



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL

**Department of Natural Resources**

CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMISSION ON  
FEDERAL AREAS  
Stan Leaphart, Executive Director

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January 25, 2013

Sue Masica  
Regional Director  
National Park Service  
240 West 5th Avenue  
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Ms. Masica:

Last week Commission member Rod Arno and I met with NPS Deputy Regional Director Joel Hard to discuss our concerns about the proposed revisions to the 2013 National Park and Preserve Compendiums. We appreciated the opportunity to discuss the issues raised in our letter of December, 5, 2012, even though we had anticipated a written response. In addition to our objection to the NPS proposal to preempt State hunting regulations, we discussed what the Commission maintains is an inadequate public hearing and meeting schedule. Mr. Hard indicated that an additional public meeting was planned in Homer and at the Alaska Forum on the Environment in February. We also understand an online meeting is scheduled for February 4 through 7.

The Commission welcomes these additional opportunities for public participation in the compendium process. However, given the significance of the proposed restrictions the public meeting schedule remains inadequate. With the exception of the Homer meeting, we are uncertain that the other venues meet the regulatory requirement that a hearing be held in the vicinity of the areas directly affected by the proposed hunting restrictions (36 CFR §13.50(d)).

Admittedly, when those regulations were originally promulgated, on-line meetings, webinars and other social media were not available. However, even now, many residents in rural Alaska who will be affected by these proposals have limited or no access to these on-line tools. Use of the internet for public outreach can supplement but not replace on the ground public meetings.

We are particularly troubled by the NPS decision to take "public" comment at the 2013 Alaska Forum on the Environment. The event information provided in the agenda for the forum states:

"NPS-Alaska leadership will present a summary of potential regulations, *take comments* about the proposals, and be available for other questions about NPS operations.....This

session will provide a description of the proposed changes, a discussion of the need for action by the NPS and *an opportunity for public comment.*”

Presentation of the proposed compendium revisions at the Alaska Forum on the Environment as an information and discussion item is certainly appropriate. Soliciting public comments at the forum for inclusion in the administrative record for the revision process is highly inappropriate. We have confirmed with forum organizers that attendance at any of the sessions requires payment of a substantial registration fee. For the purposes of the compendium revision process the forum cannot legitimately be considered an open public meeting.

We also strongly caution the NPS against treating its participation in the forum as anything other than an opportunity to provide a briefing on the proposals and to encourage interested attendees to submit comments through other acceptable methods. Comments should not be solicited at the forum, nor should any unsolicited comments by forum participants be included in the compendium record.

As of today, 21 days remain in the public review and comment period for the 2013 compendiums. Ample time remains to schedule and hold additional public hearings on the proposed changes, as this Commission suggested in our previous letter - more than 7 weeks ago. It is unfortunate that the NPS did not utilize the intervening time to better comply with the public hearing requirements found in its own regulations. We urge you to use the remaining time to do so.

Sincerely



Stan Leaphart  
Executive Director

cc: Sen. Lisa Murkowski  
Doug Vincent-Lang – ADF&G  
Sue Magee – State ANILCA Coordinator