

**Department of State Lands**

**Division 141-088**

**Restrictions for State-Owned Property at the Sandy River Delta in Multnomah County**

Need for the Rule

The Department of State Lands oversees the beds and banks of the Sandy River, as well as approximately 50 acres of natural area adjacent to the Sandy River Delta, a 1,500-acre U.S. Forest Service natural area extensively used for recreation.

For more than a decade, this area has been used for long-term camping by people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The Department works with the U.S. Forest Service, the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office Homeless Outreach and Programs Engagement (HOPE) Team, METRO regional government, and other partners to reduce impacts of long-term camping, with an emphasis on connecting people with services and housing.

The Department and partners are receiving increased reports of vehicles being driven and parked on Oregon-owned lands, and of firearms being discharged. Concerns with these uses include:

- Firearm discharge puts people using the natural area at risk. Thick brush reduces visibility past 100 yards in most places. In addition, Troutdale Airport is directly across the river and aircraft frequently fly directly overhead.
- Driving and parking in the natural area creates safety and health risks. Since trails are unlit and for pedestrian use only, the use of vehicles on them increases the risk and likelihood of injury. Fire risk is also increased when vehicles access the natural area as the heat from the engine and exhaust can ignite dry brush. The area has no maintained roads, and therefore vehicles park over brush.
- Additionally, vehicles leak fuel, oil, and other toxic liquids, and introduce exhaust, affecting both human and environmental health. They can damage vegetation, create rutted trails, and increase runoff and soil erosion through soil compaction, both of which contribute to the degradation of water quality.

On August 1, 2023, the Department enacted emergency restrictions on use of vehicles and firearms on Oregon-owned lands at Sandy River Delta to address the health, safety, and environmental hazards created by driving vehicles and discharging firearms in the natural area.

The Department is undertaking the rulemaking process to explore permanently restricting vehicle use and discharge of firearms. Sandy River Delta partners support both the emergency restrictions and the permanent restrictions through rulemaking.