

Tern Lake Fish and Wildlife Viewing Area

Dear Planning Participant:

March 2003

The Forest Service is seeking your involvement regarding a proposal to improve fish and wildlife viewing opportunities at Tern Lake, in the Moose Pass area of the Seward Ranger District, Chugach National Forest. The Seward Ranger District wishes to create a world-class fish and wildlife viewing area and to provide educational opportunities about the flora, fauna, and ecology of Tern Lake. The project fills the need of increasing recreational opportunities for forest visitors, and educating them about fish and wildlife to improve appreciation and wise use of public resources.



The proposed action, located at the junction of the Seward and Sterling Highways at milepost 37, in T5N, R2W, Section 13 on the Kenai Peninsula. The project includes:

- Construction of 2 boardwalks with viewing platforms.
- Construction of 2 new interpretive wildlife trails, and reconstruction of existing trails. Expansion of existing parking and restroom facilities, and the addition of a new parking area with restroom and garbage facilities.
- Construction of a small interpretive cabin or yurt at the Day Use area.
- Installation of benches and spotting scopes at selected viewing sites.
- Selective thinning and clean up of dead and down material near trails and viewing sites.

Opportunities with these actions include:

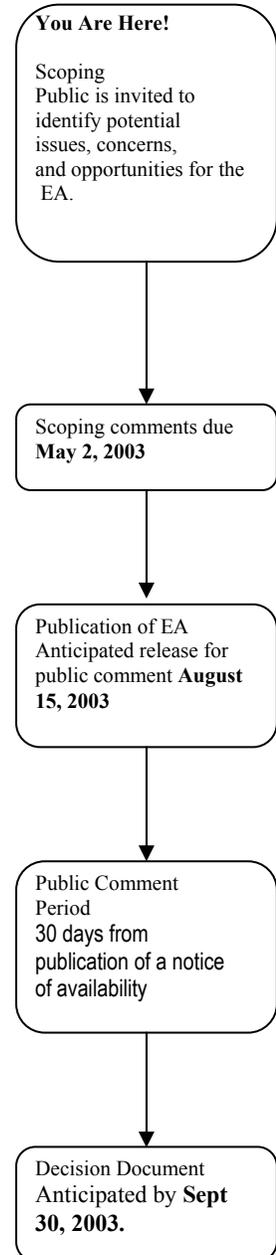
- Interpretation on fish, wildlife, ecology, plant communities, and disturbance such as avalanches and flooding.
- Cameras offering live viewing opportunities on fish, bear, nesting birds, and other wildlife.
- Hiking opportunities.
- Viewing opportunities on the east side of the lake.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) will use an ecosystem-management approach to compare the impacts of each alternative on the biological, social, and economic resources of the area. We are now in the scoping stage of completing the Environmental Analysis. Scoping, or public participation is the first formal step in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Scoping identifies your potential issues, concerns, and opportunities associated with the proposed project.

Please examine the enclosed map and project description. Send us any comments you feel will help us develop a comprehensive EA. You should identify specific issues to be considered, places within the Project Area that are important, or suggestions to improve or change the project, including your ideas for alternatives to the proposed action. We have provided forms on which to write your comments, or you may use your own format to write, call, email, or fax your comments to us. Email comments should be directed to: mboenit@fs.fed.us. Remember, in order to be most useful to the planning team, your comments should be received by May 2, 2003.

We look forward to receiving your comments and thank you for your participation in the Fuller Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Environmental Assessment. Your views are important to us as we develop an action strategy to achieve the goals of the Forest Plan.

MIKE KANIA
DISTRICT RANGER



Tern Lake Fish and Wildlife Viewing Area Proposed Action Seward Ranger District

Why: Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to create a world-class fish and wildlife viewing area and to provide educational opportunities about the flora, fauna, and ecology of Tern Lake. The project fills the need of increasing recreational opportunities for forest visitors, and educating them about fish and wildlife to improve appreciation and wise use of public resources.

The desired condition is to increase opportunities to view fish and wildlife, increased interpretive signing, increased capacity for parking, and expanded restroom and day use facilities.



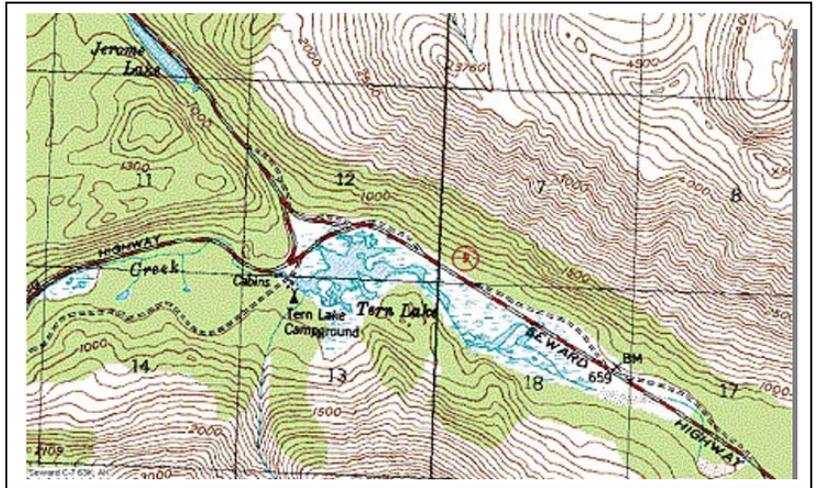
Objectives are:

1. Provide new fish and wildlife viewing opportunities, and educational opportunities to learn about birds, fish, bear, Dall sheep, mountain goats, avalanches, disturbances, and forest habitats.
2. Meet Forest Plan direction to maintain or expand current recreational capacity through maintenance, re-construction, or construction of recreational facilities and trails.
3. Public education, because appreciation and wise use of public resources on National Forest lands depends on an informed populace.

Who: The US Forest Service, Seward Ranger District on the Chugach National Forest

Where:

Tern Lake Day Use Area is located at the junction of the Seward and Sterling highways at milepost 37, in T5N, R2W, Section 13 on the Kenai Peninsula. Tern Lake is approximately 8 miles from Moose Pass, 11 miles from Cooper Landing, 35 miles from Seward, and 80 miles from Anchorage. Tern Lake encompasses approximately 55 acres, and the project site is approximately 100 acres.



What:

 The project design includes:

- Removal of the existing fish viewing platform at the Day Use area, and construction of a new fish viewing bridge (approximately 15 feet). The bridge connects to the parking area, at the location of the existing fish viewing platform and to the adjacent knob (called Goldeneye Knob on the site map) and Swan Viewing boardwalk and platform which winds around the knob and runs adjacent to the Day Use Area road, out to the highway.
- Approximately 1420 feet of boardwalk on the east and west portions of the lake. On the west side, is the Swan boardwalk and viewing platform. On the east side is the East Viewing boardwalk and viewing platform
- Approximately 6500 ft of new wildlife interpretive hiking trails, one attached to the Day Use area (Plant Loop 2), and one on the east side of the lake (East Side Trail).
- Approximately 2257 ft of trail reconstruction at the Day Use Area (Fish Spawning Trail, Goldeneye Knob Trail). This includes reconstructing the short trail to the fish spawning area and the short trail on Goldeneye knob. This also includes creating a trail from the existing loop road running through the day use picnic area.
- Construct one small wooden lookout tower (10' high) on Goldeneye knob.
- Construct a small interpretive cabin (approximately 20' x 20') or yurt with live web cameras viewing fish, bears and other wildlife at the lake. A yurt would be a removable building placed on a platform in the picnic area across from the first picnic site near the parking area. The yurt would be removed in the winter.
- Re-construct seven miles of bike trail on the old Sterling Highway. Re-construction would include brushing along the sides, resurfacing, and installation of culverts.
- Install 13 or more interpretive signs throughout the project area along trails and at viewing sites.

- Construction of 8 viewing areas with benches and spotting scopes. Install one at Golden-eye knob, two along Plant Loop 2, one on the Swan Viewing Platform, one on the East Side Viewing Platform, one at the lake inlet on the east side, one on Hemlock Knob at the end of East Side Trail, and one at the interpretive cabin at picnic site #1.
- Replacement five picnic tables. At the Day Use area.
- Construction of a new parking area and toilet along the Seward Highway on the southeast portion of the lake at the East Side Trailhead. The parking area will be screened from the highway by trees, and will be approximately 60'x20' and will allow parking for 10 cars.
- Expansion of the Day Use parking area, and construction of an additional toilet and garbage facilities.
- The culvert on the west side of the lake will be replaced with a bridge or reconstructed to allow faster flows out of the lake at high water levels.
- A host would live on site at the day use area during a portion of the year (spring, summer, fall) adjacent to the interpretive building.
- Some thinning and clean up of dead and down material along new trails and at viewing areas.

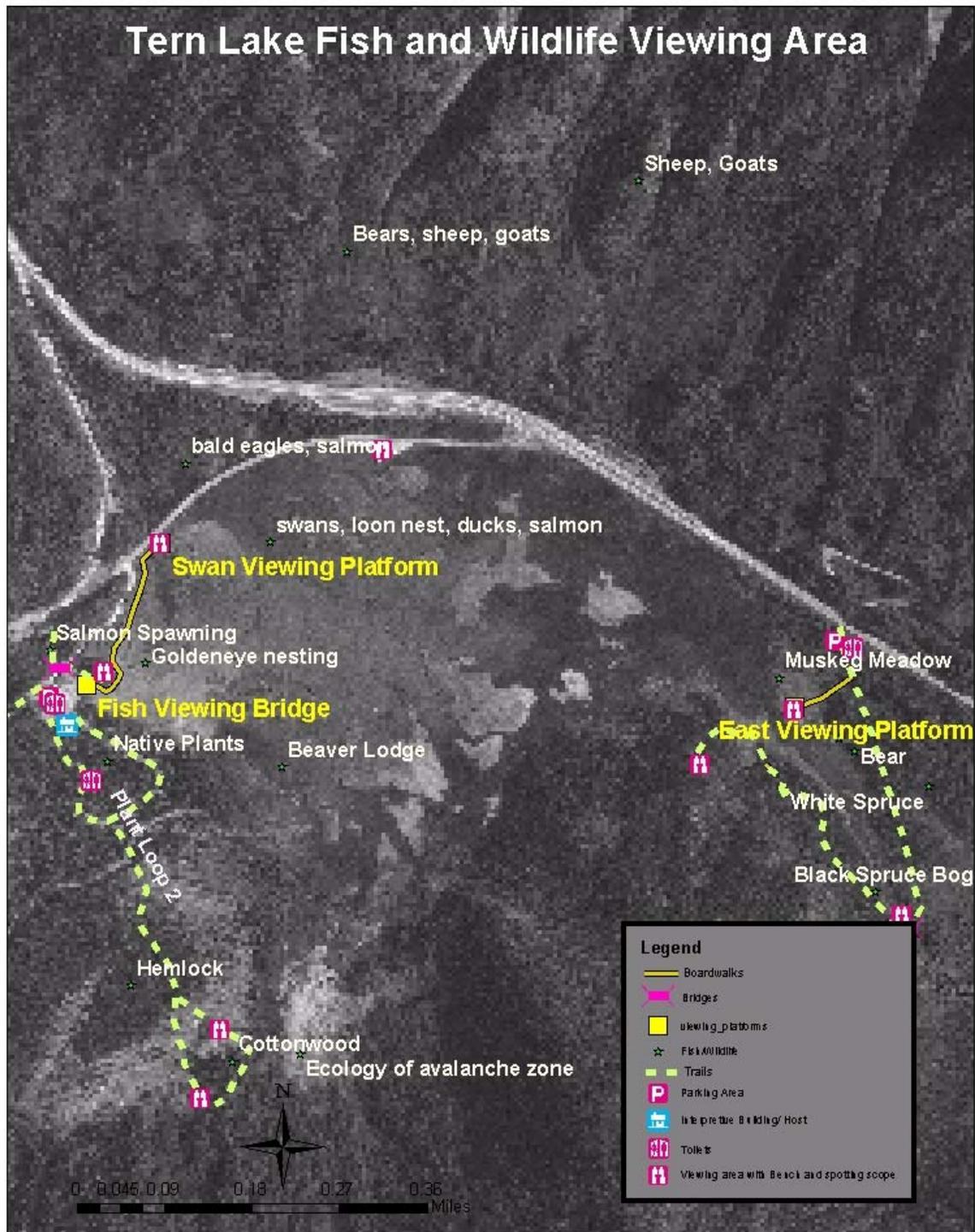
To the maximum extent feasible, all facilities will be accessible. Signage will conform to Forest Service standards. Construction will minimize site disturbance, utilize natural materials, and visually blend into the landscape.

When: The project design, NEPA (the proposed action, scoping, and environmental analysis will occur in 2003. Your comments on this proposed action are due on June 7, 2003. An Environmental Analysis should be complete and mailed to you by August 15, 2003. The comment period for the Environmental Analysis is planned for August 15-September 15, 2003. The decision date for this project is planned for September 30, 2003. The appeal period will be October 1-November 14, 2003. If an action alternative were selected, construction would not likely occur until 2007-2008.

Decision to be Made: In the decision, I will answer the following three questions based on the environmental analysis:

1. Whether the proposed action will proceed as proposed, as modified by an alternative, or not at all? If it proceeds:
2. What mitigation measures and monitoring requirements will the Forest Service apply to the reconstruction?

Photo 1: Overview of Entire Project Area



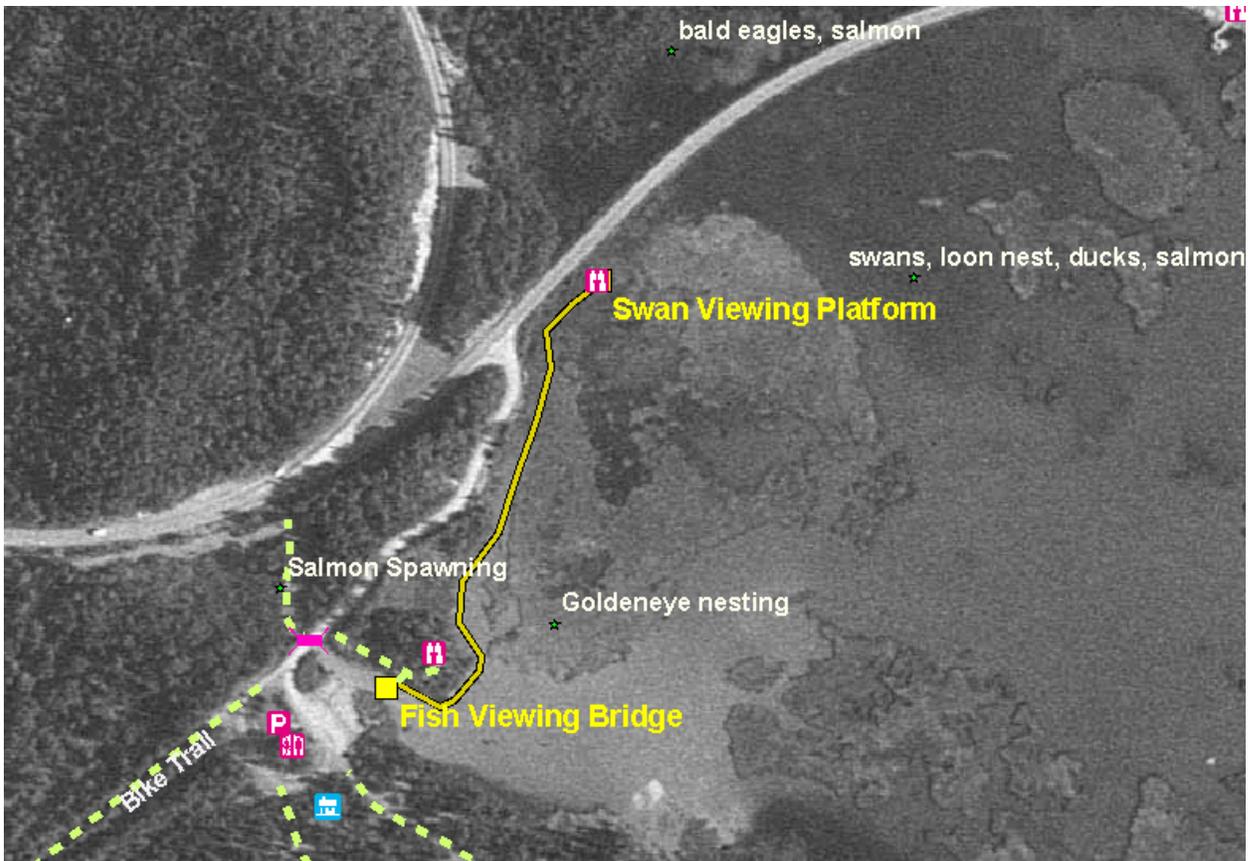


Photo 2: Detailed View of Boardwalk from Day Use Area

Legend

-  Boardwalks
-  viewing_platforms
-  Fish/Wildlife
-  Trails
-  Parking Area
-  Interpretive Building/ Host
-  Bridges
-  Toilets
-  Viewing area with Bench and spotting scope

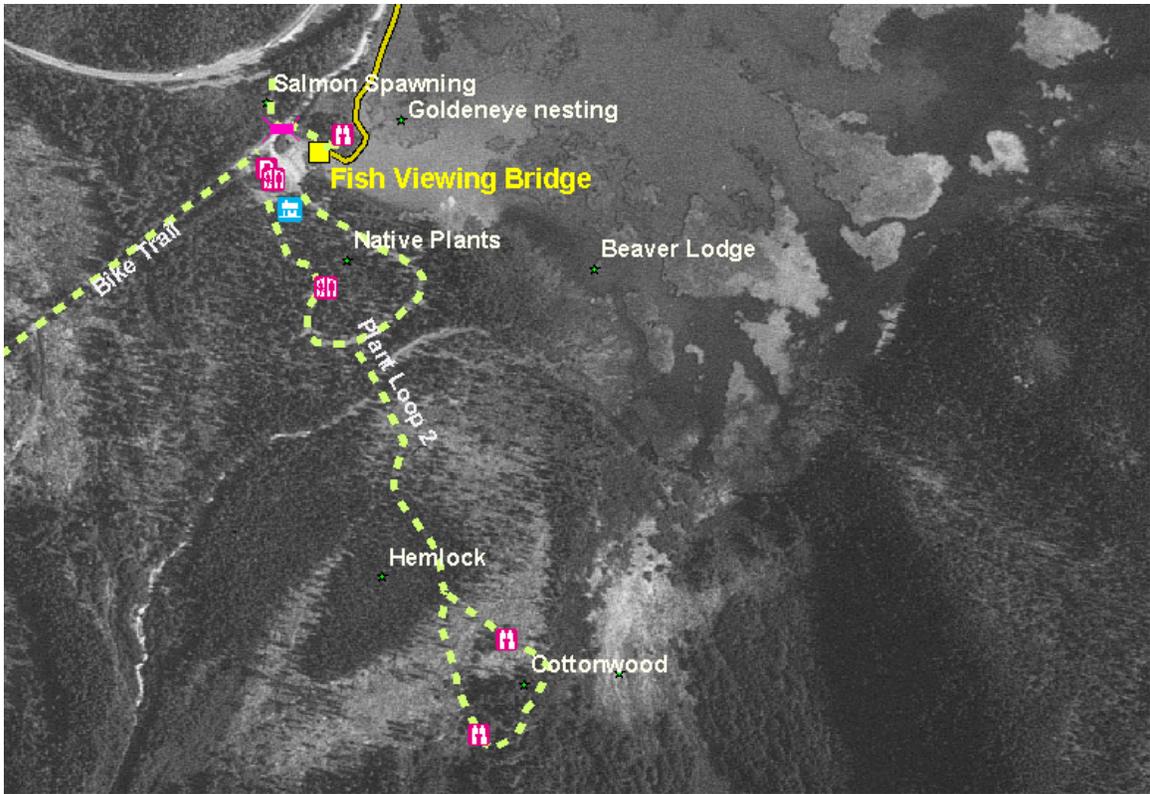


Photo 3: Detailed View of Trails and Interpretive cabin from Day Use Area

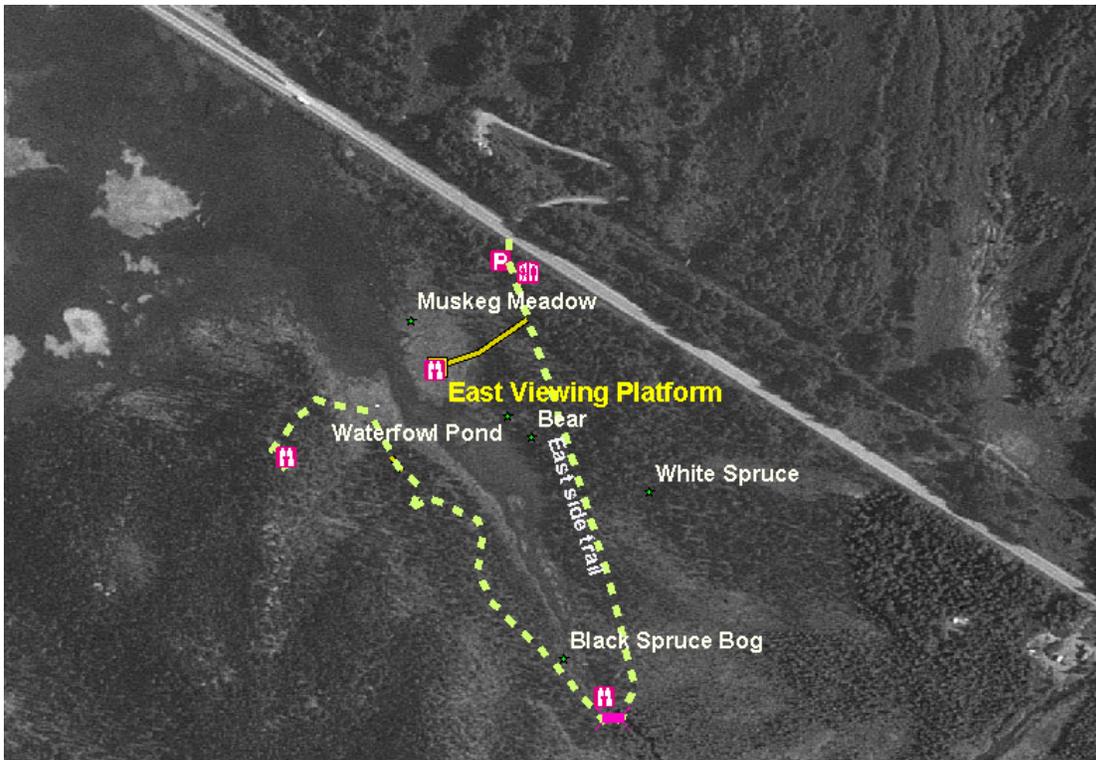


Photo 3: Detailed View of New parking area, boardwalk, and trail on east side of the lake.

**Here are my scoping comments for the Tern Lake Fish and Wildlife
Viewing Area EA:**

Due by June 7, 2003

Please complete the other side, and mail this form or a format of your choice to:

**District Ranger, Seward Ranger District, Chugach National Forest, Attn: Tern Lake Fish
and Wildlife Viewing Area EA, PO Box 390, Seward, AK 99664**

Telephone: 907 – 224 – 4122

Fax: 907 – 224 – 3268

Email: mboenit@fs.fed.us

In order to maintain our mailing lists, please provide your correct name, organization if for official representation, and address below.

In order to maintain an effective and efficient mailing list at our District, please answer the following questions after completing the other side of this form. ***IF WE DO NOT HEAR FROM YOU AT THIS TIME, YOUR NAME MAY BE REMOVED FROM THE PROJECT AND THE DISTRICT-WIDE MAILING LIST.***

YES, I want to remain on the mailing list for all future proposed actions on the Seward Ranger District.

YES, I want to remain on the Tern Lake Fish and Wildlife Viewing Area EA Project mailing list.

NOTE: Our public mailing lists may be made available to those who request them under the Freedom of Information Act. We cannot assure you that your name and address will remain confidential if you are on the mailing list.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY. If your mailing label is correct, you may cut it out and tape it here.

Name: _____

Organization: _____
(official representation only)

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

----- Fold along line, staple, stamp, and mail -----

From:

(Return address required)

TO: District Ranger
Seward Ranger District
Chugach National Forest
Attn: **Tern Lake Fish and Wildlife Viewing Area
EA**
PO Box 390
Seward, AK 99664

Please Participate!

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues, opportunities, and concerns on the proposed action, comments during scoping, and on the Draft EA, should be AS SPECIFIC AS POSSIBLE. Use the information provided in this letter and refers to specific areas on the enclosed maps. Please identify areas of particular concern. Larger-scale maps are available at the Seward Ranger District.

STAY IN TOUCH! STAY INVOLVED!

District Ranger
Seward Ranger District
Chugach National Forest
Attn: **Tern Lake Fish and Wildlife Viewing Area EA**
PO Box 390
Seward, AK 99664



TERN LAKE FISH AND WILDLIFE VIEWING AREA

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

DETAILS INSIDE

PROPOSED PROJECT: Improve fish and wildlife viewing opportunities at Tern Lake by constructing new trails, parking area, interpretive building, and viewing areas.

LOCATION: Intersection of the Sterling and Seward Highways.

SUMMARY: Create a world-class fish and wildlife viewing area and to provide educational opportunities about the flora, fauna, and ecology of Tern Lake.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

District Ranger
Seward Ranger District
Chugach National Forest
PO Box 390
Seward, AK 99664
(907) 224 – 3374

