

Chapter 7: Implementation

The guidelines in this plan are intended to be flexible so as to respond to changing conditions, shifts in demand and use patterns, and availability of funds. Regular review is essential throughout the implementation of this plan to continuously analyze public need and ensure that those needs are being met.

Phasing

Implementation of the management recommendations should begin immediately upon adoption of the final plan and proceed as opportunities allow. Facility recommendations are intended to be implemented in phases as staffing and funding allow. Specific phased project steps for the facility recommendations are not listed in this document since its focus is to provide broad policy direction and this type of phasing is more appropriate for the more detailed site planning process. Throughout the planning process however, the public consistently identified certain areas of interest that need to be considered as implementation priorities.

While this document will not address phasing of specific projects, the projects below were identified as priorities and would greatly enhance recreational opportunities:

- The Facility Recommendations for the Cottonwood Eastland unit, including but not limited to a campground with a parking area, several public use cabins, and a viewing platform.
- Repurpose the old ranger station in Halibut Cove Lagoon to a group camp facility and develop a Ranger Station in an area that is easier to access at all tides.
- Develop a Homer-based Park Maintenance/Operations Facility to include: a maintenance shop able to house a boat, offices, tools, dry heat storage, and dry cold storage; and a yard able to accommodate multiple vehicles, boats, ATVs, lumber storage, and a large fuel storage locker.
- Develop more public use cabins and tent platforms/shelters.
- Supply drinking water (well or catchment system) to public use cabins and to popular camping areas with poor or no water.

Site Planning

Locations of facilities provided in this section of the plan are intended to be general in nature. The exact location of a facility is dependent upon more detailed site analysis and design work that is done as part of a specific project. A detailed site analysis may yield minor revisions to the numbers and locations of the facilities recommended in this plan.

Plan Review and Modification

Due to changes in use patterns and demands, funding realities as well as changes in data associated with specific plan recommendations, adjustments to the plan will have to be made over time. If proposed adjustments are a major departure from the plan's intent, the Director may determine the need to initiate a public review process.

This plan reflects the best efforts of the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation to analyze the resources of the park and to provide recreational/interpretive opportunities that do not significantly compromise the park's cultural and natural resources or character.

The planned outlook for the document is 20 years, with the realization that intermediate reviews and modifications may be warranted and are appropriate. The Director may initiate a review at any time.

The following procedure will be used for plan deviations and modifications:

Periodic Review. The Division will coordinate periodic review of the Management Plan when the Director considers it necessary and so directs. The decision to review may be triggered by:

- Written public or agency requests for review;
- Policy changes within the Division;
- Availability of new data;
- Availability of new technology; or
- Changing social or economic conditions that place different demands on the park or affect the Division's capabilities.

The Management Plan review will include meetings, as determined appropriate, with the local advisory board, interested groups, the general public, affected agencies, the area superintendent, and other Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation personnel. The periodic review will lead to one of the following actions:

- No modification of the plan;

- Modification of the plan; or the
- Granting of a special exception.

Modification of the Plan. Plan modifications are of two types:

- Minor changes – These are changes which, if accomplished, would not cause a deviation from the original intent of the Management Plan. Minor changes may be necessary for clarification, consistency, or to facilitate plan implementation. Minor changes do not require public review but should be coordinated with the area superintendent and appropriate staff.
- Major changes – These are changes which, if accomplished, would cause a deviation from the original intent of the Management Plan. Major changes require public notice and review prior to adoption.

Granting of a Special Exception. Exceptions to the provisions of the Management Plan may be made without modification of the plan. Special exceptions shall occur only when compliance with the plan is excessively difficult or impractical, and an alternative procedure can be implemented which adheres to the purposes and spirit of the plan.

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation may make a special exception in the implementation of the plan through the following procedures. The person or agency requesting the special exception shall prepare a written finding which specifies:

- The nature of the special exception requested;
- The extenuating conditions which require a special exception;
- The alternative course of action to be followed; and
- How the intent of the plan will be met by the alternative.

The Director of DPOR will review the findings and issue a determination. If warranted by the degree of controversy or the potential impact, the Director may hold a public hearing before reaching a decision. The decision of the Director may be appealed to the Commissioner of ADNR, whose decision will be final.

Proposed Regulations

Regulation changes will be needed for some plan recommendations to be enforceable by DPOR. If a regulation needs to be promulgated to fully implement a recommendation in the plan, it is mentioned in Chapter 5 under the relevant park use category and/or in the Trail Plan. Some of these regulations may be developed as soon as practicable after this plan is completed. Other regulations that are determined necessary in the future may be developed from time to time as determined necessary by DPOR.

Recommended Staffing

Adequate staffing of park units is important to provide positive public/staff interactions that foster appreciation and support for state park units; to provide public safety and emergency response to the recreating public; to protect the natural and cultural resources; to maintain facilities so they are safe and clean; and to supervise seasonal workers, contract workers, and volunteers that are critical to day-to-day functions of park units. These additional staff are recommended to properly fulfill current operations, without the addition of any of the facilities proposed in this plan:

- Upgrade seasonal Park Specialist to a 12-month Park Specialist position to provide expertise in trail construction and maintain trails on a year-round basis. As existing trails keep deteriorating and are being redeveloped and new trails are constructed, it will be increasingly important to ensure these trails are properly maintained to minimize impacts on natural and cultural resources and to provide safe recreational opportunities. This position will be involved in the planning, layout, and constructions of trails and it will supervise volunteer and contract construction and maintenance crews.
- Permanent part-time Park Interpreter Position. This position would have a unique opportunity to provide interpretative and educational opportunities. These services would provide a positive interaction with the public and would foster support for parks and park programs.
- Create two natural resource technician positions (7 months each). These two positions would each oversee a four-person trail crew funded for four months. The park currently has one park specialist that juggles grant funds to work on trail projects. These positions would oversee the proposed trail crew listed below and provide maintenance on public use cabins and other park facilities.
- Create two four-person Alaska Conservation Corps (ACC) trail crews (4 months each). Currently, the park relies on Recreation Trails Program grant funding to oversee trail maintenance projects. This funding is not guaranteed and is limited to working on specific projects. Dedicated trail crews will help to ensure the maintenance of park trails and greatly improve the condition of the trails by maintaining them to high standards.
- Create volunteer coordinator position (6 months). Currently, DPOR hires a 3-month ACC position to coordinate volunteers for the park. During the time this has been implemented it has proven to be an excellent way to leverage the volunteer effort in the park.
- Create a volunteer grant writer position. This position would write and administer grants for the parks to fund the part-time positions that this plan recommends adding, and to fund new PUCs, trails, and trail maintenance.

If additional facilities in the plan are implemented, DPOR should also add the following positions to the park:

- Create another natural resource technician (8 months) to oversee public use cabin maintenance and supervise the cabin maintenance crew.
- Create a three-person ACC cabin maintenance crew that is dedicated to cabin maintenance.

