

# Alaska Lands Update

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

## COMMENT PERIOD ON WILDLIFE RESTRICTIONS EXTENDED

The National Park Service has held hearings on temporary restrictions for certain sport hunting practices in several national preserves in Alaska. According to the National Park Service, the restrictions generally mirror those put in place last year and are in response to decisions made by the Alaska Board of Game to liberalize hunting seasons and methods for wolves, coyotes and bears; and the Board has also rejected proposals by the National Park Service to exclude preserves from these practices, an action that would have made federal restrictions unnecessary.

The restrictions include:

- Shortening the open season for wolves and coyotes. Under the proposed rule, wolf and coyote hunting would be open from August 10 through April 30. This would prevent the taking of wolves and pups at den sites during the early summer when the animals are vulnerable and their pelts are in poor condition.
- Prohibiting the use of bait for the taking of brown bears. Until recently, the practice had been prohibited since Statehood and is the only such allowance in North America. The NPS is proposing to prohibit the practice to avoid public safety issues which can arise with bears conditioned to finding human food.
- Prohibiting the use of artificial light when taking black bear sows or cubs at den sites. This practice was opened to all resident hunting license holders in 2010.

Public comment on these provisions was set to close on March 22, 2014 but has been extended through April 5. The extension is in response to a request from the State of Alaska.

Comments may be submitted in writing to 240 W. 5th Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99501 or emailed to [AKRO\\_compendium@nps.gov](mailto:AKRO_compendium@nps.gov).

For more information and a complete text of the restrictions for each affected national preserve is posted at <http://www.nps.gov/akso/management/compendiums.cfm>. ♦

## BLM Seeks Nominations to BLM-Alaska Resource Advisory Council

The Bureau of Land Management announced in February that it is seeking public nominations for open positions on its Alaska Resource Advisory Council (RAC). Nominations will be considered through March 25, 2014. "The advice given to the BLM by these citizen-based Resource Advisory Councils is a vital part of the BLM's collaborative approach to land management," said BLM-Alaska State Director Bud Cribley. "Citizen input enhances our agency's ability to administer and conserve these lands for the use and enjoyment of current and future generations of Americans."

To learn more about the BLM-Alaska RAC and download an application, visit <http://www.blm.gov/ak/rac> or contact Thom Jennings, RAC Coordinator, at email: [tjennings@blm.gov](mailto:tjennings@blm.gov) or telephone (907) 271-3335. ♦

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## Deadlines and Reminders

- The **Chugach National Forest Plan Revision Phase I - Assessment** is well underway. For more information visit the planning website at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/chugach/landmanagement/planning/?cid=stelprdb5408185>;
- **2014 ALASKA STATEWIDE TRAILS CONFERENCE** will be held at the Alaska Pacific University **in Anchorage from April 24th to 26th, 2014**. For more information contact Steve Cleary at [steve.cleary@alaska-trails.org](mailto:steve.cleary@alaska-trails.org); or visit online at: <http://www.alaska-trails.org/>;
- **National Park Service Temporary Hunting Restriction Public Comment Period extended to April 5**; For more information and a complete text of the restrictions for each affected national preserve is posted at <http://www.nps.gov/akso/management/compendiums.cfm>;
- **Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park and has prepared an Area Plan and Environmental Assessment (EA)**; For more information or to review the EA, visit the project site online at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>. Public comments about the proposed changes will be accepted through Friday, March 28, 2014;
- **Lake Clark National Park and Preserve General Management Plan Amendment** The plan will be available for public review and comment through Wednesday, March 26, 2014;
- **CACFA has two reauthorizing bills in the House Bill 244 and Senate Bill 109**. You may track those with an online Bill Tracking site at: <http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/start.asp>.

## 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/>

### **The BLM's Land Use Planning and NEPA site online**

BLM's Resource Management Plans (RMPs) form the basis for every action and approved use on the public lands.

The BLM prepares Resource Management Plans or RMPs, for areas of public lands, called planning areas. These plans form the basis for every action and approved use on these public lands. Planning emphasizes a collaborative environment in which local, state, and tribal governments, the public, user groups, and industry work with the BLM to identify appropriate multiple uses of the public lands. Plans are periodically revised as changing conditions and resource demands require.

RMPs are used by managers and the public to accomplish the following:

- Allocate resources and determine appropriate multiple uses for the public lands;
- Develop a strategy to manage and protect resources; and
- Establish systems to monitor and evaluate status of resources and effectiveness of management practices over time.

The BLM-Alaska maintains an online site with current information on these planning efforts. Visit them online at: <http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/planning.html>; and for more information contact Serena Sweet by phone (907) 271-4543, or by email [ssweet@blm.gov](mailto:ssweet@blm.gov). (See Map on Page 5.) ♦

**The Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas has a comprehensive website with information on the Federal Overreach Summit, Meeting dates and times, agendas, meeting packets and minutes as well as an archive of correspondence and the Alaska Lands Update.**

**Visit us online at:**

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

### **Alaska Hummingbird Festival**

Every April, the Southeast Alaska Discovery Center hosts the Alaska Hummingbird Festival. The month long event schedule will include the juried art show and opening reception on Friday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at 5:00 p.m., birding hikes, movies, lectures and activities that focus on the natural world of birds. A schedule of events is available online at:

[http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5444769.pdf](http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5444769.pdf). ♦

### **Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, Dyea Area Site Plan**

The National Park Service (NPS) is considering changes in the Dyea area of Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park and has prepared an Area Plan and Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze proposed actions and alternatives and their impacts on the environment.

Proposed changes to the Dyea area are designed to protect park resources and improve the visitor experience. They include upgrading the Dyea Flats Road, establishing a formal entrance into the Dyea Historic Townsite, re-routing trails to provide better interpretive opportunities, and establishing appropriate commercial use levels within the Dyea Core Historic Townsite. The plan also addresses graves within park boundaries that may be in danger of destruction because of changes in the Taiya River.

For more information or to review the EA, visit the project site online at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>. Public comments about the proposed changes will be accepted through Friday, March 28, 2014. ♦

## Commission Members

**Representative Wes Keller**, Wasilla  
Chairman - (H)

**Mark Fish**, Anchorage  
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**Rod Arno**, Palmer (S)  
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**Charlie Lean**, Nome (G)  
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**Senator John Coghill**, Fairbanks (G)

**Teresa Hanson**, Fairbanks (G)

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**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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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.

## Secretary Jewell Issues Decision on 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 today reiterated the Depart-

ment'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 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>. ♦



(Photo Credit—USFWS Momma Bear and Cub, Izembek NWR, 2009)

## Lake Clark NP&P Accepting Comments on their General Management Plan Amendment

The National Park Service has released a plan that updates and replaces the 1984 General Management Plan and guides the future of Lake Clark National Park and Preserve. This plan will guide management of park resources, visitor's uses, and facilities for the next 15 to 20 years. It also provides direction for stewardship of park wilderness and backcountry recreation. During the planning process, we involved federal, state, and local agencies, tribes and villages, corporations, other interested parties, and the general public.

The General Management Plan Amendment / Environmental Assessment identifies and evaluates three management alternatives and their environmental impacts to natural and cultural resources,

wilderness character, and visitor experiences. The NPS preferred alternative would expand visitor opportunities while protecting wilderness character and park resources. Under all of the alternatives, the wild and undeveloped character would be maintained, and subsistence use in the park and preserve would continue to be a priority and supported in accordance with the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act.

The plan will be available for public review and comment through Wednesday, March 26, 2014 online at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/lacl> (click GMP Amendment). Comments may be submitted electronically at this website, or by regular mail to: Zachary Babb, National Park Service, 240 W. 5th Ave., Anchorage, AK 99501. ♦

## Greater Mooses Tooth Unit Proposed Development Project in NPR-A

On July 22, 2013, ConocoPhillips submitted an application with BLM for issuance of a right-of-way grant and related authorizations to construct, operate, and maintain a drill site, access road, pipelines, and ancillary facilities to support development of petroleum resources at Greater Mooses Tooth Unit 1. The proposed drill site location, and majority of the infield roads and pipeline route are on BLM-managed lands.

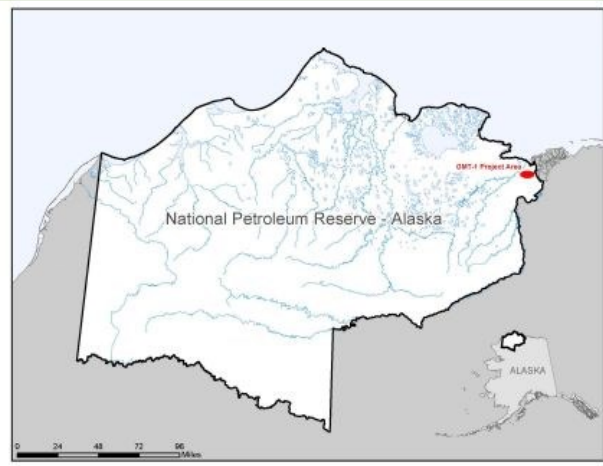
The Draft Supplemental EIS has been prepared for the limited purpose of supplementing the Alpine Satellite Development Plan Final EIS, dated September 2004, which analyzed the establishment of satellite oil production pads and associated infrastructure within the Alpine field.

The Greater Mooses Tooth Unit 1 project would facilitate the first production of oil from federal lands in the NPR-A. A *Federal Register* Notice of Availability for the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) was published on February 21, 2014 and this notice launched an official **60-day** public comment period.

For more information, the public meeting schedule or to review the Draft SEIS, visit BLM's planning website at: <http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en.html>, or contact the Project Lead, Bridget Psarianos at (907) 271-4208.

Comments on the Draft SEIS may **be** submitted by April 22, 2014 **by any of the following** methods:

- **Email:** [gmt1comments@slrconsulting.com](mailto:gmt1comments@slrconsulting.com)
- **Fax:** (907) 271- 3933
- **Mail:** GMT1 Draft SEIS Comments Attn: Bridget Psarianos 222 West 7th Avenue, Stop #13 Anchorage, Alaska 99513;
- **In person** at the BLM Public Information Center at 222 W. 7th Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99513 or at a public meeting. ♦



## State Files Suit Challenging ANWR Decision

On March 14, 2014, Governor Sean Parnell announced that the State of Alaska has filed a lawsuit challenging the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's (USFWS) refusal to consider the State's carefully developed exploration plan for the coastal plain, or 1002 Area, of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR).

"It is both disappointing and disturbing that the Obama administration, which claims that it is pursuing an 'all of the



above' energy policy, is afraid to let the people of the United States learn more about ANWR's oil and gas resources," Governor Parnell said. "The modern technology that we are seeking to use is responsibly utilized all across the North Slope with extremely limited environmental impact, and would dramatically improve our understanding of ANWR's resources. The State has filed this lawsuit to ensure all Americans have an opportunity to learn about the vast resource base Americans own in the 1002 Area of Alaska."

The State's complaint asserts that exploration of this area was mandated by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) and is still authorized by the plain language of law today, despite the Fish & Wildlife Service director's assertion in his final administrative decision in September 2013, that his agency did not have authority to review the State's plan.

The Fish & Wildlife Service's position was primarily based on a legal opinion, issued by a Department of the Interior solicitor in the final days of the Clinton administration, claiming that these provisions of ANILCA had expired. Despite the numerous legal issues raised by the State in its filings, the Fish and Wildlife Service in 2013 refused to revisit its interpretation of the still-existent federal law.

The State's exploration plan was submitted to Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell in July of 2013 and complies with existing USFWS regulations. The plan called for using advanced three-dimensional seismic imaging that would provide the people of Alaska and the United States with valuable information about the extent and accessibility of the significant oil and gas resources in the 1002 Area.

A copy of the complaint is available at:

[http://gov.alaska.gov/parnell\\_media/resources\\_files/Complaint\\_031414.pdf](http://gov.alaska.gov/parnell_media/resources_files/Complaint_031414.pdf) ♦

## BLM-Alaska to Delay Amendment to the Ring of Fire Resource Management Plan

The BLM has announced a delay in the Haines Planning Area Amendment to the Ring of Fire Resource Management Plan. This planning area is located in Southeast Alaska with approximately 320,000 acres of BLM-managed public lands in two main blocks encompassing the cities of Haines and Skagway. There is new scientific information related to mountain goats in the Haines area as well as an increased awareness of Alaska Native cultural values relating to these goat populations has prompted BLM to identify a new proposed alternative for a mountain goat habitat Area of Critical Environmental Concern for portions of the planning area.

A final decision on the amendment was expected in early 2014. However, developing a new alternative for public review and comment is expected to delay the amendment for at least a year.

More information can be found at the BLM's planning website online at: [http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/planning/ring\\_of\\_fire\\_plan.html](http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/planning/ring_of_fire_plan.html).

## Concerned with Lack of Federal Cooperation, Governor Parnell Releases Fortymile District Report

On March 13, 2014, Governor Parnell released the special counsel report on the federal criminal compliance investigation of placer mining operations in the Fortymile mining district last August. The governor called for the special counsel report after learning of the unprecedented investigation.

Notably, the report cites the lack of cooperation from Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) officials to provide witnesses and documents pertinent to the investigation. The special counsel specifically found the EPA-led criminal investigation unnecessarily placed Alaskan mining families in harm's way. The EPA went forward with the raid, even though the Alaska Department of Public Safety had investigated concerns of criminal activity a year earlier and they were "found to be without merit." Additionally, the special counsel found that state involvement in the EPA-led investigation was limited, and communication by the federal agency was lacking.

"The notion of armed federal agents showing up unannounced to 'investigate' hard-working Alaska mining families disturbs me," Governor Parnell said. "The question remains, why was a criminal investigation called for in the

first place? Further, I am disappointed, but not surprised that the special counsel was met with resistance in attempting to access documents and witnesses pertinent to his review."

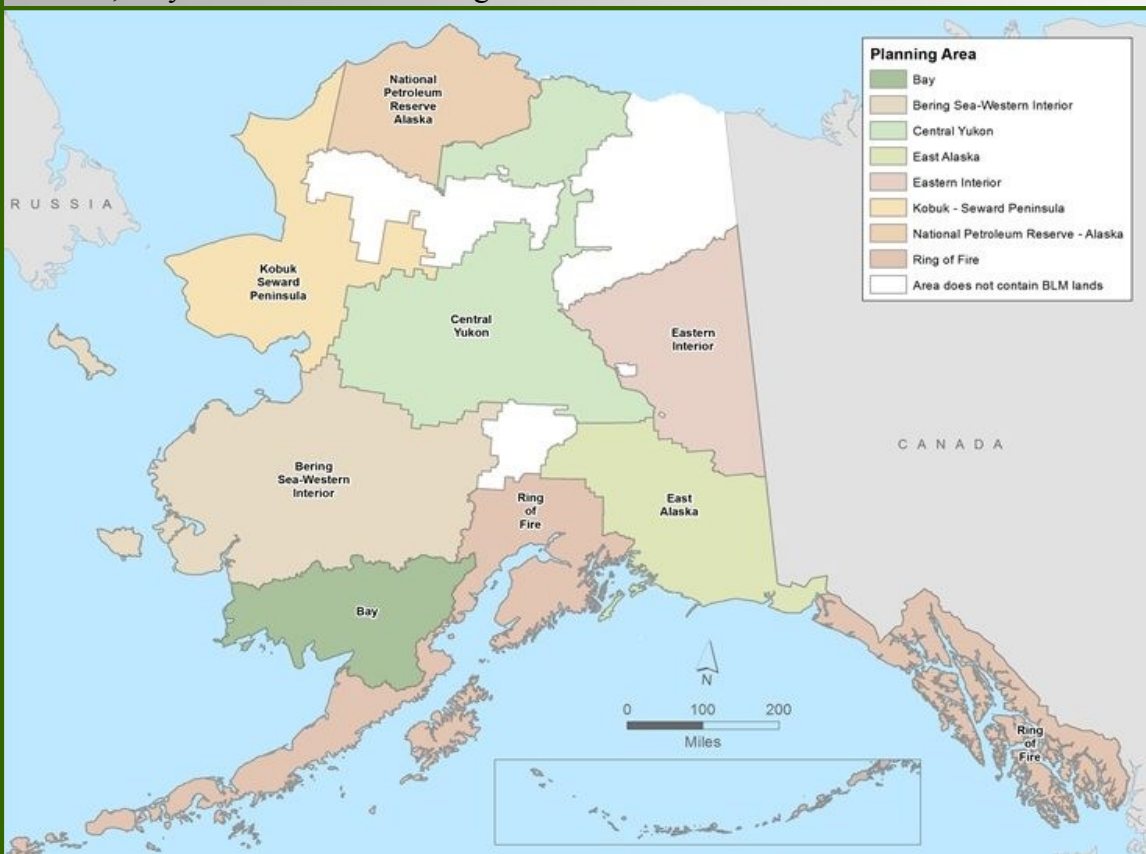
Governor Parnell has issued directives to the commissioners of Natural Resources, Public Safety, Environmental Conservation, and the attorney general to implement and improve procedures for reviewing future requests by a federal agency to have the state participate in an environmental crimes investigation. The governor will also ask the House Natural Resources Committee and House Resources Subcommittee to request EPA documents and hold a hearing where EPA witnesses, unavailable to the special counsel, can be questioned.

The report is available at:

[http://gov.alaska.gov/parnell\\_media/resources\\_files/2013\\_fortymile\\_mining\\_district\\_investigation.pdf](http://gov.alaska.gov/parnell_media/resources_files/2013_fortymile_mining_district_investigation.pdf)

Governor Parnell's letter to commissioners and the attorney general is available at:

[http://gov.alaska.gov/parnell\\_media/resources\\_files/Letter\\_031314.pdf](http://gov.alaska.gov/parnell_media/resources_files/Letter_031314.pdf) ♦



### BLM-Alaska Planning Area Map

Can be found online at: <http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/planning.html>

# Community Perspective by Senator John Coghill

(As published in The Fairbanks Daily Newsminer, 3/9/14; reprinted with permission from Senator Coghill)



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently exercised a damaging and preemptive power play against Alaska, and all other states, by using the Clean Water Act to keep the state from permitting a project in Southwest Alaska on state land. This is not about environmental protection or clean water. Instead, this is about the federal government bullying Alaska and private industry through the use of poor science and political favoritism on behalf of the environmental lobby.

It is truly disappointing that the EPA may prevent the Pebble mine project before it can even get to the permit process. The EPA assessment relies on a speculative multi-scenario “fantasy mine” yet admits that the assessment will “undoubtedly... differ from actual mine development.” (Page 28 of executive summary of January 2014 “An Assessment of Potential Mining Impacts on Salmon Ecosystems of Bristol Bay, Alaska”).

The non-peer reviewed “scientific analysis” focuses on various supposed “failure scenarios” where the damage is always presumed catastrophic. The failure scenarios, according to EPA, are deemed “common,” “likely” and “reasonable.” Give me a break.

The environmentalist lobby is a powerful, lucrative, worldwide industry with an anti-development agenda. Alaska is a huge prize and a good source of fundraising dollars for environmental activists. Right now, our federal landlords are heavily influenced by an overreaching “environmental philosophy,” putting our people and economy at risk.

Izembek is another example. President Obama’s administration and its extreme environmental agenda, led by Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, told the communities of Cold Bay and King Cove that the health and safety of their people were less important than the preservation of a few acres of land. It appears to be just another political favor to the environmental industry by the Obama administration.

The Izembek Wildlife Refuge of 315,000 acres is approximately one-fifteenth the size of my Fairbanks North Star Borough. The King Cove Corp. was willing to convey about 18,730 acres with the state kicking in 43,093 acres for a 10-mile one-lane dirt road.

Of the 71,960 letters commenting on this proposal, 70,111 were opposition letters from Defenders of Wildlife, The Alaska Wilderness League, The Sierra Club, and the National Wildlife Refuge Association. According to the Wilderness Society, “Jewell upheld the USFWS decision, and spared the wilderness from ruin.”

Eleven reported deaths in the Cold Bay and King Cove area have been attributed to the lack of road access. Our people have been jilted and left in unnecessary danger by our government.

When Alaska came into the union of states, our compact

with the rest of America rested on the promise of using our resources for our economic well being. Our state-selected lands were intended for us to develop and conserve. Our focus from then until now has been to use lands and resources for “producing” for our people and “conserving” for this and future generations. We are and have been good stewards.

On the other hand, the focus of federal land (about two-thirds of Alaska) and resource policy has been from “conservation” to “preservation” with production being a low priority in Alaska. For example, the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska has been designated by the Obama administration as a “wilderness like” area when it comes to permitting.

We as people and political leaders cannot give in to the continued overreach by our federal government or stand by when our interests are disrespected by an environmental industry that views human lives as a blight on the earth.

As good managers of our resource economy, our lands, waters and communities, we have a good story to tell. Let’s resolve to command respect from our federal landholders by voicing factual, credible and persistent resource development processes that protect our people, our environment, our economy and our future.

It is now election season, a time when we have the opportunity to mobilize Alaskans who will not cede state power to an over-dominating federal government or a large multinational environmental industry.

A Citizen Advisory Commission on Federal Areas was authorized by the Legislature to take comments, distribute information, deliberate on policy issues, and report to Alaskans on state and federal management. I encourage everyone in Alaska to participate by getting their “Alaska Lands Update” by going to the commission’s website (<http://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/cacfa>) and engaging in land management plans across this state.

Your federal and state representatives should hear from you.

Republican Sen. John Coghill represents the northern and eastern regions of the Fairbanks North Star Borough. He is majority leader in the Alaska Senate. ♦

## 2014 Alaska Statewide Trails Conference

Alaska Trails will be holding the 2014 Alaska Statewide Trails Conference in Anchorage on April 24 to 26 at the Alaska Pacific University. There will also be ‘Pre-Conference’ Session on April 22 & 23.

For more information, the conference agenda and registration information, visit Alaska Trails online at: [www.alaska-trails.org](http://www.alaska-trails.org), call (907) 334-8049 or e-mail: [office@alaska-trails.org](mailto:office@alaska-trails.org). ♦