

Planning

Goal: Apply effective, accurate and reliable information for the analysis, planning and implementation of all decisions.

Effective organizations establish ways to ensure accuracy in important decisions at all levels. It is essential that the division creates and maintains reliable processes to disseminate accurate and timely information. Although the division will pursue a variety of strategies, technology is viewed as a primary tool to accomplish this vision. Therefore, the agency is committed to establishing and implementing electronic administrative applications to enhance reporting.

So that the best interests of the division and the people of Alaska are met, integrated planning will occur at all levels of the organization. Managers and staff will be involved with and responsible for successful planning. The Ten-Year Strategic Plan will be the blueprint for the allocation of the division's budget and other resources for new and improved initiatives. This will also largely determine the content of other planning efforts including the annual implementation plan and the division's annual missions and measures report. Because park units and programs vary so widely, elements of some, but not all, strategies will be incorporated in plans for individual park units and programs.

To ensure that the division continues to provide for the needs of park visitors and responsible stewardship of natural and cultural resources, managers will initiate efforts to gather baseline data including levels of use and the condition of park units. This will include better assessment of yearly visitation levels, trail conditions and inventories. Staff will periodically survey park visitors to better understand conditions sought by the various users and identify management actions that can be effective in providing facilities that are safe, sanitary and well maintained. The division will also initiate cultural resource surveys both inside and outside park units designed to provide better information of these resources that will assist in their preservation, protection, and interpretation.

The division's policies, procedures, regulations and manuals that direct the division operations and programs should also be reviewed and revised on an as-needed basis and made more accessible to park staff through electronic formats.



Glenn Highway overlook at milepost 118

Objective I.

Improve the collection, interpretation and distribution of current, reliable information to ensure consistent and information-based decision-making.

Action Strategies

1. Develop an automated record keeping system by 2010 that is continuously updated which includes data and information on all aspects of division operations and planning and is accessible to all employees and volunteers throughout the state.
2. Develop and implement a plan to generate accurate visitation estimates and reliable visitation reports for each park.
3. Create and deploy an automated law enforcement records and citations management system to establish a centralized database. Train division law enforcement staff so the system is fully utilized.
4. Update the 1994 Catalog of the Alaska State Park System which includes maps of all units in the state park system and their acreages, designation dates, and realty information. Once updated, make the catalog available on the division website.
5. Gather baseline data on patterns and intensities of uses that will assist in documenting trends and activities to establish specific management objectives. To achieve this, the division will work with recreation survey professionals to design data collection strategies. The data should be standardized and collected over time so trends and changes can be identified and effective management strategies can be formulated.
6. Develop Cultural Resource Plans and Historic Building Preservation Plans in regions likely to undergo intensive development in the near term where high-value cultural resources are likely to be present. An example of such a planning effort was the Denali Highway Cultural Resource Plan.
7. Perform cultural surveys along transportation corridors, particularly along existing and proposed state highway right-of-way alignments. Funding for these surveys should be included in the Department of Transportation and Public Safety's project budgets for highway planning.
8. Develop and apply comprehensive evaluation criteria for adding new park units and/or deleting existing units from the state park system.
9. The division will gather information in those park areas with key public concerns that documents social and/or ecological conditions that can be used to establish standards that identify acceptable levels of impacts on both resource conditions and the experience of park users.



Matanuska Glacier, Tom Bol/Mat-Su Convention and Visitors Bureau

Objective II.

Create, implement and annually update the agency-wide, Ten-Year Strategic Plan to better allocate agency resources.

Action Strategies

1. Complete an annual implementation plan that integrates the strategic plan with the division's budgeting process. Superintendents will provide annual "work plans" sometime prior to this each year that outline priority park-specific stewardship practices and funding requests for the upcoming budget cycle. Other division program managers will also provide their prioritized funding requests and work plans prior to the implementation plan each year.
2. Develop a procedure and timeline for producing a State Parks Annual Report to assess the agency's strategic plan and other accomplishments from the prior fiscal year. By the time the first annual report is completed, also establish a process to review and update the Ten-Year Strategic Plan action strategies and other related components each year that will be evaluated when considering the annual Implementation Plan.
3. Prepare and finalize a Strategic Plan every ten years, to be reviewed annually and updated as needed.



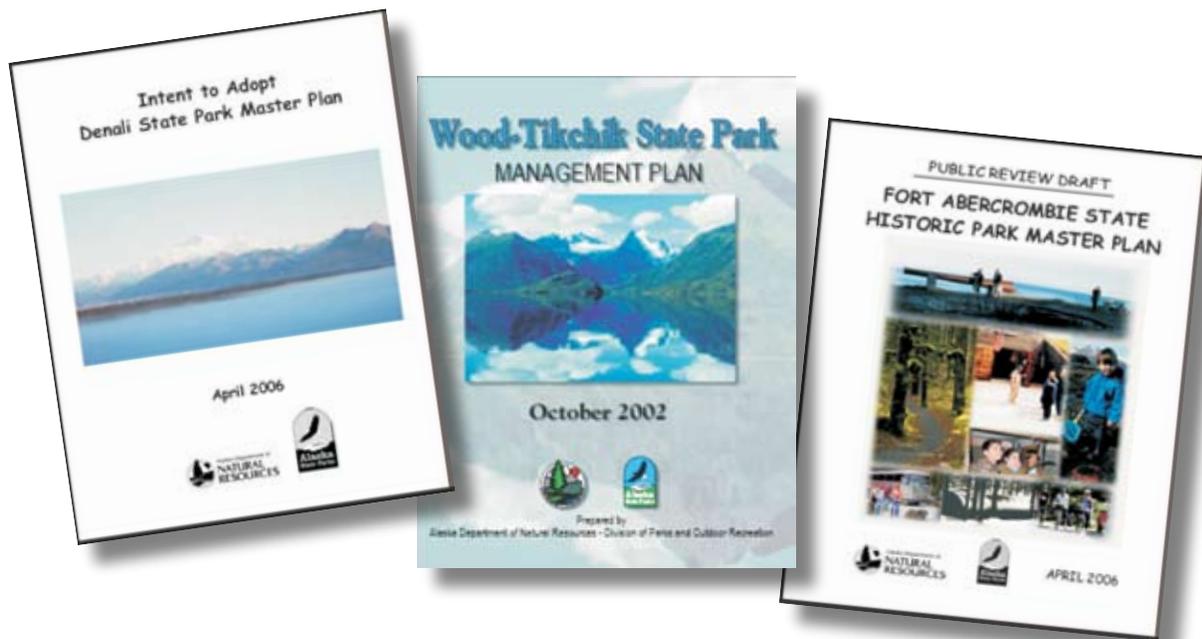
View of Flat Top and Anchorage bowl taken from "The Ramp" Chugach State Park

Objective III.

Produce a Management and Trails Plan for each park.

Action Strategies

1. Update the 1982 Alaska State Park System: Statewide Framework. This document, with its 20-year planning window, provided a framework within which more detailed planning efforts and management actions were to be taken. The document also defined the purposes of the types of state park units; their general characteristics; types of developments and activities allowed in each; and defined the four types of “land use zones” that could be applied to units of the park system.
2. Begin preparing at least one state park management plan or other related planning project each year.
3. Periodically review individual park management plans and update as necessary.
4. Parks (or regions/districts) with developed trails will develop trail plans within five years, and these should be reviewed every five years as recreational patterns change. A typical trails plan document or “template” will be developed by 2009.
5. Develop a state park policy that provides sustainable trail classifications, standards and general trail management objectives. Partner in the development of statewide trail guidelines that help provide direction for all trail users groups in the maintenance, design and development of trails in Alaska.



Objective IV.

Update and maintain policies and procedures to provide direction for all agency planning and decision-making.

Action Strategies:

1. Review and revise as needed board bylaws, division administrative directives, procedures and manuals.
2. Develop a list of specific sections and/or full documents that need to be updated or repealed and create a schedule for future maintenance of this information. This will include concession data, public safety procedures and volunteer manuals.
3. Ensure all staff have access to and comprehension of the process for creating agency rules, policies and procedures. Then begin to regularly update electronic versions of division rules, regulations, policies and procedures, as well as the Director’s Policy Files.