

REVISION TO THE COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION
PLAN FOR THE ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REF-
UGE

COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

TRANSMITTING

A REVISION TO THE COMPREHENSIVE CONSERVATION PLAN FOR
THE ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE TO INCLUDE THE
ATIGUN RIVER, HULAHULA RIVER, KONGAKUT RIVER, AND
MARSH FORK CANNING RIVER, PURSUANT TO SEC. 304(g)(1) OF
THE ALASKA NATIONAL INTEREST LANDS CONSERVATION ACT,
PUB. L. 96-487



APRIL 13, 2015.—Referred to the Committee on Natural Resources and
ordered to be printed

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THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, April 3, 2015.

Hon. JOHN BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to section 304(g)(1) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), Public Law 96–487, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has revised the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and completed an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The revised CCP will guide the Service’s management of the refuge for the next 15 years.

Based on the best available science and extensive public comment, the Service’s preferred alternative recommends 12.28 million acres—including the Coastal Plain—for designation as wilderness. The Service also recommends four rivers—the Atigun, Hulahula, Kongakut, and Marsh Fork Canning—for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

The Service’s revised CCP and final EIS address a variety of needs, including preserving subsistence uses of local inhabitants, protecting fish and wildlife populations and their habitats, and ensuring opportunities for fish- and wildlife-dependent recreation and other public uses. The revised CCP also strengthens wildlife and habitat monitoring as well as the monitoring of public use of the refuge so as to better respond to changing conditions on the landscape, particularly those associated with climate change.

With these points in mind, and pursuant to the Wilderness Act of 1964, I am recommending that the Congress pass legislation making additions to the National Wilderness Preservation System and the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System that the Service proposed as part of the revised CCP and final EIS for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. This area is one of the most beautiful, undisturbed places in the world. It is a national treasure and should be permanently protected through legislation for future generations.

Attached is the letter of recommendation from the Secretary of the Interior and a map of the area.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA.



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

APR 03 2015

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am formally requesting that you submit our recommendation to the 114th Congress of the United States to add the Brooks Range, Porcupine Plateau, and Coastal Plain Wilderness Study Areas to the National Wilderness Preservation System and to add 278.6 miles of 4 rivers – the Atigun, Marsh Fork Canning, Hulahula, and Kongakut – to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has conducted an exhaustive analysis of this recommendation through the Revised Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and has just signed the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Final CCP/EIS. The proposed additions to the National Wilderness Preservation System, as depicted in the enclosed map and defined below, are defined in greater detail in the Service's Wilderness Review, EIS Appendix H, and the proposed additions to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System are described in the Service Wild and Scenic River Review, EIS Appendix I (<http://www.fws.gov/home/arctic-ccp/>).

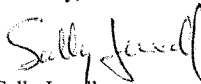
During the CCP process, the Service received hundreds of thousands of public comments from Alaskans and citizens across the country in support of increased protections for the areas identified in Alternative E, including the Coastal Plain.

The proposed Coastal Plain Wilderness is defined by Section 1002 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Public Law 96-487, as extending from the northern foothills of the Brooks Range to the Beaufort Sea to include 121 miles (79 percent) of the Refuge's coastal habitat. The proposed Porcupine Plateau Wilderness is an area of scattered mountains and rolling hills located south of the Brooks Range that extends from just east of the East Fork of the Chandalar River to the Canadian border. The proposed Brooks Range Wilderness is a large area of rugged relief that straddles the Continental Divide on the western side of the Refuge, extending from the western boundary of the Refuge near the Dalton Highway to the existing Refuge Wilderness just past the East Fork of the Chandalar River.

Based on our review of the Final CCP/EIS, I believe that the proposed Wilderness and Wild and Scenic River designations in Alternative E will best achieve the purposes of the Refuge, support the mission of the Refuge System, and maintain the Refuge's unique values. Wilderness designation would provide long-term protection for the lands, wildlife and other resources that subsistence users depend on, and would ensure long-term protections for the incredible diversity of wildlife that call the refuge home. Wilderness and Wild and Scenic River designations would also provide additional layers of protection for water resources in the Refuge.

Only Congress has the authority to designate Wilderness areas for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System and to designate rivers for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System. Until Congress makes a decision regarding this recommendation, the Wilderness Study Areas will continue to be managed under minimal management, and suitable and recommended rivers will be managed according to the interim management guidelines listed in Appendix I of the final EIS.

Sincerely,



Sally Jewell

Enclosure

