

SAR - PWS - Interests - Recreation

Comment # Comment

0028298-005 Sensitive Habitat in Eastern Prince William Sound

With the opening of the Whittier road there will be increased pressures for recreational use in the eastern PWS. We see an immediate need to identify low-impact campsite areas, construct platforms, and begin a permit system for overnight camping. There is a need to assess the impacts and the potential for spills from increased presence of tenders and floating gas stations supplying recreational users.

0029063-024

Recreation Impacts - PWS (see also pages 3-81 through 3-92! The FWS expressed many concerns about the impacts increased human access into PWS will impose on fish and wildlife resources in their November 22, 1999, letter to Alan Vandiver, Chugach National Forest Interdisciplinary Team. We believe the USFS, other State and Federal resource agencies, and private organizations have a unique opportunity to offer greater protection to these important resources by working together and using proactive management strategies. Studies conducted by Murphy and Suring (1999) are extremely valuable to help determine current and projected future human use patterns in PWS. The use of this information, in combination with species distribution maps, will help project where impacts will occur and give resource managers an opportunity to implement management strategies before long-term, irreversible impacts can occur.

For example, we are aware of an unfunded USFS study proposal to evaluate boat anchoring within PWS eelgrass beds. Documenting the locations where boaters are anchoring in PWS eelgrass beds will help determine popular mooring areas. Eelgrass is among the most productive

coastal habitats in the world. It provides numerous functions that include: supporting a complex trophic food and detritus-based food chain, sediment and nutrient filtration, providing buffers to shorelines against wave action, sediment stabilization, and serving as breeding and nursery areas for finfish and shellfish (Short and Wyllie-Echeverria 1996). Permanent anchoring structures could then be placed in nearby habitats, which are less valuable and where eelgrass does not occur, thus preventing future impacts to the eelgrass beds.

The placement of any future recreation facilities should be carefully planned, ensuring that direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the activities are evaluated. Even activities that may seem innocuous such as hardened campgrounds, can cause major impacts to fish and wildlife resources. New recreational facilities should be placed in areas that avoid and minimize impacts to fish and wildlife and associated resources. Concentrating new recreation facilities in less biologically significant areas, such as Passage Canal and Esther Island, can help take the pressure off of areas where more sensitive fish and wildlife habitats occur.

0029462-002 A national treasure, the Chugach offers tremendous opportunities for sustainable development of tourism and recreation opportunities while maintaining the magnificent natural setting which draws so many to visit Prince William Sound.

Comment # Comment

0034881-008

Camping In western Prince William Sound

Western Prince William Sound. I support development of a network of camping destinations, spaced to accommodate kayakers, extending outward from Whittier in western Prince William Sound. Some site development for campers is essential to protect shores and uplands from increasing recreation use.