



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**

GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL

Department of Natural Resources

CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMISSION ON  
FEDERAL AREAS  
Stan Leaphart, Executive Director

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October 5, 2013

The Honorable Sally Jewell  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell:

The Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas learned yesterday that the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has closed all the national wildlife refuges in Alaska to public use except for use by federally qualified subsistence users. These unprecedented and unnecessary closures must be lifted immediately.

Under the provisions of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) national wildlife refuges in Alaska may only be closed to hunting and fishing, as well as other compatible public uses and access, only if necessary for the conservation of healthy populations of fish and wildlife, to protect the purposes for which a refuge was created or in the event of an emergency involving public health and safety. These closures do not meet any of those criteria. Additionally, closure of a national wildlife refuge in Alaska requires public notice and hearings in the affected areas. To our knowledge, no such notices have been forthcoming and no hearings have been held, or even scheduled.

It is our understanding that lands managed by the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management in Alaska remain open to public use and access. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service must be directed to reopen the National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska. We join Governor Parnell in strongly urging you to do so.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stan Leaphart".

Stan Leaphart  
Executive Director

cc: Gov. Sean Parnell  
Geoff Haskett – USFWS Regional Director