

SAR - DEIS - Chapter 1 Only

Comment # Comment

0029063-030 GENERAL COMMENTS
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Ecosystem management We suggest the Final EIS place more emphasis on the 1992 Ecological Systems Management policy (see pages 1-4,1-5), and be particularly sensitive to the land status and management mandates of other agencies adjacent to the CNF boundaries. There is little to no mention within the Draft EIS of how the CNF, in conjunction with other land management agencies, will implement ecosystem management on the Kenai Peninsula. The CNF is treated as a distinct and separate unit with little recognition or regard of how its management fits into the larger landscape, especially on the geographically isolated Kenai Peninsula.

The adjacent Kenai NWR forms a common boundary with the CNF of over 60 miles. Consequently, there needs to be recognition and management recommendations within the Final EIS for how future management of the CNF in conjunction with the Kenai NWR can jointly promote wildlife diversity on the Kenai Peninsula, thereby effecting true ecosystem management.

The FWS recommends the following characteristics along the Kenai NWR-CNF 60+ mile boundary be acknowledged, emphasized, and addressed in the Final EIS:

- 1) That approximately 50% (about 30 miles) of the common Kenai NWR-CNF boundary includes Congressionally mandated Wilderness within the Kenai NWR

- a) That approximately 60% (about 18 miles) of this common Kenai NWR-CNF Wilderness boundary includes the Russian River drainage, which is an area that is extremely important to Kenai Peninsula brown bears feeding on salmon carcasses along the Russian River, Lower and Upper Russian Lakes, Goat Creek and unnamed creeks within the CNF at the southern end of Upper Russian Lake. The Russian River drainage is also important because it supports the Russian River sockeye salmon spawning and rearing habitat streams/lakes, as well as spawning and rearing habitat for rainbow trout, silver salmon and other fish species. This watershed is also critically important to significant recreational and commercial fisheries, and a major factor in the local economy.

- lb. That approximately 40% (about 12 miles) of this common Kenai NWR-CNF

- Wilderness boundary includes the Mystery Creek Wilderness Unit within the Kenai NWR, which includes important habitat for brown bears, wolverine

- wolves, lynx, moose, caribou, Dall sheep and other species of wildlife.

- 2. That approximately 50% (about 30 miles) of the remaining Kenai NWR-CNF

- common boundary includes a Minimal Management Zone protecting the Chickaloon River watershed within the Kenai NWR. Minimal management zones within the Kenai

- NWR are recommended for wilderness designation and the Chickaloon River watershed is a highly important area for staging and migrating waterfowl, waterbirds, shorebirds, beluga whales, harbor seals, and four species of salmon.

- 3. That the indistinct and unmarked boundaries between the Kenai NWR-CNF could facilitate CNF-authorized human motorized or nonmotorized vehicular access to occur on adjacent Kenai NWR Wilderness or Minimal Management Zones, where these uses are not authorized and are not compatible with Kenai NWR purposes

The Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WRST) and Kenai Fjord National Park (KEFJ) also share common boundaries with the CNF. For your information and use in further discussion of impacts and

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ecosystem management opportunities, we have identified, below, National Park Service (NPS) management practices and those proposed for the adjacent CNF.