

# 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

## Denali National Park and Preserve Seeking Public Input on Entrance Fee Changes

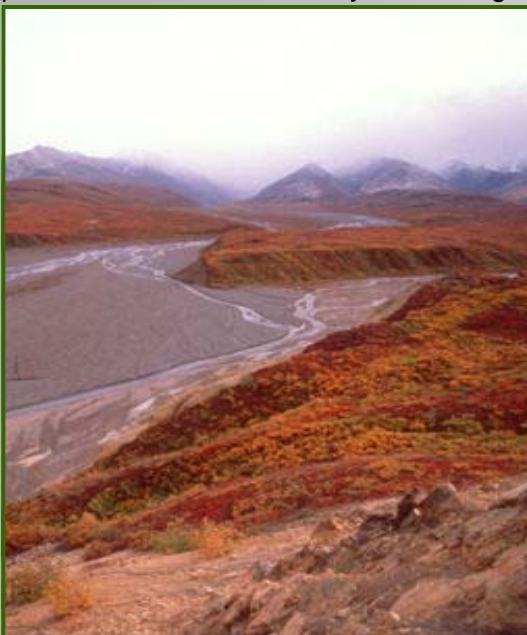
Denali National Park and Preserve is seeking public input on a proposal to simplify the entrance fee structure. Currently the park charges entrance fees of \$10 per person, \$20 per vehicle, and \$15 per motorcycle. The National Park Service is proposing to collect only the \$10 per person entrance fee, effective January 1, 2012. The vast majority of the park's visitors do not travel into the park in vehicles or motorcycles during

the main visitor season (mid-May through mid-September), and this has created an inconsistency in how the fees are being accounted for.

The fee is valid for seven days. There is no entrance fee for visitors who are age 16 or younger. The park will continue to honor the Interagency Federal Recreation Passes such as the Annual, Senior, and Access Pass, and the Denali Annual Pass. Each of these passes provides entry for the cardholder and up to three other adults. The majority of the money collected through entrance fees remains in the park to be used for projects to improve visitor services and facilities.

More information can be obtained on the parks website at [www.nps.gov/dena](http://www.nps.gov/dena) or by calling Jasmine Horn, Fee Business Manager, at (907) 683-6554 or [jasmine.horn@nps.gov](mailto:jasmine.horn@nps.gov).

Comments on this proposal to change the entrance fee structure may be submitted through Sunday, October 30, 2011, preferably via email to [DENA\\_Public\\_Comments@nps.gov](mailto:DENA_Public_Comments@nps.gov). Comments may also be faxed to (907) 683-9610 or mailed to: Superintendent, ATTN: Entrance Fee, P.O. Box 9, Denali Park, AK 99755



East Fork of the Toklat River, Denali National Park

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## Selawik National Wildlife Refuge Releases Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan

The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announces the availability of their revised comprehensive conservation plan (CCP) and finding of no significant impact (FONSI) for the Selawik National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). In this revised CCP, The Service describes how it will manage the Refuge for the next 15 years. This notice is the final step in revising the CCP.

In 2008 the process began with a Draft CCP and EA consistent with Section 304(g) of ANILCA. Public scoping identified eight major



planning issues: (1) Protection of fish, wildlife, habitats, and subsistence; (2) management of access to refuge lands for community residents and the visiting public; (3) maintain-

ing hunting opportunities; (4) addressing local public use needs; (5) maintaining water quality and quantity; (6) maintaining the wild character of the Refuge and quality visitor experiences; (7) proactively addressing the uncertainties of climate change; and (8) providing more outreach and better communication for the public. The Service considered and evaluated all of these issues through the alternatives, goals, and objectives addressed or described in the draft CCP and the EA.

You may view or obtain copies of the revised CCP and FONSI by any of the following methods.

Online at <http://alaska.fws.gov/nwr/planning/plans.htm>;

By E-mail at [selawik\\_planning@fws.gov](mailto:selawik_planning@fws.gov); please include "Selawik National Wildlife Refuge CCP" in the subject line;

By U.S. Mail

Jeffrey Brooks

U.S. F&W Service Regional Office  
1011 E. Tudor Road Mailstop 231  
Anchorage, AK 99503.

To view In-Person Call (907) 786-3357 to make an appointment during regular business hours at the above Anchorage address; or call (907) 442-3799 to make an appointment during regular business hours at the Selawik Refuge Headquarters in Kotzebue, AK.

## North Slope Science Initiative seeks Science Technical Advisory Panel members

The North Slope Science Initiative (NSSI) is seeking members for its Science Technology Panel. The 15-member panel of scientists and technical experts plays a critical advisory role for the NSSI and its oversight group by assisting with resource inventories, monitoring, and research needs for Alaska's North Slope. Panel membership is diverse and may represent the oil and gas industry, subsistence users, traditional ecological knowledge, conservation organizations, academia; and panel members come from wide ranging disciplines from landscape ecology and petroleum engineering to sociology, economics and or North Slope traditional and local knowledge.

The Secretary of the Interior appoints NSSI's Science Technology Panel members for three-year terms; and members will be reimbursed for official travel (airline tickets, lodging and per diem) to participate on the panel. The Federal Advisory Committee Act does not permit salaries, benefits or honorariums for appointees.

The *Federal Register* published the notice on Sept. 14 soliciting nominations for this panel. The NSSI must receive all nominations by Oct. 14. For information, instructions, and the nomination form, go to <http://www.northslope.org/>.

The NSSI was established by Congress under Section 348 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (Public Law 109-58). This Act directs the NSSI to coordinate scientific data collections that will provide a better understanding of the terrestrial, aquatic and marine ecosystems of Alaska's North Slope. The NSSI also works to identify and prioritize information needs to address individual and cumulative effects of development activities and environmental change.

## Commission Members

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**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 citizens of the state and officials of the state.



## Serpentine Hot Springs Master Plan

The National Park Service (NPS) is beginning a master planning process for the Serpentine Hot Springs area of Bering Land Bridge National Preserve (BELA). A Master Plan will provide long-range guidance for managing future development of the Serpentine Hot Springs, balancing natural and cultural resources while maintaining a positive experience for visitors. Serpentine Hot Springs is located about thirty miles from the end of the Nome-Kougarok road. It is the most visited area of the preserve. It is a remote destination that is prized for its recreational, scenic, cultural, and spiritual qualities. Facilities at Serpentine are minimal and consist of an enclosed bath house; a bunkhouse with

wood/oil heat; a connecting board walk; and a short dirt 1,100 foot airstrip. Current means of access to the area include fixed wing aircraft, snowmobile, dog sled, and foot. As visitation increases, the natural and cultural resources of the area may be impacted; therefore, the NPS wants to create and implement an area management plan to proactively manage the situation. A transportation access study was completed for the area during the winter of 2011. The report compiled information about potential improvements to access ranging from minimal upgrades to pre-existing facilities to large scale road improvements. Possible improve-

ments to access, including summer, winter, air and surface transportation options, that were studied included:

- On site improvements such as: limited improvements to the existing airstrip, expand the existing airstrip, build a new, longer airstrip, adding helicopter access;



Serpentine Hot Springs Area of the Bering Land Bridge National Preserve, Seward Peninsula

- Increased winter trails to the site;
- Build a 'geogrid' earthen trail, single or double lane road from the end of Nome-Taylor Highway to the area.

The report provided an overview of possible impacts to resources and visitor experience by the access improvements, and it included preliminary cost estimates for each option. View the transportation study under the documents tab at the project webpage <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=36603>.

The Master Plan, which is a formal effort that will amend the 1986 BELA General Man-

agement Plan, is expected to build upon the results of the transportation study utilizing information gained during public scoping. A dialogue with communities across the Seward Peninsula was initiated by the NPS in order to learn about community perspectives, potential access improvements, costs and impacts.

During these public meetings, stakeholders emphasized the importance of protecting the current rustic facilities and traditional healing values of Serpentine Hot Springs and they urged improvements in access so that more people can enjoy the exceptional values of the site.

The master planning process for Serpentine Hot Springs is expected to take almost two years to complete. The time-

line for major milestones is as follows:

- Summer 2011 - Define Purpose, Need and Impact Topics;
- Fall 2011 - Alternatives Workshop;
- Winter 2011-12 - Draft Alternatives Newsletter and Public Meetings;
- Summer 2012 - Public Review of the Master Plan/EA;
- Fall 2012 - Final Decision.

Find more information visit the Bering Land Bridge National Preserve website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/parkHome.cfm?parkID=6>.

## Federal Subsistence Board to Add Public Members

Revised regulations concerning the composition of the Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) take effect on October 12, 2011. The revised regulations will expand the FSB by two public voting members. Currently the FSB is comprised of a Chair, who is appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture, the Alaska Regional Directors for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Alaska State Director for the Bureau of Land Management, and the Alaska Regional Forester for the U.S. Forest Service.



Farming Operation in Dillingham

The two public members will also be appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture. The public members must possess personal knowledge of and direct experience with subsistence uses in rural Alaska to qualify for appointment. This change is the result of a review of the Federal Subsistence Management Program that proposed several administrative and regulatory changes intended to strengthen the program and make it more responsive to rural subsistence users. Additional information and the revised regulations can be found at: <http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/index.cfm>.

The **Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas** will be meeting in **Anchorage** on **October 27 and 28, 2011** at the

**Legislative Information Office,**

**716 W. 4th Avenue, Suite 220, ph - 907-269-0111**

More information and the agenda can be found at

**<http://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/pic/pubnotfrm.htm>**

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION is ENCOURAGED.**

**Call in or by present at 3p on October 27, 11a and 3p on October 28 to speak with the Commission on agenda items as well as other issues.**

**Call 1 855-463-5009 outside Juneau or 463-5009 inside Juneau.**

## National Landscape Conservation System Releases 15-Year Management Strategy

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has released a 15-year strategy to guide National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) land management efforts in coming years. "By continuing to collaborate and successfully develop new partnerships, the BLM can ensure that future generations of Americans



have the chance to use and experience these incredible lands just as we do today," said BLM Director Bob Abbey.

Created in June 2000 to conserve, protect, and restore the BLM's nationally significant resources for fu-

ture generations, the NLCS now has nearly 900 units nationally, encompassing 27 million acres of conservation lands, trails, and waterways each designated by congressional act or presidential proclamation. In Alaska, these units are the Steese National Conservation Area, the Iditarod National Historic Trail, the Beaver Creek Wild and Scenic River, the Birch Creek Wild and Scenic River, the Delta Wild and Scenic River, the Gulkana Wild and Scenic River, the Fortymile Wild and Scenic River, and the Unalakleet Wild and Scenic River. The BLM's Alaska state web page features these

units in detail at <http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/nlcs.html>.

The new NLCS strategy supports the BLM's multiple-use mission by ensuring that NLCS management efforts will focus on conservation,

while still allowing for other compatible uses, consistent with the designating legislation or presidential proclamation. In addition to conservation, the strategy emphasizes continued collaboration, public involvement, and youth engagement.

For more information, maps and to read the NLCS 15-Year Strategy visit <http://on.doi.gov/pttikY>.

### 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/>

## Climbing Allocation for Mount McKinley

Denali National Park and Preserve has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) pertaining to the allocation of climbing permits between commercially guided climbing operators and independent climbers on Mount McKinley. The 2006 Backcountry Management Plan established a seasonal (April 1 to August 1) limit of 1500 permitted climbers for Mount McKinley. The Backcountry Management Plan allocated 25% of the permits for commercially guided groups.

Concessioner guided climbs are a longstanding tradition in Denali; and interest in guided climbing is increasing. The National Park Service (NPS) is working to determine how to accommodate this demand, while assuring that wilderness resources values, visitor experience, and other park resources are protected. A reasonable range of alternatives has been developed for consideration ranging from no change to increasing the percentage of commercially guided permits to utilize the remaining unused independent climber permits.

The EA is available at the NPS planning website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov>.

**Comments will be accepted through October 15** and can be submitted through the planning website;

By US mail - Denali National Park and Preserve, ATTN: Climbing EA, P.O. Box 9, Denali Park, AK 99755; or fax at 907-638-9612.

For additional information contact Martha Armington, Project Lead at 907-683-9529 and Paula Homan, Project Planning Lead at 907-683-6223.

