



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL

Department of Natural Resources

CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMISSION ON

FEDERAL AREAS

Stan Leaphart, Executive Director

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November 30, 2012

Mr. Zachary Babb
National Park Service
Alaska Regional Office
240 W. 5th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Mr. Babb:

The Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas (CACFA) has reviewed the Serpentine Hot Springs Master Plan Environmental Assessment Alternatives Newsletter and offers the following comments and support. Thank you again for coming to our recent meeting in Anchorage to explain the proposed project and the status of this planning effort.

The range of action alternatives developed by the National Park Service represent a common sense approach to recognizing the historic use of the hot springs and surrounding area, as well as its traditional and cultural significance to the residents of the region. The alternatives also are consistent with the mandate for Bering Land Bridge National Preserve in Section 201(2) of ANILCA *"to provide for outdoor recreation and environmental education activities including public access for recreational purposes to the Serpentine Hot Springs area."*

As the project alternatives are refined, it is important that all alternatives include provisions to improve safe access to the hot springs and the facilities there. This should include improved trail marking, expanding and hardening of trails and safety upgrades to the airstrip. Maintenance and upkeep of the bunkhouse and bathhouse to improve public safety and health at those facilities should also be included in each action alternative.

The Commission supports updating the Preserve's wilderness eligibility status by removing the Iyat Area from wilderness eligibility. We also encourage the NPS to consider removing additional acreage in the area if necessary to meet the ANILCA mandate for the hot springs area. In light of the longstanding use of this area, the presence

of the facilities and airstrip, this area should not have been determined to eligible in the original ANILCA 1317 wilderness review.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the project alternatives and we look forward to reviewing the environmental assessment. Please contact us if you have questions or if we need to clarify our comments.

Sincerely,



Stan Leaphart
Executive Director

Cc: Sue Magee – State ANILCA Coordinator
Jeanette Pomrenke – Superintendent BELA