

# Alaska Lands Update

monthly updates on Federal management actions for the people of Alaska

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

## Meet CACFA's New Executive Director, Sara Taylor

On July 31, CACFA's long-time Executive Director Stan Leaphart retired to the joys of Alaska living. After many years of dedication to developing a reputable and prosperous working relationship with federal land management agencies in Alaska, He is passing the baton.

At its August 8 & 9 meeting in Anchorage, the Commission voted to appoint Sara Taylor as its newest Executive Director. Sara has a B.S. in Environmental Sciences as well as a law degree. Throughout her studies, she interned and worked for six federal agencies as a field biologist, statistician and law clerk. Her work as a bird biologist with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service brought her to Alaska in 2003, and she immediately knew - Alaska was home. After officially moving to Alaska the following year, she joined the



Alaska Department of Natural Resources to work on federal land management issues with the State's ANILCA Program. Prior to her appointment as CACFA's director, she was working as a Large Project Coordinator in DNR's Office of Project Management and Permitting, focusing on federal land use planning and natural resource development projects in the Cook Inlet region. Sara is absolutely thrilled to join CACFA's staff and is already hard at work increasing the capabilities of the Commission to be an open and effective resource for all

Alaskans in their interactions with the federal government. Sara's office will be based in Palmer at the DNR Forestry building off Airport Road, while Karrie will continue staffing CACFA's Fairbanks office in the same location. Please stop in for a mug-up and meet our new director! ♦

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## Comment Deadline Reminders

- BLM has posted online the **Scoping Summary Report for Bering Sea-Western Interior RMP** and the **Community Scoping Meeting Summaries for the Central Yukon RMP**. These documents can be found online at: <http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/planning.html>; select the project title, then Documents and Reports;
- The **National Marine Fisheries Service** announced its intent to prepare an **EIS to analyze the environmental impacts of issuing Incidental Take Authorizations** pursuant to the Marine Mammal Protection Act for the taking of marine mammals incidental to human related activities in the waters of Cook Inlet, Alaska. Comments regarding the scoping and preparation of this EIS will be accepted until **December 29, 2014**. For more information visit the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) enter NOAA-NMFS-2014-0129 in the keyword search;
- The **National Park Service** is **proposing rulemaking prohibiting certain state-authorized hunting practices in National Preserves, amending subsistence provisions and altering the longstanding process by which closures are developed and implemented**. Among the proposals, new regulations would prohibit the take of coyotes and wolves during extended seasons, prohibit the taking of brown bears at state-permitted black bear bait stations, and prohibit the use of artificial light in taking black bears at den sites. **The proposed rulemaking was published in the Federal Register on September 4, 2014, and will be open for public comment through December 3, 2014**. For more information, see page 4 and/or visit <http://www.nps.gov/akso/management/regulations.cfm>.
- **Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas** will have its next meeting in Juneau, January 30 & 31, 2015. Meeting times, agenda items and public comment sessions will be posted on our website as the meeting approaches. The web address is: <http://>

## Governor Announces ANWR Boundary Fight

Governor Sean Parnell announced on October 17, 2014 that the State of Alaska is seeking priority conveyance of nearly 20,000 acres of land at the western boundary of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). He made the announcement to the Alaska Support Industry Alliance conference in Fairbanks.



USFWS, National Digital Library - Polar Bear resting, ANWR

“The federal government, through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, has been improperly drawing the western boundary of ANWR for some time. We will not sit back while they do this,” said Gov. Parnell.

“The Alaska Department of Natural Resources has confirmed the State’s position with a detailed on-the-ground analysis. Priority conveyance of this land that

is rightfully ours will bring 20,000 acres under State control on the eastern North Slope for oil and gas exploration. A few miles away from this area, we are seeing billions of dollars of investment at the Point Thomson Field.”

Alaska selected these lands, but the federal government later claimed them as part of ANWR. The State’s previously requested lands, as part of the Alaska Statehood Act and Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, are located between the Staines and Canning rivers.

“Our position is consistent with the U.S. Supreme Court’s definition of the refuge’s coastal boundary,” the governor told conference attendees. “So I say it’s now long past time for the federal government to convey these lands to Alaska so we can put them to use for Alaskans.”

DNR filed the State’s request for priority conveyance for uplands along the western boundary of ANWR with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

More information is available at:

[http://gov.alaska.gov/parnell\\_media/resources\\_files/DNR%20NEWS%20RELEASE-State%20asserts%20land%20claims%20at%20ANWR%20boundary.pdf](http://gov.alaska.gov/parnell_media/resources_files/DNR%20NEWS%20RELEASE-State%20asserts%20land%20claims%20at%20ANWR%20boundary.pdf) ♦

## 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 - Region 10, AK

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/r10/>

### Bureau of Land Management

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

### Department of the Interior

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

### National Marine Fisheries Service

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

## Temporary Closure of Sport Brown Bear Hunting

The Fish and Wildlife Service is implementing a temporary closure of sport hunting of brown bears on the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. The temporary closure is being implemented as a resource protection measure to ensure consistency with Refuge purposes. The temporary closure is effective at 12:01 a.m., September 1, 2014 through May 31, 2015.

For more information please visit the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge website at:

[http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Kenai/what\\_we\\_do/resource\\_management/proposed\\_temporary\\_closure\\_of\\_sport\\_brown\\_bear\\_hunting.html.html](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Kenai/what_we_do/resource_management/proposed_temporary_closure_of_sport_brown_bear_hunting.html.html). ♦



USFWS, National Digital Library - Brown Bear camouflaged in tundra

## Commission Members

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**Mark Fish**, Anchorage  
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**Susan Smith**, Chokosna (G)

**Frank Woods**, Dillingham (G)

(S) SENATE APPOINTMENT

(H) HOUSE APPOINTMENT

(G) GOVERNOR'S APPOINTMENT

## Commission Staff

**Sara Taylor**

Executive Director

[sara.taylor@alaska.gov](mailto:sara.taylor@alaska.gov)

**Karrie Improte**

Commission Assistant

907-451-2035

[karrie.improte@alaska.gov](mailto:karrie.improte@alaska.gov)

For more information, visit our website:

[www.dnr.alaska.gov/commis/cacfa](http://www.dnr.alaska.gov/commis/cacfa)

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.

## Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement on the Issuance of Take Authorizations in Cook Inlet, Alaska

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announces its intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to analyze the environmental impacts of issuing Incidental Take Authorizations (ITAs) pursuant to the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) for the taking of marine mammals incidental to anthropogenic activities in the waters of

USFWS, National Digital Library - Mountain Glacier, lower west side of Cook Inlet



Cook Inlet, Alaska. The Secretary of Commerce is permitted to allow, upon request, the incidental, but not intentional taking of small numbers of marine mammals by U.S. citizens who engage in a specified activity (other than commercial fishing) within a specified geographical region if certain findings are made and either regulations are issued or, if the taking is limited to harassment for a period of one year or less, a notice of proposed authorization is provided to the public for review. For the purposes of this EIS, NMFS intends to analyze the effects on the human environment of issuing authorizations for the incidental take of marine mammals from activities occurring in both the state and Federal waters of Cook Inlet, AK, from Knik Arm in the northern part of the Inlet to the southern edge of Kachemak Bay on the southeastern part of the Inlet and to the southern edge of Cape Douglas on the southwestern part of the Inlet.

Comments regarding the scoping and preparation of this EIS will be accepted until

December 29, 2014 by any of the following methods:

**Electronically:** via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). To submit comments via the e-Rulemaking Portal, enter NOAA-NMFS-2014-0129 in the keyword search. Locate the document you wish to comment on from the resulting list and click on the "Comment Now" icon on

the right of that line.

**Mail:** Addressed to: Jolie Harrison, Chief, Permits and Conservation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

**Fax:** (301) 713-0376, Attn: Jolie Harrison.

For more information contact: Jolie Harrison, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, at (301) 427-8401. ♦



Yellow Billed Loon - Audubon

## USFWS Announces 12-Month Finding on Petition to List Yellow-billed Loon

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced a determination that listing the yellow-billed loon (*Gavia adamsii*) as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act is not necessary at this time. The Service reviewed the best available information to evaluate the current status of the bird and stressors it faces throughout its range.

Geoffrey Haskett, Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Alaska Region, said "We've been working to provide for the conservation of yellow-billed loons in Alaska for a number of years, collaborating with the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, State of Alaska, North Slope Borough, oil and gas industry, and others. After careful consideration,

we don't believe yellow-billed loons meet the definition of an endangered or threatened species but we will still continue to work with our partners toward their conservation."

There are two primary reasons we have now determined that listing the yellow-billed loon is "not warranted" in contrast to our earlier determination.

\* First, following the 2009 finding, the Service and its partners expanded efforts to better understand yellow-billed loon harvest, abundance, and distribution in the Bering Strait-Norton Sound region with the goal of evaluating the reliability of reported subsistence harvest. The Service now has reliable information suggesting the yellow-billed loon is not a significant subsist-

ence resource; and that the limited harvest does not have a negative impact on the population.

\* Second, additional years of survey data on the Arctic Coastal Plain in Alaska further support that the breeding population, which we believe to be representative of the other breeding populations, is stable or slightly increasing in abundance.

This finding and the Yellow-billed Loon Species Status Assessment Report are available online at <http://www.regulations.gov> at Docket Number FWS-R7-ES-2014-0043.

For further information, contact Sarah Conn, Field Supervisor, Fairbanks Fish and Wildlife Field Office, at 907-456-0499. ♦



## BLM Issues Notice of Availability of the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Greater Mooses Tooth Unit Development Project

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) published the formal Notice of Availability for the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Alpine Satellite Development Plan for the proposed Greater Mooses Tooth Unit oil and gas development project (GMT<sub>1</sub>) within the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A). The document was released to the public on October 29, 2014, and a Record of Decision will be published at least 30 days after the Notice of Availability.

"This is the first potential development in the NPR-A which would lead to Federal production. The estimated first-year production from this participating area could represent up to 5-10 percent of all nationwide BLM-regulated oil production," said Bud Cribley, BLM Alaska State Director.

The project is proposed by ConocoPhillips, Alaska, Inc. (CPAI) to develop petroleum resources within the Greater Mooses Tooth Unit of the NPR-A. Public meetings have been held in North Slope villages, Anchorage and Fairbanks.

Since 1999, nine lease sales in the NPR-A have garnered more than \$261 million. Currently, 205 authorized leases cover more than 1.73 million acres within the 23



USFWS National Digital Library - Chocolate Lily

million acre reserve. The BLM's 2013 Area-Wide Integrated Activity Plan identified 11 million acres in the NPR-A for protection of natural values while making available 72 percent of technically and economically recoverable barrels of oil for development. To date, only exploratory drilling has occurred in the reserve. The Greater Mooses Tooth project would facilitate the first production and transportation by pipeline of oil from federal lands in the NPR-A.

To view the Final SEIS go to: <http://www.blm.gov/ak>. ♦

## NPS-Alaska Proposes Hunting Regulations for National Preserves

*(The following is excerpted from an NPS Press Release. If you are concerned or curious about how the proposed rulemaking might impact your interests, please contact the CACFA office for more information.)*

The National Park Service has proposing a permanent federal prohibition on three historically illegal predator hunting practices in Alaska's national preserves.

The proposals would prohibit sport hunters from hunting wolf and coyote pups and adults in early summer when they den and their pelts have little commercial value; prohibit the taking of brown bears over bait; prohibit the use of artificial light to take black bear cubs and sows with cubs at dens; and other changes.

The proposal was published in the Federal Register on September 4, and will be open for public comment through December 3, 2014.

"These proposals, if finalized, codify long-standing prohibitions for wildlife harvest seasons and methods that were traditionally illegal under state law, but in recent years have been authorized by the State of Alaska in an effort to drive down predator populations and boost game species," said NPS Alaska Regional Director Bert Frost.

This manipulation of natural population dynamics conflicts with National Park Service law and policy. National park areas are managed to maintain natural ecosystems and processes, including wildlife populations and their behaviors. While sport hunting is allowed by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act in national preserves in Alaska, NPS policies prohibit reducing native predators for the purpose of increasing numbers of harvested species.

"This rule does nothing to restrict or limit federal subsistence hunting on NPS managed lands. It would make permanent the small number of temporary restrictions we have put in place annually for the past four years, and largely maintain the status quo," Frost said.

The proposed regulations would replace temporary restrictions in the following national preserves: Denali, Wrangell-St. Elias, Glacier Bay, Yukon-Charley Rivers, Gates of the Arctic, Noatak, Bering Land Bridge, Lake Clark, Katmai and Aniakchak.

The National Park Service has repeatedly requested the State of Alaska and the Alaska Board of Game to exempt national preserves from state regulations that liberalized methods, seasons and bag limits for predator hunting. The requests have been denied. State officials have also objected to the use of repeated temporary federal closures, and advised the NPS to seek permanent regulations.

Sport hunting occurs on about 38 percent, or more than 20 million acres, of the land managed by the National Park Service in Alaska. In these national preserves, sport hunting generally occurs under state regulations. The vast majority of state sport hunting regulations would remain unchanged by the proposed regulations. National Park System areas, including preserves, already prohibit predator control actions, such as aerial shooting of wolves, which the State of Alaska conducts as part of its statewide wildlife management program.

The proposed regulations would also update procedures for implementing closures or restrictions in park areas, including taking fish and wildlife for sport purposes, to more effectively engage the public, as well as update NPS regulations to reflect federal assumption of the management of subsistence hunting and fishing under Title VIII of ANILCA from the State of Alaska in the 1990s. Additionally, the regulations propose the allowance of the use of native species or their parts to be used as bait, commonly salmon eggs, for fishing in accordance with non-conflicting state law.

Links to the proposed regulations, an environmental assessment and instructions on how to comment will be available from the National Park Service's web

Page. 4 -site, ([nps.gov/akso/management/regulations.cfm](https://www.nps.gov/akso/management/regulations.cfm)). ♦



River-side Wildlife Cleaning station