

**S J R**

**39**

STATE OF ALASKA  
1989 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL VERSION: SJR 39  
PUBLISH DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**FISCAL NOTE**

REQUEST: \_\_\_\_\_

REVISION DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
TITLE: National Park Service  
proposed Alaska Science Initiative  
SPONSOR: Sen. Sturgulewski  
REQUESTOR: \_\_\_\_\_

AGENCY: federal impact  
BRU: \_\_\_\_\_  
COMPONENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

**EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS)**

OPERATING	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94
PERS. SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND/BUILD.						
GRANTS/CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
CAPITAL						
REVENUE						

**FUNDING: (THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS)**

GENERAL FUNDS						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0

**POSITIONS:**

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

**ANALYSIS:**

SJR 39 supports the National Park Service's proposed Alaska Science Initiative.  
SJR 39 has no state fiscal impact.

PREPARED BY: Nancy Petersen, Staff, Senate Resources Committee

DATE: 4-10-89  
PHONE NO.: 465-3872

SJR 39

BRIEFING

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE'S PROPOSED ALASKA SCIENCE INITIATIVE

March, 1990

Proposal:

The National Park Service Alaska Region is requesting a federal appropriation of \$8.02 million per year to be used for scientific research in the Alaska National parks. The program would involve direct hiring of scientists to work in the parks, the Regional Office in Anchorage, and research centers in Anchorage and Fairbanks. It would also provide funds for cooperative agreements and contracts with the University of Alaska in Fairbanks and Anchorage and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, as well as with other sources of scientific expertise.

Background:

A major purpose of Congress in establishing the national parks in Alaska was to designate areas for scientific study of natural ecosystems. The parklands provide invaluable benchmarks for measuring effects of global and regional environmental change.

Until last year, the National Park Service scientific staff in Alaska was minimal. Though some increase has been provided, with only a fraction of the funding needed, there is no way the National Park Service can realize the Alaska parks' potential as a source of knowledge about natural systems. Alaska has over 68 percent of the acreage of the country's National Park System, yet receives less than 3 percent of the national park budget. The entire staff for scientific research in any of a number of the other national parks of the country was more than that available to all the national parks in Alaska in 1990.

Justification:

Reasons for approval of SJR 39 supporting the national Park Service Alaska science initiatives are as follows:

1. Strengthen Alaska's role in studying global environmental change.  
Alaska, and particularly the Alaska national parks, have a major potential as a laboratory for study of the effects of global environmental change. The greenhouse effect is more extreme in northern regions. Increasingly, the Brooks Range is covered by an arctic haze from wood fires and industrial waste generated outside the U.S. Park environments can be an unmatched base for science as a crucially important "industry" of the future.
2. Increase scientific exchange between Russia and Alaska.  
The Soviet and United States governments are working on a proposal for an international park including existing park lands in Northwest Alaska and areas in the Soviet Far East. A major purpose of this international park is cooperation in scientific study including the study of common cultural and anthropological roots. To participate actively and effectively in

such a program, adequate National Park Service staff and basic facilities in Alaska are essential. The international study program will, in turn, have other benefits for Alaska by increasing travel and communication between the USSR and Alaska and encouraging international tourism.

3. Contribute to other scientific study programs within Alaska.  
The proposed science initiative will provide funding for a combination of cooperative efforts with the university and with state scientists. Already the National Park Service provides a significant contribution to state research programs - approximately \$200,000 in 1990. This shared funding to accomplish common research goals would increase significantly under the proposed science initiative.
4. Enable resource management decisions to be based on more complete knowledge of the facts. Knowledge gained through the scientific research program will help the National Park Service be a better manager of the Alaska parks. When information about the effects of use is limited, park managers are constrained to be conservative in their decisions. More complete knowledge about actual effects of use will enable a more informed approach towards wise use of park resources.
5. Establish baseline data about existing resources and natural systems.  
The Valdez oil spill provided a strong example of the need for more complete baseline data about existing park resources. When the spill occurred a massive emergency effort was required to obtain information about the natural environment which could serve as a base for measuring effects of the damage. By establishing baseline data for each of the parks, the National Park Service will be equipped to assess environmental impacts in a timely and cost-effective manner, and to guide more effectively the deterrent and rehabilitative actions needed.
6. Benefit the state's economy. An annual infusion of \$8.02 million of federal funds will, in turn, have a range of benefits for other sectors of the economy. The University of Alaska has estimated that the addition of approximately 134 new National Park Service positions would generate about 130 private sector jobs. This economic growth would affect 14 communities ranging in size from Anchorage and Fairbanks to bush communities.

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# **A Comprehensive Resource Proposal**

**National Park Service, Alaska Region March 1989**

# The Resource Initiative

Eight years ago, with the passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, the National Park system in Alaska was expanded by millions of acres, adding lands of tremendous natural and cultural value. With the Lands Act came the promise to preserve and manage the park resources for all generations. Sadly the bold promises of 1980 have not always been met.

In northwest Alaska artifacts from the earliest North Americans rested for centuries, some weathering well, others forever lost to nature or thieves. The few sites surveyed have yielded new insights into those people's lives and the land, but until the work is expanded the promise of protection remains empty. The heritage of the "Ellis Island of native Americans" stands at risk. The stressed arctic environment in which those artifacts rest is permeated daily by a haze whose effects are as yet unknown. Entire ecosystems may be at risk.

Seven-hundred miles south, the rivers flowing to Bristol Bay are choked with spawning salmon. Their healthy

return allows the world's richest harvest, and supports subsistence activities and wildlife. But more knowledge is needed to assure protection of this renewable resource.

The Alaska Region of the National Park Service today includes two-thirds of the parkland in America, yet is funded with 3 percent of the service's budget. Park managers must make decisions about resources on which there has been little study; the promise of a decade ago to "do it right the first time" will ring hollow if basic research is ignored.

As a partial remedy, the region is proposing ambitious growth for its science program. The expansion requires \$8.02 million per year in additional federal spending in Alaska. Communities will welcome the new permanent jobs, but dollars do not measure the true benefits: the perpetuation of wildlife and fish populations, the ability for subsistence users to continue their way of life, and the preservation of great living museums, laboratories for greater understanding of our past and future.

## The Lands Act

The national parks and preserves in Alaska are used in unprecedented ways by sportsmen and for subsistence. The northern latitude and fragile flora make the parks especially vulnerable to resource damage. The areas' magnitude has to date allowed only limited inventories.

The Alaska Region of the National Park Service administers 23 areas totalling 54 million acres; of that, 44 million acres were added in 1980.

The Lands Act gave far-reaching mandates to the Park Service. Among the challenges:

- \* Maintain undisturbed ecosystems and opportunities for scientific research.

- \* Provide the opportunity for rural residents to continue their



subsistence lifestyles.

- \* Maintain sound populations of, and habitat for, wildlife species of inestimable value to citizens of Alaska and the nation.

- \* Preserve extensive arctic tundra, boreal forest and coastal rain forest.

- \* Protect, preserve and interpret historical and archeological sites.



## The Economy

The value of the science proposal to land managers, researchers and park users is high. The payoff will come in many forms: better knowledge of our past, healthy populations of fish and game for sportsmen and subsistence users, greater understanding of global climate changes.

But there is also a material benefit to Alaska.

The plan would add 74 scientists and resource managers and 60 support positions. The 134 new employees would be based near the parks, and in Anchorage and Fairbanks, working in concert with scientists from other agencies and universities.

The proposal calls for increasing the region's budget by \$8.02 million per year. A higher proportion of the money

would go to non-recurring construction during the first three years. As the needed construction, primarily park housing, is completed, staffing will accelerate to reach, at maturity, the recurring level of \$8.02 million.

With new workers, additional jobs are indirectly created. A University of Alaska Anchorage study estimated 128 private sector jobs would be created from increased Park Service spending. Fourteen communities, ranging in size from Anchorage to Port Alsworth, would benefit.

During the first five years of the program, more than \$9 million would be spent on statewide construction, resulting directly and indirectly in an estimated 30 jobs.

## The Resource

The features of every park are distinctive, but those in Alaska provide opportunities found nowhere else.

The U.S.A.'s only Dall sheep are in Alaska, as are the largest populations of grizzly bears, eagles, salmon, and waterfowl. Those resources, combined with unrivalled scenery as diverse as the emerging landscape of Glacier Bay and the artifact-laden beach ridges of Bering Land Bridge, form a treasure for the world.

In the long-term conservation of those resources rests the real "permanent fund" for Alaska. Dividends are paid every year with the 600,000 visitors who come to Denali. Dividends come, too, with hikers exploring untrammelled reaches of Gates of the Arctic and other parks in this great wildland system.

The large parks, in preserving vast portions of the arctic and sub-arctic ecosystems, provide unmatched research opportunities. Largely untouched, they are benchmark areas for measuring global climatic change.

A preliminary assessment has found some 300 needed research projects. Among them:

- \* How would Denali be affected by a major timber industry in the Susitna Valley, or by a new northern access road?

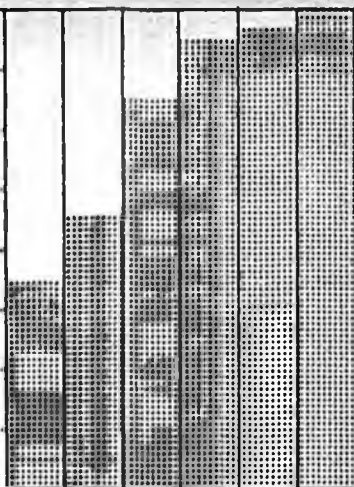
- \* What means and routes can best provide access for private inholdings while still protecting the surrounding park resources?

- \* How do intensive fish harvests affect salmon returns to Katmai and the wildlife that thrives on them?

- \* Which activities and park qualities most attract visitors and how can use be increased without destroying the qualities people come to enjoy?

Baseline data and continuing inventories of park resources build a sound foundation for the accurate measurement of change necessary for informed management well into the next century. Without them, management is blind; progress impeded.

MILLIONS

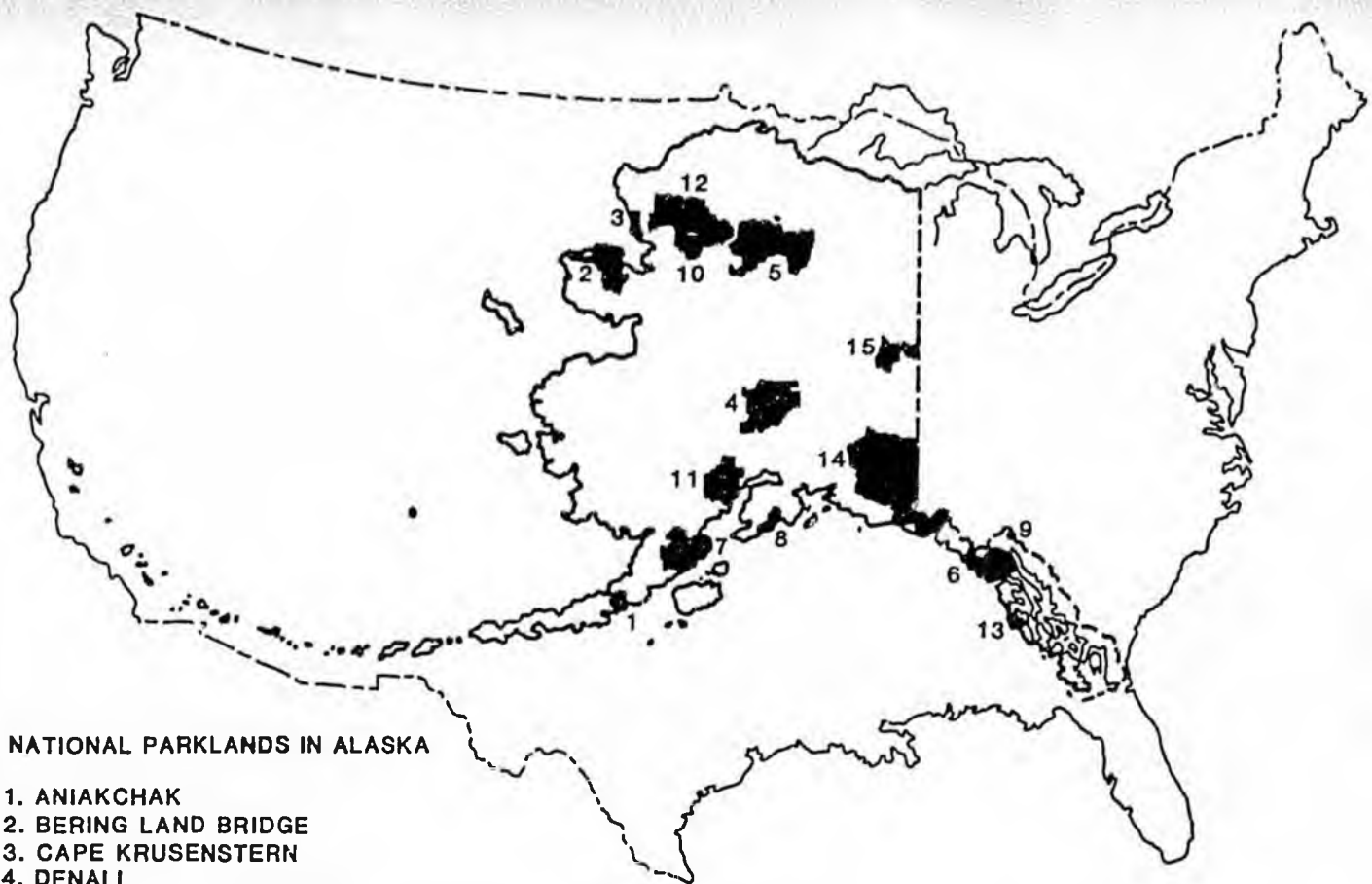


91 92 93 94 95 96  
FY

PERSONNEL 

CONSTRUCTION 





**NATIONAL PARKLANDS IN ALASKA**

- |                        |                       |                          |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. ANIAKCHAK           | 9. KLONDIKE GOLD RUSH | 13. SITKA                |
| 2. BERING LAND BRIDGE  | 10. KOBUK VALLEY      | 14. WRANGELL-ST. ELIAS   |
| 3. CAPE KRUSENSTERN    | 11. LAKE CLARK        | 15. YUKON-CHARLEY RIVERS |
| 4. DENALI              | 12. NOATAK            |                          |
| 5. GATES OF THE ARCTIC |                       |                          |
| 6. GLACIER BAY         |                       |                          |
| 7. KATMAI              |                       |                          |
| 8. KENAI FJORDS        |                       |                          |

**The Future**

The science proposal sets ambitious goals. It would guide the most fundamentally important undertaking of the National Park Service in Alaska.

The region proposes to commit unprecedented resources to research and basic understanding. Sharing the work and resources with state and federal agencies and the academic community will be vital.

The results will be far-reaching -- on our ability to manage intelligently, on our perceptions of ourselves and our priorities, and on the way others perceive parks.

The choice to emphasize research reflects the character of the parks in Alaska. They are the nation's largest, rich in resources, with little visitation and few of the amenities associated with parks in the Lower 48. New visitor facilities, and additional rangers for interpretation and protection are needed to preserve resources, provide visitor safety and further the public's understanding of

the parks; but research will be the region's top priority. Increased understanding of the resources Alaska shares with the world and of the people who use them is essential in assuring their integrity, and invaluable in gauging what is happening to the rest of the environment of humankind.

To achieve success, funding must be committed over a long period. Baseline data, and knowledge of change and its causes, cannot be obtained in a field season.

In Alaska, the possibility remains to avoid the expensive corrective measures taken elsewhere. The promise of a decade ago to "do it right the first time" is achievable.

*This initiative has been developed with assistance and guidance from scientists and managers from the federal, state and private sectors. Copies of the plan are available from the National Park Service, Alaska Region, 2525 Gambell St., Room 401, Anchorage, AK 99503*



# United States Department of the Interior

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

ALASKA REGIONAL OFFICE  
2525 Gambell Street, Room 107  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-2892



IN REPLY REFER TO:

N2215 (ARO-RNR)

28 MAR 1989

Senator Arliss Sturgulewski  
P.O. Box V  
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Senator Sturgulewski:

We have reviewed the resolution on the National Park Service proposed "Alaska Science Initiative" that you are sponsoring in the Alaska legislature. We heartily support this resolution.

We believe if this initiative is implemented it will have an immediate and long-term positive impact on Alaska. The initiative will result in 134 new positions for the National Park Service, generate an estimated 128 positions in the private sector and provide more than \$9 million in construction funding. Fourteen communities, ranging in size from Anchorage to Port Alsworth, will benefit directly. To accomplish this will require a budget of \$8.2 million per year.

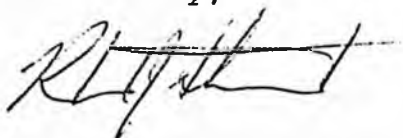
The initiative will allow the Alaska Region of the National Park Service to, among numerous other activities:

- Take an active role in measuring impacts and predicting environmental changes from man's activities, including global climatic warming.
- Determine what means and routes can best provide access to private inholdings in parks while still protecting the surrounding park resources.
- Determine how to accommodate the activities most attractive to visitors while maintaining the environmental qualities they come to enjoy.
- Determine how to protect fish and wildlife values of inestimable value while allowing their utilization for subsistence and, where applicable, for sporting purposes.
- Provide opportunities for scientific study in protected ecosystems to serve as baselines against which to measure results of management in other areas.

We will continue our close working relationship with the University system, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and other state and federal agencies. We wish to cooperate with other research scientists and exchange data collected from National Park Service lands.

The resources of Alaska, as diverse as the emerging landscape of Glacier Bay and the ancient artifacts of Bering Land Bridge, form a treasure for the world. With baseline data and sound inventories of park resources, a solid foundation will be built for the accurate measurement of change, and informed management well into the next century.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R. Stenmark', written over a horizontal line.

Richard J. Stenmark  
**Acting** Regional Director