

PUBLIC AND COMMERCIAL RECREATION RESOURCES

Goals

Recreation Opportunities. Alaska's residents and increasing numbers of out-of-state visitors desire and expect accessible outdoor recreational opportunities. 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. Provide recreation opportunities on land and water areas that serve multiple purposes such as habitat protection, timber management, settlement, and mineral resource extraction.
2. Assist communities through cooperative planning, conveyance of state lands, and grants-in-aid for parks and trails within population centers.
3. Encourage commercial development of recreational facilities and services through leases, loans, and technical assistance where public recreation needs can most effectively be provided by private enterprise, while avoiding or minimizing conflicts with traditional uses, such as subsistence.

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 by:

1. Protecting natural features of regional or statewide significance and cultural features representative of major themes of Alaska history.

2. Assisting 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 one of the state's largest industries; 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. In addition to the influx of tourism dollars, many jobs and services are created for Alaska residents and pride in Alaska's cultures is generated. The challenge is to provide the benefits of the tourism industry without conflicting with existing community lifestyles.

1. Provide, rehabilitate and maintain recreation facilities that enable greater appreciation of Alaska's scenic and historic resources.
2. Maintain viable fish and wildlife populations.

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. Amos Lakes, Beaver Mountains and the dog mushing trails near McGrath have been identified as general areas suitable for public use cabins.

B. Permanent Commercial Recreation Facilities on State Land. Lodges, or other private facilities designed to be run as private, profit-making recreation facilities may be leased if the facility fulfills the following conditions and a finding in accordance with AS 38.05.035.

1. Commercial recreation development adds to or enhances public recreation opportunities.

2. The use generated by private, recreation development will not result in significant adverse effects on important fish and wildlife populations. In making this determination, DNR shall consult with the Department of Fish and Game.

3. The amount of use generated by the facility will not exceed the best available estimate of the recreation carrying capacity of the area. This estimate will be based on the following information.

a. The number of commercial recreation leases and permits that already exist on state and other land in that unit and the amount of use they generate.

b. Management intent and guidelines of this or subsequent plans for the unit.

c. Management objectives for nearby non-state lands (to the extent this information is readily available).

This information will be gathered as part of the normal permitting and leasing process and the public notice regulations described in guideline I, page 2-11, Public Notice to Help Avoid Conflicts with Traditional Uses of Fish and Game. Commercial recreation uses that exist at this time are identified in the individual management units.

4. The facility can be sited, designed, constructed, and operated in a manner that avoids significant conflict with natural values and traditional uses of the area. See guideline H, Avoid Conflicts with Traditional Uses of Fish and Game, page 2-11 for guidance on deter-

mining the likely impacts on traditional land uses (as required by AS 38.05.830).

5. Additions to existing facilities, rebuilt facilities, or new facilities 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. Temporary Commercial Recreation Facilities on State Land. Tent camps and other temporary private recreation facilities designed to be used as private profit-making facilities may be permitted if the facility fulfills the following conditions and is determined appropriate after interagency review.

1. Private recreation development adds to or enhances public recreation opportunities.

2. The use generated by private, recreation development will not result in significant adverse effects on important fish and wildlife populations. In making this determination, DNR shall consult with the Department of Fish and Game.

3. The amount of use generated by this facility will not exceed the best available estimate of the recreation carrying capacity of the area. The estimate will be based on the following information.

a. The number of commercial recreation leases and permits that already exist on state and other land.

b. Management and intent guidelines of this or subsequent plans for the unit.

c. Management objectives for nearby non-state lands (to the extent this information is readily available).

This information will be gathered as part of the normal permitting and leasing process and the public notice regulations described in guideline I, Public Notice To Help Avoid Con-

flict With Traditional Use of Fish and Game, page 2-11. Commercial recreation uses that exist at this time are identified in the individual management units.

D. Optimum Use of Sites. Achieve optimum use of recreation sites consistent with maintaining high quality recreation experiences, wildlife harvest, environmental quality, and safety.

E. Other Guidelines Affecting Public and Commercial Recreation Resources.

Several other guidelines may affect recreation management practices. See the following sections of this chapter:

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

Land Allocation Summary

Background. Because of the small resident population in the planning area and the distance from railbelt and Kuskokwim Delta communities, the amount of nonconsumptive, dispersed recreation activities such as snow-machining, cross-country skiing, hiking, all-terrain vehicle use, and float-boating within the planning area is relatively low. These activities are concentrated near communities, along some of the major rivers, and in the Alaska Range. There are also a number of cultural sites in the area. Most are associated with the Native occupation, the gold rush era, and Russian trading posts. Most of the areas with moderate or high potential for recreation will be retained in public ownership and managed for multiple use, with public recreation as one of the primary designated uses (Table 2.3). These areas total approximately 4.3 million acres. In addition, approximately 62,400 acres of land in the Candle Hills, Nun-satuk River, and Gagaryah River areas that are designated resource management have

moderate to high recreation value. These lands will be retained in public ownership in the near term and managed for multiple use, including public recreation. When the plan is reviewed in five years, these areas will be reevaluated to determine whether they should be kept in public ownership for the long-term multiple use, or offered for private ownership. Where land or remote cabin permits will be offered, specific setbacks and guidelines are identified in this Chapters 2 and 3 in order to protect recreation, cultural, and historic resources. A description of lands designated for consumptive forms of recreation such as fish and wildlife harvest is included in the Fish and Wildlife Habitat section of this chapter.

Public Use Cabins. The Beaver Mountains, Amos Lakes, and areas along popular dog mushing trails are recommended for public use cabin sites. Construction of public use cabins is contingent on funding or interest from nonprofit groups.

Trails and Access. To ensure continued opportunities for public use of trails, those recreation and historic trails of regional or statewide significance will be protected through public ownership of trail corridors. The Iditarod National Historic Trail System and the sites associated with it, and the Iditarod race trail have special significance because of their historic value and present public use. The race trail will be protected by a publicly-owned corridor 200 feet or greater when passing through land offerings. The Iditarod Trail Advisory Council (or equivalent body) or the BLM trail coordinator and the State Office of History and Archeology will be consulted when land offerings or remote cabin permits are considered near the INHTS. The State Office of History and Archeology will be consulted for other permits or leases along the INHTS.

Commercial Recreational Facilities on Public Land. Commercial recreation facilities are allowed on most state lands. In the near term, most of these facilities are likely to be built on non-state lands in or adjacent to communities or on state lands in the Alaska Range and other more remote parts of the planning area. Along the Aniak, Holitna, and

Hoholitna rivers, in the Beaver Mountains, and adjacent to Tishimna Lake where wildlife habitat and human use values are high, the number or location of lodges are restricted.

New permanent facilities for commercial recreation are not permitted in the Aniak drainage

Table 2.3 Public Recreation Designations

Areas Where Public Recreation is Designated a Primary Use

<u>Name</u>	<u>Subunit</u>
Tonzona River	3a
Kuskokwim River	5a and 5c
Nixon Fork	6a
Dishna-Iditarod	8f
Takotna River	9d
George River	10a
South Alaska Range	12a
North Alaska Range	13a
Stony River	14d
Aniak River	17a, 17b, and 17e

Areas with Recreation Potential Designated Resource Management

Candle Hills	5d
Kuskokwim River	5h
South Alaska Range	12b
