



AN ACT REVISING LAWS RELATED TO RECREATIONAL USE OF STATE LANDS; REQUIRING PUBLIC NOTICE PRIOR TO LAND CLOSURES AND RESTRICTIONS ON GENERAL RECREATIONAL USE; SETTING CAMPING LIMITS; PROVIDING RULEMAKING AUTHORITY; REQUIRING REPORTING TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL; AMENDING SECTION 77-1-804, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Section 77-1-804, MCA, is amended to read:

"77-1-804. Rules for recreational use of state lands -- penalty. (1) The board shall adopt rules authorizing and governing the recreational use of state lands allowed under 77-1-203. The board shall use local offices of the department to administer this program whenever practical.

(2) Rules adopted under this section must address the circumstances under which the board may close legally accessible state lands to recreational use. Action by the board may be taken upon its own initiative or upon petition by an individual, organization, corporation, or governmental agency. Closures may be of an emergency, seasonal, temporary, or permanent nature. State lands may be closed by the board only after public notice and opportunity for public hearing in the area of the proposed closure, except when the department is acting under rules adopted by the board for an emergency closure. Closed lands must be posted by the lessee or by the department at the request of the lessee at customary access points, with signs provided or authorized by the department.

(3) Closure rules adopted pursuant to subsection (2) may categorically close state lands whose use or status is incompatible with recreational use. Categorical or blanket closures may be imposed on state lands due to:

- (a) cabin site and home site leases and licenses;
- (b) the seasonal presence of growing crops; and
- (c) active military, commercial, or mineral leases.

(4) The board shall adopt rules that provide an opportunity for any individual, organization, or governmental agency to petition the board for purposes of excluding a specified portion of state land from a categorical closure that has been imposed under subsection (3).

(5) Under rules adopted by the board, state lands may be closed on a case-by-case basis for certain reasons, including but not limited to:

(a) damage attributable to recreational use that diminishes the income-generating potential of the state lands;

(b) damage to surface improvements of the lessee;

(c) the presence of threatened, endangered, or sensitive species or plant communities;

(d) the presence of unique or special natural or cultural features;

(e) wildlife protection;

(f) noxious weed control; or

(g) the presence of buildings, structures, and facilities.

(6) (a) Rules adopted under this section may impose restrictions ~~upon~~ on general recreational activities, including the discharge of weapons, camping, open fires, vehicle use, and any use that will interfere with the presence of livestock.

(b) The board may also by rule restrict access on state lands in accordance with a block management program administered by the department of fish, wildlife, and parks.

(c) Motorized vehicle use by recreationists on state lands is restricted to federal, state, and dedicated county roads, trails developed by the department for motorized use, and ~~to those~~ roads designated by the department to be open to motorized vehicle use.

(d) Recreational overnight use of state lands in a 30-day period is limited to 16 days:

(i) in a designated campground; and

(ii) on unleased, unlicensed lands outside a campground unless otherwise allowed by the department.

(e) Pets on state lands must be on a leash or otherwise controlled to prevent harassment of livestock or wildlife.

(f) Horses may be kept overnight on state lands if:

(i) the horses do not remain in a stream riparian zone for more than 1 hour; and

(ii) only feed certified as noxious weed seed free is present on state lands.

(g) A horse kept overnight on state lands where there is a lease or license must be kept in compliance with the provisions of subsection (6)(f) and must be restrained.

(h) Restrictions on general recreational activities must comply with the following:

(i) at least 30 days prior to a restriction, except in the case of emergency, the lessee or the department if requested by the lessee shall:

(A) post notice of the proposed restriction at frequent access points to the land where the restriction is proposed; and

(B) issue a press release or a public service announcement detailing the proposed restriction;

(ii) except for seasonal restrictions and unless required for public safety, a restriction in an area may not exceed 1 year; and

(iii) if a misuse of the land, including littering, may lead to a restriction, common access points must be posted with notice of the possible restriction for 30 days with information detailing the misuse of land and stating the penalties for the violation. If the misuse persists at the end of 30 days, a proposed restriction notice may be posted in accordance with subsection (6)(h)(i).

(7) The board shall adopt rules providing for the issuance of a recreational special use license. Commercial or concentrated recreational use, as defined in 77-1-101, is prohibited on state lands unless it occurs under the provisions of a recreational special use license. The board may also adopt rules requiring a recreational special use license for recreational use that is not commercial, concentrated, or within the definition of general recreational use.

(8) For a violation of rules adopted by the board pursuant to this section, the department may assess a civil penalty of up to \$1,000 for each day of violation. The board shall adopt rules providing for notice and opportunity for hearing in accordance with Title 2, chapter 4, part 6. Civil penalties collected under this subsection must be deposited as provided in 87-1-601(8).

(9) Unauthorized dumping of refuse on state lands and destruction of property, which includes land and improvements, are misdemeanor crimes punishable by a fine of not more than \$1,500."

Section 2. Reporting requirements. (1) On or before September 1 of each year preceding the convening of a regular session of the legislature, the department shall provide a report to the environmental quality council in accordance with 5-11-210.

- (2) The report must include:
- (a) existing road closures and restrictions on state lands;
 - (b) anticipated road closures and restrictions on state lands; and
 - (c) ongoing travel management planning on state lands or foreseeable travel management planning by the department or by the department in conjunction with federal agencies conducting travel management planning that may impact state lands.

Section 3. Codification instruction. [Section 2] is intended to be codified as an integral part of Title 77, chapter 1, part 8, and the provisions of Title 77, chapter 1, part 8, apply to [section 2].

Section 4. Effective date. [This act] is effective on passage and approval.

- END -

I hereby certify that the within bill,
SB 0326, originated in the Senate.

Secretary of the Senate

President of the Senate

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2015.

Speaker of the House

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2015.

SENATE BILL NO. 326

INTRODUCED BY J. HINKLE

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