

STATE OF ALASKA

ANILCA IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

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June 3, 2004

Ms. Shelley Hall
Chief of Resources Management
Kenai Fjords National Park
P.O. Box 1727
Seward, Alaska 99664

Dear Ms. Hall:

The State of Alaska reviewed the May 2004 Environmental Assessment (EA) addressing the installation of a permanent remote weather station on the Harding Icefield within the Kenai Fjords National Park. This letter contains the consolidated comments of state resource agencies.

The State supports the Park's intent to install this remote automated weather station within the area recommended in 1988 for Wilderness designation. As the EA *Purpose and Need* discussion indicates, the information collected will benefit researchers modeling climate change and flooding potential, backcountry users, firefighters, and pilots. We appreciate the Park's recognition of Section 1310(b) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, which provides for such facilities within conservation system units – including recommended and designated Wilderness. We also appreciate the recognition that helicopter and fixed wing aircraft access is a necessary and reasonable minimum tool associated with this project.

For our general edification, we are interested in learning how the NPS intends to monitor future aircraft access (especially helicopters) for maintenance, including if some sort of annual internal authorization or permit will be prepared, or if this EA will suffice. Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely,

/ss/

Sally Gibert
State ANILCA Coordinator

cc: Anne Castellina, Superintendent