

LEGAL NOTICE

The Kenai National Wildlife Refuge (Kenai Refuge) is preparing compatibility determinations for existing refuge uses in association with revisions to the Refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan. Compatibility determinations are written documents signed by the Refuge Manager and Regional Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System, Alaska, and are required for all proposed new and existing refuge uses, consistent with the provisions of the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended. Only those uses that are found "compatible" that is, do not materially interfere with refuge purposes or the National Wildlife Refuge System Mission may be allowed. Existing refuge uses must generally be re-evaluated every 10 or 15 years (depending on type of use) and draft compatibility determinations are now available for public review and comment for all existing refuge uses at Kenai Refuge. The Refuge invites interested persons to make comments on the draft compatibility determinations for existing refuge uses, and on how the uses may affect Refuge purposes or the Refuge System Mission.

Kenai Refuge was established by Public Law 96-487 to conserve fish and wildlife populations and habitats in their natural diversity; to fulfill international treaty obligations with respect to fish and wildlife and their habitats; to ensure necessary water quality and quantity within the Refuge; to provide opportunities for research, interpretation, environmental education, and land management training; and to provide opportunities for fish and wildlife-oriented recreation. Additionally, The Wilderness Act of 1964 requires that its purposes be considered for activities conducted within Congressionally designated wilderness (approximately 1.3 million acres of the nearly 2 million acres of the Refuge). Wilderness purposes include the securing of an enduring resource of wilderness, to protect and preserve the wilderness character of areas within the National Wilderness Preservation System, and to administer the wilderness system for the use and enjoyment of the American people in a way that will leave it unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness.

The National Wildlife Refuge System Mission is "to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans."

Fifteen draft compatibility determinations are available for public review and comment. These evaluate the following ongoing refuge uses: 1) hunting; 2) fishing; 3) bear baiting; 4) trapping; 5) environmental education, interpretation, wildlife observation, and photography; 6) subsistence; 7) miscellaneous commercial uses (rafting, air taxi operations, Russian River Ferry, etc.); 8) research and scientific studies and surveys; 9) snowmachine use; 10) hiking, walking, skiing, snowshoeing, bicycling, horse riding/packing, dog sledding, and use of non-motorized boats and canoes; 11) use of powerboats or aircraft; 12) camping; 13) forest product use (including firewood cutting, Christmas tree use, and commercial and non-commercial logging); 14) natural resource gathering (including the removal of minerals/gold panning, antler collection, picking of berries/mushrooms, edible plants, removal of skulls/bones, and similar activities); and 15) miscellaneous uses (including field trials, technical climbing, hot air balloon use, swimming and beach use, special events and group gatherings, ice skating, commercial filming, roller blading/skating, snorkeling/scuba, skydiving, highway vehicle use on Refuge roads, and picnicking).

Copies of the draft compatibility determinations for each existing refuge use, or groups of uses are available to download at <http://alaska.fws.gov/nwr/planning/completed.htm>. Compact discs or paper copies of the draft compatibility determinations are also available by contacting the Refuge at (907) 262-7021.

Comments on the draft compatibility determinations must be received by April 15, 2007 and may be sent electronically, by mail, or fax to:

robin_west@fws.gov --or--

Refuge Manager – Kenai Refuge
P.O. Box 2139,
Soldotna, AK 99669 --or--

(907) 262-3599 (fax to attn: Refuge Manager)

Results of the compatibility determinations review may be received after June 15, 2007 by contacting the Refuge Manager at the above address, viewing them on the web at <http://alaska.fws.gov/nwr/planning/completed.htm>, or by phoning the Refuge at (907) 262-7021. The draft Kenai National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan should be available for public review and comment sometime later in 2007 or early 2008.