

Willow Lake Use Plan

The State of Alaska, Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOTPF) manages Willow Lake as a designated State float plane base. Willow Lake is open to the public for recreational uses including boating and fishing. Property owners with land bordering the Lake have riparian rights. These rights are subject to regulation, and may not be used in a manner adverse to the rights of the community. Recognizing the aviation and recreational uses of Willow Lake, and in the interest of preventing conflict between aviation and recreational users, DOTPF has adopted the following plan governing the summer use of Willow Lake.

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

DOTPF may plan, regulate, and enforce rules and procedures for the use of Willow Lake.

- A. It is the Lake user's responsibility to follow "good neighbor" safety practices, to be courteous, and to avoid conflict.
- B. To avoid inadvertent but dangerous conflict between float planes and highly maneuverable, fast personal water craft (PWC), DOTPF reminds all Lake users that float planes are not highly maneuverable. Caution should be exercised by both float planes and PWCs operating near one another.
- C. Prior to each succeeding summer season, the State may publish in a local newspaper and/or hold a public information meeting (if necessary) to inform Lake users of this Lake Use Plan.

II. WILLOW LAKE RECREATIONAL USE

- A. Recreational users are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Alaska Boater's Handbook, available at dnr.alaska.gov/boating/publications.
- B. Immediately prior to and during the summer season DOTPF will install and maintain a copy of the WLUP in an informational glass case at the Community Center Lake access ramp. DOTPF will make additional copies available at the Community Center.
- C. Immediately prior to and during the summer season DOTPF will install and maintain informational signs at the Community Center boat access ramp, and at other Lake access points. These informational signs will remind users of the existence of the WLUP and will state where the WLUP can be found on DOTPF's web-site.
- D. Immediately prior to and during the summer season DOTPF, in consultation with the State Boating Law Administrator, will install and maintain a buoy approximately 100' feet from the point located at the southeast side of the Lake. The buoy will keep taxiing aircraft from coming too close to the shore. Recreational users are advised to familiarize themselves with the buoy and its purpose.
- E. Immediately prior to and during the summer season DOTPF, in consultation with the State Boating Law Administrator, will place buoys to delineate a "boats keep out" area at the northeast end of the Lake. The "boats keep out" area shall be for aircraft use in engine warm up, "run up" and similar operational activities. It is unsafe for users other than aircraft to be present in this restricted area at any time.
- F. Recreational users on the Lake or leaving the shoreline are reminded to be watchful for aircraft taxiing, landing, or taking off. Upon noting an aircraft taxiing, taking off, or landing in a location or direction that may result in potential conflict, recreational users must move towards the closest shore away from the path of the aircraft until the danger of conflict has passed.
- G. It is recommended that no swimming, rafting, floating, fishing, etc. take place where aircraft take off and land.

III. WILLOW LAKE AIRCRAFT PROCEDURES

- A. Pilots are reminded to review the Alaska Supplement for current operational guidelines for use of Willow Lake. Pilots are reminded to operate in compliance with 17 AAC 45.030, to be aware of recreational use activities, and to use their best judgment and "good neighbor" safe practices. Prior to landing, visual inspection is recommended.
- B. While on the Lake, aircraft shall not operate on the land side of the buoy located at the southeast side of the Lake. When outside the "boats keep out" area, or when operating away from the point at the southeast point of the Lake, aircraft may not operate within 100 feet of the shoreline unless taxiing to or from the shore, or unless safety concerns dictate otherwise.
- C. The departure route for aircraft that use the Lake will be in a generally northerly or southerly direction, using the center of the Lake for operations. No east/west take-offs or landings are allowed, except when weather or safety dictate otherwise.
- D. It is recommended that all aircraft take-off towards the south, weather conditions permitting.
- E. Pilots are encouraged to announce on the local CTAF their departure from and approach to Willow Lake.

IV. PERSONAL DOCKS


All lakeside landowners who have a dock on the Lake or contemplate placing a dock on the Lake must ensure that activities associated with the dock (mooring, swimming, boating) do not interfere with aviation operations and the activities of other recreational users. To avoid interference, docks must be of a reasonable width and length.

V. ENFORCEMENT

DOTPF's regulatory and enforcement powers include but are not limited to those stated in 17 AAC 45.020 and 17 AAC 45.030. Lake users are encouraged to familiarize themselves with AS 02.15.230, AS 02.15.240, and 17 AAC 45.020 U) and (k).

The Willow Lake Use Plan is effective upon the date of signature, below. This plan supersedes all prior plans.

By authority of the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities AS 02.15.020; AS 02.15.060; AS 02.15.090 17 AAC 45.010; 17 AAC 45.015; 17 AAC 45.020; 17 AAC 45.030 17 AAC 45.080; 17 AAC 45.127; 17 AAC 45.205



Marc A. Luiken, C.M.
Commissioner, Department of Transportation
& Public Facilities

9 Feb 2017

Date

¹ Placement of the buoy at 100' for the 2017 summer season is on a trial basis.

Willow Lake Use Plan (WLUP) Frequently Asked Questions

- Q:** Will public events be allowed on the lake?
- A:** Applications for special events should be submitted to DOT&PF Aviation Leasing. Contact Information: (907) 269-0740.
- Q:** Why was no public meeting held or comment taken before the plan was signed?
- A:** The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities is responsible for decisions about the operation, improvement, protection, and maintenance of airport property. In the interest of public safety and welfare the Department revised the original WLUP to better align aviation and non-aviation uses at Willow Lake.
- Q:** Can I continue to participate in recreational activity on the Lake?
- A:** Yes. The WLUP states that Willow Lake is open to the public for recreational uses including boating and fishing.
- Q:** Where can I recreate on the Lake?
- A:** Buoys will be placed to delineate a "Boats Keep Out" area at the northeast end of the Lake. This area is for aircraft use in engine warm up. It is unsafe for users other than aircraft to be present in this restricted area at any time. This area may be modified in the future after observation of actual lake activities to balance between users.
- Q:** Under what conditions will DOT&PF modify the dimensions of the "Boat's Keep Out" area.
- A:** DOT&PF may revise the dimensions of the "Boats Keep Out" area to ensure sufficient, but not excessive, spacing between aircraft in the northeast corner and non-aviation, recreational users. The dimensions of the "Boats Keep Out" area may be revisited from time to time. The WLUP does not require specific dimensions
- Q:** Why is the Lake Use Plan limited to just the summer season?
- A:** To DOT&PF's knowledge there has not been a history of aviation/recreational use conflict to warrant a winter Lake Use Plan. We issue a NOTAM in the winter stating there is no winter maintenance; land at your own risk.
- Q:** What is the process for resolving conflicts between different users of the lake?
- A:** Conflicts should be reported to the airport manager at 907.495.6286. DOT&PF will handle all reports on a case by case basis.
- Q:** Turnover occurs in ownership of residential properties around the lake, how will the guidelines outlined in the WLUP be communicated to users each year?
- A:** The WLUP contains information regarding how the plan can be accessed.
- Q:** The WLUP refers to "good neighbor" safe practices. What constitutes "good neighbor" safe practices?
- A:** Participants at the April 27, 2016 open house are encouraged to submit suggestions on what they believe would be appropriate "good neighbor" safe practices for Willow Lake. Suggestions can also be submitted to the airport manager at 907.495.6286, or by placement in a "comments" box to be installed at Willow Lake, at the information kiosks. Additionally, comments can be emailed to dot.cr.director@alaska.gov. Upon receipt of comments, DOT&PF will publish and post a list of good Neighbor Safe Practices, which may be updated from time to time.
- Q:** Will the Department consider assessing a fine against users who violate the Lake Use Plan?
- A:** DOT&PF anticipates that adherence to the WLUP and "good neighbor" safe practices will minimize the need for enforcement action. Alaska Administrative Code, 17 AAC 45.020 (j) and (k) authorize DOT&PF to take action to correct violations of the WLUP.
- Q:** The WLUP states "to avoid interference, docks must be of a reasonable width and length." Where can a Lake user go to understand what dimensions are considered reasonable?
- A:** Lake users should look to existing dock sizes for guidance. Lakeside property owners are encouraged to contact DOT&PF's airport manager at 907.495.6286 in the event they are considering constructing a new dock or modifying an existing dock.
- Q:** The WLUP references the Alaska Boater's Handbook. Why?
- A:** The handbook provides practical information for boating safety. Willow Lake is a state lake, not a U.S. Navigable Water. Therefore the "International Navigation Rules" in the Handbook are not enforceable on Willow Lake.
- Q:** The Willow Lake concept map published online and posted at the lake shows a buoy at the Southeast side of the lake, 100 feet from shore. Does that buoy give direction to aircraft on takeoff and landing?
- A:** As stated in the WLUP, the buoy provides guidance to aircraft while on the lake surface, to include taxiing and surface operations during takeoff and landing.