

PLEASE DO NOT USE THIS DOCUMENT AS YOUR COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED RULES. If you provide comments, draft your own letter in your own words. The FWS will not consider cut-and-paste or form letters.

ALERT: US Fish & Wildlife Service proposed regulations on January 8, 2016, that will:

- *Change how wildlife is managed on 76 million acres of national wildlife refuges in Alaska, and*
- *Reduce public participation in federal decisions for public uses and refuge closures.*

FWS claims the regulations only affect non-subsistence uses. In truth the changes significantly impact:

- *The State's ability to manage and assure healthy, sustainable populations of many of Alaska's invaluable wildlife and fish species, as required by law;*
- *All Alaskans' ability to participate in hunting, fishing, trapping, potlatches, and other cultural, recreational, subsistence, and related traditional activities due to erratic, undependable levels of wildlife populations;*
- *All fish and wildlife-related social and economic activities, such as fishing and hunting guides, lodges, restaurants, air transporters, related jobs, trapping, and related family and community activities.*

The regulations will change how wildlife has been regulated since Statehood. The FWS proposal:

- ✓ **Authorizes Refuge Managers to prohibit any 'methods and means' allowed by state regulations without meaningful criteria, without public process, and without consultation with the State if:**
 - the federal manager thinks they are "particularly effective," not "ethical," or lack "fair chase."
- ✓ **Authorizes Refuge Managers to establish shorter seasons, closures, access limits, and lower bag limits and to prohibit any methods and means if:**
 - the federal manager thinks the harvest would impact "conservation of natural and biological diversity, biological integrity, and environmental health" (*despite the fact that Congress has not authorized the FWS to use these criteria to trump state regulations.*)
- ✓ **Reduces the public's role in the process Refuge Managers use to restrict uses. The new process:**
 - uses the internet instead of local public notice, hearing, and signage in the affected area.
 - allows "temporary" closures to last 3 years (currently 12 months) and to be perpetually extended.
- ✓ **Closes all refuge lands to hunting, trapping, and fishing for subsistence uses under state regulations:**
 - Subsistence as a priority use in Alaska under state law would be denied on refuge lands.
 - On refuge lands, FWS will only recognize subsistence uses authorized by the Federal Subsistence Board for federally-qualified rural residents, thus limiting participation by other family members.

Comments are due March 8, 2016. FWS gave Alaskans only 60 days to comment on these major changes.

If you want to testify, give oral comments at Public Hearings. Oral testimony is not accepted at Open Houses.

February 11	Tok School, 249 Jon Summar Rd	Open House 5-6 PM; Public Hearing 6:30-8:30 PM
February 16	Kenai Refuge Visitor Center Soldotna	Open House 4-5 PM; Public Hearing 5:30-7:30 PM
February 18	USFWS, 1011 Tudor Rd, Anchorage	Open House 4-5 PM; Public Hearing 5:30-7:30 PM
March 1	Dillingham City Council Chambers	Open House 4-5 PM; Public Hearing 5:30-7:30 PM
March 3	Charlie Larsen Community Hall Galena	Open House 1-2 PM; Public Hearing 2:30-4:30 PM
Date ??	Reschedule Kodiak —yet to be announced	

Three ways to submit written comments: Write your own personal comments; do not duplicate this ALERT.

Electronically: go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and in Search box, type FWS-R7-NWRS-2014-0005, click "Search", then click "Comment Now"; insert comments; or

By mail: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R7-NWRS-2014-0005; Division of Policy, Performance, and Management Programs; US Fish and Wildlife Service, MS: BPHC; 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803; or

By hand: give your printed comments to any Service personnel conducting open houses or public hearings.