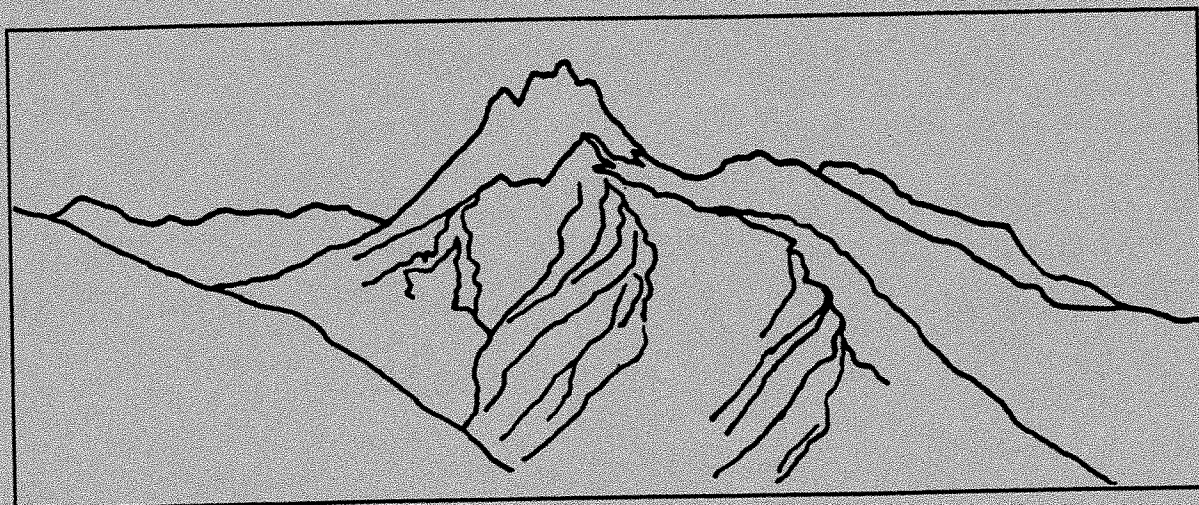


Gates of the Arctic

National Park and Preserve

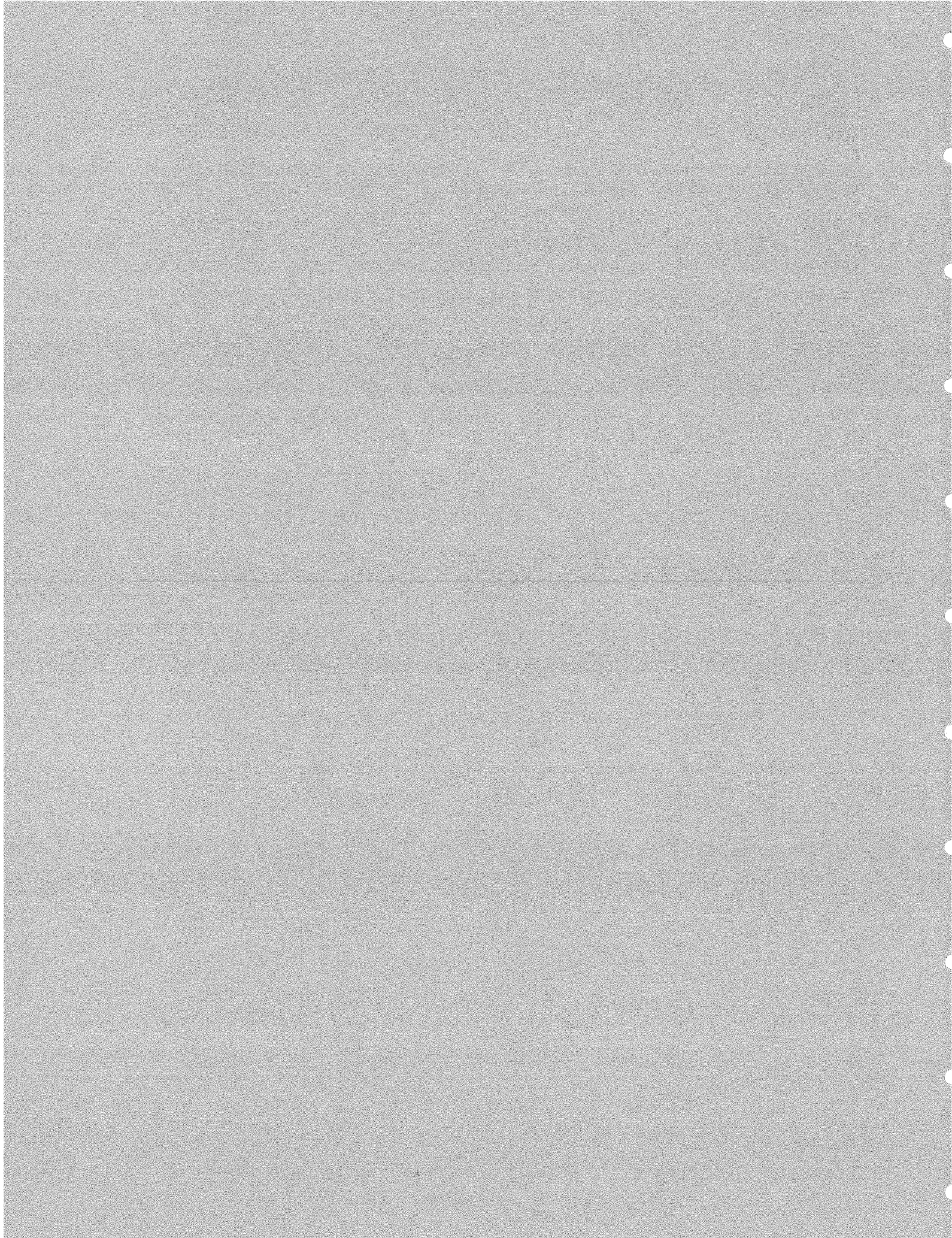
Alaska

Statement for Management



March 1996

United States Department of the Interior • National Park Service

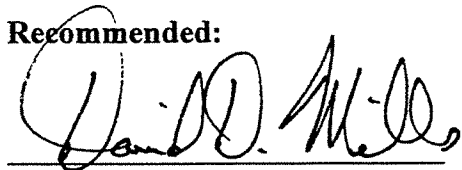


**GATES OF THE ARCTIC NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE
ALASKA**

STATEMENT FOR MANAGEMENT

March 1996

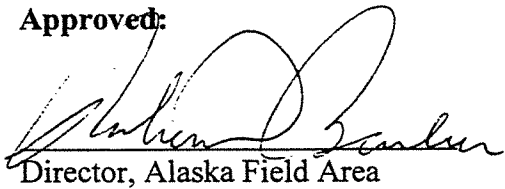
Recommended:



Superintendent

3/29/96
Date

Approved:



Director, Alaska Field Area

4/18/96
Date

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I. INTRODUCTION

Each park must have an approved statement for management (SFM). This document compiles information about

- ▶ the park's¹ purpose,
- ▶ the nature and significance of its resources,
- ▶ the existing uses of the lands and waters,
- ▶ the regional context and adjacent land considerations,
- ▶ the legislative and administrative requirements for park management and the

experience of park visitors

The park uses this information to identify major issues and problems that need addressing and to develop the park's objectives. The management objectives describe those conditions necessary to realize the park's purpose, consistent with legislation, regulations, park policy and the general management plan (GMP). The SFM assesses conditions and is used to determine the nature and extent of required planning and design. The SFM does not require National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance, but may identify actions or plans that will require compliance prior to their implementation.

At least every two years the superintendent and regional staff review the approved SFM. During the review, they update and revise the document as necessary.

II. LOCATION And REGION

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve is situated in the central Brooks Range, west of the trans-Alaska pipeline in arctic Alaska. The northern portion of the area is within the North Slope Borough, and the western portion is in the Northwest Arctic Borough. Both boroughs are incorporated under state law. The park is 200 air miles north of Fairbanks and a similar distance south of Barrow on the Arctic Ocean coast. Nearly 200 miles long and 130 miles wide, it embraces both the north and south slopes of the rugged Brooks Range. The park encompasses nearly 8.5 million acres, of which 8,171,026 acres are in federal ownership administered by the National Park Service and 269,349 acres are private land. The State of Alaska has interests on 455 acres, as well as ownership of the beds of waterways determined to be navigable.

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) have defined much of the landownership of the region. To the west of the park are two other national park system units, Noatak National Preserve and Kobuk Valley National Park. The Bureau of Land Management manages the Alaska National Petroleum Reserve to

¹ The word "park" in this SFM means "park and preserve," except in the sections discussing sport hunting and subsistence uses.

the northwest and the Trans-Alaska Pipeline utility corridor and the Dalton Highway management corridor to the east. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages the Selawik, Arctic, Kanuti and Yukon Flats wildlife refuges in the region. State lands border most of the southern boundary, and state and Native corporation lands are to the north.

MAP

The boundaries of Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC), NANA Regional Corporation, and Doyon, Limited meet in Gates of the Arctic. The North Slope Borough's southern boundary crosses the northern third of the park along the 68th parallel. The Northwest Arctic Borough encompasses the western portion of the park.

Access to the region is primarily by air. Regularly scheduled flights are available from Fairbanks to Allakaket, Bettles and Anaktuvuk Pass. The communities of Ambler, Shungnak and Kobuk are served from Kotzebue and Fairbanks. Aircraft are available for charter into the park from Fairbanks, Bettles, Kotzebue, Ambler and Umiat.

The state maintains the Dalton Highway, built as a service road for the trans-Alaska pipeline. This road is now open to the public for its entire length. The highway is directly east of the entire eastern boundary of the park and offers year around access to Gates of the Arctic. The communities of Coldfoot (pop. 15) and Wiseman (pop. 30) are located along the Dalton Highway adjacent to the park. Opening of the road to Prudhoe Bay for public use is expected to increase visitor access into and around the park.

The ancestors of Alaska Natives inhabited the area perhaps as long ago as the end of the Pleistocene, when the Bering Land Bridge connecting the old and new worlds still existed. This long and active human history involved Athabaskans and eventually Eskimos. The first contacts in the Brooks Range with people of western culture was probably in the 1880s; the first U.S. Government contacts were the expeditions of Navy Lt. George M. Stoney and Ensign W.L. Howard in 1886 and 1887.

The name "Gates of the Arctic" derives from Robert Marshall's name for a pair of peaks (Frigid Crags and Boreal Mountain), that flank the broad valley of the North Fork of the Koyukuk River. In the 1930s, Marshall, an explorer-forester and one of the founders of the American Wilderness System, extolled the region to many outside Alaska in his extensive writings. Marshall's message was that "in Alaska alone can the emotional values of the frontier be preserved."



III. CONGRESSIONAL PURPOSE

In passing ANILCA, Congress identified the general purpose for the Alaska conservation system units as preservation for present and future generations of nationally significant values. Congress specifically identified: "natural, scenic, historic, archeological, geological, scientific, wilderness, cultural, recreational, and wildlife values."

The act also states that specific conservation units "provide the opportunity for local, rural residents engaged in a subsistence way of life to continue to do so." (Appendix: ANILCA, Sec. 101).

In establishing Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, Congress placed emphasis on maintaining "the wild and undeveloped character of the area." Solitude, environmental integrity, wilderness recreation, wildlife habitat protection, and subsistence uses are among the specifically identified values. [Appendix: ANILCA, Sec 201. (4)(a)]

Congress also set aside 7,052,000 acres of the park as wilderness to be managed in accordance with the Wilderness Act as amended by ANILCA. Wilderness is defined (in part) as "an area of undeveloped federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or habitations, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural condition."

For many, Gates of the Arctic evokes a mental image of the ultimate wilderness. It is a vast, tundra landscape of spectacular peaks, glacier-carved valleys and waterways waiting to be explored by foot or watercraft. The Brooks Range is also important to the descendants of the earliest inhabitants, the Nunamiut Inupiat of Anaktuvuk Pass, the Kobuk Inupiat, and the Koyukon Athabaskans as a place where they can continue their culture and subsistence way of life.

IV. LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

LEGISLATIVE

► The National Park Service Organic Act (39 Stat. 535) of 1916 establishes a mandate for the conservation and recreational use of national park areas. This law provides overall guidance in managing Gates of the Arctic and other units of the national park system and sets the tone for NPS policies, which strive to protect park resources and make the parks available for public use.

► The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (94 Stat. 2371; 16 USC 3101; Public Law 96-487) of 1980. ANILCA provides for NPS management directions for park units in Alaska in recognition of Alaska's unique access patterns, rural lifestyles and undeveloped character. Numerous legislative requirements of this act are also applicable to the management of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. A list of several applicable provisions is in the appendix.

Other Legislative and Administrative Requirements

- ▶ The Wilderness Act of 1964, 16 USC 1131, provides for the designation of national wilderness areas. NPS manages the 7,052,000 acres of wilderness in the park under the provisions of this law as amended by ANILCA.
- ▶ The Concessions Policy Act of 1965, 16 USC 20, provides for the use of concessioners to provide needed commercial visitor services deemed necessary and appropriate in national parks.
- ▶ The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 16 USC 470; Historic Sites Act of 1935, 16 USC 461-467; and Executive Order 11593 provide a process for recognition and protection of historically significant properties. These acts and this executive order protect archeological sites and historic sites, consisting primarily of cabins and other structures associated with mining and trapping.
- ▶ The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, 16 USC, 1271, established the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. NPS administers the Alatna, John, Kobuk, Noatak, North Fork of the Koyukuk and Tinayguk as wild rivers.
- ▶ The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 42 USC 4321, establishes a national policy to restore and maintain environmental quality and promote health and welfare by considering natural and cultural preservation and enhancement in federal decision making. NEPA compliance forms the basis for the NPS planning process, which requires NPS to evaluate significant actions affecting the park with consideration of their impacts to park resources and visitor uses. The NEPA process can coordinate consideration of the requirements of other environmental statutes (i.e., Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Executive Orders concerning floodplain management and wetland preservation, Coastal Zone Management Act, Oil Pollution Act of 1990, and hazardous waste management laws). The NPS implementation of the NEPA process provides for public review of and comment on environmental assessments of certain actions and on published draft environmental impact statements.
- ▶ The National Park Service General Authorities Act of 1970, 16 USC 1, provides modification of park administration and authorization for certain law enforcement designations.
- ▶ The American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, 42 USC 1996, provides for the practice of Indian religion on federal lands and the return of Indian religious objects.
- ▶ Section 810 of ANILCA requires an evaluation of potential impacts to subsistence uses or resources by proposed federal actions.
- ▶ The Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, 16 USC 470, was enacted to prevent the illegal excavation, damage or possession of archeological resources located on federal and Indian land.

- ▶ The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990. This act was enacted to protect in-place Native American human remains and culturally important objects and to provide for the repatriation of human remains, funerary objects and items of cultural patrimony that are in federal or federally supported museums or repositories.
- ▶ The Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The CFR directly influences the management of Gates of the Arctic. Management regulations in 36 CFR 13 are specific to national park system units in Alaska.
- ▶ The National Park Service Management Policies. The Constitution, public laws, proclamations, executive orders, rules and regulations and directives of the Secretary of the Interior and the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks guide the management of the national park system and NPS programs. NPS policy must be consistent with these higher authorities and with appropriate delegations of authority. NPS must also consider the additional legislative exceptions of ANILCA in the interpretation and application of these management policies.

V. EXISTING INFORMATION BASE

While park management has compiled resource information about the park and preserve, it seeks further detailed information so that it will have comprehensive knowledge of resources and present conditions, for example:

- ▶ land uses,
- ▶ terrain,
- ▶ impacts,
- ▶ geological features,
- ▶ fish and wildlife populations and productivity,
- ▶ harvests,
- ▶ habitats,
- ▶ threatened and endangered species,
- ▶ fragile vegetative communities and
- ▶ archeological, ethnographic and historical resources.

The park will request, through the normal budgeting process, means to accomplish this research for detailed information and will solicit cooperation from organizations and agencies. Such research will have to compete against other resources research priorities within the NPS and cooperating agencies.

Efforts at gathering baseline information on resources have been a priority of the resource management program. The small staff, limited funding and the relatively short time the park has been in existence have resulted, however, in limited data collection. A detailed inventory of baseline information can be found in the Natural Resource Management Plan for Gates of the Arctic. Additional data is in the park's Automated National Catalog System (ANCS) records. Natural resources baseline information is limited to data gathered from a variety of research projects or recently initiated monitoring projects and collections made in the past by non-NPS institutions. Wildlife data comes from census work, inventories and surveys with a limited number of species, as

well as the data files of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Part of the Firepro and Geographic Information System (GIS) programs in the park have accomplished some plant species distribution work. Weather, water and air quality monitoring has taken place as well. The amount of baseline data could be improved to understand and monitor populations and processes that will give clues about the health and maintenance of the park's natural environmental integrity, wildlife populations and their habitats.

The park staff has collected very little cultural information. One archeological survey identified almost 600 sites in an area that comprises only five percent of the park/preserve acreage. The park's ANCS records contain some of this information. Archeological excavation has occurred on threatened sites. NPS is collecting oral history from villages surrounding the park and is inventorying historical sites, as well.

Subsistence resources baseline data exists in a variety of forms. More often than not, studies have been very specific, short term and unrelated to other work in progress. Solid baseline trend data often cannot be extrapolated. Reliable data availability is a high priority because of the potential risks of impacts to fish and wildlife populations, the need to provide a subsistence opportunity and the importance of trapping in local economies.

VI. STATUS OF PLANNING

STATUS OF PLANNING AND OUTLINE OF PLANNING REQUIREMENTS

Gates of the Arctic has several significant planning documents. They contain useful data, but are outdated in addressing the management issues and objectives of the park and preserve as it was ultimately established:

- A. A Master Plan - "Gates of the Arctic National Wilderness Park and Nunamiut National Wildlands" - (December 1973)
- B. Final Environmental Statement - "Proposed Gates of the Arctic National Park" - (October 1974)
- C. Final Environmental Supplement - "Alternative Administrative Actions, Alaska National Interest Lands" - (December 1978)

The Status of Planning table contains a list of 15 park-related plans, the purpose of each, the approved date and present status. Two of the more significant plans are the general management (GMP) and the resource management plan.

A combination general management plan/environmental assessment (GMP/EA), land protection plan, and wilderness suitability review (WSR) was completed in 1986.

The general management plan is the key management document for the park. The major directions of the plan are to maintain the wild and undeveloped character of the area, provide continued

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve Status of Planning

Name of Plan	Purpose	Date Approved	Status - March 1996
General Management Plan	Guideline addressing issues and problems facing the park over the next five to ten years; determines needs for NPS operations and facilities.	1986	current
Statement for Management	A compilation of park purposes, nature and significance of its resources, existing uses, legislative and administrative requirements. Identifies major issues and problems that need to be addressed.	1984	draft revision in progress
Development Concept Plan	Identifies designs for specific park management and visitor use facilities at specific park locations.	in progress	draft
Bettles			
Anaktuvuk			
Coldfoot			
Resource Management Plan	Identifies, defines, and programs monitoring, inventory, and research activities required to achieve park purposes.	June 1994	current
Land Protection Plan	Management guideline that addresses NPS' relationships and intent regarding nonfederal lands. Identifies methods, including acquisition and cooperating agreements, that provide for the protection of resources, for visitor use, and for development in and around the park.	1986	current
Interim Interpretive Plan	Key document for developing interpretive media for the park. It firms up the interpretive proposals outlined in the GMP and other planning documents, identifies specific interpretive themes and objectives, and makes recommendations concerning appropriate media to blend the park's interpretive program into a harmonious whole.	1989	revision to be completed by Nov. 1997

Name of Plan	Purpose	Date Approved	Status - March 1996
Outline of Planning Requirements	Programming document reviewed annually that contains a priority listing of studies and surveys needed to produce an information base for planning and compliance, as well as the plans and designs needed for the park.		draft in progress as part of SFM
Loss Control (Safety) Plan	Directs, establishes requirements, provides guidelines, and establishes procedures and practices for the park's occupational safety and health program for park employees.		to be completed by Nov. 1997
Wilderness Management Plan	Guides the preservation, management, and use of designated park wilderness areas. Must be supported by environmental and archeological compliance documents.		scoping in progress
Collection Management Plan	Assesses the park's museum collection management program to identify problems and makes recommendations to improve the care of the collection. Is consistent with the relatively small collection, e.g., a brief outline of the collection.		to be completed by Nov. 1997
Emergency Operations Plan	Identifies procedures, personnel and resources for responding to emergency situations in the park. Consistent with highest priority for the protection of life and property, followed by the protection of park resources.	10/93	current
Aviation Management Plan	Park specific guideline identifying operations procedures for administrative use of aircraft in the park.	9/93	current
Fire Management Program/Plan	Identifies natural and historic roles of fire in the park and provides a prescription for response, if any, to natural and human-caused fires. The park follows the Alaska Consolidated Interagency Fire Management Plan, which provides guidelines for statewide, interagency fire management activities.	1993 draft	Current interagency plan meets basic needs.
Communications Plan	Provides guidance for the development of radio communications to support field operations.	10/93	current
Oil and Hazardous Substances Spill Prevention and Emergency Response Plan	Provides guidance to park staff and other government agency personnel concerning oil/hazardous substance discharge prevention and emergency response planning for the park.	1992	needs to be updated

opportunities for wilderness recreation activities, protect park resources and values and provide continued subsistence opportunities for local, rural residents.

The park's resource management plan was completed in June 1994. The plan documents the park and preserve's natural, cultural and subsistence resources; describes and evaluates current resource management activities; prescribes an action program; and identifies funding and personnel needs.

VII. SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES

Key values of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve to the nation are:

- ▶ Congress recognized the vast wilderness character of the area. Section 201 of ANILCA states the values for which Gates of the Arctic was established: "...the wild and undeveloped character of the area...the natural environmental integrity and scenic beauty of the mountains, forelands, rivers, lakes, and other natural features...the habitat for and the populations of, fish and wildlife, including, but not limited to caribou, grizzly bears, Dall sheep, moose, wolves, and raptorial birds."
- ▶ The area is one of the last of its scale in the United States conducive to wilderness adventure where a sense of isolation and discovery can be perpetuated amid rugged but traversable country. The greatest resource of this park is space: unique recreational space for wandering, solitude and adventure. It is a major reserve of wilderness, one of the few remaining of such caliber among America's dwindling wilderness resources.
- ▶ The park and preserve has many individual resources described below that have received national recognition. Seen together, these resources emphasize the scale and uniqueness that combine to make this area more valuable than when viewed as individual parts of the park.

NATIONAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

In addition to these resources, Congress also designated six park rivers as units of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. They are significant recreation resources, valuable for a range of activities, from sport fishing to floating through remote wilderness areas unsurpassed anywhere in the world. The rivers are:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. North Fork of the Koyukuk River | 4. Alatna River |
| 2. Tinayguk River | 5. Kobuk River |
| 3. John River | 6. Noatak River |

NATIONAL REGISTER OF NATURAL LANDMARKS

Resources specifically recognized (pre-ANILCA) for their national significance by placement on the National Register of Natural Landmarks are Walker Lake and Arrigetch Peaks.

NATIONAL WILDERNESS PRESERVE

Congress also included 7,052,000 acres of the park in the national wilderness preservation system. The public lands in the area not in the national wilderness preservation system have been reviewed for their suitability, and more than 300,000 additional acres in the Itkillik preserve have been recommended for wilderness. Uniform wilderness suitability criteria applied to all Alaska parks identified approximately 1,052,561 acres in the park as suitable for wilderness; the FEIS for wilderness recommendation identified this acreage as the wilderness study area. The 1,052,561 acres met the criteria for designation as defined in the 1964 Wilderness Act and the 1988 NPS Management Policies for wilderness areas.

UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMS

The entire area is eligible for nomination as both a Biosphere Reserve, part of the United Nation's Man in the Biosphere Program, and as a World Heritage Area, also a United Nations Program. The Noatak River drainage is already part of the Biosphere Reserve program.

SUMMARY OF PARK DYNAMICS

While these resources are individually important, they are aspects of the more significant whole that is Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. What follows is a general summary of several characteristics or dynamics of that whole.

VEGETATION

The unique combination of four major vegetational associations occurring in the region have significant scientific value. These associations are the boreal forest (taiga, or northern coniferous forest), treeless bogs, shrub thickets and tundra. Tundra and shrub thicket associations are the most extensive in surface area coverage. The forest and bog communities reach their most northerly limits along the southern border of the Brooks Range.

FIRE

The vast taiga of Interior Alaska is a fire-dependent ecosystem, and lightning is the primary ignition source. The parklands, particularly on the southern flank of the Brooks Range, share in this fire-affected ecological system. Wildfire in northern Alaska is seen as a key environmental factor, initiating new succession, controlling species composition and age structure of the forest and providing vegetative patterns upon which diversity of fauna depends. In the NPS units of Alaska, fire will be allowed to fulfill its natural role in fire-dependent ecosystems while protecting human life and health, private property and specific resource values. The Alaska Consolidated Interagency Fire Management Plan provides guidance for statewide, interagency fire management activities. The plan also enables each land manager or agency to select specific fire management options to accomplish protection needs and fire-related, land-use objectives in the most cost-efficient manner.

WILDLIFE

Wildlife are also significant aspects of the whole ecosystem, whose natural environmental integrity is rare if not unknown in the southern United States. The area contains both resident and migratory species, which can be affected by activities outside the parklands. Despite this, animal dynamics and populations today are, for the most part, natural and healthy. Unlike many parks in other regions of the country, this park contains important predator, as well as prey species. Populations of Dall sheep, black and grizzly bears, raptors, fox, lynx, moose, caribou, wolves and others can be impressive in periods of cyclic abundance or seasonal concentration.

Because of their abundance, wide distribution, pattern of behavior and value in the subsistence economy, caribou historically have been of major importance to human survival in arctic and subarctic regions of Alaska. They continue to play an important role in the subsistence economy of the region. Significant portions of the migration routes and habitat of the Western Arctic Caribou herd and Central Arctic Caribou herd lie within Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. Alaska is the only place in the United States where animal, specifically caribou, migrations of huge proportions still take place.

FISH

Fish resources are significant for several reasons, but are of particular scientific interest because the parklands include the headwaters of four major river systems. The North Slope of the Brooks Range is drained by the Colville River and its many tributaries, which flow north, emptying into the Arctic Ocean.

Although the Kobuk and the Noatak rivers rise in close proximity, the Noatak diverges to trend north and west above the Baird Mountains. The Kobuk flows southwest through lowlands south of the Brooks Range. Both empty into Kotzebue Sound. The southern and southeastern portions of the park are drained by the Alatna, the John, the North Fork of the Koyukuk and other tributaries of the Koyukuk, which eventually reach the Bering Sea to the west via the Yukon River. Despite the geographic diversity of these rivers, the fisheries are remarkably similar. Species of particular significance within the park are Arctic grayling, char, sheefish, a variety of salmon, whitefish, lake trout and northern pike. Some of these fish are slow-growing in the region are often quite small for their age.

SUBSISTENCE

Congress recognized subsistence activities as important consumptive uses of natural and healthy wildlife populations and vegetation resources within the park and preserve. The NPS considers subsistence harvests to be a natural component of ecosystem processes.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Prehistoric and historic resources are in many locations in the park and preserve. The museum collection for the park contains large collections cataloged into ANCS. Known sites associated with the early exploration and mining period; the Anaktuvuk, Itkillik and Kurupa Lake archeological deposits; and the Killik River valley are geographical zones with sites that appear to contain resources of national significance.

It is clear from preliminary research that the passes, the river valleys and the lake shorelines of the Brooks Range have seen human occupation since glacial recession began in the Brooks Range. Further, humans may have inhabited the area as long ago as the late Pleistocene, during the existence of the Bering Land Bridge. The natural environment at various stages of pre-history appears to have influenced cultural traditions of the region. With further research and analysis, the area will likely offer new insights on the prehistory of humans in Alaska and perhaps in the New World. Several historic themes are in evidence: (1) post-contact cultural dynamics of indigenous peoples, (2) nineteenth century exploration, (3) development of trading and trapping communities and cyclic surges of mineral exploration, (4) emergence of the wilderness-centered philosophical/aesthetic value system and (5) transportation development and diversification.

VIII. EXISTING USES AND TRENDS

RECREATION

Recreational uses include river running, hunting, fishing, hiking, canoeing, camping, skiing, mountaineering, nature study and photography. All occur generally throughout the area. Access is by airplane, foot, canoe, kayak and occasionally by motorboat, cross country skis, snowmobiles or dog sled.

The state of Alaska expects a 5% to 10% annual statewide increase in tourism during the next five years. This increase may be smaller in the Brooks Range due to the difficulty and expense of access. Or, this difficulty and extremely remote character of the region may actually attract visitors in the "ecotourism" industry.

Significant among current recreational activities are:

River Running

River-running occurs from June through September and includes rafts, canoes and kayaks on large rivers, including the Koyukuk, Alatna, Kobuk, Noatak, John and Tinayguk, where access is usually by air.

Because of the popularity and relative ease of river-running in this area, the trend is toward increasing use levels.

Trapping, Sport Hunting and Fishing

Trapping, sport hunting (both are permitted only within the preserve; trapping and hunting by eligible subsistence users can occur in the park) and sport fishing range from the pursuit of food; to the pursuit of trophy specimens; providing commercial visitor services.

Small service enterprises near the park and preserve or on inholdings, support these activities by offering guides, air taxis and some lodging and dining facilities.

Sport hunting is usually based at hunting camps or conducted from rivers or lakes in the preserve areas. The Alaska Big Game Commercial Services Board assigns exclusive guiding licenses for Alaska hunting guides. Commercial hunting guide services are selected by NPS in the preserve portion of the park. State law requires out-of-state hunters of brown bear and Dall sheep to use the services of those guides when hunting in Alaska.

Dall sheep, bear and moose are the major species of guided hunts in the preserve. Major sport fishing species include Arctic char, Arctic grayling, lake trout, and sheefish.

The trend is toward increased hunting and fishing, with guiding becoming a more broad-based, multi-faceted recreational enterprise.

Hiking and Backpacking

Overland treks are frequently undertaken (often in connection with river trips). Though no man-made trails exist in the park, travelling through the country on foot, using natural routes, is one of the most popular ways to experience the wilderness.

Although this can be an extremely rigorous activity, it is becoming increasingly popular.

Mountaineering

Mountaineering in the park is attracting some local and national climbers. Opportunities range from relatively easy day hikes to more difficult expeditions on the highest mountains such as Mt. Igikpak, Arrigetch Peaks and Mt. Doonerak.

Mountaineering opportunities in Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve are not widely known. However, by virtue of the area's designation as a national park and preserve, and with better equipment and more knowledge of the area, the expected trend is toward a steady increase in climbers.

Winter Recreation

Although winter recreation use is low, each year from February through March several groups use the area's recreation opportunities. The North Fork of the Koyukuk is a common route for cross-country skiers and campers, although parties also use the Kobuk region, as well as the John and the Alatna river valleys. During the past couple of years, commercially lead dog sled trips out of Bettles and Coldfoot have increased.

Access by dog sled for recreational use also occurs, particularly along the North Fork of the Koyukuk and the John rivers and in the Anaktuvuk Pass area. Again, the expected trend is for these uses to increase gradually.

SUBSISTENCE

Year-round, local residents of the area are hunting, fishing, trapping or gathering plant resources for personal and family consumption and for barter and trade.

Subsistence activities are conducted on foot, with the use of snowmachines, snowshoes, skis, or dog teams, motorboats, canoes and, in some specific cases, ATVs (all-terrain vehicles) and aircraft.

Customarily, Natives and non-Natives have practiced subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering in many of the areas that are now within the park and preserve boundaries. Subsistence activities could either diminish because of a trend toward a cash economy, or expand because of an increasing number of people having subsistence eligibility and improved technology with which to pursue subsistence activities. Availability of natural resources will obviously determine the success and perhaps the activity level of subsistence users, so will natural fluctuations in population levels and changes in migration routes.

MINING

Exploration and mining along the eastern boundary of the park have been almost continuous since the turn of the century, but the current level is far below the initial period of extensive mining development. Within the park the activity is primarily centered on placer gold mining in the Glacier River area.

Adjacent mineral development of copper deposits near Ambler and west of Walker Lake (Bornite-Picnic Creek) and oil and gas deposits along the northern boundary are probable. Provision for road or other surface access to these areas has been made in ANILCA. Such a transportation right-of-way to the Ambler Mining District may cross parkland and is authorized under ANILCA.

Consolidated lode and placer claims on Nolan Creek on the eastern boundary of the park are undergoing development.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Numerous private, academic, state and federal organizations are permitted to use the resources of the park and preserve as the subject of scientific research. Most of the field work in the park occurs during the summer months; and all of it contributes information on the park and preserve on a variety of biological, geological and anthropological processes. The trend is for these activities, regulated to assure environmental compatibility with park purposes, to increase.

PRIVATE RESIDENCES

For a variety of reasons, such as natural beauty, isolation, attraction to resources and conditions that encourage self-reliance, opportunities for a subsistence lifestyle, and prospecting and exploration, the area has attracted seasonal and year-round residents to private inholdings and property adjacent to the boundaries.

ASSERTIONS OF RIGHTS-OF-WAY

The park is subject to certain valid existing rights, including rights-of-way established under Revised Statute 2477. The validity of these potential rights-of-way will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Private parties or the state of Alaska may identify and seek recognition of additional RS 2477 rights-of-way within the unit.

IX. LAND CLASSIFICATION AND STATUS

LAND WITHIN THE PARK AND PRESERVE

The land within the park and preserve boundaries contains the following:

National Parkland

National parkland consists of approximately 7,252,000 acres, of which 7,052,000 acres are designated wilderness and managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act of 1964, as amended by ANILCA. Much of the remainder of non-wilderness surrounds Anaktuvuk Pass, and some is scattered in other areas.

National Preserve Land

National preserve land consists of approximately 943,000 acres divided between two areas contiguous to the national parkland of the unit. One area is located along the Kobuk River from just south of Walker Lake approximately to the confluence of the Selby River. The second is centered around the Itkillik River, northeast of Anaktuvuk Pass. Both are managed for their natural values as required by ANILCA. Sport hunting and fishing, as well as non-commercial trapping, as defined in ANILCA, are allowed in both areas, and these uses are also governed by the laws of the state of Alaska.

Native Allotment Lands

Native allotment land is land for which individual Natives have applied for title pursuant to the Native Allotment Act of May 17, 1906. This act was repealed by ANCSA with a savings clause that all pending applications would be processed. Under the 1906 Act, a Native could secure title to up to 160 acres of land that he or she had substantially used and occupied.

The Bureau of Land Management is responsible for the adjudication and processing of the Native allotment applications throughout Alaska. Within the park and preserve there are 63 pending, approved or conveyed allotment claims. The validity of many of these applications is undetermined at this time. Any applications that go to certification of title will have the status of private land, which will include the right of reasonable access under Title XI of ANILCA.

Regional Deficiency Lands

Regional deficiency lands are lands that have been selected by regional corporations under section 12(c)(3) of ANCSA, because sufficient lands were unavailable for regional corporation selections within the Native village withdrawal areas.

There are selections within the park by the Doyon regional corporation (Doyon Ltd.) that comprise the majority of three townships. They are along the upper portions of the Glacier River near Nolan; and the majority, approximately 62,264 acres, of these three selections were conveyed to Doyon Ltd.

Approximately 15,793 acres were conveyed to Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC).

Cemetery Sites and Historic Places

These are sites identified under the provisions of Section 14(h)(1) of ANCSA. There are 30 such sites known to be within the park/preserve.

Private Land

This is non-ANCSA privately owned land inside the park and preserve and is the result of patented small tract entries that occurred while the land now comprising the park and preserve was still open to public entry. There are nine such holdings in the park and preserve. Almost all are used by their respective owners for private residences or bases of guiding or recreational activity.

Mineral Interests

The park and preserve are closed to mineral entry. As of February 12, 1996, nine claims remain within the park boundaries. These claims were originally staked for placer gold and other minerals. A validity examination was conducted and a mineral report written and completed on May 29, 1990. This report recommended that a contest be initiated against these claims for lack of discovery. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) subsequently issued a contest decision. An administrative law judge held a hearing and upheld BLM's decision. This decision is under appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals.

A validity examination was conducted on 21 abandoned and void placer mining claims on Mascot Creek to determine the final property ownership of the lands once encompassed by the mining claims. The mineral report was completed on January 8, 1996. The recommendation was that two and one-half of the overlying claims were valid and that the land once encompassed by these claims be retained by the federal government as part of the Gates of the Arctic National Park. It was further recommended that the lands once encompassed by the remaining claims, which were determined invalid at the time of selection under ANCSA, be transferred to Doyon Regional Corporation.

Mining activity occurs outside, but close to, the park boundary and ranges from one-man placer mining operations to large, corporate efforts utilizing heavy earth-moving machinery such as that found in Nolan Creek area near the eastern boundary of the park and the town of Wiseman.

Potential exists for large scale mining of massive sulfide lode deposits, primarily copper, in the Ambler Mining District. Several base- and precious-metal massive sulfide deposits have been identified in this area. Large groups of claims have been staked with continuous exploration work being conducted. These claims are near the Kogoluktuk River adjacent to the southwest edge of the preserve approximately 15 miles northwest of the town of Bornite. Development of these deposits is dependent on world market values for specific metals and the development of an infrastructure for shipment of ores and equipment.

Subsurface Interests

The Arctic Slope Regional Corporation owns the subsurface estate to approximately 31,500 acres within the northern edges of the preserve and to approximately 102,000 acres within the park near Anaktuvuk Pass. Oil and gas exploration and extraction could occur on these lands. The state has informed the NPS that the state's adjacent land interests in this region also are within the same basin, but not currently scheduled for leasing. The trend will be for more active seismic work to ascertain oil and gas potential on this basin. Such activity could result in drilling and development.

ADJACENT LAND OWNERSHIP AND USE

Conservation System Units

Kobuk Valley National Park
Noatak National Preserve (western boundary of park)
Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge

Pipeline Utility Corridor and Dalton Highway

A pipeline utility corridor and the accompanying support road immediately east of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve lead from the Arctic Slope oil fields at Prudhoe Bay to the Alaska port of Valdez. The Bureau of Land Management has a Resource Management Plan for the Utility Corridor (RMP), for administering the pipeline corridor, called the Dalton Highway Management Corridor. The corridor contains the Dalton Highway, which the state of Alaska maintains.

There are road maintenance areas, pipeline maintenance camps and pump stations and points of private services. The trend is toward a diversification of uses such as recreation from the road system, mining activities and support services.

National Petroleum Reserve

The National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A), administered by the BLM, lies northwest of the park and contains oil, gas and mineral resources. Future development of these resources may result in new east-west utility corridor proposals north of the park.

State Land

The state of Alaska is the primary owner of land south of the park, interspersed by mining claims, Native allotments, village corporation land, cemetery sites and private residences. Future disposal of state land may result in numerous small tracts and diverse uses.

Native Corporation Land

Most of the land immediately to the north of the park belongs to the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation. It may contain oil, gas, and mineral resources; future development could result in an east-west utility corridor.

X. PARK MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

PARK MANAGEMENT

Principal Objectives

- (1) Resolve park management issues.
- (2) Pursue opportunities that will improve ecosystem management.
- (3) Minimize impacts of outside influences on the park by cooperating with other public agencies, private organizations, Native corporations and associations, landowners and others.

Issue: Anaktuvuk Pass ATV Agreement/Land Use

Objective. Resolve a long-standing land management disagreement at Anaktuvuk Pass concerning the use of ATVs for subsistence purposes.

Strategy. The park will continue to pursue completion of legislation to resolve this issue and then implement the terms of the legislation.

Authority. The Anaktuvuk Pass ATV Use Agreement (12/17/92), Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS)(February 1992), and the Record of Decision (10/20/92).

Discussion. Residents of the village of Anaktuvuk Pass use motorized all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) to travel to traditional hunting and subsistence areas within and outside the park. Areas include land within wilderness portions of Gates of the Arctic National Park. The Native community of Anaktuvuk Pass needs to use ATVs to conduct traditional activities and to reach subsistence resources in the snow free summer months. To resolve this matter, an agreement has been reached under which the residents of Anaktuvuk Pass could continue to use ATVs on certain park land, dependent on congressional action to remove the land from wilderness. Other lands near the village are proposed to be exchanged between Native corporations and the United States Government to protect park values and allow traditional activities. The agreement represents a cooperative solution to this long-standing issue and was reached by the NPS, BLM, City of Anaktuvuk Pass, Nunamuit Corporation, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation and conservation groups. The parties to the agreement feel that this legislation will ensure the protection of park-related values, allow for continued subsistence use and avoid a protracted legal battle.

Issue: Land Protection Plan and Land Acquisition Priorities

Objective. Maintain a current land protection plan responsive to the changing issues and land status of Gates of the Arctic.

Strategy. Update the land protection plan and land acquisition priorities. Gates of the Arctic will continue to purchase remaining tracts of land on a willing-seller, willing-buyer basis, as funds are available. On a priority basis the park will work with the regional office, BIA and landowners to purchase hardship status lands, those lands whose owners have a special need to sell, e.g. financial hardship. (Appropriate NEPA compliance will be necessary on any land acquisition actions.) Other opportunities for land protection include cooperative agreements, conservation easements or land bank agreements.

Authority. GMP and LPP (1986); NPS Management Policies (1988), Chapter 3.

Discussion. The land protection plan (LPP) is the planning instrument for addressing adjacent land issues and for establishing land acquisition policies and priorities. The land protection plan and land acquisition priorities for Gates of the Arctic have not been reviewed every two years as stated in the GMP. Issues and land status on the boundary and within Gates of the Arctic have changed in the nine years since completion of the land protection plan, necessitating updating the plan. For example, substantial gold deposits have been discovered at Nolan Creek, and increased mining activity on the park boundary is predicted. Oil and gas lease/sale and potential exploration activities continue along the northern boundary of the park, and exploration continues in the National Petroleum Reserve west of the park. With the settlement of ANCSA and Native allotment interests, land status has changed. There are willing sellers in the Anaktuvuk Pass area that fit the category of "hardship." Many remote tracts of private land and mining claims remain in the park and, if developed, could create a potential threat to wilderness and subsistence values on parklands.

Protecting park resources requires attention to issues and land status on both sides of the park boundary. Issues related to lands outside the park boundaries are addressed in the land protection plan. This land protection plan also addresses lands that need to be acquired within its boundaries. When private land is available for acquisition, the NPS will make every reasonable effort to secure funds needed to purchase the property at the appraised value. Land acquisition is subject to all applicable laws, guidelines and regulations.

Issue: Dalton Highway Management Corridor

Objective. Manage park area adjacent to the corridor with recognition that increased use of the area could affect subsistence, wilderness or other park resources.

Strategy. Work with BLM to develop a memorandum of understanding and cooperative management program with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the state, Native groups and others for the Dalton Highway area adjacent to the park. Management plans should anticipate problems and needs rather than react to them.

Authority. GMP and the LPP (1986).

Discussion. The Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP) completed by the BLM for the Dalton Highway Management Corridor (DHMC) provides for the management of this area as a multiple-use unit of the BLM. Recreational use of the DHMC and surrounding lands will most likely increase in the next few years. The park supports the BLM's efforts to manage the growing use in the area, but wants to ensure that park resources and wilderness values are protected as visitor use of this area increases. Some specific concerns of the park include: (1) assure that human waste and refuse is managed to reduce the chance of wildlife habituation to humans; (2) continue the joint interpretive and visitor information programs; (3) establish staffing, facilities and agreements before visitation increases; and (4) develop joint regulations for horse use and guidelines for acceptable impacts. Appropriate NEPA compliance will be necessary on regulations concerning horse use on park lands.

Issue: Ecosystem Management Assisted by Cooperative Agreements

Objective. Promote a forum to develop solutions and make choices related to land use, in and adjacent to the park for resource management, subsistence, economic concerns, tourism, development, social and cultural issues.

Strategy. Develop formal and informal cooperative relationships with entities including: (1) the North Slope Borough on subsistence management, natural and cultural resources, GIS and educational programs; (2) BLM on the management of the Dalton Highway corridor; (3) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on natural resource management, research, species monitoring, and informational/interpretive educational programs; (4) state agencies, Native corporations, including Doyon, ASRC, Nunamiut and others on resource management, subsistence management, cultural resource management, oral history and education/interpretation; (5) University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) on collection management and natural and cultural resource management; and (6) National Biological Service on research programs.

Participate in regional efforts to develop an ecosystem management program.

Authority. GMP; NPS Management Policies (1988), Chapter 4.

Discussion. Gates of the Arctic manages resources, shares goals and has programs similar to or overlapping those of the state, federal and private land managers in the region. Human and fiscal resources needed to address and resolve major issues are diminishing. Land management issues in and around Gates of the Arctic are complex. Decisions on management programs in Gates of the Arctic affect many private, state, Native, and other entities. Conversely, decisions by other entities in the region affect Gates of the Arctic. In the region there is much ecosystem management expertise that the park needs for wise management of its resources. The purpose of ecosystem management is not to extend jurisdiction, but to facilitate management decisions that help the mission of each management partner in the region.

Issue: Wilderness Management Program

Objective. Develop a formal wilderness management program in the park that recognizes the importance of wilderness as articulated in the enabling legislation. Develop wilderness program recognizing the parks role in state tourism and under the conditions set forth in ANILCA.

Strategy. Assume a leadership role in regional and national wilderness management direction, participate in the exchange of ideas on wilderness philosophy and management and ensure that staff members of the park remain current on wilderness management philosophy and techniques. Treat wilderness as a complex resource in its own right.

Authority. ANILCA; GMP; NPS Management Policies (1988), Chapter 6; Wilderness Act as amended by ANILCA.

Discussion. The park contains one of the largest and most pristine designated wilderness areas in the national wilderness preservation system (NWPS). Nearly every action of park and preserve management relates directly or indirectly to the management of wilderness. Thus, aspects of wilderness management are discussed in several other sections of this statement for management (in particular, see the Natural Resources and the Visitor Use Management sections).

Wilderness management requires special focus by park staff. A formal wilderness management program provides this focus. As part of such the program, park staff will review and evaluate all significant park management decisions for individual and cumulative effects on wilderness values. In addition, park staff will communicate and promote wilderness values in interpretive efforts. The park and preserve also benefit from increased involvement in regional and national wilderness issues. Staff will be encouraged to submit papers to professional journals, present talks at conferences and attend and conduct wilderness training sessions and workshops. Individuals participating in these activities will share information gained with other park staff. Because of the terms of ANILCA, wilderness is different from national wilderness in the

contiguous 48 states. This includes access provisions for motorboats, aircraft and snowmachines and subsistence activities.

Issue: Access

Objective. Assure reasonable and adequate access to private land, resources, and specific sites for allowed recreational, subsistence, and administrative activities while protecting the purposes for which this park area was established.

Strategy. Produce solutions to access issues outlined in the GMP and identified by park management and user groups.

Authority. NPS Management Policies (1988), Chapter 8 ANILCA (titles VIII and IX), and the GMP.

Discussion. The NPS needs to evaluate the statements made in the GMP that "nonlocal, recreational use of snowmachines has not traditionally occurred and is not an accepted wilderness activity..." and that "proliferation...where it has not been widely established, would not be consistent with maintaining the wild and undeveloped character of the area..." The GMP treats motorboats similarly and also suggests promulgating regulations or pursuing legislation to remedy the situation. Many provisions within ANILCA modify or otherwise supersede general agency legislative mandates, policies and laws defining management objectives for the park and preserve. Park resources, including wilderness values, need to be protected while at the same time providing for uses allowed by ANILCA. Several areas within the unit are highly desirable for both recreational and subsistence activities. Use needs to be monitored and managed so conflicts do not occur.

Issue: Cabin Management Program

Objective. Implement the general standards in the GMP for cabins that the park owns and for those it may acquire in the future. Appropriate NEPA compliance will be necessary on future cabin development projects.

Strategy. Evaluate the need for a cabin management plan.

Authority. GMP; CFR 36 13.17; ANILCA, Title XIII.

Discussion. There are 13 standing cabins on federal land in Gates of the Arctic, and of those only one is under permit for occupancy. Additional cabins may be acquired through the purchase of inholdings. The general management plan gives general guidance for the management of

cabins on parkland, but lacks the details necessary for administering a cabin management program. A cabin management plan will assess each cabin for its usefulness for recreational, emergency, subsistence, or administrative use and give recommendations for the cabin's management and maintenance while ensuring protection of resource values in the area.

Issue: Facilities Maintenance Program

Objective. Maintain park facilities and equipment to a reasonable standard to insure that they are serviceable to carry out the mission of the NPS in Gates of the Arctic.

Strategy. Implement maintenance management systems for the park's infrastructure. Develop a "site plan" to evaluate the park infrastructure, objectively estimate maintenance needs and identify staffing needs and other support costs.

Authority. NPS Management Policies (1988), Chapter 9; GMP.

Discussion. The park's maintenance workload has greatly expanded in the last few years with no corresponding increase in maintenance funding. The number of facilities that the park must maintain has more than doubled, and the number of park-owned vehicles has tripled; but maintenance funding has remained the same. The park has a growing maintenance backlog and defers necessary, routine maintenance. Without a significant budget increase for maintenance, the park's facilities and vehicles will deteriorate. The park needs to systematically assess its maintenance workload and realistically evaluate and manage support costs.

Issue: Special Regulations/Compendium

Objective. Develop special regulations for the protection of park resources.

Strategy. Re-evaluate recommendations in the general management plan and any other perceived needs for special regulations or compendia. Those that are thought to be necessary for management of the park will go through the formal rule-making process with full public participation.

Authority. 36 CFR 13.30.

Discussion. The park's GMP proposes several changes to regulations that would give park management the ability to better protect park resources and wilderness values. Some of the regulation changes under consideration would:

- limit the use of hoofed pack animals to three per party;

- ▶ limit recreational group size to 7 for backpacking, 10 for river-running and 10 for winter use; and
- ▶ restrict campfires to bare ground or gravel bars.

Any such proposals will go through the closure procedures outlined in 36 CFR 13.30, with Federal Register notice, NEPA compliance, public comment and hearings.

VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT

Principal Objective: Provide quality wilderness recreation experiences for visitors while protecting park resources and providing reasonable subsistence opportunity.

Issue: Incidental Business Permit/ Limited Concession Permits

Objective. Evaluate the benefits of conversion of incidental business permits (formerly commercial use licenses) to limited concession permits.

Strategy. Work with commercial operators and the public to determine if it is appropriate to convert incidental business permits to limited concession permits.

Authority. GMP; NPS Management Policies (1988), Chapter 10; Concession Policy Act of 1965.

Discussion. The park manages the majority of its commercial visitor services under the incidental business permit (IBP) program, formerly the commercial use license program. This permitting instrument has the advantage of being relatively simple, but it provides little interaction between commercial operators and the park. The park's GMP calls for the conversion of incidental business permits to concession permits. The concession permit system will give the businesses more involvement in park management, promote a better working relationship between commercial operators and the park and help ensure the continued viability of existing operations. Limited concession permits will enable park management to ensure that the public receives quality services and that park resources are adequately protected. Appropriate NEPA compliance will be necessary for the conversion of incidental business permits to concession permits.

Issue: Visitor Information and Interpretation

Objectives. Increase interpretation efforts and education programs to improve interpretation for visitors and interpretive displays at field offices. Increase efforts to contact greater numbers of

visitors. Provide information about the park's wilderness values and natural and cultural history and more varied and useful printed materials.

Strategies. Expand interpretation and visitor information services at Coldfoot, Bettles and Anaktuvuk Pass and develop quality interpretive displays for the park's visitor contact facilities at those locations. These centers can also be used to provide information unique to Alaska parks and preserves, such as subsistence uses, sport hunting and various forms of access. Establish effective environmental education and community outreach programs for use in local communities.

Authority. NPS Management Policies (1988), Chapter 7; GMP.

Discussion. Since its creation, the park has initiated only minimal visitor information, interpretation and environmental education programs. More contact with park visitors and neighbors is needed to explain the park mission, protect resources and develop partnerships. Visitor information areas in Coldfoot, Bettles and Anaktuvuk Pass need improvement and expansion. Visitor information and interpretation efforts are primarily responses to phone and mail requests for information about the park, along with some visitor contact at the park's offices and ranger stations. Responses to visitor information requests have emphasized resource protection (low-impact camping techniques) and basic park information. The park's interpretive program is managed on a collateral basis by one of the district rangers; there are no full-time interpretive positions for the park.

The visitor information services at Coldfoot, which is in the corridor and near the shared border between the highway corridor and the park, are operated cooperatively by BLM, USFWS and NPS.

The park needs to strengthen its ties with neighboring communities and local subsistence users through expanded environmental education and community outreach programs. These activities have been provided on a limited basis by various park staff as time allowed. The park needs to expand upon current efforts to create a more consistent integrated program.

Issue: Recreational Use Management

Objectives. Develop a recreational use management plan to implement the objectives and standards set by the GMP for managing recreational use in the park.

Strategy. The recreational use management plan will address recreational use impacts, establish limits of acceptable change and provide methods for monitoring and evaluating levels of impact.

Authority. NPS Management Policies (1988), Chapter 7; GMP; ANILCA.

Discussion. One of the primary purposes of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve is "to maintain the wild and undeveloped character of the area, including opportunities for visitors to experience solitude, and the natural environmental integrity and scenic beauty [of the area]." One of the park's greatest management challenges is providing for quality wilderness recreation experiences while, to the greatest extent possible, preventing the development of impacts to park resources and wilderness values from such use. Although overall park visitation remains low, certain areas receive concentrated use and have begun to show cumulative human use impacts. The park's GMP established standards for judging these visitor use impacts, but more work needs to be done in developing objective means of assessing such impacts and effective ways in controlling or mitigating them.

NATURAL RESOURCES ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES

Principal Objective: Conserve and protect the integrity of Gates of the Arctic's natural resources and processes, recognizing certain traditional human interaction as a natural part of that ecosystem.

Issue: Lack of Baseline Data

Objective. Collect baseline information needed to evaluate change through time, assess ecosystem data on plant and animal species diversity, distribution and population dynamics.

Strategy. Develop and implement inventory and monitoring plans to detect change to park ecosystems. This baseline information is needed to assist with determining appropriate management strategies.

Authority. NPS Management Policies (1988), Chapter 4; GMP.

Discussion. Natural resources in the park have been inventoried only on small-scale, piece-meal, site-specific basis. A park-wide inventory of fish, wildlife, aquatic and plant communities is desirable to increase basic knowledge of park natural resources. Such an inventory, however, will be an enormous, extremely costly long-term task. An increase in base funds is needed to initiate and continue inventory and monitoring work.

Baseline information of this type is essential to protect resources, make informed management decisions and detect impacts or change in the health and status of park resources. Areas and species should be prioritized and monitoring plans developed to address long-term needs. Inventory and monitoring work should be coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,

National Biological Service, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, North Slope Borough
Department of Wildlife Management and other area specialists.

The park contains habitat suitable for a variety of rare, threatened and endangered species; however, information on the presence or status of these species is minimal. The threatened American peregrine falcon and the once-threatened, but now delisted, Arctic peregrine falcon nest in the park. The endangered Eskimo curlew may inhabit northern tundra areas. Candidate (category 2) endangered species found in the park include the North American lynx, harlequin duck, northern goshawk and olive-sided flycatcher. The state of Alaska species of concern include the Swainson's thrush, gray-cheeked thrush, Blackpoll warbler, Wilson's warbler and the olive-sided flycatcher. Several rare and candidate plants have been located near the park, but surveys to determine if these species exist in the park have yet to be done. Information gained through baseline inventory will enable the park to protect these species from future impacts.

Issue: Human Use Impacts on Resources

Objective. Monitor impacts of humans on natural resources to ensure that impacts are consistent with park purposes and the maintenance of natural and healthy populations of fish and wildlife.

Strategy. Design a monitoring program to determine levels of impacts and develop levels of acceptable impacts to protect the park's ecosystem.

Authority. ANILCA; GMP; NPS Management Policies (1988), Chapter 4.

Discussion. The following activities and associated impacts have been identified as high priority for monitoring efforts and management actions:

- (1) Vegetation: Vegetation is impacted by consumptive and nonconsumptive human use. Timber harvest, berry picking and birch bark collecting are consumptive uses that occur. Incidental human use impacts associated with subsistence wood cutting and with recreational camping and hiking comprise the majority of nonconsumptive use. A monitoring program will be developed to identify changes through time and assist with determining acceptable levels of impact and methods of mitigation.
- (2) All-Terrain Vehicle Use (ATV): ATV use agreement cooperators should jointly develop monitoring program protocols and establish acceptable limits of change. Trails are concentrated adjacent to the city of Anaktuvuk Pass and extend into river drainages east and west of the village.

(3) Maintenance of Airplane Landing Strips: The current policy concerning maintenance of landing strips within the park/preserve should be reconsidered in light of the park's GMP. This issue will be revisited to determine if and what level of maintenance may be acceptable. Existing landing strips where maintenance could be considered will be identified and appropriate maintenance methods will be determined. If maintenance occurs by the NPS or the public in the future, a monitoring program will be developed.

(4) Bear/Human Interactions: As visitor use increases, so do bear/human interactions. Increased public education and visitor contacts will reduce the potential for bear/human interactions. It will also improve the safety of visitors using the backcountry and reduce adverse impacts to bears.

Issue: Consumptive Use of Natural Resources

Objective. Manage consumptive uses as required in ANILCA and the Park GMP.

Strategy. Develop harvest monitoring strategies for all species harvested in the park and preserve, strategies that will track with, rather than influence, population trends and natural fluctuations.

Authority. ANILCA; GMP.

Discussion. The park staff would like to know more about the status of its resources. Levels of allowable consumptive use are unknown, however, making it difficult to determine the health of the park's resources. Sport hunting and trapping occur within the Itkillik and Kobuk river preserve units of the park and preserve. Sport fishing occurs in both park and preserve. Subsistence harvest of a variety of furbearers, large mammals, fish and vegetation is on-going within the park and preserve. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has some general information, which is available to the NPS.

Village harvest monitoring programs need to be designed cooperatively and initiated in all of the villages harvesting natural resources in Gates of the Arctic. These programs will be most effective if the experience of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, borough governments, village councils and subsistence resource commissions is sought at the earliest stages of design for the monitoring programs. Research needs, such as basic population status, monitoring protocols and methods should be cooperatively determined and solicited through agency and private funding sources.

Issue: Data Management

Objective. Develop an information management system to insure that existing data and new data are in usable databases, making data accessible by management.

Strategy. Continue to develop and maintain appropriate data management systems in order to support management and science.

Authority. General administrative policies National Park Service.

Discussion. Important resource information (some of which was obtained at significant cost) is stored as paper files and paper maps in file cabinets and field notebooks. The information is difficult to retrieve, especially if multi-year projects are involved; it is difficult to determine what work has previously been completed; and information (often in single copies of original work) is susceptible to damage and loss.

An information management system designed to be compatible with other resource/land managing entities will;

- ▶ enable rapid exchange and retrieval of information,
- ▶ create and maintain resource databases and bibliographic references, and
- ▶ establish protocols for archiving information, protecting data integrity, enhancing information analysis and use and improving the park's capability to access regional, national and international information sources.

In addition to the information management system, a Geographic Information System (GIS) is needed at the park. The databases provided from the information management system contribute to the creation of resource themes (e.g., vegetation cover or nest locations) used by the GIS. A GIS is a powerful analytical tool capable of integrating and analyzing large, complex sets of resource information that cannot be cumulatively analyzed by other means. GIS provides the capability to organize, analyze and protect large spatial and temporal data sets required for large land areas such as the park and preserve. GIS also enables the relatively easy production of maps and other display products.

Cooperative agreements should be established between land/resource management entities and research institutions. These agreements will facilitate the exchange of resource information, improve coordination of data collection, reduce duplication of effort and costs and increase efficiency and effectiveness of data collection efforts.

Issues: Special-Focus Resource Management Issues

Objective. Recognize resource management issues that may be controversial and require additional staff effort.

Strategy. Park staff need to devote a portion of their time to staying apprised of related activities as they develop by attending special-emphasis group meetings and coordinating with other agencies and special interest groups.

Authority. Management Policies.

Discussion. Some examples of the controversial issues follow:

Humans' over-harvest of musk ox resulted in extirpation of the animals from the park in the late 1800s. Musk ox have been observed in the western portion of the park and north of the park in the Colville River area. The protocol for allowing the reestablishment of a species needs to be researched, and concerns of cooperative groups need to be solicited. Appropriate NEPA compliance will be necessary for the reestablishment of species in the park.

Neotropical birds are becoming an international issue. Many migratory species breed in Gates of the Arctic; and, therefore, the area could be considered the most northern extension of their range. Staff will continue to stay involved in the statewide effort to develop study protocols and cooperative work.

Two National Natural Landmarks lie within the boundaries of Gates of the Arctic. Several other areas were described in the GMP as potential National Natural Landmark areas. These areas need to be reconsidered and processed through the nomination system.

The entire Noatak River drainage, of which the headwaters lie in Gates of the Arctic, is internationally recognized as a biosphere reserve in the United Nation's Man in the Biosphere program. Park staff will continue to monitor activities within the biosphere and strive to become more involved in the international efforts to build the program.

CULTURAL RESOURCES ISSUES AND OBJECTIVES

Principal Objective: Identify, interpret and protect the cultural resources of Gates of the Arctic and manage them as vital components of the park.

Issue: Lack of Cultural Resource Information

Objective. Develop program to protect and preserve the parks cultural resources. Information on location, description and significance of cultural sites is generally lacking, making protection and preservation difficult for park management.

Strategy. Design and implement an inventory program, establish priorities and develop a cultural resources management program at the park level.

Authority. GMP; NPS Management Policies (1988).

Discussion. Approximately two percent of the park's lands have been inventoried for cultural resources. There are many more sites, including those relating to Early Man, the early roots of Eskimo and Athabaskan cultures, sites related to later cultural phases and the historic remains of early explorers and miners. Most of the sites that have been inventoried have not been tested or examined sufficiently to assess their significance or subsurface potential. Other important cultural resources include life and oral histories, as well as ethnographic sites.

The park's cultural resources management program is in a rudimentary stage because of a lack of staffing and funding at the park level. Cultural resources issues are not being addressed because the park does not have an integrated cultural resources program. The park's issues are broad and diverse and require staff with a background in cultural resources who can work cooperatively with other agencies and special interest groups to protect the resources.

Issue: Protection of Cultural Resources

Objective. Reduce or stop the loss or degradation of valuable cultural resources *in situ* due to a combination of natural forces and human activities. This loss compromises the significance and integrity of the cultural record contained in the park.

Strategy. Design protocol for monitoring and protecting known cultural resources and establish priorities.

Authority. GMP; NPS Management Policies (1988).

Discussion. Known cultural resources and newly identified resources need protection at an appropriate level. Park management, in cooperation with surrounding landowners and the regional office, should determine the level and type of protection warranted for the park's cultural resources.

SUBSISTENCE USES

Principal Objective: Protect the opportunity for eligible local, rural residents to engage in a subsistence way of life. Ensure consistency with recognized, scientific ecosystem management principles and the purposes for which the park area was established. Subsistence use has a preference over all other consumptive uses and is recognized as a natural part of the ecosystem.

Issue: Eligibility

Objective. Manage subsistence eligibility in accordance with ANILCA, the CFR and NPS Management Policies. Provide for a public process to add or delete communities or areas to or from the park resident zones. Issue 36 CFR 13.44 permits as necessary.

Strategy. Develop guidelines for making consistent determinations of eligibility for the park and preserve in consultation with the SRC, the state and subsistence users.

Authority. ANILCA Title VIII; Regulations in 36 CFR 13.43 and 13.44.

Discussion. There are approximately 1,500 people residing in 10 resident zone communities. Those who make a resident zone community their primary, permanent residence are eligible to engage in subsistence activities in the park and preserve. Populations in some communities have increased markedly from the benchmark of 1980, while others have remained fairly static or decreased in the same period. In most cases, community physical boundaries have not been delineated. Approximately 270,000 acres of private land lies within the park boundaries, which could allow for the immigration of people as permanent residents who would then qualify to engage in subsistence activities on parkland. Demographics of these changing communities, as well as pre-1980 resource harvests, are being cooperatively documented and monitored.

Issue: Community Outreach

Objective. Increase staff awareness of local concerns, differing cultural values and improve communications with residents in order to develop cooperative management strategies to assure the long-term protection of both resources and traditional subsistence opportunities. Develop cooperative management strategies as necessary.

Strategy. Actively promote local understanding, involvement and participation in park and subsistence management goals by integrating scientific methods and principles with traditional knowledge and cultural values.

Authority. GMP; NPS Management Policies (1988); ANILCA Title VIII.

Discussion. Few people living within the park resident zone are aware of specific park management mandates, wilderness values or the general purposes for which the park was established. This will be rectified through regular meetings in resident zone communities, educational programs with school children of all ages and the exploration of mutually acceptable ways to resolve enforcement and management issues in these communities. The 10 communities within the resident zone are culturally diverse and naturally concerned with all aspects of park management. The sensitivity of park/community relationships necessitates designing culturally appropriate educational programs and fostering cooperative relationships.

The most promising subsistence monitoring and resource allocation strategies will be most effective at the community level. Outreach and partnerships in these communities also allow local residents with special knowledge to understand and seek employment opportunities with the service.

Issue: Subsistence Hunting Plan

Objective. Provide necessary assistance to the subsistence resource commission (SRC) to devise and recommend (to the secretary of interior and the governor of Alaska) a program for subsistence hunting within the park.

Strategy. Facilitate the development of a comprehensive hunting plan by providing technical assistance and guidelines to the SRC. Actively support and facilitate the efforts of the SRC in developing a viable subsistence hunting program for the park.

Authority. Section 808(a) of ANILCA.

Discussion. After 10 years and a good faith effort by the Gates of the Arctic SRC and many interested individuals, there is still only a rudimentary hunting plan. Many federal and state agencies, Native organizations and special-interest groups have a keen interest in effective, yet reasonably non-intrusive management of subsistence activities. The political and cultural sensitivities surrounding the subsistence preference and activities in the park are complex. There is little NPS experience with harvest and access needs of this sort, which necessitates a creative and cooperative process of issue identification and planning. The hunting plan and subsistence management plan must be forged in this way to be effective in directing management of resources and subsistence activities. Appropriate NEPA compliance will be necessary in developing these plans.

APPENDIX

Summary of ANILCA Provisions

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) (Public Law 96-487, December 2, 1980) provides for the "designation and conservation of certain public lands in the State of Alaska..." The following provisions of this act are pertinent to Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. Some sections are summarized while others are stated in their entirety to convey their intent.

- Section 101. (a): Establishment of all areas that "contain nationally significant natural, scenic, historic, archeological, geological, scientific, wilderness, cultural, recreational, and wildlife values, the units described in the following titles are hereby established.
- (b): Values to be protected: unrivaled scenic and geological values associated with natural landscapes; to provide for the maintenance of sound populations of, and habitat for, wildlife species of inestimable value to the citizens of Alaska and the Nation, including those species dependent on vast relatively undeveloped areas; to preserve in their natural state extensive unaltered arctic tundra, boreal forest, and coastal rain forest ecosystems; to preserve historic and archeological sites, rivers, and lands, and to preserve wilderness resource values and related recreational opportunities including but not limited to hiking, canoeing, fishing and sport hunting, within large arctic and subarctic wildlands and on freeflowing rivers; and to maintain opportunities for scientific research and undisturbed ecosystems.
- (c): "... to provide the opportunity for rural residents engaged in a subsistence way of life to continue to do so."

Section 201. (4)(a): Establishment of Gates of the Arctic "... to maintain the wild and undeveloped character of the area, including opportunities for visitors to experience solitude, and the natural environmental integrity and scenic beauty of the mountains, forelands, river, lakes, and other natural features; to provide continued opportunities, including reasonable access, for mountain climbing, mountaineering, and other wilderness recreational activities; and to protect habitat for and the populations of fish and wildlife, including, but not limited to caribou, grizzly bears, Dall sheep, moose, wolves, and raptorial birds. Subsistence uses by local residents shall be permitted in the park, where such uses are traditional..."

Section 201.(4)(b): "Congress finds that there is a need for access for surface transportation purposes across the Western (Kobuk River) unit of the Gates of the Arctic National Preserve (from the Ambler Mining District to the Alaska Pipeline Haul Road)..."

Section 203: Administration of new National Park Service areas, pursuant to cited laws; national preserve permit hunting; no entrance fees.

Section 206: Withdrawal from future disposition for mining or state and Native selections.

Section 601: Designation of the (26) Alatna, (30) John, (31) Kobuk, (33) Noatak, (34) North Fork of the Koyukuk, and (36) Tinayguk rivers as part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

The GMP addresses management of these rivers. The need for cooperative agreements has not been identified, and none has been signed.

Section 701: Designates 7,052,000 acres of Gates of the Arctic as wilderness.

Section 707: Administration of Gates of the Arctic Wilderness in accordance with the Wilderness Act.

TITLE VIII - Subsistence Management and Use

Title VIII is a lengthy and extremely important part of ANILCA, establishing federal policy for the management of subsistence on all federal lands in Alaska. Gates of the Arctic has implemented Title VIII, and the NPS sits on the Federal Subsistence Board. Rather than cite all of Title VIII, this SFM only addresses those segments that are specific to NPS and Gates of the Arctic.

Section 801: Findings and declaration of opportunity for subsistence.

Section 802: Subsistence policy.

Section 803: Subsistence definitions.

Section 804: Preference for subsistence uses.

Section 808: Establishes park subsistence resource commissions.

Section 809: Cooperative agreements for subsistence.

Section 810: Procedural requirements to assess impacts of land use decisions on subsistence.

Section 811: Reasonable access for subsistence.

Section 812: Research on subsistence.

Section 813: Periodic reports on subsistence.

Section 815(a): Subsistence take levels consistent with natural and healthy populations of fish and wildlife.

Section 816: Closure to subsistence uses.

Section 1010: Assessment of oil, gas and mineral potential on all public lands in the state.

Section 1110: Allows for motorized access for traditional activities and travel. Public notice required before enacting a closure.

Section 1301: Management plan completion date.

Section 1303: Use of cabins; improved property on national parkland.

Section 1306: Administrative sites and visitor facilities.

Section 1307: Revenue-producing visitor services.

Section 1308: Local hire.

Section 1313. Administration of national preserves.

Section 1314: Taking of fish and wildlife.

Section 1315(a): Wilderness management in Alaska.

(c): Existing cabins.

(d): New cabins.

Section 1316: Allowed uses of temporary facilities to manage fish and wildlife.

Section 1317: General wilderness review provision.

Section 1319: Effect on existing rights.

Section 1431(a): Provisions for Arctic Slope Regional Corporation land.

(b): Land exchange and terms for Kurupa Lake.

(c): Acquisition and exchange authority, boundary adjustments, exchange with
National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska.



As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural and cultural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

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