

Carbon Management Leases and Carbon Offset Projects

Two mechanisms exist to authorize carbon-related projects within HSFRMA. The DNR may undertake carbon offset projects through the Office of Project Management and Permitting (OPMP) Carbon Offset Program, authorized by AS 38.95.400. The DMLW may authorize leases of state-owned lands for carbon management purposes through AS 38.05.081. For the purpose of this management plan, the DFFP defines carbon management as “a greenhouse gas mitigation measure or nongeologic carbon sequestration project.”

Goals

1. Provide opportunities for carbon offset projects and carbon management leases within the HSFRMA consistent with the primary purposes of the HSFRMA, the management intent for individual units, and the management guidelines in this chapter.
2. Maintain access to and availability of other uses within HSFRMA, including use of renewable and non-renewable resources through multiple use management and the continuation of other beneficial uses including traditional uses and recreational activities.
3. Maintain the existing uses and values for which each unit is designated in HSFRMA.

Management Guidelines

1. Planning Process

The DFFP will recommend stipulations for the authorization of proposed carbon offset projects or proposed carbon management leasing projects as necessary to maintain compatibility with the primary purposes of the HSFRMA. Authorization of leasing for carbon management projects is contingent upon DFFP concurrence (see Appendix I, Cooperative Agreement Between DNR Divisions).

2. Sustained Yield

Carbon offset projects must not impair the Forest’s ability to meet sustained yield requirements under AS 41.17.060. Carbon projects may defer harvest but cannot remove so much productive acreage, or alter harvest schedules to such a degree, that the Forest can no longer support long-term, continuous timber production. All forested lands within HSFRMA registered as a carbon offset project under AS 38.95.420, or included in a carbon management lease, must be incorporated into sustained yield and AAC calculations to ensure compliance.

3. Agency Capacity

If proposed leases for carbon management generate additional management needs such as additional cost or workforce required of the DFFP, the staffing capacity of the DFFP should be considered in review and authorization of applications.

4. Long-term Maintenance of Forest Resources

Carbon offset projects or carbon management leasing activities that involve the management or manipulation of vegetation on lands within the DFFP timber base should be designed for consistency with the Forest Resources guidelines in this chapter and with the timber harvest guidelines within each subunit. Throughout both the active project term and any subsequent permanence commitment period, forest management and timber harvest prescriptions in these project areas must remain compatible with the carbon stocking, monitoring, and maintenance commitments required under an agreement to register a carbon offset project pursuant to AS 38.95.420. To satisfy these commitments, the department may limit timber harvest volumes in these areas during both the active project term and post-project permanence monitoring. Upon the expiration of all contractual carbon commitments, these lands will return to standard HSFRMA management.

5. Subsistence Practices, Traditional Uses, and Recreation Activities

One of the primary purposes described in the HSFRMA enabling statute (AS 41.15.300) is the “continuation of other beneficial uses including traditional uses and other recreational activities.” See the Recreation section of this plan for more information about how traditional uses and modes of transportation are described. Use of lands within the HSFRMA for carbon offset or carbon management purposes shall maintain access to traditional uses and modes of access including, but not limited to, fishing, hunting, trapping, berry gathering, plant harvesting, other forms of subsistence, and motorized and nonmotorized transportation.

6. Other Guidelines Affecting Carbon Management Leasing and Carbon Offset Projects

Several other guidelines in this chapter may affect the management of carbon resources. For details of those guidelines, see the following sections of this chapter:

- Forest Resources
- Recreation
- Forest Protection

Resource Allocation Summary

Lands of all classifications within the HSFRMA are available for carbon offset projects and for leasing for carbon management purposes.