

Alaska Outdoor Council Inc.
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March 29, 2015

RE: House Bill No. 153. Expanding the Palmer Hay Flats

Dear Representative Jim Colver,

The Alaska Outdoor Council (AOC) is a statewide conservation organization representing 48 outdoor clubs and 3,000 individual members who hunt, trap, fish, and recreate on public lands and water in Alaska.

AOC thanks you for introducing HB153 "An Act expanding the **Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge**" to include lands acquired within the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge under AS 16.20.032 as part of the State Game Refuge system. Under AS 16.20.020 the purpose of State Game Refuge's is to - "protect and preserve the natural habitat and game populations of the area." That is consistent with AOC's No. 1 bylaw - "to perpetuate the natural resource base upon which our membership depends."

HB153, the Act to expand the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge will also expand the boundary of the Refuge to include the mouth of Cottonwood Creek and the flats east back to the current refuge boundary. This area has been a popular ATV access point for duck hunters for many years. AOC supports sustainable motorized access for hunters and anglers to the Palmer Hay Flats Refuge consistent with the refuge management plan.

With the expansion of the urban population into the Mat-Su Borough area the expanded Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge will continue to provide needed refuge for migrating waterfowl as well a critical moose habitat. As long as sustainable public access is made available for the outdoor folks who chose to hunt, trap, and fish these valuable public resources within the Palmer Hay Flats Refuge the legislative intended of the State Game Refuge will be achieved.

AOC supports passage of HB153 into law.

Sincerely,
Rod Arno,
Executive Director of the Alaska Outdoor Council

