

3.13 Recreation and Special Lands

Citizens appreciate recreational resources because they help improve the quality of life within communities. Public spaces that are enjoyable, accessible, and diverse in their social and recreational functions enrich minds, bodies, and spirits. They serve as symbols of a community's accomplishments. Recreation lands have strict rules governing their properties and their boundaries since they are protected by federal and state laws.

What are recreation and special lands?

Recreational and special lands include state parks, local parks, recreational areas, trails and greenways, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, historic sites of national, state or local significance, and Land and Water Conservation Fund properties.

What federal regulations protect recreation and special lands?

Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act of 1966 states that special effort be made to preserve the natural beauty of public park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites, when providing facilities for vehicular traffic. **Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act of 1966** states that any land taken from a publicly-owned park, recreational area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or publicly or privately owned historic site, will not be approved by the USDOT unless a determination is made that there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of land from that property. The Act also requires that the Preferred Alternative include all possible planning to minimize harm that may result from such use.

How were recreation and special lands identified and evaluated?

Recreation and special lands were inventoried by way of websites, community interviews, and field inventories. Recreation and special lands were identified and evaluated to determine if they would be impacted by the project. Impacts to a Section 4(f) land can include the amount of land to be used, facilities and functions affected, noise, air pollution, and visual intrusion among others.

What recreation and special lands are affected by the alternatives?

A review of the area adjacent to each of the alternatives was conducted. Based on the required ROW needs for the alternatives, no local parks or recreational facilities are affected. Considerable effort was made during the alternatives development and evaluation process to avoid impacts to parks and recreational resources.

Did you know?

When private institutions, organizations or individuals own parks, recreational areas or wildlife and waterfowl refuges, Section 4(f) does not apply to these properties, even if such areas are open to the public. Section 4(f) does apply to all historic sites of national, state or local significance, even if they are privately owned and closed to the public.

Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act of 1966

The intent of the Section 4(f) statute and the policy of the USDOT is to avoid the use of public parks, recreation areas as part of a project, unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such land.