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Growing Alaska Through Responsible Resource Development

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Ex-Officio Members Senator Mark Begich Senator Lisa Murkowski Congressman Don Young Governor Sean Parnell

### **BREAKFAST MEETING**

Thursday, March 4, 2010

- 1. Call to order Wendy Lindskoog, President
- 2. Self Introductions
- 3. Headtable Introductions
- 4. Staff Report Jason Brune, Executive Director
- 5. Program and Keynote Speaker:

# **Economic Benefits of Port MacKenzie Rail Extension to the Mainline**

Rick Mystrom, Former Mayor of Anchorage and Economic Development Advisor to Mat-Su Borough

### Future Meetings:

March 18: Sofia Wong, Technical Manager, Point Thomson Project, ExxonMobil April 1: Senator Lisa Murkowski

April 15: Lt. Governor Craig Campbell

Please add my name to RDC's mailing list

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### Fairbanks chamber backs Mat-Su rail plan

The Associated Press

(11/11/09 10:34:36)

FAIRBANKS -- The Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce has endorsed a plan by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the Alaska Railroad Corp. to extend track to industrial land at Point MacKenzie. The Mat-Su Borough has developed a port there, on the north shore of Cook Inlet. They say it could handle exports of coal, limestone and other natural resources.

The chamber resolution this week said the economic activity would boost jobs and corporate taxes in the Fairbanks and Mat-Su boroughs.

The chamber resolution asks state leaders to help the project get built by 2013. It could cost as much as \$250 million.

"Basically we're talking about some sort of state or federal funding," said John Duffy, manager for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

Across the Inlet, the municipality of Anchorage operates the state's major port, and the railroad extension could split cargo between the two ports.

The state owns the railroad corporation.



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# Rail route is the key for using MacKenzie PIPELINE: Using port as shipment center would save money.

By RINDI WHITE rwhite@adn.com (03/18/08 22:42:09)

WASILLA -- A contractor hired by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough says moving building material for the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline through borough-owned Port MacKenzie will save from \$122 million to \$176 million compared with other Alaska ports.

Analysts with Northern Economics say the state saves by shipping pipeline materials through Port MacKenzie rather than from Seward by rail or from Valdez by truck -- provided, of course, that a rail link is built linking Port MacKenzie to the main line of the Alaska Railroad in time to accommodate pipeline construction. Building a rail line is estimated to cost as much as \$300 million.

The borough hopes to have the track laid by 2012.

Missing from the analysis is the cost of shipping pipeline materials through the Port of Anchorage. Borough staff said Anchorage wasn't considered because it wasn't likely to be used to move the bulky pipeline pieces.

"When you're talking about heavy-duty stuff like the pipe and the big bridge parts, there's just not room there to do it," said borough economic developer Dave Hanson.

But Anchorage port director Bill Sheffield said Tuesday that Anchorage intends to be the shipping point for pipeline construction materials.

The port is adding 135 acres to its facility, 60 acres of which would be ideal for offloading pipeline materials, he said.

"It's funny they would say that," Sheffield said. "We have all the amenities here for the pipe and module construction, all the things that a gas line is going to have to have before a gas line is going to be built."

He said oil industry executives and TransCanada, the only gas line applicant currently being considered by the state, have already toured the Anchorage port to look at potential spots to offload pipe.

Large oil-field modules could be built at the Anchorage port after an ongoing port expansion project wraps up, Sheffield said.

"We didn't have the ground to do it before, but now we do," he said.

### STUDY IS ONE OF SIX

The Mat-Su Borough commissioned the Northern Economics study in January. It analyzes the potential savings of using the borough port as a shipping point for pipeline materials.

It's part of an effort by the borough to bolster its bid for a 30- to 45-mile rail extension linking the port

to the existing Alaska Railroad.

The Northern Economics study is one of six the borough has commissioned, analyzing various aspects of the rail line project.

A route for the rail line has not been chosen.

A contractor is preparing an environmental impact study for the federal Surface Transportation Board. The board, responsible for choosing where new rail projects are built, is expected to consider the Point MacKenzie rail project in 2009.

Hanson said the borough is preparing next to study various financing methods for the rail link.

### CHANCE TO DIVERSIFY

Another study completed March 10 by the University of Alaska Anchorage's Institute for Social and Economic Research might make financing easier to find, he said. The study shows that adding a rail link to Port MacKenzie would likely more than double the return on investment over 50 years.

"We're really thrilled. We're really excited about this. It will just do great things for an economy during a time when we need to further diversify," Hanson said.

Find Daily News reporter Rindi White online at <a href="https://www.adn.com/contact/rwhite">www.adn.com/contact/rwhite</a> or call 352-6709.

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## Mat-Su growth dips, but area is still growing THE NUMBERS: But the area still is the No. 1 place in Alaska.

By RINDI WHITE rwhite@adn.com

(03/02/10 22:02:03)

WASILLA -- Growth in Mat-Su is slowing, according to state population estimates released earlier this year. And according to the state, more than a third of the borough's census-designated places lost a few residents.

Mat-Su Borough officials say the growth might be slowing, but it's nowhere near stopping. "We've had one heck of a run," said borough economic development director Dave Hanson. "And 2.6 (percent) is a very healthy growth rate."

Despite the slowing, Mat-Su continued to be the fastest-growing area in the state, a title the Valley has held since 1990.

The Valley population between 2000 and 2009 jumped from 59,322 to 84,314, an increase of 42 percent. The average rate of growth was about 3.8 percent each year during that time, according to the state.

Hanson pointed out that adding 25,000 residents to the borough has driven up demand for local services. The borough has a long list of roads that are overused and in need of repair, including three state-designated traffic safety corridors.

The slower rate of growth also doesn't diminish the need for new schools, said Mat-Su School District spokeswoman Catherine Esary. "We went from 12,699 students in 1999 to 16,673 this year. At its highest, we were seeing a 5.3 percent gain," she said.

The Mat-Su School District has opened nine new schools since 1999. That list includes Su-Valley Junior/Senior High School, built to replace a school that burned, but Esary said all other schools were built to decrease crowding.

Despite all that construction, she estimated between 1,800 and 2,000 students attend classes in portable classrooms. The district hasn't seen much of a slow-down in the growth of its student population, nor does it expect to.

District officials expect to continue seeing 1-percent to 2.5-percent growth rates, she said. With 3,500 soldiers scheduled to return to Elmendorf and Fort Richardson this spring, she said the district might see a small spike in its population.

Mat-Su has been living a culture of growth for a decade but not everywhere in the Valley is booming. Thirteen of 28 so-called census-designated places measured in Mat-Su lost population. Most lost just a few people, like Chase, the off-road community north of Talkeetna, which lost one of its 36 residents in 2009. But some of the losses came in unexpected places, such as Farm Loop and Lazy Mountain, both popular and fairly close-knit communities near Palmer. The state shows Farm Loop lost 33 people and Lazy Mountain nine.

One of the biggest puzzles is the loss of 53 people from Gateway, the community that straddles Trunk Road and the Parks Highway near its intersection with the Glenn Highway. It's close to the hospital, an easy spot for commuters to live and there are several nice recreation spots nearby.

"It really surprises me that there would be any loss," said Neil Fox, Gateway Community Council president. "This continues to be one of the most sought-after areas for recreation and for living."

Some of the loss might have come from houses purchased to make way for the Trunk Road project sweeping through the Gateway Community. State Transportation Department right-of-way agents bought 5 homes, which would have displaced about a dozen people.

State demographer Gregory Williams, who put together the new population figures, said he doesn't delve into the reasons numbers go up or down around the state.

Houston officials are also scratching their heads. The state says the Valley's smallest city, with an estimated population of 1,664, lost 64 residents between 2008 and 2009. Houston Mayor Roger Purcell is challenging the count.

"There are more houses here than last year, more activity here than last year. I'm not exactly sure how that (calculation) happened, but we'll challenge it like we did last year," Purcell said.

Population numbers are significant for communities that rely on revenue sharing.

Williams said the state's annual population count is based on what people list as their physical address when they apply for a state Permanent Fund dividend. The state in 1999 began requiring residents to give a physical address as well as a mailing address, Williams said. The number is cross-referenced with the most recent census -- in this case, the 2000 census -- to provide a more accurate count.

The state figures have proven pretty accurate, Williams said, but there is a margin of error. Next year the 2010 census data will provide a new baseline for the state to use.

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Comment letters and testimony opposing Cook Inlet beluga whale proposed critical habitat designation now available on the RDC website:

### http://www.akrdc.org/issues/other/esa/belugas/

- Jason Brune, Resource Development Council
- U.S. Senator Mark Begich
- Steve Borell, Alaska Miners Association
- Bob Cox, Crowley Petroleum Distribution
- William Sheffield, The Port of Anchorage
- Jim Odom, The Odom Corporation
- Heinrich Springer, Private Citizen
- Mary Ann Pease, MAP Consulting
- Tom Harris, Tyonek Native Corporation
- Bruce Carr, Alaska Railroad Corporation
- Statements from U.S. Senator Mark Begich
- Danny Davis, Escopeta Oil
- Bradley Evans, Chugach Electric Association
- Bruce Webb, Webb Consulting
- Paul Glavinovich, Minerals Consultant
- Charlotte MacCay, Pebble Partnership
- Jeff Bentz, North Star Terminal and Stevedore Company, LLC
- Steve Denton, Usibelli Coal Mine
- Caroline Higgins, Alaska State Chamber of Commerce
- Greg Kessler, Totem Ocean Trailer Express
- George Lowery, Totem Ocean Trailer Express
- Mike Thrasher, Totem Ocean Trailer Express
- Anthony Follett, Export Council of Alaska
- Richard Berkowitz, Transportation Institute
- Mary Ann Pease, MAP Consulting, LLC
- Carl Portman, Private Citizen

As of March 3, 2010 at 3 pm, check back for updates.

**Subject: APOC Complaint Consent Decree Accepted** 

**Date:** Friday, February 26, 2010 6:09 PM **From:** RDC <resources@akrdc.org>

RDC Membership:

We have just been informed that a consent decree between APOC and Bob Gillam, the Renewable Resources Coalition, and Alaskans for Clean Water has been accepted. Despite having to make one of the largest payments to the state resulting from an APOC investigation of \$100,000, the final decree resulted in no admission of wrong doing, but rather a commitment by these parties not to repeat this behavior again. Amazingly, this does not even cover the cost of staff's investigation.

The evidence clearly pointed to wrong doing and indeed, the original APOC staff report called for very stiff penalties and referral to the state Attorney General for criminal investigation. Unfortunately, nothing in this agreement will deter similar actions in the future by these, or other parties. If this type of slap on the wrist is what APOC will consent to or settle for given the facts in this case, it makes me start to wonder why we even have it in the first place. With this ruling, it sets the precedent for future campaigns to simply budget 1-2% into their races for post-election fines as a cost of doing business. We are very disappointed with the actions of the APOC commissioners.

Jason Brune
Executive Director
Resource Development Council for Alaska, Inc.
jbrune@akrdc.org
(907) 276-0700



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## Foes of proposed Pebble mine to pay for violation \$100K: State election regulators rule against anti-mine group.

By ELIZABETH BLUEMINK ebluemink@adn.com (02/27/10 20:17:36)

Pebble mine foes will fork over the largest-ever cash payment to state election regulators to settle alleged campaign law violations.

The APOC on Friday approved a \$100,000 settlement with several high-profile opponents of the massive copper and gold Pebble prospect in Southwest Alaska who were involved in a major ballot-measure dispute in 2008.

The regulators had accused Anchorage businessman Bob Gillam and two anti-Pebble groups of illegally hiding that Gillam was the source of about \$2 million the groups spent to support that year's ballot measure attempt to block Pebble.

The \$12.5 million fight over Ballot Measure 4 was the most expensive political ad war in state history. Pitting Pebble opponents against the mining industry, the proposed law sought to tighten water-pollution discharge rules for large mines. Alaskans voted it down in August 2008.

In the aftermath of the vote, both sides filed complaints against each other alleging campaign-finance violations. One case, filed by Pebble opponents against mining supporters, is still pending.

The original complaint in the case involving Gillam was filed by the companies seeking to develop Pebble and the Resource Development Council. They say that Gillam -- the biggest single donor in support of Measure 4 -- should be prosecuted on state criminal charges. APOC ultimately decided not to recommend a criminal investigation.

In the settlement approved Friday, Gillam and the groups did not admit guilt for most of their actions during the Ballot Measure 4 fight. However, they agreed that in the future, they will not make donations to an organization, knowing it will pass those donations to a ballot campaign without identifying them as the source -- an illegal "pass-through."

An attorney for one of the groups, the Anchorage-based Renewable Resources Coalition, said the parties have worked hard to clear themselves of the charges. "We think (the settlement) is a reasonable resolution," said the attorney, Peter Maassen.

He and another attorney working on behalf of the Pebble foes disputed any description of the \$100,000 settlement as a "penalty" or "fine."

Matt Singer, an attorney for the companies seeking to develop Pebble, criticized APOC for agreeing with Gillam and the groups not to describe the \$100,000 as a penalty or fine.

The agreement doesn't even specify who is to pay the settlement, Singer said, during an APOC hearing on Friday. He termed it "one last secret payment."

In October, APOC turned down a proposed \$35,000 settlement of the case, saying it was too lenient. On

Friday, the commissioners listened to lawyers for both sides argue whether the panel should accept a revised settlement, and whether it should be \$60,000 or higher.

"Given the large sums of money involved, a fine of only \$60,000 will not provide sufficient (deterrence) to these particular respondents, nor will it send a message to the general public that APOC will take similar allegations seriously," according to the filing, signed by a state attorney working on behalf of the commission.

Despite being the largest payment in APOC history, it was less than the \$198,610 that APOC spent fighting the case.

The previous record sum levied by the Alaska Public Offices Commission was its \$98,000 fine against an Anchorage construction company in 1996.

Find Elizabeth Bluemink online at adn.com/contact/ebluemink or call 257-4317

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# Testimony of Carl Portman Deputy Director, Resource Development Council Hearing on Izembek Wildlife Refuge Land Exchange March 4, 2010 Anchorage, AK

Good evening. My name is Carl Portman, Deputy Director of the Resource Development Council. I am here to express RDC's support for the land exchange between the federal government, the State of Alaska and the King Cove Corporation for the purpose of constructing a single-lane, limited-use gravel road between the communities of King Cove and Cold Bay.

RDC is a statewide business association comprised of individuals and companies from Alaska's oil and gas, mining, forest products, tourism, and fisheries industries. RDC's membership includes Alaska Native corporations, local communities, organized labor, and industry support firms. RDC's purpose is to encourage a strong, diversified private sector in Alaska and expand the state's economic base through the responsible development of our natural resources.

For over a decade, RDC has consistently advocated for a road link between King Cove and Cold Bay. As noted in previous comments and correspondence, RDC strongly believes that a road corridor from King Cove to the all-weather airport at Cold Bay via a small portion of the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge is in the public interest. In our view, this is a public safety issue, which should take precedent over all other concerns.

The proposed land exchange would involve the removal of 206 acres within the Izembek Wilderness for the road corridor and 1,600 acres of federal land within the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. In exchange, the federal government would receive more than 43,000 acres of land owned by the State and approximately 13,000 acres of land owned by the King Cove Corporation near Cold Bay and adjacent to the Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge. Overall, the exchange would add more than 56,000 acres to the Izembek and Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuges and designate 43,000 acres as Wilderness.

Clearly, this exchange would provide a net gain for the national wildlife refuge system while providing a vital public safety and human health access corridor for King Cove residents to Cold Bay and its all-weather airport. The land trade is more than fair and the road would be narrow and unobtrusive. Mitigation strategies restricting access and prohibiting commercial use will be devised to allow the road, the environment and wildlife to coexist. This road would solve the community's perennial problem with access to the outside world, especially in poor weather conditions.

Meanwhile, the marine link between the two communities has not solved King Cove's transportation challenges in reaching Cold Bay and its airport. The hovercraft requires a substantial subsidy, which cannot be sustained. Moreover, poor weather conditions prevent the operation of the hovercraft, while the entire reason for improved access is largely because of the region's weather. The road has always been the community's first choice because it provides residents with the greatest amount of security, mobility, peace of mind and quality of life.

The spirit of the proposed exchange would recognize and honor with equal regard the human face of conservation, alongside wildlife and wilderness. RDC will be submitting written comments before the April 30 deadline. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on a land exchange that is so critical for the future health and welfare of local residents.

# Meetings to address Izembek land swap

REFUGE: Road across refuge involves state, U.S., Native acreage.

By DAN JOLING The Associated Press

A federal agency will begin an environmental review of a proposed road through an Alaska wildlife refuge that provides sanctuary to thousands of migratory birds.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service plans "scoping" meetings in Alaska and Washington, D.C., this month to collect testimony on issues to consider related to a land exchange and possible road through Izembek National Wildlife Refuge.

The road proposal pits rural Alaskans, who want the road for safety reasons, against environmental groups, which call the road unnecessary.

The refuge is on the Alaska Peninsula.

It is an internationally important wetlands for migratory birds, said John Schoen of Audubon Alaska.

surrounds The refuge and protects the watershed of several large lagoons, including the 30-mile by 5-mile Izembek Lagoon, which provides food and shelter for a wide variety of migrant birds. According to the refuge Web site, about 130,000 Pacific black brant, 62,000 emperor geese, 50,000 Taverner's Canada geese, 300,000 ducks, and es removing 206 acres from

A road for decades has been a priority for King Cove.

80,000 shorebirds stop in the Izembek area during migration. Threatened Steller's eiders winter in the area.

A road for decades has been a priority for the community of King Cove, population 750, which wants land access to an all-weather jet port at Cold Bay.

Congress in 1998 addressed the community's access with a \$37.5 million appropriation that paid for a \$9 million hovercraft to ferry villagers between the two communities.

"We're finding that it doesn't operate as well as we had hoped in windy conditions," said Sharon Boyette, administrator for the Aleutians East Borough. Foul weather can stop both aircraft and the hovercraft, she said.

Della Trumble, a King Cove Corp. spokeswoman, said Monday winds were blowing from the northwest at 40 mph and a 100-foot vessel just back from Cold Bay was covered with ice. "Our weather is extreme, and it gets very cold," she said.

The land exchange propos-

and 1,600 acres from the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge on Sitkinak Island south of Kodiak.

In return, the federal government would receive about 43,093 acres of state land and 13,300 acres of land owned by King Cove Corp., an Alaska Native village corporation set up by federal law in Alaska's Native land claims settlement. A road would be restricted and could not be used for com-

Imercial activity, Boyette said. Trumble said the land exchange is not a small gesture.

"It's unbelievable what's on the table, including what the state is giving up," she said.

For environmental groups, it's not how much land that's critical but where it's located.

A road would split a narrow isthmus in one of the most sensitive areas in the refuge, according to The Wilderness Society, causing irreparable harm and adding stress to an ecosystem already feeling effects of climate change. Environmentalists also say the road would set a bad precedent for a refuge.

Environmental groups don't live in the affected communities, Trumble said.

"We're Aleut people. We've lived and subsisted off these lands for thousands of years.

the refuge for a road corridor We don't do anything that won't give us a return for renewable resources."

The first scoping meeting will be Thursday night in Anchorage. A second is planned for March 11 in Washington, D.C. Meetings also are scheduled for King Cove, Cold Bay, False Pass, Sand Point and Nelson Lagoon in April.



### **Scoping Process**

To avoid duplication with State and local procedures, we plan to use the scoping process initiated by Western under CEQA. No additional public scoping meetings are planned at this time. The CEQA Notice of Preparation, comments received, and a map showing the proposed project and pipeline alignment alternatives are available at http://www.usbr.gov/lc/socal/ envdocs.html. No known Indian trust assets or environmental justice issues are associated with the Proposed Action, although the proposed pipeline alignment may include areas of low income and minority populations.

Written comments are requested to help identify any additional alternatives and issues that should be analyzed in the EIS/EIR. Federal, State and local agencies, tribes, and the general public are invited to participate in the environmental review process.

### **Public Disclosure**

Before including your name, address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, please be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Dated: February 18, 2010.

### Jayne Harkins,

Deputy Regional Director, Bureau of Reclamation, Lower Colorado Region. [FR Doc. 2010–3644 Filed 2–23–10; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-MN-P

### **DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

#### Fish and Wildlife Service

[FWS-R7-R-2009-N288; 70133-1265-0000-U4]

### Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, Cold Bay, Alaska

**AGENCY:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Revised Notice

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), intend to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for a proposed land exchange of certain lands owned by the State of Alaska and certain lands owned by the King Cove Corporation and evaluation of a proposed road corridor through the Izembek National Wildlife

Refuge and the Izembek Wilderness Area. We published a notice in the **Federal Register** on August 6, 2009, inviting suggestions on the scope of issues to address in the EIS. We now provide a comment-period end date and announce the dates, times, and locations of upcoming public meetings. Special mailings, newspaper articles, and other media releases will announce additional opportunities to provide written and oral input.

DATES: Meetings: Public scoping meetings will be held in Anchorage, Alaska on March 4, 2010, 5–8 p.m. and on March 11, 2010, 1–4 p.m. in Washington, DC. In addition, we will hold public scoping meetings in King Cove, Cold Bay, Sand Point, and Nelson Lagoon in Alaska. We will announce these meeting dates, times, and locations locally, at least 10 days prior to each meeting.

Comments: Please provide any written comments, information, or suggestions on the scope of issues to address in the EIS by April 30, 2010.

ADDRESSES: Additional information concerning the proposed land exchange is at <a href="http://izembek.fws.gov/EIS.htm">http://izembek.fws.gov/EIS.htm</a>. Send your comments or requests for information by any of the following methods:

- E-mail: izembek eis@fws.gov;
- Fax: Attn: Stephanie Brady, (907) 786–3965; or
- *U.S. Mail:* Stephanie Brady, Project Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1011 East Tudor Rd., MS–231, Anchorage, AK 99503.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Stephanie Brady, 907–246–1203 (phone), or at the addresses above.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Izembek National Wildlife Refuge (417,533 acres) and the North Creek (8.452 acres) and Paylof (1.447,264 acres) units of the Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge are located at the westernmost tip of the Alaska Peninsula. The 1,008,697-acre Unimak Island (the easternmost Aleutian Island of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge) lies across the Isanotski Strait. To the north of the Izembek Refuge is the Bering Sea; to the south is the Pacific Ocean. The Alaska Peninsula is dominated by the rugged Aleutian Range, part of the Aleutian arc chain of volcanoes. Landforms include mountains, active volcanoes, U-shaped valleys, glacial moraines, low tundra wetlands, lakes, sand dunes, and lagoons. Elevations range from sea level to the 9,372-foot Shishaldin Volcano. Shishaldin Volcano is a designated National Natural Landmark.

Several major lagoons are within the Izembek Refuge boundary. These lagoons contain some of the world's largest eelgrass beds. The lagoons are under the jurisdiction of the State of Alaska. Izembek Lagoon is designated as Izembek State Game Refuge. Birds from all over the Arctic funnel through Izembek Refuge in fall on their way to wintering grounds throughout the world. More than 98 percent of the world's Pacific black brant use Izembek Lagoon as a staging area for their fall migration to Mexico. Other birds that use the refuge include golden plovers, ruddy turnstones, western sandpipers, tundra swans, Steller's eiders, and emperor geese. The refuge also is home to large concentrations of brown bears and other large mammals, such as caribou and wolves. The red, pink, chum, and silver salmon that use the waters within the refuge enrich the entire ecosystem with the nutrients they bring from the sea. The refuge also has a rich human history, from ancient settlements of Alaska Natives, through the 18th and 19th century Russian fur traders, to a World War II outpost. The Izembek Wilderness covers much of the refuge and includes pristine streams, extensive wetlands, steep mountains, tundra, and sand dunes, and provides high scenic, wildlife, and scientific values, as well as outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge stretches from the Arctic Ocean to the southeast panhandle of Alaska and protects breeding habitat for seabirds, marine mammals, and other wildlife on more than 2,500 islands, spires, rocks, and coastal headlands. Sitkinak Island, which lies within the boundaries of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, is primarily owned by the State of Alaska, with two parcels owned by the Service.

The King Cove Corporation is an Alaska Native Village Corporation established under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (ANCSA; 43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.). Under the authority of ANCSA, Congress granted King Cove Corporation land entitlements within and adjacent to Izembek Refuge. The State of Alaska also owns lands, submerged lands, shorelands, and tidelands within and adjacent to Izembek and Alaska Peninsula Refuges, including the Izembek State Game Refuge.

In the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (H.R. 146, Subtitle E; the Act), Congress directed us to prepare an EIS under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), and its implementing regulations (40 CFR parts 1500-1508) to evaluate the impacts of a proposed land exchange with the State of Alaska and the King Cove Corporation for the purpose of constructing a single-lane gravel road between the communities of King Cove and Cold Bay, Alaska. The land exchange would involve the removal of approximately 206 acres within the Izembek Wilderness portion of Izembek National Wildlife Refuge for the road corridor and approximately 1,600 acres of Federal land within the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge on Sitkinak Island. In exchange, we would receive approximately 43,093 acres of land owned by the State of Alaska and approximately 13,300 acres of land owned by the King Cove Corporation. These lands are located around Cold Bay and adjacent to the North Creek Unit of Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge.

The Act directed us to begin our preparation of this EIS not later than 60 days after the Secretary received notification by the State and the King Cove Corporation of their intention to exchange lands. The Secretary received notification from the King Cove Corporation on May 19, 2009, and from the State of Alaska on June 19, 2009. Our notice of August 6, 2009 (74 FR 39336), initiated the process and opened the period for public scoping. This revised notice informs the public of the dates for the public scoping meetings in Washington, DC, and Anchorage, Alaska, and also notifies the public of the comment-period end date (see DATES). We will also hold public scoping meetings at King Cove, Cold Bay, Sand Point, and Nelson Lagoon, Alaska; we will announce the dates, times, and locations locally, at least 10 days prior to each meeting.

In accordance with Section 6402(b)(2)(B) of the Act, the EIS will analyze the proposed land exchange and the potential construction and operation of a road between the communities of King Cove and Cold Bay, Alaska, and will evaluate a specific road corridor through the Izembek Refuge that will be identified in consultation with the State of Alaska, the City of King Cove, and the Agdaagux Tribe of King Cove. The alternatives anticipated at this time include the existing situation (no land exchange or road construction) and the proposed land exchange and road construction and operation as outlined in the Act. In preparing the EIS, we will request comments from the public locally, regionally, and nationally. As required in the Act, subsequent to the

preparation of the EIS and in conjunction with the Record of Decision, the Secretary of the Interior will determine whether the land exchange (including the construction of the proposed road) is in the public interest. We anticipate release of the Draft EIS in the spring of 2011, followed by a 90-day public review period.

#### **Public Availability of Comments**

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us to withhold it from public review, we cannot guarantee we will be able to do so.

Dated: February 16, 2010.

#### Geoffrey L. Haskett,

Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage, Alaska.

[FR Doc. 2010-3642 Filed 2-23-10; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

#### **DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

### **Bureau of Land Management**

[LLUT91000-L11400000-PH0000-24-1A]

### Notice of Utah's Resource Advisory Council (RAC)/Recreation RAC Meeting

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of Utah's Resource Advisory Council (RAC)/Recreation RAC Meeting.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and The Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 (FACA), the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Utah Resource Advisory Council (RAC)/Recreation RAC will meet as indicated below.

DATES: The Utah Resource Advisory Council (RAC)/Recreation RAC will meet March 24, 2010, (8:30 a.m.—3:30 p.m.) and March 25, 2010, (8 a.m.—5 p.m.) in St. George, Utah.

ADDRESSES: The Council will meet at the Hilton Garden Inn (Indigo meeting room), 1731 South Convention Center Drive, St. George, Utah.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Contact Sherry Foot, Special Programs Coordinator, Utah State Office, Bureau of Land Management, P.O. Box 45155, Salt Lake City, Utah, 84145–0155; phone (801) 539–4195.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The 15member Council advises the Secretary of the Interior, through the Bureau of Land Management, on a variety of planning and management issues associated with public land management in Utah. In conformance with the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (Title 16 of the United States Code, Part 6801 et seq.), the U.S. Forest Service and the BLM will present the following recreation fee proposals on March 24: The BLM Moab Field Office proposal to begin charging Expanded Amenity fees at the Moab Skyway Group Site and the Entrada Bluffs, Bartlett, and Courthouse Rock camping areas; the BLM Fillmore Field Office proposal to increase Special Recreation Permit fees at the Little Sahara Recreation Area; the Dixie National Forest proposal to begin charging Expanded Amenity fees at the Pine Valley Guard Station; and the Fishlake National Forest proposals to increase Expanded Amenity fees at the Adelaide, Gooseberry, Lebaron, Maple Grove, and Oak Creek campgrounds. Planned agenda topics for the March 24 session also include a welcome and introduction of new Council members. A half-hour public comment period, where the public may address the Council, is scheduled to begin from 2:15 p.m.—2:45 p.m. Written comments may be sent to the Bureau of Land Management address listed above.

On March 25, topics will include an implementation overview of Subtitle O of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, and the Washington County Commissioners' and School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration's perspectives on the Act. Randy Johnson, consultant, will address the Council on the status of ongoing land use bills from other counties. A field tour of the Red Cliffs National Conservation Area is planned from 1:15 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. All meetings are open to the public; however, transportation, lodging, and meals are the responsibility of the participating public.

Dated: February 16, 2010.

Approved:

### Selma Sierra,

State Director.

[FR Doc. 2010–3654 Filed 2–23–10; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-DQ-P



## RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

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Ex-Officio Members Senator Mark Begich Senator Lisa Murkowski Congressman Don Young Governor Sean Parnell March 3, 2010

Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Commercial Passenger Vessel Environmental Compliance Program Attn: Denise Koch PO Box 111800 Juneau, AK 99811-1800

Re: 2010 DRAFT Large Commercial Passenger Vessel Wastewater Discharge General Permit

Dear Ms. Koch:

The Resource Development Council for Alaska, Inc. (RDC) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the 2010 DRAFT Large Commercial Passenger Vessel Wastewater Discharge General Permit.

RDC is a statewide business association comprised of individuals and companies from Alaska's oil and gas, mining, forest products, tourism and fisheries industries. RDC's membership includes Alaska Native Corporations, local communities, organized labor, and industry support firms. RDC's purpose is to encourage a strong, diversified private sector in Alaska and expand the state's economic base through the responsible development of our natural resources.

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has endorsed the discharge requirements in place today as among the most stringent in the world. However, the modifications in effluent limits proposed in the Department's 2010 DRAFT General Permit are unattainable, as the technology to reach these limits simply does not exist.

Alaska's environmental standards, across all resource sectors, are second to none. Indeed, in 2001, DEC called the requirements developed through collaboration with the cruise industry and members of the public "the most stringent water quality standards in the world." A 2002 Science Advisory Panel study reaffirmed this and stated that ships discharging into a mixing zone, while adhering to these requirements, caused no negative environmental effects. The industry then spent millions of dollars to upgrade Alaska ships with advanced wastewater treatment systems to meet the newly imposed requirements.

Four years later, the 2006 Ballot Initiative instituted a "point of discharge" requirement, which holds cruise ships to an impossible standard by

eliminating the mixing zone. The new required levels of effluent limits, measured right at the pipe, are technologically unattainable. These standards far exceed what is currently in place for municipal and statewide wastewater facilities in Alaska and isolates the cruise industry in a separate playing field with no known added benefit to the environment.

At one time, Alaska had a flourishing tourism industry that annually brought over one million cruise ship passengers to the state, provided thousands of jobs, and had an estimated economic impact of over \$1.3 billion. Now, inequitable environmental standards like those proposed in the general permit, coupled with an unpredictable tax regime, have resulted in the cruise industry rerouting their ships out of Alaska. This will result in devastating cuts in jobs and wages to residents, in revenues to governments statewide, and the failure of many small, family-owned tourism businesses.

State water quality requirements should not be a standard for one, but for all entities. Ultimately, this general permit proposes environmental regulations that single out cruise ships from other entities in the state that discharge water. Requiring cruise ships to meet effluent limits that are much stricter than what is required of other dischargers in the state is discriminatory. Furthermore, the proposed limits in the general permit for cruise ships are unattainable.

RDC encourages DEC to retain the attainable, the still very stringent standards currently in place for cruise ships. It is a balanced compromise that will keep Alaska's waters clean and provide for a healthy environment in which cruise ships can continue to bring visitors and economic opportunities to Alaska.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue.

Sincerely.

Jason W. Brune Executive Director Fact Sheets

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# Division of Mining, Land & Water

Alaska Department of Natural Resources

State of Alaska - Na

Natural Resources > Mining Land & Water

### Susitna Matanuska Area Plan

### **Public Review Draft - Public Meetings and Comment Period**

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has revised the state land use plan for over 9 million acres of state land in the Susitna and Matanuska river valleys. This public review draft (PRD) of the Susitna Matanuska Area Plan (SMAP) is available for review until May 5, 2010. Public meetings will be held at the locations and dates below.

The SMAP revises the majority of the 1985 Susitna Area Plan (SAP), encompassing most of the land within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Not included in the SMAP is the area generally between Palmer and Willow which is covered by the 2008 Southeast Susitna Area Plan, the Hatcher Pass Management Plan (currently under revision), and the Knik River Public Use Area. Also not included is the northeast corner of the borough, the area of land accessed from the Denali Highway, and Lake Louise. These regions are still guided by the 1985 SAP. For more detail of the planning area, refer to the website below.

The SMAP designates primary uses on state land, provides general management guidelines for a variety of land uses and resources, and identifies specific management intent for individual units of land. Half of the state land has been designated for wildlife habitat. This land will be retained in state ownership and managed to support fish and wildlife resources and their associated habitats. About 800,000 acres is designated Minerals and will be managed primarily for the mineral resource. Forestry is the designation for about 700,000 acres and will be managed to support forest resources and other related uses. Another 700,000 acres is designated for Settlement and is intended to provide a pool of land for future state land sales. The remainder is designated for a variety of land uses including coal, public recreation, agriculture, and water resources. A Land Classification Order (LCO) will be adopted with this plan which classifies each unit of land consistent with the land use designation. The effect of the approval of this LCO is to classify all of the land within the SMAP boundary, both legislatively designated and general state land. The classification corresponds to the designations and corresponding acreages noted above.

The draft plan, LCO, maps and other information can be found here, or, you can request a copy from the address below to be

### Land Planning Index

- Planning Unit Home
- Area Plans
- Easement Atlases
- Management Plans

Other Management Plans

- Div. of Forestry Plans
- Div. of Parks Plans
- Special Use Area

### Area Plans Index

- Bristol Bay Area Plan
- Central / Southern Southeast Area Plan
- Copper River Basin Area Plan
- Juneau State Land Plan
- Kenai Area Plan
- Kodiak Area Plan
- Kuskokwim Area Plan
- Northern Southeast Area Plan
- Northwest Area Plan
- Prince of Wales Island Area Plan
- Prince of Wales Island Area Plan Amendment
- Prince William Sound Area Plan for State Land
- Southeast Susitna Area Plan
- Susitna Area Plan
- Tanana Basin Area Plan
- Upper Yukon Area Plan
- Yakataga Area Plan

either emailed as an attachment or mailed as a CD.

Paper copies of the plan will be available for review by early March at local libraries, DNR's Public Information Center at 550 W 7th Ave. in Anchorage, at the Matanuska-Susitna Borough office at 350 E Dahlia Ave. in Palmer, or by request using the contact information listed below.

Please come to one of the following public meetings to learn about the plan and its recommendations for land use and guidelines. Following a presentation there will be an opportunity for the public to comment on the recommendations found in the plan.

Town	Date	Time	Location
SKWENTNA	Thursday, March 18	2:00-5:00 pm	Skwentna Roadhouse
WILLOW	Monday, March 22	7:00-9:30 pm	Willow Community Center, Mile 70 Parks Highway
TALKEETNA	Tuesday, March 23	6:00-8:30 pm	Talkeetna Elementary School, 13798 E Vtrns Way
TRAPPER CREEK	Wednesday, March 24	6:00-8:30 pm	Trapper Creek Elementary School, 6742 Petersville Rd
GLACIER VIEW	Thursday, March 25	1:00-4:00 pm	Long Rifle Lodge, Mile 102 Glenn Hwy
SUTTON	Thursday, March 25	6:00-8:30 pm	Sutton Public Library, Mile 0.1 Jonesville Rd
ANCHORAGE	Tuesday, March 30	6:00-8:30 pm	Atwood Building, 550 West 7th Ave., Suite 240
WASILLA	Wednesday, March 31	6:00-8:30 pm	Cottonwood Public Safety Building (Fire Station 65), Seward Meridian and Palmer-Wasilla Hwy

Comments can also be sent directly to the address below. To receive full consideration comments must be received by DNR before 5:00 pm on May 5, 2010.

Contact-

Mail:

DNR, Division of Mining, Land & Water Resource Assessment and Development

550 West 7th Ave, Suite 1050 Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3579

Phone: (907) 269-8534, or, Fax: (907) 269-8915

Email: ray.burger@alaska.gov

The State of Alaska, DNR, complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Individuals with disabilities who may need auxiliary aides, services or special modifications to participate in the review may contact the above number, email or the TDD

269-8411.

There are 11 million acres of land within the area plan boundary and 9 million of these are state owned. Since 1985 the legislature has designated 3 million acres as special purpose lands such as the Nelchina Public Use Area and the Susitna Recreation Rivers. There have also been land conveyances to the borough, Mental Health Trust, University and private individuals and this plan will not affect these lands. These and other changes to the state's population and economy make it desirable to revise the plan to reflect current conditions.

Planning is a way of sorting through the possibilities for using state land, choosing those with the greatest benefits for all Alaskans, and involving the public in the process. The planning process provides a link between the citizens and the agencies charged with managing their land.

Developing plans for state land is challenging because people have differing ideas of how state land can best be used. Also, not all desired uses of state land are compatible in the same place at the same time. Through resource planning, DNR works with the public to determine where the important resources are and how the land can be used for the maximum public benefit. In the planning process all resources are considered and evaluated. Wherever possible, guidelines are established that allow for multiple use.

### Susitna Matanuska Area Plan Public Review Draft

All files can be viewed using Acrobat Reader 7 or higher.

Complete Document with Maps (10 MB)

Note: Color maps (#s 3-3 thru 3-12) are 11 x 17 inches.

Map 3-1: Planning Boundary and Regions (190 KB)

Complete Text (2.6 MB)

10 Color Plan Maps - Low Resolution (2.1 MB)

Preface (45 KB)

Includes: Title Page / Overall Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction (135 KB)

Includes: Introduction and Background / Summary of Purpose of the Plan / Description of the Planning Area / Uplands and Shorelands as Described in This Plan / Update of the Original Susitna Area Plan / Planning Area / How the Plan is Organized / Why This Plan Was Developed / The Mandate / What the Plan Will Do / How This Plan is Used / Public Participation in Planning Process / Process of Plan Preparation / Who Developed the Plan? / Uses and Resources Within the Planning Area / What the Plan Won't Do / Planning Period / Summary of Plan Actions / Management Intent / Land Use Designations / Management Guidelines / Classifications / Summary of Plan Implementation

and Modification

### Chapter 2: Areawide Land Management Policies (765 KB)

Includes: Introduction / Agriculture / Coordination and Public Notice / Cultural Resources / Fish and Wildlife Habitat / Forestry / Instream Flow / Material Sites / Recreation and Scenic Resources / Settlement / Shorelands and Stream Corridors / Subsurface Resources / Public Access

### Chapter 3: Land Management Policies for Each Management Unit (1.5 MB)

Includes: Introduction / Plan Structure / North Parks Highway Region / South Parks Highway Region / Petersville Road Region / Sunflower Basin Region / Susitna Lowlands Region / Mount Susitna Region / Alaska Range Region / Glenn Highway Region / chugach Mountains Region / Talkeetna Mountains Region / Legislatively Designated Areas / Navigable Rivers and Lakes

### Individual High Resolution Maps (11 x 17 inch)

- Map 3-3 (810 KB)
- Map 3-4 (1.2 MB)
- Map 3-5 (1.1 MB)
- Map 3-6 (885 KB)
- Map 3-7 (810 KB)
- Map 3-8 (470 KB)
- Map 3-9 (360 KB)
- Map 3-10 (830 KB)
- Map 3-11 (550 KB)
- Map 3-12 (500 KB)

### Chapter 4: Implementation and Recommendations (105 KB)

Includes: Introduction / State Land Classifications / Relationship of Land Use Designations in the Plan to State Land Classifications / Public Trust Doctrine / Leasing of State Land / Classification Order / Applicability of Plan Designations/Classifications to State Lands not Identified in the Plan Text or Plan Maps / Survivor Designations and Classifications / Alaska Coastal Management Program / Municipal Entitlement / State Land Selections / Mineral Orders / Legislatively Designated Areas / Generally Allowed Uses / Types of Plan Changes

### Appendices (80 KB)

Includes: Glossary / Land Classification Order

### 2009 Scoping Materials:

#### Area Plan Map

- Matanuska Scoping Map Ortho
- Matanuska Scoping Map Topo
- Northern Susitna Scoping Map Ortho
- Northern Susitna Scoping Map Topo
- Southern Susitna Scoping Map Ortho



### Alaska Miners Association 22nd Fairbanks Biennial Conference

### Arctic International Mining Symposium

March 9-12, 2010 ■Westmark Hotel, Fairbanks, Alaska

Registration Form
Conference Website: http://www.arcticminers.org

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early. NO REFUNDS AFTER MARCH 5, 2010 / \$25 HANDLING CHARGE FOR REFUNDS. Fax your registration form to Dave Szumigala: 907-451-5050

FAX listed above prior to February 19, 2010. Non-members may take advantage of the lower member rate by joining AMA when they registe

# ACT NOW! ALASKA ACT Alaska Alliance for Cruise Travel

Dear Alaska Business Partner:

With the decision from the cruise industry to move portions of their fleet and their marketing dollars out of Alaska, we now must look ahead with creative minds to keep our Alaska tourism businesses viable. We believe we cannot sit back and wait for the Alaska Legislature, Governor's office, or anyone other than ourselves to affect change that will bring our industry back to life. PLEASE PASS THIS TO ALL OF YOUR EMPLOYEES!

To advance our goals, we are developing a new support group called the Alaska Alliance for Cruise Travel (AlaskaACT) We are not the cruise lines, rather we are a group of local Alaska businesses.

Our Mission Statement is simple:

Alaska Alliance for Cruise Travel is an Alaskan statewide, non-profit, membership-funded organization made up of business and individuals benefiting from cruise travel. Through AlaskaACT, these stakeholders will work together to promote accurate information and support responsible development and growth of Alaska Tourism and the Cruise Industry.

In addition to these activities our organization's efforts are focusing on the following goals:

- Create a positive business environment in Alaska for the cruise and tourism industries
- Encourage the Alaska Legislature and Administration to work toward a resolution of the current legal issues between the State and the cruise industry
- Oppose inequitable taxation directed at the cruise industry
- Support equitable environmental laws for the cruise industry
- Commit its resources to advancing the restoration and stability of the Cruise Industry in the best interest of Alaska, and Alaskans.
- Encourage accurate and honest reporting by the media
- Educate Alaskans about the economic benefits and positive environmental effects of the cruise industry on Alaska
- Support the cruise industry in their efforts to protect and preserve the environment through reasonable and attainable legislation

### Please sign up today at www.alaskaact.com

(You will receive an email that will ask you to confirm your registration.)

### AlaskaACT Steering Committee

John Litten, Sitka Tours, Spokesman for AlaskaACT Bob Berto, TEMSCO Helicopters/CLAA Jason Brune, Resource Development Council Tim Cerny, Fountainhead Development Corporation Gary Danielson, White Pass & Yukon Route Bob Dindinger, Alaska Travel Adventures Ken Dole, Promech Air/Waterfall Group Carol Fraser, ARAMARK Steve Hites, Skagway Street Car Holly Johnson, Wings Airways/Taku Glacier Lodge Paul Landis, CIRI Alaska Tourism Corporation Bill MacKay, Alaska Airlines

Follow us on Twitter: AlaskaACT

### The Alaska Miners Association Annual Convention and Trade Show Banquet presents the

# Raffle & Silent Auction

Benefiting Alaska Resource Education (formerly AMEREF) Friday, March 12, 2010



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Please contact Marleanna at 907-276-0700 ext. 4 or raffle@akresource.org with any questions.

Alaska Resource Education's mission is to provide Alaska's students with the knowledge to make informed decisions relating to mineral, energy, and forest resources.

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For an updated list of prizes, please visit akresource.org.

# Tickets only \$5 each or a book of five for \$20

Proceeds benefit Alaska Resource Education (formerly AMEREF). The raffle & silent auction will be held at the conclusion of the Alaska Miners Association Banquet on Friday, March 12, 2010.

Need not be present to win!

Alaska Resource Education's mission is to provide  $\widehat{A}$ laska's students with the knowledge to make informed decisions relating to mineral, energy, and forest resources. Alaska Resource Education is a 501(c)(3) non-profit.