

# TRAIL MANAGEMENT

---

## Goals

---

**Public Use Opportunities.** Ensure continued opportunities for public use of important recreation, public access, and historic trails of regional and statewide significance.

**Local Trails.** Assist in establishing local trail systems that provide access to community recreation areas.

**Trail Corridors.** Protect or establish trail corridors to meet projected future use requirements and protect current use.

## Management Guidelines

---

**A. Special Trails.** These are trails that require unusual widths or management practices because of historical significance or unique values. Management guidelines should be developed for such trails on an individual basis. As a general policy special trails will be protected by publicly owned buffers that will generally be wider than the 100-foot minimum trail buffer width established for trails of regional or statewide significance in guideline C below.

**1. The Iditarod Race Trail.** Where the Iditarod race trail passes through an area that is to be offered for settlement or other development, the trail will be located (see maps in Appendix C) and protected by a public ownership corridor 200 feet wide (100 feet on either side of the centerline). The corridor width may be expanded to minimize potential land use conflicts or the impacts of the trail on adjacent land uses. Rerouting of the trail corridor may be permitted in specific instances with the consultation of the Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, the Division of Forestry and the Iditarod Trail Committee or similar body in place at the time a decision is made. A wider corridor may be desirable in certain instances to incorporate

cultural and historic sites or to buffer adjacent land uses that would adversely affect the trail.

No permanent structures or equipment should be placed in the trail corridor if they could adversely affect the trail experience or access along the trail. Where necessary, trail crossings may be permitted to allow access to lands on both sides of the trail. Crossings should be limited to a few discrete areas rather than scattered crossings in many places along the trail. In areas where the trail has been used previously for transporting heavy equipment to mining claims, primarily on the trail sections west of McGrath, this use will not be restricted unless there is documented damage to the trail and there is a feasible and prudent alternative access to mining claims.

**2. The Iditarod National Historic Trail System (INHTS).** There are a number of trails and historic sites within the northern half of the planning area that have been identified as part of the INHTS (see maps in Appendix C). Some of these trails and sites are well defined while others are not. Minimum trail buffers will generally be wider than the 100-foot minimum (50 feet each side of centerline) established for trails of regional or statewide significance. Prior to areas being offered for disposal or remote cabin permits in areas which include the INHTS, the Iditarod National Historic Trail Advisory Council (or equivalent organization in place at the time a decision is made) and/or the BLM trail coordinator and the State Office of History and Archaeology will be consulted. For permits and leases along the INHTS, only the State Office of History and Archaeology will be consulted.

The State of Alaska and BLM have signed a memorandum of agreement covering management of the INHTS. The trail will be managed in a manner consistent with this agreement.

## **B. Neighborhood and Community Trails.**

Local trails that are not of regional or statewide significance will be identified and protected through management plans or disposal design. Guidelines recommended in DNR's subdivision design manual should be used in areas offered for subdivision. Once identified, trails will be recorded on the state's Land Record System and reserved through issuance of a trail permit. The following criteria should be used to determine whether a local trail should be protected by easement or public ownership:

1. If the local trail serves as a neighborhood collector trail that connects to a public open space system or regional or statewide trail, it will be kept in public ownership.
2. If the trail will be used almost entirely by neighborhood residents for their own use, it should be kept in state ownership or dedicated to the local government.
3. If the objective is to provide local pedestrian access and does not have the characteristics of criteria 1 or 2 (above) an easement may be used. This would typically occur when the purpose is to establish access between two lots to improve pedestrian circulation within a subdivision where a greenbelt and neighborhood trail system does not provide adequate access or where it is impractical to establish such an integrated trail system.
4. In cases of land offerings other than subdivisions (for example, land opened to homesteading) a publicly owned buffer or an easement will be used to protect trails. If a trail has the characteristics described in criterion 1 or 2 (above), it will be retained in public ownership; if it has the characteristics described in criterion 3, an easement will be reserved.

**C. Buffer Width for Trails of Regional or Statewide Significance.** This category includes the majority of trails on state land that are identified in this plan. These trails are generally traveled by foot, dogsled, horse and sometimes vehicle access for a variety of purposes. Most standard trails have a history of

public use and can be expected to see increased use as the state's population increases.

Trails of regional or statewide significance on state land shall be protected by a publicly owned buffer that has a minimum width of 100 feet (50 feet each side of center line). This buffer should be sized to protect the quality of the experience of the user and to minimize negative effects such as noise or dust from adjacent land uses. Buffer widths may be increased to minimize land use and ownership conflicts, to protect the privacy of adjacent landowners, to separate motorized from non-motorized uses, to allow future siting of public facilities, to allow flexibility for rerouting, or to adopt a trail to specific public uses or aesthetic or environmental concerns. Buffer widths may vary along the length of a trail because of the above considerations. The width of a buffer on any portion of a trail should also be based on the management intent for adjacent public land as expressed through applicable land use plans. However, the minimum width of the buffer will be 100 feet. Trail buffers should be located and designed in consultation with affected divisions of DNR, the ADF&G and the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT/PF), affected private land owners, and local trail committees. Activity areas of 10 to 40 acres may be identified along trails for other uses such as camping or rest areas.

**D. Land Use Adjacent to Trails.** Land adjacent to trails, including land in trail buffers, generally will be managed to avoid trail damage, maintain trail use and retain the natural vegetation adjacent to the trail or within the buffer. Timber sales, materials sales, and permits and leases for activities that impact trail use or the natural vegetation adjacent to the trail will, to the extent feasible and prudent, be managed so as to not adversely affect trail use or the aesthetic character of the trail. This guideline does not preclude trail crossings or rerouting of trails as described below.

**E. Trail Crossings.** When it is necessary for powerlines, pipelines or roads to cross trail buffers, crossings should be at a 90° angle to

the buffer when feasible. Vegetative screening should be preserved at trail crossings.

**F. Identification of Trails.** Before public lands are leased or disposed of, trails that merit consideration for protection by one of the methods described in guidelines A through C (above) should be identified. The Division of Land and Water Management will be the lead agency for identification of trails and will consult with the other divisions of DNR, DOT/PF, ADF&G, affected private land owners, and local government when identifying trails. In addition, any agency, organization, or individual may identify public trails to be considered for protection.

**G. Rerouting Trails.** Rerouting of trails may be permitted to minimize land use conflicts or to facilitate use of a trail if alternate routes provide opportunities similar to the original. If trails are rerouted, provision should be made for construction of new trail segments if warranted by type of use. Rerouting trails should be done in consultation with affected divisions of DNR, DOT/PF, and ADF&G, private land owners, and local trail committees. Historic trails which follow well-established routes should not be rerouted unless necessary to maintain trail use.

**H. Other Guidelines Affecting Trail Management.** Several other guidelines may affect trail management. See the following sections of this chapter:

- Agriculture
- Cultural resources
- Fish and wildlife habitat
- Forestry
- Lakeshore management
- Materials
- Public access
- Public and commercial recreation resources
- Settlement
- Stream corridors and instream flow
- Subsurface resources
- Transportation
- Wetlands management