

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Lake Clark National Park and Preserve
Alaska



Finding of No Significant Impact

Snipe Lake Cabin Repair

March 2008

Recommended:


Superintendent, Lake Clark National Park and Preserve

March 7, 2008

Date

Approved:


Regional Director, Alaska

08 March 2008

Date

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Snipe Lake Cabin Repair Lake Clark National Park and Preserve March 2008

The National Park Service (NPS) prepared an environmental assessment to evaluate a proposal to rehabilitate the Snipe Lake Cabin located in Lake Clark National Preserve, outside the wilderness boundary, near Snipe Lake. Snipe Lake is located approximately 30 air miles north of Port Alsworth.

The NPS has selected Alternative 2 (NPS Preferred Alternative) which would rehabilitate the Snipe Lake cabin. The alternative was not modified by public comment.

ALTERNATIVES

Two alternatives were evaluated in the EA.

Alternative 1, No Action

Under the no-action alternative the Snipe Lake cabin would not be rehabilitated. The NPS would not take any action to stabilize the structure. The cabin would be allowed to naturally decay and collapse. Hunting patrols would use alternative cabins or return to Port Alsworth every night. Monitoring scientists would live in field camps located around the shoreline of Snipe Lake.

Alternative 2 – Rehabilitate the Snipe Lake Cabin (NPS Preferred Alternative)

The Snipe Lake cabin is a 12 ft. by 13 ft. structure with an extended porch on the south side. The NPS proposes to replace the sill and wall logs which are rotten or porcupine-chewed, replace the ridge beams and roofing, build a wood floor, restore the door and fit the windows with glass and install a wood stove. The sill and walls would need up to 25 logs 6 to 8 inches in diameter at the butt end and 16 to 18 feet long. The ridgepole is a larger log (10 inch butt diameter) and would be 20 ft. long. Treated boards (2 ft. x 12 ft.) would be installed below the sill logs to prolong the life of the cabin. The roof would be recovered with imported slabs or treated 2X boards, insulated and covered with aluminum sheets to match the original newsprint sheets. The subfloor would be constructed of treated boards and insulated, and covered with 1 inch flooring. The door would be reconstructed and glass windows installed in existing frames. A wood stove and chimney would be installed, following manufacturer's clearance requirements. An outhouse would be constructed behind the cabin. A pit approximately one meter square and deep would be dug and a small frame outhouse built over it.

Logs for the walls and ridgepole would be cut locally and skidded to the cabin site in the winter when adequate snow cover exists to protect the vegetation. The proposed timber site is in a small cove about 1.5 km southwest of the cabin site. The proposed timber skidding route would be above the small drainage to the lake shore, thence across the ice to the beach below the cabin.

Logs would be cut from an open stand of white spruce located about 1.5 km to the southwest and stockpiled by the cabin to dry before construction.

All stumps would be cut flush with the ground surface and the slash scattered through the stand. Trees would be selected from throughout the stand to avoid the appearance of a clearcut. Chain saws, axes, and snow machines would be used during the timbering operation. Up to 25 mature white spruce would be cut, although it may be possible to get two wall logs from some trees. Materials for the roofing and floor would be flown into the site with fixed wing planes. These materials would be stockpiled around the cabin during the construction phase. Timber harvest (winter) and cabin reconstruction (summer) should take less than a week in the winter and about three weeks during summer.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The EA was issued for public review and comment from February 1, 2008 to March 3, 2008. The EA was sent by mail to 61 agencies, organizations, and individuals and was posted on the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website.

Two comments were received on the EA. The public comment did not change the conclusions in the EA concerning the environmental effects of the action.

DECISION

The NPS decision is to select Alternative 2 (Rehabilitation of the Snipe Lake Cabin). Cabin restoration would be conducted under the supervision of a historical architect to ensure that the historical integrity of the cabin and surrounding area will be maintained.

MITIGATING MEASURES

No additional mitigating measures were developed.

RATIONALE for the DECISION

Alternative 2 (NPS Preferred Alternative) was selected. The Snipe Lake cabin is ideally located to support park administrative activities in the western portion of the preserve. The cabins current deteriorated condition prevents its use for administrative purposes to support hunting patrols and resource monitoring activities in the area. Cabin rehabilitation will support these uses as well as maintain the historic integrity of the cabin and the themes of big game hunting and trapping in the Lake Clark region.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

The preferred alternative will not have a significant effect on the human environment. This conclusion is based on the following examination of the significance criteria defined in 40 CFR Section 1508.27.”

(1) Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that on balance the effect will be beneficial.

As documented in the EA the restoration of the Snipe Lake Cabin would have a minimal effect on the Preserve's natural resources while ensuring preservation of a line cabin from the mid-twentieth century.

(2) The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.

The proposed action would not affect public health or safety.

(3) Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetland, wild and scenic rives, or ecologically critical areas.

The Snipe Lake cabin is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

(4) The degree to which effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

The effects on the quality of the human environment would not be controversial.

(5) The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

The effects of the selected alternative do not involve unique or unknown risks.

(6) The degree to which the action may establish a precedent of future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

The cabin rehabilitation would not set a precedent for future actions.

(7) Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. Significance exists if it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment. Significance cannot be avoided by terming an action temporary or by breaking it down into small component parts.

The action is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulative significant impacts.

(8) Degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

The selected alternative would not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

(9) The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

The selected alternative would not adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat.

(10) Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

The selected alternative would not violate any Federal, State, or local law.

FINDINGS

The levels of adverse impacts to park resources anticipated from the selected alternative will not result in an impairment of park resources that fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or that are key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park.

The selected alternative complies with the Endangered Species Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and Executive Orders 11988 and 11990]. There will be no restriction of subsistence activities as documented by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Title VIII, Section 810(a) Summary Evaluation and Findings.

The National Park Service has determined that the selected alternative does not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1508.9), an environmental impact statement is not needed and will not be prepared for this project.