



# United States Department of the Interior

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Alaska Regional Office  
240 West 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Room 114  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

IN REPLY REFER TO:

February 11, 2005

Dear Reader:

Within Alaska's national park units, there are more than 1.6 million acres of land owned by private individuals and corporations, the state of Alaska and local governments. These owners and other valid occupants are entitled to adequate and feasible access to their property, but the process of obtaining legal access across public land has never been well described in a single document.

The Alaska Region of the National Park Service has released a draft user's guide for public review that will help landowners and others understand the process that is required by law and regulation for the National Park Service to authorize access across park areas. Your review of the draft and comments on how it might be improved are welcomed.

Titled "Draft User's Guide to Accessing Inholdings in a National Park Service Area in Alaska" the 14-page document is an outcome of conversations held last year among U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Gale Norton, Alaska Governor Frank Murkowski, and NPS Alaska Regional Director Marcia Blaszak. The NPS consulted with state officials during preparation of the document.

The draft describes how landowners and valid occupants can secure rights under Section 1110(b) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). This section addresses motorized access to inholdings, as well as access that would require improvements such as construction or maintenance of a road, power line, or landing strip, or similar undertakings on publicly owned park land. Access by airplane, boat, snowmachine, and various methods of non-motorized travel not requiring improvements generally does not require a permit.

Authorization, in the form of a right-of-way permit, allows the National Park Service and other agencies that manage public resources -- things such as salmon streams, wildlife habitat, historical sites-- and other public uses, to protect those public assets. At the same time, the permitting process meets the unique provisions in law to provide access to non-federal lands within parks. The user's guide will not only help landowners understand what is required of them, but will help park managers provide consistent information to people seeking access.

Readers are encouraged to review the guide to insure that it accomplishes the NPS objectives of clarity, accuracy and sound public policy. In particular, the National Park Service is interested in comments on a proposed cost structure which includes an application fee and the reimbursement of some NPS costs, and a land rental fee for commercial operations.

Public comment will be accepted for 90 days, through May 13, 2005. Your comments on this document can be submitted electronically using the NPS web-based PEPC system. To download the document for review and comment, go to the following website: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/>

- Select the link "Plans/Documents Open for Comment" located at the lower left corner of the page.
- From the "Plan/Document List" select the link "Draft User's Guide to Accessing Inholdings in a National Park Service Area in Alaska".
- To download the document to your computer select the Draft User's Guide from the "Document Content" list.
- Make comments on the document by selecting the link "Comment on document" in the menu on the left side of the page and submit your comments using the "Comment Form".

In lieu of submitting your comments using PEPC, you may also send them to Marcia Blaszk, Regional Director, National Park Service, 240 W. 5th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99501. Copies of the guide may also be requested by writing the above address, or by calling (907) 644-3539.

Public comment will also be accepted at each of four meetings planned in March:

March 9	Anchorage -- Alaska Public Lands Information Center, 605 W. 4th Ave.
March 16	McCarthy -- Location, time to be announced
March 18	Slana -- Location, time to be announced
March 30	Fairbanks -- Alaska Public Lands Information Center, 250 Cushman St.

The Anchorage and Fairbanks meetings will be held from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. A brief presentation on the guide by National Park Service staff will be given at 3:45 and 5:15 p.m., with a question and answer session and public comment taken after each presentation.