



United States Department of the Interior

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge
1390 Buskin River Road
Kodiak, Alaska 99615

IN REPLY REFER TO:

September 25, 2000

Dear Kodiak Refuge Planning Participants:

We are updating you on the status of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) revision for Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge. Several things have happened since our last update.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) is initiating a Kodiak Archipelago Brown Bear Management Plan which is scheduled for completion by April 2001. This plan will be developed by a citizens advisory committee and will provide recommendations on bear viewing, bear population and habitat management, and other issues related to management of bears on the Archipelago. Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge will be a full participant in this process.

We are delaying finalizing the draft alternatives for managing the Refuge until the bear management plan is complete. Implementation of any recommendations coming from ADF&G's planning process which affect refuge management are subject to Fish and Wildlife Service compatibility regulations and requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act. To satisfy these requirements, final recommendations from the bear management plan will be incorporated into one or more of the alternatives for the revised CCP. These alternatives will then be presented as draft refuge management alternatives for public review in the spring of 2001, prior to completing the draft CCP.

In addition to delaying the draft alternatives for managing the Refuge, we have suspended publication of proposed special refuge regulations implementing the 1993 Public Use Management Plan for Kodiak Refuge. As these regulations would affect bear management on and public access to the Refuge, we feel it is necessary to re-evaluate the need for these special regulations after reviewing the recommendations from ADF&G's bear management plan.

Following public workshops in Anchorage and Kodiak late last winter, we announced that an additional opportunity for public review of the draft alternatives would be provided, prior to completion of the draft CCP and environmental impact statement. Based on public comments we received, several changes to the preliminary draft alternatives were made. These revised alternatives, along with a preliminary analysis of their potential impacts, were going to be distributed for review this fall. We believe that delaying this step so that the bear management plan can be completed will result in: (1) a better working relationship between the Service and ADF&G as we work together to manage the resources of the Kodiak Archipelago; (2) a better plan for management of Kodiak Refuge; and (3) greater acceptance by the affected public of both the Kodiak Refuge CCP and the Kodiak Archipelago Brown Bear Management Plan.

We appreciate your interest in Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge and in the planning process for the refuge. We will keep you informed of our progress as we move forward. If you have comments, questions, or concerns about the revision of the Kodiak CCP, please contact:

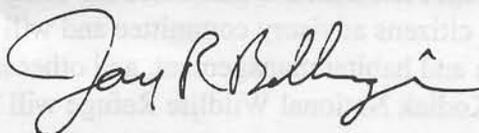
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or at our email address: <FW7_Kodiak_Planning@fws.gov>.

You can also find more information on refuge planning in Alaska at our web site:
<<http://www.r7.fws.gov/planning/plan.html>>.

Sincerely,



Jay R. Bellinger
Kodiak Refuge Manager