

STATE OF ALASKA

ANILCA IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM Office of Project Management and Permitting

SARAH PALIN, Governor

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April 30, 2008

Gary Wheeler, Refuge Manager
Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge
US Fish and Wildlife Service
1390 Buskin River Road
Kodiak, AK 99615

Dear Mr. Wheeler:

The State of Alaska appreciates your efforts to re-evaluate public use cabins on the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge. We support providing additional public use cabins, either newly constructed or as re-designated administrative cabins. Providing public use cabins facilitates additional opportunities for priority public uses by providing shelter from the rich variety of weather conditions typically encountered on the refuge, and helps avoid negative bear/human encounters. This effort implements Goal 10.6 for Public Use Cabins of the recently completed Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

The comment sheet distributed at the recent public meeting requested suggestions for potential locations to site new cabins. We recognize that balancing this public use with potential conflicts with other users and wildlife, particularly bears, poses a challenge for managers. When considering suggestions from the public for new cabin sites, we request the intent of the Kodiak Archipelago Bear Conservation and Management Plan be kept in mind. Specifically, the plan recommends avoiding serious adverse impacts to bear habitat and conflicts between those that use public use cabins and other user groups. As a partner with the Refuge in the administration of fish and wildlife resources, we request that the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Area Wildlife Biologist, Larry Van Daele; Area Sport Fish Biologist, Len Schwarz; and Commercial Fisheries Regional Supervisor, Jim McCullough be included in these deliberations. They have considerable local knowledge and experience with public uses and fish and wildlife resources on the Refuge and would appreciate an opportunity to assist the Refuge in this effort.

Increasing opportunities for recreational fishing is another important consideration. Few public use cabins on the Refuge are located near good fishing opportunities. We recommend evaluating Olga Bay, the Ban Island area and the Uganik, Frazer and Red Lake drainages for potential sites. Although we understand there may be liability issues to consider, providing boats at one or more cabin sites for local use may also improve access within a specific area.

Finally, we also recommend the Refuge look at potential public use cabin locations on refuge lands nearest the city of Kodiak. Such location(s) could provide opportunities close to the transportation hub of Kodiak Island and the Refuge that may be more desirable and affordable as transportation costs increase.

Specific Cabin Recommendations

The re-designation of Deadman Bay cabin could be problematic during times when bear concentrations in the area are high. Specific permit stipulations may be necessary to avoid negative bear encounters. If determined necessary, we request the Refuge work with area biologists to develop stipulations.

We recommend considering moving the Viekoda Bay cabin to another location. It has a generally north facing orientation, is in poor condition and has limited outdoor recreational opportunities nearby.

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 E. Magee
ANILCA Project Coordinator

cc: Sally Gibert, ANILCA Program Coordinator