

## Compatibility Determination

**Use:** State of Alaska Management Activities

**Primary Uses:** State of Alaska routine management and law enforcement activities.

**Supporting and Incidental Uses:** Boating (motorized and non-motorized), fixed-wing aircraft landings, helicopter landings (subject to Minimum Requirements Analysis before landing in the Selawik Wilderness Area), snowmobiling, environmental education and interpretation (not conducted by refuge staff or authorized agents), fishing, natural resource gathering, camping, cross-country skiing, hiking and backpacking, wildlife photography, videography and audio recording, snorkeling and scuba diving, snowshoeing, research, scientific collecting, surveys, and wildlife observation.

**Refuge Name:** Selawik National Wildlife Refuge

**Establishment and Acquisition Authority:** The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) established the 2.5-million-acre Selawik National Wildlife Refuge (Selawik refuge, refuge) as part of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge System (Department of the Interior) on December 2, 1980.

**Selawik Refuge Purposes:** As stated in ANILCA Section 302 (7) (B), the purposes for which the Selawik Refuge was established and shall be managed include:

- (i) to conserve fish and wildlife populations and habitats in their natural diversity including, but not limited to, the Western Arctic caribou herd (including participation in coordinated ecological studies and management of these caribou), waterfowl, shorebirds and other migratory birds, and salmon and Sheefish;
- (ii) to fulfill international treaty obligations of the United States with respect to fish and wildlife and their habitats;
- (iii) to provide, in a manner consistent with the purposes set forth in subparagraphs (i) and (ii), the opportunity for continued subsistence uses by local residents; and
- (iv) to ensure, to the maximum extent practicable and in a manner consistent with the purposes set forth in subparagraph (i), water quality and necessary water quantity within the refuge.

The purpose of the congressionally designated Selawik Wilderness Area is to secure an enduring resource of wilderness, protect and preserve the wilderness character of the area as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS), and administer the area for the use and enjoyment of the American people in a way that will leave it unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as designated wilderness.

### National Wildlife Refuge System Mission

The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System 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 (National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended [16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee]).

### **Description of Uses**

This compatibility determination addresses routine management activities conducted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and Public Safety wildlife enforcement officers that are not cooperative projects with the Service. These projects may not be encompassed by the Master Memorandum of Understanding (or other specific cooperative agreements) between the ADF&G, Juneau, Alaska, and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Anchorage, Alaska, signed March 13, 1982, and/or law enforcement activities conducted by Alaska wildlife enforcement officers. This includes the following activities: fish and wildlife surveys conducted by boat, foot, or other means not restricted by regulation or policy; aircraft landings in support of aerial fish and wildlife surveys; vegetation and habitat classification and surveys; and law enforcement activities.

This compatibility determination does not address predator management, fish and wildlife control (with the exception of animals taken in defense of life or property), reintroduction of species, native fish introductions, non-native species introductions, non-native species management, pest management, disease prevention and control, fishery restoration, fishery enhancement, construction of facilities, or any other unpermitted activity that could alter ecosystems within the refuge. Separate compatibility determinations addressing specific proposals will be required for those activities. All management and research activities conducted by the ADF&G under a specific cooperative agreement with the Fish and Wildlife Service to fulfill one or more purposes of the Refuge or the National Wildlife Refuge System mission are not subject to a compatibility determination.

Potential means of access include fixed-wing aircraft, helicopter (subject to Minimum Requirements Analysis before landing in the Selawik Wilderness Area) motorboats, snowmobiles, non-motorized boats, foot, snowshoes, and cross-country skis. Potentially allowable lodging and other facilities include tents, tent frames, tent platforms, weather ports, and caches.

### **Availability of Resources**

Adequate refuge personnel and base operational funds are available to manage activities at existing and projected levels. Administrative staff time (as many as 15 staff days per year) primarily involves phone conversations, written correspondence, and personal interaction with State personnel regarding ongoing activities. Field work associated with administering the program primarily involves monitoring (when applicable) the State's activities to ensure all activities remain compatible and informing the public of activities occurring on the refuge involving subsistence resources or areas used for subsistence activities.

### **Anticipated Impacts of Uses**

Because ADF&G and Public Safety personnel are trained professionals, the Service anticipates that routine law enforcement and fish and wildlife monitoring and management activities would have positive overall impacts on wildlife resources, visitors, and other resources on refuge lands (such as water quality, soil, and vegetation). These positive impacts would support refuge purposes and goals and the mission of the Service.

### **Public Review and Comment**

Public comments were solicited concurrently with the revision of the Selawik National Wildlife Refuge's Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment (USFWS 2010). Public comments on compatibility determinations were accepted during the public review period for the draft plan and announced in the Federal Register. The public comment period was October 21, 2010 to March 15, 2011, which provided 145 days for public review. We mailed the full draft plan and a summary to the individuals and organizations on our mailing list. We invited public comments through an advertisement in a local newspaper and attended city council meetings in Selawik and Noorvik to receive comments on the draft plan. Planning team members met with the Citizen's Advisory Commission on Federal Areas to discuss the issues at Selawik refuge and alternatives that were proposed in the draft plan. The draft compatibility determinations were posted on the Service's Region 7 Web page.

We received no comments on the draft of this compatibility determination.

### **Refuge Determination (check one below)**

Use is not compatible

Use is compatible

### **Stipulations Necessary to Ensure Compatibility**

Refuge staff will monitor State activities within the refuge. Findings from these monitoring efforts will be used to determine what additional management actions, if any, would be needed to ensure State activities remain compatible with refuge purposes and in compliance with established agreements.

### **Justification**

The State of Alaska and the Service are partners in the management of many resources on the refuge, especially those necessary for subsistence. Natural and social science information is necessary for the proper management of the National Wildlife Refuge System. It is the policy of the Service to encourage and support research and management studies to provide scientific data upon which decisions regarding management of units of the Refuge System may be based. State research, management, and law enforcement activities support achieving refuge purposes and goals, and the System mission and would have favorable impacts on resources within the refuge and wildlife-dependent priority public uses. After fully considering the impacts of these activities, as described previously in the "Anticipated Impacts" section of this document, it is my determination that State of Alaska management activities within the refuge do not materially interfere with or detract from the purposes of the refuge or mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

### **Supporting Documents**

Memorandum of Understanding for Coordinated Interagency Fish and Wildlife Management for Subsistence Uses on Federal Public Lands in Alaska between the Federal Subsistence Board and the State of Alaska. 2008.

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1987. Selawik National Wildlife Refuge Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan, Wilderness Review and Environmental Impact Statement. U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage, Alaska. 378 pp.

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1987b. Record of Decision: Selawik National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan, Environmental Impact Statement, Wilderness Review, and Wild River Plan. U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage, Alaska. 15 pp.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2010. Draft Revised Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment. Selawik National Wildlife Refuge. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage, AK. 285 pp (plus ten appendices).

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2011. Final Revised Comprehensive Conservation Plan. Selawik National Wildlife Refuge. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage, AK.

**Refuge Determination**

Refuge Manager/  
Project Leader Approval:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lee Anne Ayres

14 July 2011  
Date

**Concurrence**

Regional Chief  
National Wildlife  
Refuge System:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mitch Ellis

7-20-2011  
Date

**Mandatory 10-Year Re-evaluation Date: 2021**

**NEPA Compliance for Refuge Use Decision**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Categorical Exclusion without Environmental Action Memorandum
- \_\_\_\_\_ Categorical Exclusion and Environmental Action Memorandum
- X  Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact
- \_\_\_\_\_ Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision