

## CHAPTER 5: CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

The National Park Service consulted and coordinated with numerous agencies, organizations, and interested persons in addressing the proposed Backcountry Management Plan and General Management Plan amendment for Denali National Park and Preserve. Individual members of the public and other interested agencies and organizations have had the opportunity to shape this plan from the definition of issues and concerns through the initial development of alternatives, *Draft EIS*, and *Revised Draft EIS*. The following is a brief overview of the extent of public and agency involvement.

### **Public Involvement**

#### **Public Scoping**

The National Park Service held scoping meetings within the park and the regional office during fall 1998 and spring 1999. A Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an environmental impact statement was published in the *Federal Register* on August 31, 1999. After publishing the Notice of Intent, the National Park Service hosted public scoping meetings in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Talkeetna/Trapper Creek, and McKinley Village to define issues and impact topics to address in the plan. Approximately 150 people attended these meetings and an additional 65 written comments were received.

#### **Newsletter**

As a result of these scoping efforts, the NPS issued in January 2001 the Special Winter 2001 Edition of the *Denali Dispatch* (Volume 6, Issue #4) to about 2,000 addresses on the park mailing list. This document described the primary activities and a range of alternatives to be evaluated in the environmental impact statement. (Recipients included those receiving the *Draft Backcountry Management Plan and EIS*—see list at the end of this section).

#### **Open Houses – Alternatives Development**

The National Park Service held open house meetings in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Talkeetna/Trapper Creek, Cantwell, and Healy during the first two weeks of February 2001 to help fine-tune the alternatives and impact topics.

#### **Open Houses – Draft Plan and EIS Review**

Upon release of the *Draft Backcountry Management Plan and EIS* in February 2003, the National Park Service held a series of informational workshops in Anchorage, Wasilla, Talkeetna/Trapper Creek, Cantwell, Healy, and Fairbanks to explain the plan so members of the public would be better equipped to respond in public comment.

#### **Public Comment on Draft Plan**

The public comment period on the draft plan was open for 75 days from February 25 to May 7, 2003, and then extended at public request to May 30, 2003. In April, public hearings were held in Anchorage, Wasilla, Talkeetna/Trapper Creek, Cantwell, Healy,

and Fairbanks. The National Park Service received 9,370 comments. These comments are summarized and responses to substantive comments provided in Appendix A of the *Revised Draft EIS*. As a result of the comments, the National Park Service decided to revise the draft plan and solicit additional public comment before publishing a final plan.

### **Public Comment on Revised Draft Plan**

A Notice of Availability for the *Revised Draft EIS* was published in the Federal Register on April 26, 2005, and public comment was accepted through July 15, 2005. National Park Service staff received 15,198 comments. See Chapter 6 for a summary and analysis of these comments and the NPS responses to substantive comments. Public hearings on the *Revised Draft EIS* were held during June, 2005, in Anchorage, Talkeetna/Trapper Creek, Cantwell, Healy, and Fairbanks.

### **Consultation With Federal Agencies**

#### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, as amended, prohibits federal agencies such as the National Park Service from implementing any action that is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a federally protected (i.e., endangered, threatened) species. Further, the act requires that the National Park Service consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on any action it authorizes, funds, or executes that could potentially affect a protected species or its designated critical habitat.

To help meet its responsibilities under the act, the National Park Service has consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to identify those listed plant and animal species that may inhabit the backcountry area. On July 17, 2000, Superintendent Stephen P. Martin sent a letter to Ann Rappaport, Ecological Services and Endangered Species, requesting information on federally endangered or threatened plant and animal species in Denali National Park and Preserve for the backcountry management plan. On July 27, 2000, Arthur E. Davenport, Endangered Species Biologist, indicated in his letter that the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service had no endangered or threatened plant and animal species occurring within the area of the proposed new backcountry management plan for the park. Copies of the correspondence were included in full in Appendix D of the original *Draft Backcountry Management Plan and EIS* (NPS 2003d).

In addition to this communication, National Park Service planning staff met with counterparts in the Alaska Region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on May 13, 2004, to discuss the draft plan.

#### **Bureau of Land Management**

The National Park Service held discussions with Bureau of Land Management staff, Glenallen Field Office, and submitted written comments regarding the East Alaska

Resource Management Plan (EARMP). The NPS comments sought coordination between the EARMP and the backcountry management plan on regional recreation opportunities, and particularly for combining efforts on the proposed visitor contact station in the Broad Pass/Cantwell area.

### **Denali Subsistence Resources Commission**

Several presentations have been made to the Denali Subsistence Resources Commission, which has maintained an active interest in the plan because of potential conflicts between subsistence users and recreational users in the park additions and preserve. Presentations have occurred at the April and October meetings in 2001, February meeting in 2002, March meeting in 2004, and June meeting in 2005. The Commission passed formal motions regarding both the original *Draft EIS* and the *Revised Draft EIS*. The motions and commission discussion have consistently called for recognizing a subsistence priority over recreational uses in areas where subsistence use occurs, zoning the southern park additions between Cantwell and the Bull River to protect subsistence activities, and providing more guidance on the resolution of conflicts between subsistence and recreational use. The complete motions regarding the *Revised Draft EIS* and the NPS responses appear in the following chapter of this document, Chapter 6: Public Comments and Response.

### **Consultation with State and Local Governments**

#### **State Of Alaska**

The planning team shared a draft copy of the affected environment section of the *Draft EIS* with the State of Alaska during winter 2000-2001 with a 60-day comment period. The Office of the Governor in Anchorage sent a comment letter to the park on April 20, 2001, along with an edited electronic version of the affected environment section. The planning team incorporated most of the state's suggestions. Suggested comments that were not incorporated into the draft plan were discussed with the Division of Governmental Coordination during fall 2001. The National Park Service provided the State of Alaska with a copy of the internal review draft backcountry management plan on January 18, 2002. The State provided verbal comments in a meeting on July 26, 2002.

During the comment period for the draft plan, the State submitted extensive comments that are published in appendix A of the *Revised Draft EIS* with responses. The National Park Service involved the State extensively in the process of crafting the revised draft plan, holding 10 meetings with representatives of the Office of the Governor, Department of Natural Resources, and Department of Fish and Game between December, 2003, and December, 2004. The State also participated in internal review of the revised draft plan during November 2004. The planning team met with the State during July and September 2005 to discuss the State's comments on the *Revised Draft EIS* and potential NPS responses to them, and the State was included in the internal review of the *Final EIS* during late November and early December 2005.

## **Alaska State Historic Preservation Office and the Western Office of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation**

The National Park Service has consulted with the Alaska State Historic Preservation Office and the Western Office of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation since initiating this project. An advance copy of the document was provided for their review. A copy of the *Draft Backcountry Management Plan and EIS* was sent to both of these offices in order to initiate and plan for coordination survey, eligibility, effect, and mitigation of possible cultural resources in the proposed project areas early in the planning process. Copies of correspondence were included in Appendix D of the original *Draft Backcountry Management Plan* (NPS 2003d). All implementation actions that could affect historic properties as defined under the National Historic Preservation Act and the 1995 Nationwide Programmatic Agreement will be evaluated through consultation with the state historic preservation officer. These actions include, but are not limited to, proposed changes to historic buildings or districts and ground-disturbing activities.

### **Consultation with Native Tribal Governments**

The National Park Service sent copies of the draft plan and letters requesting government-to-government consultation to six affected Native tribal governments. A meeting with the Nenana Native Council was held in summer of 2003 to discuss the backcountry management plan and other issues. These Native tribal governments were also provided with a copy of the *Revised Draft EIS* in April 2005.

### **Additional Consultation**

In addition to the publicized public involvement opportunities and consultation with public agencies, the National Park Service has sought comments and responded to requests for meetings, discussion, or informational presentations with a wide variety of organizations throughout the process of preparing the original and revised draft of the plan. In winter and spring 2002, the National Park Service held collaborative planning workshops in Anchorage and Talkeetna to discuss alternatives and issues associated with climbing and mountaineering, snowmachine use, and airplane use. Park staff frequently met with snowmachine groups, air taxi operators, environmental groups, inholders, subsistence users, and members of the travel and tourism industry to provide updates and solicit ideas and information.

**List of Agencies, Organizations, and Businesses to Whom Copies of the *Revised Draft Backcountry Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement* Were Sent**

**ALASKA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION**

Congressman Don Young  
Senator Lisa Murkowski  
Senator Ted Stevens

**FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS, AGENCIES, AND OFFICES**

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation  
Alaska Public Lands Information Center, Anchorage  
Alaska Public Lands Information Center, Fairbanks  
Department of the Interior  
    All Alaska National Parks  
    Assistant to the Secretary for Alaska  
    Bureau of Land Management  
    National Park Service, Alaska Region  
    National Park Service, Washington office  
    U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Federal Highway Administration

**NATIVE ORGANIZATIONS AND CORPORATIONS**

Ahtna Development Corporation  
Alaska Village Initiatives  
Cook Inlet Region, Inc.  
Doyon, Limited  
Subsistence Resource Commissions  
Native Village of Cantwell  
Native Village of Tanana  
Nenana Native Council  
Nikolai Edzeno' Village Council  
Tanana Chiefs Conference

**STATE OF ALASKA**

Governor Frank Murkowski  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Alaska Department of Natural Resources  
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities  
Alaska Railroad Corporation  
Alaska State Historic Preservation Office

Alaska State Parks  
State Representative David Guttenberg  
State Senator Ralph Seekins  
State Senator Gene Therriault

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau  
City of Anderson  
City of Fairbanks  
City of Talkeetna  
Denali Borough  
Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce  
Fairbanks Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Fairbanks North Star Borough  
Greater Palmer Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce  
Healy Chamber of Commerce  
Matanuska-Susitna Borough  
Municipality of Anchorage  
Talkeetna Chamber of Commerce  
Talkeetna Community Council  
Trapper Creek Community Council  
Village of Nenana

## **ORGANIZATIONS**

Access Fund  
Alaska Airmens Association  
Alaska Alpine Club  
Alaska Aviation Safety Foundation  
Alaska Center for the Environment  
Alaska Conservation Alliance  
Alaska Conservation Foundation  
Alaska Environmental Lobby  
Alaska Lands Act Coordinating Committee  
Alaska Miners Association  
Alaska Natural Heritage Program  
Alaska Natural History Association  
Alaska Outdoor Council  
Alaska Professional Hunters Association  
Alaska Public Interest Research Group  
Alaska Quiet Rights Coalition  
Alaska State Snowmobile Association  
Alaska Tourism Industry Association  
Alaska Wilderness Recreation & Tourism Association

Alaska Wildlife Alliance  
Alaska Women of the Wilderness  
American Alpine Club  
American Alpine Institute  
American Wilderness Alliance  
Anchorage Audubon Society  
Anchorage Snowmobile Club  
Blue Ribbon Coalition  
Commonwealth North  
Denali Citizens Council  
Denali Foundation  
Denali Visitors Association  
Earth First, Ltd.  
Earth Justice Legal Defense Fund  
Fairbanks Snow Travelers  
Greenpeace USA  
Lake Minchumina Advisory Committee  
Mat-Su State Park Citizen's Advisory Board  
McCarthy Area Council  
Middle Nenana River Advisory Committee  
Mountaineers Club of Alaska  
National Audubon Society  
National Outdoor Leadership School  
National Parks and Conservation Association  
National Wildlife Federation  
Northern Alaska Environmental Center  
Panguingue Creek Homeowners Association  
Resource Development Council for Alaska, Inc.  
Seaplane Pilots Association  
Sierra Club, Alaska Chapter  
Sierra Club, Alaska Field Office  
Southeast Alaska Conservation Council  
Susitna Valley Association  
Talkeetna Environmental Center  
Talkeetna Historical Society  
The Conservation Fund  
The Nature Conservancy of Alaska  
The Wilderness Society  
Trustees for Alaska  
Wilderness Watch  
Wildlife Federation of Alaska

## **BUSINESSES**

The *Revised Draft EIS* was sent to over 200 businesses, which fall into one of the following categories:

- Accommodations
- Climbing services
- Dog sled tour and freighters
- Engineering and consulting firms
- Fishing services
- Flying services
- Hiking services
- Hunting services
- Inholders associations
- Leisure services
- Mining companies
- Mountaineering services
- Raft and kayak services
- Restaurants, local
- Ski tour services
- Transportation services, automobile
- Wilderness schools

## **EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

- Alaska Pacific University
- Denali Institute
- Fairbanks Noel Wein Library
- Loussac Public Library
- Prescott College
- Talkeetna Public Library
- Tri-Valley Community Library
- University of Alaska-Anchorage
- University of Alaska-Fairbanks

## **MEDIA**

- Alaska Snowrider
- Airmen's Magazine
- All Public Radio and Television Stations
- Alaska Geographic
- Alaska Magazine
- Anchorage Daily News
- Denali Summer Times
- Fairbanks Daily News Miner
- The Frontiersman