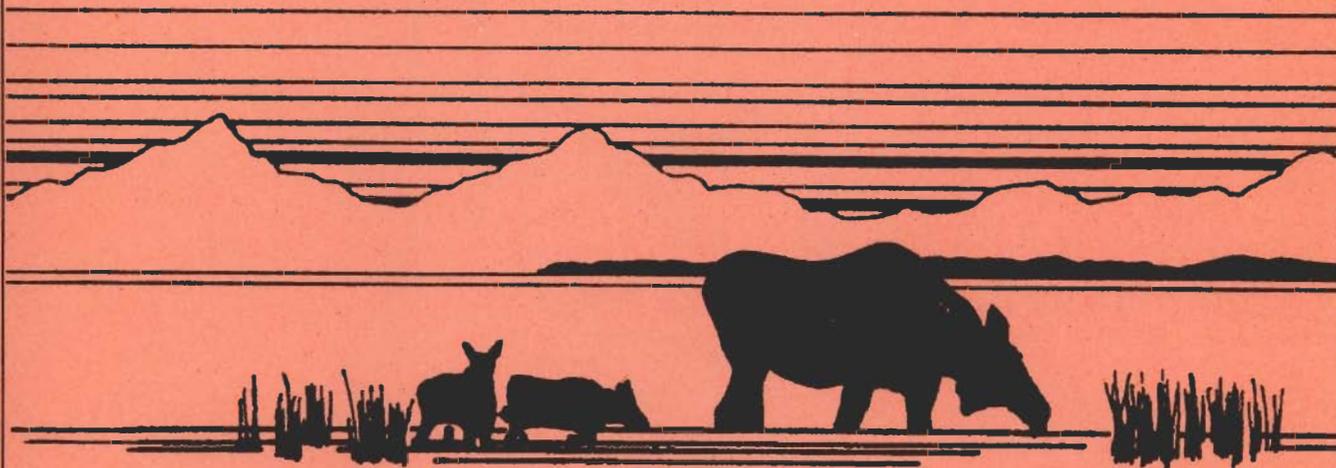


Land Protection Plan

Options for the protection
of fish and wildlife habitats



Kenai
National Wildlife Refuge

Land Protection Plan

for

*Kenai National Wildlife Refuge
Soldotna, Alaska*



U.S. Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Region 7
Anchorage, Alaska

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Introduction

The Kenai Peninsula in Alaska has been recognized for its outstanding wildlife resources since 1941 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt set aside approximately two million acres of land there to protect the feeding and breeding habitat of "the giant Kenai moose...". With the passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) in 1980, the name and the mission of the Kenai National Moose Range (now the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge) were changed to reflect the importance of a wide variety of wildlife and fisheries resources and habitats on the Kenai Peninsula. ANILCA also cited environmental education and recreation as purposes of the refuge.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is responsible for managing the land and wildlife resources of the Kenai Refuge to benefit people, now, and in the future. The Service does not, however, own or have management authority over all of the land within the administrative boundary of the refuge. Private landowners have title or valid claims to approximately 73,000 acres or about 4% of these lands (Table 1).

Table 1. Land ownership (surface lands) on the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge as of May, 1994.

Current Ownership	Acres*
Federal	1,927,318
Native Corporation (conveyed & <u>valid</u> selections)	71,372
Native Allotments (conveyed/selected)	290
State of Alaska	1,137
Other patents	290
Total acreage inside administrative boundary	2,000,407

*Acreage figures are approximate and subject to change. Land status acreage figures in Alaska will not be finalized until conflicting claims are adjudicated by the Bureau of Land Management and all inholdings are surveyed.

Interspersed federal and private landownership complicates refuge management.

The Service protects wildlife on refuge lands but is also concerned that wildlife be protected on non-federal lands within refuge boundaries. Activities on private lands can affect resources on adjacent refuge lands and complicate management. Therefore, we would like to work with landowners to preserve the resource integrity of the Kenai Refuge and to ease management difficulties. We are particularly interested in working with owners of land with high fish and wildlife habitat values. Generally, this can be done through agreements with the landowners to manage land in a manner consistent with the purposes of the refuge, or through acquisition. An acquisition can be a partial interest in the land, such as a conservation easement, or outright purchase of all interests in the land (fee title).

Objectives of LPP

The goal of the Service in developing a land protection plan is to preserve the high quality wildlife habitat found on and in the vicinity of private lands within the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. The plan is intended to guide the refuge's land protection activities and provide a framework for refuge and private landowner cooperation. The purpose of this document is to answer the following questions:

1. Where are the private lands in the Kenai Refuge?
2. What resources are we are trying to protect?
3. What methods do we have for resource protection?
4. What are the Service's priorities for resource protection on the Kenai Refuge?
5. What land protection measures do we recommend?
6. How will implementation of this plan affect landowners and others?

The land protection plan does not obligate either the refuge or landowners to undertake any of the land protection measures identified. Any course of action requires mutual consent. The refuge must consider its management goals, priorities, and the availability of funds when approached with land protection proposals from private landowners.