

**Appendix O**  
**Cabin Regulations**



## O. Cabin Regulations

### 50 CFR 36.33 What do I need to know about using cabins and related structures on Alaska National Wildlife Refuges?

(a) **Definitions.** As used in this section, the term:

*Administrative cabin* shall mean any cabin only used by refuge or other authorized personnel for the administration of the refuge.

*Cabin* shall mean a small, usually single-story, three or more sided structure that is permanently and completely enclosed with a roof and walls. The roof and walls are not fabric, cannot be easily disassembled, and are not removed seasonally.

*Commercial cabin* shall mean any cabin which is used in association with a commercial operation including but not limited to commercial fishing activities and recreational guiding services.

*Existing cabin* shall mean any cabin situated on Federal lands before December 2, 1980. A cabin legally situated on land that subsequently become refuge will also be considered an “existing” cabin providing the applicant meets the appropriate application deadlines.

*Family* shall include the spouse (including what is known as a common-law relationship), children by birth or adoption, and other blood relatives within the second degree of kindred.

*Guest* shall mean a person who occasionally visits the permittee in the cabin. This term does not include clients using commercial cabins.

*Immediate family* shall include the spouse and children, either by birth or adoption, of the claimant residing in the cabin or structure.

*New cabin* shall mean any permitted cabin constructed on refuge lands after December 2, 1980. This may also include a cabin whose claimant failed to meet the application deadline for existing cabins but is otherwise a permitted cabin.

*Other related structures* shall mean those structures or devices essential to the activities for which the cabin special use permit is issued. This includes but is not limited to outdoor toilets, food caches, storage sheds, and fish drying racks.

*Private recreational use* shall mean a use associated with leisure activities, not including bona fide subsistence uses or authorized commercial uses.

*Public use cabin* shall mean a cabin owned and administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service and available for use by the public.

(b) **All cabins.** The regulations in this paragraph (b) shall apply to all cabins, claimants, occupants, and guests. The regulations in this paragraph (b) do not apply to temporary

facilities: any structure or man-made improvement which can readily be completely dismantled and removed from the site when the period of authorized use is terminated.

- (1) A special use permit is required to construct, use and or occupy a cabin on Fish and Wildlife Service lands within the refuge. The permit may also authorize the use of related structures and other necessary appurtenances.
  - (2) After adequate public notice has been given, unclaimed cabins become the property of the Federal Government. Adequate public notice shall include: Posting notices of trespass on unclaimed cabins; publication of notices of trespass in Anchorage and Fairbanks newspapers and in at least one local newspaper if available; and posting notices of trespass at appropriate community post offices. A Government-owned cabin may be used for refuge administration, used for emergency purposes by the public, permitted to another applicant, designated a public use cabin, or destroyed. Disposal of excess cabins and structures will be according to regulations pursuant to title 41, chapter 114 of the Code of Federal Regulations.
  - (3) Willful noncompliance with the conditions and stipulations of a special use permit shall be considered grounds to invoke the administrative process leading to notice and hearing, and possible revocation of the permit. The refuge manager will attempt to resolve problems of noncompliance with the permittee as soon as possible after the situation becomes known. If this effort fails, the refuge manager shall provide written notice to the permittee within 30 days of that date, informing the permittee of noncompliance, giving specific instructions for compliance and providing appropriate time for the permittee to comply.
  - (4) No special use permit will be issued for the construction of a cabin for private recreational use or for the private recreational use of an existing cabin.
  - (5) Guests are allowed to occupy a cabin only during the activity period identified on the special use permit. Guests occupying a cabin during the absence of the permittee shall obtain a letter of authorization from the permittee. The guest must have a copy of the letter in his/her possession. In commercial cabins, the permittee or another person listed on the permit must be present when the cabin is occupied by guests or clients.
  - (6) A person whose permit application (new or renewal) for a cabin has been denied or whose cabin permit has been revoked by the refuge manager may appeal to the Regional Director as described in section 36.41 (b).
- (c) **Existing cabins.** In addition to paragraph (b) of this section, the regulations in this paragraph (c) shall apply to all existing cabins, claimants, occupants, and guests.
- (1) Where a valid cabin permit or lease was in effect on December 2, 1980, or at the time the land was subsequently added to the refuge, the refuge manager shall provide for the continuation of the permit or lease under the same conditions. The new permit shall be nontransferable and renewable every five years unless the continuation would directly threaten or significantly impair the purposes for which the refuge was established. The cabin and related structures are the personal property of the claimant and can be removed by him/her upon non-renewal or revocation. The owner of a cabin may sell his/her interest in the cabin to another person; however, the new owner does not automatically qualify for a permit and must apply for a new one.
  - (2) To obtain a special use permit for a cabin that was not under permit or lease before December 2, 1980, or at the time the land was subsequently added to the refuge, a

claimant should submit to the refuge manager an application that includes the following:

- (i) Reasonable proof of possessory interest or right to occupy the cabin as shown by affidavit, bill of sale, or other document.
  - (ii) Date of construction or acquisition.
  - (iii) A sketch or photograph that accurately depicts the cabin and related structures.
  - (iv) The dimensions of the cabin and related structures.
  - (v) A U.S. Geological Survey topographic map that shows the geographic location of the cabin and related structures.
  - (vi) The claimant's agreement to vacate and remove all personal property from the cabin and related structures within one year from receipt of a non-renewal or revocation notice.
  - (vii) The claimant's acknowledgment that he/she has no legal interest in the real property on which the cabin and related structures are located.
  - (viii) A list of family members residing with the claimant in the cabin being applied for. It need only include those immediate family members who may be eligible to renew a permit for continued use and occupancy upon the original claimant's death (this is not applicable to cabins used for commercial purposes).
- (3) Applications for permits for existing cabins, which are not currently under valid permits, will only be accepted for a period of one year following the effective date of these regulations. However, cabins that were legally located on lands that subsequently become refuge will also be considered "existing" cabins. The owners will have two years following the date the lands become refuge to apply for a permit. Following those dates, all applications for cabins will be for "new" cabins only, no matter when the cabin was built or first used. If ownership is not established within three years after the land becomes refuge, the cabin may be considered abandoned, and it will become Federal property in accordance with Federal regulations.
- (4) The occupancy of a noncommercial cabin is limited to the permittee and his/her family, bona fide partners, and guests.
- (5) Major modifications or rehabilitation of an existing cabin must be approved by the refuge manager before construction begins. The modifications will be done by the permittee or designated agent and will remain the property of the permittee. Major additions (e.g., larger than the original cabin) may fall under the ownership provisions for new cabins. Although cabins destroyed by accidents, vandalism or natural causes may be reconstructed, they must be approved by the refuge manager before construction and must meet the construction guidelines for new cabins, even though remaining the property of the claimant.
- (d) **New cabins.** In addition to paragraph (b) of this section, the regulations in this paragraph (d) shall apply to all new cabins, claimants, occupants, and guests.
- (1) A nontransferable, five year special use permit shall only be issued upon a determination that the proposed construction, use and maintenance of the cabin is compatible with refuge purposes and that the cabin use is either directly related to refuge administration or is needed for continuation of an ongoing activity or use

- otherwise allowed within the refuge where the applicant lacks a reasonable off-refuge site. In addition, these activities must have historically been supported by the construction and use of cabins in the geographic area. In general, new cabin permits will be given only to local residents to pursue a legitimate subsistence activity. In determining whether to permit the construction, use, and occupancy of cabins or other structures, the refuge manager shall be guided by factor such as other public uses, public health and safety, environmental and resource protection, research activities, protection of historic or scientific values, subsistence uses, endangered or threatened species conservation and other management considerations necessary to ensure that the activities authorized pursuant to t permit are compatible with the purposes for which the refuge was established.
- (2) To obtain a special use permit for a new cabin, an applicant should submit to the refuge manager an application that includes the following:
    - (i) A sketch that accurately depicts the proposed cabin and related structures.
    - (ii) The dimensions of the proposed cabin and related structures.
    - (iii) A U.S. Geological Survey topographic map that shows the geographic location of the proposed cabin and relate structures.
    - (iv) The applicant's agreement to vacate and remove all personal property from the cabin and related structures within one year from receipt of a non-renewal or revocation notice.
    - (v) The applicant's acknowledgment that he/she has no legal interest in the cabin and related structures or in the real property on which the cabin and relates structures are located.
    - (vi) A list of family members residing with the applicant in the cabin being applied for. It need only include those immediate family members who may be eligible to renew a permit for continued use and occupancy upon the original claimant's death.
  - (3) The permitting instrument shall be a nontransferable renewable five year special use permit. It shall be renewed every fire years (upon request) until the death of the original claimant's last immediate family member unless the special use permit has been revoked or the cabin has been abandoned.
  - (4) No new cabins will be constructed in designated wilderness areas unless they are built specifically for the administration of the area, for public safety, or for trapping where trapping has been a traditional and customary use.
  - (5) New trapping cabins in wilderness will be available for public use to ensure public health and safety.
  - (6) The occupancy of a noncommercial cabin is limited to the permittee, and his/her family, bona fide partners, and guests.
- (e) **Commercial cabins.** In additions to paragraph (b) of this section, the regulations in this paragraph (e) shall apply to all commercial cabins, permittees, clients, guests, and occupants.
- (1) A special use permit is required for all cabins used for commercial purposes. Refuge managers may also issue special use permits that authorize additional commercial use of an existing cabin used for guiding, etc. The use of a new cabin

shall be limited to the type of use specified in the original permit. The refuge manager may permit the use of an existing cabin on non-wilderness refuge lands for the exercise of valid commercial fishing rights. Such a permit may be denied if, after conducting a public hearing in the affected locality, it is found that the use is inconsistent with refuge purposes and is a significant expansion of commercial fishing activities within the unit beyond 1979 levels.

- (2) When the commercial fishing or guiding rights associated with a permittee's existing cabin are acquired by a new party, the privilege of using the cabin cannot be sold and the new party does not necessarily qualify for a cabin permit. He/she must apply for a permit and meet the criteria described in this paragraph (e) before issuance of a special use permit by the refuge manager. He/she may not occupy the cabin before issuance of a permit.
- (3) No new commercial cabins will be permitted in wilderness areas.
- (4) Commercial cabins may be occupied only by persons legitimately involved in the commercial enterprise, assistants, employees, their families, guests and clients and only during the time that the authorized activity is occurring. The names of those individuals, excluding guests and clients, will be issued on the permit. The permittee or another individual listed on the permit must be present when the cabin is occupied.
- (5) Special use permits for commercial cabins may be renewed annually in conjunction with the special use permit renewal for the commercial activity itself. The cabin permit may be issued for periods of up to five years and is a separate permit from one issued for the commercial activity.

(f) ***Administrative and government-owned public use cabins.*** In addition to paragraph (a) of this section, the regulations in this paragraph (f) apply to all administrative and government-owned cabins.

- (1) The refuge manager can designate those cabins not under permit as administrative cabins to be used for official government business. Administrative cabins may be used by the public during life-threatening emergencies. On a case-by-case basis, they may also be designated as public use cabins when not needed for government purposes. In such cases, the refuge manager must inform the public and post dates or seasons when the cabins are available.
- (2) The refuge manager may designate government-owned cabins as public use cabins. They are only intended for short-term public recreational use and occupancy. The refuge manager may develop an allocation system for managing public use cabins for short-term recreational use. No existing public use cabins shall be removed or new public use cabins constructed within wilderness areas designated by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 or subsequently designated wilderness areas until the Secretary of the Interior notifies the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs and the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

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