

Alaska Lands Update

monthly updates on Federal management
actions for the people of Alaska

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

Hunting Guide Capacity Study EA

The BLM has received public interest and comments on social issues and user conflicts with commercial hunting guides. To address these conflicts, the BLM proposes to complete a statewide hunting guide capacity analysis, through an environmental assessment (EA), to determine the allocation of Special Recreation Permits (SRP) for each Guide Use Area on BLM public lands in Alaska.

The goal of this analysis is to determine the proper allocation of commercial hunting guide permits per Guide Use Area based on user conflicts and social issues associated with commercial hunting guides. These social issues are anticipated to drive the scope of the EA, including the affected environment, the identification of alternatives, the analysis of impacts, and subsequent decisions.

The purpose of the public scoping process, which began on July 9, 2012, is to identify relevant issues and criteria that will

guide the process and influence the scope of the analysis and alternatives. Detailed comments related to social user conflict (or the lack thereof) related to commercial hunting guides in specific Guide Use Areas will be the most important for this analysis. Comments must be received by September 9, 2012 to be considered in the analysis and may be submitted by:
Email: [BLM AK Hunt Guide Capacity Study@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_AK_Hunt_Guide_Capacity_Study@blm.gov); Fax: (907) 271-5479. Attn: GUA Comments; Mail: BLM Alaska State Office, Attn: Hunting Guide Capacity Comments, BLM Alaska, 222 West 7th Avenue, Suite 13, Anchorage, AK 99513.

For more information on this project or to have your name added to the mail list, contact Bill Overbaugh, at (907) 271-5508. The project website may be found at: [http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/planning/Hunting Guide Capacity Study EA.html](http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/planning/Hunting_Guide_Capacity_Study_EA.html).

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Comment Deadline Reminders

- BLM Alaska **Eastern Interior Resource Management Plan** comment deadline has been extended, new deadline to be announced <http://www.blm.gov/ak>;
- **Katmai National park and Preserve Hunting Guides Environmental Assessment** comment deadline is August 2, 2012; project website <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=35773>.

BLM release updated “Desk Guide to Cooperating Agency Relationships and Coordinating with Intergovernmental Partners”

In May 2012, the BLM released a *Desk Guide to Cooperating Agency Relationships and Coordination with Intergovernmental Partners* as a reference for managers and BLM partners in understanding the commitments, roles, and responsibilities of the BLM and cooperating agencies during land use planning and project development. The Desk Guide updates a 2005 guide by incorporating the valuable lessons learned since 2005 as the BLM has completed more than 60 resource management plans and engaged with more than 300 intergovernmental partners



Akun columnar basalt formation, Alaska Maritime NWR

at the federal, state, local, and tribal levels. It also addresses the changes in the Department regulations in 2008 and the principles of coordination under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and how cooperating agency status can improve efforts to coordinate during land use planning.

On this site you will find links to the BLM's *Desk Guide to Cooperating Agency Relationships and Coordination with Intergovernmental Partners* and associated documents. For further information, please contact Matthew Higdon, Division of Decision Support, Planning, & NEPA (202-912-7282), or Cynthia Moses-Nedd, Intergovernmental Affairs Group (202-912-7446), at the BLM Washington Office or by visiting online at: http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/info/nepa/cooperating_agencies.html.

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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.

Katmai National Park/Brooks River Area Draft Access Plan EIS AND Public Meetings

The National Park Service has released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement to evaluate alternatives for constructing a bridge and boardwalks to replace the current floating bridge, as well as associated trails to improve visitor access for the Brooks River area within Katmai National Park and Preserve. The alternatives are intended to continue to provide for the same pedestrian and small vehicle traffic that currently uses the floating bridge to cross the Brooks River. The alternatives also consider options for relocating the park's barge landing site and access road away from the mouth of the Brooks River. Comment on the draft EIS are being accepted through August 20, 2012.

Also planned are a series of public meetings scheduled between 4:30 and 7:30 p.m. at the following locations:

- Anchorage on August 1 at the Sheraton Hotel, 401 E. 6th Avenue; and
- King Salmon on August 2 at the Southwest Alaska Vocational & Education Center.

The draft EIS may be downloaded at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=24254>. The website also allows comments to be sent electronically. For more information, email Glen Yankus at glen_yankus@nps.gov or call 907-644-3535.

BLM-Alaska to Issue a Supplement to the Eastern Interior Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement and Extend the Comment Deadline

On July 3, 2012, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced its intention to release a Supplement to the Eastern Interior Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) and extend the comment period for the Draft RMP/EIS past the current deadline of July 30, 2012. The Supplement, which has not been released yet, is expected to amend hardrock mineral leasing in the White Mountains National Recreation Area.

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) withdraws the White Mountains National Recreation Area from the mining laws, but allows the Secretary of the Interior to issue leases for hardrock minerals if such leasing would not have significant adverse effects on the recreation area. The Draft RMP/EIS released in February considered hardrock mineral leasing in the White Mountains but did not analyze it in detail. Public comments received in response to the Draft RMP/EIS prompted the BLM

to conduct further legal research on this issue. As a result, the BLM decided that the Supplement was needed to analyze a full range of alternatives and to obtain public comment on hardrock mineral leasing in the White Mountains. Although release of the Supplement will delay the planning schedule for the RMP/EIS, the BLM concluded that addressing the issue of hardrock mineral leasing now is preferable to risking even longer delays by waiting until later in the planning process. The Supplement, when released, will be open and available for comment for a minimum of 90-days and set a new public comment deadline for the Draft RMP/EIS. Also, additional public meetings and Section 810 subsistence hearings will be held for the Supplement. The availability of the Supplement and the closing date for the extended comment period will be published in the *Federal Register* and on the BLM Eastern Interior RMP Home Page through www.blm.gov/ak when the Supplement is released for public comment. For information about the Eastern Interior planning process, visit the Eastern Interior RMP Home Page at www.blm.gov/ak or contact the BLM at (907) 474-2340 or (800) 437-7021 (within Alaska).



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.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/>

BLM Manual on the “Management of Wilderness Study Areas”

On July 13, 2012, the BLM released “Manual 6330 – Management of BLM Wilderness Study Areas”. The manual is intended to provide line manager and program staff professionals with general policies for the administration and management of wilderness study areas (WSA) and outlines procedures to ensure the Congressional mandate to manage Wilderness Study Areas “so as not to impair the suitability of such areas for preservation as wilderness”. This policy replaces the “Interim Management Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review”.

In Alaska however, this applies to only one area, the Central Arctic Management Area WSA, and doesn’t apply to areas that may have wilderness characteristic. This exception reads: “This policy does not apply to areas designated by Congress as Wilderness or to other lands that may have wilderness characteristics. Nor does this policy apply to Alaska outside of the Central Arctic Management Area WSA designated under the authority of Sections 1001 and 1004 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) and which is managed pursuant to all relevant sections of ANILCA.”, and can be found on page 1-1 of the manual. The full document can be reviewed at: [http://www.blm.gov/pgdata/etc/medialib/blm/wo/InformationResourcesManagement/policy/blm_manual.Par.31915.File.dat/WSA%20Manual%20Final%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.blm.gov/pgdata/etc/medialib/blm/wo/InformationResourcesManagement/policy/blm_manual.Par.31915.File.dat/WSA%20Manual%20Final%20(1).pdf).

BICYCLE REGULATIONS IN NATIONAL PARKS

The National Park Service (NPS) has released a Final Rule amending the current regulations for designating bicycle routes and for managing bicycle use within park units throughout the National Park System. The NPS believes that, with proper management, bicycling is an appropriate recreational activity in many park areas. In other areas, due to safety or other concerns, bicycling may not be appropriate. It authorizes park superintendents to open existing trails to bicycle use within park units under specific conditions, in accordance with appropriate plans and in compliance with applicable law, and provides park superintendents with a more efficient and effective way to determine whether opening existing trails to bicycles would be appropriate in the park unit they manage. The rule also offers guidance on trail sustainability, bicycle safety and retains the current requirement for a special regulation to authorize construction of new trails for bicycle use outside developed areas. The rule will be effective starting August 6, 2012.

For further information in this Final Rule contact Russel J. Wilson, Regulations Program, Manager, 1849 C Street NW., MS-3122, Washington, DC 20240, (202) 208-4206.

In Alaska there are 23 conservation units in the National Parks System. The NPS-Alaska main website can be found at: <http://www.nps.gov/state/ak/index.htm?program=parks>; and you may use the search tool to gain cycling information on a specific park. Denali National Park has a webpage devoted to cycling the Park which can be found at: http://www.nps.gov/denali/planyourvisit/cycling.htm#CP_JUMP_228329.

