

LAND STATUS

Goals

Land Retention. Retain state lands within the Recreation Rivers in state ownership.

Land Acquisition. Acquire private lands through purchase, lease, gift, exchange or other means when the parcel could significantly contribute to the public values and uses in the Recreation Rivers.

Cooperation. Cooperate between state, federal, and municipal agencies to ensure that land and water within the Recreation Rivers is managed efficiently. Cooperate, at the request of a municipality, in the planning for municipal land adjacent to the Recreation Rivers.

Authority. The authority under the Recreation Rivers Act only applies to those lands designated as Recreation Rivers by the legislation (AS 41.23.420(f)).

Municipal Land. If a municipality commits land for inclusion in the Recreation River Plan or management, the department will receive the concurrence of the municipality to the management plan proposed as it applies to municipal land. Municipal land not committed by a municipality for inclusion in a Recreation River corridor is excluded from the operation of the plan.

Management Guidelines

Retention in State Ownership. State lands in the Recreation Rivers will be retained in state ownership and will be managed in accordance with the management intent and guidelines intent in the plan. One parcel at the mouth of the Deshka River may, however, be conveyed to the Matanuska Borough. This intent is described in Chapter 3, Subunit 2a.

Land Acquisition. Under AS 41.23.460, DNR may acquire isolated parcels of private land in the corridor by purchase, lease, gift, or exchange. Land may not be acquired for inclusion in the corridors by eminent domain. Private land may be returned to the state or borough through foreclosure, escheat, or other circumstances. DFG may use federal-share and matching state funds for land purchases to enhance recreational

boating and sport fishing. Land purchased by DFG may be noted as OSL (Other State Land) on the status plat and managed by DNR under an MOU or management agreement. Federally mandated criteria for use of parcels purchased with federal funds must be followed.

It is not the goal of the plan to acquire all private land in the Recreation River corridors. Only land that significantly contributes to the management intent for the Recreation Rivers should be proposed for acquisition. Criteria for identifying and prioritizing potential parcels for acquisition are listed below.

1. The parcel has been identified in the resource inventory or by a site inspection as containing unique habitat.
2. The parcel provides needed access to other state land or water.
3. The parcel can be used by many members of the public, thereby dispersing user pressure from other areas or increasing recreation opportunities.
4. Public ownership of the parcel would preclude uses not consistent with management intent and guidelines for the Recreation River.

Parcels should meet most of the following site criteria:

1. Topography and soil are suited to what the parcel will be managed for. For example, acquiring important wetlands for habitat protection would be consistent with this guideline.
2. The parcel should be free of toxic wastes, garbage, and contamination from septic systems. An environmental risk assessment should be conducted unless the parcel has had no evidence of prior use or development that may result in the disposal of wastes. The applicant may be required to collect soil samples and conduct surface and subsurface water quality tests.
3. The parcel has no significant erosion or accretion problems that could eventually render the site unusable or require expensive soil stabilization work.

4. The site does not include structures or facilities that are not suitable for public use or are not needed to fulfill the plan's management intent and guidelines.

5. The site is not surrounded by private land, unless the site will be used for access.

Four areas where acquisition of private land is being considered include lands in the following subunits, Neil Lake (2d), Alexander Lake (6c), Judd Lake (5e), and the mouth of Clear Creek (3c). Areas recommended for designation as Recreation Rivers are discussed in Chapter 4.

Land Exchanges. Land exchanges between the state and private landowners may be pursued to improve access to state lands or to protect important resources. The land exchange process is lengthy and staff intensive. When the same objective can be achieved through a cooperative agreement, it is the preferred management tool. Criteria for acquiring new lands in the corridors through an exchange are described in the previous section.

State Selections. All townships in the Recreation Rivers were selected by the state under Section 6(b) of the Alaska Statehood Act. Most of this land has been conveyed to the state. Any selected tracts of land that are available or become available in the future should be identified and placed on the state's land conveyance priority list (tentative approval) as a BLM high priority. Only two parcels, both at the south end of Chelatna Lake, have been identified at this time.

Susitna Flats State Game Refuge. As part of plan implementation, DNR, DFG, Department of Public Safety, and the borough will consider entering into a management agreement for land and water in the Recreation Rivers plan and Game Refuge on the lower Little Susitna River. When the Recreation Rivers plan is updated in approximately five years, the management of this area will be reviewed to determine whether additional measures, including changes in existing statutes and designation boundaries, are needed.

Classifications. Consistent with the Recreation Rivers Act and management intent in this plan, all state lands within the Recreation Rivers shall be classified under categories in 11 AAC 55 as Public Recreation Land, Water Resources Land,

and Wildlife Habitat Land. Borough-owned lands in the Recreation Rivers were classified by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly in October, 1990. Borough classifications are noted under *Management Guidelines, Borough Lands* in Chapter 3 for each subunit where there is borough-owned land.

Mental Health Lands. Mental health lands are located on the lower Little Susitna River and near Talkeetna. Until the management of Mental Health Trust land is further defined through court decisions and new state laws, this plan, in conjunction with Department Order 121, reflects the department's interim management guidelines for all Mental Health Trust land within the boundaries of the Recreation Rivers. These lands are an integral part of two Recreation Rivers and will be managed consistent with the management intent for the subunits in which they are located. However, to the extent that the plan conflicts with the Alaska Mental Health Enabling Act of 1956, court decisions, and new state laws, the plan will not apply to Mental Health Trust lands.

University Lands. Under AS 38.04.005(f), the land owned by the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska is not subject to Chapter 4 statutes of Title 38 which includes planning, classification, and inventorying processes. This plan does not apply to the 284 acres of University lands in the Recreation Rivers including those located on the upper Little Susitna River (Subunit 1c) and at the mouth of the Talkeetna River (Subunit 3a).

Cooperative Agreement. To ensure efficient and consistent management of lands in and adjacent to the Recreation Rivers, DNR may enter into management agreement with different agencies and municipalities. Also see *Chapter 4, Agency Implementation Responsibilities*.

