

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE ANDY JOSEPHSON

Sponsor Statement

House Bill 272: *"An Act establishing the Tangle Lakes State Game Refuge; and providing for an effective date."*

House Bill 272 will establish a game refuge on approximately 156,000 acres of state land in the Tangle Lakes region, north of the Denali Highway and west of the Richardson Highway. This area is of great importance for recreational, hunting and fishing, subsistence, and tourism purposes, and we would like to ensure the preservation of this area and its resources for our fellow Alaskans.

Although most activities within the proposed refuge pertain to renewable resources, there is potential for non-renewable activities, which could irreparably damage both the ecosystem and the wildlife that depend on it. Any damage to this ecosystem may dramatically affect Alaskans who rely on subsistence hunting and who enjoy recreating in undeveloped and unpolluted wild spaces. The more expansive mining claims to the north of the proposed refuge will not be affected by this bill.

Part of what makes this wilderness area so popular is that access is relatively easy. Gently sloping terrain alongside the Denali Highway invites thousands of hunters, birders, wilderness enthusiasts, and tourists into the proposed refuge area each year. Sport and subsistence hunters flock to this region for the Nelchina caribou herd, though moose, ptarmigan, and waterfowl are also abundant. These resources rely on a healthy local ecosystem.

The presence of an archeological district and a federally-protected corridor further underscore the Tangle Lakes region's importance.

I invite you to discuss this issue with me further and urge you to support this legislation.

Please contact my staff Lisa Delaney with any questions: 465-4967, lisa.delaney@akleg.gov