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For Immediate Release
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NPS-Alaska Extends Comment Period on Collection EA

The National Park Service (NPS) has extended the public review period for an environmental assessment addressing the subsistence collection and use of shed or discarded animals parts and plants from NPS areas in Alaska.

In response to a request for additional time, the deadline for public comment is now May 3, 2012, about a month longer than originally scheduled.

The NPS is considering promulgating regulations to allow subsistence collection and use of shed or discarded animal parts (for instance, antlers, horns, bones, hooves) and plants to make handicrafts for personal or family uses, for barter, or to sell. Collection activities would only be allowed in NPS areas where subsistence is authorized in accordance with Titles II and VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980.

The environmental assessment evaluates the effects of alternatives for managing the collection of plants and inedible animal parts from naturally shed (including natural mortality) or discarded (from hunters) for subsistence uses by qualified local rural residents. The NPS goal is to authorize these uses in a manner to prevent or minimize adverse impacts to other park resources, values, and uses.

The NPS is considering this action because Alaska rural residents asked the agency to consider allowing these activities in units with subsistence provisions because national regulations at 36 CFR 2.1 presently prohibit the “Possessing, destroying, injuring, defacing, removing, digging, or disturbing from its natural state any living or dead wildlife or fish, or parts or products thereof, such as antlers or nests.”

Please send written comments to the attention of Bud Rice , NPS Alaska, 240 W. 5th Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99501. Comments may also be posted at the Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) program located on the NPS public comment website at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov> You may request a hard copy of the EA, executive summary of the EA, or download the EA from the NPS Planning Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) web page at: <http://parkplanning.nps/projectHome.cfm?projectID=35955> If you have questions about the EA, please contact Bud Rice, Environmental Protection Specialist, at (907) 644-3530 or Sandy Rabinowitch, Subsistence Manager, at (907) 644-3596.