

INSTREAM FLOW

1. GOAL

Maintain water quantity and quality sufficient to protect the human, fish, and wildlife resources and uses of the region.

2. MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

A. Studies and Reservations to Support Plan. In accordance with applicable statutes, regulations and procedures, give support to instream flow studies and reservations that are necessary to protect and promote resource values and uses identified in this area plan for streams and other waterbodies.

B. Streams and Uses to Consider. All streams and other waterbodies that are retained wholly or in part in public ownership for their public values should be considered for instream flow reservations. Additional streams and other waterbodies may be identified for consideration.

Under DNR's statutes reservation of instream flow is possible for four types of uses:

1. Protection of fish and wildlife habitat, migration and propagation; instream flow reservations to protect habitat may be made for streams that: (a) have significant anadromous or resident fish populations; (b) flow into wetlands that support significant waterfowl, furbearer or other wildlife populations; or, (c) provide the water supply needed for other habitat types that support significant wildlife populations;
2. Recreation and park purposes;
3. Navigation and transportation purposes; and,
4. Sanitary and water quality purposes.

C. Priorities. High priority streams and other waterbodies for instream flow study and possible reservation are identified in Chapter 4, Implementation. These have been identified because of their high public values particularly for habitat and recreation and the high potential for conflicts with these values from resource developments.

D. Process for Determining Reservations. The process of determining instream flow reservations should include the following steps for each stream or other waterbody.

1. Identify the management objectives.
2. Estimate the quantity of water seasonally available by direct measurement (hydrograph), predictive methods (regional hydrographic models) or other appropriate methods.
3. Determine the quantities of water already appropriated.
4. In consultation with appropriate agencies, use site-specific studies or other information to determine the instream flow requirements for the resources and uses to be protected. For habitat resources this will require cooperative work and consultation with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to identify necessary conditions for rearing, staging, reproduction, spawning, overwintering and migration of valuable fish and wildlife resources.
5. Specify in advance: (a) study methods; (b) agency or other responsibilities for every aspect of the studies, including funding; (c) schedule for the studies; and, (d) responsibility for applying for instream flow reservation.