



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Alaska
Region



Accessibility Strategy for Recreation Programs

Chugach National Forest, Alaska

Draft 7/14/04

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Printed on recycled paper – September 2004

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Chugach National Forest - Accessibility Strategy for Recreation Programs

Introduction

The Chugach National Forest Accessibility Strategy for Recreation Programs identifies existing conditions of the Forest's recreation programs, and recommends strategies to meet current accessibility guidelines within specific timeframes. This strategy is a transition plan for ensuring all the Forest's recreation program areas are available for use by people with disabilities.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, requires that Federal agencies provide access to their programs and activities to people with disabilities. Several different design guidance documents have been developed to implement Section 504, as well as the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

Guidance utilized to determine overall program accessibility in the outdoor recreation setting includes the draft Forest Service Outdoor Recreation Accessibility Guidelines (FSORAG) and the draft Forest Service Trails Accessibility Guidelines (FSTAG). The FSORAG and FSTAG are available on the Forest Service website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/accessibility/>. The ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities (ADAAG) provides design standards for buildings on the National Forest, such as visitor centers, cabins, and restrooms. ADAAG also includes supplements that address accessible boating facilities and fishing piers and platforms. Some guidance on implementation of accessibility in communications media can be found in 36 CFR Part 1145, but this only addresses audio/visual media. Regulatory guidance on accessibility with other media is minimal.

The Chugach National Forest has identified eight recreation program areas that are addressed in this accessibility strategy and identified below.

- Boating
- Cabin Rentals
- Camping
- Communications
- Fishing
- Hiking (trails and trailheads)
- Picnicking/ Day Use
- Recreation Special Uses

In the individual transition plans, the facilities are grouped by the three major geographic regions of the Forest: the Kenai Peninsula, Prince William Sound, and the Copper River Delta. Each of these geographic areas have distinct use patterns and access points that are a consequence of their unique geography and existing infrastructure.

In assessing the accessibility of each of the recreation programs listed above, we recognize that at several of the Forest's recreation facilities, visitors are provided a variety of recreation experiences. At a campground, for example, people may come to fish and boat, as well as

camp. The Forest's intention is that at those locations where several activities take place, each of the activities is accessible to people with disabilities, as the terrain and natural setting may allow. All sites in this transition plan are in the Forest's infrastructure database (INFRA).

Each of the following assessments of recreation programs stands alone as a plan for improving accessibility within that program. The obstacles to accessibility and planned actions for individual facilities are indicated within each transition plan. Target dates for completing the planned actions along with the officials responsible for completing them are also shown. Actual accomplishment is dependent on availability of funding.

Public Involvement

The focus of public involvement is collaboration with interested parties, such as advocacy organizations for people with disabilities, and recreationists with disabilities. We will outreach to interested parties by sharing this draft transition plan via:

- Legal notices in newspapers
- Letters to interested organizations and individuals
- Open houses
- Chugach NF public website
- One-on-one discussions as desired by members of the public

The transition plan will be finalized based on this collaborative process.