

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

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ADDITIONAL HEARINGS SET IN ALASKA ON PROPOSED FINAL PUBLIC LAND WITHDRAWALS

Interior Secretary Cecil D. Andrus today announced three additional hearings in Alaska on proposals to withdraw for 20 years up to 57 million acres of Federal land in Alaska for national wildlife refuges and other special management areas.

The hearings will be held from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on May 24 at the University of Alaska Fine Arts Theatre in Fairbanks; at the Alaska Pacific University Student Center, East Wesley Drive off Providence Drive in Anchorage; and the village community building in Tanana, Alaska.

Six village hearings were announced previously. They were scheduled for 2 p.m. on April 24 in Kotzebue and Galena, April 25 in Kaktovik and Bethel, and April 26 in Arctic Village and Dillingham.

The proposed withdrawal of 57 million acres could be made under authority of Section 204(c) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). The areas are currently withdrawn for 3 years under emergency withdrawal orders issued by the Secretary November 16, 1978, after Congress failed to pass legislation putting these critical Federal lands into conservation system units--national parks, national wildlife refuges, wild and scenic rivers, and national forests.

Subsequently, President Carter on December 1, 1978, declared 56 million acres (largely national park proposals) as National Monuments through his authority under the Antiquities Act. At the same time, he directed the

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