

# STATE OF ALASKA

## CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMISSION ON FEDERAL AREAS

*SEAN PARNELL, Governor*

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March 30, 2011

Mr. Bud C. Cribley  
State Director  
Bureau of Land Management  
Alaska State Office  
222 W 7th Avenue #13  
Anchorage, Alaska 99513

Dear Mr. Cribley:

Over the last year, Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas staff has worked informally with your agency in an effort to revise the longstanding trapping cabin policy for Alaska. This is actually the continuation of an effort initiated by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) and the BLM in 2006. Enclosed is a copy of a May 2006 letter to former BLM State Director Henri Bisson from ADF&G on the subject. Since the Commission resumed operations in 2008, we have had several discussions with former Fairbanks District Manager, Bob Schneider and with Anchorage District Manager Gary Reimer on one occasion.

We last met with Mr. Schneider in August 2010. The meeting was productive but inconclusive. At the meeting we were provided with a 2008 draft Instruction Memo on the Alaska Supplement to the Manual Regarding Commercial Use Cabins. As requested, we have not shared that draft memo. We attempted to schedule a follow-up meeting last fall, but because of mutual schedule conflicts were unable to do so before he retired.

Since the August meeting we also have met again with several trappers who are interested in seeing the adoption of a workable cabin policy. Some of these trappers have cabins they can no longer use because they have been denied the necessary permits. Others cannot get a permit to construct a new trapping cabin. In both cases, this is due to the economic criteria and other requirements found in the existing cabin policy.

We understand that the Alaska Trappers Association (ATA) recently contacted your office about this issue and was told that the need for changes to the policy was being evaluated. It is also our understanding that ATA was directed to submit any comments or thoughts on the policy to Shelly Jacobson, Acting District Manager, Fairbanks District.

We believe that the logical next step is for the BLM to initiate a more formal public process that will provide trappers and other interested individuals an opportunity to suggest changes and to review any proposed changes to the existing cabin policy. We are requesting that you initiate such a process.

Our discussions with the BLM, trappers and others clearly indicate that there are considerable differences in views and expectations regarding the use and construction of cabins to support trapping on BLM managed lands. The one point everyone appears to agree on is that the current cabin policy, developed in 1987, is in need of revision. Any revisions to the policy can best be accomplished with input from the affected public and user groups. This type of outreach effort is consistent with the *Department of the Interior Open Government Plan* which calls for increased public involvement in policy development at all levels.

Our Commission staff is available to help facilitate meetings or workshops with ATA and other groups or with individual trappers. Please contact our office if you have questions about our request. We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,



Stan Leaphart  
Executive Director

Cc: Shelly Jacobson – BLM Fairbanks District  
Gary Reimer - BLM Anchorage District  
Sally Gibert – ANILCA Program Coordinator  
Brad Palach – ADF&G ANILCA Program  
Randall Zarnke – Alaska Trappers Association