



DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH AND PARKS
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Land Acquisition Priorities and Guidelines

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The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks offers diverse opportunities for people to experience the outdoors. The foundation of these opportunities is the special lands and waters entrusted to the Department through the South Dakota Legislature's foresight in authorizing acquisition of property for public use and recreation. These lands are classified and managed accordingly by the Divisions of Wildlife and Parks and Recreation.

Division of Wildlife

- Game Production Areas
- Water Access Areas

Division of Parks and Recreation

- State Parks
- Recreation Areas
- Lakeside Use Areas
- Nature Areas
- Trails

Today

Private property dominates the South Dakota landscape, accounting for more than 80 percent of the state's acreage, and is important in conserving our natural resources. Every year, hundreds of thousands of outdoor enthusiasts enjoy the bounty of our vast natural resources - a strong testament to the high quality of land stewardship provided by South Dakota landowners.

South Dakota's public lands and waters provide residents and visitors with a great number of outdoor recreational opportunities; as well as, places to enjoy wildlife and the beauty of the South Dakota landscape. In addition to recreation, Department lands provide high quality habitat for hundreds of species of resident and migratory wildlife, including rare and declining species.

Department lands are an important part of the South Dakota landscape, as they exist exclusively for the use and enjoyment of all citizens. Found across the vast South Dakota landscape, these areas

often provide a county or region with its most important and readily available outdoor recreation opportunities.

Tomorrow

This document serves to guide the Department in its land acquisition activities over the next decade. In doing so, it sets forth and describes the Department's land acquisition guiding principles and priorities. These guidelines and priorities are based upon the expertise of Department staff, and the input of users and other interests who have shared their thoughts about Department land acquisition direction over the years.

When the Department began purchasing public hunting lands in the late 1930s, efforts were centered on obtaining Game Production Areas and Water Access Areas to provide management and recreational opportunities for individual species rather than specific habitat types. Over time the Department shifted its land acquisition efforts to securing native habitat types that support resident and migratory wildlife species and preserving areas of historical, geological, and natural significance. Eventually parcels were also added that improve management efficiency and effectiveness, while still providing a variety of recreational opportunities. This approach has resulted in a widely distributed land inventory of high quality habitat types, preservation areas, and recreation sites that are both biologically sound and publicly acceptable.

Land Acquisition Guidelines

The Department utilizes the following guidelines when conducting land acquisitions:

Regarding process, the Department will:

- Utilize existing and long-standing land acquisition procedures, based in Department Policy, South Dakota Administrative Rule, and South Dakota Codified Law, in acquiring property.
- Ensure an open public acquisition process through early involvement by the GFP Commission in potential acquisition projects.
- Work only with willing sellers.
- Utilize a property's market value, as determined by an independent appraisal, in negotiating a purchase price.
- Ensure that property appraisals conducted on behalf of the Department are completed by State-Certified General Appraisers and conform to Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) or Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions (UASFLA) as applicable.

Regarding economics, the Department will:

- Carefully consider the economic impacts of proposed land acquisition projects, and champion only those projects with minimal financial burdens and maximum conservation and public use benefits.
- When available as an option, evaluate the costs/benefits of leasing a property for wildlife habitat management and public access opportunities over purchasing it.

- Identify anticipated land management operation, maintenance, and development needs and their associated costs, and develop strategies for meeting these needs prior to acquiring new properties.
- Utilize financial support offered from partners for acquisition and management activities, making the most efficient use of these resources as potential matching funds through grant programs such as the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Regarding land ownership and stewardship, the Department will:

- Strive to be a good neighbor in communities in which it owns land, and involve communities when discussing land management issues.
- Work to identify existing Department lands that could be considered surplus to its mission and potentially available for disposal via exchange or sale.
- Utilize carefully evaluated land exchanges above the sale of surplus lands to improve management efficiency and effectiveness in addition to ensuring overall wildlife conservation values and public use opportunities are maintained.
- Ensure compliance with all applicable state and federal laws, rules, regulations, and policies regarding disposal of Department lands.
- Only consider accepting land donations that serve its mission, meet or exceed standards for state ownership, and do not impose significant management, liability, or financial concerns on the Department.

Land Acquisition Priorities

Additions to existing: Game Production Areas | Water Access Areas | State Parks | Recreation Areas | Lakeside Use Areas

- Parcels that improve public use on and access to existing Department lands.
- In-holding and round-out parcels that consolidate or connect existing Department lands or other public lands open to hunting, fishing, or other recreational related activities.
- Parcels that facilitate more efficient and effective wildlife habitat or recreation management and development activities on existing Department lands.
- Parcels that provide buffers or are necessary for maintaining or enhancing the integrity of existing Department lands.

Lake Access | River Access

- Parcels necessary to address public access needs to newly developed fisheries and popular water-based recreation resources.
- Parcels that can replace currently obsolete or deteriorating resources due to forces such as erosion, sedimentation, landslides, flooding, drought, etc.

Habitat types | Landscapes | Recreation | Educational Opportunities

- Parcels necessary to expand existing or develop new administrative facilities.
- Parcels containing significant habitat and hunting opportunities for pheasants.
- Parcels containing significant wetland habitat complexes.
- Parcels that represent intact native prairie grassland systems.
- Parcels of undeveloped lakeshores and riparian corridors.
- Parcels associated with planned and coordinated flood mitigation buyout projects.
- Parcels containing rare, unique, or significant plant or animal species or their habitats.
- Parcels necessary to preserve sites of geological, historical, natural, and cultural significance to the people of South Dakota.
- Parcels that have potential for high demand levels of outdoor recreation such as hunting, fishing, camping, trails, wildlife observation, water-based recreation.