

Administration of Barack Obama, 2015

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Proposed Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Designations for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

April 3, 2015

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Pursuant to section 304(g)(1) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), Public Law 96–487, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has revised the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and completed an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The revised CCP will guide the Service's management of the refuge for the next 15 years.

Based on the best available science and extensive public comment, the Service's preferred alternative recommends 12.28 million acres—including the Coastal Plain—for designation as wilderness. The Service also recommends four rivers—the Atigun, Hulahula, Kongakut, and Marsh Fork Canning—for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

The Service's revised CCP and final EIS address a variety of needs, including preserving subsistence uses of local inhabitants, protecting fish and wildlife populations and their habitats, and ensuring opportunities for fish- and wildlife-dependent recreation and other public uses. The revised CCP also strengthens wildlife and habitat monitoring as well as the monitoring of public use of the refuge so as to better respond to changing conditions on the landscape, particularly those associated with climate change.

With these points in mind, and pursuant to the Wilderness Act of 1964, I am recommending that the Congress pass legislation making additions to the National Wilderness Preservation System and the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System that the Service proposed as part of the revised CCP and final EIS for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. This area is one of the most beautiful, undisturbed places in the world. It is a national treasure and should be permanently protected through legislation for future generations.

Attached is the letter of recommendation from the Secretary of the Interior and a map of the area.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John A. Boehner, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., President of the Senate.

Categories: Communications to Congress : Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, proposed wilderness and wild and scenic river designations, letter.

Subjects: Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; Environment : Conservation :: Promotion efforts.

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