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Katmai National Preserve to Conduct an Environmental Assessment for a Sport Hunting Guide Services Business Opportunity

The National Park Service will begin work on an environmental assessment (EA) next month to consider the reissuance of concession contract (s) and proposed changes for sport hunting guide services within Katmai National Preserve. Because sport hunting is a Congressionally authorized use of the preserve, all options in the EA will propose that guided sport hunting continue in a way that does not result in significant environmental impacts to park resources and values, including the brown bear population, other users, wilderness character, or subsistence uses.

Currently, the preserve is divided into two guide areas. The larger area is without a concessioner and could accommodate up to 25 clients annually. The second (smaller) guide area has a current concessioner in place which may take up to three hunting clients into the preserve annually under a contract that expires at the end of 2012.

Public comment on the EA is planned for spring of 2012. A prospectus is planned to go out later in 2012. Competitively selected concessioners would most likely be authorized to begin taking clients under the provisions of the new contract(s) by the fall 2013 hunting season. Guided hunters generally seek to take brown bears and moose, although other species may be hunted.

Hunting and trapping in the 418,000 acre preserve were authorized by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act in 1980, although guided hunting took place for decades before the preserve's establishment. Hunting takes place in accordance with State of Alaska general season (sport) hunting laws and regulations in addition to the overall NPS requirements to conserve park resources and values in perpetuity.

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 general season (sport) hunting.

Katmai National Preserve is managed by the same staff which manages Katmai National Park. National preserves in Alaska are administered and managed in the same manner as national parks except that the taking of fish and wildlife and trapping are allowed under applicable state and federal law and regulation. The NPS manages commercial services that are consistent with enabling legislation in a manner that is complementary to the NPS mission and visitor service objectives.

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