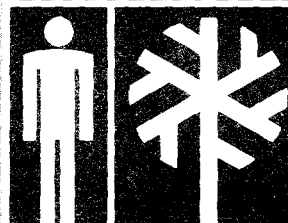


final wild and scenic river study
august 1984

KOYUK RIVER

ALASKA



FINAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVER STUDY
KOYUK RIVER, ALASKA

Abstract: Pursuant to section 5(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Public Law 90-542, as amended), the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, has prepared this Final Wild and Scenic River Study for the Koyuk River in Alaska. The report finds that the river is not eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

The Koyuk River was examined from its headwaters in the Seward Peninsula uplands to its mouth at Norton Bay. The study focus was whether outstandingly remarkable values were present along the river and adjacent land areas. The study team did not find any values associated with the Koyuk River corridor, individually or collectively, to be outstandingly remarkable. Because the river meets only one of the two criteria for eligibility set forth in the Wild and Scenic River Act--it is free flowing, but it does not possess one or more outstandingly remarkable values--the Koyuk is not eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

SECTION I

DRAFT KOYUK RIVER WILD AND SCENIC RIVER STUDY

The draft document was widely distributed on and after January 31, 1984. It has not been reprinted and is incorporated here by reference. A limited number of copies are available at the office of the regional director, Alaska Region, National Park Service, 2525 Gambell Street, Room 107, Anchorage, Alaska 99503.

SECTION II
CHANGES TO THE DRAFT STUDY REPORT

Page

- 6 & 8 The last paragraph on page 6 (continuing on to page 8) should be updated to read:

Employment statistics for 1981 show a labor force of 3,932 people for the Nome Census Division. The 1981 annual unemployment rate was 9.1 percent, with a June high of 11.4 percent and an October low of 6.7 percent (Alaska Department of Labor 1983a). In comparison, statewide statistics for 1981 show an annual unemployment rate of 9.3 percent (Alaska Department of Labor 1983b).

- 8 The first sentence of the second paragraph should read:

The following table reflects the average wages in the region's larger communities.

- 8 The fourth paragraph should read:

A 1972 subsistence survey in the Bering Strait Native Association area (U.S. Department of the Interior 1975) revealed that Koyuk had the third highest per capita rate of all harvestable resources in total pounds of usable weight.

- 9 The first complete sentence of the first paragraph should read:

Three potential transportation/utility corridors have been identified along the Koyuk River (USDI, Bureau of Land Management 1974): the first one is a northerly route extending north from Koyuk to Cape Lisburne; the second is an east-west route between Bettles and Nome that would cross the headwater area; and the third goes south from Koyuk to Kamishak Bay.

- 11 The last sentence of the second paragraph under "Commercial Fishery" should read:

It is highly probable that some king and coho salmon do enter the Koyuk River system, since they are present in other rivers in the Norton Bay subdistrict.

- 12 Under "Caribou," the following should be added at the end of the paragraph:

However, the herd has been expanding its winter range westward over the past few years, as the herd size increases. Thus, increased use of the Koyuk River area by caribou is a strong possibility in the near future.

Page

- 12 Under "Waterfowl," substitute the following:

Annual waterfowl survey data compiled by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reveal high waterfowl utilization of the area, especially in wetlands along the lower Koyuk River. Pintails appear to be the most common nesting waterfowl in the area. Breeding and nesting activities by tundra swans, sandhill cranes, lesser Canada geese, arctic and red-throated loons, and common eiders have also been documented for the lower river. Many other species of waterfowl and shorebirds occur throughout the area, and it also provides important nesting and feeding areas for fall and spring migrants, as well as nesting habitat.

- 16 The following should be inserted between the first and second sentences under "Scenic Resources":

The river flows through rolling, tundra-covered terrain from the headwaters to tidewater.

- 17 Delete the following from the first sentence of the third paragraph:

". . . to follow the river downstream."

- 19 Add the following after the last paragraph:

The Bureau of Land Management has found the Koyuk River to be navigable at least through T4S, R13W, KRM. The state of Alaska has not completed its research for this area. However, based on the use documents and hydrologic-physical characteristic data available, the state feels that the Koyuk River may be navigable at least to Big Bar Creek. The beds of navigable streams belong to the state of Alaska.

- 30 Under Alaska Department of Labor, change 1982a and 1982b to 1983a and 1983b respectively.

SECTION III

COMMENTS FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES, STATE AND LOCAL
GOVERNMENTS, NATIVE AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

June 19 1984

Honorable G. Ray Arnett
Assistant Secretary for Fish and
Wildlife and Parks
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Arnett:

We have reviewed your draft Wild and Scenic River study reports for the Kanektok and Koyuk Rivers in Alaska. We are in agreement with your recommendations that the Kanektok River is not suitable for Wild and Scenic River designation, and the Koyuk River is not eligible.

We have no further comments at this time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Richard E. Lyng".

Richard E. Lyng
Deputy Secretary



**U.S. Department of
Transportation**

Office of the Secretary
of Transportation

400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

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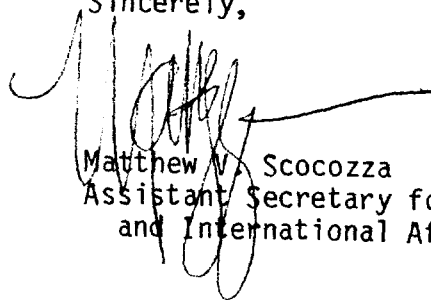
The Honorable G. Ray Arnett
Assistant Secretary for Fish
and Wildlife and Parks
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Arnett:

Thank you for your recent letter to Secretary Dole, enclosing a copy of the draft report on the Koyuk Wild and Scenic River Study, Alaska. The study concluded that the Koyuk River is not eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, because it does not possess outstandingly remarkable values.

The Department of Transportation has no comment on the draft report. We appreciate the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Matthew V. Scocozza
Assistant Secretary for Policy
and International Affairs



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

4 APR 1984

Honorable G. Ray Arnett
Assistant Secretary for Fish and
Wildlife and Parks
U. S. Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Mr. Arnett:

Your letter of January 23, 1984, requested comments of the Department of the Army on your proposed report on the Wild and Scenic River Study on Koyuk River, Alaska.

The report concludes that the Koyuk River lacks the essential qualities and characteristics necessary to be eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System. In view of this conclusion, we have no comments.

Sincerely,

William R. Gianelli
William R. Gianelli
Assistant Secretary of the Army
(Civil Works)

STATE OF ALASKA

BILL SHEFFIELD, GOVERNOR

CSU Planning Office
333 Raspberry Road
Anchorage, AK. 99502
Phone: 267-2215

10 April 1984

Roger Contor, Regional Director
National Park Service
2525 Gambell Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Dear Mr. ^{Roger}Contor:

The State Conservation System Units (CSU) Contacts have completed their review of the Koyuk River draft wild and scenic river report. State Contacts concur with the finding that this river is not eligible for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System.

The plan is concise and generally well written. To improve the quality of the final draft of this document, we request that a paragraph describing submerged land ownership be included. It would also be appropriate to correct the errors noted on pages 6 and 8 (see attached corrected copy) and include the attached revised labor force statistics.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this draft report. Please contact us if we can be of assistance in clarifying these comments.

Sincerely,

Tina Canning

Tina Canning
State CSU Coordinator

cc: L. Nebel, NPS
J. Mosby, NPS
S. Leaphart, CACFA
L. Parker, ALUC
State CSU Contacts

Anchorage Region Office	
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KOYUK RIVER - DRAFT WILD & SCENIC RIVER STUDY

- Author should refer to Kanektok River Report for organizational and stylistic ideas.
- Table of contents - standardize format with Kanektok River Report.
- Page 5 - Vicinity Map - Location of river is not obvious at a glance. Perhaps a heavier weight line could be used. The dotted line symbol is also difficult to differentiate from the dot symbol for settlements.
- Page 7 - Location Map - North arrow should be more prominently displayed.
- Page 8 - Third paragraph (Above Transportation and Access) - Harvest of what? Not clear.
- Page 9 - First paragraph. Could use a figure illustrating transportation corridors. Also, the transportation corridor numbering system makes no sense.
- Page 13 - Is any soils information available for the Geology and Mineral Resources section? The wording is awkward in the first sentence under Geology. Citations should read "USGS" rather than "USDI, Geologic Survey" following common usage.
- Page 15 - Water Resources - Read the section on stream flow and water quality in the Kanektok River Report. Third paragraph of section: Use expressions like "The river has a gradient of X feet per mile", for example.
- Page 16 - Fifth paragraph - This strip of vegetation increases in width, not depth.
- Page 16 - Scenic Resources - This needs a general statement early in the section that the river flows through rolling, tundra-covered terrain from the headwaters to tidewater, and then discuss the minor variations on this theme.
- Page 17 - Third paragraph - Did you feel nervous with that vegetation following you?
- Page 18 - Land Status Map - The location of the Kateel River Meridian is unclear.
- Page 33 - Participants section - All entries should be followed by "Anchorage".

STATE OF ALASKA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET DIVISION OF GOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

BILL SHEFFIELD, GOVERNOR

CENTRAL OFFICE

POUCH AW
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811
PHONE: (907) 465-3562

SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE

211 Fourth Street
Pouch AW, Room 306
Juneau, AK 99811
Phone: (907) 465-3562

SOUTHCENTRAL REGIONAL OFFICE

3301 Eagle Street
Suite 307
Anchorage, AK 99503
Phone: (907) 272-3504

NORTHERN REGIONAL OFFICE

675 Seventh Avenue
Station H
Fairbanks, AK 99701
Phone: (907) 456-3084

Registered Mail
Return Receipt
Requested

April 19, 1984

Mr. Roger J. Contor, Regional Director
National Park Service
2525 Gambell Street, Room 107
Anchorage, AK 99503-2892

Dear Mr. Contor:

SUBJECT: KOYUK RIVER DRAFT REPORT
STATE I.D. NUMBER AK840307-09A

The Division of Governmental Coordination (DGC) has completed the consistency review of your plan in which you propose to not designate the Koyuk River a Wild and Scenic River.

Based on our review, the Division agrees with your consistency determination that the project is consistent with the Alaska Coastal Management Program.

If changes to the original plan are made, you are required to contact this office to determine if a review of the revision is necessary.

Thank you for your cooperation with the Alaska Coastal Management Program.

Sincerely,

ROBERT L. GROGAN
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

By: 

Jack R. Heesch
Regional Coordinator

lr

cc: Helga Eakon, Unalakleet
Caleb Pungowiyi, Nome
Jan Sorice, DGC, Fairbanks

DIVISION OF LAND AND WATER MANAGEMENT

**555 Cordova Street
Pouch 7-005
Anchorage, Alaska 99510
Phone: (907) 276-2653**

5103.03(B)(5)
Koyuk

[illegible]



*Citizens' Advisory Commission
on Federal Areas*

515 Seventh Avenue
Suite 310
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
(907) 456-2012

April 20, 1984

Roger Contor
Regional Director
National Park Service
2525 Gambell Room #107
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Dear Mr. Contor:

The Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas concurs with the study team's decision that the Koyuk River is not eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System. This finding is based on the lack of outstanding or remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic or cultural values.

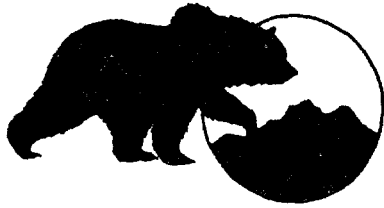
Additionally, a considerable portion of the adjacent lands along the study corridor are native and/or State selections. The local economy has few private job opportunities but the region does have a modest potential for some mineral development. Inclusion of the Koyuk River into the National Wild and Scenic River System could unnecessarily restrict future mineral or other economic development on the aforementioned State and native lands.

The study team for the Koyuk should be complimented on the clean, concise nature of the document. Inclusion of the Guidelines for Eligibility, Classification and Management of River Areas was particularly helpful to the reader.

The Commission would like to be provided with a copy of the final report for the Koyuk.

Sincerely,

Stan Leaphart
Stan Leaphart
Executive Director



Northern Alaska Environmental Center

218 DRIVEWAY
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99701
(907) 452-5021

April 18, 1984

Regional Director
Alaska Regional Office
National Park Service
2525 Gambell St.
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Dear Mr. Contor,

The Northern Alaska Environmental Center objects strongly to the conclusions of the draft wild and scenic river report for the KOYUK RIVER in northwest Alaska. We find it incredible that the NPS could claim that a free-flowing river virtually encompassed by wilderness "does not possess one or more outstandingly remarkable values."

We note that the river has one of the highest densities of grizzly bear in that part of Alaska and that the river crosses through the southern portion of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd migration route. Certainly the existence of such remarkable wildlife phenomenon should qualify as a "remarkable" value.

One would expect the National Park Service to give some value to an almost total wilderness surrounding of seemingly limitless vistas even without a "Mt. McKinley" to set it off for the Instamatic snap shots. It causes one to wonder what sort of "standards" have been imposed by the study team and what sort of predetermined prejudice they brought with them into the field.

We are extremely disappointed by the narrow definition of what constitutes an "outstandingly remarkable value." We are suspicious of some secret criteria based on a predetermined model. It is much easier for us to believe that the NPS is merely attempting to not get in the way of any potential Alaska Department of Transportation access corridor than to accept that this river is unqualified for designation as a wild and scenic river.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Robert D. Warren
Executive Director

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities to protect and conserve our land and water, energy and minerals, fish and wildlife, parks and recreation areas, and to ensure the wise use of all these resources. The department also has major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

Publication services were provided by the graphics and editorial staffs of the Denver Service Center. NPS D-2161A

