



June 17, 2021

Andy Loranger, Refuge Manager  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Kenai National Wildlife Refuge  
P.O. Box 2139, Ski Hill Road  
Soldotna, AK 99669-2139

Dear Mr. Loranger:

The State of Alaska reviewed the draft Jims' Landing Access Improvements Project Environmental Assessment (EA). The project is located within the Skilak Wildlife Recreation Area on the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge). The following comments represent the consolidated views of state agencies.

The State supports the intent to construct improvements to Jim's Landing Boat Launch and associated parking area(s). Such improvements are supported by the Refuge's recreation purpose "to provide, in a manner compatible with these purposes, opportunities for fish and wildlife-oriented recreation" (Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Section 303(4)(B)(v)).

As noted in our scoping comments, the proposed project also includes two important public safety components that we support – 1) relocating the overflow parking lot from its current location on the north side to the south side of the Sterling Highway; and 2) design elements that will slow currents at the boat launch.

Root wad installation is a critical component to include in the final project design, as it will serve to both stabilize the bank and protect public safety by reducing treacherous velocities at the landing. The installation of additional root wads along the upstream shoreline of the boat basin, in lieu of rip rap, will further stabilize the bank, and protect juvenile fish habitat.

Streambank restoration and protection measures such as these are also consistent with the following direction in the Kenai River Special Management Area Comprehensive Management Plan, "Habitat protection/restoration projects shall accompany all new or upgraded recreation sites. They should be closely integrated with recreation use patterns and trail design" (Page 57, Section 4.5.1.2.3).

The EA states the 810 Analysis will be included in the Final EA. These improvements will serve all users, including federally qualified subsistence users. We request an opportunity to review the draft 810 analysis prior to its inclusion in the final EA.

The State appreciates the Refuge's efforts to reach out to state staff on the development of this project and we look forward to continued collaboration. Please contact me at (907) 269-7529 or by email at [susan.magee@alaska.gov](mailto:susan.magee@alaska.gov) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Magee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of the first name being a large, stylized 'S'.

Susan Magee  
State ANILCA Program Coordinator