

*Wildlife and Hunting Heritage
Conservation Council*

Feb 11, 2015

The Honorable Sally Jewell
Secretary of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell:

One of the topics discussed at the January 13-14, 2015 meeting of the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council was a series of new hunting rules proposed by the National Park Service (NPS) on National Preserves in Alaska. Some of the proposed rules have caused serious concern amongst the majority of Alaska Native entities, the State of Alaska, and many members of the hunting community. While some of Alaska's Subsistence Resource Commissions are supportive of the new rules, others stand with the State of Alaska and the Alaska Federation of Natives in opposition.

The concern for some subsistence and recreational hunters, and the professional guide-outfitters who depend on huntable populations for their livelihood, is that these proposed rules could cause a further shift in the ratio of predator and prey populations in the National Preserves in Alaska. Such a shift could affect healthy wildlife populations that support food supply and economies.

Another serious concern is that these proposed rules could prohibit or reduce some time-honored and very important Native Alaskan traditions – traditions that are sacred to many in Alaska's native populations. This is a very emotive issue for many of Alaska's Native Corporations and Tribes.

Additionally, the State of Alaska is concerned with the process by which these new rules are being developed.

As the Council discussed these issues, it became apparent that there are new leaders in place both at the state level (Governor, Game and Fish Commissioner, and Wildlife Conservation Director) and in the senior leadership of the Alaska Regional Office of the National Park Service. It was also apparent that a new spirit of cooperation exists ... a spirit that should be nurtured and encouraged.

One of the key components of the Council's charter directs it to foster communication and coordination among state, federal, and Tribal organizations. We think this Alaska issue provides an excellent opportunity to do exactly that.

Our recommendation is straight-forward. We would suggest that you direct the Alaska NPS Area Region leadership to engage the State of Alaska and the various affected Native Alaskan entities to make another attempt to cooperatively address the concerns communicated by all parties involved and develop new recommendations

RC 061

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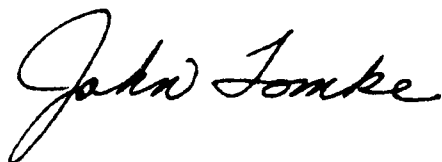
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for cooperative wildlife management in NPS-managed National Preserves in Alaska, and do so without promulgating a rule which potentially preempts the state's role in managing the harvest of resident wildlife. We believe the spirit of teamwork we saw at our Council meeting should be supported and fostered.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Tomke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J" and "T".

John Tomke, Chair
Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council