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December 29, 1999

Deborah O. Liggett
Superintendent
Lake Clark/Katmai National Park and Preserve
4230 University Drive, Suite 311
Anchorage, AK 99508

Dear Ms. Liggett:

This letter is in response to your letter of November 30, 1999, to Frank Rue, Commissioner of the Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). In light of the multiple agency interests triggered by the scope of your request, ADF&G and other state agencies felt a coordinated response from this office would be most appropriate. We apologize for the delayed response.

Your letter suggests that current public use trends call for development of a "*long-range, collaborative fishery management plan*" and suggests a meeting in January to discuss this planning effort. We welcome the opportunity to discuss the issues raised in your letter. In the meantime, however, we have several questions and considerations that should be addressed before finalizing an agenda, a list of participants and desired products.

First, we would like to a better understanding of the area you are interested in discussing. It is not clear if you are interested in a park-wide effort for Lake Clark, Katmai and Aniakchak, or if you wish to focus specifically on the Alagnak. From the perspective of state agencies, a river-specific approach, such as the Alagnak, would be more manageable and likely more productive given our limited resources. We assume the Service acknowledges the state's authorities to manage public uses in navigable waterways as a fundamental principle, at least outside the boundaries of the original Katmai National Monument. For the beds of navigable waterways within parklands and management of state waters, we support joint efforts to evaluate uses and, if appropriate, adopt special use management designations and plans.

We also think it would be valuable to redefine the scope of the effort. A "fishery management plan", as defined by the state, is developed by ADF&G and the Board of Fisheries and is specific to the conservation and allocation of the fisheries themselves. For strictly fisheries issues, a Master Memorandum of Understanding signed in 1982 by the NPS and ADF&G (see page 164 of the Katmai GMP) lays out a process for working directly with the State Board of Fisheries.

Your letter, however, appears to address more than just the health and utilization of fish populations, apparently including the spectrum of public uses associated with river use. Therefore, what may be needed is a collaborative process that ties together or coordinates several types of state and federal planning and decision-making. State agencies have some experience in this arena through coordinated planning for rivers in the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge. Our cooperative efforts in the Togiak Refuge have included the Alaska Department of Natural Resources actions to manage the beds of navigable rivers in the refuge, and revised Board of Fisheries harvest regulations to conserve fisheries while protecting the interests of fishermen. These combined actions, among others, have resulted in a leveling or reduction in number of non-local fishermen in that area.

Before the agencies meet, we should discuss your proposal and identify who from the state should be involved. We also suggest having some discussions on what data are already available. For example, state fisheries and visitor surveys suggest that the rapidly increasing uses in the early 1990s may have leveled off and even declined in the past few years. Thus, any park data that portrays a different view would be useful to provide to participants before the meeting.

In preparing for the proposed meeting, we also suggest the following additional information be available to the participants: 1) the status of the applicable Resource Management Plan(s) and issues the state raised in during review; 2) listing of appropriate agency jurisdictions, 3) summary of the public trust doctrine addressing the rights of the public to boat, fish and hunt on navigable waterways, and processes required to restrict such use; and 4) applicable provisions of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), such as step-down planning process requirements and regulations available for managing public use.

ADF&G's Division of Subsistence will be interested in tracking how subsistence uses by park area communities might be affected by any proposed changes to existing public uses. The coverage of subsistence issues would be strengthened if any planning responds to questions and concerns raised by local residents in subsequent village public meetings. Subsistence data are essential to identify specific local issues, current and projected cumulative effects, and ways to minimize impacts. Additional studies may be necessary and, if so, should be conducted before planning is complete. We also assume the Lake Clark National Park Subsistence Resource Commission will provide input into this process if waters within the Lake Clark unit are targeted.

The state welcomes opportunities to cooperatively engage in discussions with the Service and other land managers to seek agreement on management of activities wherever possible. Please call me at 269-7477 about the intended scope of your proposal so that we may be better prepared to participate. It may be valuable to have a smaller meeting of state agency and NPS personnel before broadening the dialogue to other agencies and organizations. We look forward to working with you to address your concerns for the resources of the park area.

Sincerely,



Sally Gibert
State CSU Coordinator

cc: John Katz, Governor's Office, Washington, D.C.
Pat Galvin, Director, Division of Governmental Coordination
John Shively, Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources
Frank Rue, Commissioner, Department of Fish and Game
Michele Brown, Commissioner, Department of Environmental Conservation
Deborah Sedwick, Commissioner, Dept of Commerce and Economic Development

bcc: Tina Cunning, DFG-Anch
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