

STATE OF ALASKA

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August 13, 2002

Steve Ulvi
National Park Service
201 1st Avenue
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Dear Mr. Ulvi

The State of Alaska has reviewed the Environmental Assessment prepared by the National Park Service (NPS) for a request for temporary all-terrain vehicle (ATV) access to an inholding at Agiak Lake in Gates of the Arctic National Park Wilderness. The State appreciates this opportunity to review the EA. The comments in this letter represent the consolidated views of the State of Alaska agencies.

The owner of an approved Native allotment on the south shore of Agiak Lake has requested temporary access from Anaktuvuk Pass to the lake using ARGO ATVs. The proposed access route involves travel south, adjacent the John River, on established ATV trails on private lands to secondary trails ending in lower Ekokpuk Creek on parklands where ATV use for subsistence is allowed. From there the proposed route would cross another 2 miles of park land and finally cross approximately 14 miles of designated wilderness to Agiak Lake.

We agree with the NPS selection of Alternative 2 that authorizes ATV access along Ekokpuk Creek to Agiak Lake as proposed by the applicant. ATV access to traditional hunting areas by Anaktuvuk Pass residents has been a time-consuming and difficult issue for area residents and the state and federal governments since the establishment of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve under ANILCA Sec 201(4). Although it is clear that the NPS has strong reservations about further use of ATVs outside the negotiated area, our review of the EA indicates that alternative 2 appears to reflect a careful balance of community needs versus regulatory requirements. Reasonable access to allotments on NPS land is guaranteed in ANILCA, but making the final determination as to what is reasonable is left to the land administrator consistent with 43 CFR 36. In this case, the evaluation allows such access as requested by the allotment holder. In Anaktuvuk Pass, this decision will likely be received with relief, and seen as further evidence that a constructive relationship between the community and the NPS over management of sensitive values is obtainable.

Please contact me at 907-269-7476 if you have any questions regarding these comments.

Sincerely,

Don Perrin
Project Review Coordinator

cc: Kerry Howard, Director, Division of Governmental Coordination
Frank Rue, Commissioner, Department of Fish and Game
Pat Pourchot, Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources
Joseph Perkins, Commissioner, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
Michele Brown, Commissioner, Department of Environmental Conservation
Deborah Sedwick, Commissioner, Dept. of Community and Economic Development

bcc: Jack Winters, DFG-Fairbanks
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