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ADF&G Seeks Comment on Draft Management Plan for Bristol Bay Critical Habitat Areas

(Juneau) - The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) is seeking public comment on a Bristol Bay Critical Habitat Areas draft management plan. The management plan addresses five critical habitat areas; Egegik Critical Habitat Area (CHA), Pilot Point CHA, Cinder River CHA, Port Heiden CHA, and Port Moller CHA located on the north side of the Alaska Peninsula. The management plan will apply to state lands and waters and private lands within the CHA boundaries. The management plan and subsequent regulations will be used by department staff to authorize appropriate activities in the critical habitat areas through Special Area Permitting.

Established in 1972, the five critical habitat areas include the major estuaries along the southern shore of Bristol Bay. The primary purpose of the critical habitat areas is to protect and preserve habitat areas especially crucial to the perpetuation of fish and wildlife, particularly waterfowl, and to restrict uses not compatible with that primary purpose.

This is the second draft plan distributed for public review. This draft addresses comments received during the initial March 2010 public review, and provides guidance for managing activities on private lands within the CHAs. The draft plan presents management goals for the CHAs and identifies policies to be used in determining which activities are compatible with the protection of fish and wildlife, their habitats, and public use of the CHAs. It includes proposed policies on access and use of resources in the CHAs and a list of proposed regulations for implementing the plan. Proposed regulations may be revised prior to adoption based on public comment and any subsequent changes to management plan policies. ADF&G will conduct a separate regulatory review for these regulations after the management plan is finalized later this year.

The draft plan is available for public review and comment through **July 8, 2011**. Copies are available on the department website at <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=bristolbay.draftplan> and at ADF&G offices in Anchorage, Juneau, King Salmon, Cold Bay, and Kodiak. Additional copies for review will be at local community libraries. Written comments may be submitted via email, to dfg.hab.specialarea@alaska.gov or via postal service to:

Bristol Bay CHAs Management Plan
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