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general management plan  
land protection plan  
wilderness suitability review

# ANIAKCHAK



NATIONAL MONUMENT AND PRESERVE / ALASKA

ON MICROFILM

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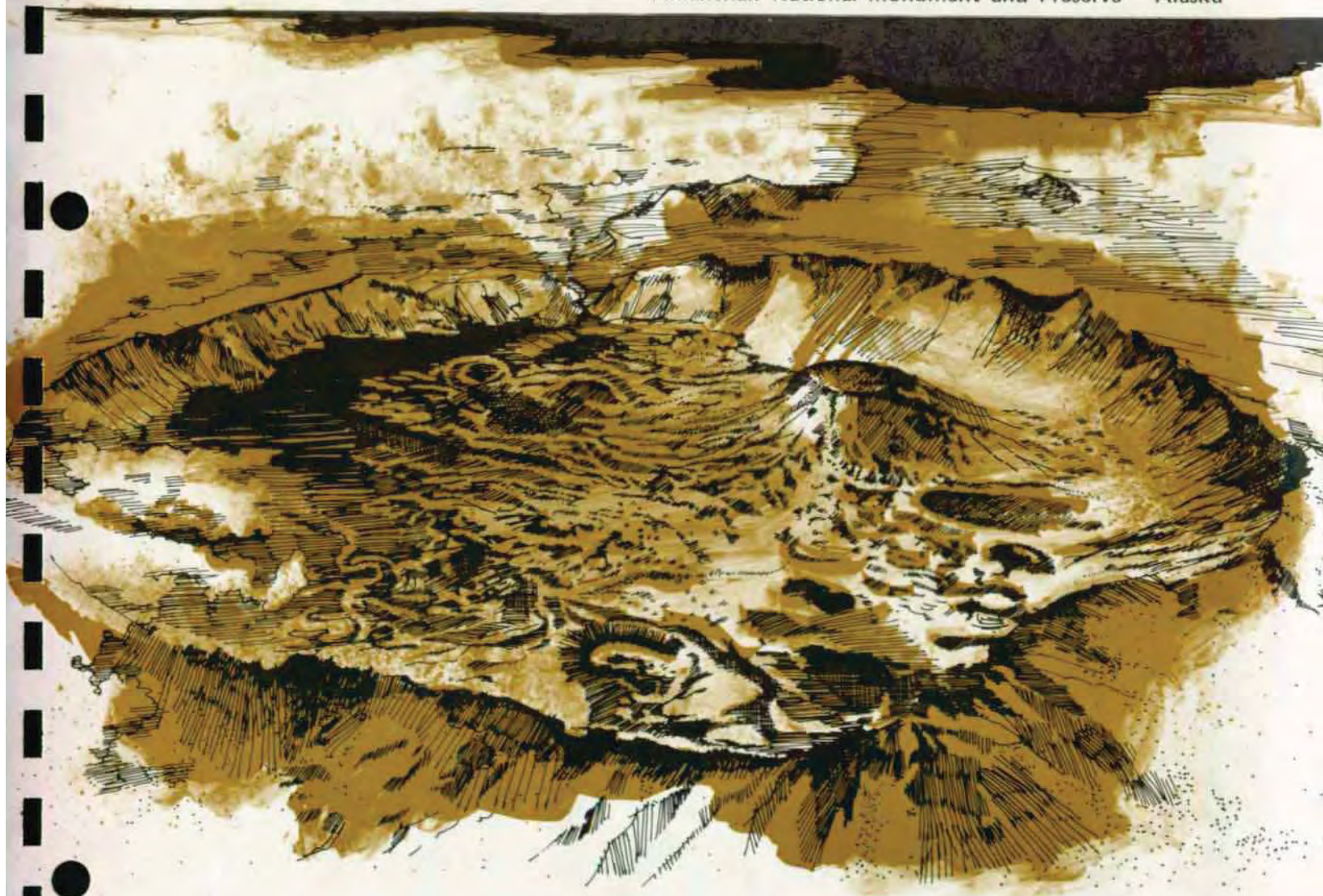
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General Management Plan  
Land Protection Plan  
Wilderness Suitability Review

Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve Alaska



## SUMMARY

The following document provides a description and a plan for use and management of Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve, a 600,000-acre federal park area on the Alaska Peninsula.

The plan presented by the National Park Service will continue existing types and levels of public use at Aniakchak, monitor these uses, and increase resource management and protection. Because good management requires resource knowledge, identifying research priorities and initiating surveys are important elements of the proposal.

The plan also calls for several National Park Service staff positions to provide permanent and seasonal resource protection, assistance to visitors, and liaison with local communities. No permanent trails or campgrounds within the monument or preserve are proposed. The only permanent facility considered to be appropriate for visitor use to the public is the cabin at the mouth of the Aniakchak River and privately owned cabins associated with two hunting camps that are operated by guides with exclusive hunting guide areas in the preserve.

Results of a wilderness suitability review conclude that all federal lands within the monument and preserve on which there are no pending selections (64 percent of the total) are suitable. The lands on which there are pending selections either for surface or subsurface oil and gas rights total 34 percent, and are placed in a category of suitability pending. The remaining 2 percent of lands are not federally owned and are considered not suitable.

On the primary land protection issue--oil and gas rights that may eventually be conveyed to the Koniag Regional Native Corporation--the National Park Service proposes to acquire these rights, giving priority to areas of high resource value and visitor use.



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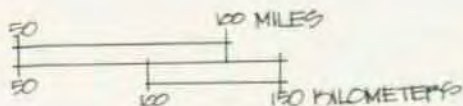
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## ABBREVIATIONS

- ACMP - Alaska Coastal Management Program
- ADF&G - Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- ANCSA - Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 USC 1601 et seq.)
- ATV - All-terrain vehicle, see ORV
- ANILCA - Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (16 USC 3101)
- BLM - Bureau of Land Management
- BBNC - Bristol Bay Native Corporation
- CFR - Code of Federal Regulations (e.g., 36 CFR 13)
- DM - Departmental Manual, U.S. Department of the Interior (e.g., 60 DM 4.2)
- EIS - Environmental Impact Statement
- FWS - Fish and Wildlife Service
- NEPA - National Environmental Policy Act
- NPS - National Park Service
- ORV - Any motor vehicle, including all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), designed for or capable of cross-country travel on or immediately over land, water, sand, snow, ice, marsh, wetland, or other natural terrain, except snowmachines or snowmobiles (36 CFR 13.1).
- USC - United States Code



## REGION and VICINITY

### ANIAKCHAK

NATIONAL MONUMENT AND PRESERVE  
 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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 DEC | JULY 85

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## INTRODUCTION

### ANIAKCHAK NATIONAL MONUMENT AND PRESERVE

Midway down the wild and roadless Alaska Peninsula lies one of the nation's most fascinating recent volcanic features, Aniakchak--a 6-mile-wide, 2,000-foot-deep caldera formed by the collapse of a once lofty 7,000-foot mountain. This great caldera's location inland in a region of frequent clouds and stormy weather meant Aniakchak remained unknown to all but native inhabitants until the 1920s. Then, geographers remotely plotting the location of mountains along the caldera's rim noticed their strange circular configuration, and eventually in 1922, a field party gazed down into the caldera and brought back news of its immense proportions.

Although there are a dozen calderas on the Alaska Peninsula, Aniakchak is one of the largest. Its volcanic history is a fascinating story readable from its exposed "internal plumbing." About 3,500 years ago, there was a dramatic explosion and subsequent loss of 3,000 feet or so of the upper mountain, followed by collapse of the remainder to form a relatively flat-floored, ash-filled bowl. On a number of occasions after the original formation, lesser eruptions have created the small internal cones, lava or fresh pumice flows, and collapsed explosion pits that now dot the caldera floor. Since some explosion features seem to have been created underwater, it appears the caldera may once have contained a deep snow-fed lake. Eventually at a low place along the rim, lake waters began to spill out and, over time, the fast-flowing stream has created a great breach in the rim--the Gates--which now allows the Aniakchak River to begin its tumultuous 32-mile course southeastward to the Pacific Ocean.

Aniakchak's most recent volcanic activity was in 1931 when a small but impressive explosion pit was added to the pockmarked caldera floor, and many thousands of tons of ash were scattered within the caldera and as much as 40 miles away in the small villages. This event, fortunately documented "before and after" by an indomitable geologist and Jesuit priest named Father Hubbard, provides an important benchmark by which to judge the rate vegetation and wildlife will return to the devastated caldera. Mosses, grasses, and more complex flowering plants have invaded in sheltered spots; brown bear and caribou once again are beginning to enter, along with an occasional wolf; and runs of sockeye salmon now return up the Aniakchak River all the way to Surprise Lake, the river's small shallow headwater lake remaining in the caldera.

In creating Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve, Congress not only recognized the unique geological significance of the caldera, but also acknowledged the outstanding wildlife and recreational values of the Aniakchak River by designating it a wild river within the national wild and scenic rivers system. Boundaries of the area also include a vast sweep of treeless tundra and lowland ecosystem characterizing the lower Alaska Peninsula.



Evidence of ancient human history at Aniakchak is minimal, but perhaps eventually more will be known of this important transition zone between ancestral Aleuts and Eskimos. Local village residents can provide a fascinating and valuable perspective on how native lifestyles have evolved.

#### LEGISLATIVE AND PLANNING HISTORY

Aniakchak National Monument was initially created as a unit of the national park system by presidential proclamation in December 1978. It was subsequently designated a monument and preserve by section 201(1) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) on December 2, 1980. Section 1301 of that act requires the development of a "conservation and management plan" for Aniakchak by December 2, 1985, generally specifies the procedures for developing the plan, and outlines its minimum content. Section 601 designates the Aniakchak as a wild river, and section 1317 requires a review of suitability for wilderness designation.

The National Park Service has an established procedure and sequence by which it is meeting Aniakchak's planning and management goals as mandated not only by ANILCA but also by the 1916 act establishing the National Park Service, the 1964 Wilderness Act, the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, the 1968 Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and various other federal acts and regulations.

Basically, this procedure requires definition of the major issues and clarification of objectives for which Aniakchak was originally set aside, followed by public discussion of issues and various feasible management alternatives. A single alternative, or a combination thereof, was chosen for presentation as the general management plan. This plan specifies the basic strategies to reach resource management and visitor use objectives; it also contains sections specifically guiding implementation of the more complex strategies, such as those for natural and cultural resource protection, research, land protection or acquisition, and facilities development.

For Aniakchak, issues and objectives were first outlined in 1983 in a publicly reviewed document, the Statement for Management, which served as an interim guide to management during preparation of the general management plan. Fieldwork and data collection took place in the summer and fall of 1983, and in February 1984, a workbook on issues and alternatives was presented for informal public review. A Draft General Management Plan/Environmental Assessment was released in April 1985. It presented a number of alternatives for management of Aniakchak and an analysis of the environmental consequences of implementing each alternative. The document was available for public review and comment for more than six months. Public meetings were held in King Salmon and Anchorage. This final plan benefited from the ideas, concerns, and preferences expressed in the meetings and in letters received on the draft plan. The general management plan represents the National Park



Service's proposed plan for conservation and management of Aniakchak for the next 5 to 10 years.

It was determined that the actions proposed in this plan will not result in major environmental effects, and the preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required. A finding of no significant impact (FONSI) is included in appendix O.

### PLANNING ISSUES AND MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

The major issues to be addressed in this general management plan and associated plans, as presented in previous public review documents, are identified below. Detailed management objectives from the Statement for Management are given in appendix A.

#### Resource Conservation, Management, and Research

ANILCA established Aniakchak to preserve and protect its natural and cultural resources. Provision was also made for continued opportunity for subsistence uses, where traditional, and sportfishing in the monument. The preserve provides opportunities for subsistence uses, where traditional, sport hunting and fishing, as well as trapping.

The issue is the means to ensure that the opportunity for traditional uses can be maintained while preserving the natural and cultural resources of the area. This will require knowledge of these resources through research and an ability to recognize and analyze impacts of use.

#### Public Use Activities

Subsistence uses, where traditional, and sportfishing in the monument and preserve, and trapping and sport hunting in the preserve are traditional consumptive uses in Aniakchak. Nonconsumptive recreational uses such as hiking, rafting, photography, and wilderness exploration have not been common in Aniakchak. Whereas increases in subsistence use are not anticipated, increases in recreational use (which includes sport hunting and fishing, as well as nonconsumptive uses) are likely. They are expected to focus on the caldera, the Aniakchak River and its mouth, the Meshik River, and Meshik Lake, where there is some potential for competition with subsistence users and for impacts on the resources.

The major issue is whether to manage the expected increased recreational use or to simply accept it.

### Visitor Services and Development

Closely tied to decisions on management of recreational use are decisions on what degree of interpretation, physical assistance, or protection from potential danger to provide recreational visitors.

### Administrative Staff and Development

Aniakchak is a remote area. Currently it is managed from King Salmon, 140 miles to the north, by the superintendent of Katmai National Park and Preserve. No permanent full-time staff is assigned nor are there any administrative facilities within the area or in nearby villages.

The issue to be addressed in this plan is a determination of the level of administrative support needed to effectively manage Aniakchak.

### Private Interests within Aniakchak

As various provisions of ANILCA and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) are implemented, the pattern of private landownership in Aniakchak is becoming clearer. Currently 152,780 acres of mineral in-lieu selections (oil and gas only) made by the Kodiak Regional Native Corporation (Koniag, Inc.); two native allotments; and a parcel of state land are the only unresolved or clearly nonfederal properties within the monument and preserve.

The issue is what private use and development might occur on such lands and whether it would be detrimental to the purposes of the area. If detrimental development is likely, measures must be considered to protect the values of adjacent federal lands within the monument and preserve.

### Response to External Influences

Various potential changes in land use, transportation, and community character in the Aniakchak region are being discussed. Of most serious concern to monument/preserve management would be discovery and development of oil, gas, or hard-rock minerals. This discovery might bring new or enlarged neighboring communities, a pipeline or transport corridor across the peninsula, and easier access to the area.

The issue is the level of NPS participation in regional planning and how the monument/preserve would respond to external development from the perspective of its mandate of resource conservation and protection.

## SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CHANGES

### COMMENTS ON THE MARCH 1985 DRAFT GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The public review period for the draft plan should be extended.

The plans should be made easier to read.

It should be stated how the plans can be changed.

It should be stated how local people can get NPS jobs.

Group sizes should be limited.

Surficial geological studies should be allowed.

Subsistence has priority over other uses.

Public meetings should be held in the lower 48 states.

There was objection to fee acquisition of the native allotments in the land protection plan.

Specific wilderness recommendations should be made in the general management plan.

Aniakchak should be closed to the recreational use of snowmachines.

Inholdings should be acquired through exchange or purchase.

The National Park Service should work closely with the Bureau of Land Management to identify land for exchanges.

Environmental impact statements should be done for all exchanges and Congress should review all such exchanges.

Subsistence map is not accurate.

Clarification is needed of NPS management intent for access and circulation, natural resources, water rights, navigability, and public use.

Scientific study program should be developed.

### CHANGES MADE IN RESPONSE TO MARCH 1985 DRAFT PLAN COMMENTS

The "Legislative and Planning History" section was expanded to include a summary of the "Consultation and Coordination" section (which was deleted).

Clarification was added concerning fish and game as well as subsistence management.

Additional sections entitled "Navigability, Shorelands, Submerged Lands, and Tidelands" and "Water Rights" were added to clarify the National Park Service's intent in these areas.

The river management plan was incorporated into the general management plan since the overall proposed management of Aniakchak more than adequately meets and is compatible with management standards for wild and scenic rivers.

Clarification that aircraft for subsistence use is permitted in the preserve was added.

A description of existing cooperative agreements was added to the general management plan.

Land status was updated--no change in the recommended minimum interest needed.

The "Alternatives" section was deleted since the recommended plan was completed after public and management review.

Appendix A (Summary of ANILCA Provisions) was deleted.

A change was made in resource management plan research/study priorities for basic resource inventory from fourth to second priority.

The general management plan was determined consistent with Alaska Coastal Zone Management Policies.

The remaining changes were editorial in nature.

#### COMMENTS ON THE DECEMBER 1985 REVISED DRAFT (COMMON TO ALL PLANS)

##### General

The National Park Service should continue to protect and maintain the undeveloped character of the national park system units in Alaska.

The National Park Service is using policies that are too restrictive. The National Park Service is anti-people.

The public is not capable of developing data to respond to the plans.

Radio repeaters do not belong in parks.

Private land, subsistence, and mining are cultural resources and should be recognized as such.



Plans provide little improvement of recreational opportunities.

Employment opportunities for local residents were not discussed.

There should be subsistence management plans for each national park system unit.

Definitions of traditional, temporary use, and public safety should be included.

Implementation of the plans will be too expensive.

Requests for temporary facilities should be addressed on a case-by-case basis, not by a blanket prohibition (preserve only).

What would constitute a "significant expansion" of temporary facilities needs to be determined (preserve only).

#### Natural Resources

The management intent for fish and wildlife with respect to the National Park Service and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game should be clarified.

All national park system units should have class I air quality.

Dogs should be the only pack animals allowed.

The National Park Service should made a greater effort to identify all resources, including minerals.

The difference between "natural and healthy" and "healthy" wildlife populations should be discussed, and management implications should be identified.

The National Park Service should consider following the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service policy on the regulation of navigable rivers.

The plans need to state that the Park Service has ultimate authority for managing fish and wildlife.

The process for involving fish and game advisory councils and committees needs to be described.

#### Land Protection Plan

The plan needs to state that complete federal ownership of land is needed for proper management.

All private lands need to be acquired.

Boundary adjustments could be used to eliminate private lands within national park system units.

Inholders say they are threatened by unnecessary regulations.

The high priority for the acquisition of nonfederal lands is opposed.

The Park Service should consider land exchanges within national park system units to minimize effects on native allottees.

Native allotments should not be acquired.

Inholders would like to provide commercial services for other park users.

NEPA and 810 documents need to be prepared for land protection plans.

Private lands should be used as developed areas.

Additions to national park system units should not simply be the same designation as adjacent units.

The land protection plans violate ANILCA provisions for access to inholdings.

#### Access

The National Park Service should limit the number of off-road vehicles.

RS 2477 maps should be deleted from the plans.

The use of helicopters should be restricted to administrative use only.

The National Park Service does not have adjudicative or management authority for RS 2477 rights-of-way.

Snowmachines and motorboats should be further restricted.

ORV determinations relating to subsistence use lack substantiation.

RS 2477 rights-of-way should be resolved before wilderness recommendations are made.

If permits are required for ORVs, they should be easy to obtain.

The Wrangell's ORV study results should not be applied to other national park system units.

#### Public Involvement

Methods for involving local residents in planning and management should be identified.

The system for getting rural input in preparing the plans was inadequate.

Mechanisms for public review of resource management plans need to be provided.

#### Wilderness

Potential transportation corridors should not be recommended for wilderness designation.

Congress should review all changes in wilderness boundaries.

Wilderness areas need to be managed more liberally to be consistent with ANILCA.

#### COMMENTS ON THE DECEMBER 1985 REVISED DRAFT SPECIFIC TO ANIAKCHAK

#### General

The NPS staff should be reduced.

There should be facilities for public use.

The entire park unit should be turned over to the Bureau of Land Management for management.

Aircraft should not be used for subsistence hunting.

Full-time staff should be put in King Salmon and in Aniakchak.

The staff level is too high for such little public use.

#### Natural Resources

Mineralized zones should be excluded from the preserve.

#### Land Protection

Only federal land should be included in the park unit.

#### Access

The National Park Service should allow traditional access.

MAJOR CHANGES MADE TO PLAN BASED ON DECEMBER 1985  
REVISED DRAFT COMMENTS

Natural Resources

Clarification was provided on management of fish and wildlife.

Clarification was provided on management of navigable waters and the watercolumn.

Public Involvement

A new section on "Public Involvement in Plan Implementation" was prepared and included.

A commitment was made to continue communication with local residents on a regular basis.

Access

The process to determine whether ORVs are traditional for subsistence was revised allowing for opportunities to review additional data.

A statement was added that there are no designated landing strips in the monument or preserve.

Clarification was provided that maintenance is not allowed on landing strips.

A commitment was made to inventory access routes and uses and to involve the public in future actions regarding access.

General

The "Guide Areas and Guide Services" section was deleted as a planning issue and management concern.

A definition of "traditional" was added.

Clarification was provided on temporary facilities in preserves, and additional justification for determination was added.

Clarification was provided on the management of unclaimed cabins on federal land.

A commitment was made to prepare a subsistence management plan.



Wilderness

Clarification was provided on the suitability of potential RS 2477 rights-of-way for wilderness designation.

An appendix was added explaining how wilderness would be managed should Congress designate any land as wilderness.

Land Protection Plan

Clarification was provided on the designation (park, preserve, monument, wilderness) of potential additions to national park system units.

Clarification was provided on NEPA and ANILCA section 810 compliance requirements.

Clarification was provided on land protection recommendations and why cost estimates are not included.

## DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

The following document is divided into four major elements as follows:

A General Management Plan setting forth basic strategies for resource conservation and management, public use and development, and administration in compliance with section 1301 of ANILCA and specific national park system legislation.

A Land Protection Plan specifically stating a plan for protecting Aniakchak from development activities that would adversely affect the resources by acquiring the minimum estate necessary and addressing other requirements of section 1301(b)(6) and (7) of ANILCA.

A Wilderness Suitability Review analyzing suitability of federal lands within Aniakchak for potential inclusion within the National Wilderness Preservation System, in compliance with section 1317(a) of ANILCA and sections 3(c) and (d) of the Wilderness Act, as amended.

The Aniakchak Environment containing a description of the natural, cultural, and socioeconomic environments of Aniakchak and the region.