

Planes, boats and snowmachines need no permits

Travel on the public lands concerns transportation to and from villages, access into the public lands for recreation and hunting, access to private land, and temporary access for surveying and exploration. These kinds of travel may involve snowmachines, motorboats, airplanes or dog teams.

It may seem a bit confusing at first, but these regulations do not apply to subsistence access. Congress felt subsistence access should not be lumped with other access uses. Subsistence travel rules are covered on page 12.

GENERAL TRAVEL

Travel regulations for park units, refuges, forest monuments and wilderness areas, rivers, trails, and BLM conservation and

recreation areas are generally more relaxed than on similar public land classifications outside Alaska. Congress felt it was necessary to allow traditional ways of travel on public lands, in Alaska - even in a national park or wilderness areas.

Consequently, snowmachines, motorboats, airplanes and non-motorized surface transportation, for example, dog teams and pack horses, are allowed on the public lands, with the exception of the three major old national park areas (McKinley, Katmai, Glacier Bay).

The use of off-road vehicles is prohibited in all park units and wildlife refuges, except in areas or on routes specifically designated for their use. Likewise, helicopters are not permitted other than at designated

landing areas.

Under certain circumstances, a land manager may close an area or restrict activities which would otherwise jeopardize a park or refuge unit and its values. Reasons for closure or restriction can include: public health and safety, resource protection, protection of cultural or scientific values, protection of subsistence uses, or other management considerations.

There are three categories of closure on park units and refuges.

EMERGENCY CLOSURE

Relates to restrictions on snowmachines, boats, planes, non-motorized surface transportation or sport taking of fish and wildlife. Cannot exceed 30 days. Cannot be extended.

TEMPORARY CLOSURE

Relates as above. Cannot exceed 12 months. Cannot be extended.

PERMANENT CLOSURE

Relates as above.

In all three cases, closures will only be made after or accompanied by public notice and hearing. In the case of permanent closure a minimum of 60 days is required for comment.

ACCESS TO PRIVATE LAND

Adequate and feasible access to private land, such as allotments and homesteads within public land units, is guaranteed. A nontransferable permit is required if access is not by snowmachine, motorboat, non-motorized surface transportation or airplane.

SURVEYING

If permanent improvements, such as a landing strip, road or bridge, are necessary to get to private land, then a simple form must be filled out in order to be granted these rights. The National Park Service or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must grant or deny the permit within 45 days, and, if requested, must make provision for an oral application.

Temporary access across the public lands by the State or a private interest for purposes of surveying, geophysical work or exploration requires a permit. And, of course, major transportation projects also are required to go through a permitting process.