

GRAVEL PITS

Philosophy:

Gravel for road-building and other construction, both on and off state lands, is an important and increasingly scarce resource for the Department and local communities. At the same time, gravel mining cause substantial, often severe, and effectively permanent disturbance to the land and associated natural environment. Moreover, it removes the land from use by the public. Therefore, extraction of gravel from state lands must be guided by a policy that considers social and management needs for gravel, protection of natural resources, and public uses of state lands.

Policy:

Existing gravel pits: Use of materials from existing gravel pits on lands managed by the Department is limited to projects occurring on state lands, unless actions of the Department damage adjacent properties. Then, materials from existing pits may be used to repair the damages.

New gravel pits: New pits may be opened only for projects on state lands, where other important natural resources and existing public uses are not compromised, damaged, or lost. The Department generally will not support proposals for new pits to supply other needs, unless (1) the lands were acquired or previously identified for such uses or (2) the state receives equal or greater public benefit in return for the allowed use.

Procedure for Implementation:

Existing gravel pits: Forestry District Managers and Parks Regional Managers may prescribe extraction of materials through (1) mapping of sites in the long-range management plans for the appropriate blocks of state land, and (2) giving extraction schedule and other details in long-range management plans and annual work plans.

District/Regional Managers may also grant use of materials to repair damages on adjacent lands caused by Department actions (such as improperly installed or maintained culvert causing a washout of a town road), with the approval of the Commissioner. Damages to adjacent lands from normal public use of roads or state lands are not reasons for allowing extraction.

Materials from existing gravel pits on lands purchased or developed with federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) money may not be used unless to assist directly in enhancing recreation on public lands. Materials shall not be used for town roads, state highways, transmission lines serving off-site facilities, commercial gravel mining or quarrying, or sewer lines. The federal government, through the Recreation Division, makes the final determination on use.

Immediately following use, the gravel pit shall be stabilized to prevent erosion and soil runoff into the waters of the State.

When closed, pits shall be returned to as natural a condition as possible.

Refuse dumping in gravel pits on state lands is prohibited.

New gravel pits:

Proposals for new gravel pits will be handled by the District/Regional Manager, in consultation with the Director of Lands Administration. Recommendations of approval or appeals of denied requests shall be referred to the Commissioner. Ultimate approval rests with the Commissioner.

Proposals for new pits on lands purchased or developed with LWCF money require not only local and state approval, but federal as well (through the Recreation Division).

Closing gravel pits:

When a gravel pit, quarry, or borrow pit on state lands is to be permanently closed, it should be graded to as natural a contour as possible, and insofar as feasible, the vegetative cover reestablished.

Conrad M. Motyka, Acting Commissioner

Effective Date: May 15, 1991