



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MICHAEL J. DUNLEAVY

Department of Natural Resources

DIVISION OF MINING, LAND & WATER

Director's Office

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Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3579

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October 4, 2019

**Re: Department Regulations on Using or Discharging Firearms in a Small Portion
of the Hatcher Pass Special Use Area
Opportunity to Comment on Proposed Regulation Changes**

Dear Alaskan:

The Department of Natural Resources proposes to adopt a regulation change in Title 11 of the Alaska Administrative Code dealing with the use or discharge of firearms in a small portion of the Hatcher Pass Special Use Area, to allow for a possible biathlon range in the Government Peak Unit of the Hatcher Pass Management Plan. I am writing to explain the proposed changes to these regulations, why we are proposing this regulation package now, and how this action relates to the ongoing resource management process. I invite you to review and comment on these proposed regulations.

Brief Description

After considering public comments, ideas, and suggestions received pursuant to the notice of public scoping under Administrative Order 266, the Department of Natural Resources is proposing to amend 11 AAC 96.014(b)(3)(E) to allow for the use or discharge of firearms associated with a possible biathlon range within a small portion of the Hatcher Pass Special Use Area, specifically the Southern Development Area of the Government Peak Unit of the Hatcher Pass Management Plan, as depicted on the map entitled *Hatcher Pass Management Plan, Government Peak Unit, Southern Development Area, Biathlon Range Area*.

Why Do We Need This Regulation Change Now?

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough is considering installing a biathlon range on borough-owned lands within a portion of the Southern Development Area of the Government Peak Unit of the Hatcher Pass Management Plan. These proposed regulations are needed to allow shooting associated with this proposed biathlon range. Under current regulations, a person may not use or discharge a firearm within this area except for lawful hunting.

While the subject lands are owned by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the Borough is required to manage these lands under DNR regulations and DNR's Hatcher Pass Management Plan. DNR must therefore, revise this existing regulation in order to allow for the use or discharge of firearms associated with the borough's possible biathlon range.

Opportunity for Comment.

Interested parties are encouraged to review the proposed regulation changes and submit any comments to the Division of Mining, Land and Water. Enclosed is the official "Notice of Proposed Changes in the Regulations of the Department of Natural Resources," which

provides the details regarding the submission of public comment. You can view the proposed regulations on our website at <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/mlw/hottopics>.

For your comments to be considered, the department must receive them no later than **5:00 p.m. on Friday, November 15, 2019**. Comments must be in writing, and they may be mailed, faxed, or e-mailed to the address below.

Attention: Joe Joyner
Division of Mining, Land and Water
550 W 7th Ave., Suite 1070
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3579
Fax: (907) 269-8904
E-mail: dnr.hatchepass.regulation@alaska.gov

You may also submit written questions relevant to the proposed regulations to: Joe Joyner, Division of Mining, Land and Water, 550 W. 7th Ave., Suite 1070, Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3579, Fax: (907) 269-8904, or e-mail at dnr.hatchepass.regulation@alaska.gov. Questions must be received at least 10 days before the end of the public comment period (**November 5, 2019**). The Department of Natural Resources will aggregate its response to substantially similar questions and make the questions and responses available online at <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/mlw/hottopics>.

For more information regarding the DNR's proposed regulation changes or a copy of the proposed regulation change, go to <http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/mlw/hottopics>, or write to the Director's Office at: Attention Joe Joyner, Division of Mining, Land and Water, 550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1070, Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3579; or call 907-269-8511, or e-mail at joe.joyner@alaska.gov.

If you are a person with a disability who needs a special accommodation in order to participate in this process, please contact Joe Joyner at 269-8511 no later than **November 5, 2019**, to ensure that any necessary accommodations can be provided.

Thank you for your consideration of these proposed regulation changes. DNR looks forward to reading your comments and suggestions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Marty Parsons", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marty Parsons
Director, Division of Mining, Land and Water
Department of Natural Resources