal

Maintain, enhance, or provide adequate access to public and private lands 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 Revised Statutes Section 2477 (RS 2477). No potential RS 2477 trails are recommended for assertion to implement this plan. Generally, section line easements should not be vacated unless alternative, physically usable access can be established or DNR has determined that state lands in the area should be roadless.

B. Accepting 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. Activities Adjacent to ANCSA 17(b) easements. Activities on state tidelands adjacent to 17(b) easements will not block access to the easement unless alternative access or an accessible, alternative easement is supplied.

D. Anchorages, Regionally Important Campsites, and Frequently Used Recreation Areas. Activities are allowed in anchorages (including those important for recreation, commercial fishing tenders, the commercial fishing fleet, or general transportation), adjacent to regionally important campsites or in intensively used recreation areas if the land manager finds that the use will not significantly diminish the capacity of

the anchorage, block access to the campsite, or significantly change the remote secluded nature of the surrounding publicly owned uplands. Authorizations for activities that create the impacts described above may be given in these areas if there is no feasible or prudent alternative; or if there are sufficient anchorages, recreation areas, or campsites nearby, and the land manager finds that the activity would be in the best interest of the state.

E. 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. When determining whether or not to improve existing access, the potential for increasing user conflicts and resource degradation will be considered and solutions sought.

F. 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. Easements should be acquired and recorded when the state acquires access rights across property in other ownerships.

G. 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. This guideline does not commit DOT/PF to the construction or maintenance of public access facilities.

H. 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 and fish and wildlife. Examples of conditions that may justify limiting public access are fire management, timber

harvest operations, high soil moisture content when traffic may cause extensive damage to roads and trails, and sensitive populations of fish or wildlife.

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

J. Access to Non-state Lands. Reasonable access will be accommodated across state lands to other public and private lands. Existing legal access will not be precluded unless equivalent access is available.

K. Access to Trailheads. Coastal access across state tidelands to designated trail corridors that begin at the shoreline will be protected. Where feasible and prudent, tideland leases and permits will maintain

public access 50 feet seaward of mean high water.

L. Shoreties. In order to protect public access to and along public tidelands, shoreties that would conflict with public access should not be authorized if floating facilities can feasibly be safely moored using anchors. In addition, shoreties will not be authorized where there is no agreement from the uplands owner.

M. Other Guidelines Affecting Public Access. A number of other guidelines may affect public access. For details of these guidelines, see the following sections of this chapter.

- Fish and wildlife habitat and harvest areas
- Forestry
- Settlement
- Subsurface resources
- Transportation and utilities