

## Section IV - Access Design & Management

**Wetland Buffers.** Wetlands help protect water quality and stabilize water supply, provide important feeding, rearing, and breeding grounds for wildlife, provide for winter recreation, and add to landscape diversity. Buffers adjacent to wetlands will, to the extent feasible and prudent, protect these important wetland functions. Buffers should include public lands within 100 feet of Class I wetlands and public lands within 60 feet of Class II wetlands.

**Harvesting near Wetlands.** Only single-tree selection harvesting is allowed within 100 feet of Class I and II wetlands except when other harvesting techniques are necessary to prevent or control outbreaks of insects, disease, wildfire, or hazards to public safety. For example, overhanging trees along trails may be removed if they endanger trail users. See *Appendix A - Glossary* for definition of Class I and II wetlands.

**See also:**

*Access Location and Design - Access Across Wetlands* in Section IV of this chapter.

The guidelines in this section cover the location, design, construction and management of timber access roads. They apply to timber access roads throughout the SFG area.

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### ACCESS LOCATION AND DESIGN

**General.** The location, design, and development of roads shall consider multiple use values of state lands, and reflect the management intent and primary uses for the affected area. The goal is to optimize long term public use benefits from new access while minimizing adverse effects on existing public uses, including maintaining the range of recreation opportunities described in *Appendix E - Recreation Opportunity Spectrum*.

**Access Information.** Descriptions of proposed access corridors and type of access will be included in the Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales for sales that will be offered in the current year or the two subsequent years. The Forest Land Use Plan for each sale will include preliminary location of any proposed primary and secondary roads and identify the type of access.

**Sensitive Vegetative Cover.** Permanent logging roads generally shall be aligned to avoid sensitive vegetative cover types such as riparian zones, wetlands, aquatic feeding sites (ponds), and naturally occurring forest openings. Roads in these cover types will be designed in concurrence with DFG.

**Bear Habitat.** Roads should be planned to minimize potential increases in vulnerability of black and brown bears to hunting and physical displacement from important foraging and denning habitats by avoiding locations near important feeding sites. DFG will provide DOF information on feeding sites during the timber sale design process. (See also *Brown Bear Habitat* in Section III of this chapter.)

**Moose Forage Areas.** Natural terrain features should be used to ensure the usability of moose forage areas, as well as other important seasonal use areas, by shielding these forage areas from road traffic. Permanent logging roads generally shall be located in dense timber away from forest openings.

**Roads along Waterways.** Road crossings within shoreline management zones or the 0-100' shoreline buffers may be allowed when such roads are a better alternative for protecting water quality or when they are the only feasible access to timber. Feasible access is not necessarily the least costly (see *Appendix A - Glossary* for definition of "feasible"). Rights-of-way for stream crossing must be minimized. (See also *Rivers, Streams, and Lakes - 0-100'* and *Shoreline Management Zones* in Section III of this chapter.)

**Access across Wetlands.** Where access crosses wetlands, only winter access should be used whenever feasible.

**Straight Stretches.** Minimize straight stretches of road of more than 1/4-mile in forested areas to increase the cover value for moose and minimize the effects of hunting from roads on local moose numbers.

**Visual Quality.** Timber access will be designed with consideration of recreation values and scenic quality. Sales will be designed by DOF in consultation with DPOR.

**Clearing.** Minimize the width of the clearing along roads.

**Road Standards.** In important fish and wildlife habitat areas, forestry access roads shall be constructed to minimum standards to discourage high volume vehicle use but maintain safety and environmental conditions and meet management objectives. These will generally be slow speed, single lane roads without large cuts and fills. DFG will identify important habitat areas as part of the interagency review of the Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales and Forest Land Use Plans.

**Cuts and Fills.** Avoid steep cuts and fills that would block moose travel routes.

**Landing Areas.** Locate log landing areas to minimize the amount of road and skid trail construction.

**Avoid Interconnections.** To reduce impacts from road hunting and allow greater control of access in local areas, secondary logging road systems shall not be designed to interconnect or form loop systems.

**Water Transportation.** Wood may be transported on boats or barges. Log rafts will not be used in the SFG area. Navigable waterways in the Susitna valley are heavily traveled in the summer, and log rafts could increase hazards to public transportation.

**Trumpeter Swan Nesting Areas.** Specific guidelines for development and management of access within one mile of waterbodies with identified trumpeter swan nesting sites will be developed by the Division of Forestry in consultation with the Department of Fish and Game and the US Fish and Wildlife Service at the time access is designed. Facilities and permanent roads for timber management should be at least one mile from waterbodies used for trumpeter swan nesting. The distances between facilities and mainline roads and these waterbodies may be increased or decreased based on site-specific environmental and economic factors by the Division of Forestry with due deference to the Department of Fish and Game. DFG will consult with the US Fish and Wildlife Service before making recommendations to DOF.

**Willer-Kash Road.** The Willer-Kash (Kashwitna) Road may be extended to provide mainline road access to the portion of South Parks 12a south of the Kashwitna River. This road will not be built closer than 1/2-mile from the Kashwitna River. Timber access roads within this portion of subunit 12a will be designed to minimize vehicle access to the Kashwitna River. Secondary roads and spur roads in this area will be put-to-bed after harvesting. (See also *Fish and Wildlife - General, Willer-Kash Road* in Section III of this chapter.)

**Petersville Road 2b.** Because of the potential conflicts between public recreation use and road access, no new road access for timber harvest will be proposed in this subunit. (See also p. 36 of Susitna Area Plan for a description of roadless area proposals in this unit and the decision-making process for these proposals.)

**Susitna Lowlands 9a and 9c.** Year-round road access in the Susitna Lowlands subregion will require public funding. In the near term (5-10 years), access to timber sales in these subunits will be by winter road unless a year-round public road is built to support other land uses.

*See also:*  
*Trails - Regional Trails*  
in Section III of this chapter.

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## ROAD CONSTRUCTION

**Wildlife Concentration Areas.** Road construction times should be scheduled and road locations selected to avoid displacing wildlife from seasonal concentration areas.

**Topsoil.** Where feasible, topsoil from road construction should be stored on site for later use in restoration.

**Winter Roads.** 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 varied to allow for variation in winter conditions. For example, deep snow may prevent freezing but provide adequate ground protection. If the ground is not frozen to a depth of at least one foot, additional snow depth is required before winter travel can occur. The amount of additional snow required will depend on the type of vehicle and must be adequate to support the vehicle. For example, vehicles with higher ground pressure require more snow to support them than light ground pressure vehicles.

Prior to spring break-up each year, winter roads and skid trails must be cleared of all logging debris extending over or into any body of water. (See also 18 AAC 70.020(b)(C) and 11 AAC 95.120(a)(1).

Cross-country travel by dozers, sleighs, tracked vehicles, and rubber-tired equipment must also be consistent with the requirements of the statewide Coastal Management Program. See *Appendix F - Requirements for Winter Travel* for a list of Coastal Management Program requirements and information on DNR stipulations for overland winter travel permits.

**Material Sites.** Prior to the design of the Oilwell Road extension, permanent material sites along the road corridor should be identified and established. Gravel will be needed for road construction and maintenance and is available only along portions of the road corridor.

**Right-of-way Slash.** Dispose of right-of-way slash so as not to inhibit moose movement.

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## ROAD MANAGEMENT

**General.** The management of roads after timber harvesting and implementation of the reforestation plan shall consider multiple use values of state lands, and reflect the management intent and primary uses for the affected area. Road closures, or restrictions on types, times, or levels of use will be considered as a means of balancing resource management goals. In some locations, it may be necessary to limit after-harvest use of a road or manage other resources along the road, for example to protect wildlife, maintain recreation opportunity settings, ensure regeneration, or minimize timber management impacts on existing land uses. Proposals for road management after forest operations are completed shall be included in the Forest Land Use Plan or the transportation schedule of the Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales. The FLUP or transportation schedule shall state whether or not roads will be permanent or put-to-bed and whether or not roads put-to-bed will be open to off-road vehicle use.

### Public Use.

**Primary Roads.** Primary timber access roads are permanent roads. Primary roads on state land will be open to public use except during spring break-up, periods of excessive rainfall, or other conditions when the roadbed would be damaged by vehicle traffic or when necessary to protect sensitive wildlife populations or other public resources along the road. Road closures will be done subject to the regulations in 11 AAC. [*Note: Regulations for road closure are currently being developed by DNR. When adopted, they will guide road closure decisions statewide. Public notice is required prior to adoption of the regulations.*]

**Secondary Roads.** Secondary roads will be managed on a case-by-case basis depending on the management intent for lands along the route and funding. If built with public funds as a permanent road, a secondary road will be managed under the same rules as primary roads (see above). If a secondary road is built as a temporary road, it will be put-to-bed (see Road Management - Putting-to-bed in this section). Proposed management for secondary roads will be described in the Forest Land Use Plan.

**Spur Roads.** Unless otherwise specified in a Forest Land Use Plan, spur roads will be put-to-bed.

**Restrictions in Sensitive Moose Areas.** Restrict public access in sensitive moose areas by closing spur roads during critical seasonal periods. DFG will identify sensitive moose areas in proposed timber sales by May 1 each year so that this information can be included in Forest Land Use Plans for the sales.

**Putting-to-bed.** Non-permanent secondary roads and spur roads will be put-to-bed (see *Appendix A - Glossary* for definition of put-to-bed). Roads put-to-bed should be treated to encourage establishment of forest vegetation immediately after forest operations have been completed. In south-central Alaska, browse plants include most willow species, birch, aspen, cottonwood, high-bush cranberry, labrador tea, and other woody shrubs and forbs.

**Willow 8a.** New timber access in the northern part of the subunit (approximately that part in T19N) will be kept available for additional road vehicle access for recreation after harvesting is complete. Timber access roads extending farther south will be closed to road vehicle access after harvesting is complete. The Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales should include 1:63,360 or larger scale maps of sale location, access corridors, and identify the type of access proposed (e.g., year-round v. seasonal, and temporary v. permanent) for sales proposed for offering in the current year or the two subsequent years.

## Section V - Public Notice & Interagency Coordination

Public notice is required for proposed timber sales, Forest Land Use Plans, and habitat enhancement projects. This section sets the guidelines for public notice.

**General.** DOF will provide interagency and public notice of proposed timber sales before decisions are made on sale offerings. See *Chapter 1 - Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales* and *Forest Land Use Plans* for more information on the review process for proposed sales.

**Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales.** Under AS 38.05.113, all timber sales must appear on the Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales for at least two years. In the SFG area, designated personal use

harvesting areas that will be open for multiple personal use permits will be included on the Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales. These designated personal use areas will be subject to the notice requirements for commercial sales. The Department may adopt regulations exempting small and emergency sales from the Five-Year Schedule requirements. If regulations are adopted, timber sales in the SFG must comply with the regulations. (See also *Forest Land Use Plan* in this section.)

**Interagency Notice.** Interagency notice shall be given prior to public notice to allow for resolution of interagency disagreements before the public comment period.

**Annual Notice.** Annual public notice shall be provided for the Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales under the following guidelines.

1. Notice shall include display advertisements that appear at least twice in Anchorage and Matanuska-Susitna Valley newspapers.
2. The Division of Forestry shall maintain a mailing list of local governments, post offices, and community councils, and of interest groups and individuals that request notification of the Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales. Annual notice of the Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales should be sent to all parties on the mailing list. Notices may be brief, but shall include a map and text sufficient to let recipients know whether or not sales are proposed in their areas of interest, and shall include directions for obtaining more detailed information on the sale schedule.

DNR will make a good faith effort to notify interested parties through the mailing list. However, failure to give notice under this guideline does not constitute a legal basis for invalidation or delay of this action. For example, notice may fail to reach a party if the party does not provide DOF with a current address or if the party misses a notice while on vacation.

3. Additional methods of notifying the public of the sale schedule may also be used.
4. DOF will notify landowners or lessees of state lands near proposed sales proposed for offering in the following year. Notification should be sent to landowners and lessees within 1/4-mile of a proposed sale boundary. Notice shall include a location map and directions for obtaining more detailed information. Borough tax records will be used to identify landowners; information on lessees can be obtained from the DNR Division of Land.