

# 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, Department of Natural Resources, State of Alaska  
3700 Airport Way Fairbanks, AK 99709

## State Intervenes in Navigable Waters Case

February 14, 2012, United States Federal District Court Judge Russell Holland has issued an order recognizing the State of Alaska's interest in challenging federal authority over state-owned navigable rivers and submerged lands. The state is now a party to a lawsuit by plaintiff, John Sturgeon, an Anchorage resident challenging the authority of the National Park Service to regulate activities on state-owned waters within national parks and preserves in Alaska.

Last December, the State of Alaska joined Mr. John Sturgeon in his lawsuit against the National Park Service over federal regulations that bar hovercraft in the waters of the Yukon-Charlie Rivers National Preserve. Mr. Sturgeon filed his lawsuit against the National Park Service in September, 2011 for a 2007 incident where National Park Service Rangers ordered him out of the preserve for using a hovercraft. The Yukon and Nation Rivers are navigable, state-owned waterways, and hovercrafts are legal under state law. Under the Alaska Na-

tional Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), Park Service regulations cannot be applied to state land or water that lies within national parks and preserves.

"My administration will continue to aggressively push back on federal overreach, and efforts to control Alaskans' ability to travel on rivers and waterways," Governor Parnell said. "I am pleased the court recognized Alaska's strong interest in this issue over the objections of the federal government to our participation in the case."

The federal government will now be required to file a formal response to the state's complaint.

For more information go to: <http://gov.alaska.gov/parnell/press-room/full-press-release.html?pr=6033>.♦

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## Winter Vehicle Access on Denali Park Road

The National Park Service intends to evaluate the impacts of plowing the Denali Park Road between park headquarters at Mile 3 and the Mountain Vista Rest Area at Mile 12 during the winter season. The NPS is interested in providing additional opportunities for winter visitors to the park, while protecting park resources and values. Plowing the road beyond park headquarters would allow private and commercial vehicles to travel further into the park to provide mountain viewing and increased recreational opportunities.



Currently the park road is closed to vehicular traffic beyond park headquarters after the first significant snowfall, usually in October. During the winter one lane of the road is maintained so

the road crew can manage the overflow ice that occurs between Mile 4-7. The other lane is not plowed. Both lanes are available for use by dog teams, cross country skiers, snowshoers, and other winter recreationalists. Spring road opening begins in mid-March, and the road is generally open to the public as far as the Savage River at Mile 15 by early April, and to the Teklanika River Rest Area at Mile 30 by mid to late April.

The public is invited to submit written comments by Friday, March 9, 2012. Comments may be submitted online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/dena>, faxed to 907-683-9612, or mailed to: Superintendent, Denali National Park and Preserve, ATTN: Winter Road Plowing, P.O. Box 9, Denali Park, AK 99755. ♦

## Huna Tlingit Tribal House Proposed for Glacier Bay National

The National Park Service is proposing to construct a 3,500 square foot replica of an 18th century Tlingit tribal house near Bartlett Cove in Glacier Bay National Park, Alaska.

The Tribal House concept was included in the 1997 Comprehensive Design Plan and Environmental Assessment (EA) for Bartlett Cove to provide park visitors with opportunities to learn about Huna Tlingit history and culture through educational and interpretive displays and to strengthen the Huna Tlingit's ongoing connection to their ancestral homeland by providing a venue for cultural events, workshops, and retreats. The structure would showcase traditional design, construction, decoration and furnishings. The building and access would cover approximately one acre located along the shore north-east of the Glacier Bay Lodge in Bartlett Cove.

Comments and questions about the proposed Tribal House project will be accepted until close of business on March 24, 2012.

Full design and details about each alternative will be presented in the upcoming EA which is planned for release in June 2012. Construction would begin in 2013.

For more information or to submit comments and questions, please contact Allison Banks, Environmental Protection Specialist, at 907-697-2611 or visit the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/>

Follow the links below to view various components already under construction by carvers in Hoonah:

<http://www.nps.gov/glba/historyculture/huna-tribal-house-project.htm>;

<http://www.nps.gov/glba/historyculture/tribal-house-project-photogallery.htm>. ♦



Artist's Rendering of the Huna Tribal House Project as showcased by the NPS Planning website

## Commission Members

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- Mark Fish**, Anchorage  
Vice Chairman - (G)
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- Alex Tarnai**, Tanana (G)
- Frank Woods**, Dillingham (G)

(S) SENATE APPOINTMENT

(H) HOUSE APPOINTMENT

(G) GOVERNOR'S APPOINTMENT

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[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 citi-

## Draft Policy on Consultation with ANCSA Corporations

Executive Order 13175, issued by President Obama in November 2009, directs that all Federal agencies ensure consultation and coordination with Indian tribal governments on Federal actions that will affect tribal governments. The Department of the Interior (DOI) recognizes and respects the distinct, unique, and individual cultural traditions and values of each Alaska Native person and the statutory relationship between Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) Corporations and the Federal government and of Indian Tribes' right to self-governance and Tribal sovereignty. Consultation is a deliberative process that aims to create effective collaboration and informed Federal decision-making, and the federal government is required to consult and coordinate with ANCSA corporations on the same basis as Indian tribes in developing policies that would affect these corporations and their tribal shareholders. To implement these requirements, the Department is proposing, and seeking comments on, a draft consultation policy to govern all activities that will affect ANCSA corporations. The DOI website for Tribal Consultation is located at <http://www.doi.gov/tribes/tribal-consultation-policy.cfm>. Comments will be accepted until April 27, 2012. For additional information on the ANCSA consultation draft policy contact: Jennifer Sisk, Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street NW., Washington, DC 20240. Email: [Jennifer\\_Sisk@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Jennifer_Sisk@ios.doi.gov). ♦

## BLM Releases Eastern Interior Draft RMP and EIS

The Bureau of Land Management in Alaska has released the Eastern Interior Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) for public review and comment.

"The Eastern Interior plan outlines the present and future use of some of the most diverse and unique public lands in Alaska." said Bud Cribley, BLM-Alaska State Director. "Within the Eastern Interior are areas and resources that are important to our economy, to subsistence, to recreation, and for conservation."

The Eastern Interior Draft RMP/EIS covers approximately 6.7 million acres of BLM administered lands in interior Alaska and is divided into four geographic areas: The Fortymile, Steese, Upper Black River, and White Mountains subunits. The planning area encompasses four areas managed under the BLM's National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS): The Birch Creek, Beaver Creek, and Fortymile National Wild and Scenic Rivers; and the Steese National Conservation Area. In addition to these NLCS areas, the planning area includes the White Mountains National Recreation Area. These five areas were designated and are covered by special provisions in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980, as amended (ANILCA).

Copies of the Eastern Interior Draft

RMP/EIS are available at the Fairbanks District Office; at the Alaska State Office, Public Information Center, Bureau of Land Management, 222 West 7th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99513; and on the following Web site: <http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/planning.html>.

A 150-day public comment period began, Feb. 24, 2012. The public is invited to provide comments about the draft plan and its alternatives. Comments must be received by July 23, 2012 to be considered. There are three ways the public can submit written comments:

- 1) In person at public meetings to be held in communities within the planning area. Specific dates and locations for meetings on the Draft RMP/EIS in potentially affected regions will be announced at least 15 days in advance, through public notices, media releases, mailings and on the BLM website at [www.blm.gov/ak](http://www.blm.gov/ak);
- 2) By mail to the BLM Eastern Interior Field Office, Attn: Eastern Interior Draft RMP/EIS, 1150 University Avenue, Fairbanks, AK, 99709; and
- 3) Online by accessing the [BLM's ePlanning System](http://www.blm.gov/ak), at [www.blm.gov/ak](http://www.blm.gov/ak).

For more information on the Eastern Interior Plan and the planning process visit [www.blm.gov/ak](http://www.blm.gov/ak) or contact Jeanie Cole, telephone 907-474-2340 or (800) 437-7021 (within Alaska), or by email [j05cole@blm.gov](mailto:j05cole@blm.gov). ♦

## 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, Alaska

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



The White Mountains as seen from the Steese Highway



## Intertie-Connection Proposed with Gustavus Electric Company/Falls Creek Hydroelectric Project and Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve

In 2010, the long awaited Gustavus Cove was upgraded in Fiscal Year 1998 and would be utilized to distribute power. The switchgear that was installed during this upgrade will allow direct connection and a communication link to the GEC plant switchgear.

GLBA submitted a proposal in 2008 with an estimated cost of \$3,887,250 (gross costs that include design). The proposed project would design and construct a buried 8.5 mile, 15 kilowatt, three phase electrical intertie between GEC and GLBA power generation plant. The proposed project was approved at the NPS Alaska Regional level in March of 2009 and at the NPS Washington level in May of that same year. This project has been recently pushed out beyond 2016. The park has programmed \$200,000 for a feasibility study in 2012 and \$500,000 for the design and initial construction start-up in 2013 which will be based on outcome of the study.

For additional information contact: Ken Hutchison, Chief of Maintenance, Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, (907) 697-2230, [ken-neth\\_hutchison@nps.gov](mailto:ken-neth_hutchison@nps.gov).

In 2010, the long awaited Gustavus Electric Company/ Falls Creek hydroelectric project (GEC) was completed and is generating power to the city of Gustavus. Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve (GLBA) is not connected to the Gustavus electrical grid, park power is provided by three diesel generators operating alternately. These generators provide power for all facilities in the Bartlett Cove (park front country) area. The park currently transfers, stores and delivers approximately 70,000 gallons of diesel annually for power generation. The distance between the GEC switchgear and the GLBA switch gear is approximately 8.5 miles, depending on the route chosen. Any route chosen for the intertie will cross multiple landowners including the State of Alaska, GLBA, and possibly other private property. Constructing the intertie would allow the park to convert from non-renewable, fossil fuel powered, diesel generation to clean and sustainable hydropower and save approximately 68,000 gallons of diesel fuel annually. The existing electrical system infrastructure at Bartlett

Cove was upgraded in Fiscal Year 1998 and would be utilized to distribute power. The switchgear that was installed during this upgrade will allow direct connection and a communication link to the GEC plant switchgear.

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Riggs Glacier, Glacier Bay National Park

## Transportation Plan Comment Period Extended to April 11, 2012

Federal Highway Administration in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, National Park Service and State of Alaska Department of Transportation collectively released the Alaska Federal Lands Long Range Transportation Plan on December 12, 2011, starting a 90-day comment period. This draft plans outline a strategy for a multi-agency approach to improving and maintaining transportation assets that provide access to Federal Lands in the Alaska region over the next 20 years. With this notice, the comment period is being extended from 90 days to 120 days, establishing a new deadline for comments by April 11, 2012.

Submit comments for any or all plans electronically through the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment system at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>.

Additional Information is available by the following agency contacts:

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT: Roxanne Bash, (360) 619-7558;

Bureau of Land Management (BLM), DOI: Randy Goodwin, (907) 474-2369; Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), DOI: Helen Clough, (907) 786-3353;

Forest Service (FS), USDA: Marie Messing, (907) 586-8834;

National Park Service (NPS), DOI: Paul Schrooten, (907) 644-3388;

The original supplementary information was published in the Federal Register on December 12, 2011, at 76 FR 77300, and the draft Plans are available on our project website: <http://www.akfedlandslrtp.org>.