

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve
Alaska

May 2013

Draft Land Protection Plan



LAND PROTECTION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

In 1982, the Department of the Interior issued a policy statement for use of the federal portion of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This policy statement requires that each federal agency using the fund for protection of lands will

- identify what land or interests in land need to be in federal ownership to achieve management purposes consistent with public objectives in the unit
- use, to the maximum extent practical, cost-effective alternatives to direct federal purchase of private lands and, when acquisition is necessary, acquire or retain only the minimum interests necessary to meet management objectives
- cooperate with landowners, other federal agencies, state and local governments, and the private sector to manage land for public use or protect it for resource conservation
- formulate, or revise as necessary, plans for land acquisition and resource use or protection to ensure that sociocultural impacts are considered and that the most outstanding areas are adequately managed

In response to this policy, the National Park Service requires that a land protection plan be prepared for each unit in the national park system that contains private or other nonfederal land or interest in land within its authorized boundary.

The guiding principle of each land protection plan is to ensure the protection of each unit of the national park system consistent with the stated purposes for which the unit was created and administered.

The major elements to be addressed in this plan are: (1) the identification of nonfederal lands within park boundaries that need to be protected; (2) the minimum interest in those lands that the National Park Service must obtain; (3) the recommended means of acquiring land or interest in land; (4) priorities for protection to ensure that available funds are used to protect the most important resources; (5) impacts of the land protection plan on local residents; (6) the amount, type, and density of private use or development that can take place without harming park resources; and (7) external activities that have or may have effects on park resources and land protection requirements.

This land protection plan does not constitute an offer to purchase land or interest in land, nor does it diminish the rights of nonfederal landowners. The plan is intended to guide the park's land protection activities subject to the availability of funds and other constraints.

The land protection plan will be reviewed every five years by the park superintendent to determine if revisions are required. If the plan requires revision other than routine updating of land status information, all affected landowners and the general public will be notified and provided a 60-day public comment period. The park superintendent will maintain current land status information, which will be available for review at the park headquarters.

LAND AND PROTECTION ISSUES

The following land protection issues have been identified for Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve:

Lands within the Boundary

- Native corporation lands – compatibility or threats from oil and gas development, ATV use, commercial development, access
- State lands – resolution of status, compatibility or threats from mining or development of submerged lands, RS 2477 rights-of-way
- Small tract entries – compatibility or threats from timber cutting, mechanized access, development of cabins or commercial lodges

Adjacent Lands

- Lands south – compatibility or threats from Ambler mining district, future transportation corridors, land disposals for private development
- Lands east – compatibility or threats from the Dalton Highway, disposal of land for mining, residential and commercial development
- Lands north – compatibility or threats from oil and gas development, transmission corridors
- Lands west – compatibility or threats from oil and gas development, threats of transportation corridors

PURPOSE OF THE UNIT AND RESOURCES TO BE PROTECTED

The purpose of the unit and the resources to be protected are described in the general management plan amendment. Integral to the purposes of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, among others, is the mandate to maintain the wild and undeveloped character of the area.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITIES

The Alaska National Interest Conservation Act provides a general framework for land protection for the newly established conservation units in Alaska. Section 1302 of ANILCA provides the general authorities for land acquisition. The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to acquire (by purchase, donation, exchange, or otherwise) any lands or interests in lands within the park. Any lands or interests in lands owned by state or local governments or by Native village or regional corporations may be acquired only with consent of the owners.

Native allotments or other small tracts may be acquired without consent only after offering an exchange for other public lands of similar characteristics and like value, if such lands are available outside the park, and the owner chooses not to accept the exchange.

No improved property will be acquired without consent of the owner unless such acquisition is necessary for the protection of resources or for protection of those park values listed in

ANILCA (section 201). When an owner of improved property consents to exchange lands or to sell to the United States, the owner may retain a right of use and occupancy for noncommercial residential and recreational use for up to 25 years or for the lifetime of the owner or his spouse, whichever is longer (ANILCA section 1302[d]).

Sections 1302(i)(1) and (2) of ANILCA authorize the Secretary of the Interior to acquire, by donation or exchange, state-owned or validly selected lands that are contiguous to the park. Any lands so acquired will become part of that conservation unit without reference to the 23,000-acre restriction included in minor boundary adjustments as defined in section 103(b) of ANILCA.

Up to 7,500 acres of land can be added to Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve if such lands contain significant archeological or paleontological sites that are closely associated with the park. Such lands may be federal lands or may be private or state lands acquired with the consent of the owner (ANILCA section 1304).

Nonfederal real property, inside or outside the park, can be leased or acquired by any method (except condemnation) for the purposes of establishing administrative sites or visitor facilities (ANILCA section 1306).

Section 103(c) states that only public lands within the boundaries of any conservation system unit will be deemed to be included as a portion of the unit. The state, Native, and other private lands within the boundaries are not subject to regulations applicable solely to the federal lands. However, such lands will become part of the park and be subject to those regulations if they are acquired by the federal government.

In recognition of BIA's responsibility to owners of Native allotments, the National Park Service would notify the Bureau of Indian Affairs before taking actions relating to Native allotments, such as securing agreements with allottees, acquiring easements, acquiring allotments in fee simple, or leasing allotments.

In addition to complying with the above-cited legislative and administrative requirements, the National Park Service is required to administer the area as a unit of the national park system pursuant to the provisions of the Organic Act of the National Park Service (39 Stat. 535), as amended and supplemented, and in accordance with the provisions of title 16 USC, title 36 CFR, and other applicable regulations and laws. The National Park Service has proprietary jurisdiction over federally owned lands in the park.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND VISITOR USE OBJECTIVES

The National Park Service intends to manage the park to maintain its natural and cultural resource values, and to maintain and enhance public understanding and enjoyment of these values. For a complete description of intended management of the park, refer to chapter 3. For a complete description of management objectives for the park, refer to appendix B, which is an excerpt from the park's approved "Statement for Management."

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USES

Most of the nonfederal lands within the park and preserve boundaries are currently undeveloped or minimally developed with cabins, camps, or caches.

Category	Acreage
Anaktuvuk Pass Village (Nunamiut) Corporation	
Application pending	0
Patent and interim conveyance – fee surface only	30,025
Surface (less than fee)	(39,543)
Small private tracts	
Native allotments – pending or approved	0
Native allotments – conveyed (38 parcels)	3,925
Private parcels – ex-Native allotments (4 parcels)	220
Headquarters sites (3 tracts patent)	15
Homesites (2 tracts patent)	8
Homesteads (0 tracts)	0
Trade and manufacturing sites (2 tracts patent)	56
Mining claims	
Unpatented placer (0 claims)	0
Townsite of Anaktuvuk Pass – fee	75
North Slope Borough / City of Anaktuvuk Pass – fee surface only	57
State of Alaska	
DNR – Patent and tentative approval	780
Bed of North Fork of Koyukuk River (possible state ownership)	455
Federal less-than-fee interests	
Coldfoot administrative right-of-way (3 tracts – outside park)	(14)
ANSCA 17(b) public easements (Glacier River)	(97)
Other public recreation easements (Killik River – outside park)	(15,000)

Note: Acreages are approximate and subject to change as various conditions affecting land status are resolved (for example, navigability determinations; state and Native land conveyances, rejections, or relinquishments; rights-of-way, easements, and small tract adjudication) and as surveys are completed.

Native Corporation Lands. Native corporation lands include Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, Nunamiut Corporation and Doyon, Limited. The types of interest include surface estates, subsurface rights, and easements. They are largely undeveloped (except for the village of Anaktuvuk Pass), and lands are currently being managed in a manner essentially consistent with park, wilderness, and subsistence values.

Nunamiut Corporation and Arctic Slope Regional Corporation lands in the vicinity of Anaktuvuk Pass are currently used for the village site and subsistence. Nunamiut Corporation also owns ATV easements, which provide access for subsistence uses. Anaktuvuk Pass is one of the two most widely used access points in the park for recreation. ANCSA 17(b) easements and easements acquired by exchange in 2007 provide for public access across corporation lands (see the “Easements” section for a discussion of these easements).

Doyon lands embrace part of the North Fork of the Koyukuk drainage and contain known historical sites. There is access from the Dalton Highway on ANCSA 17(b) easements across these lands. These lands are undeveloped and are currently being managed in a manner consistent with park, wilderness, and subsistence values. If conveyed, the historic values of these sites must be protected. Specific rights of reasonable access may be involved.

Small Private Tracts. There are 11 small tracts and 38 Native allotments totaling 3,925 acres within the park and preserve. Existing developments and levels of use, particularly subsistence activities and low-key personal use are largely compatible with park management objectives.

However, while most current uses of these properties are compatible with the park’s wilderness purposes, significant and abrupt changes in land use could occur which would diminish the wild and undeveloped character of the region and significantly impair park purposes and resources.

Commercial use, especially expanded new activity or development on small private tracts, is a concern of the National Park Service. Such activity usually depends on the use of surrounding park lands and waters. Clients are concentrated in specific areas, causing impacts on fish and wildlife, vegetation and soils, subsistence activities, and opportunities for solitude. Associated development further affects adjacent park land by impairing scenic vistas, water quality, cultural resources, and the wild and undeveloped character of the area. Future commercial development which would be incompatible is most likely to occur on small tracts with good access by plane or boat. Tracts with such potential are in the area of Walker, Takahula, Narvak, Selby, and Nutuvukti lakes; the lower Alatna and John rivers; and the upper North Fork River.

Certain methods of access to small tracts would adversely affect park resources, such as ATV trails or roads that destroy permafrost and tundra vegetation and erode soils. Generally, motorized access to private lands using snowmachines, motorboats, and airplanes is compatible.

General guidelines for acquiring less-than-fee interests are outlined in the recommendations for small private tracts.

Mining Claims. Park and preserve lands are no longer available for new mineral entry and location. Currently, however, locatable mineral claims may be filed anywhere on state lands inside the unit (the submerged lands beneath the navigable rivers). The National Park Service recommends that the state close the beds of navigable waters to new mineral entry, extraction

of oil and gas, and sand and gravel resources, and will apply to the state for these closures. The National Park Service will also pursue cooperative agreements with the state for the management of lands under navigable water bodies (shorelands). Earlier chapters of this plan contain a complete discussion of resource management.

Placer mining as it has occurred in Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve alters soils, vegetation, and wildlife and fisheries habitat, degrades water quality, disrupts stream flow, displaces fish populations, disrupts solitude, impairs scenery, may conflict with subsistence activities, and may destroy cultural resources. Although federal mining claims no longer exist in the park, soil erosion and vegetation destruction caused by access vehicles can be seen in the vicinity of past mining operations. Mitigation has occurred at Mascot Creek within Doyon properties to help reduce any long term adverse effects on park resources.

State Lands and Interests. The Submerged Lands Act of 1953, the Alaska Statehood Act of 1958, and the state constitution provide for state ownership of shore lands (the beds of navigable waters). Determinations of what waters are navigable are an ongoing process in Alaska at both the administrative and judicial levels. The State of Alaska has made administrative determinations of navigability, but such determinations are not binding on the federal government. There have been no judicial determinations of navigability within Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. The Bureau of Land Management has made navigability determinations related to its land conveyance programs, and those determinations, within the lands conveyed, are binding on the federal government in accordance with the Submerged Lands Act of 1988. A list of those BLM determinations is available from the NPS regional Land Resources Program Center. Public Land Order 82, which withdrew lands on the North Slope from appropriation under the public land laws, has been determined to prevent the State of Alaska from obtaining title to shore lands (submerged lands) within the withdrawn area. In Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve that encompasses all lands north of the Continental Divide.

The State of Alaska contends that certain rights-of-way are valid under Revised Statute 2477. The validity of these rights-of-way has not been determined. Any valid rights-of-way will be included in future land protection plans as nonfederal interests and appropriate protection strategies will be identified.

Land Status Changes. Since the establishment of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, certain land status changes have occurred. A land exchange with the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation resulted in the NPS acquisition of 102,000 acres of surface estate in the vicinity of Anaktuvuk Pass and a recreation easement along the Killik River to the confluence with the Colville River. Air and ATV access easements were retained by the corporation in the vicinity of Anaktuvuk Pass. The subsurface estate beneath these lands was acquired through provisions of the Barrow Gas Field Transfer Act of 1984. A second land exchange with the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation under section 1431 of ANILCA resulted in the addition of 6,500 acres, including Kurupa Lake along the park's northwestern boundary, with the corporation retaining some subsurface rights.

In 1994, the National Park Service, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, Nunamiut Corporation, and City of Anaktuvuk Pass executed an agreement to conduct a land exchange within Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve and Wilderness to resolve a subsistence hunting and ATV issue. A component of the resolution required the deauthorization of designated wilderness and the designation of other lands as wilderness. Congress ratified the agreement in section 302 of the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996, Public Law 104-333, which also created an addition to the Noatak National Preserve and

Noatak Wilderness in order to balance the amount of wilderness being authorized and deauthorized. The purpose of this exchange was to accommodate and control ATV use for subsistence hunting near the village of Anaktuvuk Pass, eliminate the potential for incompatible developments on private lands, and open specific private lands in the area to dispersed public recreational use. The exchange provided ATV use on 126,632 acres of nonwilderness park lands, relinquishment of surface and subsurface development rights on 116,435 acres of corporation lands, and public pedestrian and dogsled access across 148,484 acres of Native lands, to reach NPS-administered lands. The exchange was completed on June 22, 2007. The total acreage acquired through exchange is 300,660 acres.

Ambler Right-of-Way. When Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve was established, a provision was made for a right-of-way to link the Alaska pipeline haul road to the Ambler Mining District across the western Kobuk River Preserve unit (ANILCA section 201[4]). Any other right-of-way requests must be pursued under title XI of ANILCA.

Small Tract Acquisitions. Land status can also change by acquisition of small tracts. In Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve the National Park Service has acquired 22 small tracts of land totaling 1,980.36 acres.

Compatibility of Land Uses

The National Park Service is required to examine existing and potential uses of nonfederal lands within the park to determine if these uses are compatible with the purposes for which the park was established (ANILCA section 1301). For example, one of the purposes Congress assigned for Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve is the protection of caribou habitat and populations, and the National Park Service must attempt to ensure that uses on federal and nonfederal lands within the park do not cause harm to caribou habitat or populations. If a private landowner were to subdivide his property and sell parcels for recreational development so that extensive caribou habitats were destroyed or migrations were interrupted, this would be contrary to the purpose of protecting caribou and would be an incompatible use of private land in the park.

The following lists of compatible and incompatible uses of nonfederal lands in the park are presented to publicly inform landowners about what uses of nonfederal lands are generally compatible with the purposes of the park and what uses will cause the National Park Service to initiate actions to protect park resources and values. These lists are intended to serve as general guidelines for both park managers and nonfederal landowners. These general guidelines do not restrict the use of non-federal lands. Because all possible uses of nonfederal lands cannot be anticipated and other compatible and incompatible uses may exist, the following list of uses cannot be all-inclusive.

Compatible Uses. Existing land uses at their present levels in the park are considered to be compatible with the purposes of the park. Compatible present and future uses of nonfederal lands within the park include the following:

- one modest cabin on most small tracts
- existing low-key commercial operations and modest structures
- selective tree cutting with minimal adverse visual or natural resource impacts
- repair, replacement, or modification of existing noncommercial structures

- new or existing airstrips with minimal alteration to vegetation, terrain, or visual qualities
- access to nonfederal land by snowmachine, dog team, motorboat, foot, aircraft

Incompatible Uses. The following uses are considered to be incompatible with the purposes of the park. If any of the following uses were begun or were proposed, the National Park Service would attempt to prevent such uses by working with the landowner and possibly by acquiring some form of interest in the affected lands.

- new cabins in view from wild rivers or national natural landmarks; more than one cabin on a tract
- large-scale, new or increased commercial developments or use
- clear cutting forested areas
- subdivision of ownership by tract
- significant increase in size of existing noncommercial structures
- construction of airstrips that significantly alter vegetation, terrain, visual qualities
- ATV access or road access (exceptions could be cases along Hickel Highway, existing easements, or cases where there would be no damage to park values)

External Conditions Affecting Land Protection

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve is a significant land area in northern Alaska, encompassing some 8.5 million acres. ANILCA section 1301(b)(8) requires a plan indicating the relationship of this unit to surrounding areas. The National Park Service is interested in maintaining good communication and ongoing cooperation with its neighbors. External conditions and activities have a direct bearing on park resources, values, and uses, including fish and wildlife, subsistence customs and resources, and recreational opportunities. The National Park Service is regularly asked to participate in and comment on the land use plans and development proposals of adjacent public land management agencies and corporate landowners. The land protection plan addresses lands adjacent to the park and preserve to develop the basis for our comments and concerns well in advance and in a public forum. The National Park Service is interested in participating in any planning effort in the region and in being good neighbors, rather than establishing any zone or buffer around the unit.

Lands South

Existing and Potential Uses. Most of the lands south of the park and preserve are owned by the State of Alaska. Current uses of the lands have little impact on park resources. However,

future uses could result in significant changes. Potential uses include mining and associated transportation and community development, all of which could adversely affect resources inside the park and preserve. Of concern are park resources in the Kobuk River region, particularly those that are adjacent to the Ambler Mining District.

Another concern is that the southern boundary often does not follow natural features. This poses identification problems for visitors and local residents and causes resource management difficulties. Also, visitors enjoying the John, Alatna, and North Fork of the Koyukuk wild rivers begin their trips in the park but float significant distances outside the boundary to reach practical pull-out points. Assuring continuity of their wilderness experience along these rivers is an objective.

Recommendation. As authorized by sections 103 and 1302 of ANILCA, minor adjustments of the southern boundary are appropriate. Land exchanges will be pursued to place the boundary on hydrographic divides in order to protect entire park watersheds, assist in boundary location in the field, and to achieve other benefits for both parties.

For lands in the vicinity of the Kobuk, Alatna, John, and North Fork of the Koyukuk rivers, the National Park Service is willing to participate in any cooperative planning. State classification of adjoining lands to protect fish and wildlife and recreational values will be encouraged. The National Park Service will work with the state to resolve practical pull-outs for floaters. One option would be for the state to designate and manage state-owned portions of the Kobuk, Alatna, John, and Middle Fork or the Koyukuk as part of the national wild and scenic rivers system.

The National Park Service is interested in participating in the interagency task force planning for the Ambler Mining District. If mining is not significantly developed, the National Park Service will encourage the state to classify the Schwatka Mountains in the upper Ambler River area for public recreation, wildlife, and subsistence use.

Lands East

Existing and Potential Uses. The trans-Alaska utility corridor just east of the park is currently managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Along with the oil pipeline, the corridor contains the Dalton Highway, which is managed and maintained by the State of Alaska. State maintenance camps at Prospect, Coldfoot, Chandalar, and Atigun, BLM concession operations at Coldfoot, and Yukon River, and a growing number of permanent residents in Coldfoot and Wiseman along the road all affect park use and access. A gas pipeline is proposed within this corridor. The state legislature has closed the corridor to hunting with firearms and to off-road vehicle use. Current enforcement is difficult.

The Dalton Highway is open to the public, providing an opportunity for visitor access that did not exist at the time the park was established. The unpaved road is maintained and provides a spectacular recreational experience. It is a unique opportunity to be able to drive through the outstanding scenery of the Brooks Range. The corridor is adjacent to several other conservation system units: Kanuti, Yukon Flats, and Arctic National Wildlife Refuges. Adjacent state and Native lands possess scenery and lakes with additional recreational potential. Visitors planning to access the park from the Dalton Highway can stop at the visitor center in Coldfoot and receive an orientation to the park.

While recreational use of the road provides access for visitors to Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, there are some concerns. Concentrated visitor use in the eastern portion of the park could potentially damage park resources. Another concern is that not all visitors who reach the park by way of the highway are prepared for wilderness opportunities and dangers. There is concern that access to the park from the highway not be impeded by development of private lands. Park staff stationed in the Coldfoot visitor center can help protect the resources along the eastern boundary by providing orientation and education talks with visitors.

Corridor management planning by the Bureau of Land Management anticipates that development will occur in nodes, around government facilities, and concessions. A possible future gas pipeline has the highest priority over other potential uses. These lands were withdrawn under PLO 5150 and PLO 5151 for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Corridor. The Alaska Department of Natural Resources filed a selection on these lands under section 906(e) of ANILCA. Because the lands remain withdrawn, the Bureau of Land Management has not made them available for conveyance to the state. Future changes in land use within the corridor will fundamentally affect park lands, access, and use. Mining along streams that are used for access, increased local population and related pressures on subsistence and recreation resources, and strip development not unlike gateways to national parks in the lower 48 states are all possible scenarios, which can lead to adverse impacts.

Recommendation. The National Park Service recommends comprehensive planning of the utility corridor as national interest land reserved for oil and gas transmission and as a link to several national conservation system units. This planning should involve all state, local, federal, and private organizations with adjacent lands or public responsibilities in the corridor. The corridor possesses outstanding opportunities for scenic and recreational use in a manner compatible with the utility purposes and purposes of the conservation system units. The National Park Service will encourage orderly, planned development that recognizes the recreational opportunities of the corridor and surrounding lands and is willing to participate in any planning or task force and provide technical assistance.

Lands North

Existing and Potential Uses. The northern boundary of the park is bordered by the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation and state land selections. Oil and gas exploration and development is the primary reason for these selections, although future prospects are not completely known. Section 1431(j) of ANILCA provides for a right-of-way from Arctic Slope Regional Corporation landholdings in the Kurupa Lake area and the Killik River watershed easterly to the Trans-Alaska Pipeline Corridor. The right-of-way is for oil and gas pipelines, related transportation facilities and such other facilities as are necessary for the construction, operation and maintenance of such pipelines. ANILCA lists several townships that are subject to this potential right-of-way including the Castle Mountain area and the north boundary of the park in the vicinity of Verdant Creek and Fire Creek. Other public lands that the Secretary and Arctic Slope Regional Corporation may mutually agree upon may also be included. The final alignment and location of all facilities across public lands shall be in the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior.

The State of Alaska proposes oil and gas leasing of land just north of the park and preserve. The state has written a proposal to build a road to Umiat from the Dalton Highway. The two-phase project would include construction of an 85 mile all season road from the Dalton to the Gubik Gas Fields. The second phase would include extending the road across the Colville River to Umiat. The record of decision for the road to Umiat is scheduled to be signed the

summer of 2013. If oil or gas resources are developed, an east-west pipeline corridor connecting to the trans-Alaska pipeline is probable. Migrating wildlife, particularly caribou, could be affected by increased human activity in an east-west corridor, which would cut directly across drainages and migration routes.

Recommendation. The National Park Service will support the North Slope Borough to continue the land use zone districts that place lands adjacent to the unit in a conservation district. The National Park Service will also encourage the state and the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation to manage these lands to protect wildlife.

Further land exchanges with the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation pursuant to ANILCA section 1431 will be sought in the Cascade Lake and Shainin Lake areas. The National Park Service is interested in future legislation and exchanges to make the Castle Mountain “island” contiguous with the rest of the park.

Lands West

Much of the western boundary borders Noatak National Preserve, which together with Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve protects one of the largest undeveloped watersheds in the world. To the northwest is the Alaska National Petroleum Reserve and an area of critical environmental concern managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Archeological surveys on nearby lands have revealed numerous sites of five different types representing most cultural traditions in northwest Alaska (Irving 1964; NPS, USDI 1981). Acquisition would significantly improve the protection of cultural and ecological values in this area. Any lands added to Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve in this area would be designated as park, while any lands added to Noatak National Preserve would be designated as preserve.

Minor Boundary Adjustments

As authorized by sections 103 and 1302 of ANILCA, the National Park Service will pursue minor boundary adjustments with the State of Alaska to place the boundaries along hydrographic divides or other recognizable natural features for mutual benefits.

Administrative Sites

All administrative facilities exist outside the boundary of the park in Fairbanks, Bettles, Anaktuvuk Pass, Coldfoot, and Dahl Creek. Facilities in Fairbanks include a leased office building and two sheds. The NPS leases space at the hangar at the airport in Fairbanks. Space is also leased at the Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center where the Alaska Public Lands Information Center is managed as part of the National Park Service. In Bettles, facilities include a visitor center shared with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, six housing units for permanent and seasonal employees, three well and four septic systems, a pit privy, toolshed, a mess hall used for storage and overflow staff temporary lodging, a recreation hall, a bunkhouse jointly operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a fire cache and backcountry cache and eight heating fuel storage and distribution systems. Facilities in Anaktuvuk Pass include a residence that doubles as office space, a bunkhouse, a storage shed, two heating fuel storage and distribution systems and a wind turbine generator. In Dahl Creek, the park leases two bunkhouses, one of which is being used as a storage shed and heating fuel storage and distribution system. The park operationally supports the Arctic Interagency Visitor Center

managed by the Bureau of Land Management in Coldfoot. There is also an old ranger station used as offices, one heating fuel storage and distribution system and storage with a parking lot that is used in the summer for temporary seasonal housing. The National Park Service also leases a 4.6-acre parcel that includes a building used formally as the Coldfoot Visitor Center. Currently, this building is shared with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Additionally, the National Park Service possesses two lots of state land in perpetuity, one of 2.1 acres, vacant, and one of 7.7 acres containing the VIP cabin for seasonal housing of volunteers. There are two single-family homes, a septic system, a well water distribution system, a storage weatherport, three heating fuel storage and distribution systems, and a power generation system that consists of solar cells, solar electricity storage (a battery bank) and generators at Marion Creek that will be studied for relocation to Coldfoot. Acquiring more lands outside the boundary for administrative purposes is not deemed necessary in the near future.

Compatible Land Uses

Most of the existing uses of Native corporation lands are compatible with park purposes. The National Park Service is concerned about water quality below Anaktuvuk Pass and about damage to vegetation and soils. Park resources could be additionally affected by future changes such as oil and gas development, development of lodges and hotels, and provisions for access to these activities on Nunamiut Corporation, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, and Doyon lands. Incompatible uses could affect wildlife, vegetation and soils, water quality, cultural resources, opportunities for solitude, and the wild and undeveloped character.

PROTECTION ALTERNATIVES

The following alternatives offer varying degrees of protection to the natural and cultural resources on nonfederal and federal lands in the park and to the public uses of the park. Each alternative is analyzed with respect to its applications, sociocultural impacts, and its potential effectiveness in land protection.

Existing Laws and Regulations

Activities and developments on nonfederal land in the park must meet applicable state and federal environmental protection laws. Regulations based on these laws provide authority to protect certain elements of the natural and cultural resources of the park.

Application. While NPS regulations do not generally apply to private lands in the park (section 103, ANILCA), there are federal and state laws that do apply. These include but are not limited to the Alaska Anadromous Fish Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water and Clean Air acts, and the Protection of Wetlands, to name a few.

Sociocultural Impacts. Environmental laws and regulations are intended to result in protection of important public resources—such as clean air and water and fish and wildlife. These laws and regulations generally do not prevent uses of private lands; rather, they ensure that uses of private lands do not result in unacceptable harm to important public resources. Landowners may be required to modify use of private property in ways that minimize or prevent harm to these resources.

Effectiveness. Enforcement of federal and state laws and regulations can prevent or minimize harm to certain of the natural and cultural resources in the park, but do not prohibit all activities that might adversely affect the park. For example, large-scale mineral development or recreational subdivision of nonfederal lands could adversely affect the park and would be generally allowable under federal and state laws.

Agreements and Alaska Land Bank

Agreements are legal instruments defining arrangements between two or more parties. Agreements can provide for the exchange or transfer of services, funds, or benefits.

Section 907 of ANILCA established an Alaska Land Bank Program to provide legal and economic benefits to landowners and to provide for the maintenance of land in its natural condition, particularly where these nonfederal lands relate to conservation system units. Native corporation lands (but not Native allotments or small patented tracts) that are entered into this program will have immunity from adverse possession, real property taxes, and assessments. They will also be immune from judgment in any action of law or equity to recover sums owed or penalties incurred by any Native corporation or group or any officer, director, or stockholder of the corporation or group.

Elements that may be addressed in an agreement include the following:

- maintenance of land in its natural condition
- access for resource management activities and public use
- fire management
- law enforcement
- trespass control
- enhancement of special values
- enforcement of environmental protection laws
- exclusion of specific uses/activities

Assistance may be provided to private landowners without reimbursement if the Secretary of the Interior determines that it would further the agreement and be in the public interest.

Application. Agreements and the Alaska Land Bank could be particularly important in cooperating with Native corporations that own large tracts of land in and adjacent to the park and also owners of Native allotments. Agreements and the land bank can also be used as an interim protective measure when long-term goals cannot be immediately achieved.

Sociocultural Impacts. Specific impacts would be defined by the terms of the agreement. Since all parties would have to agree to its terms, it is unlikely there would be significant adverse impacts on any party of any agreement.

Effectiveness. As long as the economic incentives for private land development remain limited and/or landowner uses of the land are basically compatible with management of adjoining park lands, agreements can be a cost-effective, mutually beneficial means of ensuring compatible uses on private land in the park. Advantages of agreements include their flexibility and relative low cost. Disadvantages include the ability of either party to terminate on short notice and consequent lack of permanent protection.

Zoning by Local Governments

Zoning is based on the power of local governments to protect public health, safety and welfare by regulating land use. The North Slope Borough has a comprehensive plan (Wickersham and Flynn, Planning Consultants), which includes “Land Use Zone Districts” adopted in 2005. Public and private lands within the borough, including a significant area of the park, are zoned primarily in the “conservation district,” which is intended to preserve the natural ecosystem for all of the various species upon which residents depend for subsistence. The conservation district can accommodate resource exploration and development on a limited scale, case-by-case basis, but major resource development projects would require rezoning. Anaktuvuk Pass is within a “village district” that encourages development that reinforces traditional values and lifestyles, is in accord with village planning, and is in accord with the desires of village residents.

North Slope Borough zoning does indicate some mutual objectives near Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, and zoning may be an effective short-term tool for protecting park values within the boundary of the borough. Effectiveness of zoning on allotments inside the borough depends largely on the borough’s ability to enforce zoning regulations. North Slope Borough is the only entity near the unit using zoning at this time.

Application. Zoning would apply to lands within North Slope Borough.

Effectiveness. The effectiveness zoning as a tool to protect park values depends primarily on mutual objectives between all landowners and the zoning entity. Zoning is most effective when it has the widespread support of the citizens it affects and when it is enforced by the zoning entity. However, local zoning has been criticized as a long-term protection tool because of the potential for changes in local governing bodies and problems in enforcement of regulations.

Sociocultural Impacts. With the adoption (generally through broad-based public participation) and enforcement of zoning regulations, individual landowners may be prevented from using their land in some manner, but this restriction on individual freedom is imposed for the benefit of the community as a whole. The impact can be regarded as beneficial to and supported by the public at large.

Classification of State Lands

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Land and Water Management, is responsible for managing state lands that are not specially designated. This division classifies the state lands it manages. Types of classifications include “Natural Resource Management,” “Public Recreation,” and “Wildlife Habitat.” Classifications establish primary uses for state lands; however, multiple uses of classified lands can occur as long as these other uses are compatible with the designated primary use.

Application. Land classification would apply to state lands, and zoning would apply to lands within North Slope Borough. Future navigability determinations may affirm that portions of the beds of other rivers in the park are state owned. The National Park Service, or any individual or organization, can request that the Division of Land and Water Management

classify or reclassify state lands. Classification of state lands may be useful in cases where the interests of the National Park Service and the state of Alaska are similar.

Sociocultural Impacts. Classification of state lands is established through a public process. Any impacts on the people of the region and state would likely be identified and eliminated or minimized during the process. The uses of the lands subject to classification and the type of classification determine what impacts will result.

Effectiveness. Classification can provide protection for state lands within and adjacent to the park. Advantages of classification include no acquisition cost and no need to exchange lands. Disadvantages of classification include lack of permanent protection for park purposes.

Less-Than-Fee Acquisition

Land ownership may be envisioned as a package of rights. Acquiring an easement conveys some land ownership rights from one owner to another, while all other rights of ownership remain unchanged. Easements can include an array of rights, ranging from limiting specific uses of the land to providing for public access.

Application. Easements are likely to be useful where

- some, but not all, private uses are compatible with park purposes
- current owners desire to continue some forms of use and occupancy of the land, but are willing to forego other uses of the land
- provision of access for the public or the National Park Service is needed only over a portion of the land
- protection of scenic values would be compatible with other forms of use and occupancy

Specific terms of easements can be constructed to fit the topography, vegetation, visibility, and character of each tract.

Easement provisions to protect park resources could address the following points:

- public access across a portion of private land to public land
- density, height, design, or color of developments visible to the public
- large-scale clearing of vegetation
- access for management of natural or cultural resources

Sociocultural Impacts. The impacts of easements vary depending on the rights acquired. Overall, the impacts may be beneficial because the acquired easements would contribute to the fulfillment of the park objectives, while allowing the landowners' use and enjoyment of the land subject only to negotiated limitations. In the case of Gates of the Arctic National Park and

Preserve the current uses (seasonal residences and associated subsistence uses) would continue.

Effectiveness. Because easements are permanent, enforceable interests in property, they provide greater assurances of protection than do cooperative agreements or zoning ordinances. Easements are rights that stay with the property and are binding on future owners.

Advantages of easements compared to fee simple acquisition include:

- continued private ownership and exclusive use subject to the terms of the easement
- lower acquisition costs than acquisition of fee simple, and consequent potential for the National Park Service to protect more land by being able to treat more tracts with available funds

Disadvantages of easements as compared to fee simple acquisition include:

- costs in monitoring and enforcing terms of easement provisions over time
- relative high costs of acquisition of scenic easements for all, or any additional development

Fee Simple Acquisition

When all interests in land are required, fee simple title is acquired. As a condition of fee simple acquisition, owners of improved property may choose to retain, and owners of unimproved property may be offered the option to retain, use and occupy the property for a definite term. The National Park Service will acquire property, or portions of property, only when necessary to further park purposes. An example of a partial acquisition would be an important archeological site that occurs only on a portion of a property. If fee simple acquisition were the only method of protecting the site, the National Park Service would attempt to acquire only as much of the property as is necessary to protect this archeological site.

Application. Fee simple acquisition may be recommended when other methods of protection would be inadequate or inefficient to meet park needs. Fee simple acquisition is generally appropriate where

- land must be maintained in a pristine natural condition which precludes private use
- land is needed for development of park facilities or public use
- land is owned by individuals who do not wish to sell less-than-fee interest
- land cannot be protected in accord with park purposes by other methods, or would not be cost-effective to use these other methods.

Sociocultural Impacts. Most private lands in the park are used for subsistence purposes by the landowners. Even with acquisition of private lands by the United States, local rural

residents could continue subsistence activities in the park, as authorized by ANILCA. Exclusive use and development opportunities on acquired parcels would be precluded.

Effectiveness. Fee simple acquisition is the most effective and secure land protection alternative.

Advantages of fee simple acquisition include:

- permanent management of the land by the National Park Service
- assurance of public access and access for management
- opportunity to develop park facilities, if appropriate
- familiarity of fee simple acquisition to landowners

Disadvantages of fee acquisition include:

- initial acquisition costs
- requirement for maintenance and management of existing facilities (cabins) on some tracts
- possible removal of lands from tax rolls

Methods of Acquisition

Primary methods of acquisition of fee simple and less-than-fee interests in lands are donation, purchase, and exchange. Land selections may be relinquished, allowing title to remain with the federal government. The National Park Service will give preference to acquiring interests in land through exchange.

Donation. Landowners may be motivated to donate their property or specific interests in their property to achieve conservation objectives or to attain tax benefits. Donations of fee simple title are deductible from taxable income. Easement donations may also provide deductions from taxable income. Landowners are encouraged to consult qualified tax advisors to explore the detailed advantages of donations.

Exchange. Land or interests in land may be acquired by exchange. The land to be exchanged for a nonfederal tract within a park unit in Alaska must be in Alaska and must generally be of approximately equal value. Exchange may be made for other than equal value if the Secretary of the Interior determined that to do so would be in the public interest (ANILCA section 1302).

The National Park Service will also consider exchanges of lands within the park boundary to consolidate NPS jurisdiction and thus create more manageable units. Land exchanges require extensive consultation with all affected parties. Exchanges will be in compliance with all

applicable laws and regulations, which in some cases may direct public involvement, environmental impact statements, notification of Congress, or other measures.

Other federal lands in Alaska that become surplus to agency needs normally go through disposition procedures, including public sale. The National Park Service will work with the Bureau of Land Management and the General Services Administration to determine the availability of federal lands for exchange purposes.

Purchase. Acquisition by purchase requires funds to be appropriated by Congress or donated from private sources. Appropriations for acquisition are expected to be very limited during the next several years. Donations of funds or purchases by individuals or organizations interested in promoting conservation purposes will be encouraged.

Landowners who wish to sell property within the park are encouraged to contact the park superintendent. The National Park Service is interested in the opportunity to review all proposed land offerings. Offerings will be reviewed for possible purchase by the National Park Service based on their priority in the land protection plan recommendations and on their potential contribution to the enhancement of scenic values, resource protection, continuation of community subsistence opportunities, enhancement of recreational opportunities, and maintenance of the undeveloped character of the area. Extenuating circumstances, including hardship as defined in ANILCA section 1302(g), will also be considered. The availability of appropriated funds will determine the NPS ability to act on proposals from willing sellers.

When an owner of improved property offers to sell to the United States, the owner may retain a right of use and occupancy for noncommercial residential or recreational use by agreement with the National Park Service for a period of up to 25 years or for life.

Relinquishment. Land under application may be relinquished, resulting in retention in federal ownership. The relinquishing entity can use the acreage being relinquished to acquire other lands outside the park.

Condemnation. Where it is determined that land or interests in land must be acquired, the National Park Service will negotiate with the owner to reach a compatible settlement for purchase. If the land use activities produce an imminent threat or actual damage to the integrity of park lands, resources or values, the National Park Service will diligently negotiate for acquisition of sufficient interest to prevent such damage. If a negotiated settlement cannot be reached, the Secretary of the Interior may exercise the power of eminent domain to preclude or cease activity damaging to park resources. Condemnation proceedings, where allowed by law, will not be initiated until negotiations to achieve satisfactory resolution of the problem have been exhausted. Under certain circumstances, condemnation action may be used during the process of acquisition involving willing sellers to overcome defects in title.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The National Park Service will pursue a series of land protection actions for the nonfederal lands in the park. These actions will be based on the purposes for which the park was established and will be in compliance with the provisions of ANILCA and other applicable laws.

The recommended means of land protection for nonfederal land in Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve are in priority order below. Ownerships, locations, acreages

involved, minimum interests needed for protection, and justifications are also given. Priorities may be readjusted if incompatible uses develop, as additional information is obtained, or to address emergencies or hardships. The land protection plan will be reviewed every two years and revised as necessary to reflect new information and changing uses and priorities. Review and revision procedures, including public involvement, are discussed in the introduction to this plan.

This plan identifies a minimum interest needed for protection of individual tracts, but recognizes that the actual means of protection may change as a result of negotiation. A minimum interest has been defined for the protection of Native allotments. However, the National Park Service recognizes that the traditional use of Native allotments is compatible with the purposes of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. If the owners of Native allotments continue to use their property as it has been traditionally used, the National Park Service does not intend to initiate efforts acquire Native allotments (Note: The National Park Service will respond to requests from owners for hardship purposes.) The need for federal acquisition to protect resource values will be triggered if a change is perceived from this traditional use to an incompatible land use.

Section 1302 of ANILCA authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to acquire by purchase, donation, exchange, or otherwise, any lands within the boundaries of conservation system units. Where acquisition is proposed, exchange is the preferred method whenever possible. Donations or relinquishments, where applicable, are encouraged. Purchase with appropriated or donated funds is another possible method. The appropriation of funds for land acquisition is expected to be very limited for the next few years. Therefore, the purchase of nonfederal interests in the park is expected to be minimal.

No estimates of the cost of implementing the recommendations of this plan have been prepared at this time. A useful estimate requires appraisals. Appraisals are costly and have a short shelf life because of variable and changing market conditions. Appraisals for individual tracts will be prepared following agreement in concept with the landowner to acquire a specific interest in real property.

Any lands added to Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve through boundary adjustments, or acquisitions within the boundary, will be designated as park. Any lands acquired within existing wilderness boundaries will become wilderness, in accordance with section 103(c) of ANILCA. When additions are proposed to be acquired under authority of section 103(b) of ANILCA, public and congressional notification and review will be provided as appropriate. Lands added to the park will be managed in the same manner as other unit lands of the same designation.

Criteria

Lands containing significant resources for which the park was established and lands needed for primary public uses will receive priority in land protection actions by the National Park Service. These two factors were used to develop the following criteria for land protection actions by the National Park Service.

Native Corporation Lands

Doyon Lands. The National Park Service will seek fee acquisition of fee interest in the three Glacier River townships, and exchange is the preferred method of acquisition. Acquisition of

these lands is considered necessary to protect the watershed, wild character, recreational use and access, and known historical sites. For the township at the juncture of the North Fork and the Middle Fork of the Koyukuk, the National Park Service will also seek acquisition of fee interest, and the preferred method is by exchange. It is not as high a priority as the Glacier River lands. These lands embrace the designated wild river. Doyon has expressed interest in exchanging the Glacier River townships, but is not interested in exchanging the North Fork/Middlefork township at this time. If Doyon should change its position, the National Park Service would be interested in pursuing this exchange.

Arctic Slope / Anaktuvuk Pass Lands. The National Park Service will encourage comprehensive community planning for Anaktuvuk Pass and will seek agreements for compatible land management in exchange for technical assistance. The National Park Service is also interested in identifying common goals with the North Slope Borough zoning commission. The National Park Service will not actively seek to acquire lands in this area, but will consider exchanges offered by landowners if mutual benefits can be demonstrated and there is full involvement and consent of residents.

NANA 14(h)(1) Sites. In 1988, NANA initiated cooperative agreements with the National Park Service on all 14(h)(1) sites within Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. Agreements included protection of the cultural values for which these sites were selected and protection of adjacent park resources. Subsequent to the agreements, NANA relinquished its selections made pursuant to section 14(h)(1) of ANCSA. The National Park Service is mandated to protect cultural values and manage these sites with sensitivity to Native concerns.

Small Private Tracts

The minimum interest necessary to protect the wild and undeveloped character and the other purposes of this national park and preserve is the acquisition of development rights or a “conservation” easement on most small private tracts.

The majority of existing uses of small tracts are compatible with the purposes of the park and preserve. Many landowners are subsistence users who intend to use their lands primarily as a base for subsistence activities within the park. The National Park Service agrees that the continuation of the traditional human presence and private land ownership for the purposes of subsistence, low-key personal use, or other wilderness-related uses is compatible. At the same time, different, higher intensity future uses could damage park and subsistence resources. Therefore, the protection recommendation is to continue private land ownership in the park while ensuring the protection of park values and purposes through acquisition of less-than-fee interests. The interest acquired would, for instance, allow subsistence activities and related small facilities to occur, while preventing activities and developments that would be harmful to park values.

To implement this protection policy, the National Park Service will negotiate with individual owners of patented or approved small tracts or Native allotments to further define compatible and incompatible uses and developments for each tract. An appraisal of the less-than-fee interest will be based on the detailed definition of compatible and incompatible uses for each tract. In the meantime, landowners with plans for developments or uses, which, based on the above guidelines appear to be incompatible, are urged to discuss their plans with the park staff. Often, small modifications in design or location may make a desired facility compatible or achieve needed access without significantly impairing park values and purposes.

In the course of the discussions, the National Park Service will consider the cost-effectiveness of the less-than-fee interest. If the interests being acquired by the National Park Service include commercial development interests and a scenic buffer using an existing stand of trees, the cost of a conservation easement may exceed 75% of the value to the fee interest. There may be additional NPS costs over time in administering the easement. In such cases the National Park Service may negotiate for fee acquisition if it is in the public interest.

Similarly, if negotiations for less-than-fee ownership are unsuccessful, and the owner is willing to sell in fee, the National Park Service may consider fee acquisition if it is in the public interest.

COMPLIANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Actions of this existing land protection plan that propose no significant change to existing land or public use are categorically excluded from NEPA considerations, in accordance with USDI implementing procedures (516 DM 6, appendix 7.4(11) and 516 DM, appendix 2). The proposed actions for small tracts, Native allotments, mining claims, administrative sites, and agreements and cooperative planning for submerged or adjacent lands are included in this category.

NEPA requirements for proposals in this plan related to Native corporation lands and state lands will be fulfilled at a later date when, and if, conceptual agreements are reached with these landowners. The effects of land exchanges can be evaluated only when both the lands to be acquired and the lands to be removed from federal ownership are identified; this land protection plan currently identifies only the lands (or interests in lands) to be acquired. Environmental assessments and/or environmental impact statements will be prepared prior to the implementation of any land exchange, with the exception of land exchanges involving the conveyance of lands to Native corporations that fulfill entitlements under the terms of ANCSA, as provided by ANILCA section 910.

Consistent with current policies on implementation of section 810 of ANILCA, evaluations will be prepared on any proposals in this land protection plan that require the preparation of environmental assessments and/or environmental impact statements, or any proposals that would result in the removal of lands (or interests in lands) from federal ownership.

Section 103(b) of ANILCA requires that Congress be notified of the intent to make boundary adjustments. The public will also receive reasonable notice of the intent to implement boundary adjustments and will be provided the opportunity to review and comment on such adjustments.

The compliance requirements of NEPA and ANILCA will be fulfilled in the case of administrative boundary adjustments.

Specific Proposals

The nonfederal lands within the park have been placed in one of five priority groupings. Priority 1 consists of the parcels requiring priority action by the National Park Service in obtaining some interest in these lands so that resources are protected, public use is maintained or enhanced, or effective administration is ensured. Priority 2 requires less immediate attention by the National Park Service, as the present uses of parcels in this group do not

appear to have the possibility of conflict with the purposes of the park, although they do have the potential for significant conflicts in the future. Priorities three through five consist of parcels that do not appear to have the potential for significant conflicts with the purposes of the park. The implementation of specific proposals in this plan and the order in which the proposals are implemented will depend on funding, staffing, opportunity purchases by willing sellers, and other factors.

The recommended land protection actions for the nonfederal land within the park are presented below. The reference numbers of individual parcels correspond to the numbers assigned to these tracts. The National Park Service is not required to maintain transfer of ownership records for privately owned lands.

Priority 1

The Walker Lake area has high scenic, natural, and recreational values. This area is within designated wilderness and is a national natural landmark. Its landmark status is merited by being an outstanding example of glacial activity and resulting wide range of ecological associations and by its impressive scenery. Commercial development and use has occurred in the past, and because of accessibility and attractiveness increased commercial development and use is possible. Private lands along Takahula Lake, Glacier River and the North Middle Fork are prime for possible commercial development. Increased commercial use would result in further impacts on fish, scenery, the wild and undeveloped character, and water quality of the lake and surrounding park lands. (See table 18 for Priority 1 tracts.)

TABLE 18. PRIORITY 1 TRACTS

NPS Tract	Type ¹	Acres	General Location	Improvements or Disturbance	US Survey Number	Status ²	Minimum Interest
16-105	T	3	Walker Lake	House	3715-2	PA	Easement
16-104	T		Walker Lake		3715-1	PA	Easement
16-101	T		Walker Lake	Cabin	5181	PA	Easement
305A	NC	10,428	Glacier River	Historic cabin			Fee
305B	NC	62,504	Glacier River				Fee
15-111	T	10	Takahula Lake	Cabin	2959	PA	Easement
304	NC	18,962	North Middle Fork	Cabin		PA	Fee

Type¹

- NA Native allotment
- T Other small tract
- M Mining claim
- C Cemetery and historical site
- NC Native corporation
- AJ Adjacent lands

Status²

- PA Patented
- U Unpatented
- A Approved
- PE Pending

Priority 2

The North Fork of the Koyukuk is a designated wild river that possesses outstanding natural, cultural, scenic, and recreational values. Approximately 15% to

20% of wilderness recreational activities take place in this portion of the park. Boreal Mountain and Frigid Crags flank the North Fork forming the “Gates of the Arctic”—namesake of the park. Private lands are located along the river and have access and potential for commercial development, which would be incompatible with the wild and undeveloped character of the area.

The Alatna River is a designated wild river in wilderness, adjacent to Arrigetch Peaks, a national natural landmark and popular visitor destination. Its remarkable natural, scenic, and recreational values are virtually untouched by man. Private lands are at prime locations for commercial development along the river and there is already one commercially operated lodge at the headwaters. Further development and commercial use would concentrate impacts on wilderness character, fish, and wildlife on adjacent park lands.

Lands along the lower John River and the Hunt Fork, and Itkillik Lake contain varied resources. The John River is a designated wild river, a major caribou migration route, and from the Hunt Fork down is moderately popular for recreational floating. Private lands along the rivers could be developed for commercial activities, which would not be compatible with wildlife protection or the wild and undeveloped character of the area. (See table 19 for Priority 2 tracts.)

TABLE 19. PRIORITY 2 TRACTS

NPS Tract	Type ¹	Acres	General Location	Improvements or Disturbance	US Survey Number	Status ²	Minimum Interest
12-102	NA	40	North Fork	Cabin	8095	PA	Easement
14-115	NA	40	North Fork	Cabin	8253	PA	Easement
15-109	T	40	Alatna River		5366	PA	Easement
15-106	T	5	Alatna River, upper	Commercial cabin	5227	PA	Easement
14-108	NA	160	John River, upper		8224-2	PA	Easement
08-124	NA	160	John River, upper		11913-2	PA	Easement
14-111	NA	160	John River, upper		8206-1	PA	Easement
14-107	NA	80	John River, upper		8224-3	PA	Easement
14-106	NA	80	John River, upper		8224-4	PA	Easement
14-110	NA	160	John-Hunt Fork	Cabin	8206-2	PA	Easement
14-103	NA	160	Hunt Fork		12478	PA	Easement

Type ¹		Status ²	
NA	Native allotment	PA	Patented
T	Other small tract	U	Unpatented
M	Mining claim	A	Approved
C	Cemetery and historical site	PE	Pending
NC	Native corporation		
AJ	Adjacent lands		

Priority 3

The Kobuk River and Narvak, Selby, and Nutuvukti lakes are important for subsistence fishing and hunting, sport hunting and recreational floating. The Kobuk River is a designated wild river, and the area contains numerous archeological sites. Itkillik River and Itkillik Lake are along a common caribou migration route and are moderately popular for backpacking trips which are accessible from the Dalton Highway. Private lands along the river or lakes could be sold or developed for commercial use, which would be disruptive to these activities and to the wild and undeveloped character of the area. Adjacent land includes state lands that contain subsistence resources, important watersheds, and recreational opportunities.

Development of subsurface rights for minerals or oil and gas near Itkillik Lake could be disruptive to wildlife and would not maintain the wild and undeveloped character. (See table 20 for Priority 3 tracts.)

TABLE 20. PRIORITY 3 TRACTS

NPS Tract	Type ¹	Acres	General Location	Improvements or Disturbance	US Survey Number	Status ²	Minimum Interest
17-103	NA	20	Narvak Lake	Cabin	12444	PA	Easement
17-101	NA	20	Narvak Lake		6791	PA	Easement
17-106	NA	20	Nutuvukti Lake		12441-1	PA	Easement
17-107	NA	40	Kobuk River		12441-2	PA	Easement
17-108, 109	NA	80	Kobuk River		12442-1,2	PA	Easement
17-102	NA	80	Kobuk River		11588	PA	Easement
17-105	NA	40	Selby Lake	Cabin	12443	PA	Easement
11-105, 12-101	NA	40	Itkillik River	Cabin	8091	PA	Easement
11-102	NA	40	Itkillik Lake	Cabin	8069	PA	Easement
11-103	NA	80	Itkillik River		9549	PA	Easement
12-104	T	5	Itkillik River		5043	PA	Easement
	AJ		Ambler Mining	Some mining			Cooperative planning

Type¹

NA Native allotment
T Other small tract
M Mining claim
C Cemetery and historical site
NC Native corporation
AJ Adjacent lands

Status²

PA Patented
U Unpatented
A Approved
PE Pending

Priority 4

Lands in the vicinity of Anaktuvuk Pass and Chandler Lake are of great importance for subsistence resources and activities for the people of Anaktuvuk Pass. The Anaktuvuk Pass

area is also one of the two highest recreational use areas of the park, with a growing number of visitors per year expected to begin backpacking trips there.

The future development of corporation lands in a manner consistent with the purposes of the Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve is a goal. Particularly in this area of the park, existing uses of Native allotments are compatible with park purposes. Tracts are generally undeveloped, used for subsistence activities, and are reached by snowmachine or on foot. Commercial use or development of ATV roads, to small tracts would be incompatible.

For Native allotments within or immediately adjacent to corporation lands, cooperative agreements similar to those proposed for Native corporation lands are the minimum interest necessary to protect park values. For outlying tracts, less-than-fee is the minimum interest.

Successful implementation and enforcement of zoning by the North Slope Borough, which would assure compatible use of tracts within the park and borough boundary, would eliminate the need for the Park Service to acquire any interests in these tracts. (See table 21 for Priority 4 tracts.)

TABLE 21. PRIORITY 4 TRACTS

NPS Tract	Type ¹	Acres	General Location	Improvements or Disturbance	US Survey Number	Status ²	Minimum Interest
09-111	NA	80	Anaktuvuk Pass	(within corp.)	8088	PA	Agreement
07-115	NA	80	Arctic Slope	(adj. corp.)	11851-2	PA	Agreement
07-116	NA	160	Chandler Lake	(within corp.)	11851-1	PA	Agreement
07-103	NA	160	Chandler Lake	(adj. corp.)	11842-1	PA	Agreement
09-103	NA	80	Anaktuvuk Pass	(adj. ATV easement)	8087	PA	Agreement
08-112	NA	160	Anaktuvuk Pass	(adj. ATV easement)	11907-2	PA	Agreement
08-122	NA	80	Anaktuvuk Pass	(within corp.)	11905-1,2	PA	Agreement
08-108	NA	80	Chandler Lake	(adj. corp.)	11844	PA	Agreement
08-123	NA	160	Anaktuvuk Pass		11913	PA	Easement
09-137	NA	160	Anaktuvuk Pass	(within corp.)	11846	PA	Agreement
08-107	NA	80	Chandler Lake	(adj. ATV easement)	8114	PA	Agreement
08-121	NA	60	Arctic Slope	(adj. corp.)	11905-3	PA	Agreement
07-122	NA	80	Anaktuvuk Pass	(adj. ATV easement)	11854	PA	Agreement
09-109	NA	160	Anaktuvuk Pass	(within corp.)	11807-1	PA	Agreement
09-141	NA	80	Anaktuvuk Pass	(within corp.)	11834	PA	Agreement
08-111	NA	160	Anaktuvuk Pass	(adj. ATV easement)	11907-1	PA	Agreement
09-120	NA	120	Anaktuvuk Pass	(within corp.)	11830	PA	Agreement
07-121	NA	160	Arctic Slope		11855	PA	Easement
	AJ		Killik-Itkillik River				Zoning

Type¹

NA Native allotment
 T Other small tract
 M Mining claim
 C Cemetery and historical site
 NC Native corporation
 AJ Adjacent lands

Status²

PA Patented
 U Unpatented
 A Approved
 PE Pending



As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has the responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historic places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. Administration.

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