

Tina Cunning

Tina grew up in Alaska and received a BS in Biological Sciences from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. She worked as a biologist with Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Juneau, Homer, Glennallen, Nome, and Anchorage, in a wide range of capacities; e.g., coordinated with Forest Service on Tongass land management planning and permits, project leader on pre-oil Kachemak Bay littoral zone studies, field work on predator-prey studies. The state appointed Tina to head up the state's involvement in ANILCA implementation in 1981, upon which she established the state's ANILCA team to coordinate with federal agencies during development of management plans for the conservation system units. She served as the Commissioner's representative on the Alaska Land Use Council Staff Committee and oversaw the Department of Fish and Game's role in ANILCA and other federal/state resource matters until retirement in 2010. During that time, she also served on various national committees of federal and state agencies seeking resolution to federal management issues involving wilderness, fish and wildlife, and waters.

Because of her experience and commitment to resolving federal-state resource and land issues, she worked under an intergovernmental personnel agreement for a number of years for US Fish and Wildlife Service to develop policies and regulations to implement the Refuge Improvement Act of 1997, particularly to recognize the unique provisions of ANILCA for Alaska refuges. She served on a Wilderness management cooperative effort with the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service that developed a national management agreement with all 50 states and initiated joint wilderness training for administrators. She received numerous awards from other states and organizations for her work on resolving issues involving public uses of fish, wildlife, water, and federal lands.

Tina initiated ANILCA training for the public and agencies in the early 1990s and frequently served as an ANILCA trainer for Institute of the North and for Department of the Interior's Alaska University, including joint training with an Alaska DOI solicitor in Washington DC for Interior officials. In the 2000s, she coordinated with the federal subsistence program to develop a public presentation to clarify federal and state laws regarding subsistence under ANILCA, which significantly reduced misunderstandings and conflicts. In 2010, the Governor of Alaska awarded Tina the first Governor's Conservationist of the Year award for her thirty years of dedication to implementation of the special provisions of ANILCA.

Since retiring, she volunteers with conservation organizations that provide programs for youth and women in the out-of-doors. She continues to assist as an instructor for DOI University and ION seminars, as well as other organizations, plus provides assistance in locating Congressional intent in the legislative history of ANILCA and advises in resolution of implementation issues.

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