

# From Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan: 2001 Update

[http://forestry.alaska.gov/management/tvsf\\_final\\_plan.htm](http://forestry.alaska.gov/management/tvsf_final_plan.htm)

Chapter 1, page 2:

In addition, AS 38.04.200 states that DNR "may not manage state land, water, or land and water so that a traditional means of access for traditional outdoor activities is restricted for the purpose of protecting aesthetic values [...] unless the restriction or prohibition is"

- "for an area of land, water, or land and water that encompasses 640 contiguous acres or less;"
- "temporary in nature and effective cumulatively less than eight months in a three-year period;"
- "for the protection of public safety and public or private property;"
- "for the development of natural resources and a reasonable alternative for the traditional means of access across the land, water, or land and water for traditional outdoor activities on other land, water, or land and water is available and approved by the commissioner; or"
- "authorized by an act of the legislature."

Chapter 1, page 7:

- **Forest Land Use Plans (FLUPs).** The DNR Division of Forestry must prepare a FLUP for each timber sale greater than 10 acres, except for salvage harvests on land that is cleared for non-forest use (AS 38.05.112). A FLUP describes the harvest methods, access, reforestation plan, and multiple use provisions for the proposed sale. Each FLUP must consider the same list of uses required for the Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan ((AS 38.05.112(c)); see "Establishment and Purpose of the Tanana Valley State Forest," above). Draft FLUPs are published for public, industry, and agency review prior to adoption.

Chapter 2, page 14:

## FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

### I. GOALS

#### C. Ensure Access to Public Lands and Waters

Ensure access to public lands and waters where appropriate to promote or enhance responsible public use and enjoyment of fish and wildlife resources. Access improvements should be designed to match the public use objectives for the area under consideration. See also guidelines in the Public Access section of Chapter 2.

Chapter 2, page 25-27:

## PUBLIC ACCESS

### I. GOALS

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

## **B. Retain Access**

The state will improve or maintain public access to the Tanana Valley State Forest by retaining access sites and corridors in public ownership, reserving rights of access when state land is leased adjacent to the State Forest, acquiring access, or identifying RS 2477 rights-of-way. Generally, section line easements should not be vacated on land within or adjacent to the State Forest unless reasonable alternative access can be established. Within the State Forest, DNR will reserve public access across areas leased for private use.

## **C. Management of 17(b) Easements**

17(b) easements are public easements through Native Corporation land. The Bureau of Land Management manages 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 unless state management will best protect public access to state lands. The DNR Division of Mining, Land and Water manages RS 2477 routes where they coincide with 17(b) easements.

## **D. Access for Development**

When an access route is constructed for resource development, existing public access will not be displaced or rendered unusable by new construction. Various uses of resource development roads shall not restrict the purpose for which the roads were constructed.

## **E. Public Access Rights**

Where feasible and within the limits of available funding, full public rights of access should be provided when roads are constructed by state or local governments for purposes other than forest operations. Perpetual exclusive easements should be acquired and recorded when the state acquires access rights across property in other ownerships adjacent to the State Forest.

## **F. Coordination with the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT/PF)**

Access needs, such as right-of-way widths or road locations, should be coordinated with DOT/PF.

## **G. Limiting Access**

Access to land within the State Forest may be curtailed at certain times to protect public safety, allow special uses, and prevent harm to the environment. Examples of conditions that may justify limiting public access are fire management, timber harvest operations, and high soil moisture content when traffic may cause extensive damage to roads and trails. Existing statutes address restrictions of easements and rights-of-way use (AS 38.04.058), and restrictions of traditional means of access (AS 38.04.200). These and subsequent statutes and regulations must be considered when contemplating use restrictions.

## **H. Access Along and Across the Trans-Alaska Pipeline (TAPS)**

On state land, access is allowed across and along the TAPS under the following conditions:

1. Crossing on foot or by vehicles of less than 1,500 lbs. gross vehicle weight (GVW) is allowed without a permit.

2. Crossing by vehicles, pickups, four-wheel-drive vehicles, and all-terrain-vehicles over 1,500 lbs GVW requires a permit except at designated vehicle crossings.
3. The public may not travel on the TAPS right-of-way parallel to the pipeline except by permit from the DNR State Pipeline Coordinator's Office.

### **I. Pipeline Access Roads**

DNR should work with Alyeska Pipeline Service Company to open or move barrier gates temporarily or permanently on certain access roads that cross state land between the Richardson and Elliot Highways and the pipeline right-of-way. Such an arrangement would allow the public more access to state land along service roads and within the State Forest.

### **J. Pipeline Crossings**

DNR should work with Alyeska Pipeline Service Company to identify options to develop new pipeline crossings. Future pipelines (such as the Trans-Alaska Gas Line) should provide more places for public crossings to state land for hunting, fishing, recreation, timber harvest, settlement, and other uses or provide a mechanism to improve or develop future public crossings as the need arises.

Chapter 2, page 63:

## **TOURISM**

**Definition:** Tourism markets Alaska's natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources. The marketable resources on which tourism depends include scenic viewsheds, wilderness, forests, wildlife, lakes, and rivers, along with developed areas, which possess cultural, economic, and/or historical significance. The difference between recreation and tourism is that tourism is a commercial activity, while recreation is a leisure activity.

The Tanana Valley State Forest will be managed for multiple use, consistent with the purpose of the establishment of the State Forest (AS 41.17.200). The State Forest is one component of the mosaic of public land in the Tanana Valley that includes state and federal park land, as well as general state land that has been designated for recreation. The State Forest will be retained in state ownership and managed to allow a range of development activities to occur, including tourism operations.

Tourism activities in the State Forest are generally concentrated along rivers, roads, and trails. The tourism industry is an economic use of the Tanana Valley State Forest. The following list describes some of the resources in the Tanana Valley State Forest that benefit tourism.

A. The Tanana Valley's forests provide natural settings for visitors engaged in activities that range from sightseeing to canoeing to wilderness camping and hiking.

B. Timber harvest in the Tanana Valley State Forest creates timber roads that can provide access to the forest for people using all different modes of transportation, including dogsled, foot, horses, skis, ATVs, and snowmachines.

C. The Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan allows for the development of roads, boat launches, pull-outs, campgrounds, cabins, and trails that would provide visitors with opportunities to access recreational and scenic sites. The plan also encourages the development of facilities that provide information about areas of cultural, economic, and/or historical significance, or about forest history and ecology (such as visitor centers and interpretive sites).

Chapter 2, page 66:

## **TRAILS**

### **I. GOALS**

#### **A. Public Use Opportunities**

Ensure continued opportunities for public use of important recreation, public access, and historic trails of regional and statewide significance.

#### **B. Local Trails**

Assist in establishing local trail systems that provide access to community recreation areas.

#### **C. Trail Corridors**

Protect or establish trail corridors to meet projected future use requirements and protect current use.

Chapter 2, page 67:

### **E. Conversion of Roads into Trails**

A forest access road may be converted to a trail after its use as a road has terminated. The nature of the road may require that it be put-to-bed, thus the new “trail” may have water bars, removed culverts, grass seeding, or other measures to prevent erosion which other trails may not have. Roads will be converted into trails only after consideration in the Five Year Schedule of Timber Sales and Forest Land Use Plans. Any anticipated conversions should consider the Corps of Engineers’ silvicultural exemption during the process.

Chapter 2, page 70:

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The Division of Forestry plans to bring the entire timberland base of the State Forest under active resource management. At current harvest levels it will take several rotations before all areas of the forest are brought under active management. Current rotation lengths vary from 80 years in the hardwoods to 120 years in the softwoods.

As all areas of the forest are brought into active management the transportation system will be expanded by using a variety of road systems. At some point in the future, all areas will have access via an all season or winter road system. Portions of the road system will be inactive or “put to bed” for long periods of time. Other portions will be maintained as primary access routes into the forest. Planning and route selection for this system will be incremental and will occur as timber sales or other resource management activities occur in different geographic regions of the forest. This transportation system will be integrated and coordinated with other major land-owners, private and public, to ensure an efficient and logical transportation system is developed.

## **I. GOALS**

Develop a transportation system to implement this plan and integrate it with other transportation needs in the Tanana Basin.

### **A. Minimize Costs**

Develop a transportation system that has the lowest possible long-range cost, including construction, operations, and maintenance. Avoid unnecessary duplication of transportation facilities.

### **B. Minimize Adverse Impacts**

Develop a transportation system with minimal adverse impact on the environment, aesthetic and cultural features, and other users.

### **C. Promote Efficiency**

Develop a transportation system through a process of efficient route planning and with consideration of the full range of access needs, such as access to approved developments, commercial timber, recreation, and for forest protection.

### **D. Ensure Public Safety**

Develop a transportation system with a high standard of public safety.

### **E. Minimize Access Restrictions**

Do not unduly restrict access to TVSF land and resources.

## **II. MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES**

### **A. Identification of Potential Transportation Routes**

Rivers and terrain influence the type of access that exists, and the type of access that will be constructed in the State Forest. Much of the State Forest is accessible only by winter road due to the presence of wetlands and rivers. **Descriptions of anticipated access for each management unit is found in Chapter 3.** Due to changing economic conditions or the construction of roads for non-timber projects, access may change from what is described in Chapter 3.

The Tanana Basin Area Plan provides general recommendations for transportation routes necessary to support the land use policies in that plan, including some routes that cross the Tanana Valley State Forest. However, more detailed route alignment and feasibility analysis must be completed before the routes can be considered final.

To the extent feasible and prudent, DNR will avoid actions incompatible with the eventual construction of any potential transportation routes within the Tanana Valley State Forest that were identified in the Tanana Basin Area Plan until final decisions are made on the feasibility of these routes. The transportation routes that could potentially pass through the State Forest are the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline, the Alaska Railroad Extension, the Prince William Sound - Upper Tanana Railroad Corridor, Western Access Railroad Corridor, and Nenana-Totchaket Area Access route. Descriptions of these routes are given in the Tanana Basin Area Plan.

## **B. Access Plans for Resource Development Projects**

Access needs for forest management are described in Chapter 3 for each management unit, and are summarized in Table 12. However, access plans may change over time because of factors like access development for non-timber resources (e.g., minerals and oil and gas).

Incremental development of forest roads is anticipated to occur throughout the State Forest.

The rate will depend on demand for forest products and need for forest protection and other multiple use activities. Non-timber development projects may not be anticipated in this plan, but may be initiated in any part of the State Forest. Prior to the initiation of a resource development project, DNR will identify appropriate means of access and responsibilities for design, construction and maintenance of any proposed transportation facilities. Access plans for timber operations will be proposed to the public and other agencies through the Five Year Schedule of Timber Sales and Forest Land Use Plans. Access plans for other development activities will be coordinated through the applicable permitting processes.

Chapter 2, page 74:

Forest roads should remain open if they access substantial timber or other public resources. When known, decisions regarding permanent road closure and continued maintenance will be reviewed by agencies and the public in the Five Year Schedule of Timber Sales planning process as detailed in Chapter 4, and in the Forest Land Use Plans for specific timber sales.