

Alaska Lands Update

Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas, Department of Natural Resources, State of Alaska
101 Airport Road, Palmer, Alaska

ACTION ALERT from the Executive Director

The National Park Service has re-opened the comment period for its Proposed Rulemaking on Hunting and Trapping in National Preserves in Alaska. Comments are due no later than February 15, 2015. If you missed the comment deadline in December, please take this opportunity to comment on the rulemaking. Even if you already submitted comments, this re-opened comment period provides an opportunity to supplement the comments you submitted, correct any misapprehensions, learn more about the issues and provide insights, describe additional observations, or simply to restate your concerns or support in a different way.

This re-opened comment period is in addition to the open comment period on the 2015 Compendium, which also closes on February 15, 2015. The 2015 Compendium will include wildlife closures being proposed in the rulemaking; it is important to note that TWO comment opportunities are being provided - one regarding the closures as they appear in the compendia and one for having those closures become permanent through rulemaking.

Here are some important links to help inform these two public comment opportunities:

-Proposed 2015 Compendia are available at http://www.nps.gov/akso/management/proposed_compendiums.cfm (More on this on page 3)

-Documents related to the Proposed Rule are available at <http://www.nps.gov/akso/management/regulations.cfm>

-The January 15, 2015, Press Release on the re-opened comment period for the Proposed Rule is available at <http://www.nps.gov/akso/connect/newsreleases/1-15-15-re-open-wildlife-regs-comment-period.cfm>

-CACFA's fact sheet on the proposed rulemaking is available on our website at <http://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/cacfa/>

Visit http://www.newsminer.com/opinion/community_perspectives/parks-rule-change-would-hurt-public/article_d13da3da-79f9-1e4-a696-3347796a82bd.html to read CACFA's rebuttal to a Com-

munity Perspective article in the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner on the proposed rulemaking.

The National Park Service will be hosting a Community Open House on Thursday, January 22, 2015, from 5pm to 7pm at the Murie Science and Learning Center in Denali National Park. There will be displays, handouts, refreshments and staff members available to answer questions about park issues, including the proposed regulations and the 2015 Compendium. The Open House will also provide an opportunity to submit comments on the proposed regulations but NOT on the 2015 Compendium.

Public comments on the 2015 Compendium can be submitted: online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/AK2015compendiums>; by mail to National Park Service, Attn: Compendiums, Alaska Regional Office, 240 W. 5th Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99501; by hand delivery to any park headquarters, at a public hearing, schedule available at <http://www.nps.gov/dena/parknews/2015-compendium-hearings.htm>

Public comments on the proposed rulemaking can be submitted: online at <http://www.regulations.gov> (Regulation Identifier Number 1024-AE21), by mail to: NPS Regulations, 240 W. 5th Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99501, by hand delivery to the National Park Service Regional Office at 240 W. 5th Avenue in Anchorage, at a public hearing; schedule available at <http://www.nps.gov/dena/parknews/2015-compendium-hearings.htm>, at a phone-in public hearing on January 29 from 12pm to 2pm by dialing 1-888-957-9843 and entering passcode 6859267 when prompted by the operator (comments limited to three minutes). ♦

IN THIS ISSUE:

ACTION ALERTS - 1

Tentative CACFA Meeting Agenda -

- Sealaska Land Entitlement Finalization - 2
- BLM's North Slope Science Initiative's Science Technical Advisory Panel to Meet -

More information on the 2015 Superintendent's Compendiums Alaska - 3

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

Secretary Jewell Issued a Decision in Late 2014 Regarding Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Land Exchange and Road Proposal -

BLM Alaska Opens Public Comment on Critical Areas of Concern in the Eastern Interior - 4

The Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas will be meeting in Juneau on January 30 and 31, 2015. These proceedings will be streamed LIVE, in real time, on Alaska Legislative Television: www.akl.tv.

Please see DRAFT agenda items on page 2.

Thank you very much to the State of Alaska Staff that make this available and to '360North' and 'GavelALASKA' who manage the archive for CACFA at:

http://www.360north.org/gavel-archives/?category_search=Citizens+Advisory+Commission+on+Federal+Areas

**CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMISSION ON FEDERAL AREAS
JANUARY 30-31, 2015 | JUNEAU, AK
CAPITOL BUILDING – CONFERENCE ROOMS 519 & 106**

Friday, Jan 30 – Conference Room 519, Capitol Building

- 9:00 a.m. Call to Order; Roll Call and Introductions
Commission Member Opening Comments
Approval of Agenda & August Meeting Minutes
- 10:00 a.m. Subcommittee & Executive Director Reports
Budget Update & Travel Tutorial: Karrie Improte
- 11:30 a.m. **Public Participation***
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch
- 1:30 p.m. Agency Reports: Lesli Ellis-Wouters, BLM
Agency Reports: Mitch Ellis, FWS
Agency Reports: John Quinley, NPS
- 3:00 p.m. **Public Participation***
- 3:30 p.m. Agency Reports: Michael Schechter, DOL
Federal Long Range Transportation Plan: Eric Taylor, DOT&PF
Angoon Airport EIS: Verne Skagerberg, DOT&PF
- 4:45 p.m. Adjourn for the Day

Saturday, Jan 31 – Conference Room 106, Capitol Building

- 9:00 a.m. Reconvene; Call to Order
Unfinished Business
- 10:00 a.m. Report on Pending USFWS Rulemaking
NPS Litigation Update/Discussion: John Sturgeon
Agency Reports: Scott Ogan, PAAD
- 11:30 a.m. **Public Participation***
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch
- 1:30 p.m. Discussion/Follow-up on
January 14 Work Session
- 2:30 p.m. New Business
Set Next Meeting Date
- 3:30 p.m. **Public Participation***
- 4:00 p.m. Elections
Commission Member
Closing Comments
- 5:00 p.m. Adjourn

***Phone number for public comments:
1-855-463-5009 (outside Juneau) and
463-5009 (in Juneau). Meeting will be
listen-only; except for the public com-
ment periods at the times noted above.
(Please note: Individual comment
time may be limited. Meeting will be
recorded.)**

**BLM's North Slope Science Initiative's
Science Technical Advisory Panel to
Meet**

The North Slope Science Initiative (NSSI) Science Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) will meet Jan. 26-28 in Barrow at the Inupiat Heritage Center, 5421 North Star Blvd. The meetings will begin at 1 p.m. on Jan. 26 and at 9 a.m. Jan. 27 and 28, with public comment scheduled for 3-4 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 27.

The NSSI is an intergovernmental effort to increase collaboration on the science needed to make informed decisions related to development and environmental change on Alaska's North Slope and its adjacent seas. The STAP provides advice and recommendations to NSSI on information priorities.

The meeting agenda will include discussions of the North Slope Scenarios Project and a long-term monitoring strategy for the North Slope.

For additional information contact Dennis Lassuy at (907) 271-3212. ♦



Photo Credit - USFWS 2008
M/V Curlew, Howard Bay

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/>

Sealaska Land Entitlement Finalization

In December 2014, Congress passed legislation that finalized the remaining Sealaska allotment under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, or ANCSA, enabling the conveyance of 18 parcels in Southeast Alaska.

ANCSA, enacted by Congress in December 1971, to finalize Alaska Native land claims and make way for the development of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline. Rather than establish Indian reservations, ANCSA created a system of village and regional corporations owned by Native shareholders and granted them rights to nearly 44 million acres of federal lands and a billion dollars. Lands around Native villages were withdrawn so that Native Corporations could select lands traditionally used by Alaska Natives. The Bureau of Land Management has conveyed approximately 293,000 acres of land to Sealaska Corporation, leaving a remaining entitlement of up to 70,075 acres.

For more information and access to maps depicting the Entitlements please visit the USFS website at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r10/home/?cid=STELPRD3824925>. ♦

Commission Members

Representative Wes Keller, Wasilla
Chairman - (H)

Mark Fish, Anchorage
Vice Chairman - (G)

Rod Arno, Palmer (S)
Executive Committee

Charlie Lean, Nome (G)
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Warren Olson, Anchorage (S)

Ron Somerville, Juneau (H)

Susan Smith, Chokosna (G)

Frank Woods, Dillingham (G)

(S) SENATE APPOINTMENT

(H) HOUSE APPOINTMENT

(G) GOVERNOR'S APPOINTMENT

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For more information, visit our website:

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.

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

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced a determination that listing the yellow-billed loon as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act is not necessary at this time.

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

More information on the 2015 Superintendent's Compendiums Alaska

National Park Service compendiums for Alaska will be open for a 30-day public comment period, from January 15 to February 15, 2015. A compendium - one for each NPS area in Alaska - is a compilation of all designations, closures and restrictions adopted under the discretionary authority within the regulations covering national parks. This regulatory tool helps manage Alaska's national park areas for the public's enjoyment, use and protection.

Only a handful of changes are proposed in this year's compendiums. These include:

- A prohibition on the use or possession of domestic goats, sheep, llamas, alpacas or related animals, which are sometimes used for packing or as pets. Wildlife biologists have found there is a significant risk of disease transmission from these domestic species to Alaska's Dall's sheep, mountain goat and other ungulate populations.

- A prohibition on the use of bicycles in the Valley of 10,000 Smokes in Katmai National Park due to the potential damage of sensitive soils that are home to cyanobacteria, lichens and mosses.

- Several national preserves are incorporating temporary wildlife sport hunting restrictions into their compendiums. These are generally identical to provisions in earlier compendiums.

NPS units which are proposing restrictions on sport hunting in national preserves will hold open houses on a wide range of topics; incorporated into those meetings will be a public hearing where participants can comment on the proposed sport hunting restrictions. The meetings are set at the following locations:

Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve
Eagle Wednesday, January 21, 7-8:30pm.
Eagle School

Denali National Preserve
Denali Park Thursday, January 22, 5-7pm
Murie Science and Learning Center

Bering Land Bridge National Preserve
Nome Monday, January 26, 6-7:30pm 214
Front Street, Beringia Room in Nome

Gates of the Arctic National Preserve
Bettles Monday, January 26, 5:30-7pm Wrangell-St. Elias Headquarters
Administrative Building

Lake Clark National Preserve
Port Alsworth Wednesday, January 28, 6-7:30 pm NPS Visitor Center

Katmai National Preserve
Aniakchak National Preserve
Naknek Monday, February 9, 7-9pm Naknek
Native Village Council Building
(Dolly's Hall)

Noatak National Preserve
Kotzebue Wednesday, February 11, 6-7:30pm NPS Heritage Center

Dial In Teleconference
Thursday, January 29, 12-2pm 888-957-9843
Passcode: 6859267

Participants in these public hearings are also invited to comment on proposed permanent National Park Service regulations, which cover some related sport hunting issues as well as procedural changes for future closures. The NPS conducted 17 public hearings on the proposed regulations in fall 2014. In response to several requests, the comment period is being re-opened, concurrent with the comment period on the superintendent compendiums. Information about the proposed regulation, and other ways to comment on it, is available at <http://www.nps.gov/akso/management/regulations.cfm>

For more information contact Andee Sears by phone at (907)644-3410 or by email at andee_sears@nps.gov . ♦

harvest, abundance, and distribution in the Bering Strait-Norton Sound region with the goal of evaluating the reliability of reported subsistence harvest.

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. ♦

Photo Credit - USFWS 2006
Selawick National Wildlife Refuge



BLM Alaska Opens Public Comment on Proposed Areas of Critical Environmental Concern in the Eastern Interior Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement

Based on public comment on the Eastern Interior Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP)/Draft Environmental Impact Statement, the Bureau of Land Management is considering changing the boundary of the proposed Fortymile Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and designating a new ACEC on the Mosquito Flats, also in the Fortymile region.

The proposed Mosquito Flats ACEC (30,000 acres) provides unique wetland and aquatic habitats and supports a variety of wildlife species. Mosquito Flats is an important moose calving area and summer habitat for the regional moose population. The area also supports short-eared owls and nesting trumpeter swans. The proposed ACEC would be recommended to be closed to new mineral entry and leasing.

Off-highway vehicles (OHVs) would be limited by season with no summer use allowed except by permit.

The Fortymile ACEC (685,000 acres) boundary presented in the Alternatives of the draft RMP/EIS was reconfigured to improve manageability and maintain effective caribou and



Photo Credit - USFWS 2006
Bearberry Tussocks

Dall sheep habitat and mineral licks. The ACEC would be recommended to be closed to new mineral entry and leasing and to have a limited OHV designation with seasonal limitations on uses within one mile of mineral licks.

A 60-day public comment period for the proposed ACECs began on January 3, 2015. The public is invited to provide comments related to the new ACECs. Comments may be submitted using any of the following methods:

- Email: EasternInterior@blm.gov
- Fax: 907-474-2282
- Mail: Eastern Interior Field Office, Attention-Eastern Interior RMP, Bureau of Land Management, 1150 University Avenue, Fairbanks, Alaska 99709, Attn: Jeanie Cole

Comments must be received by March 3, 2015 to be considered. For maps and information about the proposed ACECs, visit the Eastern Interior RMP website at www.blm.gov/ak/eirmp or contact the BLM at (907) 474-2340 or (800) 437-7021 (within Alaska). ♦

Secretary Jewell Issued a Decision in Late 2014 regarding Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Land Exchange and Road Proposal

As directed by Congress in the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell concluded a four-year analysis, and issued a decision supporting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's preferred alternative to decline a proposed land exchange with the State of Alaska and prevent construction of a road through the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge.

The nearly four-year analysis on the effects of the proposed land exchange, including the impact a road would have on Izembek's vital ecology and congressionally-designated wilderness helped to inform the Secretary's decision. In addition, a personal visit to the Refuge and the King Cove and Cold Bay communities as well as a report from the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs regarding the medical evacuation benefits of the proposed road were considered.

To complete the environmental impact assessment, the Service conducted a public process that included over 130 meetings with stakeholders, government-to-government consultations, and numerous trips to King Cove by Service and Department of the Interior officials.

"We've undertaken a robust and transparent public process to review the matter from all sides, and I have personally visited the Refuge and met with the King Cove and Cold Bay communities to gain a

better understanding of their concerns," said Jewell. "After careful consideration, I support the Service's conclusion that building a road through the Refuge would cause irreversible damage not only to the Refuge itself, but to the wildlife that depend on it. Izembek is an extraordinary place – internationally recognized as vital to a rich diversity of species – and we owe it to future generations to think about long-term solutions that do not insert a road through the middle of this Refuge and designated wilderness. I understand the need for reliable methods of medical transport from King Cove, but I have concluded that other methods of transport remain that could be improved to meet community needs."

Given the serious concerns raised by King Cove residents, the Secretary reiterated the Department's commitment to assist in identifying and evaluating options that would improve access to affordable transportation and health care for the citizens of this remote Alaska community. She noted that nothing in the decision precludes the State of Alaska, the Aleutians East Borough, or the communities of King Cove and Cold Bay from implementing another alternative for transportation improvements outside of the Refuge, including



Photo Credit - USFWS 2007
Hunters at Izembek National Wildlife Refuge

enhancements to the dock at Cold Bay. "We will continue to work with the State of Alaska and local communities to support viable alternatives to ensure continued transportation and infrastructure improvements for the health and safety of King Cove residents," added Jewell.

The Service issued the final EIS for public review on February 6, 2013. On March 21, 2013, then-Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar directed that two actions be completed before any final decision:

- 1) the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs visit King Cove and hold additional government-to-government consultations to assess the medical evacuation benefits from the proposed road, and provide a report to the Secretary; and
- 2) the Secretary of the Interior hold an official meeting in King Cove.

A copy of the Record of Decision, final EIS and report of the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs to the Secretary are available online at: <http://izembek.fws.gov>. ♦