

PUBLIC ACCESS³

Goal

Public Access. Maintain, enhance, or provide adequate access to publicly owned land and resources.

Management Guidelines

A. Retain Access. Improve or maintain public access to areas with significant public resource values by retaining access sites and corridors in public ownership, by reserving rights of access when state land is sold or leased, by acquiring access, establishing easements, or by asserting rights-of-way through Revised Statute (RS) 2477. (See Appendix C.) No potential RS 2477 trails are recommended for assertion to implement this plan. Generally, section line easements should not be vacated unless alternative, physically usable access can be established or DNR has determined that state lands in the area should be roadless.

B. Management of 17(b) Easements. Generally, DNR will not accept management of 17(b) easements unless it already actively manages a portion of the trail or easement or state management will best protect public access to state lands.

C. Access for Development. When an access route is constructed for resource development, existing public access should be maintained or improved to mineralized areas, recreation, fish, wildlife, and forest resources, agriculture areas, and other public resources. When determining whether or not to improve existing access the potential for increasing user conflicts and increasing demand for limited resources will be considered and solutions will be sought.

D. Adequate Access Rights. Where practical and within the limits of available funding, full public rights of access should be provided when roads are constructed by state or local

governments. Perpetual public easements should be acquired and recorded when the state acquires access rights across property in other ownerships.

E. Coordination with the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT/PF). Access needs, such as right-of-way widths, airport reserves, or road locations, should be coordinated with DOT/PF.

F. Limiting Access. Access to public lands may be curtailed at certain times and in certain places to protect public safety, allow special uses, and prevent harm to the environment. Examples of situations that may justify limiting public access are fire management; timber harvest operations; developed oil and gas facilities; and high soil moisture content when traffic may cause extensive damage to roads and trails.

G. Purchase of Access Sites. Public appropriations may be requested to purchase access sites, easements, or reservations to public-use areas and to proposed settlement and agricultural projects.

K. Other Guidelines Affecting Public Access. Several other guidelines may affect public access. See the following sections of this chapter:

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

³ Also see Settlement page 2-33 and Trail Management page 2-60.