

STATE LANDS MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Philosophy:

The management of state lands for a variety of values in the public interest, both environmental and human, is mandated by Vermont statute.

The many tracts and blocks of lands under the Department's jurisdiction have different inherent biological characteristics, susceptibilities to disruption from ecological or human disturbances, capabilities to produce forest-related products, and abilities to satisfy demands of the visiting public. Therefore the management of state lands must take all these variables into consideration, and respect them.

The Department also recognizes that the public often feels deeply about state lands, and should have the opportunity to participate in the planning for their use and management.

Therefore, the Department will approach the management of state lands through a systematic process that:

- 1) Identifies and protects the natural resources and biological diversity of the tracts over the long term,
- 2) places strong emphasis on participatory planning, by having managers and interested publics involved upfront in formulation of management goals and activities designed to reach them,
- 3) clearly links on-the-ground activities to long-range management plans, and
- 4) has provisions for changes and amendments as conditions, management philosophies, and public expectations change over time.

Policy:

In treatment of lands under its jurisdiction, the Department adopts and practices a thorough long-range management planning and implementation process with the following components:

- 1) **Long Range Management Plans (LRMPs) – *Content.*** Each parcel or administrative block of state land will have a LRMP prepared for it. LRMPs will be effective for a 10-20 year period beginning on date of adoption, but may be amended (see Procedure for Implementation). Preparation of LRMPs will incorporate public involvement as described in (2). Each LRMP will include, at a minimum:

- a. General Information: pertinent maps, general description of property, overall purpose for the parcel, relationship of parcel to the larger state forest or park within which it is location.
 - b. Existing Conditions: vegetation types, soils, forest productivity classification, wildlife, recreation, cultural resources (e.g., cellar holes, stone walls, etc.), special constraints (natural areas, endangered species sites, deed or other legal restrictions, etc.), and emphasis zones; pertinent maps.
 - c. Desired Future: ideally, what the land will look or be like at the end of the planning period, as determined by the goals, objectives, and public vision.
 - d. Implementation: a description of how the parcel will be managed, taking into consideration all Existing Conditions (b) and to achieve the Desired Future (c); includes activities such as vegetation management, road improvements, etc.
 - e. Appendices: includes supplementary data such as use value appraisal summaries, glossary of terms used, etc.
- 2) **LRMPs – Preparation.** LRMPs will be prepared in stages, as follows:
- a. Data/Information Gathering: Prior to writing of an LRMP, the Department will provide information at public meetings and to interested persons, and will solicit comments on overall management goals, activities, and other considerations to go into the LRMP.
 - b. Draft LRMP. Weighing public comments, legal restraints, land capabilities, and other factors, a draft LRMP will be prepared and offered for public comment.
 - c. Final LRMP. Based on responses to the draft, a final LRMP will be prepared, including a responsiveness summary.
- 3) **Annual Work Plans (AWPs).** The Department will prepare AWP for each parcel to carry out implementation of provisions of the LRMP. These will be reviewed by the Agency of Natural Resources and be available for public review; they may be amended based on comments received.
- 4) **Public Involvement.** Interested persons will have ample opportunity to provide input at several stages in the process, both for LRMPs and AWP as shown above. Reasonable accommodation of legitimate concerns or suggestions will be made, if they are broadly acceptable to the public, do not compromise the area's natural resources or long-term ecological integrity, and do not conflict with established public uses that have already been determined to be compatible with the lands in question. The specifics of conducting public involvement will be guided by FPR Policy #20 (Public Involvement in State Land Management).

Procedure for Implementation:

The Lands Administrator, in consultation with the District Forest Managers/Regional Park Managers, Director of Forests, Director of Parks and Recreation, and Commissioner, will establish (1) a standard LRMP format and statewide schedule for adoption or revision and (2) a standard AWP format and schedule for implementation.

The appropriate District Forest Manager/Regional Park Manager will be responsible for preparation of LRMPs, AWPs, and related public involvement for each parcel under his/her jurisdiction. Work may be delegated to staff.

Persons/offices within the Agency of Natural Resources to review the draft LRMPs, AWPs, and subsequent revisions or amendments to either include at least the following:

Region/District

- Forest Resource Protection Specialist
- District Fisheries Biologist
- District Wildlife Biologist
- District Regional Engineer
- District Environmental Coordinator

Central Office

- Director of Forests
- Director of Parks and Recreation
- Director of Lands Administration
- Nongame & Natural Heritage Program
- Commissioner of Forests, Parks & Recreation

The LRMPs and AWPs will take affect following review by all the above and upon signing by the Commissioner.

Copies of all LRMPs and AWPs will be on file in Waterbury. District/regional offices will also keep on file those that pertain to lands within their jurisdiction.

Conrad M. Motyka, Commissioner

Effective Date: January 30, 1995