

STATE OF ALASKA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR ANILCA IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

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Mark E. Vande Kamp Ph.D., Research Associate
National Park Service
PNW Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit
University of Washington
P.O. Box 352100
Seattle, WA 00195-2100

Dear Dr. Vande Kamp:

Thank you for responding to the State of Alaska's concerns regarding the Alagnak River Recreational Visitor Survey. The State appreciates the revisions of the questionnaire and work plan that you and your staff have made following our March 10, 2003 review. This letter outlines a few remaining concerns. In the interests of time, we encourage informal consultation by phone and/or email to explore further improvements.

The State still has concerns with the bear questions. ADF&G, which has management authority over resident fish and wildlife in the State of Alaska, feels that these questions have little or no bearing in the overall management of recreation users on the Alagnak River. ADF&G would like to discuss these questions with you further.

In our view, questions 27 and 28 (of the revised questionnaire) still do not provide meaningful information. These questions can still be seen as pre-judging a conclusion that certain use levels are damaging natural resources. We would like to work with you to develop some alternative language for these questions that reduce bias and expand recognition of other management options.

We urge that questions 37 and 38 about children be dropped. We do not believe they are relevant to the study and may be viewed as unnecessarily intrusive.

As noted in our earlier comments, the State also feels that the timeline of three follow-up response reminders within 38 days is too compressed. In addition to the slower-than-typical mail service to and within Alaska as noted in our March 10 letter, many visitors to Alaska often spend several weeks or months traveling in the state. Such a compressed response deadline would inadvertently exclude such participants from the study.

The ADF&G statistician strongly recommends that the study (pp. 2-3). should measure unit nonresponse, as any differences between unit response could potentially result in flawed data (i.e. responses from those aged 40-50 versus 25-30). Most likely, the unit nonresponse would be insignificant, but there is still an opportunity for significant differences in nonresponse. Since it doesn't hurt to do it, it would be useful to at least eliminate this potential source of flawed data.

As a general rule, the State feels that pre-testing of study instruments in Alaska is very important and can significantly influence the overall success of the study. Survey questions which seem routine by lower 48 standards may be perceived differently in Alaska, or by Alaskans. We urge the study authors to reconsider the issue of pre-testing in Alaska.

There are other minor concerns that the State has with the questionnaire that we would like to discuss with you further. Please feel free to contact me for additional coordination. To expedite dialogue on any of the specific issues raised above, you may contact George Weekley at ADF&G at 907-267-2242 for follow-up. As needed he can also involve other ADF&G staff who have contributed to this letter. Thanks for the additional opportunity to suggest further improvements to the Alagnak River user survey.

Sincerely,

/ss/

Sally Gibert
State ANILCA Coordinator