

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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MINING REGULATIONS PROPOSED FOR
THE BECHAROF AND YUKON FLATS NATIONAL WILDLIFE MONUMENTS:
90-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT SOUGHT

The Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today the publication of proposed regulations in the Federal Register for mining activities associated with the Becharof and Yukon Flats National Wildlife Monuments established in Alaska by President Carter on December 1, 1978.

"These regulations would apply only to existing mining claims within the Becharof National Monument, located at the head of the Alaska Peninsula, and the Yukon Flats National Monument, lying north of Fairbanks (see map)," Service Director Lynn A. Greenwalt said. "New mining claims cannot be permitted within a national monument.

"The object of these regulations is to permit uninterrupted continuation of mining activities on existing valid claims (patented or unpatented) within the boundaries of the wildlife monuments and to provide guidelines for ensuring that such activities are carried out in a reasonable manner that will appropriately protect the scientific and historic values of the monument lands for the benefit of the public.

"In order to have the public understand and fully participate in shaping the final version of these regulations, we are providing a 90-day period for public comment," Greenwalt said. "During that time, extensive efforts will be made to contact interested groups and individuals for their comments and suggestions."

To meet the immediate need for public use guidelines, emergency interim regulations for mining in these areas were published March 14, 1979. These regulations will remain in effect until the proposed regulations being announced today are issued in final form during this coming summer.

The Interior Department sought public comment on concepts to be addressed in the proposed and final regulations last February through a "Notice of Intent" published in the Federal Register and widely publicized. The present proposed regulations set out a far more comprehensive and detailed regulatory framework than in either the emergency regulations or the "Notice of Intent." They are patterned, principally, after the mining regulations for the new National Park monuments in Alaska as proposed in the general monument regulations issued for comment last June.

"In addition, public comments received to date have been used in development of these proposed regulations, Director Greenwalt said.

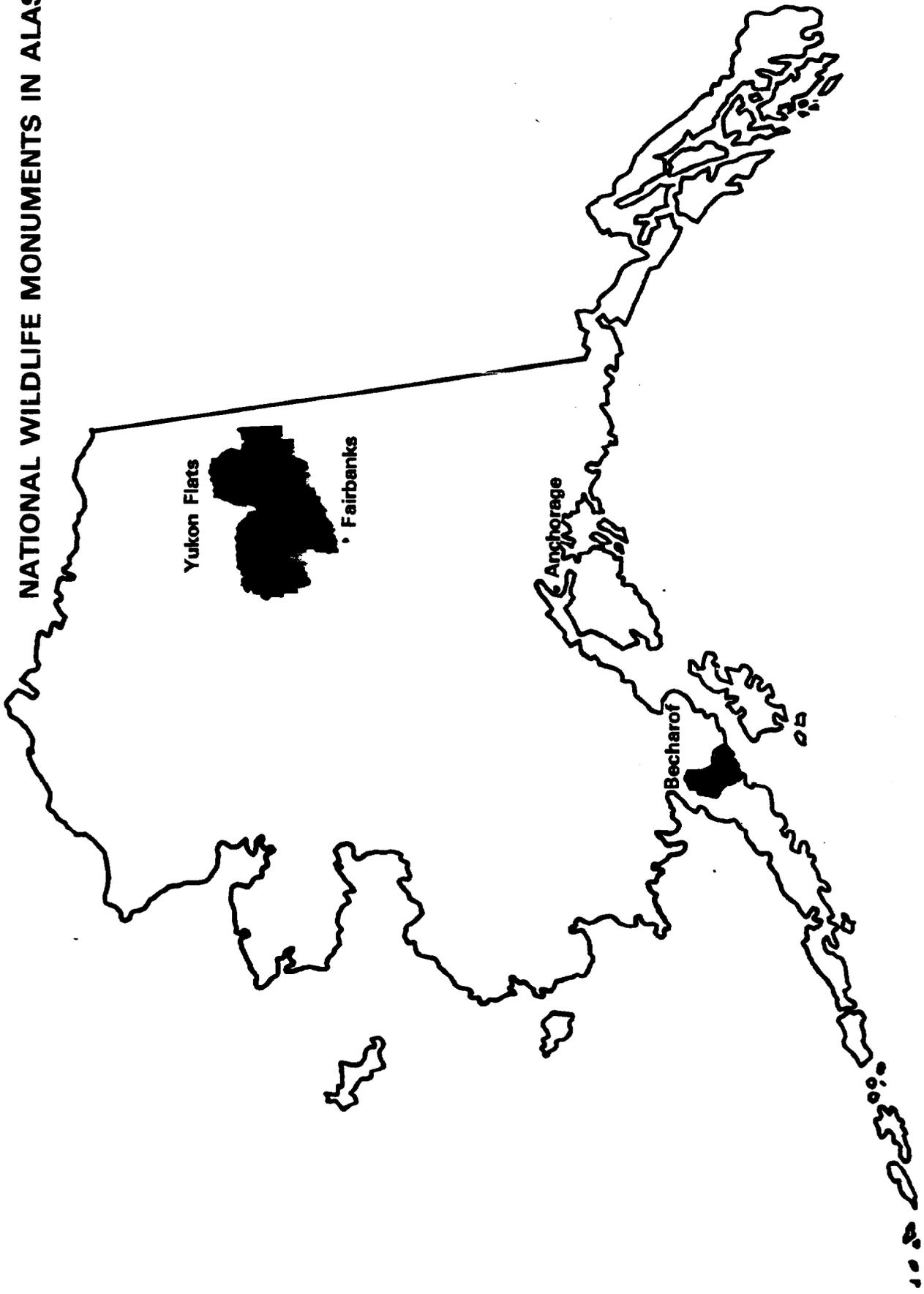
"These regulations build upon the existing Bureau of Land Management (BLM) regulations for recording and annual filing of claims and incorporate many aspects of the regulatory system used in monuments administered by the National Park System, in order to minimize confusion to persons mining within the boundaries of other Alaskan monuments. The overall consideration, however, is to ensure reasonable compatibility with protection of the fish, wildlife and other scientific and historic values of the national monuments managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service."

These proposed mining regulations supplement the proposed general regulations for the Becharof and Yukon Flats National Monuments issued for public comment on June 28, 1978. Highlights of this minerals management package include:

- Procedures for recording mineral claims, which adopt BLM regulations.
- A procedure for preliminary determination of a claim's validity to remove delays in processing a plan of operations.
- Requirements for filing and deferrals of assessment work including a relaxation of the need for assessment work solely for the purpose of holding a claim.
- The adoption of a plan of operations in which the claimant obtains Service approval of all reasonably foreseeable operations for the area at a time of filing. An impacts report and a reclamation plan for replacing the soil and vegetation also are proposed as parts of this plan, with a limited exception for small operators.

Interested persons are encouraged to read the proposed regulations in their entirety. Copies of these proposed regulations can be obtained from: Area Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1011 E. Tudor Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99507, or Chief, Alaska Native Claims Staff, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 18th & C Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240. Written comments should be addressed to either of the above addresses.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE MONUMENTS IN ALASKA



Yukon Flats

• Fairbanks

Anchorage

Becharof

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