

Alaska Lands Update

monthly updates on Federal management actions for the people of Alaska

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
Photo Credit: USFWS

Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas, State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources
3700 Airport Way Fairbanks, AK 99709

Final EIS for Yukon Flats/Doyon Land Exchange

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a proposed land exchange between the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge and Doyon Native Corporation. The environmental evaluation included four alternatives, with the final preferred alternative as the no action alternative (no land exchange). Fish and Wildlife Service received over 100,000 public comments, most of which were opposed to the exchange for conservation reasons.

The original proposed action included provisions for an equal exchange of land based on fair market appraisals, while the alternatives were variations on the proposed action. Due to the lack of public support, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service decided to not go through with the exchange. The EIS can be viewed on the Yukon Flats Land Exchange [website](#).

(Yukon Flats continued on page 3)

Proposed Withdrawal Extension

Juneau Falls Recreation Area

On February 23, 2010, the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service filed an application to extend Public Land Order Number 6888 for an additional 20-year period. The original Public Land Order withdrew approximately 320 acres of National Forest System land, located in the Chugach National Forest, from surface entry and mining (not mineral leasing laws) to protect recreational values associated with Juneau Falls Recreation Area. The

original withdrawal will expire on October 7, 2011. Comments on this extension or requests for public meetings should be submitted by May 24, 2010 to:

BLM Alaska State Office, Alaska State Director, 222 West 7th Avenue, No. 13, Anchorage, AK 99513-7504.

More information can also be found at the office location above.

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The Importance of Participation

Notes from the Executive Director, Stan Leaphart

A quick look at this newsletter will give the reader an idea of the number of draft management plans, environmental documents and proposed regulations affecting the federal public lands in Alaska that are currently undergoing review. While the process for preparing and implementing these proposals may vary, every federal land management agency provides the opportunity for public participation at each stage of the process. It is important that the public take advantage of those opportunities.

You can do this in a number of ways –

- Attend a public meeting or workshop to learn about a proposed action or plans and to make your views and concerns known.
- If there are no meetings or workshops planned for your community or area, ask the agency to schedule one.
- Talk to agency staff. They can answer questions or clarify issues.
- Take some time to review the draft plan or proposed regulations and understand how your use of an area might be affected.
- Submit written comments if you can. This is the most time consuming, but most effective way to provide input.

With some 60% of the lands in this state under federal management, decisions on how these lands and the resources they contain are managed have significant impacts on Alaskans. For this reason, the Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas strongly encourages everyone to take advantage of every opportunity to participate in the management decisions affecting federal public lands in Alaska. It does make a difference and it is important.

Subsistence Resource Commissions to Meet

The Cape Krusenstern National Monument and Kobuk Valley National Park Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) will meet on Monday, April 19, 2010 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the National Park Service Northwest Arctic Heritage Center in Kotzebue. The purpose of the meeting is to continue developing recommendations for the subsistence hunting program and other subsistence issues. Some items on the proposed agenda include park staff reports, a Federal Subsistence Board update, an Alaska Board of Game update, SRC member reports, and a SRC work/training session. Time will be allotted for public comments. For more information, contact George Helfrich or

Willie Goodwin at 907-442-3890 or Clarence Summers at 907-644-3603. Written comments can be submitted to P.O. Box 1029, Kotzebue, AK 99752.

Gates of the Arctic National Park SRC will also be meeting to discuss similar issues. This meeting will be on Wednesday, April 28, 2010, from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. at the Inupiat Heritage Center in Barrow. A two-hour dinner break is planned from 5 – 7 p.m. Contact Dave Krupa (907- 455-0631) or Clarence Summers (907-644-3603) for more information. Written comments can be submitted to 4175 Geist Road Fairbanks, AK 99703.

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For more information, visit our website:

<http://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/cacfa/index.htm>

AS 41.37.160 The Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Management Areas in Alaska is established in the department [Natural Resources]. In the exercise of its responsibilities, the commission shall consider the views of citizens of the state and officials of the state.

(Yukon Flats continued from page 1)

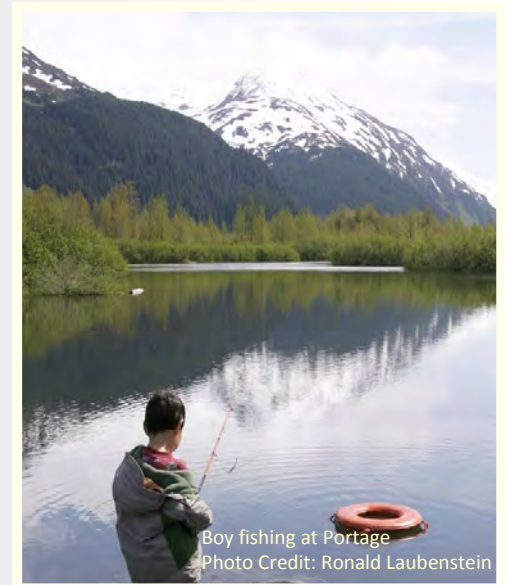
Any comments on the final EIS should be submitted prior to April 12, 2010. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service requests specific comments that address the merits of the alternatives and adequacy of the environmental analysis. Written comments should be submitted by mail to:

Laura Greffenius
EIS project Coordinator
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1011 East Tudor Road, MS-231
Anchorage, AK 99503

Electronically:
yukonflats_planning@fws.gov

Funds Available to Alaska for Fish and Wildlife Conservation Projects

The State of Alaska will receive more than \$20 million in Wildlife Restoration and Hunter Education funding and \$19.4 million in Sport Fish Restoration funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These funds come from excise taxes and import duties on sporting firearms, ammunition, archery equipment, sport fishing equipment, electric outboard motors and fuel taxes from motorboats and small engines. This money is to be used for wildlife and habitat research, conservation, management, education and access and facility projects for fishing.



Boy fishing at Portage
Photo Credit: Ronald Laubenstein

Juneau Roundtable on Forest Service Planning Rule



Anan Wildlife Observatory
Tongass National Forest
Photo Credit: Anan Interpretive Staff

The USDA Forest Service is holding two roundtable sessions in Juneau to give the public an opportunity to provide input on the new planning rule. The planning rule is used as a guide for development of individual forest plans. It attempts to answer broad questions such as what they are trying to do, what should be studied and considered, and how they will know if they are doing what they wanted. Individual forests will then use this planning rule to create land management plans specific to that unit.

In 2009, the U.S. District Court overturned the 2008 National Forest Management Act Planning Rule because the rule promulgation failed to comply with procedures outlined in the National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act. In the interim, the U.S. Forest Service proclaimed reinstatement of the 2000 rule, which allowed for use of the 1982 procedures for revisions and amendments. The amended 2000 rule was reinstated December 18, 2009.

Also in 2009, following the Court decision, the U.S. Forest Service announced intent to revise the planning rule and prepare an environmental impact statement for a new rule. The upcoming roundtable in Juneau is part of this effort to develop a new rule with extensive stakeholder and public involvement. To do this, they are hosting three national roundtable discussions, a science forum and roundtables in every Forest Service region. The Juneau sessions will be on April 13, from 2-5 pm and 6-8 pm at Centennial Hall, Ballroom 1. The afternoon session is designed for state, local and tribal government officials and industry and conservation organization representatives. The evening session is designed for the general public. To attend in person or via web/teleconference, contact Jan Caulfield by April 5 at janc@gei.net or 907-523-4610.

National Wildlife Refuge Land Exchange

Izembek NWR, Alaska Maritime NWR, King Cove Corp. & the State

As reported in the previous issue, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for a proposed land exchange between the State of Alaska, King Cove Coporation, Izembek National Wildlife Refuge and Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. The purpose is to construct a single-lane road between King Cove and Cold Bay, Alaska. This exchange would add approximately 56,400 acres to the Alaska Peninsula and Izembek National Wildlife refuges, while transferring 1600 acres on Sikinak Island and another 206 acre corridor to the State. The corridor would provide land for road construction.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is currently in the scoping phase of the process and has announced dates and times of additional public scoping meetings. The dates and times are weather dependent.

Please check with the Aleutians East Borough for updates.

Monday, April 26 – Sand Point, City Chamber Room @ 3 pm

Tuesday, April 27 – Nelson Lagoon, Community Center, mid-afternoon

Wednesday, April 28 – Cold Bay, Community Center @ 7 pm

Thursday, April 29 – False Pass, Community Center, mid-afternoon

Friday, April 30 – King Cove, Multi-Purpose Building @ 2 pm



Shishaldin Volcanom, Izembek National Wildlife Refuge
Photo Credit: Cyrus Read

BLM Resource Advisory Council Nominations Requested

The U.S. Department of Interior and Bureau of Land Management are calling for nominations for the Resource Advisory Council (RAC) in Alaska. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act requires establishment of 10-15 member, citizen based advisory groups to help with planning issues related to management of BLM lands. The membership must be balanced and representative of various interests and to assure this balance, members are selected to represent one of three categories. The Alaska RAC categories include Energy/Minerals (2 vacancies), Conservation/Dispersed Recreation (2 vacancies) and Alaskan Native Groups (1 vacancy). Nominations for these vacancies are due by May 10, 2010.

Nominees must live in Alaska and will be evaluated based on education, training, experience, knowledge of the geographic area of the RAC, and commitment to collaborative resource decision-making. Each nomination must include letters of reference from represented interests or organizations, a completed background information nomination form and additional information describing qualifications.

Send nominations to Ruth McCoard, Alaska State Office, BLM, 222 West 7th Avenue, #13, Anchorage, Alaska 99513, 907-271-3322.

Agency Websites:

National Park Service

<http://www.nps.gov/state/ak/index.htm>

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

<http://alaska.fws.gov/>

U.S. Forest Service

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/>

Bureau of Land Management

<http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en.html>

Department of Interior

<http://www.doi.gov/>

National Marine Fisheries Service

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/>

Delta Wild and Scenic River Management Plan Revision

A draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Delta River Special Recreation Management Area Plan and a Land Use Plan Amendment to the East Alaska Resource Management Plan are now available for review. Decisions made in this plan and amendment will be incorporated into a revision of the 1983 Delta Wild and Scenic River (Delta WSR) Management Plan. This process is only considering recreational use and management within the river corridor since other use/resource decisions were made in the East Alaska Resource Management Plan (completed in 2007).

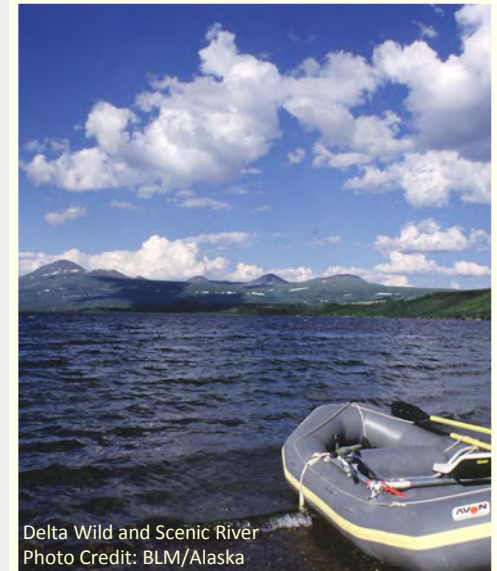
The Delta WSR was designated as a Special Recreation Management Area in the East Alaska Resource Management Plan. This requires an implementation plan be developed for the area. Also included in the East Alaska Re-

source Management Plan is a planning process called Benefits Based Management. This process divided the Delta WSR into four Recreation Management Zones. After additional information and guidance on the BBM process was developed, further review by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) found that changes were required, therefore requiring an amendment to the East Alaska Resource Management Plan.

As directed by the East Alaska Resource Management Plan, BLM staff used Benefits Based Management to help focus efforts on primary activities, experiences and benefits obtained by different user groups. Several Benefits Based Management meetings were also held to help determine potential issues and primary user groups in the area. The issues that were identified through

this process and during the public scoping period were subsequently analyzed in the draft EA.

To read the EA in its entirety, go to the [BLM website](#). The 30-day comment ends on April 22, 2010.



Delta Wild and Scenic River
Photo Credit: BLM/Alaska



Orca in Prince William Sound
Photo Credit: US Fish and Wildlife Service

Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council

The Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council will meet on April 30, 2010 in Anchorage. The meeting begins at 10 AM at the Restoration Office. Members of the public may participate via teleconference or in person. Call in to 1-800-315-6338 and use conference code 8205#.

Nabesna Off-Road Vehicle EIS

A draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will soon be released for Nabesna District Off Road Vehicle (ORV) use. The issuance of permits for ORV use on nine trails in the Nabesna District of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve was challenged in a lawsuit and as part of the settlement a draft EIS will be released by mid-May. After release of the draft, the public will have 60 days to comment. Public meetings are planned but dates are not set.

The draft EIS will contain five possible management options, including a no action alternatives and the NPS preferred alternative. The alternatives

deal with recreational ORV use, subsistence ORV use, trail improvements and possible closure of some, all, or none of the existing nine trails. Monitoring resource degradation is also included in some of the options.

To view a copy of the draft EIS, go to the park planning website (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov>), the Park website <http://www.nps.gov/wrst/parkmgmt/planning.htm> or send a request for a hard copy to:

Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve
Attn: Bruce Rogers
PO Box 439, Copper Center, AK 99573