



Frequently Asked Questions

What is a prospectus?

Prospectus documents are solicitations for business opportunities. They are the method by which prospective concessioners make offers to conduct business in National Park Service (NPS) units. This one is for the provision of guided hunter services within Katmai National Preserve.

Why are you doing an environmental assessment (EA) for something that has been going on for decades?

This issue has generated considerable public interest and we want to make the best decision possible. We now have better, more accurate data on brown bears than we have had in the past. We plan to use the best available science and to listen to public input to guide the decision on the appropriate level of commercial use within the preserve. The decision on an appropriate client limit that provides for “high concentrations of brown bears” while offering a reasonably sustainable commercial business opportunity will benefit from robust public dialogue.

When will the EA be done?

We will begin working on the EA next month (November). It will take 9-12 months to complete.

Will there be public involvement? Will there be scoping?

We published a newsletter in May, 2011 and received comments from members of the public. This provided excellent scoping on the concerns about the upcoming prospectus. We will take what we heard and prepare an EA with proposed alternatives. It will be posted for public comment in late spring of 2012.

Will the no-action alternative leave one guide area unused, or would there be two active guiding companies under the no-action alternative?

Alternatives will be evaluated as we delve into preparation of the EA. A “No Action” alternative typically continues the status quo.

Will the number of guides or number of clients be different in some alternatives?

Details of alternatives will be evaluated as we delve into preparation of the EA.

When are the bear hunts within the preserve?

Currently bear hunts in this region are authorized under State regulations in the fall of odd numbered years, and in the spring of even numbered years.

When will the prospectus be issued to the public?

A prospectus is planned to go out in late 2012. It takes about six months to review, evaluate, select, and obtain approval for new concessions contracts. New concessioner(s) would most likely begin guiding clients under the provisions of the new contract(s) by the fall 2013 hunting season.

Is there lost hunting opportunity within the preserve while you go through this process?

Hunting is regulated by the State. Non-guided hunters are not affected by this process and the potential harvest levels remain unaffected. The current contract remains in effect through 2012.

Why are you allowing hunting within a unit of the National Park System? And brown bears, Katmai's iconic species, in particular?

Guided sport hunting has taken place on the preserve since before the area's establishment as an NPS unit in 1980. The Alaska Board of Game sets the hunting regulations. Alaska hunting regulations require non-resident brown bear hunters to either use the services of licensed hunting guides, or hunt with a close relative who is an Alaska resident. Hunt guide concession operations provide the means for U.S. citizens who are not Alaska residents, as well as non-citizens, to access national preserves for sport hunting. Hunting and trapping in national preserves was authorized by ANILCA in accordance with federal and non-conflicting state regulations. Preserves are to be managed as parks except that hunting and trapping are allowed, as long as these activities are consistent with the mandate to protect park resources:

§1313. A National Preserve in Alaska shall be administered and managed as a unit of the National Park System in the same manner as a national park except as otherwise provided in this Act and except that the taking of fish and wildlife for sport purposes and subsistence uses, and trapping shall be allowed in a national preserve under applicable State and Federal law and regulation.

Is hunting an appropriate use of NPS lands?

Hunting is an authorized use of national preserves under ANILCA. We are not regulating hunting; we are regulating a commercial activity within the park. This would in no way affect the number of non-guided hunters that could hunt in the preserve. NPS policy requires a determination that a concession contract is a necessary and appropriate service, facility, or activity. Such a determination was made in the 1986 General Management Plan for Katmai National Preserve.

How much guided hunting is going on now within the preserve?

Currently there are two guide areas. One has no operator at present; that guide service was authorized to have 25 clients annually. This area will remain vacant until a new contract is in place. The other contract expires at the end of 2012. That contract is authorized to guide three clients annually.

What can the NPS do if there are concerns about the population of bears in the park?

The NPS will continue to monitor the brown bear population within the preserve. If necessary, harvest concerns that arise during the term of the contracts could be addressed through changes to federal and/or state hunting regulations, or emergency action. The NPS retains authority to change the client and wildlife harvest limits identified within the concession contracts through established administrative procedures and utilizing appropriate notification.

For information about Katmai National Preserve visit <http://www.nps.gov/katm/index.htm>.