

CHAPTER 61-33 SOVEREIGN LAND MANAGEMENT

61-33-01. Definitions.

As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

1. "Board" means the sovereign lands advisory board.
2. "Board of university and school lands" means that entity created by section 15-01-01.
3. "Sovereign lands" means those areas, including beds and islands, lying within the ordinary high watermark of navigable lakes and streams. Lands established to be riparian accretion or reliction lands pursuant to section 47-06-05 are considered to be above the ordinary high watermark and are not sovereign lands.
4. "State engineer" means the person appointed by the state water commission pursuant to section 61-03-01.

61-33-02. Administration of sovereign lands.

All sovereign lands of the state must be administered by the state engineer and the board of university and school lands subject to the provisions of this chapter. Lands managed pursuant to this chapter are not subject to leasing provisions found elsewhere in this code.

61-33-03. Transfer of possessory interests in real property.

All possessory interests now owned or that may be acquired except oil, gas, and related hydrocarbons, in the sovereign lands of the state owned or controlled by the state or any of its officers, departments, or the Bank of North Dakota, together with any future increments, are transferred to the state of North Dakota, acting by and through the state engineer. All such possessory interests in oil, gas, and related hydrocarbons in the sovereign lands of the state are transferred to the state of North Dakota, acting by and through the board of university and school lands. These transfers are self-executing. No evidence other than the provisions of this chapter is required to establish the fact of transfer of title to the state of North Dakota, acting by and through the state engineer and board of university and school lands. Proper and sufficient delivery of all title documents is conclusively presumed.

61-33-04. Existing contracts and encumbrances recognized.

The transfers made by this chapter are subject to all existing contracts, rights, easements, and encumbrances made or sanctioned by the state or any of its officers or departments.

61-33-05. Duties and powers of the state engineer.

The state engineer shall manage, operate, and supervise all properties transferred to it by this chapter; may enter into any agreements regarding such property; may enforce all rights of the owner in its own name; may issue and enforce administrative orders and recover the cost of the enforcement from the party against which enforcement is sought; and may make and execute all instruments of release or conveyance as may be required pursuant to agreements made with respect to such assets, whether such agreements were made heretofore, or are made hereafter. The state engineer may enter agreements with the game and fish department or other law enforcement entities to enforce this chapter and rules adopted under this chapter.

61-33-06. Duties and powers of the board of university and school lands.

The board of university and school lands shall manage, operate, and supervise all properties transferred to it by this chapter; may enter into any agreements regarding such property; may enforce all subsurface rights of the owner in its own name; and may make and execute all instruments of release or conveyance as may be required pursuant to agreements made with respect to such assets, whether such agreements were made heretofore, or are made hereafter.

61-33-07. Deposit of income.

All income derived from the lease and management of the lands acquired by the state engineer and board of university and school lands pursuant to this chapter and not belonging to other trust funds must be deposited in the strategic investment and improvements fund.

61-33-08. Advisory board - Responsibilities.

There is created a sovereign lands advisory board. The board's responsibility is to advise the state engineer and the board of university and school lands on general policies as well as specific projects, programs, and uses regarding sovereign lands. The board, being solely advisory, has no authority to require the state engineer or the board of university and school lands to implement or otherwise accept the board's recommendations.

61-33-09. Members of the board - Organization - Meetings.

1. The board consists of the manager of the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District, the state engineer, the commissioner of university and school lands, the director of the parks and recreation department, the director of the game and fish department, and the state health officer, or their representatives.
2. The state engineer is the board's secretary.
3. The board shall meet at least once a year or at the call of the state engineer or two or more members of the board. The board shall meet at the office of the state engineer or at any other place decided upon by the board.
4. The board may adopt rules to govern its activities.

61-33-10. Penalty.

A person who violates this chapter or any rule implementing this chapter is guilty of a class B misdemeanor unless a lesser penalty is indicated. A civil penalty may be imposed by a court in a civil proceeding or by the state engineer through an adjudicative proceeding pursuant to chapter 28-32. The assessment of a civil penalty does not preclude the imposition of other sanctions authorized by law, this chapter, or rules adopted under this chapter. The state engineer may bring a civil action to recover damages resulting from violations and may also recover any costs incurred.