

**§1858. Location of public reserved lands**

**1. Public reserved lands.** In every township or plantation existing on October 3, 1973 or organized after that date there must be reserved, as the Legislature directs, 1,000 acres of land, and in the same proportion in all tracts less than a township, for the exclusive benefit of the State. This land must be of average quality, situation and value as to timber and minerals as compared to other land in the township or plantation. Title to these reserved public lots is in the State. All future earnings attributable to those public lots belong to the State to be used for the management and preservation of the public lots as state assets.

[PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

**2. Location by agreement.** In townships or tracts sold and not incorporated, the public reserved lots may be selected and located by the commissioner and the proprietors by a written agreement describing the reserved lands by metes and bounds, signed by the parties and recorded in the commissioner's office. The plan or outline of the lands selected must be:

A. Entered on the plan of the township or tract in the commissioner's office; and [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

B. Recorded in the registry of deeds in the county in which the township or tract is located. [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]  
[PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

**3. Location without agreement.** When the commissioner and the proprietors of a tract or township described in subsection 1 can not agree on the location of the public reserved lands, the commissioner may petition the Superior Court in the county where the land lies to appoint a committee of 3 disinterested persons. The court shall issue a warrant under the seal of the court to those persons requiring them to locate the public reserved lot or lots in the township or tract as soon as possible. The public reserved lot or lots must be of average quality compared to other lands in the tract or township.

A. Before taking any action, the members of the committee formed under this subsection must be sworn before a dedimus justice. A certificate of the swearing must be endorsed on the court's warrant. [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

B. At least 30 days before their first meeting, the members of the committee shall announce their appointment and the time and place of their meeting to perform their duties by:

(1) Publishing a notice in a newspaper of general circulation in the State, to be designated by the court; and

(2) If ordered by the court to do so, posting written notification in 2 or more public places in the same plantation or town. [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

C. The members of the committee shall make a signed return of the court's warrant and their activity under it to the Superior Court when they have completed their service. Upon acceptance by the court and after being recorded in the registry of deeds in the county or registry district where the land is located, within 6 months, the public reserved lot or lots must be legally assigned and located. [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

D. In a proceeding for the location of public reserved lots under this subsection, an appeal may be taken to the Law Court as in other actions. [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

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**4. Subdivided lands.** When portions or lots are reserved for public uses in a tract of land to be divided, they must first be set out, of an average quality and situation, and a return made of that reserved land to the commissioner's office, with a description of its quality and location. The commissioner's return of partition, accepted and recorded as provided, is a valid location of the reserved lands.

[PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

**5. Incorporation into town; location.** When, in the grant of any townships or parts of townships, certain portions are reserved for public uses and those portions have not been located in severalty before the townships or parts are incorporated into a town, the Superior Court in the county where the land lies, on application of the assessors of the town, may appoint a committee of 3 disinterested persons of the county. The court shall issue a warrant under seal of the court to those persons requiring them to locate the reserved portion according to the terms of the grant as soon as possible. If the use or purpose of the reservation is prescribed in the grant, they shall set off and locate the lots accordingly.

A. Before taking action under the warrant, the members of a committee formed under this section must be sworn to the faithful discharge of the duty assigned them. A certificate of the swearing must be endorsed on the court's warrant. [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

B. At least 30 days before locating the reserved portions, the members of the committee shall announce their appointment and the time and place of their meeting to perform their duties by publishing a notice in a newspaper of general circulation in the State, to be designated by the court, and by posting written notices in 2 or more public places in the same town. [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

C. The members of the committee shall make a return of the court's warrant and their activity under it to the Superior Court when they have completed their duties. Upon acceptance by the court and after being recorded in the registry of deeds in the county or registry district where the land is located, within 6 months, the reserved portions must be legally assigned and located. [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

[PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

**6. Criteria for location.** Whenever land reserved for public use is located under this subchapter and the commissioner makes the return of partition under subsection 4, the determination as to what lands are of average quality, situation and value as compared with the other lands in the township must include, but may not be limited to, appropriate consideration of the following criteria:

A. Contiguity to other public lands; [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

B. Public recreation needs; [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

C. Accessibility to roads, highways and other transportation; [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

D. Proximity to centers of population; [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

E. Needs of state agencies; [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

F. Scenic quality; [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

G. Value as to minerals; [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

H. Value as to timber; [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

I. The preservation of significant natural, recreation and historic resources, including wildlife habitat and other areas critical to the ecology of the State; and [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

J. The provisions of any applicable comprehensive or long-range management plans for the use of those public reserved lands. [PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

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**7. Application.** Nothing in this section may be construed to require the location of unlocated public reserved lands. The commissioner shall determine the desirability of locating unlocated public reserved lands in the preparation and maintenance of the management plans for the public reserved lands. In those townships in which public reserved lands remain unlocated, the commissioner shall take appropriate steps to ensure that the State receives its proportionate share of common income and that the lands are not subjected to waste by the other cotenants.

[PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).]

## SECTION HISTORY

PL 1997, c. 678, §13 (NEW).

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