

**HB**

**153**

<TARGET><BILL>HB 153</BILL><SUBJECT>HB  
153</SUBJECT><COMM>SRES29</COMM></TARGET>

# SENATE COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: 4/9/15

FURTHER: Rules

DATE TURNED IN TO OFFICE: 4/14/15

**Resources Committee** considered CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 153(RES)

HB 153-PALMER HAY FLATS GAME REFUGE

"An Act expanding the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge."

and recommends:

- be replaced with SCS SRE HB 153 (SRES)  Same Title  Technical Title Change  New Title/SCR No. \_\_\_\_\_
- adopt previous SCS \_\_\_\_\_ ( \_\_\_\_\_ )  Same Title  Technical Title Change  New Title/SCR No. \_\_\_\_\_
- attached amendment(s)
- adopt \_\_\_\_\_ Letter of Intent
- further referral to \_\_\_\_\_ Committee

Dept Abbr.	
ADM	LWF
CED	LAW
COR	LEG
EED	MVA
DEC	DNR
DFG	DPS
GOV	REV
DHS	DOT
AJS	UA

NEW FISCAL NOTE(S)				
Dept.	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN #

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S)				
Dept.	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN #
DF/G			X	

APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:	PRINTED LAST NAME	Do PASS	Do NOT PASS	No REC	AMEND
	Castello	X			
	Wielechowski	✓			
	Cahill				
	Micciche	✓			
	Stoolman			✓	
	Stoltz	✓			
CHAIR:	Gressel	✓			

**REPRESENTATIVE JIM COLVER**  
ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE HOUSE DISTRICT 9

SESSION  
Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801  
Phone: (907) 465-4859  
Fax: (907) 465-3799  
Toll Free: 888-465-4859



INTERIM  
600 E. Railroad Avenue  
Wasilla, AK 99654  
Phone: (907) 373-6287  
Fax: (907) 373-6288

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**SPONSOR STATEMENT**

**HB 153 – Expanding the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge**

HB 153 adds three state-owned sections of land to the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge which would expand the refuge by approximately 2900 acres.

The refuge was created in 1975 and protects 28,800 acres of coastal and freshwater wetlands, tidal sloughs, mudflats, lakes & streams, as well as upland birch forests. It's location at the head of Cook Inlet and its proximity to over half of Alaska's population has made the Palmer Hay Flats refuge one of the most important year-round wildlife and outdoor recreation areas in Alaska.

The additional acreage to be added to the refuge were acquired at various times since 1990 and passage of HB 153 will formally protect these lands and ensure they are available for future generations to use for hunting, trapping, fishing, mushing, hiking, skiing, snow-machining, and outdoor education opportunities.

**REPRESENTATIVE JIM COLVER**  
ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE HOUSE DISTRICT 9

**SESSION**

Alaska State Capitol  
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**INTERIM**

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**EXPLANATION OF CHANGES**

**HB 153 version E to version N**

There were two changes from the House CS to the Senate CS.

These are reflected in the SCS CSHB 153 (version N):

- Page 2, lines 10,13, 26 & 29 – adds language to exclude AKRR prior rights-of-way so there is no future confusion.
- Page 3, line 25 thru Page 4, line 1 – this change reflects the addition of the ILMA lands.

# Fiscal Note

State of Alaska  
2015 Legislative Session

Bill Version:	CSHB 153(RES)
Fiscal Note Number:	1
(H) Publish Date:	3/31/2015

Identifier: HB153-DFG-WCD-03-27-15  
 Title: PALMER HAY FLATS GAME REFUGE  
 Sponsor: COLVER  
 Requester: House Resources Committee

Department: Department of Fish and Game  
 Appropriation: Wildlife Conservation  
 Allocation: Wildlife Conservation  
 OMB Component Number: 473

**Expenditures/Revenues**

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below. (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY2016 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY2016 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates					
			FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
<b>OPERATING EXPENDITURES</b>								
Personal Services								
Travel								
Services								
Commodities								
Capital Outlay								
Grants & Benefits								
Miscellaneous								
<b>Total Operating</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

**Fund Source (Operating Only)**

None								
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

**Positions**

Full-time								
Part-time								
Temporary								

<b>Change in Revenues</b>								
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**Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY2015) cost:** 0.0 *(separate supplemental appropriation required)*  
*(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)*

**Estimated CAPITAL (FY2016) cost:** 0.0 *(separate capital appropriation required)*  
*(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)*

**ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS**

Does the bill direct, or will the bill result in, regulation changes adopted by your agency? No  
 If yes, by what date are the regulations to be adopted, amended or repealed?

**Why this fiscal note differs from previous version:**

Initial version of the fiscal note.
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Prepared By:	Bruce Dale, Acting Director	Phone:	(907)861-2101
Division:	Wildlife Conservation	Date:	03/26/2015 09:40 AM
Approved By:	Sunny Haight, Administrative Services Director	Date:	03/27/2015
Agency:	Fish and Game		

FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS

STATE OF ALASKA  
2015 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

**Analysis**

House Bill 153 will amend the legal boundary description for the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge to include lands that have either deed restrictions or management rights directing that they be managed as a part of the Refuge until such a time as they can be included in the Refuge's statutory boundary language. The addition of these parcels of land to the Refuge's statutes will not require any additional funding.

002W

001W

001E

002E

017N

016N

015N

002W

001W

001E

002E

Wasilla

Palmer

Anchorage

Cottonwood Creek

Cottonwood Slough

Reedy Lake

Wetlic Lake

Lucy Lake

Palmer Slough

Rabbit Slough



Marataska River



Knik River

Knik Arm

### Palmer Hayflats State Game Refuge

#### Land Status

-  Borough
-  State Selected
-  Native Corp
-  Private
-  Public University
-  State
-  Tidelands

-  Proposed Boundary
-  Affected Aquired Lands



State of Alaska  
Department of Fish and Game  
2/5/2015



002W

001W

001E

002E

017N

016N

015N

Wasilla

Palmer

Cottonwood Creek

Cottonwood Slough

Reedy Lake

Weenie Lake

Lucy Lake

Palmer Slough

Matanuska River

Knik River

Knik Arm

Anchorage

### Palmer Hayflats State Game Refuge

#### Legend

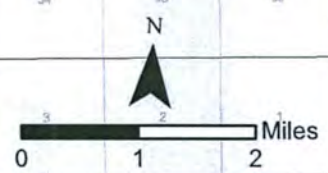
- Existing Boundary
- DOT Exclusion
- OSL/ Management Rights
- Aquired State Lands
- ILMA Lands
- Omissions
- Accreted Additions

#### Land Status

- Borough
- State Selected
- Native Corp
- Private
- Public University
- State
- Tidelands



State of Alaska  
Department of Fish and Game  
2/6/2015



## **Lands proposed for additions to the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge contained in HB153**

Since 1989, several parcels of land totaling approximately 3,000 acres of mostly coastal wetlands lying within or adjacent to the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge have been acquired by the State of Alaska from willing sellers. Most of these parcels were acquired by land conservation organizations including The Nature Conservancy and the Great Land Trust with funds provided by the federal National Coastal Wetlands Program, the state's Alaska Waterfowl Conservation Stamp Program (aka state Duck Stamp Program), The Nature Conservancy, Great Land Trust, Ducks Unlimited, and/or community and private organizations and individuals. In addition, several parcels were acquired in a land trade with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough with the requirement that they be managed consistent with the adjoining refuge.

All these parcels contain restricted deeds that dictate these lands be maintained in their natural state to protect wildlife habitats and populations. Many of these restrictions also require the lands be managed consistent with the Palmer Hay Flats refuge while allowing uses by the public including hunting and fishing. These deed restrictions and grant requirements preclude these parcels from ever being used for purposes other than those that maintain their natural qualities.

**Summary of Conservation Lands Acquired within or Adjacent  
to the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge**

<u>Acquired from</u>	<u>Year Acquired</u>	<u>Purchased/Funded By</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
Turner	2013	Great Land Trust	918	Funded in part: National Coastal Wetlands Program, Alaska Waterfowl Conservation Stamp Program. Management assigned to ADF&G within the Palmer Hay Flats.
Cope	2004	The Nature Conservancy	160	National Coastal Wetlands Program. For the use and benefit of the SOA Department of Fish and Game, to be managed consistent with the policies of the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge Plan.
M'Karzel	1989	The Nature Conservancy	562	Shall forever be managed as a natural area and that it shall not disturb nor permit and disturbance of habitat or plant or animal populations ...
Cassity & Fritzler	2000	The Nature Conservancy	404	Property to be managed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game pursuant to AS 16.20.032. Funds from National Coastal Wetlands Program, Alaska Waterfowl Conservation Stamp, The Nature Conservancy.
Williams	1992	The Nature Conservancy	250	Shall forever be managed as a natural area and that it shall not disturb nor permit and disturbance of habitat or plant or animal populations.
Mat-Su Borough	2006	Land Trade	537	Managed for public use and recreation consistent with the goals and policies of the SOA LDA established by AS16.20.032 as PHF Refuge.
Mat-Su Borough	2003	Land Trade	11	The natural wetlands of the property shall be protected and preserved. For the use and benefit of the ADF&G to be managed as Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge. Said property will be managed consistent with the goals and policies of the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge.
Mat-Su Borough	2006	Land Trade	80	Managed for public use and recreation consistent with the goals and policies of the SOA LDA established by AS16.20.032 as PHF Refuge.

**Prepared by ADF&G**

**PROPOSAL 105 - 5 AAC 95.505. Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge. Expand the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge as follows:**

AS 16.05.255(a)(1) states that the Board of Game may "set apart" game reserves and refuges subject to legislative approval. the Board of Fisheries has a similar authority under AS 16.05.251(a)(1). I propose the following action:

The Board(s) of Game (and Fisheries) hereby sets aside lands described below, acquired and transferred to the State for addition to Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge, for enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat and related public uses of the refuge.

Additions to include the formerly named M'Karzel, Williams, Fritzler, Cassity, and Cope parcels, and any other similarly situated acquisitions in state ownership.

In addition, the board(s) requests the Alaska Legislature to approve this action by amending AS 16.20.032 to include the additions.

**What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?** Since 1990, ADF&G has collaborated with public and private partners to acquire inholdings and parcels adjacent to Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge from willing sellers to consolidate and add land to the refuge for fish and wildlife habitat, hunting and fishing, secure public access and facilitate outdoor education and other compatible uses. Five primary parcels, comprising over 1,360 acres have been purchased for over \$310,000 of public and private funds and transferred to the Alaska Department of Natural Resources with conservation easements for incorporation into Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge. Over the past 20 years, no legislative action has affirmatively added these parcels to the refuge, either because ADF&G and past administrations have not been successful in moving a bill or because no sponsors have acted.

It is important, if only for completing valuable good faith conservation actions, to request addition of these parcels to the refuge so ADF&G can manage these lands consistent with refuge goals and management plans and address current issues.

**PROPOSED BY:** Thomas Rothe

(EG-C14-301)

\*\*\*\*\*



Anchorage Fish and Game Advisory Committee  
January 9, 2015  
William Hernandez Hatchery  
941 Reeve Blvd, Anchorage

RECEIVED  
JAN 27 2015  
BOARDS  
ANCHORAGE

- Call to Order: By Chairman Joel Donner, At 6:30PM
- Roll Call: Joel Doner, Chair, George Jacoby, Vice-Chair, Sam Albanese, Secretary, Neil Dewitt, Jim Bolgiano, Robert Caywood, Michael Klehr, Frank Neumann, Kevin Taylor, Dwight Johnson, Steve Flory, Phil Calhoun, Ehren Strahn, Robert Peck Jr. notified the chair he would be late. (arrived 1920),

Members Absent: Brian Nelson Alt, Mark Campbell were excused.

Number Needed for Quorum on AC: 8

List of User Groups Present: None

- Approval of Agenda: Yes
- Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: From meeting date.... No.
- Fish and Game Staff Present: Sherry Wright
- Guests Present. Tom Rothe, Lynette Moreno Hinz, Yolanda Delacruz
- Old Business

- Public Testimony. Yolanda Delacruz, addressed the AAC about our meetings not being posted in the media. (Yolanda speaks poor and broken English and much of what she said was uninterruptable to me.) Public does not come because they are afraid of the AAC and ADF&G. She believes we need adversity in the AAC. We only represent professional hunters. We need balance on the ACs. Alaska is beautiful for its nature. We should respect the land. Indigenous Alaskans respect the land, We are only pleasing ourselves. If the animals were hunted for subsistence OK. We are killing wolves and bears so we can have more. It is time to control the sport hunters. Hunters have the support of the politicians. She said the natural resources are for all Alaskans. What about us. Try to stop the killing for special interest Alaska is beautiful and she would like to keep it that way.

George commented it was a full house last Tuesday. She responded she sees the same thing, killing and killing.

Jim asked if she had internet access for notification. She said it needs to be in the media



	13	1	<p>Frank moved reconsider proposal 104 Beaver season Seconded Sub-committee voted 4 Support, 3 Opposed.</p> <p>Michael does trap up there and does see lots of beavers, and would support this.</p> <p>Robert Peck - fully endorses Michael and 16B is pretty inaccessible.</p> <p>Joel - as a Cook Inlet commercial fishermen will support this since the beavers will reduce salmon return.</p> <p>Nell expressed concern about potentially wiping out all of them to which Robert Peck reiterated it is extremely inaccessible, Michael said he does not think it is possible to decimate them in this area. Frank asked if you can currently shoot beaver.</p> <p>Kevin explained this would remove the requirement for a trapping license and allow hunting beaver.</p> <p>Nell asked if we were not having problems with a village that lives in the unit.</p> <p>Steve said he supports this.</p> <p><b>Proposal 104 passed. 13 Support, 1 Opposed.</b></p> <p>Supported for reasons stated in proposal Opposed, like the current seasons and dates.</p>
* BOG	105	Expand the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge.	

- continued on next page.



	14	<p>Frank moved we reconsider 105</p> <p>Tom Rothe authored this proposal and is here to address us. He provided a paper with notes.</p> <p>He proposed this to push the system a little. Since 1990 the Department has acquired inholdings in the hay flats but has not gotten legislative action to buy the lands. The purpose was to buy the land to increase public access and hunting. The land is sitting there and it will only take legislation to expand the boundary to include this land.</p> <p>There is misconception in the Mat-SU, the Department 100% supported these purchases. The \$\$ came from duck stamps, grants and private contributions.</p> <p>Concerned that this could result in restricted access. These were privately held land that were previously inaccessible to public access.</p> <p>This land is now under the game management process.</p> <p>Tom is using this to push the process to get this completed.</p> <p>Steve asked who the Senator and Representative of the area. Stolz, Newman, Huggins. Since it is there area, our legislative affairs sub committee can take it up. We need to get the local politicians on board.</p> <p>Robert Peck asked what is happening to this land now since it is not part of the refuge. Right now it is managed by DNR. Tom said it makes more sense to have ADF&amp;G manage it.</p> <p>Frank - sounds like a house cleaning measure, Will this bring more restrictions?</p>
		<p>Tom said refuges are for public use, fishing, hunting recreation. Support the principal of management. Restricted to minimize damage etc. One glowing example is the acquisition for the land that provides public access to the refuge.</p> <p>Steve voted against this in subcommittee. Our concern is going from unrestricted to restricted access. Example is the Knik Public Use area. The road to hell was paved with good intentions. Can you outline for us the differences in how its managed now and how it will be in the future.</p> <p>The conservation covenants dedicate this to management consistent with conservation and game management. Habitat conservation is important. It is currently managed by DNR. Leave it in limbo or if it is included it will be managed like the refuge.</p> <p>Robert Caywood asked if motorized access is allowed now. Tom</p>



			<p>believes it must be managed by DNR in accordance with habitat conservation.</p> <p>Neil asked if we vote no can he go the political route.</p> <p>Robert Caywood, will access be more or less restrictive? NO.</p> <p>Frank, it is DNR land that is currently being managed by DNR, like it is State Refuge Lands, so nothing really changes.</p> <p>Proposal 105 Passed.</p>



Attention: Board of Game Comments  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game,  
Boards Support Section  
PO Box 115526  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-5526  
Submitted via email on time to: [dfg.bog.comments@alaska.gov](mailto:dfg.bog.comments@alaska.gov)

Subject: Support for BOG Proposal 105-AAC 95.505. Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge

2015 January 19

Dear Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Boards Support Section:

I strongly support Board of Game Proposal 105 submitted by Tom Rothe regarding Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge additions. Since the parcels formerly named M'Karzel, Williams, Fritzler, Cassity, and Cope (and any other similarly situated acquisitions in state ownership) were made available for addition to the refuge for fish and wildlife habitat, hunting and fishing, secure public access, outdoor education, and other compatible uses, it is important that the Legislature formally accept said lands so that they may be properly managed for the people of Alaska by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. These lands have already been purposefully purchased with private funds and transferred to the Department of Natural Resources, with conservation easements for incorporation into Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge.

I urge the Board of Game to write the Legislature now and help complete this process which will enable the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to manage the lands in a way that is consistent with refuge goals and management plans to address current issues as they arise. This will benefit the people of Alaska, not only now, but for future generations.

Again I strongly support BOG Proposal 105 and urge you to write the Legislature and engage them in the necessary process to incorporate these lands, as intended, into the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge.

Thank you for your attention to these important details.

Sincerely,  
*Barbara Švarný Carlson*

Barbara Švarný Carlson  
PO Box 220196  
Anchorage, Alaska 99522-0196



## THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY ALASKA CHAPTER

5800 Kalgin Drive  
Anchorage, AK 99516

*The Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society is a professional society founded in 1971. With over 200 members, the Alaska Chapter is one of the largest chapters of The Wildlife Society, an international organization representing wildlife biologists and managers employed by state, federal, and borough resource agencies, academic institutions, non-governmental conservation organizations, and private industry. Our mission is to enhance the ability of wildlife professionals to conserve biological diversity, sustain productivity, and ensure responsible use of wildlife resources in Alaska for the benefit of society.*

Alaska Board of Game  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Boards Support Section  
P.O. Box 115526  
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Dear Chairman Spraker and Board Members,

I am writing in support of BOG proposal 105, a proposal to expand the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge. This proposal would "set aside" lands that have already been acquired and transferred to the state for addition to the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge. It does not increase land ownership by the state, does not impose land use restrictions beyond normal refuge management, nor does it impose an additional financial burden on the state.

These lands were conveyed to or acquired by the state with the intent that they be included within the refuge boundaries. Although the state now owns these lands under ADNOR oversight, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has no management authority over them without legislative action. Thus, ADF&G cannot undertake habitat improvements or manage public access, and enforcement of violations is unclear.

Passage of this proposal would be a valuable step in ensuring ADF&G can manage these lands consistent with refuge goals and management plans and address current issues.

I hope that the board will support this proposal to help facilitate expansion of the refuge and to ensure the quality of the land remains undiminished.

Sincerely,

Grant Hilderbrand  
President, Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society



January 23, 2015

Alaska Board of Game  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Boards Support Section  
P.O. Box 115526  
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Dear Alaska Board of Game:

I am writing to strongly urge your support of Proposal 105, scheduled for consideration at the Central/Southwest Region meeting on February 13. I am the author of Proposal 105 and I have had discussions with ADFG staff, numerous refuge users (mostly hunters and fishers), and the Anchorage and Mat-Su Fish and Game Advisory Committees. I would like to clarify my intentions in submitting this proposal and address a couple of concerns that have been raised.

I am aware that only the Alaska Legislature can modify the boundary of Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge in AS 16.20.032 to include the parcels that I have described. My goal in asking the Board of Game to act under AS 16.05.255(a)(1) is simply to have the Board endorse these lands for inclusion in the refuge through letters to Southcentral Alaska Legislators, the Governor and the Commissioner of ADFG.

During discussions of Proposal 105, some individuals have been unduly concerned that including these parcels in the refuge would increase restrictions on public access—primarily motorized access. First, these parcels were originally private land that we not open to the public; now they are owned by the state and open to public access. Second, the public and private collaborators that purchased these parcels for fish and wildlife and related public uses attached conservation covenants on the titles to ensure that the lands would be managed consistent with the purposes of the state refuge. Thus, these additions would have no more and no fewer restrictions than any other part of the refuge, as guided by the refuge management plan and regulations.

Given that the state owns these parcels and they are bound to be managed consistent with refuge policies, some view statutory changes to the refuge boundary as a minor housekeeping issue that is not important. We refuge users and others, however, believe that officially consolidating these lands into the refuge: (1) fulfills the promises made to conservation partners that acquired these parcels for public benefit; (2) designates ADFG as the primary manager of the entire refuge vs. the current ADNR responsibilities on these parcels; (3) facilitates ADFG investment in improvements to fish and wildlife habitat and public access; and (4) clarifies land status and applicable regulations for enforcement purposes.

Finally, my original proposal specifically named five parcels that were purchased explicitly for the refuge and "other similarly situated parcels" that I may not have been aware of. Since I submitted the proposal, I have learned that ADNR has acquired two parcels adjacent to the



PC043

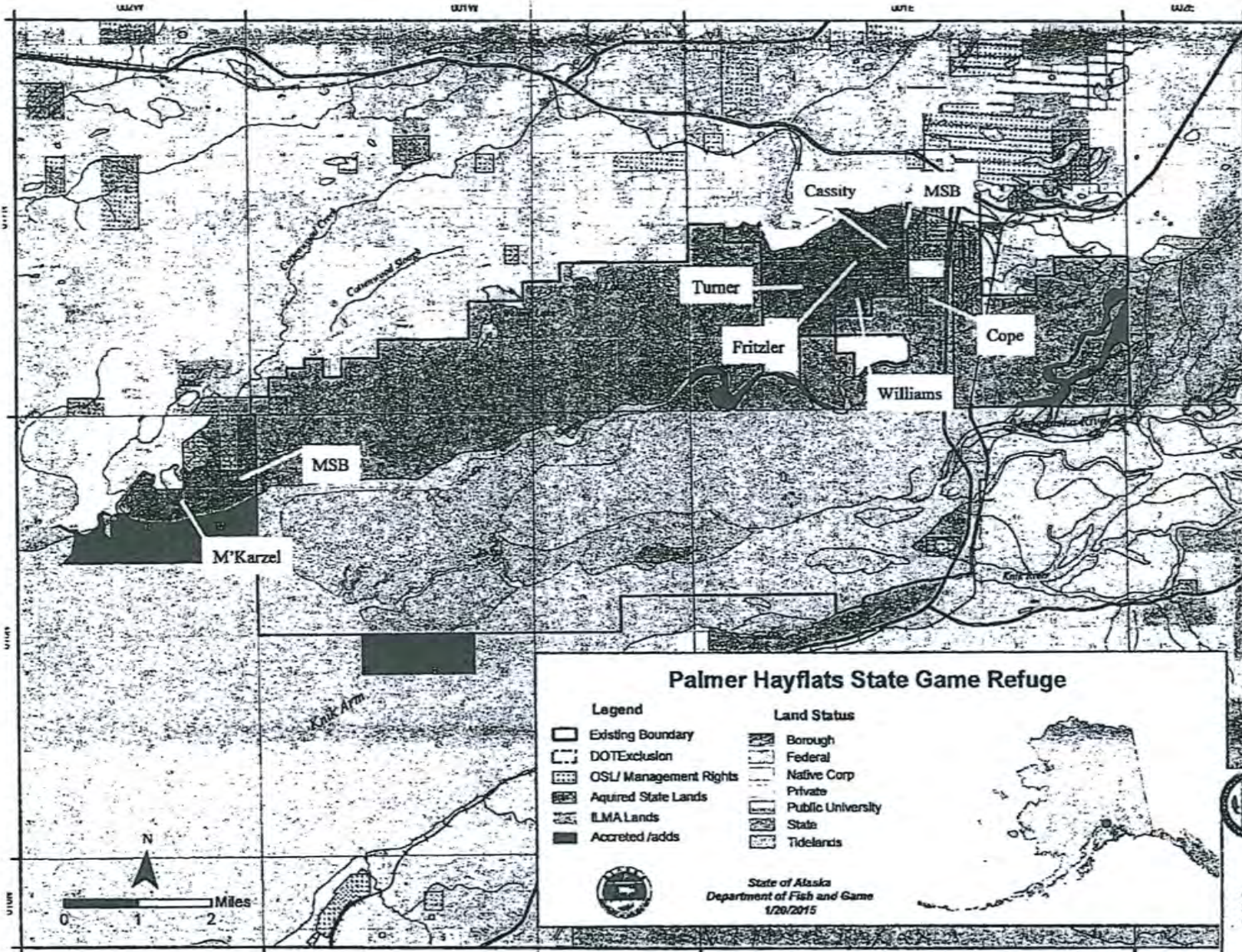
refuge in trades with Mat-Su Borough. Also, the Turner property was acquired for the refuge and transferred to ADNR with conservation covenants similar to the other parcels. These eight parcels (map attached) were clearly acquired for the refuge and should be included in a Board endorsement.

I appreciate the Board's consideration of this proposal to demonstrate support for the acquisition and conservation of fish and wildlife habitats in our state game refuges. Your active support will enhance the public's access to well-managed hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation experiences.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Thomas C. Rothe".

Thomas C. Rothe  
11828 Broadwater Drive  
Eagle River, AK, 99577  
(907) 694-9068  
[Tom.halcyon@gmail.com](mailto:Tom.halcyon@gmail.com)





Submitted By  
Barbara Johnson  
Submitted On  
1/30/2015 2:31:42 PM  
Affiliation

Phone  
907-229-8891  
Email  
[sbejohn1@mac.com](mailto:sbejohn1@mac.com)  
Address  
P.O. Box 670874  
Chuglak, Alaska 99567

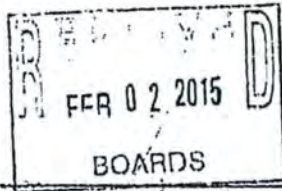
To: Alaska Boards of Fisheries and Game

Re: Proposal 105-5 AAC 95,505, Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge

I am writing you to ask that Proposal 105, which would expand the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge, be approved. I urge that both boards also send a recommendation to the State Legislature for action this year to ensure that the Alaska Department of Fish & Game can manage these additional lands consistent with refuge goals. These lands, purchased over the past 20 years for incorporation into the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge, need to be given the legal protection under the law. I think it is very important to amend the legal descriptions in AS 16.20.032 so that the refuge boundaries are expanded and include these additional lands.

As I understand it, these parcels have all been transferred to the state and they have conservation covenants on them. It seems logical and necessary to officially include them in the boundaries of the refuge to enable managers to communicate consistent management goals to the public more clearly. I think it would be very helpful to have new maps that make it easier for the public to also know the new boundaries and to allow the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to put up signs and manage these lands appropriately with the other lands already designated as part of the refuge.

I appreciate your consideration of this proposal, and I hope that you will take positive action this year to make these lands officially part of the refuge, as intended when they were purchased and given to the state through a variety of methods.



January 29, 2015

Dear Board Members of the Alaska  
Department of Fish and Game,

I am a teacher at  
Machetaniz Elementary School.  
My class has been learning  
about the animals and habitat  
of the Palmer Hay Flats. I am  
writing to request that you  
support Proposal 105. Recently,  
land was purchased adjacent  
to the Palmer Hay Flats Game  
Refuge to create a trail  
along a portion of the refuge  
near our school. Putting  
this land as part of the Refuge,  
and under the management  
of Alaska Department of Fish  
and Game, will allow access  
to the refuge for educational  
purposes.

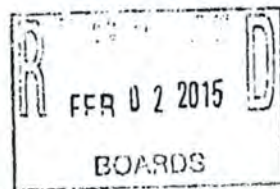
Sincerely,  
Laura Wick

Jan. 29, 2015

Dear Board Members of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game,

I am a student at Machetanz Elementary School. My class and I have been learning about the animals and habitat of the Palmer HayFlats. I am writing to request that you support Proposal 105. Recently, land was purchased adjacent to the Palmer HayFlats Game Refuge to create a trail along a portion of the refuge near our school. Putting this land as part of the refuge, and under the management of Alaska Department of Fish and Game, will allow access to the refuge for educational purposes.

Sincerely,  
Kiera Durnford



FFR 0 2 2015  
F03PDS

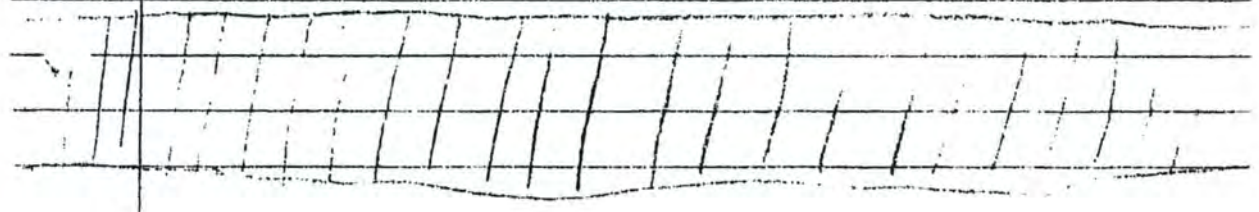
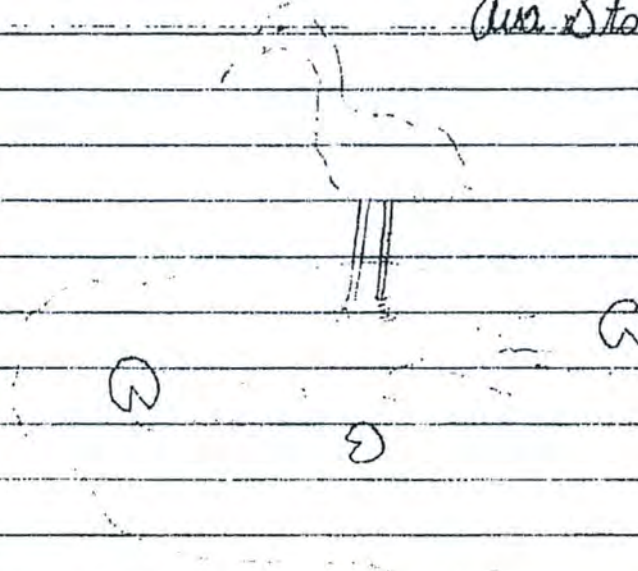
January 25, 2015

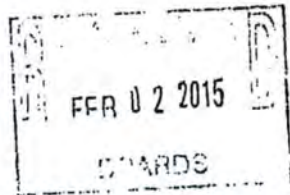
Dear Board Members of Alaska Department of Fish and Game,

I am a student at Machetomy Elementary School. My school and members of our community donated money to Treat Land Trust so they could purchase part of the Palmer Hay Flats. This land is not yet protected. Please protect this land so our school and community can enjoy the Alaska wildlife.

Thank you!

Sincerely,  
Aur Stotts





January 29, 2015

Dear Board Members of the Alaska  
Department of Fish and Game,

I am a student at Machetaniz  
elementary school. My class and I  
have been learning about animals  
and habitat of the Palmer Hay Flats.  
I am writing to request that you  
support Proposal 105. Recently  
land was purchased adjacent to  
the Palmer Hay Flats Game Refuge  
to create a public trail along  
a portion of the refuge near our  
school. Putting this land as a  
part of the refuge and under  
the protection of Alaska Department  
of Fish and Game so that we  
can have field trips and have  
out class learning. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Jaigem Dawid

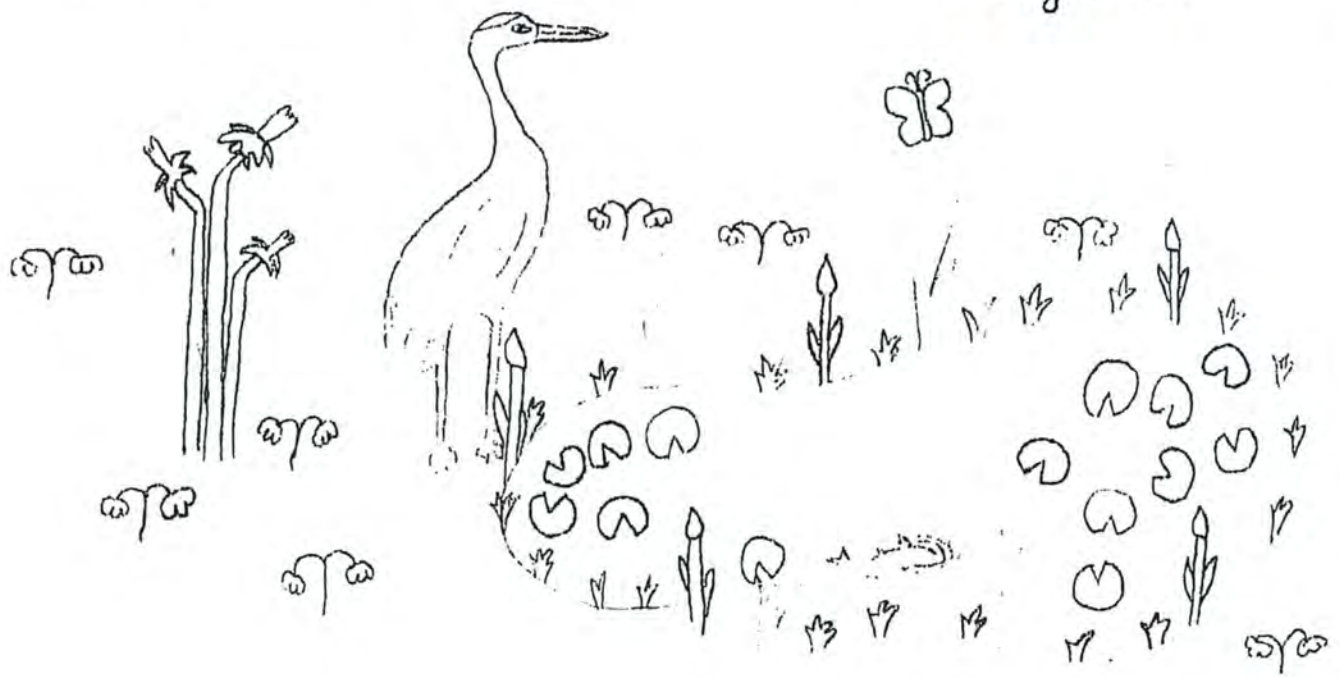
FEB 02 2015  
BOARDS

January 29, 2015

Dear Board Members of the Alaska  
Department of Fish and Game,

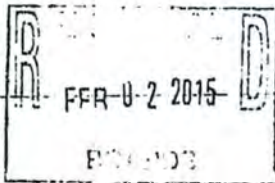
I am a student at Machetaniz  
Elementary School. I am writing to ask that  
you support Proposal 105. That would put  
management of the new lands of the Palmer  
Hay Flats Game Refuge. So that my family  
and me and of cours my class could go out  
and see beautiful plants and animals! Thank you!

Sincerely,  
Bright B.

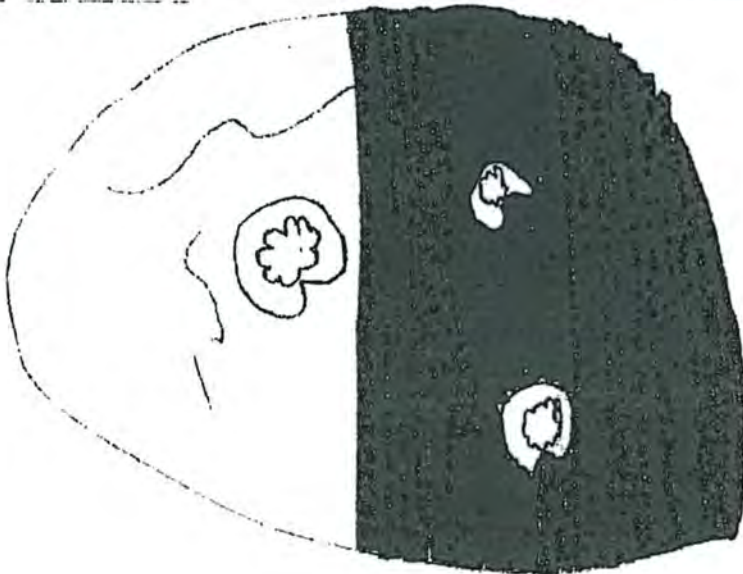


January 29, 2015

Dear Board Members of Alaska Department of Fish and Game, My name is Alani from Machetan Elementary. I'm writing to ask that you support proposal 105 that would put management of the new lands of the Palmer Hay Flats Game Refuge under the direction of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game



Sincerely,  
Alani Underwood



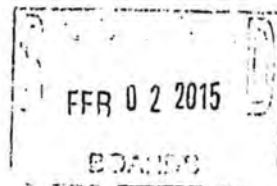
January 29, 2015

Dear Board Members of the Alaska  
Department of Fish and Game,

My name is Lyndsey Payne and I am  
a fourth grade student at Macheetna  
Elementary School. My class has been  
learning about the Alaska Tundra  
and I would like to support Proposal  
105. I would like to support Proposal 105  
because I would like to go on outside field  
trips to the Tundra to study the habitat  
and wildlife of Alaska. Thank you for  
considering to make this change.

Sincerely,

Lyndsey Payne



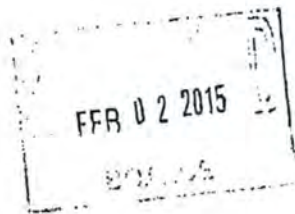
January 29, 2015

Dear Department of Fish and Game

I am writing to ask that you support  
proposal 10E that would put management  
of the new lands of the Palmer

Hay Flats Game Refuge under  
the direction of the Alaska  
Department of Fish and Game.

I want the land to be  
part of the refuge so that  
we can go on field trips  
to the Palmer Hay Flats.



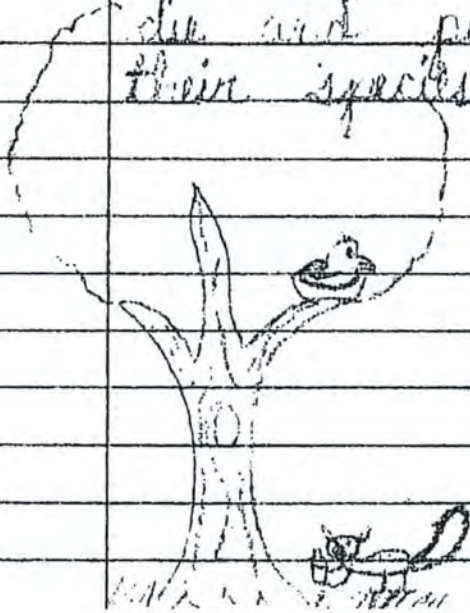
Sincerely,  
Sophia Micheli

FFB 0 2 2015  
BOARD

1/29/15

Dear All Department of Fish and Game,  
I go to school at Marking  
Elementary. It is very close to  
the Palmer Hay Flats State  
Game Refuge and I think you  
should support Proposal 105.  
This is a good idea because  
there are many habitats in  
that area and they need to  
be protected. It would be sad  
to see so many habitats of  
completely innocent animals  
being destroyed and replaced  
with something like a few  
new neighborhoods. Without  
habitats, many animals could  
die and possibly cause  
their species to go extinct.

Sincerely,  
Emma Taylor

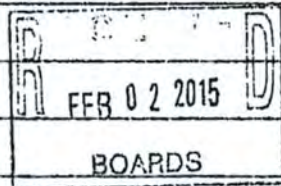


January 29, 2015

Dear Board members of the Alaska  
Department of Fish and Game,

I am a student at Machezan  
Elementary School. My class has been  
learning about the animals and habitats  
of the Palmer Hay Flats. I am writing  
to ask that you support proposal 105  
that would put management of the new  
lands of the Palmer Hay Flats under  
the management of the Alaska  
Department of Fish and Game.

Sincerely,  
Tofer



January 29, 2015

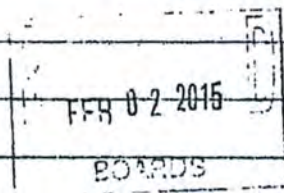
Dear Board Members of the  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game,

I am writing to ask you to support  
proposal 105. I think this is a  
good idea for schools (my school is  
Machetang Elementary) because we  
can go on field trips to learn  
about wildlife and animal habitats.

I know that land was purchased  
near the Palmer Hayflats. (I  
should know, I was in a play!  
to raise money for it!)

Thank you!

Sincerely,  
Lia Silaren



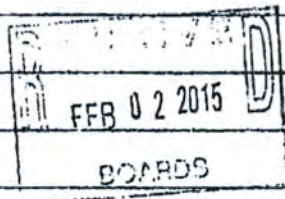
January, 29, 2015

Dear Department of Fish and Game.

I am writing to ask that you support Proposal 105, that you would put management of the new lands of the Palmer Hay flats Game refuge under the direction of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Sincerely,

Emily Payton

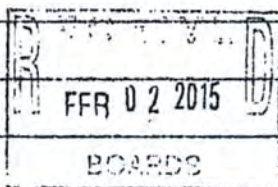


January 29, 2015

Dear Board Members of the Alaska  
Department of Fish and Game,

I am a student at Machetaniz  
Elementary school. My class has been  
studying about the animals in the Palmer  
Hay Flats. I am writing to request that  
you support the proposal 105, and I  
hope you consider.

Sincerely  
Andrew

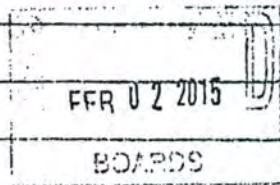


January 29, 2015

Dear Board members of the  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game,

I am writing to ask that you  
support proposal 105 that  
would put management of  
the new lands of the Palmer  
Haw Flats Game Refuge  
under the purview of the  
Alaska Department of Fish and  
Game

Sincerely,  
Tyler Higgins



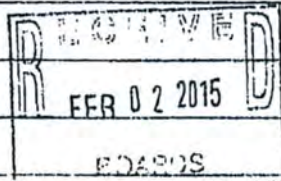
January 27, 2015

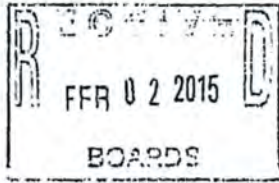
Dear Department of Fish and Game

I strongly ask you to support Proposal 105. Proposal 105 would put management of the new lands of the Palmer hay flats game Refuge under the protection of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. I hope you take notice.

Sincerely

Ernan Bronger





January 29, 2015

Dear Department of Fish and Game,

Hi. My name is Abby Novak. I go to school at Mackinac Elementary, right by the Palmer Hayflats State Game Refuge. I would like you to do proposal 105 and expand the Palmer Hayflats State Game Refuge. The reason why I would like you to do this expansion is because there are many habitats that could be destroyed without this extra protection. There are lots of salmon and many nesting swans that could get killed or have their habitats destroyed by people. Lots of wildlife could get killed. We need this wildlife protection and fast!  
Thank you!

Sincerely,  
Abby Novak



January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
Dear Board Members of the Alaska  
Department of Fish and Game,

I am a student at Machitanze Elementary  
my name is Megan Davies. My class and  
I have been studying the wild life in the  
the Alaska Hay flats. Many people have been  
donating money to purchase the property from  
several families. In which the property  
is meant for public use. I am writing  
to request that you support that  
you support proposal 105. So that we  
can use the property for a trail which  
we will use as public use.

Sincerely,  
Megan Davies

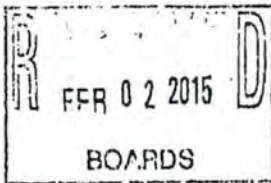


Dear State Legislator,

I am a student at Machetanz Elementary school named Anthony Jones. I think that you should pay the bill to expand the refuge in the hay flats because the land has already been bought but can not be protected by laws. Please pay the bill this will save who knows how many innocent animal lives which are just as valuable as human lives.

Sincerely,

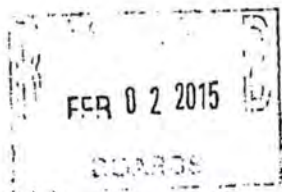
Anthony Jones



January 29, 2015

Dear Board Members of the  
Alaska Department fish and game,

My name is Alexis smith and I  
go to Machetaniz Elementary  
School. My Class has been learning  
about animals and habitats of the  
Palmer Hay Flats. I am writing about  
Propose ~~los~~ that would put management  
of new lands of the Palmer Hay Flats  
game Refuge, under the Pirection of the  
Alaska Department of fish and game.  
I want the land to be part of the  
Refuge so that we can go on feild trips.



Sincerely,  
Alexis smith



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

**Alaska Board of Game**

1255 West 8th Street  
P.O. Box 115526  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-5526  
Main: 907.465.4110  
Fax: 907.465.6094

March 26, 2015

Representative Jim Colver  
State Capitol, Room #424  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Colver:

As chairman of the Board of Game (Board), I'd like to thank you for introducing House Bill 153, an Act expanding the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge and relay to you the recent Board action to support the expansion. At the Central/Southwest Region meeting, the Board unanimously passed a public proposal, Proposal 105, requesting an expansion the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge. Although the Board has authority to expand or set aside game reserves or refuges under AS 16.05.255, it is subject to legislative approval. A copy of the proposal and comments submitted to the Board on the proposal including those from the local fish and game advisory committees are enclosed for your review.

The Board recognizes the refuge is one of the most important year-round wildlife and outdoor recreational areas in the state, providing several types of uses enjoyed by the public including waterfowl hunting, bird dog (retriever) training, trapping, bird watching, nature study, hiking, sport fishing, canoeing, winter snow machining and cross-country skiing, and photography. Since the Department of Fish and Game has been acquiring or assuming management responsibility of several parcels of land contiguous with the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge with the interest in adding them to the refuge, the Board agreed it is appropriate the refuge be expanded to include these parcels.

I look forward to listening to the legislative hearings and will keep the Board apprised of its' progress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ted Spraker".

Ted Spraker, Chairman  
Alaska Board of Game

Enclosure

cc: Bruce Dale, Acting Director, ADF&G Division of Wildlife Conservation

**Alaska Outdoor Council Inc.**  
310 K Street, Suite 200  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501  
[aoc@alaskaoutdoorcouncil.com](mailto:aoc@alaskaoutdoorcouncil.com)  
(907) 264-6645

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



WESTERN REGIONAL OFFICE  
3074 Gold Canal Drive  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-6166  
916-852-2000 916-852-2200 (fax)  
[www.ducks.org](http://www.ducks.org)

April 7, 2015

Representative Jim Colver  
Alaska House of Representatives  
State Capitol Room 424  
Juneau, AK 99801

**RE: Support for HB 153**

Dear Representative Colver:

Ducks Unlimited is pleased to inform you of our support for House Bill 153, your measure to amend the boundaries of the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge to include lands previously acquired for conservation. As one of the most heavily visited state refuges, accessible to the majority of Alaskans, Palmer Hay Flats is highly important for waterfowl and moose hunting, fishing for salmon, many forms of outdoor recreation, and as a natural classroom for outdoor education.

As an organization committed to conserving wetlands for waterfowl, other wildlife and people, we appreciate your initiative to enhance public access to wildlife resources and habitat values on the refuge. We view the addition of the subject lands to the refuge as the culmination of efforts by many partners (including Ducks Unlimited) to produce a win-win outcome for the citizens of Alaska.

Ultimately, the acquisition of these parcels and incorporation into the refuge will have exceptional benefits:

- The owners of refuge inholdings that were largely undevelopable received fair value and tax benefits for the voluntary sale of their lands for conservation.
- The properties were acquired through collaboration between non-profit conservation organizations (who brought over \$1 million to the table), federal wetlands grants, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (State Duck Stamp and Sport Fish funds) without other appropriated state money.
- The acquisitions near Rabbit Slough created legal public access to the eastern half of the refuge for waterfowl hunting, boating and salmon fishing. As a result, ADFG has been able to upgrade the quality and convenience of the road and boat launch.
- Inclusion of these conservation lands in the refuge will consolidate management by ADFG under a well-written refuge plan, remove ambiguity about the authority to pursue wildlife and habitat projects, and clarify administrative and enforcement policies.

We understand that there have been discussions about amending the bill to include a parcel at Cottonwood Creek, long managed under an Interagency Land Management Agreement with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. We fully support such an amendment to consolidate management at the primary northern refuge access area for hunting and fishing. Nearly all refuge visitors use Cottonwood Creek and Rabbit Slough.

In amending refuge boundaries, your bill will not only consolidate management of the entire refuge, but it will fulfill obligations made to many partners that contributed to conservation of valuable habitats and expanding public access to wildlife resources. As a partner in several of the acquisitions, Ducks Unlimited thanks you for your efforts and offers its continuing support to bring this legislation to success.

Sincerely,



Mark Biddlecomb  
Director, Western Region  
Ducks Unlimited

Cc: House Resources Committee Co-Chair Rep. Ben Nageak  
House Resources Committee Co-Chair Rep. David Talerico  
Sam Cotton, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game

---

Ducks Unlimited's nearly 675,000 members in North America partner with a wide range of corporations, governments, other NGO's, landowners, and private citizens to conserve, restore, and manage wetlands and associated habitats for North America's waterfowl. In total, Ducks Unlimited has influenced and conserved over a total of 108 million acres in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. In the Pacific Flyway, Ducks Unlimited and its thousands of members have invested hundreds of millions of dollars and impacted over a million acres of habitat.



**FRIENDS OF  
THE  
ANCHORAGE  
COASTAL  
WILDLIFE  
REFUGE**

PO Box 220196  
Anchorage, AK  
99522-0196

Phone: 907-248-2503  
Fax: 907-248-3159  
e-mail: [bc@farak.org](mailto:bc@farak.org)

The Honorable Representative Colver  
The Honorable Representative Nageak  
The Honorable Representative Talerico  
The Honorable Representative Hawker  
The Honorable Representative Herron  
The Honorable Representative Johnson  
The Honorable Representative Olson  
The Honorable Representative Seaton  
The Honorable Representative Josephson  
The Honorable Representative Tarr

Subject: FAR's support of HB 153, adding Lands to Palmer Hay Flats Refuge

2015 March 27

Dear Representatives Nageak, Talericio, Hawker, Colver and All:

I write on behalf of Friends of the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge (FAR) to support House Bill 153 which adds conservation dedicated lands already owned by the State of Alaska to the Palmer Hay Flats Refuge. These lands were purchased without tapping legislative appropriations and to add these lands now to the refuge by amending the refuge boundaries in statute is the last step remaining to fulfill promises made to contributing partners, whose key members are The Nature Conservancy, The Great Land Trust, federal wetland grants, and Ducks Unlimited

We thank Representative Colver for working with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to develop this bill and bring it forward and applaud the groups who helped previous owners realize their vision of these now public lands. These lands in State ownership with conservation covenants to ensure management for fish and wildlife and their public benefits help make Alaska the place we love to live, work, raise our families, and retire. It is important to include these lands into the system so that the State can ensure that they will be here for future generations to enjoy as intended.

Again, FAR supports HB 153, and we encourage you pass this bill completing the good work that has been done to provide these lands to enhance the beauty and integrity of the Palmer Hay Flats State Refuge for fish, wildlife, and their public benefits.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

*Barbara Švarný Carlson*

Barbara Carlson  
President and Executive Director



## Alaska Department of Fish and Game

[ADF&G Home](#) » [Lands and Waters](#) » [Conservation Areas](#) » [Palmer Hay Flats](#)

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### Palmer Hay Flats — State Game Refuge Area Overview

Switch to area:

Palmer Hay Flats

[Overview](#) [Fish and Wildlife](#) [Visitor Information](#) [Permits](#) [Contacts](#)

Created in 1975, this Upper Cook Inlet refuge located near Wasilla protects 28,800 acres of coastal and freshwater wetlands, tidal sloughs and mudflats, lakes and streams, as well as upland birch forests. Much of the Hay Flats that now supports wetland habitats was relatively dry grasslands prior to the 1964 Alaskan Earthquake. Land subsidence of 2 feet or more during the earthquake transformed the area into the wetlands we now see as Cook Inlet tidal waters and freshwater runoff inundated the area.



During spring, tens-of-thousands of migrating ducks, geese, swans, shorebirds and other birds stop in the Hay Flats to refuel during their migration to their northern nesting grounds. Many species of waterbirds remain in the refuge for the summer to nest and raise their young. During winter, the refuge provides important habitat for hundreds of moose that move out of the mountains to take advantage of the lower snow depths in their search of browse.

While the Knikatnu native peoples of Upper Cook Inlet have lived in and around what is now the Palmer Hay Flats for centuries, there are currently no settlements within the refuge; although evidence of their historic occupation exists along the bluffs above the Hay Flats. Much of the surrounding region was settled by Midwest farmers the U.S. Government brought to Alaska during the Great Depression. Hay and other agricultural crops were grown within the area now comprising the refuge, particularly near Cottonwood Creek.

Created in the late-1800s and mostly following existing trails created by Alaska's native peoples, the historic Iditarod Trail passes through today's refuge. This trail was created as a way to transport supplies to and from gold mining camps and other settlements in the state's interior from the coastal supply port of Seward. Travelers on the trail utilized teams of dogs pulling cargo sleds.



Today, easy access and proximity to over half of Alaska's population has made the Palmer Hay Flats refuge one of the most important year-round wildlife and outdoor recreational areas in the state. While the refuge is mostly undeveloped, several sites provide parking and access to marked trails, streams and lakes. Waterfowl hunting, bird dog (retriever) training, trapping, bird watching, nature study, hiking, sport fishing, canoeing and winter snow machining and cross-country skiing provide diverse opportunities for those wishing to enjoy the refuge. The refuge's wildlife, wetlands and dramatic mountain backdrop provide many opportunities for photographers and others wishing to enjoy the scenery in Upper Cook Inlet.



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*Development Coordinator*

Austin Quinn-Davidson  
*Conservation Project Manager*

#### ADDRESS INFORMATION

715 L Street, Suite 200  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Tel: 907.278.4998  
Fax: 907.278.4997

[www.fb.com/GreatLandTrust](http://www.fb.com/GreatLandTrust)  
[www.greatlandtrust.org](http://www.greatlandtrust.org)



#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January xx, 2014

Contacts (all area code 907)

Kim Sollien, 746-6406

Phil Shephard, 278-4992

### GREAT LAND TRUST ENHANCES PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE PALMER HAY FLATS GAME REFUGE THROUGH PURCHASE OF 917 ACRES

*Wild Salmon Conservation and Recreation Top Priorities*

**Palmer, Alaska** – For the benefit of all Alaskans, local non-profit Great Land Trust purchased and made public 917 acres of private land in the Mat-Su Valley. This purchase will permanently conserve valuable salmon and wildlife habitat. A three mile section of Wasilla Creek, home to important spawning, rearing, and overwintering habitat for all five species of salmon and 168 species of migratory birds, passes through the purchased land.

Over three years and with the help of a dozen partnerships with state agencies, foundations, and individuals, GLT raised \$1.5 million for the purchase. The land is located on the south side of Nelson Road directly across the street from Machetanz Elementary School and directly adjacent to the 29,000-acre Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge.

Joe Meehan, Refuge Manager for Alaska Department Fish & Game, emphasized the importance of the project's connectivity with Knik Islands and Chugach State Park: "The acquisition of this property is a significant achievement in protecting Cook Inlet's important coastal wetlands, which are a significant part of North America's Pacific Flyway." Alaskans will be able to use the new area for hunting, recreational fishing, wildlife viewing, and other activities.

Machetanz Elementary is a new school built to serve the largest subdivision development in the Mat-Su Borough. With this purchase, Machetanz is now connected to the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge, one of the most significant year-round wildlife and outdoor recreational areas in the state.

With the purchase complete, GLT is now raising funds to build two new trailheads and a 4-mile rustic trail, furthering public access to the Refuge. The trail will extend from Wasilla Creek at Nelson Road through the Refuge and end at Machetanz Elementary. The students are eager to learn about science and play in this exceptional new outdoor classroom.

"This is a great example of how conservation benefits Alaskans," says Phil Shephard, Executive Director of Great Land Trust.

The Palmer Hay Flats/Wasilla Creek Conservation Project was made possible through funds raised by Great Land Trust. Funders and partners of the project include the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Coastal Program, National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grants, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Alaska Department of Fish & Game, the Alaska Sustainable Salmon Fund, The Conservation Fund, Pacific Coast Joint Venture, Mat-Su Borough, Bullitt Foundation, M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust, the State of Alaska Duck Stamp program, Alaskans for Palmer Hay Flats, and hundreds of individual supporters.

###



## FACT SHEET PRESS PACKET Wasilla Creek Conservation Project

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John Wros  
*Lands Manager*

Shannon Kuhn  
*Development Coordinator*

Austin Quinn-Davidson  
*Conservation Project Manager*

### ADDRESS INFORMATION

715 L Street, Suite 200  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Tel: 907.278.4998

Fax: 907.278.4997

[www.fb.com/GreatLandTrust](http://www.fb.com/GreatLandTrust)  
[www.greatlandtrust.org](http://www.greatlandtrust.org)



- In December 2013, Great Land Trust (GLT) purchased and transferred 917 acres to the State, the largest private inholding within the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge (Refuge.)
- The land, previously in private ownership, is adjacent to the 28,000-acre Alaska Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge and 500,000-acre Chugach State Park.
- The land parcels are intended to be added to the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge, and then managed by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, through designation by the Alaska State Legislature.
- The land is located in the Matanuska/Knik River watershed and visible from the Glenn Highway.
- Rapid growth and urbanization in the Mat-Su Basin is threatening the fish habitat necessary to sustain healthy salmon populations and ultimately the quality of life for residents.
- Conservation of this land will conserve important wildlife habitat; maintain the connectivity of Wasilla Creek & Spring Creek, which run through the project area to the Refuge; and protect estuarine habitat at the mouth of the Knik and Matanuska Rivers.
- Three miles of Wasilla Creek will be conserved through this project, supporting all 5 species of salmon. Chinook, coho, sockeye, pink, and chum salmon all return in great numbers to the streams and lakes of the Mat-Su Basin each summer to spawn.
- The project will achieve the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge management plan objectives through conserving this sensitive area.
- Numerous conservation plans support this project, including the National Fish Habitat Action Plan, Matanuska-Susitna Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership Strategic Plan, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Recreation and Open Space Plan, Great Land Trust Mat-Su Borough Parcel Prioritization and the 2008 Conservation Plan for the Cook Inlet Beluga Whale.
- In 2010, in partnership with the Mat-Su Borough government, GLT developed a GIS based prioritization tool to identify and prioritize potential conservation projects throughout the region. This property ranked the highest out of the 100,000 privately owned parcels evaluated in the prioritization.



Machenanz Elementary School, home to over 400 students, sits in the middle of a growing residential development and the world-class Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge. Students currently have no access to the Refuge. Photo by Carl Johnson.



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## FACT SHEET PRESS PACKET Great Land Trust

*"The mission of Great Land Trust is to work in partnership with willing landowners to protect Southcentral Alaska's, lands and waterways"*

- Founded by and for Alaskans in 1995
- A local private non-profit land conservation organization
- Dedicated to collaborative efforts with willing landowners
- As an innovative nonpartisan organization, GLT partners with diverse interested parties including landowners, business developers, and conservationists.
- Serving the southcentral region, north of the Kenai Peninsula, from Denali Park to Cordova
- Permanently conserving important natural lands and open space through voluntary action
- Conserved over 9,000 acres of land including 40 miles of salmon streams, 5,000 acres of wetlands, six historic homesteads, seven municipal parks, three projects that provide access to Palmer Hay Flats Game Refuge, three trail development projects, two projects that provide access to Chugach State Park, and a historic 80-acre farm in Trapper Creek.

For more information visit our website at [www.greatlandtrust.org](http://www.greatlandtrust.org)  
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