

STATE OF ALASKA

ANILCA IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM Office of Project Management and Permitting

SEAN PARNELL, Governor

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October 2, 2009

Paul Anderson, Superintendent
Denali National Park and Preserve
P.O. Box 9
Denali Park, AK 99755

Dear Mr. Anderson:

The State of Alaska reviewed the Environmental Assessment (EA) for Construction of New Trails in the Savage River Area of Denali National Park. The following comments represent the consolidated views of the State's resource agencies.

The State supports the Service's intent to provide increased recreational and interpretive opportunities in the entrance area of the park where visitors can access the park independent of the bus system. We appreciate the proposed trails would connect heavily used activity areas; mitigate resource damage resulting from existing social trails; reduce the creation of new social trails; improve visitor safety by removing pedestrian traffic from the park road shoulder; and increase wheelchair access.

We also understand the trail and route system proposed for the alpine area needs to be carefully planned to protect park resources and, as such, appreciate the EA and the Minimum Requirements Decision Guide acknowledge that the proposed trail system implements objectives established in previous planning documents and addresses various ways in which the proposed actions minimize impacts to wilderness resources and values.

Given the description of Section C of the Savage High Alpine Trail includes "...a cairned route on the creekbed..." and "...would be eventually built on the creek bench where it would require heavier construction methods because of the soft soils" we recommend the Service contact Robert "Mac" McLean, Regional Supervisor with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Habitat (907-459-7281) to determine if any of the proposed trail or construction activities require state authorization.

We appreciate inclusion of Appendix C, Wetlands Statement of Findings, and recognition of the Corps Section 404 permit on page 13. Note a companion Section 401 Certification from the Department of Environmental Conservation is also required.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. Please contact me at (907) 269-7529 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Magee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of the last name being a large, prominent capital 'M'.

Susan E. Magee
ANILCA Project Coordinator

cc: Sally Gibert, ANILCA Program Coordinator