



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Natural Resources
OFFICE OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND PERMITTING

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September 4, 2026

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve
Attention: Joshua Scott
Acting Superintendent
PO Box 439
Copper Center, AK 99573

Submitted online at Planning, Environment & Public Comment (PEPC) website

Re: 2026 Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve Superintendent's Compendium

Dear Superintendent Scott,

The State of Alaska (State) reviewed the 2026 Proposed Change to the Superintendent's Compendium (Compendium) for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST). The proposed changes modify where electric bicycles (e-bikes) are permitted as an allowable mode of transportation between McCarthy and Kennecott. Generally, the State is supportive of these changes and offers procedural and clarifying information to support access management. The comments below incorporate input from the Departments of Natural Resources (DNR) and Fish and Game (ADF&G).

Electric Bicycle Access Management

The State supports allowing electric bicycles on the Trail Creek, Lost Creek, Soda Lake, and Nugget Creek trails, recognizing that portions of these routes were established for OHV use. Allowing e-bikes on these established corridors will expand low-impact recreational access, improve safety and travel efficiency on long backcountry routes, and enhance opportunities for Alaskans to reach high-country terrain, remote drainages, and destinations such as Soda Lake and the Nugget Creek Public Use Cabin. Integrating e-bikes into the WRST experience is a practical and responsible step that supports public access while maintaining resource protections.

However, clarity is needed on how these compendium changes align with the Kennecott Operations and Management Plan (KOMP). As stated in the State's 2023 KOMP comments, the State continues to advocate for clear delineation of transportation areas along with the clear delineation of legal authorities and consistent treatment of access authorities within the same governing document: bicycle access, including e-bikes, should be in the same document where management of other means of transportation are addressed. (see https://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/opmp/nilca/pdf/2023%20Letters/23-11-9_SOA_Kennecott%20comments.pdf for the State's 2023 comments)

As we requested in 2023, the State continues to advocate for opening Preserve roads, currently only open to rural residents, to use by other Alaskans, including for electric bicycles. The road

surfaces of the Toe of Kennecott Glacier Road and the Wagon Road, in particular, are durable and the increase in user numbers would likely be minimal.

Revised Statute 2477 Trails

The DNR - Division of Mining, Land and Water has conducted research on the status of Revised Statute 2477 (RS 2477) transportation easements that pass through the Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark. If Wrangell-Saint Elias National Park and Preserve intends to issue guidance on acceptable means of travel on National Park Service lands, the State requests that the areas and routes where this guidance applies are clearly marked to avoid any general confusion by the public. Further, the State asks that NPS note and sign all RS 2477 easements that may be co-located with the National Historic Landmark including, but not limited to, RST 1349: The Kennicott Mine Trails, RST 372: The Nikolai Mine Trail, and The Wagon Road where the issued guidance regarding E-bikes is not enforceable.

Revised Statute 2477 is found in section 8 of the Mining Law of 1866. It granted states and territories rights-of-way over federal lands that had no existing reservations or private entries. The law remained in effect until Congress repealed it in 1976. The grant of a right-of-way can be accepted by two separate means: a) by “some positive act on the part of the appropriate public authorities of the state, clearly manifesting an intention” to accept it; or b) by “public user for such a period of time and under such conditions as to prove that the grant has been accepted.

Process Timing and Notification Concerns

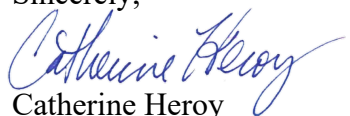
The notice published on August 7, 2026, solicits public comments outside the annual Compendium Process established in the October 31, 2002, letter from Regional Director Arnberger to the State. That agreement was intended to ensure a predictable, collaborative, and transparent cycle for regulatory changes. Maintaining a formal period of public input and notice (recurring annually in January with a 45-day public notice soliciting written comment for all proposed Compendium edits) was successfully followed until a few years ago. We request that WRST return to the annual cycle envisioned by both NPS and State of Alaska at that time.

Additionally, the current process of noticing the changes to a compendium solely on the NPS' PEPC website, without any outreach to State partners, does not align with the intent to collaborate with State land and game managers. As listed in the State's March 17, 2022, letter to Alaska Regional Director Creachbaum, we again request greater distribution outreach of proposed Compendium changes. (see https://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/opmp/anilca/pdf/2022%20Letters/22_03_17_NPS_ARD_Compendia_SOA+enclosures.pdf for the letter and related documents). The 2022 letter incorporates the 2002 letter mentioned above.

Closing

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed changes to the 2026 Superintendent's Compendium. Please contact me at (907)269-0880 or by email at catherine.heroy@alaska.gov to coordinate any follow up discussions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Catherine Heroy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Catherine" being more prominent than the last name "Heroy".

Catherine Heroy
Federal Program Manager