


COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
PENNSYLVANIA GAME COMMISSION
HARRISBURG

November 4, 2025

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE 60.20

SUBJECT: Use of Powered Mobility Devices on State Game Lands by Persons with Disabilities; Procedure for Addressing Accessibility Issues Experienced in the Field; Assigned Responsibility to Certain PGC Employees

TO: All Pennsylvania Game Commission Employees

FROM: Stephen P. Smith
Executive Director 

PURPOSE

This policy is to promote public access to Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) State Game Lands (SGL) in furtherance of the PGC's mission to manage and protect wildlife and their habitats while promoting hunting and trapping for current and future generations and in accordance with the federal Department of Justice regulations at 28 CFR Part 35.

It is the policy of the PGC to issue permits for supplemental disabled access unless circumstances or conditions merit access restrictions consistent with this policy.

The policy explains how individuals with mobility disabilities may seek authorization to operate a powered mobility device on routes other than designated routes approved by the Executive Director under § 135.51 (Designated routes open to mobility devices and motor vehicles). This policy shall be made available to the public via the PGC's website and attached to all initial letters to Disabled Person Access Permit holders that indicates approval of a Disabled Person Access Permit-State Game Lands.

DEFINITIONS

Accessibility Coordinator: each Land Management Supervisor (LMS) for a given Region Office who is responsible for reviewing special permit applications for supplemental access for mobility devices on PGC lands. The Accessibility Coordinator will facilitate the PGC's obligations under the ADA in each Region.

Designated Routes: routes approved by the Executive Director under § 135.51.

Disability: an individual's physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the individual's major life activities.

Disabled Persons Access Permit: the permit found at 58 Pa. Code § 147.1023.

Grievance Officer: the Director of the Bureau of Wildlife Habitat Management, or their designee, who is responsible for processing complaints relating to Mobility Devices, accessibility, or Special Use Permits seeking supplemental access received by the Accessibility Coordinators consistent with this policy.

Mobility Device: a device, other than a Wheelchair, powered by a battery, fuel, or other engine, that is used by persons with a mobility disability for the purpose of locomotion. The term includes golf carts, Segway®, and any other mobility device designed to operate in areas without defined pedestrian routes, regardless of whether it is designed primarily for use by persons with a mobility disability.

PLACES WHERE MOBILITY DEVICES ARE AUTHORIZED

Mobility Devices are authorized:

1. On routes within SGLs that are open to vehicle travel;
2. On designated routes, in accordance with Title 58 Part III, §§ 135.51-135.55;
3. On PGC administrative roads requested by a disabled permittee under the grant of a Special Use Permit.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE FOR PERMITTING MOBILITY DEVICE ACCESS

The PGC shall grant to Disabled Person Access Permit holders, through a Special Use Permit, Mobility Device access to travel and operate upon routes in State Game Lands other than Designated Routes, including PGC administrative roads, unless road conditions, weather, or other Assessment Criteria would pose a conflict with the safe and reasonable operation of the Mobility Device. Access shall not be unreasonably withheld by the PGC.

Application Process:

1. Applicants must submit a completed and signed State Game Lands Special Use Permit-Request to the PGC. Applications are available online, at the PGC Headquarters, or at any PGC Regional Office, and also included in letters to Disabled Person Access Permit holders.
2. Completed applications and any supporting materials will be routed to attention of the Accessibility Coordinator (LMS) at the PGC Regional Office with management responsibility for the administrative road(s) for which Mobility Device access is sought.

3. The Accessibility Coordinator will review each application, apply the Assessment Criteria, and will issue a Special Use Permit for the Mobility Device consistent with this SOP.

Within thirty (30) days of receipt of a completed application, the Accessibility Coordinator will notify the applicant, in writing, of the outcome of the review in the form attached to this SOP. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant with an explanation and instructions on how to correct and/or reapply.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The Accessibility Coordinator shall consider:

- i. In its current condition, is the road(s) suitable for travel by the Mobility Device;
- ii. In its current condition, can the road(s) sustain the expected impacts of travel by the Mobility Device;
- iii. Impact of operation of the Mobility Device upon wildlife and wildlife habitat, including threatened/endangered species or species of greatest conservation need, and critical, rare, and unique habitat types present on the SGL;
- iv. The potential for conflict with other SGL users, contractors, or partners / Special Use Permit holders that will be using the access point(s) and road(s) during the requested timeframe;
- v. The potential for conflict with other PGC wildlife management or habitat management activities, such as prescribed fire, bridge maintenance, or scientific wildlife research studies.
- vi. Whether the use of the road creates a substantial risk of serious harm to environmental, natural or cultural resources in proximity to the roadway, or poses a conflict with federal land management laws or regulations.

OTHER RESTRICTIONS

The PGC reserves the right to close specific areas and/or roads or to further restrict the use of Mobility Devices in specific areas or on certain roads due to prevailing weather and/or road conditions. Such restrictions or closures will be prominently posted in the field, via PGC online resources (*i.e.*, website and social media), and upon request.

ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES AND RESOLUTIONS

The relevant Accessibility Coordinator will act as the primary point of contact with any disabled hunter who needs to report and resolve accessibility issues experienced in the field. Disabled hunters shall be notified of this designation and provided the phone number to utilize to make

said reports with the letters sent with an Elk tag and a Disabled Persons Access Permit. Accessibility Coordinators shall report all disability and accessibility complaints, issues, and resolutions on a monthly basis to the PGC Grievance Officer (Director of BWHM).

To ensure equal applicability and access across the Commonwealth under the PGC's disabled access policy, the PGC Grievance Officer (Director of BWHM) shall receive, review, and assess in a timely manner all disability and accessibility complaints, issues, and resolutions provided by the Accessibility Coordinators.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Persons whose application(s) for a Special Use Permit is denied will have the right to seek reconsideration by writing to the PGC Grievance Officer (Director of BWHM) at 2001 Elmerton Avenue, Harrisburg, PA 17110. The Grievance Officer will review each case, including relevant documentation, and will notify the applicant, in writing, of the outcome of the review. If the request for reconsideration is denied, the applicant will be advised of their rights to seek an Administrative Hearing pursuant to 58 P.S. §§ 145.1 *et seq.*