



**Title:** Development Standards for WMA/AMAs

**Directive Approval:** Dave Schad April 6, 2010

***Division Director***

***Date***

**Affected Units:** ☒ WMA ☒ General Use AMA ☒ Restricted Use AMA  
☒ Easement AMA

**Definitions:**

**AMA: Aquatic Management Area.** a unit of the outdoor recreation system established in accordance with Minnesota Statutes (MS), section [86A.05](#), Subd. 14.

"*Easement aquatic management area*" is an aquatic management area for which the commissioner acquires easement rights for angler and management access and is open to angling only. All other activities are prohibited, unless landowner permission is obtained.

"*General use aquatic management area*" is a designation for identifying permitted and prohibited activities as described in part [6270.0200](#) on an aquatic management area acquired in fee simple by the commissioner and is open to angling, hunting, trapping, and other light use non-motorized activities, unless otherwise posted.

"*Restricted use aquatic management area*" is a designation for identifying permitted and prohibited activities as described in part [6270.0200](#) on an aquatic management area acquired in fee simple by the commissioner and is open to angling, and most other light use non-motorized activities. Hunting and trapping are prohibited, unless otherwise posted.

**WMA: Wildlife Management Area.** a unit of the outdoor recreation system established in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section [86A.05](#), Subd. 8.

**IDP: Initial Development Plan.** Proposal document for a new WMA/AMA acquisition that includes boundary surveys, boundary posting, wood routed signs, access roads, parking facilities, site cleanup, well closure and habitat development sufficient to cover bare ground.

**Directive:**

WMA/AMAs will be developed to at least minimum standards within two years of acquisition for facility and habitat development that will provide basic asset preservation, public access and safety, environmental and cultural resource protection and soil and water resource conservation. Physical development may provide access to the area, but shall be developed to minimize intrusion on the natural environment. All new acquisitions require a WMA Initial Development Plan (IDP) or Fisheries Project Proposal (FPP) be completed by the Area and approved by the Region before the parcel is accepted by the DNR. Cooperators should be included in the review of the IDP/FPP.

To limit the Division's short-term obligations, Area Managers are encouraged to accept contributions (following DNR Gift Acceptance Policy) for funding, materials or labor from the donor organization to complete development plans.



Minimum standards are defined as follows:

Boundary Surveys: WMA/AMAs will have boundaries surveyed to DNR Division of Lands & Minerals survey standards. New surveys will include GPS coordinates for all boundary points sufficient to describe the boundary lines in the WMA GIS.

Boundary Signing: WMA/AMAs will have boundaries signed at all access points, corners and at not more than 500 foot intervals along the boundaries.

Access: Reasonable access will be provided sufficient for public recreation and management consistent with [MS 86A.05](#) Subd. 8 and 14 and [MS 97A.145](#). WMAs require public access by right of way or easement from a public road. AMA access by water is sufficient.

Parking Lots: Parking areas may be constructed as necessary so that there is adequate off road parking for safe public use of the unit.

Information Signs: Major public access sites will be posted with WMA rule signs, motor vehicle restriction signs and federal aid signs where appropriate. A large entrance sign consistent with the standards in the DNR Sign Manual may be erected at the principle access point of the AMA/WMA.

Building/Well Clean Up: Unless used for management or public use, all buildings will be removed or destroyed and the sites revegetated. Certified contractors will close wells according to Department of Health standards.

Habitat Development: Habitat restoration and maintenance should comply with best management practices as outlined by other FAW Directives and DNR guidelines.

Cultural & Natural Heritage Resource Reviews: Where appropriate, review will be undertaken to insure compliance with state and federal laws and to protect natural, historical and cultural properties.

**Authority:**

**MS 84.085** (c) **ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS.** The commissioner of natural resources, on behalf of the state, may accept and use grants of money or property from the United States or other grantors for conservation purposes not inconsistent with the laws of this state.

**MS 86A.05** **OUTDOOR RECREATION SYSTEM, CLASSIFICATION AND PURPOSES.**

**Subd. 8. State wildlife management area; purpose; resource and site qualifications; administration.** (c) State wildlife management areas shall be administered by the commissioner of natural resources in a manner that is consistent with the purposes of this subdivision to perpetuate, and if necessary, reestablish quality wildlife habitat for maximum production of a variety of wildlife species. Public hunting, fishing, trapping, and other uses shall be consistent with the limitations of the resource, including the need to preserve an adequate brood stock and prevent long term habitat injury or excessive wildlife population reduction or increase. Physical development may provide access to the area, but shall be so developed as to minimize intrusion on the natural environment.

**Subd. 14. Aquatic management areas.** (d) Aquatic management areas must be administered by the commissioner of natural resources in a manner consistent with the purposes of this subdivision to perpetuate and, if necessary, reestablish high quality aquatic habitat for production of fish, wildlife, and other aquatic species. Public fishing and other uses shall be consistent with the limitations of the resource, including the need to preserve adequate populations and prevent long-term habitat injury or excessive fish population reduction or increase. Public access to aquatic management areas may be closed during certain time periods.



**MS 92.08 SURVEYS AND RESURVEYS, subd (a)** (a) The commissioner may have surveys made to determine the correct boundaries or description of the land or to dispose of it in convenient parcels.

**MS 97A.081 POSTING LAND.** The commissioner may post land acquired for public hunting grounds, food and cover planting areas, game refuges, wildlife lands, and conservation area lands so as to identify and indicate the management purpose and whether hunting and trapping are allowed.

**MS 97A.145 WETLANDS FOR WILDLIFE.** (b) The commissioner may also acquire land owned by the state and tax-forfeited land that is suitable for wildlife development. The wetlands may not be acquired unless public access by right-of-way or easement from a public road is also acquired or available.

**Background:**

Minimum development of WMA/AMAs is imperative for management as a designated WMA/AMA in the Outdoor Recreation System and for proper land and water stewardship. User expectations include boundary identification, signs, maps, reasonable access, and habitat development. WMA/AMA laws and rules cannot be enforced until the boundaries are signed. Many WMA/AMAs are acquired with old homestead sites that have dilapidated buildings, garbage dumps and unsealed wells and septic systems. These sites may contain environmental hazards and could be dangerous for unsuspecting users of the site. The Division may incur significant expense in reclaiming these sites.

Funding for minimum development should be included with the acquisition funding, special appropriation or through the project proposal procedure. WMA/AMAs acquired through donation from conservation organizations may obligate the Division to significant initial development costs to develop the unit to the minimal standards. These donations are above and beyond the Division's traditional acquisition activity. The initial development of these donated WMA/AMAs often obligates the Division to expend large amounts of development funds that were not planned.

**Federal Aid Implications:**

Not all WMA/AMA lands have federal interest. Federal regulation 50 CFR Part 80.14 states that real property acquired or constructed with Federal Assistance funds must continue to serve the purpose for which acquired or constructed.



**Procedure:**

Action	Responsibility
Identify potential funding source for initial development at the time the land acquisition is proposed. Determine if partner or donor funding is available and included in acquisition funding source.	Area Fisheries/Wildlife Supervisor
Prepare WMA Initial Development Plan (IDP) or Fisheries Project Proposal (FPP) ideally at the time the Fact Sheets for the land parcels are prepared or at a minimum at the time processed for “election to purchase” (EP).	Area Fisheries/Wildlife Supervisor
Submit IDP/FPP to Region for review and approval.	Area Fisheries/Wildlife Supervisor
Review, prioritize and approval by Region	Assistant Regional/Project Manager
Submit to Central Office Section Development staff	Assistant Regional/Project Manager
Approve available funding sources for IDP/FPP.	Section Development Coordinator
Track project review requirements (historical, natural heritage, permits, etc)	Section Development Coordinator & Area Fisheries/Wildlife Supervisor
Completion and accomplishment reports.	Area Fisheries/Wildlife Supervisor
Compile accomplishment reports.	Central Office Staff

**Supporting Documents:**

DNR Gift Acceptance Policy: [http://files-intranet.dnr.state.mn.us/user\\_files/1915/policy0625.pdf](http://files-intranet.dnr.state.mn.us/user_files/1915/policy0625.pdf)

DNR forms webpage: [http://intranet.dnr.state.mn.us/fish\\_wildlife/forms/index.html](http://intranet.dnr.state.mn.us/fish_wildlife/forms/index.html)

Historical review guidelines: [http://intranet.dnr.state.mn.us/fish\\_wildlife/forms/index.html](http://intranet.dnr.state.mn.us/fish_wildlife/forms/index.html)

DNR Operational Order #99, Building Disposal, Management Resources:

[http://files-intranet.dnr.state.mn.us/user\\_files/1920/oporder\\_99.pdf](http://files-intranet.dnr.state.mn.us/user_files/1920/oporder_99.pdf)

DNR Operational Order 101, Working With Partners, Sponsors, and Donors: [http://files-intranet.dnr.state.mn.us/user\\_files/1920/oporder\\_101.pdf](http://files-intranet.dnr.state.mn.us/user_files/1920/oporder_101.pdf)

**Related Directives:**

FAW Directive 010105: Native Vegetation.DRAFT.doc

FAW Directive 042507: Boundary Posting on WMA/AMA's.DRAFT.doc

FAW Directive 122805: Buildings Surplus Property Wells.DRAFT.doc