

STATE OF ALASKA

SEAN PARNELL, Governor

ANILCA IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM Office of Project Management and Permitting

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January 24, 2011

William Freeland, Environmental Protection Specialist
U.S. Coast Guard, Rescue 21 PRO Alaska
100 Savikko Rd.
Douglas, AK 99824

Dear Mr. Freeland,

The State of Alaska reviewed the Environmental Assessment (EA) that addresses the Coast Guard's proposal to permit, construct, operate and maintain a search and rescue communication facility in Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve. The following consolidated state agency comments were compiled by the State's Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) Implementation Program and cover issues relative to ANILCA and other state interests. Any correspondence or response pursuant to the federal Coastal Zone Management Act and the Alaska Coastal Management Program will be provided separately by the Division of Coastal and Ocean Management.

The State is supportive of the Coast Guard's proposal to modernize and replace its maritime search and rescue communications systems, which will serve to close a gap in the existing communications signal area and decrease response times for at-sea rescue. Congress envisioned the need to locate facilities of this type in conservation system units established by ANILCA and Title XI and Section 1310 were included in the law for that express purpose.

It appears the project has been designed to minimize impacts to both resources and visitors, including employing renewable energy sources to supplement propane fuel use. In addition, we support the proposed use of helicopters to access these communication sites for construction and maintenance purposes. The use of helicopters mitigates worker safety hazards associated with such remote locations that experience unpredictable weather patterns.

A large block of mining claims have been staked within the past several years along Yakutat area beaches for placer minerals. We recommend the Coast Guard consider whether any activities associated with the proposed project could potentially impact exploration, development or production activities associated with these mining claims.

We reiterate the following safety protocols recommended in our scoping comments to help reduce negative bear/human encounters and impacts to wildlife. From the

information provided in the EA, it was not clear whether the recommended protocols were being adopted.

- Require construction crews to follow bear safety protocols while in the field.
- To protect both bears and facilities, secure sites with adequate fencing to prevent bears from entering. Fences should be gated and locked to keep hunters from using the fenced areas to hang meat or camp (a problem we have seen elsewhere under similar circumstances).
- Adopt appropriate mitigation measures to help prevent bird strikes with the tower and any associated guy wires.
- Hazardous materials necessary for the construction or operation of the facility must be appropriately contained and securely stored for removal in accordance with applicable state and federal laws.

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', written in a cursive style.

Susan Magee
ANILCA Project Coordinator

cc: Sally Gibert, ANILCA Program Coordinator
Susan Boudreau, Superintendent, Glacier Bay NPP