

Alaska Lands Update

monthly updates on Federal management actions for the people of Alaska

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

Hearing Set on Proposed Hunting Restrictions in Denali National Preserve

The National Park Service (NPS) has announced it will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, December 12 at 5 p.m. at the Murie Science and Learning Center on proposed changes to sport hunting regulations for Denali National Preserve. The proposed changes would prohibit taking brown bears over bait stations, using artificial light to take black bears at dens, taking black bear cubs and sows with cubs, and would shorten the season for hunting wolves and coyotes.

According to the press release. The proposed restrictions renew a previous temporary prohibition on taking black bears at dens and black bear cubs and sows with cubs. The restrictions also respond to recent changes to State of Alaska hunting regulations. Those changes included allowing the killing of brown bears over bait stations in three game management units, which included portions of three National Preserves. The proposed prohibition reflects the NPS concerns about the dangers of food conditioned bears as well as the potential impact to the natural abundance, behavior, distribution, and ecological integrity of brown bear populations.

The State has also extended the hunting season for wolves and coyotes into the summer in several areas, including nine National Preserves. The NPS is proposing to prohibit the take between May 1 and August 9 because it is the period when wolves and coyotes are denning and raising offspring and their pelts have little trophy or economic value.

The hearing is the first step leading to the potential implementation of restrictions in the annual Superintendent's Compendium, an annual compilation of temporary closures and similar restrictions. After taking into consideration public comments, the National Park Service may include hunting restrictions in the draft Compendium, which will be released on January 15, 2013. The text for all of the Alaska compendiums will be posted on www.nps.gov/akso/compendiums. A 30-day public comment period will also be held for the draft compendiums, with a final compendium expected to go into effect on April 1, 2013.

For more information contact Maureen McLaughlin, Mountaineering Administration and Public Information Talkeetna Ranger Station; (907) 733-9103 (phone). ♦

Concepts in Strategic Habitat Conservation and Surrogate Species

To enable effective and efficient fish and wildlife conservation, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has developed draft technical guidance to help employees and partners establish biological outcomes at defined landscape scales. This guidance describes a standard process and criteria for defining biological outcomes using a surrogate species approach, reducing the burden of addressing the requirements of many species individually. Surrogate species are used to represent other species or aspects of the environment. They are used for comprehensive conservation planning that supports multiple species and habitats within a defined landscape or geographic area. The application of this guidance represents an opportunity for the Service to participate with partners in advancing understanding of surrogate species science and refining application of the Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) framework to our conservation activities.

The guidance describes ten steps for identifying and selecting surrogate species and discusses the advantages, conservation applications, and limitations of this conservation planning technique.



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Used consistently, this guidance will improve the conservation practitioner's efficiencies and impacts through the application of SHC, assist in defining biological objectives, help target where on the landscape to target efforts, and result in more cost-effective management decisions and investments in conservation.

For more information on this and how to post a comment visit the USF&WS online at <http://www.fws.gov/landscape-conservation/draft-guidance.html>. Comments will be received through January 31, 2013. ♦

Comment Deadline Reminders

- BLM Alaska **Eastern Interior Resource Management Plan** comment deadline extended pending the release of supplemental documents which are awaiting approval from Washington D.C. office. Once approved, the documents should be released within a few weeks. Check BLM Alaska's website at <http://www.blm.gov/ak> for more information;
- BLM AK **Controlling Invasive Plants** - Comments due by Dec. 30, 2012;
- Bering Land Bridge National Preserve **Guided Hunting EA** - Dec. 9, 2012;
- Katmai NPP **Fire Management Plan** - February 1, 2013;

Documents expected out soon:

- **Izembek Land Exchange/Road Final Environmental Impact Statement and Public Interest Determination** from the US Fish and Wildlife Service is not expected until February 2013;
- The **BLM-National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska** is anticipating release of the Final Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement in early 2013. The project website is: <http://www.blm.gov/ak>.
- The USFWS expects to release the final **Comprehensive Conservation Plan** for the **Arctic National Wildlife Refuge** this December. Keep track of that project at: <http://alaska.fws.gov/nwr/arctic/index.htm>.

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/>

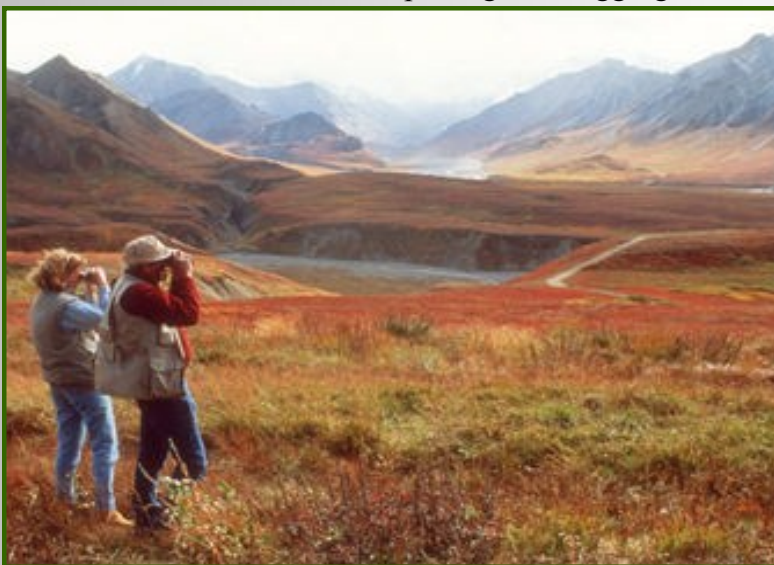
National Marine Fisheries Service

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/>

BLM Seeks Public Comments on Strategies for Controlling Invasive Plants along the Dalton Highway

The Bureau of Land Management's Central Yukon Field Office is seeking public comments on a draft environmental assessment (EA) analyzing the potential impacts of invasive plant management strategies along the Dalton Highway. The document became available November 30, 2012, for a 30-day public comment period.

The draft Dalton Management Area Invasive Plant Management Strategic Plan analyzed by this EA covers BLM-managed public lands along the Dalton Highway between the Yukon River Bridge and Galbraith Lake. Past efforts by volunteer crews of plant-pullers and trimmers focused on removal of white



sweet clover, oxeye daisy, yellow toadflax, bird vetch, and common tansy. Some of these control methods have proven inadequate—particularly with dense, continuous infestations—and evidence suggests that some of the in-

vasive plant species may move away from the highway into natural, undisturbed areas.

The draft plan includes alternative strategies for invasive plant control, including use of herbicides, when pulling and digging are insufficient. The draft plan also includes public education, monitoring and an Early Detection Rapid Response program.

After analyzing comments on the draft EA, the agency will decide whether to implement the proposed action or alternatives. More information about the plan and EA can be found online at www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/fo/fdo/central_yukon_field/dalton_invasives.html or by calling Jennifer McMillan at (907) 474-2308. Comments may be submitted by mail to BLM Central Yukon Field Office, 1150 University Avenue, Fairbanks, AK 99709, or by email to CentralYukon@blm.gov. ♦

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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.

considering alternatives for managing wildland fires in Katmai National Park and Preserve and the Alagnak Wild River corridor. The Katmai Fire Management Plan (FMP) would serve as a detailed and comprehensive program of action to implement fire management policy principles and goals that are consistent with the areas' resource management objectives. The environmental assessment (EA) evaluates the effects of three alternatives for managing wildland fires in the park, preserve, and wild river corridor. These include the no-action alternative that continues full suppression of all wildland fires using techniques appropriate for various locations, a second that uses wildland fires to restore and

Bering Land Bridge Accepting Comments on Guided Hunting Environmental Assessment

The National Park Service has released for public review an environmental assessment to consider alternatives to solicit proposals for guided sport hunting in Bering Land Bridge National Preserve (Preserve). Guided hunting occurred in the area before and after the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA), but ceased on the Preserve by the mid-1980s. Changing conditions in wildlife populations and subsistence use patterns, and requests for new economic opportunities in the region, have prompted the NPS to consider this action

The environmental assessment evaluates the effects of alternatives for managing guided sport hunting concessions within the Preserve. The alternatives include: 1) the no-action alternative with no guided hunting, 2) awarding contracts to up to three guides with overlapping guide areas in the preserve and an average total of about 30 clients per year, and 3) awarding contracts to up to three guides with separate guide areas with an annual average total of about 20 clients per year. The NPS goal is to authorize these uses in a manner to prevent or minimize adverse effects to park resources, values, and uses.

The NPS is considering this action because local rural residents and the Alaska Professional Hunters Association asked the agency to consider allowing these activities in the Preserve. At present subsistence and sport hunting without guides occurs within the Preserve, but pursuant to State of Alaska regulations a non-resident citizen of the USA cannot hunt a brown/grizzly bear in the State without a licensed guide (unless accompanied by a close relative who is a resident) nor can a nonresident foreign resident hunt any big game species without a licensed guide.

The 30-day comment period for the EA began November 9, 2012 and will end Sunday, December 9, 2012. Comments may also be posted at the Planning, Environment, and Pub-

lic Comment program located on the NPS public comment website at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov> or submitted in writing to the attention of Bud Rice, NPS Alaska Regional Office, 240 West 5th Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99501.

A copy of the EA is available from the NPS Planning Environment and Public Comment web page at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=6&projectID=38051&documentID=50464>.

If you have specific questions about the EA or public comment process, or to request a hard copy of the EA, please contact Bud Rice, Environmental Protection Specialist, at (907) 644-3530 or Jeanette Pomrenke, Superintendent, Bering Land Bridge National Preserve, at (907) 443-2522. ♦



Katmai National Park and Preserve seeks comment on their Fire Management Plan

The National Park Service (NPS) is maintain natural conditions in the bulk of the areas with mechanical removal of flammable vegetation from around structures and sensitive cultural sites, and a third that uses wildland fire and mechanical removal techniques plus prescribed fire in selected locations to reduce hazardous vegetative fuel loads to protect human life, property, and park resources from the effects of unwanted fire. The third alternative is the NPS preferred alternative. For more information and to comment, visit the project website at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=13&projectID=39260&documentID=50741>. The comment period for this EA is 60-days, beginning December 3, 2012 and ending February 1, 2013. ♦

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For more information and to comment, visit the project website at:

[http://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?](http://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=13&projectID=39260&documentID=50741)

[parkID=13&projectID=39260&documentID=50741](http://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=13&projectID=39260&documentID=50741).

The comment period for this EA is 60-days, beginning December 3, 2012 and ending February 1, 2013. ♦

Welcome Ms. Goodro as Superintendent for Lake Clark National Park

A land manager with extensive experience across the western United States has been selected as the new Superintendent of Lake Clark National Park and Preserve. Margaret L. Goodro will begin her new position in January overseeing the four-million-acre national park and preserve located southwest of Anchorage, Alaska. Since 2010, she has served as the Bureau of Land Management's El Centro Field Manager in California where she was responsible for 1.5 million acres, 10 wilderness areas, 85 miles of International Border and the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area.

"Margaret brings a wide range of experience to her Alaska position, including work on tribal consultation, renewable energy and recreation projects", said NPS-Alaska Deputy Regional Director Joel Hard. "She's also an avid boater and has been a private pilot, which adds a greater degree of understanding about the access to Lake Clark and other remote Alaska parks."

"I am honored to join the NPS Alaska team and I look forward to this exciting challenge. It's a great feeling to be heading home to the northwest", said Margaret L. Goodro. ♦



Comment Period for USFWS Proposed Rule on Impact Analysis of Critical Habitat Reopened

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service announce the reopening of the public comment period on their proposed rule to revise regulations pertaining to impact analyses conducted for designations of critical habitat for endangered and threatened wildlife and plants under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. Originally published in the Federal Register on August 24, 2012, the proposed rule to amend implementing regulations at 50 CFR 424.19 to clarify the instructions for making information available to the public, considering the impacts of critical habitat designations, and considering exclusions from critical habitat. These changes are being proposed as directed by the President's February 28, 2012, memorandum, which directed the Secretary of the Interior to revise the regulations implementing the Endangered Species Act to provide that a draft economic

analysis be completed and made available for public comment at the time of publication of a proposed rule to designate critical habitat. Comments will now be accepted until Wednesday, February 6, 2013. For additional information and to review the proposed rule in detail, access the Federal eRule-making Portal at: <http://www.regulations.gov>; search for FWS-R9-ES-2011-0073. The original post is dated August 24, 2012 and the notice to reopen the comment period is dated November 8, 2012. The original post of the proposed rule has not been changed only the comment period has been reopened to allow all interested parties additional time to review and comment. Comments previously submitted need not be resubmitted and will be fully considered in preparation of the final rule. ♦

