

**NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT (EXCERPT)**  
**Act 451 of 1994**

**PART 351**  
**WILDERNESS AND NATURAL AREAS**

**324.35101 Definitions.**

Sec. 35101. As used in this part:

(a) "Natural area" means a tract of state land or water under control of the department and dedicated and regulated by the department pursuant to this part which:

(i) Has retained or reestablished its natural character, or has unusual flora and fauna or biotic, geologic, scenic, or other similar features of educational or scientific value, but it need not be undisturbed.

(ii) Has been identified and verified through research and study by qualified observers.

(iii) May be coextensive with or part of a wilderness area or wild area.

(b) "Wild area" means a tract of undeveloped state land or water under control of the department and dedicated and regulated by the department pursuant to this part which:

(i) Is less than 3,000 acres of state land.

(ii) Has outstanding opportunities for personal exploration, challenge, or contact with natural features of the landscape and its biological community.

(iii) Possesses 1 or more of the characteristics of a wilderness area.

(c) "Wilderness area" means a tract of undeveloped state land or water under control of the department and dedicated and regulated by the department pursuant to this part which:

(i) Has 3,000 or more acres of state land or is an island of any size.

(ii) Generally appears to have been affected primarily by forces of nature with the imprint of the work of humans substantially unnoticeable.

(iii) Has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

(iv) Contains ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, scenic, or natural history value.

**History:** Add. 1995, Act 59, Imd. Eff. May 24, 1995;—Am. 1996, Act 290, Imd. Eff. June 19, 1996.

**Popular name:** Act 451

**324.35102 Wilderness, wild, and natural areas; duty of department to identify, dedicate, and administer.**

Sec. 35102. The department shall identify for dedication, dedicate, and administer wilderness areas, wild areas, and natural areas in accordance with this part. The department shall enlist the voluntary cooperation and support of interested citizens and conservation groups.

**History:** Add. 1995, Act 59, Imd. Eff. May 24, 1995.

**Popular name:** Act 451

**324.35103 Review of state land; identification of certain tracts; determination of dedication; proposed alteration or withdrawal of previously dedicated areas; filing proposals; procedure for making dedication or denying proposal; exchange of dedicated land.**

Sec. 35103. (1) The department shall annually review all state land under its control and identify those tracts that in its judgment best exhibit the characteristics of a wilderness area, wild area, or natural area. The department shall determine which land in its judgment is most suitable for dedication as wilderness areas, wild areas, or natural areas. The department shall administer the proposed land so as to protect its natural values.

(2) A citizen may propose to the department land that in his or her judgment exhibits the characteristics of a wilderness area, wild area, or natural area and is suitable for dedication by the department as such or may propose the alteration or withdrawal of previously dedicated areas. Land under control of the department that has been dedicated or designated before August 3, 1972 as a natural area, nature study area, preserve, natural reservation, wilderness, or wilderness study area shall be considered by the department and, if eligible, proposed for dedication. The proposals of the department shall be filed with both houses of the legislature.

(3) Within 90 days after land is proposed in accordance with subsections (1) or (2), the department shall make the

dedication or issue a written statement of its principal reasons for denying the proposal. The department shall dedicate a wilderness area, wild area, or natural area, or alter or withdraw the dedication, by promulgating a rule. The department shall hold a public hearing relative to the dedication in the county where the land to be dedicated is located before a rule making the dedication may be promulgated. Not more than 10% of state land under the control of the department shall be dedicated pursuant to this subsection. All persons who have notified the department in writing during a calendar year of their interest in dedication of areas under this part shall be furnished by the department with a notice of all areas pending dedication or alteration or withdrawal from dedication during that calendar year.

(4) The department may exchange dedicated land for the purpose of acquiring other land that, in its judgment, is more suitable for the purposes of this part.

**History:** Add. 1995, Act 59, Imd. Eff. May 24, 1995;—Am. 1996, Act 290, Imd. Eff. June 19, 1996.

**Popular name:** Act 451

### **324.35104 Proximity of wild and natural areas to certain urban centers; designation of private land or land controlled by other governmental units.**

Sec. 35104. (1) The department shall attempt to provide, to the extent possible, wild areas and natural areas in relative proximity to urban centers of more than 100,000 population.

(2) Private land or land under the control of other governmental units may be designated by the department in the same way as a wilderness area, wild area, or natural area and administered by the department under a cooperative agreement between the owner and the department.

**History:** Add. 1995, Act 59, Imd. Eff. May 24, 1995.

**Popular name:** Act 451

### **324.35105 Prohibited activities; easement.**

Sec. 35105. (1) The following are prohibited on state land in a wilderness area, wild area, or natural area, or on state land proposed by the department for dedication in 1 of these categories during the 90 days a dedication is pending pursuant to section 35103:

(a) Removing, cutting, picking, or otherwise altering vegetation, except as necessary for appropriate public access, the preservation or restoration of a plant or wildlife species, or the documentation of scientific values and with written consent of the department.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (2), granting an easement for any purpose.

(c) Exploration for or extraction of minerals.

(d) A commercial enterprise, utility or permanent road.

(e) A temporary road, landing of aircraft, use of motor vehicles, motorboats, or other form of mechanical transport, or any structure or installation, except as necessary to meet minimum emergency requirements for administration as a wilderness area, wild area, or natural area by the department.

(f) Motorized equipment, except if the department approves its use for management purposes or conservation practices.

(2) If a right-of-way or an easement for ingress and egress was granted on land prior to the land's designation as a wilderness area, wild area, or natural area, upon request, the department may grant an easement along the route of the existing right-of-way or easement for the installation and maintenance of utilities for gas, electric, telephone, and cable services. In granting an easement under this section, the department shall require conditions necessary to protect the wilderness area, wild area, or natural area.

**History:** Add. 1995, Act 59, Imd. Eff. May 24, 1995;—Am. 1996, Act 290, Imd. Eff. June 19, 1996.

**Popular name:** Act 451

### **324.35106 Landing aircraft or operating mechanical transport in wilderness, wild, or natural area.**

Sec. 35106. A person who lands an aircraft or operates a motor vehicle, motorboat, or other form of mechanical transport in a wilderness area, wild area, or natural area without the express written consent of the department is guilty of a misdemeanor.

**History:** Add. 1995, Act 59, Imd. Eff. May 24, 1995.

**Popular name:** Act 451

### **324.35107 Maintenance or restoration of wilderness, wild, or natural area.**

Sec. 35107. (1) State land in a wilderness area, wild area, or natural area shall be maintained or restored so as to

preserve its natural values in a manner compatible with this part.

(2) Grasslands, forested lands, swamps, marshes, bogs, rock outcrops, beaches, and wholly enclosed waters of this state that are an integral part of a wilderness area, wild area, or natural area shall be included within and administered as a part of the area.

**History:** Add. 1995, Act 59, Imd. Eff. May 24, 1995.

**Popular name:** Act 451

### **324.35108 Posting signs; contents.**

Sec. 35108. The department shall post signs in appropriate locations along the borders of a wilderness area, wild area, or natural area. The signs shall give notice of the area's dedication and may state those activities that are prohibited under section 35105 and those activities that are punishable as a misdemeanor pursuant to section 35106.

**History:** Add. 1995, Act 59, Imd. Eff. May 24, 1995;—Am. 1996, Act 290, Imd. Eff. June 19, 1996.

**Popular name:** Act 451

### **324.35109 Acquisition of land.**

Sec. 35109. The department may acquire land through purchase, gift, or bequest for inclusion in a wilderness area, wild area, or natural area.

**History:** Add. 1995, Act 59, Imd. Eff. May 24, 1995.

**Popular name:** Act 451

### **324.35110 Taxation; audit of assessments; appropriation.**

Sec. 35110. The local taxing authority is entitled to collect from the state a tax on a wilderness, wild, or natural area within its jurisdiction at its ad valorem tax rate or \$2.00 per acre, whichever is less. The department shall audit the assessments of wilderness, wild, or natural areas regularly to ensure that the properties are assessed in the same ratio as similar properties in private ownership. The legislature shall appropriate from the general fund for payments under this section.

**History:** Add. 1995, Act 59, Imd. Eff. May 24, 1995.

**Popular name:** Act 451

### **324.35111 Saving clause.**

Sec. 35111. (1) Nothing in this part affects or diminishes any right acquired or vested before August 3, 1972.

(2) Nothing in this part alters the status of land dedicated by the commission before August 3, 1972 until dedicated pursuant to section 35103, except that tax reverted lands are subject to section 35110. Purchased land dedicated by the commission before August 3, 1972 is subject to ad valorem taxes if dedicated pursuant to section 35103.

**History:** Add. 1995, Act 59, Imd. Eff. May 24, 1995.

**Popular name:** Act 451

## Table Of Contents

324.35101	Definitions.	1
324.35102	Wilderness, wild, and natural areas; duty of department to identify, dedicate, and administer.	1
324.35103	Review of state land; identification of certain tracts; determination of dedication; proposed alteration or withdrawal of previously dedicated areas; filing proposals; procedure for making dedication or denying proposal; exchange of dedicated land.	2
324.35104	Proximity of wild and natural areas to certain urban centers; designation of private land or land controlled by other governmental units.	2
324.35105	Prohibited activities; easement.	2
324.35106	Landing aircraft or operating mechanical transport in wilderness, wild, or natural area.	2
324.35107	Maintenance or restoration of wilderness, wild, or natural area.	3
324.35108	Posting signs; contents.	3
324.35109	Acquisition of land.	3
324.35110	Taxation; audit of assessments; appropriation.	3
324.35111	Saving clause.	3