



Alaska Public Lands Information Center Anchorage, Alaska Long-Range Interpretive Plan



The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and intrinsic values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

—NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
MISSION STATEMENT



Front cover: Banners featuring colorful images of the region invite visitors into the Anchorage Alaska Public Lands Information Center. NPS PHOTO

Inside front cover pages: Spawning runs of sockeye salmon fight their way up the Aniakchak River and into Surprise Lake—the river's shallow headwaters inside the caldera—at Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve. Aniakchak is one of the least visited units of the National Park System.

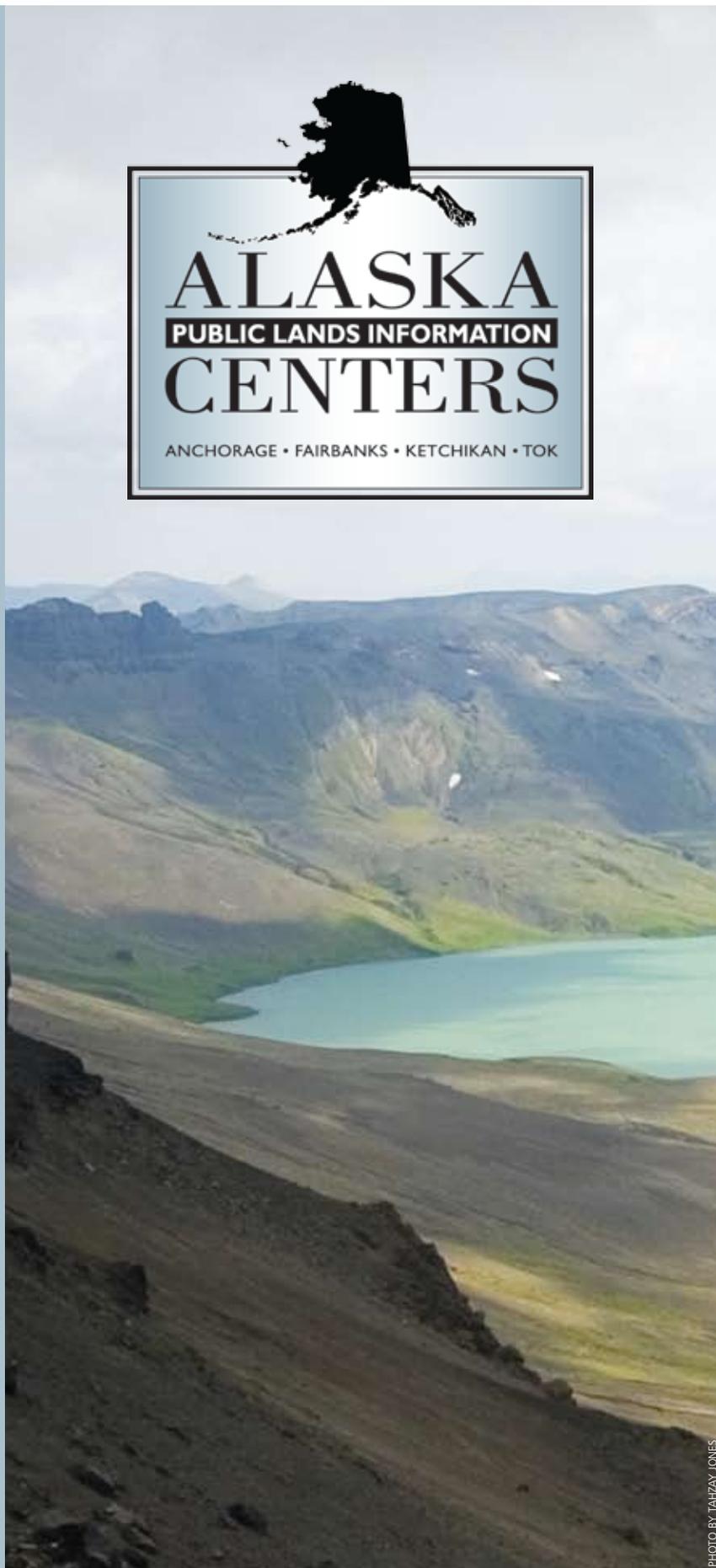


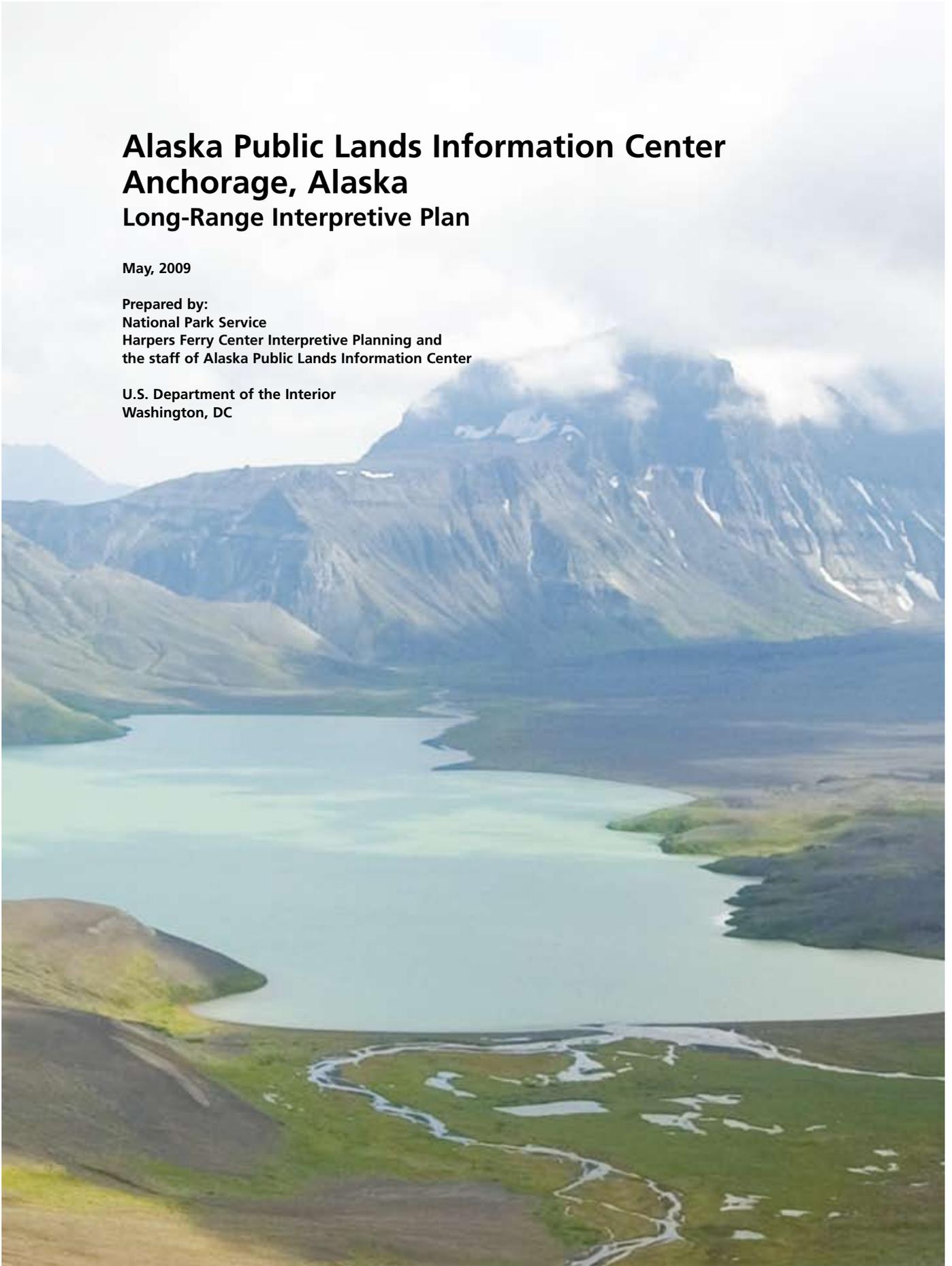
PHOTO BY TANZAY JONES

Alaska Public Lands Information Center Anchorage, Alaska Long-Range Interpretive Plan

May, 2009

Prepared by:
National Park Service
Harpers Ferry Center Interpretive Planning and
the staff of Alaska Public Lands Information Center

U.S. Department of the Interior
Washington, DC





NPS Planning Process

Performance management within the Anchorage Alaska Center's GPRA Strategic Plan of 2005 will ensure that the Center's daily interpretive and education actions are guided by established goals . . .

The Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) is the keystone of the Comprehensive Interpretive Planning (CIP) process. Once the LRIP is approved, it is up to each park staff to pursue implementation of the LRIP's recommendations through a series of Annual Implementation Plans (AIPs). Throughout the CIP process, the park should also compile and maintain an Interpretive Database (ID).

The LRIP strategic plan is prepared in accordance with the goal-driven, performance management of the park's primary Strategic Plan that is required by the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993. Performance management within the Anchorage Alaska Center's GPRA Strategic Plan of 2005 will ensure that the Center's daily interpretive and education actions are guided by established goals, and that performance toward these goals can be measured and evaluated. This measurement will help the Anchorage Alaska Center determine how efficient and effective it is in fulfilling its mission.

National Park Service planning at all levels is organized around three primary questions: WHY was the Anchorage Alaska Center established (i.e., what is its overall mission?), WHAT is the vision for the future (i.e., what actions will the Anchorage Alaska Center take to meet the mission in future years?), and HOW will the future vision be accomplished (i.e., what actions are needed to create this desired future?). NPS planning at all levels will help ensure that the Anchorage Alaska Center's mission is carried out effectively and efficiently.

Opposite: During summer park rangers lead a variety of history talks and guided walks. NPS PHOTO

Multiple agencies comprise the Alaska Public Lands Information Centers. NPS PHOTO



Executive Summary

The Alaska Public Lands Information Center in Anchorage (known as AAPLIC or the Anchorage Alaska Center) is located in leased space in the Historic Federal Building in downtown Anchorage at the corner of “F” Street and 4th Avenue. The Anchorage Alaska Center is administered by an NPS director who oversees a full-time permanent staff of one full-time permanent GS-11 education specialist who directs a curriculum-based education program at the Center, two GS-9 park rangers, a part-time GS-2 information clerk, three seasonal GS-5 park rangers, three seasonal GS-4 visitor use assistants, student interns, and volunteers. A GS-5 administrative clerk position vacated in 2005 has been lapsed indefinitely because of budget constraints.

A Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) provides a vision for the future of interpretation. This LRIP for AAPLIC was created through a goal-driven process that describes desired visitor experiences and recommends appropriate means to achieve them. The first section of this LRIP, from pages 1-31, confirms the foundations of the Center: its purpose, significance, interpretive themes, visitor profiles, visitor experience goals, issues and influences, and existing conditions. The LRIP’s second section, starting on page 41, recommends actions to be taken over the next 5-10 years to enhance the Center’s personal services program and interpretive media, and provides an achievable implementation strategy. At workshops held in 2006, participants representing AAPLIC’s partner organizations and agencies made recommendations. The AAPLIC staff later culled and prioritized the results. Highlights of final recommendations follow:

OVERALL GOALS DERIVED FROM THE LONG-RANGE INTERPRETIVE PLAN FOR THE ANCHORAGE ALASKA CENTER

The following goals were identified during the long-range interpretive plan for emphasis and action over the next five to ten years given the visitor center remains in the same location. The multiple tasks delineated in the LRIP themes and recommendations charts combine to support these overriding goals.

Increase Visitation to the Center. Expand knowledge and awareness of services provided by the Anchorage Alaska Center through marketing, better visibility of the visitor center from the street, and easy access. This topic includes developing mail lists, writing articles in publications, better signage and visual elements outside the Old Federal Building, and minimizing the effect of the guard station. The goal also encourages revisiting the Strategic Marketing Plan created for the APLIC in 2004.

Revisit the Delivery of Center Themes in Regard to Universal Accessibility. Plans include adding interactivity to displays, creating an exhibit about public lands, adding exhibits to better represent themes, providing better lighting and use of space, close-captioned movies and exhibit stations, larger labels and language translations, and the development of informational brochures.

Upgrade the Visitor Experience in the Theater. Upgrades involve installing a lighting system for multiple venues, a new projector and cooling system, new soundboards and amplifiers, enhancing projection by painting the ceiling, updating aged acoustic panels, and providing for automatic lights and door controls for safety.

Fix and/or Replace Deteriorating and Dated Video Exhibits. These recommendations include upgrading the public use kiosks, replacing numerous broken video stations, updating the content of video footage, and adding more sanitary listening devices.

Create and Redesign the Anchorage Alaska Center’s Website. This goal outlines a user-friendly website that better incorporates the needs and concerns of visitors in preparing for their visits to Alaska’s parks and public lands.

Expand Educational and Interpretive Programming to Communicate Current Themes Using New Technology. Programs are needed to address global climate change, green living, bear safety, *Leave No Trace*, and the inclusion of outdoor components. Methodology includes audio and visual podcasts, social networking, partnering with local parks and organizations, and periodic evaluations.

Develop and Request Adequate Staffing to Proactively Address the Programmatic and Facility Needs of the Center as Identified Above. This goal requires developing a position management and sustainable budget plan and accompanying Operations Formula System (OFS) requests.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (WITH AAPLIC MOVING TO A NEW LOCATION)

During the LRIP Workshops in 2006, the planning team took time to list the factors and conditions that should be considered if, over the following four years, an alternative location to the Old Federal Courthouse were found. If the Anchorage Alaska Center were to move in 2010, there would be an exponential increase in funding requirements, expenditure of Center staff time, and cooperation with other government entities, and working with private contractors. A few of these factors and conditions are listed below:

- Location needs to have easy access for cruise, bus, and foot traffic.
- Linked to downtown development and design.
- Proximity to important partners and, perhaps, shared space with partners.
- Must have adequate visitor parking, either next to the facility or close to it.
- Needs a passenger drop-off area for cars and buses (and a waiting area for buses).
- Outdoor space for picnics, resting, and phone calls; seen as a public “gathering place.”
- Include a few exterior interpretive exhibits to draw visitors into the Center.
- Develop an outdoor sculpture (of people or bronze topographic model) that engages visitors.
- Close to an outdoor element of a natural environment (e.g., Ship Creek, Coastal Trail).
- No security check barriers.
- Interior space big enough to integrate exhibits, trip planning, and desk activities.
- Space for staff, book storage, and agency meeting room/s.
- Include a classroom space.
- Include high ceilings and big spaces to design appropriate exhibits that interpret the vastness and showcase inspirational elements of Alaska (large images, murals, and maps in the exhibit area).
- Dedicated space suitable for hands-on, curriculum-based educational activities.
- 150-seat, sloped-floor theater that meets HFC’s audiovisual standards.
- Depending on the size of the facility, the current staff to cover the Center’s functions may need to increase. The exact number of FTEs will need to be determined according to site and facility chosen.

*The National Park Service
cares for special places
saved by the American
people so that all may
experience our heritage.*

Contents

NPS Planning Process i

Executive Summary ii

Contents v

Part 1. Foundations

Congressional Intent 2

Enabling Legislation and Background 4

APLICs: A System of Interagency Centers 5

Anchorage Alaska Center Administrative History 6

Purpose 9

Significance and Mission 10

Interpretive Themes 11

Goals 13

Visitation 19

Issues and Influences 27

Existing Conditions 29

Part 2. Future Interpretive Program

Introduction 40

Short-Term Recommendations 41

Opportunities for Action Based on Interpretive Themes 42

Multi-Year Implementation Plan 45

Long-Term Recommendations 50

Library and Collection Needs 52

Planning Team 53



PHOTO BY DANICA YATES

Visitors enjoy a discovery hike in Denali National Park and Preserve.

Part 1: Foundations

*It was almost dark when we arrived,
light falling and rising again,
wind from Wolverine Glacier
filling the long valley.*

*We needed a fire to keep us warm
until morning when we rowed across
the lake to walk a field of lilies
that lay far below the glacier*

*with its caul of blue-green ice
and then cloud upon cloud coming
down for the rest of our visit
and these words of John Hay in
my mind, “Exhaltation takes practice.”*

—TOM SEXTON
ALASKA POET LAUREATE, APPOINTED 1995
“PARADISE VALLEY”

Congressional Intent

In a report dated April 7, 1978 (below and on the next page in italics), the U.S. Congressional House of Representatives Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs stated that a system of information and education centers was needed both to help provide visitors to Alaska with meaningful, safe, and enjoyable experiences and to encourage them to protect the fragile resources they would encounter:

The Committee has noted that visitation to existing National Park System areas in Alaska increased 406 percent between 1971 and 1976. Establishment of new conservation system units by this Act and growing public awareness of these spectacular resources will further stimulate this growth. The Alaska State Park system will also provide increased opportunities for visitor use in the State. The Committee believes a system of information and education centers is needed both to help provide visitors with meaningful, safe, and enjoyable experiences and to encourage them to protect the fragile resources they will encounter. In addition, the Committee believes these services are needed before visitors reach their destination.

Section 1204(a), therefore, authorizes the Secretary to plan and develop an information center along the Alaska Highway, near the Canadian Border, because a major portion of the tourists entering Alaska arrive through Canada on the Alaska Highway. It is the intent of the Committee that through the establishment of this visitor center near the Canadian Border, visitors to the State will be afforded the opportunity to become aware of the various opportunities throughout the State—on Federal and State lands, as well as any opportunities that may be developed on native lands, by the Native Corporations; make such reservations that may be necessary for facilities around the State; and use the center as a staging point for trips throughout Alaska. The center should include such facilities as group camps, youth hostels, or facilities as are appropriate for visitors to “lay-over” at the center.

The Committee intends that this center and its facilities and services, and the others authorized in this section, will be cooperative ventures to the maximum possible extent, and urges the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture to work closely with the State and local agencies, with Native Corporations, and with other private groups in planning, developing and managing them. This will help avoid duplication and unnecessary expense while providing the necessary facilities and services, as well as a full array of information about Alaska, for its visitors.

It is the intent of the Committee that the National Park Service, which has the most extensive experience of any Interior Bureau in this regard, assume the leadership within the Department for the planning, development, funding, and operation of the Alaska Highway center. National Park Service information centers, managed cooperatively with the U.S. Forest Service in Portland, Oregon, and in Seattle, Spokane, and Hoodspport, Washington, as well as in Juneau, Alaska provide the full spectrum of information about local, State, Federal, and private recreational and park facilities in their respective regions. The National Park Service is expected to work very closely with other Federal land managing agencies, the state of Alaska and the Native Corporations in selecting the site and in developing this center. It is the Committee’s intent that the center be operational within 8 years after establishment of this Act.

For similar reasons, section 1204(b) provides for the development of visitor centers in the major population centers in the State to afford the opportunity for visitors to become aware of the recreation potential throughout the State. This type of information system can help solve a problem in other states where for example, a few well-known national parks attract the majority of park visitors.

In addition, the metropolitan information centers can also serve the local communities in which they are located. These facilities should be more than seasonal in operation

The Captain Cook walking tour, which takes place daily during the summer—rain or shine—is one of several free activities scheduled through the Alaska Public Lands Information Center in downtown Anchorage. NPS PHOTO

and should serve as a vehicle to stimulate environmental education in the local communities throughout the year. They should serve as information centers about outdoor recreation facilities and cultural resources throughout the State; as educational centers for visitors as well as local public school and university systems; as reservation centers for the National Parks and other conservation system units and State facilities as may require reservations or permits; and as staging areas which may include campgrounds, youth hostels, or other such facilities deemed appropriate by

the Secretary. The Committee also expects the centers to be developed and utilized as museum facilities for the collection, display, public use and enjoyment, and educational use of archeological, paleontological, and natural resources of the State; in this regard, the National Park Service should coordinate with the Alaska State Museum in order to complement the State museum operations. For the Anchorage and Fairbanks facilities, it is the intent of the Committee that the National Park Service take the lead in the planning, funding, and operation of each facility.



Enabling Legislation and Background

In 1980 Congress passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) which created many national park areas and wildlife refuges in Alaska. Section 1305 (below) of ANILCA included a provision for the establishment of four cooperative information/education centers, including the Anchorage Alaska Center.

The Secretary is authorized in consultation with other Federal agencies, to investigate and plan for an information and education center for visitors to Alaska on not to exceed 1,000 acres of Federal land at a site adjacent to the Alaska Highway, and to investigate and plan for similar centers in Anchorage and Fairbanks, Alaska. For the purposes of this investigation, the Secretary shall seek participation in the program planning and/or operation of such centers from appropriate agencies of the State of Alaska, and he is authorized to accept contributions of funds, personnel, and planning and program assistance from such State agencies, other Federal agencies, and Native representatives. The Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to investigate and plan for, in a similar manner, an information and education center for visitors to Alaska in either Juneau, Ketchikan, or Sitka, Alaska. No information center shall be developed pursuant to investigations and plans conducted under authority of this section unless and until such development is specifically authorized by Congress.

Eventually, four Alaska Public Land Information Center (APLIC) facilities were opened: in Tok, 1984; in Fairbanks, 1985; in

Anchorage, 1987; and in Ketchikan, 1995. The National Park Service (NPS) operates the Fairbanks and Anchorage facilities, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) operates the Ketchikan facility, and the Alaska Department of Community and Economic Development operates the Tok facility.

The four centers are operated cooperatively on behalf of the following agencies:

- Alaska Department of Community and Economic Development
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- Alaska Department of Natural Resources
- Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. National Park Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Geological Survey

A Memorandum of Understanding/General Agreement (MOU/GA) among these agencies established policies and the general direction for operating the Alaska Public Lands Information Centers. The current MOU/GA dated 2005, will expire on September 30, 2010, at which time it is subject to review, renewal, or expiration. An APLIC Interagency Committee was established to oversee and guide operation of the four centers. The committee conducts quarterly conference calls and meets annually to provide broad coordination and policy, while daily management remains the responsibility of each center manager.





Alaska Public Lands Information Centers: A System of Interagency Centers

The Alaska Public Lands Information Centers (APLICs) were some of the first interagency information and education centers established in the nation. The mission of the APLICs is to support the appropriate use and enjoyment of Alaska's public lands and resources through "one-stop shopping" for public lands information, trip-planning assistance, and resource education.

Four Alaska Public Lands Information Centers (APLICs) currently provide information, education, and interpretive services to both visitors and Alaska residents. Established pursuant to the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) the centers are a partnership among nine state and federal agencies and operate under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The centers operate in Tok, Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Ketchikan. Each APLIC is managed by a designated lead agency that assumes responsibility for day-to-day operations and primary funding. Costs to the primary funding agencies in Fiscal Year 2006 are listed below:

Tok - State of Alaska, Department of Commerce and Economic Development

\$100,000 salaries, \$21,500 building rental and utilities

Fairbanks - National Park Service

\$334,000 operation and maintenance, \$126,000 building lease

Anchorage - National Park Service

\$598,694 operation and maintenance, \$230,000 building lease

Ketchikan - Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture

\$454,000 operation and maintenance, the Forest Service owns the building

Oversight, strategic planning, and policy guidance for the centers is provided by an interagency committee pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding. Chairmanship of the committee rotates annually among the three primary funding agencies. All nine agencies that participate in the interagency committee contribute recreation information through news releases, brochures, maps, and websites. Committee members represent the following partner agencies: National Park Service; USDA Forest Service; Bureau of Land Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U.S. Geological Survey; and the Alaska Departments of Commerce, Community and Economic Development; Natural resources; Fish and Game; and Transportation and Public Facilities.

During federal Fiscal Year 2006, the Alaska Public Lands Information Centers served more than 154,000 walk-in visitors and responded to more than 7,600 phone calls. Over the years, each center has developed a variety of programs and services unique to the community in which it is located and the visitors it serves.



AAPLIC Administrative History

The Anchorage Alaska Public Lands Information Center (AAPLIC) was officially opened to the public in August 1987. Initially, line authority and oversight for the Center's manager was provided by the NPS Alaska Regional Chief of Interpretation. Center staffing consisted of a GS-11 Manager, a GS-9 Assistant Manager, a permanent subject-to-furlough GS-5 Park Ranger, and three seasonal GS-4 or GS-5 Park Rangers during the summer months. Three to five volunteers were also recruited for specific projects and duties associated with operation of Center. Visitor use was moderate during these first years of operation, with about 15,000 visitors to the Center each year.

In 1990 Denali National Park instituted an advance reservation system for campsites and shuttle bus seats available exclusively at the APLICs in Anchorage and Fairbanks. The park provided an annual contribution in funding to support this service. During the four year duration of this program, visitation to the Center more than doubled and seasonal staffing was increased from three to five park rangers accordingly. With the increase in staff, logistics and oversight also increased, necessitating the addition of a support position for administrative functions. The Center classified and received approval for a permanent GS-4 Administrative Clerk in November 1993 to provide clerical support for the staff. Volunteers were also used to supplement staff and assist with specialized duties and functions. Denali reservations at the APLICs were discontinued in the spring of 1994.

When the Anchorage Alaska Center first opened, the Center's resource education activities were conducted by the Assistant Manager and consisted primarily of providing workshops for teachers and educators. In 1991 the NPS "Parks as Classrooms" initiative gave additional emphasis to educational programs and activities. The Center applied for and successfully received funding for expansion of educational activities. A full-time, year-

round term GS-7 Information Specialist position was added to develop and present new outreach programs, including a very popular puppet show for grades K-3. Response from the Anchorage School District and other community organizations for these educational activities was overwhelming and positive.

In autumn 1991 the U.S. Forest Service approached the Anchorage Alaska Center and proposed the Center manage their public use cabin reservation system. The Forest Service provided funding, and AAPLIC provided one permanent full-time employee. The cabin permit system began in May 1992. The Center added one full-time permanent GS-4/5 Park Ranger position to administer and coordinate the fee collection program and two seasonal positions were extended into the autumn and spring to assist with the added workload. Reservations, taken year-round, were busiest during December through March, the period when reservations were made for the summer months. Later in the 1990s, the Forest Service converted to a toll-free number for reservations nationwide, relieving AAPLIC of this function; the Center continues to offer information about the cabins (and still provides reservations for cabins in Kenai Fjords National Park).

Beginning in FY92 and for several years leading up to FY95, the National Park Service undertook an effort to professionalize park ranger positions on a national scale. Under the initiative entitled "Ranger Careers," all NPS interpretive and law enforcement positions were evaluated and reclassified to provide clear professional standards and improve career development for park rangers throughout the NPS. Organizational changes at the AAPLIC followed. The two GS-5 Park Ranger positions were re-classified to GS-5/7/9 Park Rangers. The Administrative Clerk position was expanded and upgraded to a GS-5. The term position for outreach (GS-7 Information Specialist) was reclassified and converted



Lichens, rocks, dwarf fireweed, and a caribou antler decorate the tundra at Bering Land Bridge National Preserve on the Seward Peninsula.
PHOTO BY KACI FULLWOOD

to a permanently funded GS-9 Education Specialist in 1998 and later reclassified and upgraded to a GS-11. Oversight by the Chief of Interpretation in Alaska Regional Support Office ended and the Anchorage Alaska Center began to operate under independent management much like other NPS units in the Alaska Region. The Center manager position was upgraded from a GS-11 to a full performance level of GS-12 with responsibilities and coordination duties on par with Alaska Region park superintendents. The Assistant Manager position was abolished and its administrative duties were assumed by the education specialist and manager.

In 2002 the NPS Alaska Regional Director asked that the educational function in Alaska receive even higher priority regionwide and created a GS-12 Education Coordinator position in the Regional Office, absorbing the urban education component of the APLICs, including supervision of the GS-11 Education Specialist and the seasonal

education employees, all of whom remained duty-stationed and as working partners within the Anchorage Alaska Center. When the incumbent GS-12 manager at the APLIC transferred to the new Education Coordinator position in the regional office, a GS-13 superintendent assumed management of both the Anchorage and Fairbanks facilities, reporting to the Associate Regional Director, Resources and Education (notably, the superintendent's salary was covered by the Fairbanks Center). When that GS-13 Superintendent retired in 2005, the Fairbanks Center oversight was assigned to the superintendent of Yukon-Charley Rivers and Gates of the Arctic National Park & Preserve, who assigned managerial duties to an employee duty-stationed in Fairbanks. Management of the Anchorage Center was assigned to the incoming GS-13 Regional Chief of Interpretation and Education, an additional cost to the APLIC budget. Given the combined salaries of both the new Regional Chief/APLIC Manager and that of the

GS-12 Regional Education Coordinator, the Center faced annual operating deficits in Fiscal Years 2005 and 2006. These budget shortfalls were alleviated in FY05 and FY06 by lapsing the vacated administrative clerk position, and soliciting contributions from state and federal partner agencies, other NPS units in Alaska, and the NPS Alaska Regional Office.

In May 2006 the NPS Alaska Regional Director committed to addressing the managerial and budget imbalances through two actions, first of which was to restore funding for a full-time Regional Chief of Interpretation position from a Regional Office account and to assign management duties at the AAPLIC to a separate position at the AAPLIC. This resulted in the Anchorage Alaska Center having its first full-time Manager since 2002. The second action by the NPS Regional Director took effect in Fiscal Year 2007, transferring the Regional Education Coordinator salary from the AAPLIC books to the Regional Office account; this allowed the Anchorage Alaska Center to begin the budget cycle with a manageable budget. Meanwhile, an OFS budget increase request for the AAPLIC was rated highly by the Region in 2006 and 2008. This OFS request reflects the newly justified position management recommendations and positions detailed in the recommendations section of the Long-Range Interpretive Plan.

Through the years, the Anchorage Alaska Center has also instituted a student intern program which has recruited high school and college students to assist with daily operations while helping them develop professional skills and gain work experience. Student hire, university partnerships, Youth Conservation Corps (YCC), and On-the-Job Training (OJT) programs provide substantial assistance each year to the Center's operations.

As the collaborative value of the APLICs gains acceptance, more opportunities for operational efficiencies are occurring as well. For example, the Alaska Railroad Corporation co-located with the Center in December of 2006 through a cooperative agreement to provide additional customer

service. In 2007 the Alaska Marine Highway System positions were moved to Ketchikan and the Alaska Railroad became a new partner in the visitor center. The Anchorage Alaska Center also assumed responsibility for mail requests for information forwarded from many state and federal agencies each year. This centralized function avoids duplication of effort, provides a more comprehensive response to the inquiries, and saves the participating agencies postage and printing costs.

With the initial development of an AAPLIC website in 1996 and a Geographical Information System kiosk in 1999, electronic media became a rapidly growing priority. Alaska Public Lands Information Centers now serve a global community. The APLIC website has recently been redesigned and posted to a new server. As web use increases along with the availability of downloadable portable document format (PDF) files, there has been a marked decrease in the amount of traditional mail. Virtual inquiries, however, require staffing, skills, and attention to current web and digital technology.

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, brought dramatic changes to AAPLIC. Because AAPLIC resides in a federal building which also houses federal judges, all visitors to the Federal Building are required to provide identification and submit to screening before entering the facility. Security is provided by a private company contracted by Federal Protective Services within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. After the implementation of these security measures, visitation to the Center dropped 10 to 15 percent. Although visitation numbers have been recovering over the past couple years, security procedures still have an adverse effect on visitation. Because of the obstacle that security screening presents to unfettered public access to the interagency visitor center, and the lack of an adjacent parking facility, the APLIC Interagency Committee has recommended that the Anchorage Alaska Center explore the feasibility of relocating to a more suitable downtown location.

Purpose

Purpose statements summarize the reasons why the Anchorage Alaska Center was established. These statements are based on the 1980 enabling legislation and the 1978 Congressional Committee Report that accompanied it. The purpose statements, together with significance statements, provide the foundation for the Anchorage Alaska Center's mission. Long-term goals are identified to meet congressional intent and fulfill the Anchorage Center's mission. These goals can then be measured and performance evaluated.

Each year, AAPLIC employees assist thousands of visitors with planning their trips on public lands in Alaska.
NPS PHOTO

The purpose of the Anchorage Alaska Public

Lands Information Center is:

- to provide information and interpretation about Alaska's public lands and resources, with an emphasis on Alaska's southcentral region.
- to assist with trip planning and access to Alaska's public lands.
- to provide year-round education programs about Alaska's public lands.
- to convey safety and resource protection messages.



Significance

Statements of significance describe the distinctive values of Alaska’s public lands, why these values are important within a national context, and why they contribute to the Anchorage Alaska Center’s purpose.

Alaska’s public lands are significant because they:

- contain largely intact temperate, sub-arctic, and arctic ecosystems.
- contain resources that sustain traditional lifeways.
- offer a wide spectrum of superlative recreational opportunities.

- contain natural resources that contribute to the global economy.

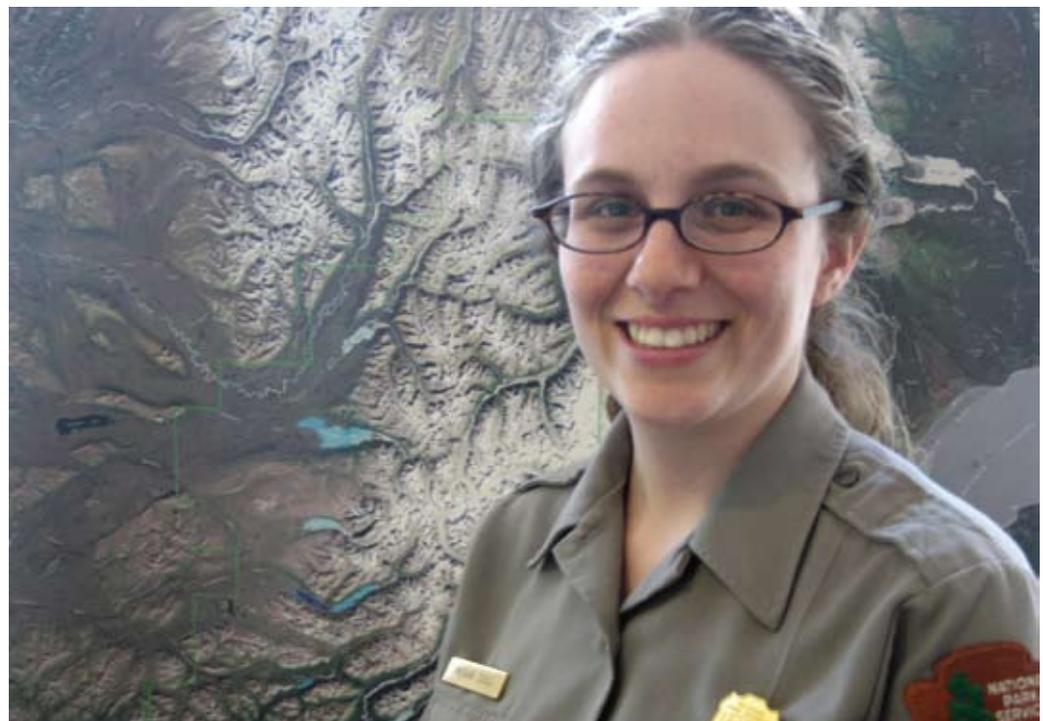
Also, the Alaska Public Lands Information Center system is significant because it:

- represents a collaboration of the Centers’ agencies and partner organizations to provide “one-stop shopping” and efficient, high-quality service to the general public.
- consolidates information, fee collection, and trip-planning assistance to minimize duplications of effort and reduce costs for all the Centers’ partners and the general public.

Mission

The AAPLIC (Anchorage Alaska Public Lands Information Center) supports the appropriate use and enjoyment of Alaska's public lands and resources through “one-stop shopping” for public lands information, trip-planning assistance, and resource education. The APLICs are a system of information and education centers that

help provide visitors and residents with meaningful, safe, enjoyable experiences on public lands and encourage them to sustain the natural and cultural resources of Alaska. These interactive and fully accessible facilities are nationally recognized for providing consistent, high-quality services at all four statewide locations.



Informational and educational opportunities offered by AAPLIC employees help visitors have enjoyable and meaningful experiences in Alaska’s public lands.
NPS PHOTO

Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are those key concepts or stories that are central to the Anchorage Alaska Center's purpose. These themes were adapted by the Anchorage Alaska Center and are complementary with the themes of the other APLICs within the system. Themes are the most important ideas for visitors' understanding of the significance of Alaska public lands.

The following themes and sub-themes form the foundation of interpretive and educational programming at the Anchorage Alaska Center:

1. Public Stewardship: Public stewardship of Alaska's lands ensures opportunities for access to wildlands for a spectrum of recreation, subsistence, and natural resource uses.

- Public lands provide a range of recreational activities from low-risk family outings to high-risk, extreme adventures.
- Public lands contain resources essential to traditional ways of living.
- Public lands contain natural resources of economic value.

2. Natural Diversity: Alaska's public lands encompass large natural areas that display a wealth of geological and biological diversity.

- Alaska's public lands are "living laboratories" providing opportunities to study natural processes and the effects of human activities.
- Understanding the natural processes at work on public lands provides a continual challenge to state and federal agencies.
- Public lands provide largely intact ecosystems on which plant and animal communities depend. Some of these habitat and species are considered threatened or endangered.
- Alaska's public lands contain intact biological communities that serve as benchmarks against which to measure change. As such they have global significance.

3. Personal Opportunities: Alaska's wildlands offer opportunities to experience a sense of grandeur, inspiration, discovery, risk, and personal achievement to a degree seldom found elsewhere.

- Safe use of Alaska public lands requires a high degree of self-reliance, and an understanding and willingness to accept the risks.
- Knowledge, preparation, and flexibility are key to a safe and enjoyable trip to Alaska's public lands.
- Much of Alaska's public lands are true wilderness; there are no signs, trails, or bridges to assist travelers.
- Alaska's public lands allow visitors to experience solitude, beauty, inspiration, knowledge, and insight.

4. Management Philosophies: State and federal oversight of resources on Alaska's public lands reflects diverse management philosophies, sparking ongoing debate regarding use and conservation.

- Allocation of public land resources is a balancing act between political, social, economic, biological, and other factors.
- Land managing agencies have different missions but together provide a spectrum of opportunities for the use of Alaska's public lands.
- With proper management, future generations will be able to experience the Alaskan wildlands that we value today.
- The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) and ANILCA marked a major turning point in Alaska's history and land ownership. Educating the public about key points in these laws helps increase understanding of resource issues that remain controversial today.

5. Resource Protection: Individual users of public lands need to know and understand the cumulative impacts of their actions on resources, and thus support efforts to protect the physical environment and wildland experience for future generations.

- While individual actions may not

appear to have immediate impact on the resources, they may result in lasting impacts on fragile ecosystems.

- Individuals can take action to minimize their impacts by practicing *Leave No Trace* and wildlife etiquette.
- Alaska's public lands are places of learning. They provide the backdrop for lifelong learners to formulate a bridge between knowledge and responsibility.

6. Human History: From prehistory into the present, Alaska's lands and resources—many of which are now managed for the public benefit—provided and continue to support a rich and diverse human history.

- For thousands of years, Alaska has been

a home to people whose descendants still live and work here, perpetuating many of their ancestors' lifeways.

- Alaska's vastness and wealth of natural resources has always attracted diverse people reflecting many lifestyles, values, and traditions.
- Evidence of human occupation and activities are represented by an abundance of material objects and remains found on Alaska's public lands. This evidence supports scientific investigation of human history and needs to be protected.
- Public lands are places where visitors may connect with their past and learn about traditional cultures.

Starting from draft themes developed in previous years, participants at AAPLIC's LRIP Workshop in 2006 crafted the six Interpretive Theme Statements (and sub-themes) shown in this document. NPS PHOTO



Goals

The Anchorage Alaska Center responds to goal documents at multiple levels—national, regional, and discipline-specific. Directives stem from the Government Performance and Results Act, the Interpretation and Education Renaissance, the Centennial Initiative, the Alaska Region Focus Areas, and the APLIC Strategic Plan. Focus areas for each set of nesting goals are summarized on the following pages.

GPRA MANAGEMENT GOALS

Congress passed the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) in 1993 to make the federal government more effective and efficient. To meet GPRA's requirements for performance management, the Anchorage Alaska Center developed management goals to guide daily actions, measure results, and evaluate performance.

Within the Anchorage Alaska Center's GPRA Strategic Plan for 2005-2010, the following goals relate to Visitor Experience:

Mission Goal IIa:

Visitors safely enjoy and are satisfied with the availability, accessibility, diversity, and quality of park facilities, services, and appropriate recreational opportunities at the Anchorage Alaska Public Lands Information Center.

Long-Term Goal IIa1 Visitor Satisfaction:

By September 30, 2010, 95 percent of visitors to the Anchorage Alaska Public Lands Information Center are satisfied with appropriate facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.

Long-Term Goal IIa2 Visitor Safety:

By September 30, 2010, the number of visitor accidents/incidents at the Anchorage Alaska Public Lands Information Center is maintained at "0."

Mission Goal IIb:

Park visitors and the general public understand and appreciate the preservation of Alaska's public lands and its resources for this and future generations.

Long-Term Goal IIb1 Visitor Understanding and Appreciation:

By September 2010, 86 percent of Anchorage Alaska Public Lands Information Center visitors understand the significance of the center.

Government Performance and Results Act "outcomes" (i.e., how well each NPS unit is achieving its visitor-related GPRA goals) are measured each year throughout the National Park System through survey forms that are distributed to visitors at each NPS unit. The survey results reflect visitor opinion about park facilities, services, and recreational opportunities, as well as measures visitor understanding and appreciation for each park's significance. The results of Anchorage Alaska Public Lands Information Center's 2005 visitor survey are on page 16.

INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION RENAISSANCE ACTION PLAN

Engage People to Make Enduring Connections to America's Special Places

Parks need to involve diverse audiences and develop programs in collaboration with communities and partners.

Use New Technologies

Make use of websites, podcasts, and other media of interest to America's youth.

Embrace Interpretation and Education Partners

Enlist volunteers, concessioners, and other partners in providing interpretive services.

Develop and Implement Professional Standards

Apply Servicewide professional standards in the delivery of interpretation and education services.

Create a Culture of Evaluation

Evaluation must become an integral part of program design and delivery to ensure ongoing program development, effectiveness, and efficiency.

Visitors to the APLIC can find a variety of resources to plan their trip in Alaska and learn more about the vibrant cultures and vast recreational opportunities on public lands. NPS PHOTO



CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE GOALS

Stewardship

- Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy.
- Improve the condition of park resources and assets.
- Encourage children to be future conservationists.

Recreational Experience

- Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.
- Establish “volun-tourism” excursions to national parks for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.

Education

- Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.
- Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.

Professional Excellence

- Be one of the top 10 places to work in America.

ALASKA REGIONAL OFFICE STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

Focus Area 1 - Demonstrate stewardship of each unit’s natural, cultural, and wilderness resources and values.

Focus Area 2 - Improve environmental leadership across the region; plan for and respond to climate change in parks and in partnership with communities and organizations.

Focus Area 3 - Provide opportunities in parks for traditional activities and recreational experiences and contribute to the sustainability of local communities.

Focus Area 4 - Expand education outreach and public understanding of Alaska resources.

Focus Area 5 - Achieve workforce and organizational excellence.

APLIC STRATEGIC MARKETING PLAN

The goal for the plan is to create awareness of the APLIC centers and to promote better use of the individual and collective services.

Goal 1 - Focuses on increasing public awareness of resources and services that APLIC provides, using comprehensive,

cooperative effort rather than state and federal entities. Strategies included purchase of mailing addresses, business reply cards, and partnering on various venues with the Alaska Travel Industry Association.

Goal 2 - Stresses image awareness, advertising, and public relations efforts, and encourages potential travelers to request trip-planning assistance from the Alaska Centers. This goal recommended a uniform message and proactive ways to disseminate the message. Strategies included public service announcements, print ads, feature stories, press releases, convention shows, and welcome packets.

Goal 3 - Dealt with using the internet to reach an increasing number of potential Alaska travelers, developing an effective website for trip-planning information for all four centers and all of Alaska.

Goal 4 - Called for the development of branding and a suite of graphic products. All four APLIC locations were directed to use a standard logo and common graphic standards. Other strategies included developing a common design for letterhead, envelopes, business cards, fax cover sheets, signage, flyers, and presentation frames.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE GOALS FOR ANCHORAGE ALASKA PUBLIC LANDS INFORMATION CENTER

The goals listed below identify the important experiences that should be available to all visitors at the Anchorage Alaska Center. The goals are general descriptions of desired outcomes.

Pre-Visit and Virtual Visitor Experience

- Visitors receive accurate, comprehensive, and balanced information to plan their visit to public lands in Alaska either by mail or on the website.
- Visitors will be well informed about public lands in Alaska: the remoteness, safety issues, and appropriate behavior in wildlands and with wildlife.
- Virtual visitors may “experience” and learn about public lands through a

variety of interpretive media (including audio and visual podcasts, webcams, images and maps, games, quick facts, and narrative) offered on the AlaskaCenters.gov website.

- The website will strive to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and sections will be translated to other languages.

On-Site Visitor Experience

Visitors to the Anchorage Alaska Public Lands Information Center would have opportunities to:

- enjoy a facility that is easy to find, clearly identified, safe, and fully accessible.
- enjoy a degree of visitor comfort while in the Anchorage Alaska Center (e.g., clean restrooms and adequate seating).
- realize that the Anchorage Alaska Center is one of four information centers statewide that were legislated by ANILCA, and are managed in collaboration with state and federal agencies for public benefit.
- acknowledge the vastness, complexity, and diversity of public land resources in Alaska.
- enjoy personal interaction with knowledgeable and courteous staff.
- choose from a range of interpretive media and programs based on interest and learning styles including exhibits, visual displays, illustrated programs, films, demonstrations, orientations, and special events.
- attend programs where they may interact with authors, experts, and scientists who share their experience of Alaska’s public lands.
- see special events or rotating exhibits that encourage the local population to visit the center during the off-season.
- use a variety of trip-planning materials.

Data from the GPRV Visitor Survey Cards

In July of 2006, the Anchorage Center distributed Government Performance and Review Act (GPRV) Visitor Survey cards, and the data was again compiled by the University of Idaho. The survey reflects visitor opinion about the center's facilities, services, and recreational opportunities during the survey period. The survey data is expected to be accurate within +/-6% with 95% confidence. The results of the 2006 Visitor Survey are summarized below:

2006 Overall Quality of Facilities, Services, and Recreational Opportunities					
Very good:	90%				
Good:	10%	(100% satisfaction: combined Very Good and Good)			
Average:	0%				
Poor:	0%				
Very Poor	0%				

2006 Specific Ratings of Facilities, Services, and Recreational Opportunities					
Category	Approval Ratings				
	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Park Facilities					
Visitor Centers	85%	15%	0%	0%	0%
Exhibits	83%	15%	2%	0%	0%
Restrooms	71%	29%	0%	0%	0%
Walkways, Trails, Roads	68%	29%	3%	0%	0%
Combined Facilities Ratings:	78%	21%	1%	0%	0%
Visitor Services					
Assistance from Employees	94%	6%	0%	0%	0%
Ranger Interpretive Programs	89%	11%	0%	0%	0%
Park Map or Brochure	84%	16%	0%	0%	0%
Commercial Services	71%	25%	4%	0%	0%
Value for Entrance Fee Paid	70%	22%	3%	0%	0%
Combined Visitor Services Ratings:	85%	13%	2%	0%	0%
Recreational Opportunities					
Learning About Nature, History, etc.	87%	11%	2%	0%	0%
Outdoor Recreation (and Sightseeing)	79%	21%	0%	0%	0%
Combined Rec. Opportunities Ratings:	84%	15%	1%	0%	0%

Due to the security rating of the building, all visitors must show identification and have their person and possessions screened by security personnel.

AAPLIC offers a range of curriculum-based education programs for school-aged children as well as life-long learning programs for adult students and travelers. NPS PHOTO



- obtain current and reliable information—including closures and safety concerns, and rules and regulations—about Alaska’s public lands and resources.
- be informed about the inherent risks on Alaska’s public lands.
- understand the consequences of their actions upon public and private wildlife and wildlands.
- understand that resource uses beyond recreational (e.g., subsistence activities, commercial operations) take place legally on public lands throughout Alaska.
- enjoy a range of curriculum-based education programs and resources.
- obtain unique take-home educational materials that will help them learn about Alaska’s natural and cultural heritage.

GOALS FOR AAPLIC’S INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM

The Anchorage Alaska Center will offer interpretive media and personal service

programs to fulfill its stated purpose of increasing the awareness, understanding, and stewardship of Alaska’s public lands and resources by the general public. These goals describe the desired outcomes for the Center’s interpretive programming, which supplement the desired outcomes for the permanent exhibits:

- create programs that provide opportunities for intellectual and emotional connections to the meanings of the resource. Remain current in interpretive research and methods.
- represent multiple perspectives and opinions and provide a hierarchy of sophistication as to subject matter and content. Involve audiences in active dialogue with an attitude of openness and inclusion.
- make use of current research and scholarship in subject matter. Involve authors, experts, and scientists when available.
- incorporate accessibility and multiple learning styles in program development and delivery.



Visitors must remain alert at all times to prevent being surprised at close distance by moving bears at Brooks Camp in Katmai.

NPS PHOTO BY PETER HAMEL

- encourage partnerships with organizations and the community to further the interpretive goals of the Center where appropriate.

GOALS FOR AAPLIC'S EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Anchorage Alaska Center will offer both curriculum-based educational programs and lifelong learning programs to fulfill its stated purpose of increasing the awareness, understanding, and stewardship of Alaska's public lands and resources by the general public. The following goals describe the desired outcomes for the Anchorage Alaska Center's curriculum-based educational program.

The educational programming at the Anchorage Alaska Public Lands Information Center will:

- ensure that all K-12 curriculum-based programs are student-centered and linked to the national and state Content and Performance Standards.

- address a representative cross-section of learners in grades K-12 and post-secondary institutions, including private, charter, and home schools, after-school, day care, and informal organizations such as Campfire Girls, Boys and Girls Clubs, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts.
- provide training for teachers and community leaders that will enable the Anchorage Center to extend the reach of its programs.
- collaborate with other educators to provide a spectrum of complementary learning opportunities, locally, statewide, and nationally.
- make effective use of new technologies to reach broader audiences, including those who may never visit Alaska's public lands.

Seasonal Visitation Trends

During the winter, school groups have the highest visitation numbers; family groups are second (the Center is a highlight for family groups during the holidays). Other visitor groups include special programs participants (i.e., First Saturdays and the Iditarod), convention participants and their spouses, new military families, and home school groups. Requests for Kenai Fjord cabin reservations begin the first week in January.

In the spring, school groups continue to comprise the Center's highest visitation, especially in April and May. Prior to the arrival of the first cruise ship, seasonal employees in the travel industry begin to frequent the visitor center. Local audiences purchase state park passes for the upcoming spring and summer. Cruise ships and bus tours start to arrive in Anchorage toward the end of May. At that point, daily visitation is strongly driven by either group travel passengers or school groups, and days with neither are visibly fewer. Convention

participants and their spouses, new military families, and small home school groups continue to make up some of the smaller but measurable numbers.

During summer cruise ship and bus tour passengers are number one in the Anchorage Alaska Center's visitation. Independent travelers are next (including international visitors and backpackers), followed by residents with visiting family from the lower 48. Kids' summer camps number several thousand, followed by small adventure groups (i.e., universities, clubs, or commercial).

By the middle of September, the Anchorage Alaska Center sees a gradual decline of cruise ship and bus tour passengers, independent travelers, and international travelers. From the middle of September to the beginning of November there can be a series of large conventions in Anchorage that can suddenly increase the Center's visitation.

Visitors enjoy an outing near Flattop Mountain, just east of Anchorage, Alaska. USFWS PHOTO BY RON LAUBENSTEIN



Visitor Group Types

Of the approximately 70,000 visitors to Anchorage APLIC each year, most can be categorized into the following group types, each with different needs for orientation, information, interpretation, and education:

Cruise ship and bus tour passengers in transit to their tours or to the airport.

Local residents with families and friends (sightseers, day hikers, casual campers, and cabin renters).

Military personnel from two large local military bases (a large number of this group are new to the state of Alaska).

Students (public schools, private schools, home school students, informal groups, and a variety of organizations).

Life-long learners (including general public, Elderhostel, and other organized groups).

Children who arrive with summer programs and after-school programs.

Independent travelers (RV users, campers, hikers, cabin renters).

Experienced backcountry users with a need for detailed information about specific areas.

International/non-English speaking visitors (often visiting during the off-season).

Tourism and outdoor recreation operators/providers.

Small organized tour groups.

The majority of visitors to Alaska—more than 60 percent of the 1.5 million annual visitors—come on cruise ships, then take buses or the Alaska Railroad to inland destinations. NPS PHOTO



Visitor Group Descriptions

Visitors to the Anchorage Alaska Center generally fit into these groups:

CRUISE SHIP PASSENGERS AND LAND-BASED TOUR GROUPS: ABOUT 60 PERCENT OF VISITORS

Characteristics: Passengers from cruise ships or bus tours who are arriving or departing from their tours, who are in transit to their tours, or on their way to the airport. Some experience Anchorage as a port of call. Most are senior citizens. Some cruise ship groups or bus groups have specific interests or topics. Most of these visitors are open to learning about Alaska’s public lands and issues.

Use of Anchorage Alaska Center: Cruise ship and bus tour passengers tend to participate in specific special programs (movies, walking tours, and demonstrations) or view the exhibits. Their visits to the Center vary from 15 minutes up to 2.5 hours. Many ask questions about local amenities (locations of pharmacies or grocery stores) unrelated to public lands.

Issues: Many visitors from cruise ships are turned back by the Federal Building’s security screening because many of them—especially the women—do not carry their identification cards with them off the ship. Many cruise ship groups arrive later in the day and do not have time to take full advantage of the Center. Most use its restrooms and are interested in Anchorage’s restaurants. Many shop in the Center’s bookstore. Many potential visitors from cruise ships are housed overnight in mid-town hotels and do not have transportation to the Center. Older visitors in this group require attention to safety and accessibility in the Center.

LOCAL RESIDENTS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL: ABOUT 10 PERCENT OF VISITORS

Characteristics: Anchorage residents who work downtown, local residents who bring

family/friends who are visiting from the lower 48 states (continental United States), and military families who have recently moved to Anchorage or elsewhere in the state.

Use of Anchorage Alaska Center: Most of these locals seek information about recreation. Many ask for trip-planning advice from the AAPLIC staff. Some locals come to the Center to view the exhibits, participate in specific special programs (movies, walking tours, and demonstrations), or purchase railroad tickets and/or state or federal land-use passes.

Issues: Many local visitors are disgruntled by the Federal Building’s security screening, the difficulty in finding downtown parking, or inexperienced seasonal staff who may not have the knowledge they want regarding Alaska’s public lands. Some local visitors think they can purchase hunting and fishing licenses at the Center.

CAMPERS AND INDEPENDENT TRAVELERS: ABOUT 10 PERCENT OF TOTAL VISITORS

Characteristics: Visitors who have rented recreational vehicles (RVs), are RV owners who have traveled the Alaska Highway, people who stay at hostels and bed and breakfasts, independent travelers who rent cars and travel from town to town utilizing hotels, or are backpackers from outside Anchorage.

Use of Anchorage Alaska Center: Most seek information for recreation including trip planning with AAPLIC staff, participate in specific special programs (movies, tours, and demonstrations), purchase railroad tickets or state or federal land-use passes. Many RV owners need information about campgrounds that have RV camping and allow RV waste dumping; many also need information about road conditions. Car travelers are interested in hotels and other amenities near public lands. Orientations about bear and other safety issues, wildlife etiquette,

and *Leave No Trace* are particularly important for campers and backpackers.

Issues: Downtown parking for RV owners is very difficult. Backpackers often do not want to run their bags through the Federal Building's security system; and those with white gas or bear spray are disqualified from entering the Center. There is no place to store backpacks once in the Center, so backpackers need to carry their packs into the theater. Visitors are disgruntled by security screening. Backpackers may require lengthy trip planning.

**NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL VISITORS:
ABOUT 5 PERCENT OF TOTAL VISITORS**

Characteristics: Many visitors from Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, Canada, and Germany make up a large percentage of the Center's international visitors. About 95 percent of international visitors have sufficient skills in English to get around Alaska. Generally, international

visitors are more independent and use multiple modes of recreation (i.e. staying at hostels, backpacking, taking overnight excursions, sea kayaking, etc.).

Use of Anchorage Alaska Center: Most seek information for recreation including intense trip-planning interchanges with AAPLIC staff. International visitors often attend multiple movies and programs, and often book passage on the Alaska Railroad.

Issues: People in this group often arrive in Alaska early or late in the shoulder seasons when recreational opportunities are minimal and some transportation is unavailable. Europeans perceive the Anchorage Alaska Center as a travel agency. AAPLIC hires staff that speak a variety of languages. International visitors can be misinformed about opportunities (i.e., viewing northern lights in the summer). Some are disgruntled by security screening or by the lack of recreational opportunities during the shoulder seasons.

The smaller percentage of visitors to AAPLIC (i.e., those who do not arrive on cruise ships) are comprised of local residents, military personnel, independent travelers from the "Lower 48" states, international visitors, and education groups. NPS PHOTO



SCHOOL AND EDUCATION GROUPS: ABOUT 15 PERCENT OF TOTAL VISITORS

Characteristics: Commonly, kindergarten through sixth grades visit the Center during the school year; often several classes at a time. Anchorage School District is the Center's largest partner. Schools from the surrounding vicinity, private, charter, and home schools are also represented as are informal groups such as CampFire, Boys and Girls Club, and Gymnastic Camp. The latter groups are represented in the summer as well as many children accompanying parents on travel. University classes, educational organizations, and some ElderHostel groups also frequent the Center.

Use of Anchorage Alaska Center: Education programs at the Center supplement the classes' curriculum on Alaskan animals, history, and general science. Most of these students participate in a topic-specific scavenger hunt in the AAPLIC exhibit area,

watch an age-appropriate public lands/wildlife movie, and listen to an interactive presentation by a park ranger. Teachers use the Center's library as a resource for educational books, kits, and other materials for use in the classroom. Summer programs include interpretive programs and movies of interest to children and ongoing scavenger hunts. The Center observes National Park Week, Constitution Week, and other calendar events. The Anchorage Alaska Center also offers an off-site puppet show addressing bear safety, wildlife etiquette, biodiversity, and the importance of parks and public lands.

Issues: Lack of permanent staffing for education reduces the potential to meet the needs of the educational groups in the community. Seasonal employees involved in delivering programs must be trained every year. Use of the Anchorage Alaska Center by educational groups during the shoulder season competes with the needs of summer visitors.



AAPLIC presents programs to the Anchorage School District, private and home schools, and groups such as Boys and Girls Clubs, CampFire, and Scouts. NPS PHOTO

Visitation

AAPLIC Annual Visitation Figures, 1991-2008						
1991	75,581		1997	120,611	2003	67,162
1992	101,907		1998	118,873	2004	68,490
1993	98,887		1999	71,571	2005	68,783
1994	96,677		2000	69,413	2006	59,447
1995	95,697		2001	82,960	2007	68,980
1996	98,718		2002	74,821	2008	77,141

AAPLIC Monthly Visitation Figures, 1999-2008										
	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
January	1,321	1,714	1,746	2,396	2,313	2,229	1,492	2,013	1,770	1,944
February	2,108	2,334	1,791	2,971	3,224	2,523	2,125	2,133	1,497	2,071
March	2,657	2,784	2,157	2,713	2,924	3,199	3,227	2,767	2,397	2,733
April	3,423	2,342	2,820	3,285	3,030	3,012	1,087	2,525	2,229	2,636
May	5,054	5,373	7,050	6,455	4,547	5,718	6,694	5,895	5,143	5,441
June	13,723	13,994	18,969	12,804	11,721	12,086	13,139	10,614	14,183	13,964
July	18,575	16,758	20,535	17,054	15,940	14,823	15,671	12,095	16,391	19,891
August	14,151	14,104	17,778	14,328	12,627	12,863	12,561	9,791	14,295	16,135
September	5,279	4,765	5,756	5,592	4,621	5,881	6,632	5,050	6,032	6,525
October	2,335	2,032	1,569	2,696	2,422	2,391	2,279	3,388	1,976	2,309
November	1,535	1,436	1,456	2,543	1,854	1,594	1,907	1,671	1,608	1,956
December	1,410	1,779	1,332	1,983	1,940	2,172	1,970	1,525	1,459	1,536
Totals	71,571	69,413	82,960	74,821	67,162	68,490	68,783	59,447	68,980	77,141

Visitors to the Alaska Public Lands Information Center in Anchorage would have opportunities to acknowledge the vastness, complexity, and diversity of public land resources in Alaska.

2005-2006 Alaska Visitor Statistics Collected by the Alaska Travel Industry and the Anchorage Convention & Visitors Bureau

- Cruise passengers are on the increase, with 976,000 in 2006 (compared to 590,000 non-cruise visitors; that number is also a nearly 30,000 increase over 2005 figures).
- Popular activities for repeat visitors include birdwatching (58%), fishing (50%), car rental (44%), tent camping (23%), traveling by recreational vehicle (21%), and winter activities (12%).

2005 NPS QUESTIONNAIRE

- A 2005 NPS questionnaire of 38,329 respondents conducted by the Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) indicated 72 percent of people surveyed are likely to visit Alaska in the next three years.
- Repeat visitors are significantly more likely to travel alone than first time visitors (11% vs. 4%).
- On average, repeat visitors stay in Alaska 20 percent longer than first time visitors (15.6 days vs. 12.6 days).
- Top interests are historical attractions (69%), day hikes (61%), wilderness recreation (53%), remote areas (39%), and backpacking (30%).
- Nearly half of all repeat visitors live in the West.

2006 IMAGES OF ALASKA PHONE SURVEY

- 59 percent of respondents have graduated college or completed some post-graduate education.
- A 2006 survey via phone interviews of 1,000 potential visitors and 400 actual visitors indicated visitors had an interest in seeing glaciers (93%), wildlife (92%), Denali/Mt. McKinley (91%), mountains (90%), Glacier Bay National Park (90%), Alaska's open spaces (88%), national and state parks (87%), and native villages, totems, native dances, and artwork (81%).
- 57 percent indicated they arrived in Alaska by air, 35 percent by driving, and 33 percent by cruise ship.
- 96 percent of visitors rate their Alaskan trip as good to excellent compared to other vacation experiences they've had.
- 48 percent are 55 or older, 20 percent are 45-54, and 18 percent are 44 or younger.
- Most visitors visit Alaska in June, July, and August.
- 74 percent indicated they do NOT have children living in their home.
- Visitors estimate the cost of their vacation to be \$2,430 per person.
- 55 percent of trips with children are taken by households headed up by "baby boomers" (someone born during the demographic birth boom between 1946 and 1964).
- On average, visitors spent 10.7 days in Alaska.
- Family travel is growing and Alaska is a popular multi-generational destination.
- The average age of visitors is 61.5 years.
- The average number of trips to Alaska for repeat visitors is 3.6 times.
- 66 percent of visitors are 55 years or older, 22 percent are 45-54, 11 percent are less than 44 years old.
- 18 percent have made 6 or more trips.

- The mean income of all visitors is \$89,900; the mean income of those 65 and older is \$63,100.
- 57 percent attended or graduated from college, with another 25 percent attending or completing graduate school.

CONVERSION STUDY OF 2005

The Conversion Study of 2005 conducted 16,922 phone interviews with those requesting Alaska travel information:

- The top activities for visitors were sightseeing (71%), native cultural attractions (62%), bird watching (35%), and backpacking/hiking (29%).
- 66 percent of visitors visited Anchorage, 53 percent visited Juneau, 52 percent visited Ketchikan, 51 percent visited Skagway, 48 percent visited Denali, 45 percent Glacier Bay, 41 percent Fairbanks and Seward, 32 percent the

Kenai Peninsula, 25 percent Prince William Sound, and 2 percent visited Nome.

- Most visitors visited Alaska in June, July, and August
- On average, non-cruise visitors spent 17.6 nights in Alaska; cruise visitors spent 6.9 nights.

ANCHORAGE CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU STATISTICS

- Visitors in Anchorage spend 4.3 nights here and 11.11 nights in Alaska
- 47 percent of Anchorage visitors are repeat visitors.
- The average age is 50 years old with 54 percent male and 46 percent female.
- 53 percent of Alaska visitors are college graduates with an average household income of \$90,000.

Hiking opportunities abound near Anchorage, Alaska.
USFWS PHOTO BY RON LAUBENSTEIN



Issues and Influences

NATIONAL INFLUENCES

National Park Service GPRA Strategic Plan

Within their Strategic Plan of 2002—mandated by the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993—the National Park Service set a number of long-term Mission Goals to be achieved by 2007. The NPS mission goals include:

- Preservation of Natural and Cultural Resources
- Natural and Cultural Resource Inventories
- Visitor Safety and Satisfaction with Park Facilities
- Visitor Understanding and Appreciation of Resources
- Visitor Demographics
- Workforce Diversity
- Employee Competencies Training/Certification
- Employee Safety
- Cost-effectiveness
- Partnerships
- Education Outreach
- Scientific and Historical Research
- International Assistance

Federal Policies and Laws

Park managers must abide by numerous federal policies and laws (e.g., the National Environmental Policy Act) when managing park resources.

Alaska Lands

The differences and complexity in agency mandates concerning management of Alaska public lands pose challenges for the seasonal staff regarding accurate explanation for visitors.

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

System of Alaska Centers

The ability of the four APLICs to develop a common identity and sense of cohesiveness is compromised by distance, agency differences, cost, facility names, and other factors. A recent logo change has not been comprehensively integrated into operations to be effective at all sites.

State Historic Preservation Office

Permission from the State Historic Preservation Office for facility changes



After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, security at all federal buildings—including the one where APLIC is located—was increased, as evidenced by this visitor screening checkpoint. NPS PHOTO

can be time-consuming and restrictive. Restrictions to retain the historical aspect of the property have affected improvements inside and outside the Center including signage and lighting.

General Services Administration (GSA)

The Anchorage Alaska Public Lands Information Center is housed in the Old Federal Building, which is managed by GSA. Sharing the space requires close coordination with other building tenants and the building manager.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT/VISITOR PROTECTION ISSUES

Security Requirements

Security mandates of the Federal Building cause a decrease in visitation at AAPLIC by requiring identification and screening of persons and possessions. Some potential visitors turn away when a line forms at the front door. Occasional poor customer service by weekend guards can turn away a higher than normal percentage of visitors. In addition to impacts on visitation, the cost of guards on weekends and federal holidays impacts the AAPLIC budget.

Safety Issues

The transition from the dark theater to the brightly lit glass walkway (via a set of stairs) is also a concern.

Exhibit Environmental Concerns

Inability to control environmental factors such as humidity increases the risk to

curatorial items. The present custodial contract does not include qualified cleaning of museum areas.

INTERPRETATION ISSUES

Inadequate Staffing

Staffing levels are inadequate to meet current visitor service needs. Current OFS requests outline the need for a permanent STF GS-7 Education Specialist and a GS-5 Park Ranger for special programs.

Lack of NPS Connections

Because staff members at the APLICs are often not recognized as being part of the National Park Service by other NPS employees, career potential for APLIC employees seems tentative at times. Inclusion on NPS e-mails, visitor statistics, and other NPS communications can also be sporadic.

Cramped Spaces

There is a need for more desk space, a podcast area, and storage—especially in summer when seasonal staff and additional brochures arrive.

Exhibit Challenges

There is no exhibit or display addressing the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. Plants are under-represented in the exhibits. There are concerns that some of the exhibits are too high for viewing by children and people in wheelchairs. Much of the exhibits' lettering is not universally accessible.

Numerous visitor guides and other information sources encourage local residents and out-of-state visitors to stop at the Anchorage APLIC (as well as the other three APLICs) for personal assistance in planning trips and recreational activities, obtaining safety information, and learning about Alaska's natural and cultural heritage.

Existing Conditions

FACILITY: ANCHORAGE ALASKA PUBLIC LANDS INFORMATION CENTER

Location, Hours of Operation, and Entry

The Anchorage Alaska Public Lands Public Information Center (AAPLIC) is located in leased space on the first floor of the historic Old Federal Building at the corner of “F” Street and 4th Avenue in downtown Anchorage. The Anchorage Alaska Center’s exhibits, office space, and auditorium consist of about 10,000 square feet.

The Anchorage Alaska Center is a primary visitor destination for orientation, information, and interpretation about Alaska’s public lands. Numerous visitor guides and other information sources encourage local residents and out-of-state visitors to stop at the Anchorage Alaska Center (as well as the other three APLICs) for personal assistance in planning trips and recreational activities, obtaining safety information, and learning about Alaska’s natural and cultural heritage.

The Anchorage Alaska Center is open seven days a week during the summer months

(mid-May to mid-September) from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Monday through Friday the rest of the year (September through May) from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The Center is open on the three federal holidays during the summer (Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day) and closed on the remainder of federal holidays.

Visitors have mentioned that the Anchorage Alaska Center is somewhat difficult to find and recognize given its location in an innocuous building of 1940 vintage. Historical restrictions prohibit signage which would more readily identify the area as a traditional National Park Service visitor center. There have been attempts to make the center more visible by putting out colorful signs and hanging a large banner on the front of the Federal Building. Although these efforts have had some effect, the majority of visitors still come by referral. Because the AAPLIC is kitty-corner across from the Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau’s “Log Cabin” and Visitor Information Center, AAPLIC receives a majority of its referrals from this location.



Banners installed after this LRIP was written may entice more visitors to enter the Anchorage Alaska Public Lands Information Center. NPS PHOTO

There is no dedicated parking lot for the Anchorage Alaska Center. There is ample parking on the streets surrounding the AAPLIC facility and parking garages one to two blocks away; however, parking spaces can be difficult to find and require payment (parking meters or garage fees).

In order to enter the visitor center, visitors must pass through a security check point in the historic Federal Building. The Federal Building is designated a class 4 security risk because a federal bankruptcy court is housed in the same building. Due to the security rating of the building, all visitors must show identification and have their person and possessions screened by security personnel.

Orientation and Information Area

Upon entering the facility, visitors enter a large open room with a high ceiling and visually attractive exhibits. They have an immediate view of the exhibits, a large round relief map directly in their path, and a staffed information desk to the left. Most of

the year, the Anchorage Alaska Center staff can see and greet visitors as they enter the exhibit area; in the summer, center staff are roving in a more central location. A number of brochure titles are accessible in storage cubicles behind the information desk. The counter space is generous.

Assistance with trip planning is an essential function offered by the AAPLIC. The majority of visitors who request assistance are interested in hiking, fishing, camping, and river trips mostly—but not always—in south-central Alaska. A large percentage of visitor questions concern access to and activities in Denali National Park.

Currently, space dedicated to detailed trip planning consists of a table and chair with maps and binders of information directly behind the self-service area. A self-service area displays brochures and other information on the more commonly requested parks, forests, and refuges. Benches in this area provide visitor seating while they are researching their trips.

A self-service area at AAPLIC displays free brochures and trip-planning information for visitors who want to plan their Alaska trip on their own; AAPLIC employees are nearby to answer visitors' questions. NPS PHOTO



Current information is posted on a bulletin board in the area. Staff are available for further questions. Sometimes it is necessary to refer visitors to other offices or agencies for more detailed information.

Two Geographic Information System (GIS) public use stations provide another valuable resource in trip planning. The GIS stations present statewide map information and mini-tours of selected National Park Service locations. More trail information, representation of other agency lands, and the inclusion of safety and etiquette information would further the value of this visitor tool.

The reality of travel in Alaska—including logistics (few roads), relative lack of support services, and safety considerations (changeable weather and possible wildlife encounters)—requires careful consideration and preparation. Trip planning also requires a visitor to carefully review up-to-date information about lodging and camping availability, reservation procedures, travel

options, clothing and equipment, and hunting and fishing regulations. Depending on their itinerary, some Alaska travelers need to know how to respond to potential life-threatening situations. The Anchorage Alaska Center staff performs a vital service by providing firsthand knowledge of procedures, current conditions, and safety issues.

Though trip-planning information is plentiful, there is a lack of information in foreign languages. While staff can refer international visitors to any number of tourist agencies that speak a particular language, there is a need for the translation of safety and outdoor etiquette materials.

Sales Area

Alaska Geographic operates throughout NPS areas in Alaska by way of a memorandum of agreement with the NPS and other agencies. The sales area offers a range of informational, interpretive, and educational materials related to Alaska's public lands. Products include



Alaska Geographic sells books and other education materials at AAPLIC; a part-time branch manager assists with sales and helps provide visitor information. NPS PHOTO

posters, maps, natural and cultural history publications, DVDs and videos, postcards, and children's books. Products are approved by the center's manager and must complement the interpretive themes, services, and furniture of the Center. A Scope of Sales is presently being jointly written to help direct the choice of products and service in the Alaska Geographic sales area. An Alaska Geographic staff person is available in the summer for five days a week and a branch manager has been assigned to the center for one day each week year-round. The Anchorage Alaska Center staff handles all sales transactions during the winter and on the weekends and many hours during the summer. Sales for the facility have ranged from \$70,000 to \$100,000 in recent years. The Anchorage Alaska Center receives \$8-10,000 each year in direct support from Alaska Geographic.

MEDIA CONDITIONS

Media Conditions: MIDS Summary

Media conditions for all NPS areas are now listed in the Servicewide Media Inventory Database System (MIDS); the listing of media conditions for the AAPLIC is listed under ANCH in the Alaska Region. The Center's 2007 MIDS summary reflects the AAPLIC's current media conditions; updates were made as recently as 2007. As of 2007 there were 43 records for interpretive media at AAPLIC: 3 were Summary Records for Audiovisual (AV), Wayside Exhibits, and Historically Furnished areas (there are no Waysides or Furnished areas at AAPLIC); 1 Interpretive Planning document; 6 Exhibits records; and 33 AV programs that are shown intermittently in the Center's theater. Center staff will continue to update MIDS data when new media is installed and time allows.

Website

Information about all four of the Anchorage Centers' interpretive and educational programs for general audiences and school groups is posted on the Internet at www.nps.gov/aplic. The Anchorage Alaska Center maintains the website and ensures current entries for all four APLIC facilities. This website provides information in a variety

of formats. There are brochures that can be downloaded as PDF files; there is a virtual tour of the facility; and there are specialized sections devoted to a wide range of topics such as education, renting a cabin, and finding a campground. As the website increases in sophistication and content, the number of requests for information via mail has decreased dramatically. (Note: The APLIC Interagency Committee made 'website improvement' one of its six priority recommendations in 2005. A subcommittee has been established to evaluate the APLIC website's content, design, and alternative hosts. The Anchorage Alaska Center is presently in the process of building a new website.)

AAPLIC Exhibits

The current exhibits were planned, designed, and installed by Harpers Ferry Center in 1987. Exhibits in the room's interior are organized by regions of the state and laid out in the shape of Alaska: Far North, Northwest, Interior, South Central, Southeast, and Southwest. This design, however, is not readily apparent to the public and is a topic for emphasis by staff and interpreters. Each regional exhibit features an Alaskan map highlighting the region location; color photographs with captions of the people, scenery, native populations, recreational activities, and resources; display cases with cultural artifacts and animals; and a video laser disk station with a variety of short clips on related topics.

Many of the photographs have cracked or peeled and some are outdated, though 10 percent of the images in poorest condition were replaced in 2005. The laser disk players and related equipment are somewhat fragile and unreliable, and are in the process of being converted to newer technology. The content on some of the clips is outdated. Few of the exhibits can be considered "hands-on." There is also a dearth of information on flora and few of the exhibits could be considered child-friendly. Additionally, the exhibits fail to meet several Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards for text label size and placement. Although films in the exhibit are



Most of the existing exhibits at AAPLIC have been in place since the facility opened in 1987 and are in need of major renovation. NPS PHOTO

captioned, there are no captions for non-English speaking visitors.

The main room of the visitor center—comprising the permanent museum exhibit area, the information desk and self-service trip-planning area, and the Alaska Geographic bookstore—received new carpet and paint in a 2005 renovation.

Audiovisual

The Anchorage Alaska Center has a 117-seat theater, which is used for a variety of interpretive and educational programs. The seating is on a floor that rises to the back with aisles on either side. There is limited handicapped seating in the back rows of the theater. The deteriorated plywood sub-flooring was repaired and strengthened during a 2005 renovation, eliminating the safety hazards of soft spots and loose seats. The wall at the front of the auditorium has been painted with a reflective surface to act as an unlimited projection screen. Lighting in the theatre can be easily modified; efforts have been made to accommodate visually impaired visitors by reducing glare and peripheral lighting. The ceiling of the theater presently consists of white acoustic tiles which need to be painted black or some other dark color to provide for better projection. A significant PMIS request will address many of the issues in the AAPLIC's aging theater. An exit to the front of the auditorium is closed because it leads to restricted court areas of the Old Federal Building; however, the theater meets fire codes for emergency exits.

The theater's audiovisual equipment has recently been upgraded, including new speakers and the permanent loan of a new digital projector from agency partner U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Projectors are available for slides, rarely-used films, DVDs and videos. A computer secured at the front podium allows for use of more modern and more intensely illuminated PowerPoint programs. Periodically, live programs are projected with a camera onto the front wall screen as they are taking place. There are outlets for two microphones at the front of the auditorium and an access panel for control of the lights at the front and back

of the theater and in the AV booth. Newly adjusted lighting now illuminates speakers at the front of the auditorium. Replacement of burned out bulbs above the seating area requires scaffolding.

The Anchorage Alaska Center staff offers a schedule of films during the summer and films are often shown as part of the education program to student groups in the winter. Most of the Anchorage Alaska Center's films do not yet comply with ADA standards for closed captioning. The Center has not yet purchased audio enhancers for the hearing impaired. A recently funded PMIS project addressing accessibility will remedy this issue.

The Center's internet and phone cabling were also upgraded in 2005, increasing bandwidth to 10 megabytes. This increased capacity now enables auditorium presenters to access the internet from the podium and allow staff to take advantage of video conferencing equipment and distance learning programming.

Publications

Brochures and Folders

The Anchorage Alaska Center offers an extensive selection of free recreational brochures, guides, maps, park newspapers, informational packets, hunting and fishing regulations, safety information, wildlife and wildland etiquette materials, and access to natural and cultural history reference books. Publications are made available on-site and by mail. Much of the free printed matter has been generated by the four Alaska Public Lands information Centers and their member agencies. Many are composites of information spanning multiple agencies providing visitors with a synopsis of opportunities.

The brochures are updated annually and many are made available as downloadable PDFs on the AAPLIC website. Trip planning via the web has increased dramatically, reducing the need for mailouts. Although a few commonly used brochures have been translated to foreign languages, others are needed.

Newspaper

In 2004 the AAPLIC produced a newspaper, "The Corridor," which covers recreational opportunities and places of interest between Anchorage and Fairbanks. "The Corridor" newspaper supplanted the need for mailing numerous individual brochures.

INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS: PERSONAL SERVICES

The Center's staff offers a variety of personal services including one-on-one assistance in trip planning (by phone, mail, or in person), orientations, and interpretive programs. Staff members are also assigned to roving positions in the visitor center to provide informal interpretation. Most but not all of the formal and informal programs occur on-site. Occasionally, the Anchorage Alaska Center participates in off-site special programs, events, and conferences. The puppet show and walking tour also occur off-site in schools and downtown Anchorage, respectively.

The range of personal services for visitors depends on staffing levels and time of year. Staff employees offer an ambitious schedule

of orientation and interpretive programs during the summer with walks, talks, and illustrated programs in the auditorium, around the round relief map, in the self-service area, and within several blocks of the facility. Interpretive opportunities have included storytelling and demonstrations, orientations to Alaskan geography and climate, walking tours, visits from live Alaskan animals, native dance, readings from authors, music performances, and programs by authors, experts, scientists, and staff. Topics have included Alaska's public use cabins, bear safety, wolves, kayaking, volcanoes, wildflowers, flightseeing, mountaineering, Denali National Park, polar bears, dogsledding, Alaskan history, and wilderness adventures. All programs are connected to the Center's interpretive themes.

Programs are curtailed during the winter because of limited staffing and lower visitation. The focus of programming also changes from out-of-state visitors to local residents. Topics of the winter programs have included avalanche safety, participation in art walks (First Fridays), where to cut a Christmas tree, preparing to hike



AAPLIC hires about 10 seasonal employees and interns each summer to help with the summer rush of around 80,000 visitors. NPS PHOTO

the Chilkoot Trail, and aurora-viewing. In early 2006 the Center presented the “First Saturday Recreation Series” in January, February, March, and April with the intent of reaching Anchorage residents with special topic speakers. The program was successful in strengthening participation by partner agencies, attracting new partners such as the retailer REI, drawing hundreds of local residents to the Center, raising awareness of Center services, and boosting bookstore sales. Unfortunately, staffing levels make this additional venue difficult to support.

INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS: URBAN EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The National Park Service Alaska Region Urban Education staff uses the Center as a staging area for a variety of programs. Each year, two park rangers are hired seasonally (from October through May) to assist with delivery of diverse programs.

On-site educational programs represent the multiagency mission of Center. A half-hour interactive introductory presentation to all student groups outlines the concept of public lands as “great places for recreation, resources, and wildlife.” Programs generally include a topic-related film and a scavenger hunt. Scavenger hunts address the topics of Alaskan wildlife, geography, and birds. Other on-site program offerings include the story of discovery at Klondike and gold-panning demonstration, live animal presentations delivered by the Bird Treatment and Learning Center, and programs on marine science in partnership with the Alaska SeaLife Center. Groups are in the Center for 1.5 to 2 hours and range in age from preschool to university. Presentations and written materials are standards-based and age-appropriate. In 2005 an NPS funding request to increase the amount of leasing funds resulted in the addition of an education classroom. The room was furnished with tables and chairs through a corporate donation, and it has multiple network connections for computers. A second projector and screen has been set up to provide a smaller, alternative viewing venue to the main auditorium.

Off-site programs include a 30-45 minute puppet show featuring fairy tale characters and Alaskan animals. Written for the K-3 audience, the performance addresses important wildlife and wildland concepts including bear safety, endangered species, biodiversity, and wildlife etiquette. The program is delivered in schools throughout the area and has traveled to Kotzebue, Glenallen, and Yakutat. The off-site program emphasizes the importance of national parks and preservation and protection of wild places.

School programs are scheduled in partnership with the Community Resources Division of the Anchorage School District. Private and home schools and informal groups such as CampFire and Scouts schedule directly. Feedback about the programs is solicited with an evaluation from the Anchorage School District and also obtained anecdotally.

Requests for services both on- and off-site often exceed staffing capabilities. The education programs presently share the auditorium and exhibit area with casual winter visitors. Manipulative materials (hides, skulls, and antlers) supporting the education programs are dispersed in the visitor area. Increased visitation by the general public during the shoulder seasons can create conflicting space use.

Educational kits on a variety of topics complementing the themes of the Center are available free of charge to schools and youth groups. The kits contain lessons, activities, supporting materials and objects which supplement the teaching of the cultural and natural history of Alaska’s public lands. The kits can be reserved and are generally checked out for a two-week period. Eighteen kits are available; most can be mailed to schools in and outside the Anchorage area. A specialized kit called the “Alaska Mystery Box” was developed for long-term loan to assist classrooms in studying Alaskan history and culture, wildlife, geography, and geology. The kit, funded by the Loyal Order of the Moose, is loaned for several months to classrooms outside of Alaska.

The GEOBEAR Project is an innovative technique for learning about Alaskan animals. Fifteen GEOBEARs are available for adoption by first grade classrooms throughout the state. Each bear, equipped with tape recorders, camera, and film are the focus of a learning adventure to four national parks in Alaska. Classes are encouraged to communicate with rangers at each park via tape or letter. In return, rangers send standards-based activities concerning Alaskan animals back to the classrooms. At present, GEOBEAR's itinerary includes learning about otters in Kenai Fjords, caribou in Western Arctic Parklands, humpback whales in Glacier Bay, and wolves in Denali. The GEOBEAR Project helps teachers recognize parks as educational resources while assisting classrooms in their studies of Alaskan animals.

The Anchorage Alaska Center Education staff also presents teacher workshops and represents the National Park Service and the AAPLIC at educational meetings, conferences, and special events. Education has developed an activity book and associated website entitled "Our Wild Neighbors;" this latter project is consistently one of the more visited pages on the Anchorage Alaska Center site. More than 200 schools in the lower 48 states link to this website as a permanent resource on Alaskan animals.

The Anchorage Alaska Center maintains a lending library containing educational videos and books, Alaska-specific curricula, and other materials. All materials may be reserved and checked out by interested parties. Staff also provides consultation to teachers, parks, and other agency personnel.

During the school year, AAPLIC hires two seasonal park rangers to assist with urban education programs and classroom tours. NPS PHOTO



2006 Anchorage Alaska Public Lands Information Center Interpretive Staff

PERMANENT STAFF

Position Title	Status	Grade	FTE*
Manager	Permanent	GS-13	1.0
Park Ranger (Education)	Permanent	GS-11	1.0
Park Ranger (Programs)	Permanent	GS-09	1.0
Park Ranger (VS/Fee)	Permanent	GS-09	1.0
Administrative Clerk	Permanent	GS-05	1.0
Information Clerk	Permanent	GS-02	0.4
Sub-total FTEs*			4.4 (5.4 if Ad. Clerk is filled)

WINTER/SCHOOL YEAR STAFF

Park Ranger (Education)	Seasonal	GS-05	0.5
Park Ranger (Education)	Seasonal	GS-04	0.5
Visitor Use Assistant	Seasonal	GS-04	0.4
Sub-total FTEs*			1.4

SUMMER STAFF

Park Ranger (Avian Flu)**	Seasonal	GS-05	0.4**
Park Ranger (Interp.)	Seasonal	GS-07	0.3
Park Ranger (Interp.)	Seasonal	GS-05	0.3
Park Ranger (Interp.)	Seasonal	GS-05	0.3
Visitor Use Assistant	Seasonal	GS-04	0.29
Visitor Use Assistant	Seasonal	GS-04	0.25
Visitor Use Assistant	Seasonal	GS-04	0.25
YCC Intern	Seasonal	N/A	0.2
YCC Intern	Seasonal	N/A	0.2
YCC Intern	Seasonal	N/A	0.2
Sub-total FTEs*			2.69
Total FTEs* for FY 2006			8.49

* FTE stands for "Full-Time Equivalency," (one work-year; 2,088 hours)

** New position funded external to AAPLIC budget for summer of 2006 to manage public information of avian influenza; this FTE is not charged to AAPLIC's ceiling.

Staff members are also assigned to roving positions in the visitor center to provide informal interpretation.



Part 2: Future Interpretive Program

This part of the long-range interpretive plan describes the mix of facilities and services, both non-personal (media) and personal (programs), that are necessary to communicate park themes and facilitate identified visitor experiences (DO-6, page 9).

Introduction

During the week of June 26-30, 2006, a Long-Range Interpretive Planning (LRIP) recommendations workshop was held at the Anchorage Alaska Public Lands Information Center. The workshop was attended by the Center's four permanent staff, eight APLIC partners, three media specialists from the National Park Service's Harpers Ferry Center, and the Alaska Region's Chief of Interpretation and Education. The objectives of this workshop were to: (1) review the LRIP's foundation sections; and (2) make recommendations on the future of the Anchorage APLIC considering the following three scenarios:

- Short-term Recommendations for the Anchorage Alaska Center – improvements that can be made to the Center during its current lease agreement through 2010.
- Long-term Recommendations for the Anchorage Alaska Center – improvements that can be made to the Center if it stays at its current location beyond 2010.
- Relocation Recommendations – factors and functions to be considered if the Center were to move to a different location in Anchorage beyond 2010.

During the recommendations workshop, participants were guided by these three scenarios and formatted recommendations into the following areas:

- Exterior Elements
- Entry and Lobby
- Exhibits
- Trip Planning
- Publications
- Theater
- Video in Exhibits
- GIS Touchscreen
- Website
- Personal Services, Education and Staffing

In November 2006, APLIC senior staff reviewed the workshop recommendations and created a draft of prioritized actions in each of the categories. A draft revision of the LRIP was delivered in December of 2006, including a chart connecting interpretive opportunities to thematic messages. Additional background materials were created/captured for inclusion in the document through the busy summer of 2007. A draft was also sent to participating partner agencies for review.

The following pages summarize the highlights of recommendations for the Anchorage Alaska Center.

Previous page: During a LRIP Workshop held at APLIC in June 2006, participants brainstormed and discussed short-term and long-term recommendations for staff and partners to accomplish in the next five to ten years. NPS PHOTO

Right: Iditarod storytellers are part of APLIC's annual celebration of the Iditarod Trail sled dog race. Located near the start of the race, the Center is a great place to warm up while enjoying exhibits. NPS PHOTO



Short-Term Recommendations – Anchorage Alaska Center Remains at the Old Federal Building

The Center will stay in the Old Federal Building until its current lease agreement expires in 2010. During the next four years, it is recommended that the Center staff accomplish a number of improvements. Some of these improvements are relatively inexpensive; others require larger funding sources. Some can be accomplished in a few months; others require a year or two. Some can be accomplished using only Center staff; others require cooperation with other

government entities and/or working with private contractors.

If, during the next four years, a decision is made to keep the Center at its current location, the Center staff should strive to accomplish these short-term recommendations. If, however, a decision is made to move the Center to a new location, the staff should attempt only the inexpensive, easy-to-accomplish recommendations.



One of the short-term recommendations calls for the existing “Alaska Region” banners to be lowered or removed. NPS PHOTO

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION BASED ON AAPLIC INTERPRETIVE THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

Themes and Sub-Themes	Thematic Statements	Existing Opportunities for Development of Themes	Additional Opportunities of Interest	Process Requirements and Other Considerations	Quality of Visitor Experience and Relationship to Mission
<p>1. A Land of Vastness and Grandeur:</p> <p>Alaska’s public lands reflect a vastness and grandeur unparalleled elsewhere.</p>	<p>a. The magnitude and size of Alaska’s public lands are awe-inspiring.</p> <p>b. Alaska’s public lands are comprised of extremes, contrasts, and superlatives.</p> <p>c. Alaska’s public lands encompass geological, biological and cultural features that are unique to Alaska and the world.</p>	<p>On-site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibit area design subtly demonstrates diversity of public lands. Selected interpretive programs demonstrate themes in this category. Films develop affective and intellectual messages in specific area. Education introduction and scavenger hunt addresses (a, b, c). <p>Off-site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education mailout directly addresses the elements of this theme. General Packet 	<p>On-site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibits need to address plants and geology. Need an exhibit defining public lands: what they are, where they are, the magnitude of their size, and their uniqueness. Need additional emphasis in interpretive and education introduction and puppet script to address uniqueness and comparative size. Need to enhance film introductions and 2-minute message with these public lands themes. Web content needs narrative to address theme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project requires dollars and some redesign for exhibit and addition of plants and geology. 	<p>Qualities of experience: <i>Awe, curiosity, interest, intrigue, surprise, amazement, affective elements.</i></p> <p><i>Priority #1: Essential to visitor understanding of resource.</i></p> <p><i>Unique message inherent to the visitor experience at this center.</i></p> <p>Addresses I&E Renaissance Action Plan - use of technology</p>
<p>2. Science and Nature – A Rich Natural Diversity:</p> <p>Alaska’s public lands encompass large pristine areas and an unparalleled richness of geological and biological diversity.</p>	<p>a. Alaska’s public lands are “living laboratories” providing opportunities to study natural processes and the effects of human activities.</p> <p>b. Public lands encompass largely intact ecosystems on which plant and animal communities depend. Some of these habitat and species are considered threatened or endangered.</p> <p>c. Alaska’s public lands contain undisturbed ecological communities and geological settings that offer a framework in which to observe change. As such they have global significance.</p>	<p>On-site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary exhibits with science focus. Interpretive Programs: Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, science programs, Bird Treatment & Learning Center and Zoo programs address themes in this category. Temporary exhibit and brochure on global climate change addresses c. Bear, walrus and other webcams available for visitors. Alaska Park Science and other science books on sale in bookstore. <p>Off-site:</p> <p>Our Wild Neighbors educational workbook addresses (a and b).</p>	<p>On-site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could connect with long-distance park interpretive programs. Need elaboration or science links on website. Integrate real science (water tests, etc.) with Education and Interpretive Programs. Community Lecture Series on science subjects. Site Explorer topic with regressing glaciers. Additional use of brochures and displays. More science-focused programs appropriate to summer visitors. <p>Off-site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Podcasts with park and partner scientists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires partnering with scientific expertise of agencies for in-depth knowledge and expertise. Additional funding for integrating science in education programs. Guard costs complicate evening and weekend programs. Funding needed for additions to Site Explorer. 	<p>Qualities of experience: <i>Curiosity, concern, interest, study, respect, introspection, surprise, intellectual elements.</i></p> <p><i>Priority #4: Essential to understanding of resource and enhancement of visitor experience.</i></p> <p>Addresses Centennial Initiative: <i>Fosters an exceptional learning opportunity that connects people to parks.</i></p> <p>Addresses I&E Renaissance Action Plan – use of technology, reaching diverse audiences, and embracing partners.</p>

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION BASED ON AAPLIC INTERPRETIVE THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

Themes and Sub-Themes	Thematic Statements	Existing Opportunities for Development of Themes	Additional Opportunities of Interest	Process Requirements and Other Considerations	Quality of Visitor Experience and Relationship to Mission
<p><u>3. Opportunities for Personal Growth and Learning:</u></p> <p>Alaska’s public lands allow visitors to experience solitude, beauty, discovery, inspiration, knowledge, and insight.</p>	<p>a. Public lands provide a spectrum of recreational opportunities from family outings to high-risk, extreme adventures.</p> <p>b. Many of Alaska’s public lands are true <i>wilderness</i>, challenging visitors’ understanding of risk and self-reliance.</p> <p>c. Knowledge, preparation, and flexibility are key to a safe and enjoyable trip on Alaska’s public lands.</p> <p>d. Alaska’s public lands are places of learning for visitors of all ages. These lands present the opportunity for intellectual and emotional connections.</p>	<p>On-site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trip-planning/informal interp. • Safety & Informational Brochures: Bear Safety, Fishing in Bear Country, Calling for Safety. • Interpretive programs on: gold-panning and dog-sledding demos, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, bore tides. • Temporary bear safety display. • Wilderness curriculum on <i>ParkWise</i>. • Wildlands Update includes safety messages and closures. • Sale of safety books. <p>Off-site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PDFs on web. • Bear safety messages in puppet show. • Bear safety decal for kids. 	<p>On-site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional orientations on safety. • Composite safety display/temporary or permanent (used to exist in center). • Bear Safety film offered as loaner to visitors. • Additional special program speakers on specific destinations/activities. • Safety tab on website. <p>Off-site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survival kit for students. • Bear and Moose Safety program for students. • Podcasts on safety issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need additional education staff for development of programs/kits. • Additional special program staff to arrange speakers. • Seasonal staff need to be trained well on safety issues. • Some safety issues require extensive background or knowledge of area/skill. 	<p>Qualities of experience: <i>Adventure, challenge, relaxation, discovery, awe, inspirational, insightful, fear, attentiveness, curiosity</i></p> <p>Priority #2a: <i>Essential to safety of visitors, protection of resource, and meaningful experiences.</i></p> <p>Addresses Centennial Initiative of leveraging superior recreational experiences.</p> <p>Addresses I&E Renaissance Action Plan – use of technology, reaching diverse audiences, and embracing community partners.</p>
<p><u>4. Debate, Conflict, and Collaboration – Differing Land Management Philosophies:</u></p> <p>State and federal management of public land resources reflects widely differing philosophies that spark and feed debate regarding protection, wise use, and conservation.</p>	<p>a. Land managing agencies have differing missions that provide a spectrum of opportunities Alaska public lands use.</p> <p>b. Use of public land resources is a balancing act among political, social, economic, and biological perspectives. Dialogue and civic engagement are essential.</p> <p>c. The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) and Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) marked a major turning point in Alaska’s history and land ownership. Educating the public about key points in these laws helps increase understanding of resource issues that remain controversial today.</p>	<p>On-site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ANILCA film (a, b, c). • Informal/roving interpretation. • Introduction to films briefly touch on some of the elements of the themes. • Temporary ANILCA display. • Sign at front of exhibit area describes participating agencies and their missions. • Statewide APLIC brochure. 	<p>On-site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included in the exhibit describing ANILCA and public lands • Statewide APLIC brochure needs additional narrative about ANILCA • Exhibit in skywalk representing agency personnel (bus wrap) • 2-minute film intro by manager about ANILCA and agency participation (same as mentioned in theme [1]). <p>Off-site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alaska Studies curriculum in classrooms and on web (a, b, c). • ANILCA section on website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need additional education staff for development of programs. • Funding for skywalk buswrap. 	<p>Qualities of experience: <i>Curiosity, interest, intellectual intrigue, confusion.</i></p> <p>Priority #3: Essential to understanding of resource and legislated purpose of facility.</p> <p>Addresses I&E Renaissance Action Plan – use of technology, reaching diverse audiences, and embracing community partners.</p>

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION BASED ON AAPLIC INTERPRETIVE THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

Themes and Sub-Themes	Thematic Statements	Existing Opportunities for Development of Themes	Additional Opportunities of Interest	Process Requirements and Other Considerations	Quality of Visitor Experience and Relationship to Mission
<p><u>5. Stewardship as a Key to Conservation:</u></p> <p>By recognizing the fundamental needs and limits of the land and its resources, stewardship ensures the integrity of natural areas and opportunities for quality experiences.</p>	<p>a. While individual actions may not appear to have immediate impact on resources, they may result in lasting impacts on fragile ecosystems and cultural settings.</p> <p>b. People can take action to minimize their impacts by practicing wildland and wildlife etiquette.</p> <p>c. Lifestyle choices at home can contribute to the conservation of public lands.</p>	<p>On-site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Wildlife decals for classrooms attending an educational program (a, b). Leave No Trace exhibit and brochures. Informal/roving interpretation. Brochures on campfire safety and wildfires. Global Climate Change rack card. Emphasis on green maintenance by recycling, reducing electricity, purchasing bus passes. <p>Off-site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Wildlife & Bear Safety decal mailouts (a and b). Our Wild Neighbors workbook and website addresses (a, b, c). 	<p>On-site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibit/brochure on lifestyle choices at home. Additional message included in formal programs. Sign indicating facility's commitment to sustainability. Facility/NPS stresses additional aspects of sustainable operations– purchasing hybrid car, etc. Books with topic of green living on sale. <p>Off-site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum-based program on lifestyle choices for classroom and web. Leave No Trace/ Wildlife Etiquette educational and interpretive programs and kits for adults and students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need additional education staff for development of programs/kits. Need funds for development of exhibit/brochure. 	<p>Qualities of Experience: Curiosity, responsibility, concern, pride, commitment, stewardship.</p> <p>Priority #2b: Essential to protection of resource and visitor experience.</p> <p>Addresses Centennial Initiative of demonstrating environmental leadership.</p>
<p><u>6. Cultural Lifestyles, Human History, and Living on the Land:</u></p> <p>From prehistory into the present, Alaska's public lands and resources support a rich and diverse human history.</p>	<p>a. Alaska's vast wealth of natural resources has always attracted humans from diverse backgrounds and with varying lifestyles, traditions, and values.</p> <p>b. Evidence of human occupation and activities are represented by an abundance of material objects and remains found on Alaska's public lands. This evidence is important to the scientific investigation of human history and needs to be protected.</p> <p>c. For thousands of years, Alaska has been a home to indigenous people whose descendants still live and work here, perpetuating many of their ancestors' ways of life.</p>	<p>On-site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpretive Programs: Captain Cook Walk, gold-panning demonstration, vary with expertise of special speakers. Informal/Roving interpretation. Films: Days of Adventure, Dreams of Gold, Alaska at War. Referrals to Alaska Native Heritage Center & Ship Creek demonstrations. Archeological/subsistence brochures. Exhibits of archaeological objects/cultural lifestyles Books on culture/history on sale. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speakers need to be chosen to represent native/historical themes. Display or temporary exhibit on subsistence or archaeology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships with Alaska Native Heritage Center. Need additional staffing for special programming. 	<p>Qualities of Experience: Respect, commonality, protectiveness, curiosity, interest</p> <p>Priority #5: Essential to understanding of resource and enhancement of visitor experience.</p> <p>Addresses Centennial Initiative: Fosters an exceptional learning opportunity that connects people to parks.</p> <p>Addresses I&E Renaissance Action Plan – reaching diverse audiences and embracing community partners.</p>

Multi-Year Implementation Plan

Actions, divided into annual, achievable steps are reproduced in the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) (DO-6, page 6).

The measure of success of any plan is the extent to which it is implemented. Initial implementation of strategies needs to be both realistic and flexible. The charts on the following pages outline an initial blueprint for the park's interpretive programs. Because funding opportunities and priorities often change, park management may need to adjust the implementation strategies to adapt to changing conditions.

The park interpretive staff and key park partners should meet each year to draft an Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) for each new fiscal year based on funding opportunities and coordination with other projects.

AAPLIC Interpretive Media – Non-Personal Services									
Priority Tasks	Partners	Short-Term			Long-Term			Out Years (6 & 7)	
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Marketing									
VH	Implement the marketing recommendations of the AAPLIC Interagency Committee	Committee/ AAPLIC	XXX	XXX					
H	Develop/purchase comprehensive contact list for different venues	AAPLIC/ATIA		XXX	XXX				
H	Market AAPLIC for inclusion in related commercial visitor publications	AAPLIC/ANHA		XXX	XXX				
M	Develop display for conventions, shows, etc.	AAPLIC				XXX	XXX		
-	Install waysides about public lands along coastal trail	RTCA/Muni						XXX	XXX
-	Install plasma screens for porch and remote areas	AAPLIC				XXX	XXX		
-	Install Geocache associated with AAPLIC	AAPLIC/ GIS/GSA					XXX	XXX	
Exhibits									
-	Rehab Exhibits to better interpret AAPLIC and its themes	AAPLIC/ Partners			XXX	XXX			
<u>Exterior/Lobby:</u>									
H	Thin/reduce trees on corner planters; add sculptural interpretive elements	AAPLIC/GSA	XXX						
H	Redo entry banner and related exterior signage	AAPLIC/GSA	XXX	XXX					
H	Improve aesthetics and functionality of security operation	AAPLIC/GSA					XXX	XXX	
H	Replace exterior security sign with welcoming message	AAPLIC/GSA				XXX	XXX		
L	Add key attracting interpretive element to draw visitors in and past security foyer	AAPLIC/GSA					XXX	XXX	
<u>Add Universal Accessibility:</u>									
VH	Re-do exhibit labels (font/contrast, etc.)	AAPLIC				XXX	XXX		
VH	Implement accessibility recommendations from USFWS report	AAPLIC				XXX	XXX		
VH	Analyze lighting (add/re-aim fixtures) Request HFC analysis	AAPLIC		XXX	XXX				
VH	Install induction loops in theatre and education area for listening devices	AAPLIC				XXX	XXX		
H	Consider accessibility of ANHA sales items	ANHA				XXX	XXX		
M	Improve acoustics/noise abatement	AAPLIC/GSA					XXX	XXX	

AAPLIC Interpretive Media – Non-Personal Services

Priority Tasks	Partners	Short-Term			Long-Term			Out Years (6 & 7)	
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Exhibits (continued)									
<u>Add Universal Accessibility:</u>									
L	Improve international component of Alaska public lands/safety messages	AAPLIC				XXX	XXX		
<u>Interior Exhibits:</u>									
VH	Add large public lands map	AAPLIC		XXX			XXX	XXX	
H	Request Curatorial Upkeep and Evaluation/Convert museum space for custodial	AAPLIC/AKR							
H	Remove signs denoting regions/ utilize back wall for interpretive mural	AAPLIC					XXX	XXX	
H	Remove Bering Sea reef exhibit	AAPLIC			XXX	XXX			
H	Use theater tunnel for interpretive opportunity concerning agency identity	AAPLIC			XXX	XXX			
H	Use other wall spaces for interpretive messages	AAPLIC				XXX	XXX		
M	Remove select exhibits to open up space (selected Aleutian Islands)	AAPLIC				XXX	XXX		
M	Replace images with quotes or larger format images/add geology and plants	AAPLIC		XXX	XXX				
M	Add listening devices with thematic stories	AAPLIC		XXX	XXX				
L	Reduce height of topo model rail or replace with larger map	AAPLIC		XXX	XXX				
Trip Planning									
H	Redesign self-service trip-planning area and replace counters for more efficient use	AAPLIC		XXX	XXX				
H	Develop staffed portable trip-planning kiosk in front of building	AAPLIC					XXX	XXX	
H	Incorporate visitor observation comment board/log book (wildlife, trails, etc.)	AAPLIC		XXX	XXX				
H	Incorporate Denali info. from wipe board to plasma screen (AV)	AAPLIC			XXX	XXX			
H	Cell phone and IPOD capabilities for trip-planning information	AAPLIC			XXX	XXX			
L	Add reservation kiosk (for Denali reservations, cabins, etc.)	AAPLIC		XXX	XXX				
L	Provide an "away" space for quiet contemplation and/or reading	AAPLIC			XXX	XXX			
-	Co-locate or integrate with ACVB/ USGS for day-use or local trip planning	AAPLIC/ ACVB/USGS				XXX	XXX		
-	Develop temporary display on safety	AAPLIC			XXX	XXX			
Publications									
H	Ensure brochures and publications integrate with center's interpretive themes	AAPLIC/ANHA		XXX	XXX				
M	Identify and prioritize additional interagency site bulletins (by topics)	AAPLIC		XXX	XXX				
L	Provide cues for publications in exhibits	AAPLIC/ANHA				XXX	XXX		
Theater									
H	Install fan or air-conditioning in AV booth	AAPLIC/GSA	XXX	XXX					
H	Install lighting, automatic doors, and new soundboard and amplifier	AAPLIC		XXX	XXX				

AAPLIC Interpretive Media – Non-Personal Services

Priority Tasks	Partners	Short-Term			Long-Term			Out Years (6 & 7)	
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Theater (continued)									
H Request replacement high-definition projector	AAPLIC		XXX	XXX					
H Provide better signage/directions to theater (floor markings or display)	AAPLIC		XXX	XXX					
- Procure "now showing" video screen in visitor center	AAPLIC			XXX	XXX				
H Install perforated screen to better integrate audio and video channels for films	AAPLIC	XXX	XXX						
H Repaint the ceiling and speaker screen black (or replace tiles)	AAPLIC	XXX	XXX						
H Ensure films are ADA compliance (open/closed captioning and descriptive audio)	AAPLIC/AKR		XXX						
H Create introduction to films	AAPLIC				XXX	XXX			
H Add individual wireless headsets for hard of hearing	AAPLIC			XXX	XXX				
H Upgrade the ANILCA film program to high-definition quality	AAPLIC	XXX	XXX						
- Produce a 20-minute movie on public lands	AAPLIC			XXX	XXX				
M Expand projection of short subjects to fill the 10 minutes/hour of "dead air" in theater	AAPLIC			XXX	XXX				
Video Exhibits									
H Replace phones with cones or directional overhead speakers for health reasons	AAPLIC	XXX	XXX						
H Replace laserdisc-based video technology with DVD or memory stick-based system	AAPLIC	XXX	XXX						
H Re-record narration and soundtracks of the exhibit stations	AAAPLIC		XXX	XXX					
H Add printer capacity to GIS public use kiosk	AAPLIC/GIS		XXX	XXX					
M Replace video station monitors with wide-aspect monitors or touch-screens	AAPLIC	XXX	XXX						
- Share material on GIS kiosk with website and video stations	AAPLIC/GIS		XXX	XXX					
Web Access									
H Migrate all content to the "Common Spot" management system provided by NPS	AAPLIC	XXX	XXX	XXX					
- Redesign website to topical and geographical based organizational structure	Committee/AAPLIC			XXX	XXX				
- Web content addresses public lands theme of vastness/lifestyle choices	AAPLIC			XXX	XXX				
Facility Needs									
H Install sink and storage area in education area	AAPLIC			XXX	XXX				
H Replace security and public address system	AAPLIC	XXX	XXX						
H Replace lighting and window covering in exhibit center	AAPLIC		XXX	XXX					
H Repaint and re-carpet education room and administration offices	AAPLIC			XXX	XXX				
- Improve bus loading/unloading for schools and disabled	AAPLIC/Muni	XXX	XXX						

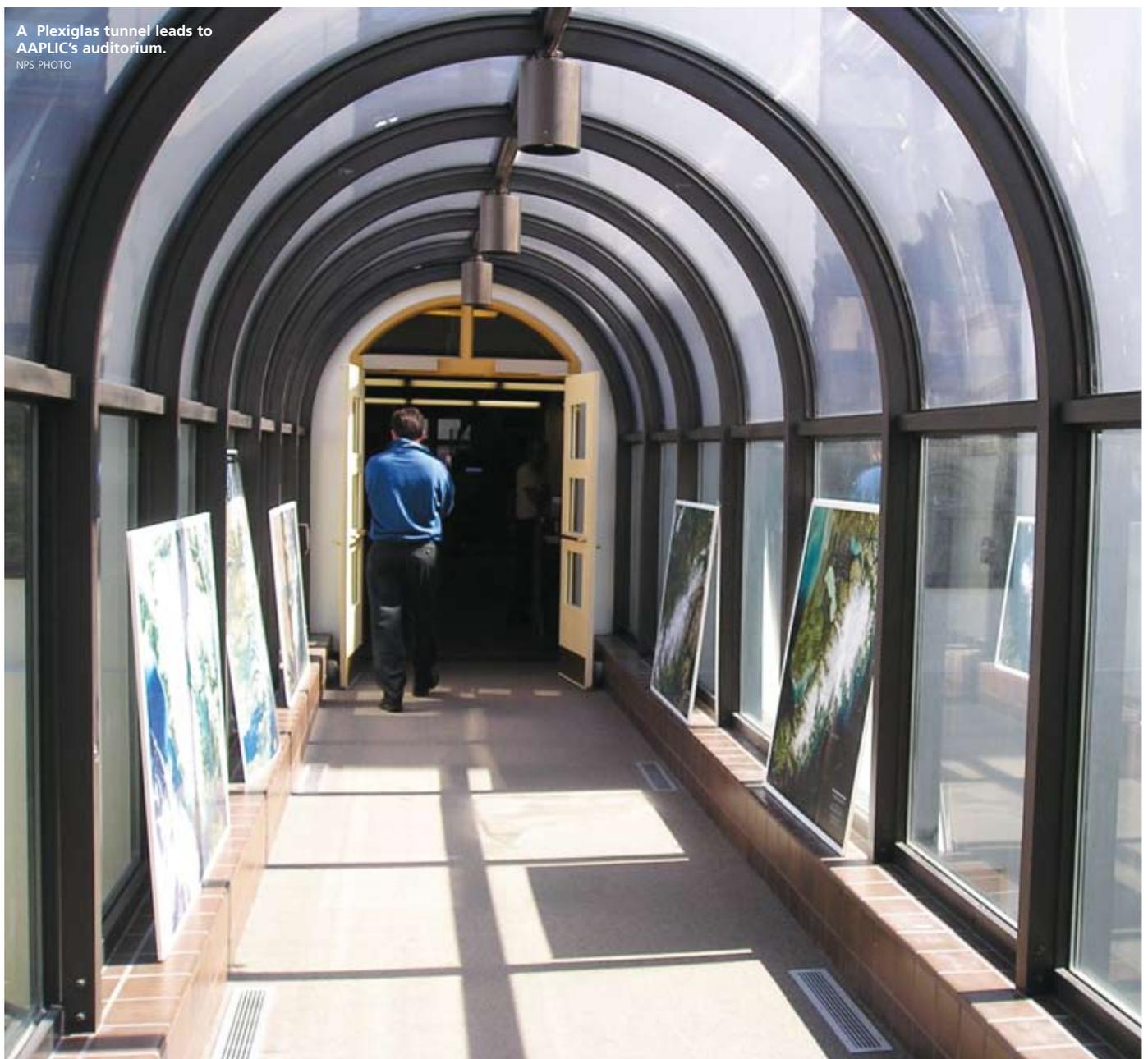
AAPLIC Interpretive Media – Personal Services

Priority Tasks	Partners	Short-Term			Long-Term			Out Years (6 & 7)	
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Educational Programming									
- Initiate long-distance education program sharing with parks and partners*	AAPLIC/parks	XXX	XXX						
- Develop educational kit/podcasts/ programs/temporary display on safety and survival	AAPLIC	XXX	XXX						
- Develop program, kit, poster, and temporary display on green living	AAPLIC	XXX	XXX						
- Develop program, kit and temporary display on <i>Leave No Trace</i> and wildlife etiquette	AAPLIC	XXX	XXX						
- Develop age-appropriate programs and kit on climate change*	AAPLIC/KEFJ		XXX	XXX					
- Update teacher/student website with emerging issues above	Committee/ AAPLIC	XXX	XXX						
- Update kits with park/agency information appropriate to topic	AAPLIC	XXX	XXX						
- Expand educational offerings associated with calendar events (Earth Science Week, Kids Day, etc.)*	AAPLIC	XXX	XXX						
- Celebrate National Park Week each year*	AAPLIC/ANHA		XXX	XXX					
- Offer a "Careers in National Parks" program for high school students	AAPLIC			XXX	XXX				
- Develop pre and post materials for educational visits	AAPLIC	XXX	XXX						
- Assist in the development of child-friendly, interactive exhibits	AAPLIC					XXX	XXX		
- Develop software for scheduling and tabulating education statistics*	AAPLIC		XXX	XXX					
- Partner with community groups in offering outdoor activities with a park theme*	AAPLIC/ Partners/	XXX	XXX						
- Develop assessment methods for all education programs	AAPLIC		XXX	XXX					
- Investigate partnership with Princess Tours for addressing young travelers*	AAPLIC/AKR/	XXX	XXX						
Interpretive Programming									
- Offer wintertime community lecture series (to address local residents)*	AAPLIC/ Partners	XXX	XXX						
- Offer family outings with community partners in the Anchorage area*	AAPLIC/ Partner	XXX	XXX						
- Participate in First Friday and other community events*	AAPLIC/ACVB			XXX	XXX				
- Optimize opportunities for calendar events at the visitor center*	AAPLIC/ partners		XXX	XXX					
- Develop specific safety orientations (bear safety, wildlife etiquette, etc.)	AAPLIC		XXX	XXX					
- Develop podcasts and website elements for emerging issues (climate change, LNT, and green living)*	AAPLIC/AKR		XXX	XXX					
Staffing Needs									
- Hire a GS-7/9 subject-to-furlough park ranger position responsible for Special Programs, VIP and YCC programs	AAPLIC/ALC		XXX	XXX					
- Hire a GS-7/9 subject-to-furlough park ranger for urban ed. operations	AAPLIC/ALC	XXX	XXX						
- Create a GS-11/12 educational and partnership position	AAPLIC/ALC					XXX	XXX		

AAPLIC Interpretive Media – Personal Services

Priority Tasks	Partners	Short-Term			Long-Term			Out Years (6 & 7)	
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Staffing Needs (continued)									
- Hire a GS-5 administrative technician for office support	AAPLIC/ALC					XXX	XXX		
- Investigate an Interagency Personnel Act to share positions between NPS and another federal agency	AAPLIC/Committee		XXX	XXX					
- Invite an ACVB employee or partners to assist with Anchorage information or project work	AAPLIC/Partners	XXX							
- Investigate funding or sponsors for volunteer housing	AAPLIC/Partners	XXX							

* Educational and interpretive program goals in 2008 are contingent on additional staffing.



A Plexiglas tunnel leads to AAPLIC's auditorium.
NPS PHOTO

Long-Term Recommendations – Anchorage Alaska Center Vacates the Old Federal Building

What if? During the LRIP planning workshop in 2006, the participants agreed to consider the question “What if the Center found a location in Anchorage that was even better than the current location?”

What if we did not have to grapple with the challenge of the Center’s existing location within the confines of the Old Federal Building; or its security procedures; or its space limitations; or its lack of parking spaces; or whatever. If our planning options had a “clean slate,” what would truly be the ideal situation?

So, the planning team took some time to list the factors and conditions that should be considered if, over the next four years, an alternative location to the Old Federal Courthouse is found. If the Center were to move in 2010, there would be an exponential increase in funding requirements, expenditure of Center staff time, and cooperation with other government entities, and working with private contractors. At this stage, these “what if” factors and conditions are simply listed below in the following topical categories:

EXTERIOR/ENTRY/LOBBY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Location needs to have easy access for cruise, bus, and foot traffic.
- Linked to downtown development and design.
- Proximity to important partners and, perhaps, shared space with partners.
- Needs to be close to AVCB’s “Log Cabin” Visitor Center to keep referrals.
- Must have adequate parking, either next to the facility or close to it.
- Needs a passenger drop-off area for cars and buses (and a waiting area for buses).
- Elevated building with access to its roof and/or large windows with a panoramic view of some of the public lands surrounding Anchorage.

- Good approach and inviting “curb appeal”—ability to design or redesign exterior to give hint about what lies inside facility (without constraints of historic building).
- If considering rehabilitating a historic structure, consult with State Historic Preservation Office to see what can and cannot be done.
- Outdoor space for picnics, resting, and phone calls; seen as a public “gathering place.”
- Include a few permanent exterior interpretive exhibits.
- Develop a sculpture (of people or a bronze topographic model) that engages visitors.
- Close to an outdoor element of a natural environment (e.g., Ship Creek, Coastal Trail).
- Develop interpretative element/s to draw visitors in to the Center
- No security check barriers.

NON-PERSONAL SERVICES (INTERPRETIVE MEDIA)

Interior/Exhibit Recommendations

- Adequate square footage for large exhibits. High ceilings, big space to design appropriate exhibits (such as large murals and maps) to interpret vastness and showcase inspirational elements of Alaska.
- Keep space big enough to integrate exhibits, trip planning, and desk activities.
- Sufficient office space for permanent and seasonal employees; storage for books, supplies and exhibits; and for agency meeting rooms.
- Include “statehood” significance story, and “territory” and “district” stories.
- Keep administration and visitor spaces together.
- Include a multiagency/education classroom space.
- Dedicated space suitable for hands-on, curriculum-based educational activities.

Off-site educational activities involve personnel from agencies, organizations and local residents as well as visitors to the Anchorage area. Here onlookers attend the release back into the wild of an injured adult bald eagle that was rehabilitated by special volunteers at the Bird Treatment and Learning Center in Anchorage. The event was part of the USFWS sponsored Migratory Bird Day celebration held at the Alaska Zoo in May.

USFWS PHOTO BY RON LAUBENSTEIN

Audiovisual Recommendations

- A theater at least equal to that of the current theater, in terms of size and capacity. (This is a critical factor—a theater requires a high-ceilinged, large open space.)
- 150-seat, sloped floor theater that meets HFC’s audiovisual standards.
- Include monitors, plasma screens, projection screen, and other equipment that would allow display of large-format images that convey the vastness and grandeur of Alaska. (Equipment needs to be versatile, offer multiple functions, and be modular to allow expansion and adoption of new functions as budget and technology permit.)
- Should include individual, self-directed interactive media. (However, the rapid evolution of media technology makes it difficult to select appropriate technology.)

- Should include more portable technologies such as Ipods, Blackberries, cell phones/PDAs that allow for podcasts, data packs, walking/driving tours, GIS maps, etc.

PERSONAL SERVICES, EDUCATION, AND STAFFING

- Depending on the facility size, staffing to cover the Anchorage Center’s functions may need to increase. The exact number of FTEs (Full-Time Equivalencies) must be calculated after the building, functions, and hours of operations are determined.
- Should the AAPLIC move into a facility not leased by GSA, additional personnel costs must be added to the Center’s operational budget to cover salaries for maintenance and security to perform duties currently covered by GSA.



Library Needs

The Center's library consists of 699 volumes of hardbound books, with other material in the form of periodicals, bound and unbound reports, binders of other papers/reports, and a host of other reference materials. The entire library is cataloged in cooperation with the Pacific West Region's library program.

- Finalize a library scope of collection.
- Acquire a broader base of reference material, including new information on Alaska's pioneer and homestead history, and update other reference materials.

Collection Needs

The Anchorage Alaska Public Lands Information Center has approximately 200 objects in its museum collection. Items in this collection either belong to the National Park Service or are on loan from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the Anchorage Museum of History and Art. While in the Center, all curated objects are handled by the Alaska Regional Curator.

Outstanding curatorial needs are:

- hands-on interpretive items (new mounts should not be accessioned).
- better climate control.
- more energy-efficient lighting that meets curatorial and exhibit standards.
- an administrative history of the Center.



The view north from the rooftop of the Old Federal Building (not open to the public). NPS PHOTO

Planning Team

Anchorage Alaska Public Lands Information Center (AAPLIC)

Alex Carter, AAPLIC Manager
Joanne Welch, Urban Education
Chris D. Smith, Special Programs
Ryan Smith, Visitor Services

Alaska Regional Office (AKSO)

Brad Bennett, former Chief of Interpretation and Education
Brad Richie, Architect

Harpers Ferry Center (HFC)

Jack Spinnler, Interpretive Planner
David Guiney, Exhibits Planner
Mark Southern, Chief of Audiovisual Arts

AAPLIC Partners

Kevin Painter, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Gene Ervine, U.S. Bureau of Land Management
Kristi Kantola, U.S. Forest Service
Nancy Long, Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game
Odin Brudie, Alaska Dept. of Community and Economic Development
Charles Money, Alaska Geographic Association

Most of the National Park Service permanent employees duty-stationed at AAPLIC and many of AAPLIC's partners participated in the LRIP Workshops that resulted in this plan. NPS PHOTO





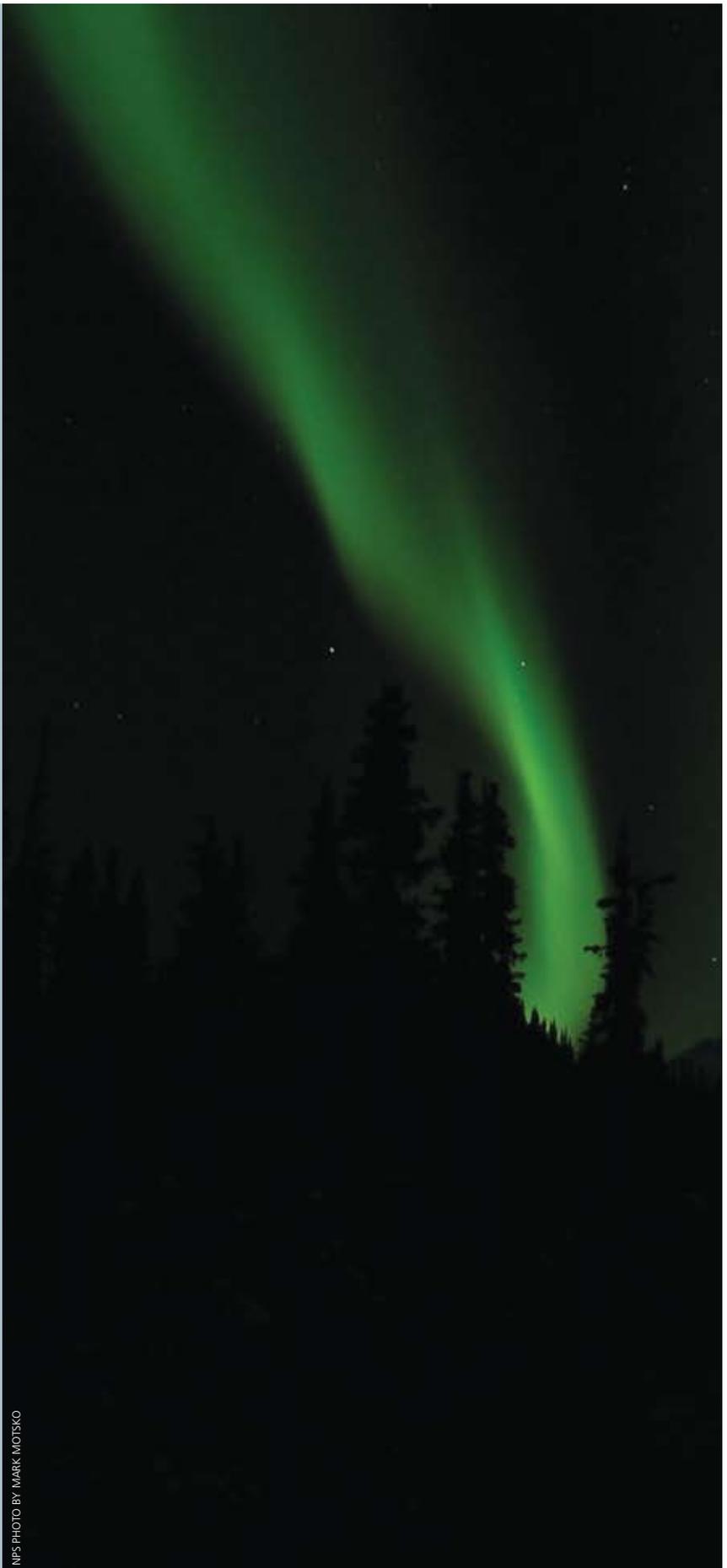
*Home of the North Star,
I roam the night sky
as well as the north woods.
Nothing escapes me.
They have called me
Owner of the Earth,
Pride of the Woodland,
Forest Apple, Light Foot,
believing my strength flows
from a secret honey in my paws.
What they do not know
who worship me in fear
is the hunger:
the immensity of the search.*

— SHEILA NICKERSON
ALASKA POET LAUREATE, 1977-1981
“GRIZZLY BEAR”

Opposite: The Kennecott Mill operated from 1911 to 1938, when it was abandoned. The historic mining town of Kennecott was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1978 and was acquired by the National Park Service in 1998.
NPS PHOTO BY CHRIS SMITH

Right: A soft glow from the northern lights paint a dark sky in the Mount Healy area of Denali National Park and Preserve.

Please reduce, reuse, and pass this publication along to other readers.



NPS PHOTO BY MARK MOTSKO



Alaska Public Lands Information Center
605 West 4th Ave, Suite. #105
Anchorage, AK 99501

907-644- 3661

www.nps.gov/aplic/center

