

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

news release

For Release February 28, 1979

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT ASKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON ALASKA RULES

Two Interior Department agencies today asked the public for advice on land management issues relating to 15 new National Monument areas in Alaska. The Park Service manages 13 of the new areas and the Fish and Wildlife Service manages two.

Both the National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service today published "Notices of Intent to Propose Rules" in the Federal Register as the first step toward developing permanent regulations for the monuments. The notices set forth a series of general questions regarding activities which will be the subject of permanent regulations. The public will be given 30 days to comment.

"The purpose of the 'Notice of Intent' is to solicit public participation in the earliest phases of federal rulemaking," Secretary of the Interior Cecil D. Andrus said. "We intend to seek the greatest possible public involvement in every phase of our management of the National Interest Lands in Alaska before final rules are adopted."

A total of 56 million acres of new National Monuments were designated by President Jimmy Carter last December 1 under authority of the Antiquities Act of 1906. In addition to the 15 areas managed by Interior Department agencies, there are two additional areas in Southeast Alaska managed by the U.S. Forest Service.

Although the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service administer their respective areas under different management authorities and objectives, resulting in different regulatory concerns regarding some activities, there are many areas of regulation that are common to both.

The Interior Department is seeking public suggestions for regulations on the following issues:

****Public Use and Recreation--**Use of aircraft within monuments; modification of abandoned property regulations to accommodate food and equipment caches; treatment of illegal cabins; possession and use of firearms; non-commercial gathering of wood.

****Subsistence--**Need for establishing a federal program if the State is unable to establish an adequate subsistence program; definition of "local resident" and other terms relating to subsistence users; use of aircraft for subsistence; "barter and trade" as subsistence activities.

****Mining--**Development of general mining regulations for the Fish and Wildlife Service and modification of existing Park Service mining regulations in response to unique mining conditions in Alaska.

(more)

