

**3. Competition.** If leased under AS 38.05.070 or 38.05.073, campgrounds must be consistent with AS 41.23.470(d) which does not allow leasing of a campground if the facility is in competition with a private facility or enterprise. Competition is defined by this plan to include competition within (not between) each Recreation River. Also see *Other Recommendations, Commercial Facilities* in Chapter 4.

**4. Public Need.** The decision to authorize this type of facility shall include the availability of similar facilities nearby, the availability of private parcels nearby that could meet this need, existing levels of public use and crowding, and the public need for such a facility.

**5. Public Use.** Such facilities shall be open to the public although fees for use of improvements and services may be required.

**6. Improvements.** Because the public was opposed to additional lodges in the Recreation Rivers (see *Lodges* in this section), cabins, wall-tents, and other types of walled structures provided by the lessee to accommodate overnight guests will not be authorized in these campgrounds.

**Other Guidelines Affecting Commercial Activities.** Several other guidelines may affect commercial activities. See the following sections of this chapter.

Subsurface Resources  
Enforcement  
Phasing and Interim Management

## GENERAL ACCESS

### Goals

See *Boating, Upland Access, Air Access, and Special Management Areas* in this chapter.

### Management Guidelines

**Permits for Access to Private Land and Mining Locations.** The department should promulgate a regulation requiring a permit for all motorized access to private land or active mine operations that crosses state land or water closed to motorized use<sup>2</sup>. Permits for motorized access may be issued across closed areas to private lands or mine operations when there is no feasible and prudent alternative to provide access for this use. The cost of these permits should be minimal. Fees may be waived in cases where they would constitute an undue hardship on the permittee or act to discourage compliance with the permit requirement. Filing fees may not be waived. Also see *Upland Access, Access to Private Land and Mining Camps*.

<sup>2</sup> "Motor Use" refers to motors associated with vessels, aircraft, and vehicles used for transportation, not use of motors such as chainsaws and generators.

**Government Use of Motorized Transportation.** The department should promulgate regulations that allow the operation of motorized vehicles including boats, aircraft, helicopters, and ground vehicles in non-motorized areas by governmental agency for the purposes of law enforcement, emergency search and rescue, medical evacuations, fire suppression; or for fish, game, recreation, or natural resource management.

**Other Guidelines Affecting General Access.** Several other guidelines may affect general access. See the following sections of this chapter:

Shoreline Development  
Boat Access  
Upland Access  
Air Access  
Subsurface Resources

## BOAT ACCESS

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### Goals

**Spectrum of Boating Opportunities.** Provide for a spectrum of boating opportunities on the six Recreation Rivers.

**Specific Opportunities on River Segments.** Provide specific motorized and non-motorized boating opportunities on individual river segments.

**Public Safety and Property.** Protect public safety and property through the established of no-wake areas and float-plane landing areas.

**Minimize Conflicts.** Minimize conflicts between user groups while providing opportunities for boaters on all rivers.

**Public Use Doctrine.** Maintain consistency with the Public Trust Doctrine in the Alaska Constitution.

### Management Guidelines

**Overall Management Intent.** Specific restrictions on boating have been developed to achieve two different goals. The primary goal is to provide for a range of recreation opportunities on the six rivers. This includes providing for motorized and non-motorized recreation experiences. The second goal concerns boating safety. Boating guidelines were not based on the protection of river banks and fish habitat from powerboat-caused erosion. Although these effects may be occurring, relationship between powerboats and these impacts has not been conclusively shown at any site in the Recreation Rivers at this time.

References to powerboats include all boats propelled by a motor, including jetboats, prop-driven boats, hovercraft, airboats, and hydroplanes. Personal water craft and floatplanes are exceptions. Personal watercraft are discussed later in this section. Floatplanes are covered under *Air Access* in this chapter.

The following section describes the relationships between boating guidelines and these goals, outlines the factors that were considered in developing guidelines, and identifies which river segments are affected.

**Recreation Experience.** Information from the user survey, alternatives workbook, and public meetings shows that a significant number of floaters and bank anglers believe their recreation experiences are compromised by the use of motorized boats. Specific concerns include: noise impacts, boat speeds, and wake sizes. Many floaters and bank anglers define high quality experience in terms of the absence of motorized use. However, powerboaters have expressed concern that opportunities for powerboat access should be maintained. To balance the concerns of these competing interests, provide quality floating and bank fishing, and provide for both powerboat and floatboat use, some river segments have been seasonally designated as "non-motorized," "powerboats only," or have been left unrestricted.

**Safety.** Boating safety is a prime concern on the Recreation Rivers. Although few boating fatalities or serious accidents have been documented, users have identified safety problems, particularly in congested areas. To address these problems, some river segments have been designated as "voluntary no-wake areas."

**Erosion and Other Environmental Impacts.** There is concern that erosion and damage to fish habitat may be increasing as a result of extensive powerboat use on some river segments. However, there is no conclusive quantitative evidence of a casual relationship. The US Department of the Interior, University of Alaska and DFG are working on a cooperative research project to study the effects of jetboats on fish. In addition, the Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys will examine the effects of powerboat use and its relationship to erosion on the Little Susitna River. The results of these studies will be used when updating or amending this plan.

**Other Factors.** In addition to the recreation experience and safety goals, other variables that were considered include:

**1. Accommodating Access to Private Land.**

Non-motorized areas were not established in areas where property owners commonly reach their land by powerboat. If powerboats offer the only practical access to private property in or adjacent to the river corridors, landowners may be issued a permit to use powerboats in the non-motorized area to reach their land. See General Access, Permits for Access to Private Land and Mine Locations in this chapter.

**2. Minimizing Restrictions.** Non-motorized areas are only designated for segments where the current demand for non-motorized opportunities is considered significant. Similarly, no-wake areas are only proposed for areas where congestion is significant and safety risks are high.

**3. Accommodating Use.** Non-motorized areas are generally designated in areas that receive relatively little or no powerboat use. These areas typically include the upper segments of rivers where there is considerable whitewater or other impediments to safe powerboat use. Conversely, frequent powerboat-use areas are not restricted to powerboat use. Exceptions include segments of the Little Susitna River where there is demand for both motorized and non-motorized use. On this river, the plan prescribes alternating non-motorized and powerboat-only weekends during the fishing season.

**4. Physical Characteristics of the Rivers.**

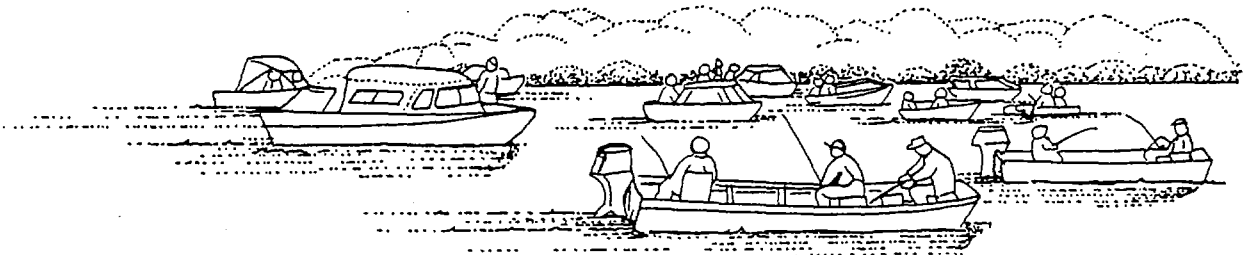
Non-motorized areas generally begin and end at landmarks identified as common limits of most current powerboat travel. No-wake areas begin and end at landmarks identified as common limits of boat and bank angler congestion.

**5. Seasons.** Non-motorized and powerboat-only periods generally apply to fishing seasons when conflicts between users occur most often.

**6. Future Technologies and Potential conflicts.**

Non-motorized areas on the Talachulitna River and Lake Creek are established on segments that do not currently receive powerboat use. This limitation on use is based on the concern that future technologies will allow powerboats access to traditionally non-motorized areas. Defining these areas before motorized access is possible will prevent future conflicts and preserve traditional use patterns.

**Regulations.** Under Section 41.23.420(c), the commissioner may, if necessary, regulate boating under the management plan. Non-motorized and powerboat-only areas will be established by regulation. No-wake areas are all voluntary and do not require regulations. Both voluntary and regulatory areas shall be marked by signs at their upper and lower limits. River segments, seasons, and justifications are described under *Management Guidelines* for each management unit in Chapter 3. Recommended boating regulations for areas not in the Recreation Rivers or proposed to be added to the Recreation Rivers are described in Chapter 4. Map 2.2 and Tables 2.1 and 2.2 summarize the regulations.



**Types of Areas.** Following is a description of the three types of areas shown on Map 2.2.

**1. *Non-motorized Areas.*** The operation of a powerboat is prohibited on designated river segments during designated non-motorized periods. Motors in or attached to boats are allowed as long as they are not operated in the non-motorized area.

**2. *Powerboat-only Areas.*** Boats that are not powered by motors are prohibited on the designated segment of the Little Susitna River on the second and fourth weekends of each month between May 15 and August 20.

**3. *Voluntary No-wake Areas.*** In these areas signs are placed to encourage boaters to operate at speeds less than five-miles per hour. Compliance is voluntary and these areas are not established by regulations.

**Personal Watercraft.** With the exceptions of where the Susitna, Skwentna, and Yentna rivers overlap with the Recreation Rivers, personal watercraft are prohibited. This prohibition is based on concerns for safety, recreation experience, and shore-nesting birds. This restriction should be established by regulation. Also see *Appendix A* for a definition of *Personal Watercraft*.

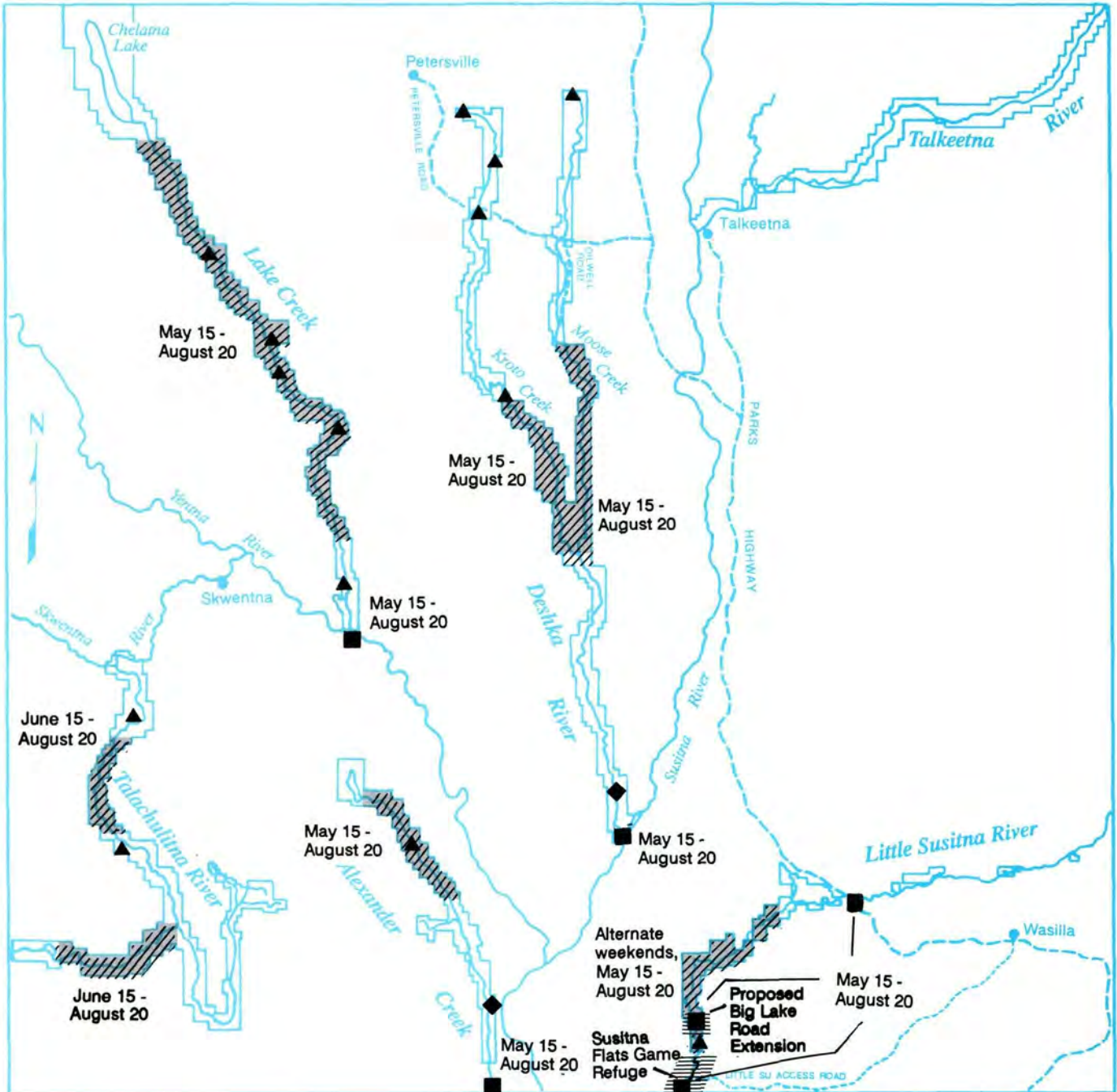
**Registering Commercial Boats.** See *Commercial, Standards* in this chapter.

**Access to Private Lands.** See *General Access, Permits for Access to Private Land and Mining Locations* in this chapter.





# SUSITNA BASIN RECREATION RIVERS MANAGEMENT PLAN

## BOATING

MAP 2.2



### TYPES OF SEASONAL LIMITS

-  Non-motorized Area
-  Voluntary No-wake Area
-  Place Warning Sign
-  Proposal or Recommendations

 Recreation River Corridor


 Special Management Areas (motor restrictions do not apply)

TABLE 2.1 NON-MOTORIZED AREAS, VOLUNTARY NO-WAKE AREAS, AND SAFETY SIGNS				
RIVER	SEGMENT	RIVER MILES	REGULATION OR SIGN	DATES
Little Susitna River	Parks Highway	67.5 - 69.6	No-Wake, Voluntary, One-Year Trial Basis	May 15 - August 20
Little Susitna River	Nancy Lake Creek to Game Refuge Boundary	33.2 - 60.5	Non-motorized	Alternating weekends May 15 - August 20
Deshka River	Mouth	0.0 - Island	No-wake, Voluntary	May 15 - August 20
Deshka River	Silver Hole	3.8 - 4.9	Place sign: "Reduce speed to 5 MPH when anglers present"	May 15 - August 20
Deshka River	Forks to 2 mi. below Amber Lake Creek and Forks to 3 mi. below Oilwell Road	0.0 - 19.1 (Kroto Creek)  29.7 - 54.2 (Moose Creek)	Non-motorized, Recommendation to Board of Fish to open lower Moose Creek to salmon fishing	May 15 - August 20
Lake Creek	Whitewater	8.1 - 51.2	Non-motorized	May 15 - August 20
Lake Creek	Mouth	0.0	Establish voluntary no-wake area at the mouth on a one-year trial basis	May 15 - August 20
Talachulitna Creek	Lower	0.0 - 17.0	Non-motorized	June 15 - August 20
Talachulitna River	Canyon	9.0 - 18.2	Non-motorized	June 15 - August 20
Alexander Creek	Upper	23.0 - 38.3	Non-motorized	May 15 - August 20
Alexander Creek	Pierce Creek Confluence	7.4	Place sign that cautions large boats above this point	May 15 - August 20

<p align="center"><b>TABLE 2.2</b>  <b>PROPOSED NON-MOTORIZED AREAS, VOLUNTARY NO-WAKE AREAS, AND</b>  <b>SAFETY SIGNS IN AREAS MANAGED BY ADF&amp;G OR IN PROPOSED</b>  <b>ADDITIONS TO RECREATION RIVERS<sup>1</sup></b></p>					
RIVER	SEGMENT	RIVER MILES	REGULATION	DATES	COMMENTS
Little Susitna River	Proposed South Big Lake Road Junction	Within one mile of Junction	No-wake	May 15 - August 20	Takes effect when road is built
Little Susitna River	Plan boundary to Burma Road Access	28.6 - 33.1	Non-motorized	Alternating weekends May 15 - August 20	Recommendation to ADF&G
Little Susitna River	Burma Road Access	27.6 - 29.5	No-wake	May 15 - August 20	Recommendation to ADF&G
Little Susitna River	Above Old FAA Station on Game Refuge	17.0 - 33.1	Address Safety Concerns	Peak Use Season	Recommendation to ADF&G
Alexander Creek	Mouth	Susitna River and Alexander Creek from 0.0 - 0.2	No-wake, Voluntary	May 15 - August 20	Takes effect if lower river is added to corridors

<sup>1</sup>The following limits are proposed for lower Alexander Creek (recommended to the legislature as an addition to the Recreation Rivers) or are proposed to ADF&G for the Susitna Flats State Game Refuge.

**Public Trust Doctrine.** Under the Alaska Constitution the state has special duties and management constraints with respect to state-owned land underlying navigable waters. The Alaska Constitution contains principles commonly known as the public trust doctrine. This doctrine requires the state to exercise authority to ensure that the right of the public to use navigable waters for navigation, commerce, recreation, and related purposes is not substantially impaired.

The Alaska Constitution (Article VIII, sections 3, 13, and 14) and Alaska Statutes (38.05.127 and 38.05.128) are the legal basis for applying the public trust doctrine in Alaska. This doctrine guarantees the public right to engage in such things as commerce, navigation, fishing, hunting, swimming, and protection of areas for ecological study.

The Constitution provides that "free access to the navigable or public waters of the state, as defined by the legislature, shall not be denied any citizen of the United States or resident of the state, except that the legislature may by general law regulate and limit such access for other beneficial uses or public purposes." Eliminating private upland owners' reasonable access to navigable waters may result in compensation.

Both federal and state laws providing for the transfer of land to private parties also provide for public access to navigable waters. Implementing the state constitutional guarantee of access to navigable waters under Article VIII, Section 14,

AS 38.05.127 requires that the state commissioner of natural resources must "provide for the specific easements or rights-of-way necessary to ensure free access to and along the body of water, unless the commissioner finds that regulating or eliminating access is necessary for other beneficial uses or public purposes."

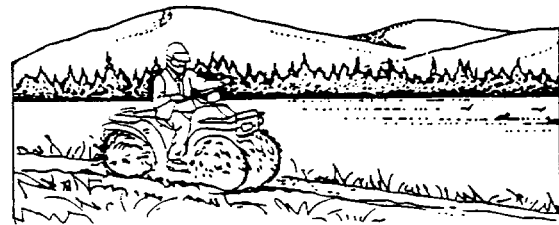
It has never been held that any lands normally subject to the public trust doctrine in Alaska are exempt from it, including land occupied and developed.

These statutes and concepts are considered and used throughout this plan. Any management actions will be consistent with the public trust doctrine as defined by the Alaska Constitution, statutes, court decisions, and public involvement.

**Other Guidelines Affecting Boat Access.**

Several other guidelines may affect boat access. See the following sections of this chapter:

- |                         |                              |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Shoreline Development   | Boat Access                  |
| Recreation              | Air Access                   |
| Fish & Wildlife Habitat | Education                    |
| Commercial              | Enforcement                  |
| General Access          | Phasing & Interim Management |



## UPLAND ACCESS

### Goals

**Support Management Intent.** Accommodate an upland transportation system that supports the management intent for each subunit and is integrated with other region-wide transportation needs.

**Minimize Adverse Impact.** Accommodate a transportation system with minimal adverse impacts on water quality, riparian and wetland areas, the terrestrial environment, and recreation uses.

**Promote Efficiency.** Accommodate a transportation system that uses energy efficiently and encourages compact, efficient development patterns including consolidating upland access routes.

**Promote Public Safety.** Ensure transportation systems are designed, constructed and maintained to an appropriate standard to accommodate the anticipated volume and type of use.



**Protection of Special Trails.** Protect high-value trails such as the Iditarod Race Trail and the Iditarod National Historical Trail.

## Management Guidelines

**Transportation Planning.** When road transportation routes are proposed that may pass through the Recreation Rivers, interagency review should occur at the scoping phase of route planning to allow agencies to identify important habitat and recreation areas in order to assist with the selection of a route.

**Consolidation of Access.** Joint use and consolidation of surface access routes will be encouraged wherever feasible and prudent. Surface access should be designed and sited to accommodate future development and avoid unnecessary duplication. The feasibility of using an existing road or trail should be evaluated before the use of a new transportation route is authorized.

**Large Vehicle Use in Winter.** The department should promulgate a regulation requiring a permit for use of vehicles over 1,000 lbs. in winter. Travel should be restricted to periods when there is adequate snow or frost. See *ORV's, Snowcover* in this section. Permit stipulations will be consistent with existing DNR requirements for use of large ground contact vehicles in winter. Permits will be reviewed in consultation with DFG. Winter roads for timber harvest or transport should be consistent with the Forest Resources and Practices Act and the Susitna Forestry Guidelines.

**Access Intent.** Public comments and responses to the alternatives workbook show the public does not support additional roads to access the recreation resources in the corridors. Roads strictly for access to recreation opportunities within the Recreation Rivers are not proposed at this time. Public attitudes on this issue will be reassessed when the plan is updated in five years. There are, however, resources, private lands, and transportation needs in and adjacent to the corridors which may require land access.

There are four general classes of roads and trails in and adjacent to the corridors. Many guidelines in this section specify which of the four types of access they apply to.

1. *Pedestrian Trails.* These are designed to accommodate pedestrians and animals.

2. *Small Vehicular Trails.* These are designed to accommodate vehicles with a gross vehicle weight of 1,000 lbs. or under, pedestrians, travel by dogsled, animals, snowmachines, two- and three-wheeled vehicles, and small ORV's.

3. *Large Vehicular Trails.* These are designed to accommodate vehicles with a gross vehicle weight of over 1,000 lbs., pedestrians, travel by dogsled, animals, snowmachines, two- and three-wheeled vehicles, small or large ORVs, track vehicles, or four-wheel-drive vehicles.

4. *Roads.* These are designed to accommodate highway vehicles including pedestrians, travel by dogsleds, animals, snowmachines, two- and three-wheeled vehicles, small or large ORVs, track vehicles, four-wheel drive vehicles, automobiles, or trucks.

**Priority for Siting Roads** (other than ice roads). Where feasible and prudent, the following criteria for consideration of alternative road locations should be used. These are listed below in descending order of priority:

1. Outside rather than inside the corridor.
2. In Class II or III areas or special management areas.
3. In Class I areas where there are no restrictions on motorized transport.
4. In Class I areas where there are restrictions on motorized transport.

Roads crossing rivers should be designed in accordance with the AASHTO design manual. When safe to do so, site distances should be minimized to enhance aesthetic qualities. Also see *Shoreline Development, Bridges* in this chapter.

### **Roads and Both Types of Vehicular Trails**

*Class I Areas.* In Class I areas, roads and vehicular trail development shall be minimized to maintain the undeveloped character of the corridors and to minimize impacts on habitat, water quality, and vegetation.

*Non-motorized Areas.* Roads and both types of vehicular trails may be built in non-motorized areas if they are built with public funds or when they are in the public interest.

*Access to Private Lands in Class I Areas.*

Private land owners may construct roads and vehicular trails to their property as long as the use provides a need for which there is no feasible and prudent alternative. A road or vehicular trail from private land to a Recreation River should not be permitted in Class I areas if the proposed route is not the primary form of access to the property. Also see *General Access, Permits to Private Land and Mineral Locations* and *Subsurface, Motorized Access* in this chapter.

*Protection of Hydrologic Systems.* To minimize adverse impacts to the environment, and risks of degradation to fish and wildlife habitat and water quality, roads and vehicular trails will not be approved in the protection area unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative route. Roads and vehicular trails may also be located in the protection area to access private land, a mining operation with a plan of operation or land use permit, to access a bridge crossing, or where the route is in the public interest. Road and vehicular trail construction will occur only where it can be demonstrated that road design, construction, use, and maintenance will avoid, minimize, or otherwise mitigate impacts to important fish and wildlife habitat. These types of access improvements should be located to avoid influencing the quality and quantity of water in adjacent rivers and lakes, or detracting from the recreational use of the waterway. When routing through wetlands or peat, culverts shall be installed to enable free cross-drainage. Construction should be minimized in areas where the seasonal water table is within four feet of the surface. Where feasible and prudent, topsoil from road or vehicle trail construction shall be used for restoration of disturbed areas.

*Parallel Routes.* Wherever possible, the siting of routes parallel to the rivers or directly uphill from any waterway should be avoided.

### **Roads, Vehicular Trails and Pedestrian Trails**

*Soils and Angle.* Where feasible and prudent, confine construction to level, well-drained areas.

In potential problem areas, excavation and soil disturbance should be minimized.

*Erosion.* Where feasible or prudent use methods to decrease runoff, erosion, and sedimentation by methods such as re-seeding, surface roughening, and diversion dikes.

### **Pedestrian Trails**

*Trail Damage.* Foot trails are beginning to develop in road accessible areas, particularly near the Little Susitna Access in the Susitna Flats Game Refuge, and the Parks Highway on the Little Susitna River. Frequent foot traffic on riverbanks can trample vegetation and cause the loss of vegetation. This may result in increased bank erosion from riverflow and surface runoff, and the loss of fish habitat along the banks. Efforts should be made to locate pedestrian trails away from the river. Where this is not possible, trails should be stabilized through techniques such as constructing board walks or trail hardening.

### **Trails**

*Signs.* Trail signs are necessary in several locations. These included areas with unclear trailheads and trail routes or where resource damage is likely to occur.

*Iditarod Race Trail.* The race trail passes through the lower Little Susitna River, upper Alexander Creek, and Alexander Lake subunits. Rerouting the trail may be permitted in specific instances in consultation with the Iditarod Trail Committee. A 400-foot wide (200 feet on either side of the centerline) buffer will be located along the trail corridor. No permanent structure or equipment should be placed in the trail corridor if it would adversely affect the trail experience or access along the trail. Where necessary, trail crossings may be permitted to allow access to lands on either side of the trail. Temporary facilities for the Iditarod race and other events that use the trail during the winter may be allowed provided they are removed during the ice-free season. An annual permit for Iditarod related events is not required. Also see *Forestry, Iditarod Trail, and Events* in this chapter. The location of these trails are shown on subunit maps in Chapter 3.

**Bridges.** See *Shoreline Development; Bridges, and Stream Crossings.*

**Closures.** Where detrimental to management of fish and wildlife habitat, recreation, or other resources, roads and trails may be closed to the public and rehabilitated when in the public interest.

**Section Line Easements.** Section line easements require a survey before improvements are built. The width depends on when the land was conveyed to the state. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough has platting authority for section line easements within the corridors. Development of section line easements in Class I subunits is discouraged. When the plan is updated, vacating some particular section lines should be considered. No vacations are recommended at this time.

**Parking Areas.** Parking areas are prohibited below annual high water and in contiguous wetlands. All parking areas should be visually screened from the rivers with natural vegetation.

**Off-Road Vehicles (ORV).** The trend of increased ORV use in the corridors is likely to continue as more access is developed near the Recreation Rivers. To prevent damage to wetlands, streambanks, steep banks, areas with poorly drained soils, areas with sensitive vegetation, and the recreation experience in non-motorized areas, DNR will develop the following regulations:

1. *Permits.* To protect soils, water, vegetation, and habitat, ORV use is restricted to existing trails except when there is adequate snow cover (see 3 below). Permits for exceptions will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
2. *Non-motorized Areas.* In areas adjacent to river segments subject to seasonal powerboat restrictions (see subunit maps in Chapter 3), ORV use is subject to the same seasonal limits on motorized travel, except when authorized by permit or the use occurs on designated trails. (See Designated Trails in this section.) This limit does not apply in special management areas. See *Boating Access, Regulations* in this chapter.
3. *Snow Cover.* Use of off-road vehicles 1,000 lbs. or under is allowed throughout the corridors when snow cover is sufficient to prevent damage to the vegetated ground mat. The general standard for adequate ground protection from vehicle damage will be one foot of snow

and one foot of frost. This standard may be altered to allow for variation in winter conditions. For example, deep snow may prevent freezing but offer adequate ground protection. If the ground is not frozen to a depth of at least one foot, an additional foot of snow is needed for winter ORV travel. DNR will announce each year when there is adequate/ inadequate cover in the fall and spring through news releases or other means. Adequate cover may vary between rivers so more than one public announcement may be required each spring and fall depending on the snow conditions. Use of off-road vehicles in winter over 1,000 lbs. requires a permit. See *Large Vehicle Use in Winter* in this section.

**Access to Private Land and Mining Locations** Permits for exceptions to restrictions on off-road vehicle uses described in the previous section may be issued to allow access to mining activities or to private property when there is no feasible and prudent alternative to provide access for this use. Permit applicants shall apply to use a designated trail (see next section). Permits for off-road access to active mining locations will only be issued for purposes of carrying out mining operations authorized by a land use permit or an approved plan of operations. In addition, "dozers, sleighs, tracked vehicles, and rubber tired equipment" must comply with the statewide Coastal Management Program guidelines for cross-country winter travel. Also see *General Access, Permits for Access to Private Land and Mining Locations* in this chapter.

**Designated Trails.** Previous sections refer to travel restricted to designated trails in non-motorized areas. To designate a trail, an individual or organization must submit a map and a written description which includes:

1. how the trail will be used;
2. how damage to state land and water such as rutting and damage to fragile vegetated areas will be prevented; and
3. how the construction and use of the trail will be compatible with other uses;
4. where materials to be used are located;
5. how timber will be disposed of; and

6. how the trail will be constructed.

DLW through the interagency review process will review trail applications and decide on the need for and suitability of the proposed route, and its compatibility with other recreation uses and management policies. When a trail is designated, a right-of-way should be issued and recorded on status plats so that the trail can be properly located. Bearings and distances should be included in the description of the trail. Centerlines may be necessary in areas where land status is complex. As more trails are designated, DLW shall restrict ORV's to designated trails during the snow-free season throughout the corridors rather than just existing trails. Also see *Trails Action Plan* in Chapter 4.

At this time, ORV use is restricted to existing trails. However, even repeated use by all ground-pressure vehicles in sensitive environments on existing trails may result in long-term damage. Such areas include wetlands, erodible soils, or steep banks. After suitable trails are identified, and designated through the trails action plan (see Chapter 4) or other means, off-road vehicles during the snow-free season should be restricted to designated trails throughout the planning area rather than just existing trails. See *Trails Action Plan* in Chapter 4.

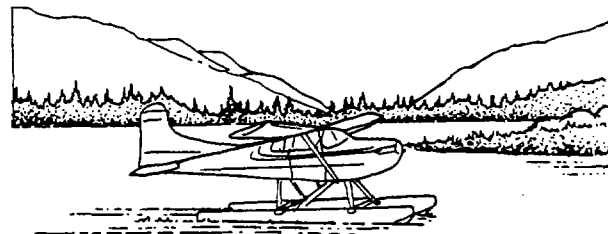
If an application for a designated trail is approved from a private land owner or mine claimant for motorized access through a non-motorized area, DNR may consider designating the trail for public access if:

1. a determination is made that increased public use will not significantly contribute to the deterioration of the trail;
2. the trail or its use is consistent with the management intent for the area.

DLW, in consultation with the borough and DFG, may designate special purpose trails in motorized areas to provide new recreational opportunities or to resolve conflicts between uses. Where possible, consultation with affected user groups will be conducted prior to designation of such trails, and users will be encouraged to construct and maintain such special purpose trails.

**Other Guidelines Affecting Upland Access**  
Several other guidelines may affect upland access. See the following sections of this chapter:

- |                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Shoreline Development | Subsurface Resources |
| General Access        | Heritage Resources   |
| Boat Access           |                      |



## AIR ACCESS

### Goals

**Access.** Allow development of public air access to the Recreation Rivers when it is consistent with the management intent of the plan.

**Liability.** Minimize liability to the state from unsafe airstrips or floatplane landing areas or the proliferation of public airstrips.

### Management Guidelines

**Public Airstrips.** The Recreation Rivers currently have good air access. However, this plan does not preclude development of additional airstrips. With the exceptions listed below for private airstrips, airstrips developed on state land should be made available for use by the general public. If an applicant requests airstrip development associated with some other type of land-use

authorization, the applicant must submit the application for the airstrip with the application for the associated use. Federal Aviation Regulation, Part 157, requires FAA notification before construction, establishment, alteration, or deactivation of civil airports, including floatplane bases. Specific airstrips are discussed in Chapter 3 for subunit 2a (mouth of Deshka) and 4e (Chelatna Lake).

**Airstrip by Class Areas.** Airstrip development may be authorized in Class II, Class III, and Special Management Areas. Airstrip development may be allowed in these areas if:

1. There is a demonstrated significant public need for the airstrip; and
2. There are no feasible alternatives to meet the public need for increased access that would not significantly impact habitat, recreation or other uses.

Airstrip development is discouraged in Class I areas and non-motorized areas because they are inconsistent with the management intent for these areas. In general, airstrips developed entirely on public land should be made available for use by the general public.

**Private Airstrips.** Private airstrips are discouraged throughout the Recreation Rivers. Exceptions to this policy may be considered on a case-by-case basis. In considering exceptions, the division will consider the plan goals, management intent, and:

1. Opportunities for alternate access;
2. Analysis of surrounding terrain and topographic features;
3. Habitat values, recreation uses in the area, and riparian vegetation and hydrology;
4. Existence of previously or naturally cleared areas;
5. Benefits to the public including reciprocal easements for public use;
6. Opportunities for consolidating airstrips or joint-use airstrips when more than one applicant is likely to apply for airstrips in adjacent areas;
7. FAA input and requirements and;
8. Other public and agency comments.

A written decision must be prepared that addresses each airstrip application stating the reasons for approving or denying the use. The factors listed above will be considered along with any other relevant information when reaching a decision. Renewal of expired rights-of-way for airstrips will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**Floatplane Landing Areas.** See Chapter 3, Subunit 2a, *Floatplane Landing Area*.

**Airstrips for Mining Operations.** Since airstrips for mining operations are usually for restricted use, and most active mining occurs in Class I areas where motorized access is seasonally limited, construction of new airstrips will not be permitted for mining operations. This does not preclude mine claimants from applying for airstrips for exclusive use outside the corridors.

**Blocking Airstrips.** Public use airstrips shall not be blocked by individuals without the prior authorization from DNR (AS 02.20.050). This does not preclude DNR from closing existing airstrips for safety reasons or other management concerns.

**Aircraft and Helicopter Landing.** On the land and water in river segments subject to seasonal powerboat restrictions shown on maps in Chapter 3, aircraft and helicopter landings are subject to the same seasonal motor prohibitions. The intent is to provide for a non-motorized recreation experience during the fishing season along these river segments. (See *Boat Access, Regulations* in this chapter and in Chapter 3.) This restriction does not apply to Special Management Areas (also shown on maps in Chapter 3) where aircraft and helicopter landings are allowed. There are also exceptions for access to private lands and mining locations. See *General Access, Permits for Access to Private Land and Mining Locations* in this chapter. The department should promulgate regulations to implement this section. When non-motorized area regulations are developed, the Federal Aviation Administration should be contacted by the department to ensure that these areas are shown on the *NOAA Sectional Maps* and the *NOAA Government Flight Information Publication Supplement, Alaska*.

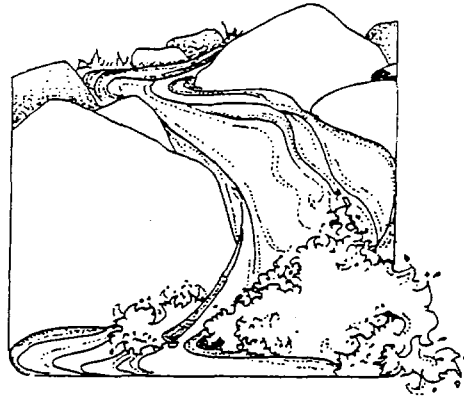
**Aircraft Storage.** Floatplanes and wheel planes kept below ordinary high water shall be stored consis-

tent with the boat storage guidelines. See *Shoreline Development, Boat Storage* in this chapter.

### Other Guidelines Affecting Air Access.

Several other guidelines may affect air access. See the following sections of this chapter:

- Upland Development
- Shoreline Development
- General Access
- Boat Access
- Subsurface Resources



## WATER & SOLID WASTE

### Goals

**Water Quantity.** Reserve adequate water quantity to provide for recreation and fish and wildlife habitat for each river system throughout the year.

**Water Quality.** Manage upland activities for multiple use within the corridors using mitigation measures to alleviate potential adverse effects on water quality.

**Wetlands.** Protect the hydrologic, habitat, and recreational values of public wetlands.

**Litter and Solid Waste.** Reduce litter, solid waste, and human waste deposition in the corridors in order to protect recreational values, water quality, and public health.

### Management Guidelines

**Litter.** Litter and other signs of use were identified as a serious problem in the Recreation Rivers. Users were almost unanimous in saying that a "no litter" standard should be in place throughout the Recreation Rivers. To address this concern, the department should adopt a regulation prohibiting littering or bringing waste or refuse into the Recreation Rivers for its disposal. A public education program should be developed by DNR, in cooperation with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and user groups, which stresses the "pack-it-in - pack-it-out" ethic. Other management tools to reduce litter

should include providing staff for litter pick-up patrols and working with volunteer groups to expand this effort. The department should also work with commercial operators interested in picking up litter, in lieu of paying commercial-use permit fees (also see *Commercial, In-Kind Services*). DNR and the borough should consider contracting for litter pick-up if staff is short and funding is available. Funding these management options is a high priority.

Providing dumpsters or trash cans in remote locations in the corridors is not encouraged at this time. However, as funding allows, the borough, DFG, and DOPOR should continue to provide dumpsters at major road accessible boat launches such as the Deshka Landing, Susitna Landing, Little Susitna Access, and the Talkeetna boat launch, to encourage private landowners and the public not to dispose of garbage within the Recreation Rivers. Operators of private boat launches are also encouraged to provide these facilities for their customers.

**Solid Waste.** Land fills, dumps, and burial of solid waste and litter will not be authorized on state lands in the Recreation Rivers. DNR should identify unauthorized disposal sites and, in coordination with DEC, close these sites.

**Waste Water Disposal Systems.** All commercial guide camps on state lands are required to meet DEC regulations for wastewater systems. No wastewater disposal systems such as leach fields and septic systems will be allowed on the