

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Izembek National Wildlife Refuge

Land Exchange/Road Corridor

Public Scoping





- The Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 directed the Secretary of the Interior to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement to conduct an analysis of a proposed land exchange among the USFWS, the State of Alaska and the King Cove Native Corporation.



The EIS will contain an analysis of:

- Proposed land exchange;
- Potential construction and operation of a road between the communities of King Cove and Cold Bay;
- Potential road corridors through Izembek NWR that will be identified by the State of Alaska, the City of King Cove, the Agdaagux Tribe of King Cove, and the public.



Cooperating Agencies –

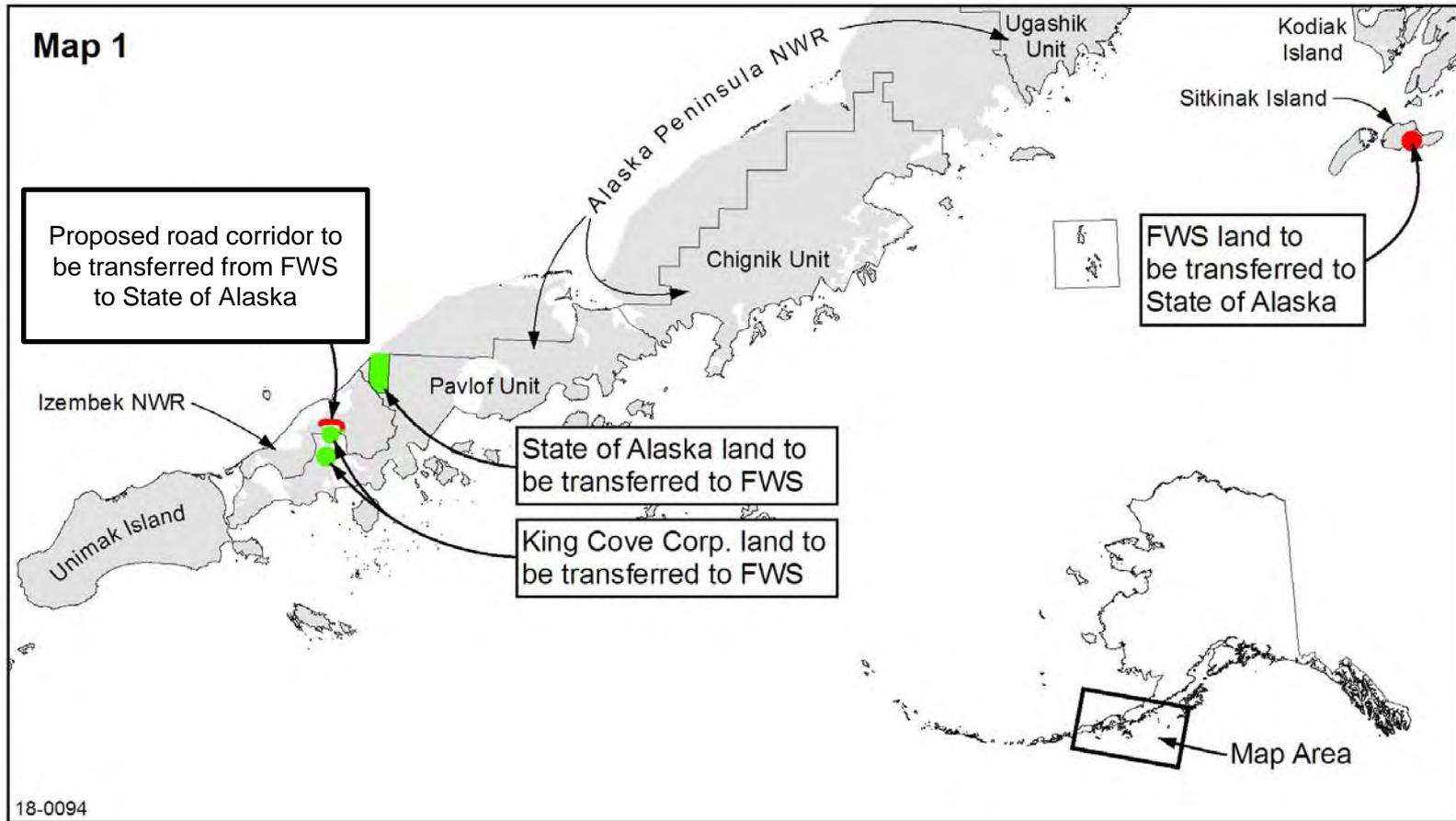
- Any Federal agency that has permitting jurisdiction over the road;
- The State;
- The Aleutians East Borough;
- The City of King Cove;
- The Tribe; and
- The Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council



Public Interest Determination –

The Secretary will determine if the land exchange (including the construction of a road between the City of King Cove and the Cold Bay airport) is in the public interest.

Map of Proposed Land Exchange/Road Corridor



What is Proposed?



Land exchange -

- Removal of 206 acres from Izembek Wilderness and transfer to the State.
- Transfer 1,600 acres of Federal land from Alaska Maritime NWR on Sitkinak Island to State of Alaska.
- USFWS would receive 43,093 acres from State of Alaska and 13,300 acres from King Cove Native Corporation.
- 43,093 acres will be designated Wilderness.

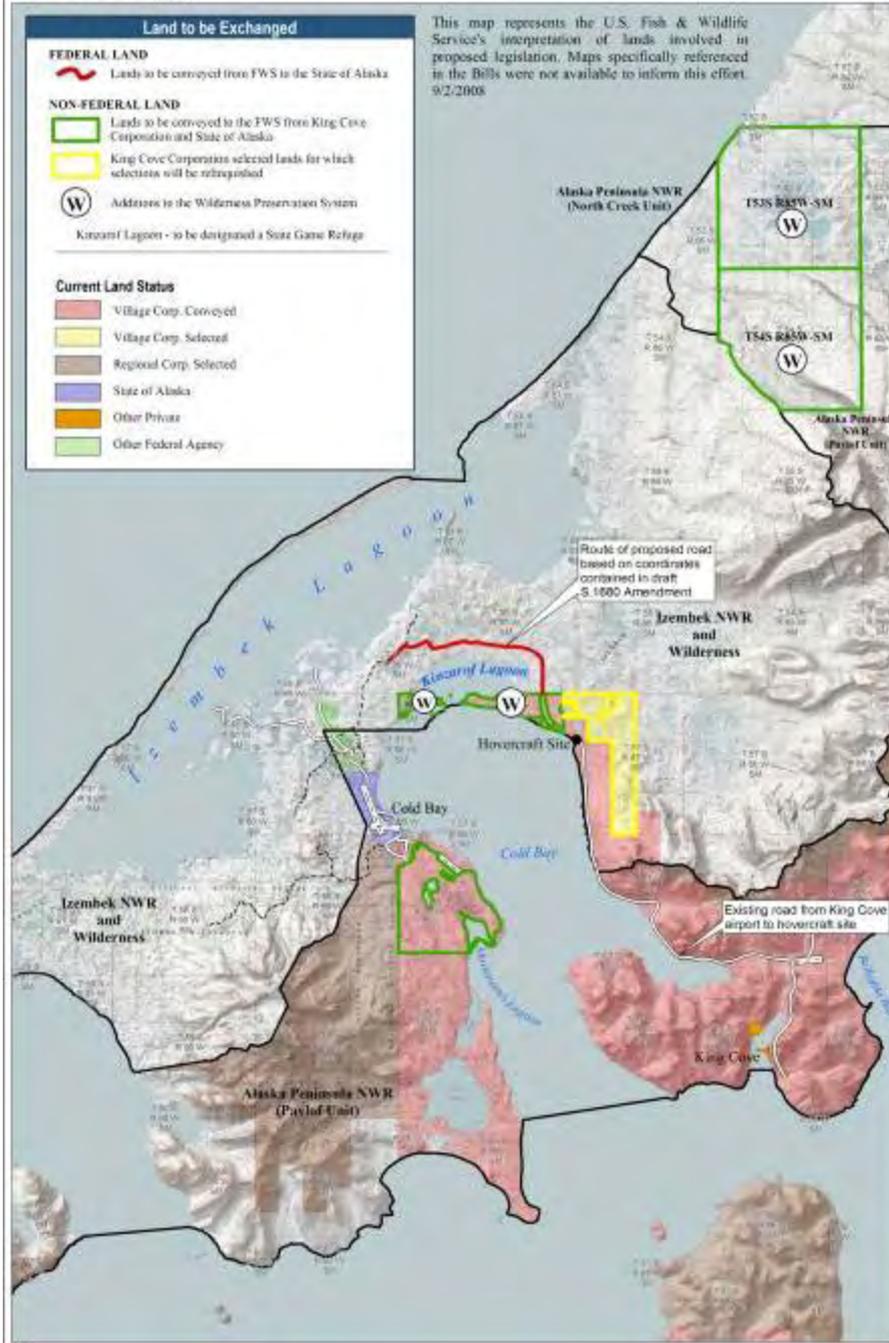


Land to be Exchanged

- FEDERAL LAND**
- Lands to be conveyed from FWS to the State of Alaska
- NON-FEDERAL LAND**
- Lands to be conveyed to the FWS from King Cove Corporation and State of Alaska
 - King Cove Corporation selected lands for which selections will be reintegrated
 - Additions to the Wilderness Preservation System
Kincaid Lagoon - to be designated a State Game Refuge

- Current Land Status**
- Village Corp. Conveyed
 - Village Corp. Selected
 - Regional Corp. Selected
 - State of Alaska
 - Other Private
 - Other Federal Agency

This map represents the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's interpretation of lands involved in proposed legislation. Maps specifically referenced in the Bills were not available to inform this effort. 9/2/2008



View of Izembek Wilderness



View Mortensen's Lagoon



Kinzarof Lagoon Bookends



North Creek Unit

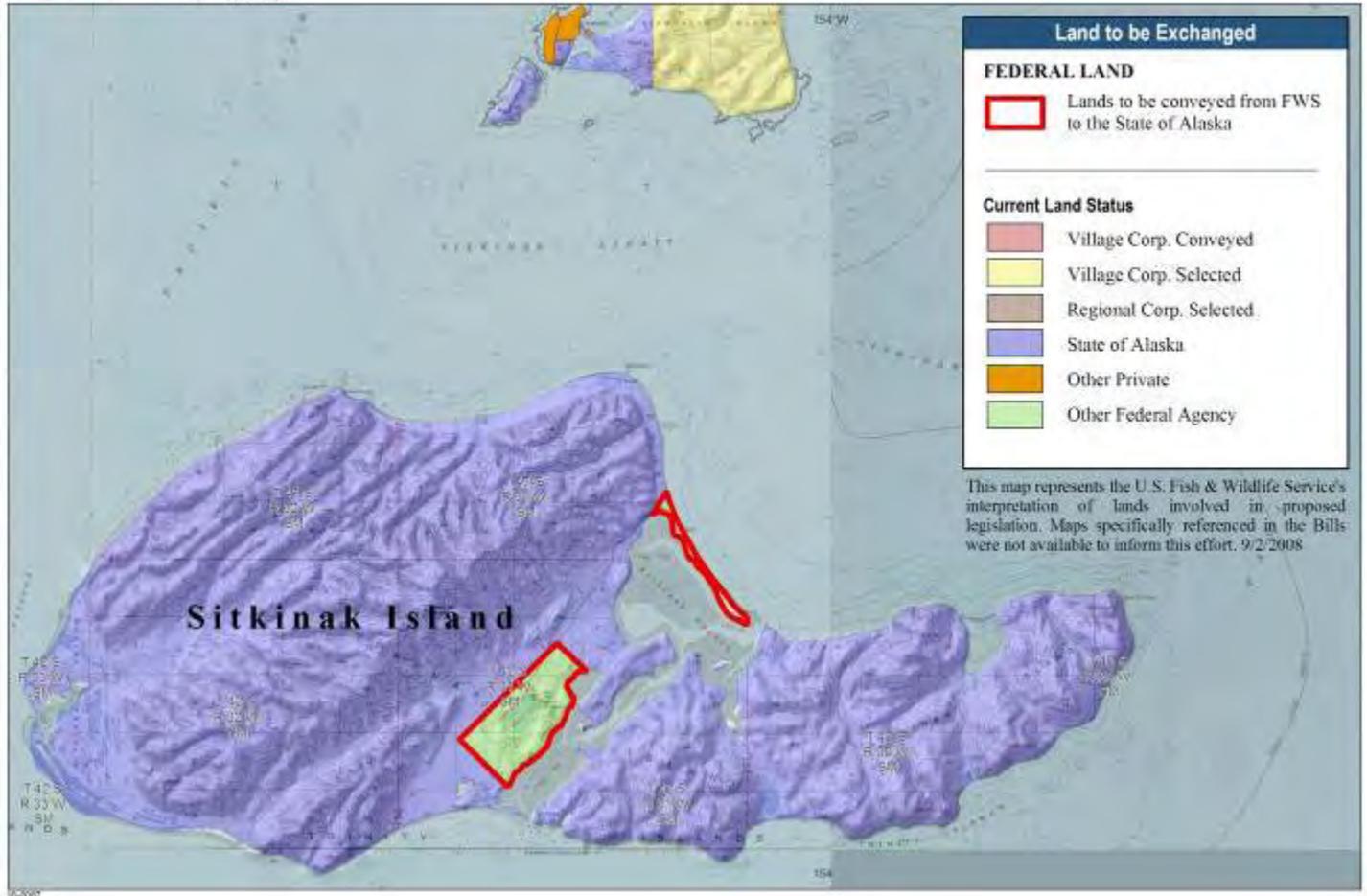




U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Lands Identified in S.1680 and H.R.2801

**Map 3 - Sitkinak Island - Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
Alaska**



Current Legislation



Kinzarof Lagoon

- proposed land exchange cannot be carried out before the State lands within Kinzarof Lagoon are designated State refuge.



Designation of a Road Corridor –

- 1) Minimize the adverse impact of the road corridor on the Refuge;
- 2) Transfer the minimum acreage of Federal land that is required for the construction of the road corridor; and
- 3) To the maximum extent practicable, incorporate existing roads into the road corridor.



Limitations on Use of Road Corridor—

- 1) Any portion of the road constructed on federal land transferred to the State will be used primarily for health and safety and only for noncommercial purposes.
- 2) The use of taxis, commercial vans for public transportation, and shared rides will be allowed.



Requirement of a Barrier Cable on Proposed Road

- the road will be constructed to include a barrier cable on each side of the road – unless a different type barrier is required as a mitigation measure in the ROD for the Final EIS.



Required Dimensions and Design Features of Proposed Road –

- 1) A width not greater than a single lane;
- 2) Constructed with gravel;
- 3) Constructed with any mitigation measures relative to the passage and migration of wildlife, the exchange of tidal flows;
- 4) Constructed to include appropriate safety pullouts.



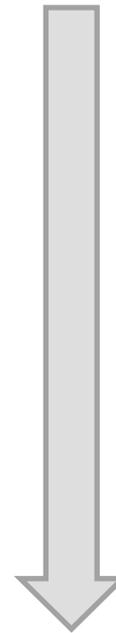
The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is our national charter for the protection of the environment. The purposes of NEPA are: 1) to allow the federal government to make better informed decisions, and 2) to involve citizens in the process.

EIS Process



- Notice of Intent (NOI)
- **Scoping**
- Draft EIS Completed
- Public Comment Period
- Public Comment Analysis
- Final EIS

- Record of Decision



AUG 2009/FEB2010

Ends May 1, 2010

Spring 2011

Summer 2011

Fall 2011

Winter 2012

Spring 2012



What is Scoping?

A process to involve the public in identifying issues, alternatives, and potential impacts of a proposed project. In this case; the proposed land exchange and road corridor.



Public Scoping meetings:

March 4 – Anchorage

March 11 – Washington DC

Week of April 26 – Cold Bay, False Pass, King Cove, Nelson Lagoon and Sand Point

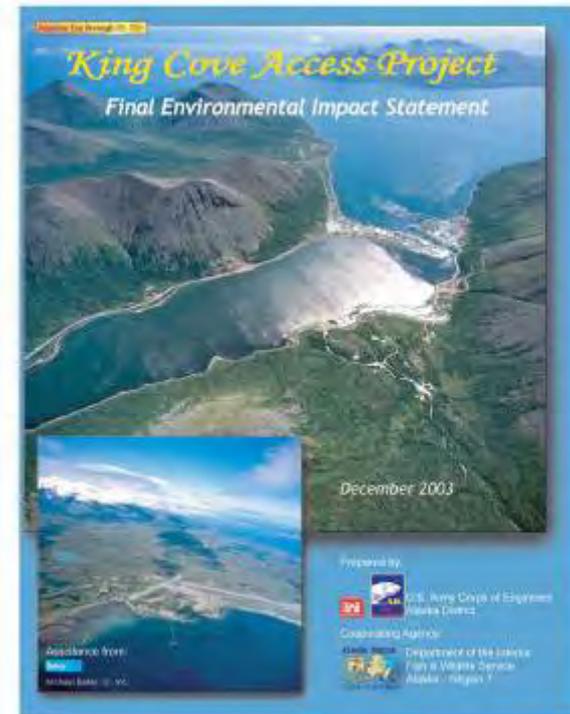
Scoping ends May 1, 2010 – however, public involvement will continue throughout the project.

Past NEPA Actions



To understand where we are now, we need to know where we have been.

- In 1998, Congress passed the King Cove Health and Safety Act for improvements to the King Cove medical clinic, airport and a road/marine transportation (hovercraft) system link between the two cities.
- An EIS was written for this project.
- A proposed road corridor was discussed in this EIS but an in-depth analysis was not completed.



Izembek NWR



Izembek NWR



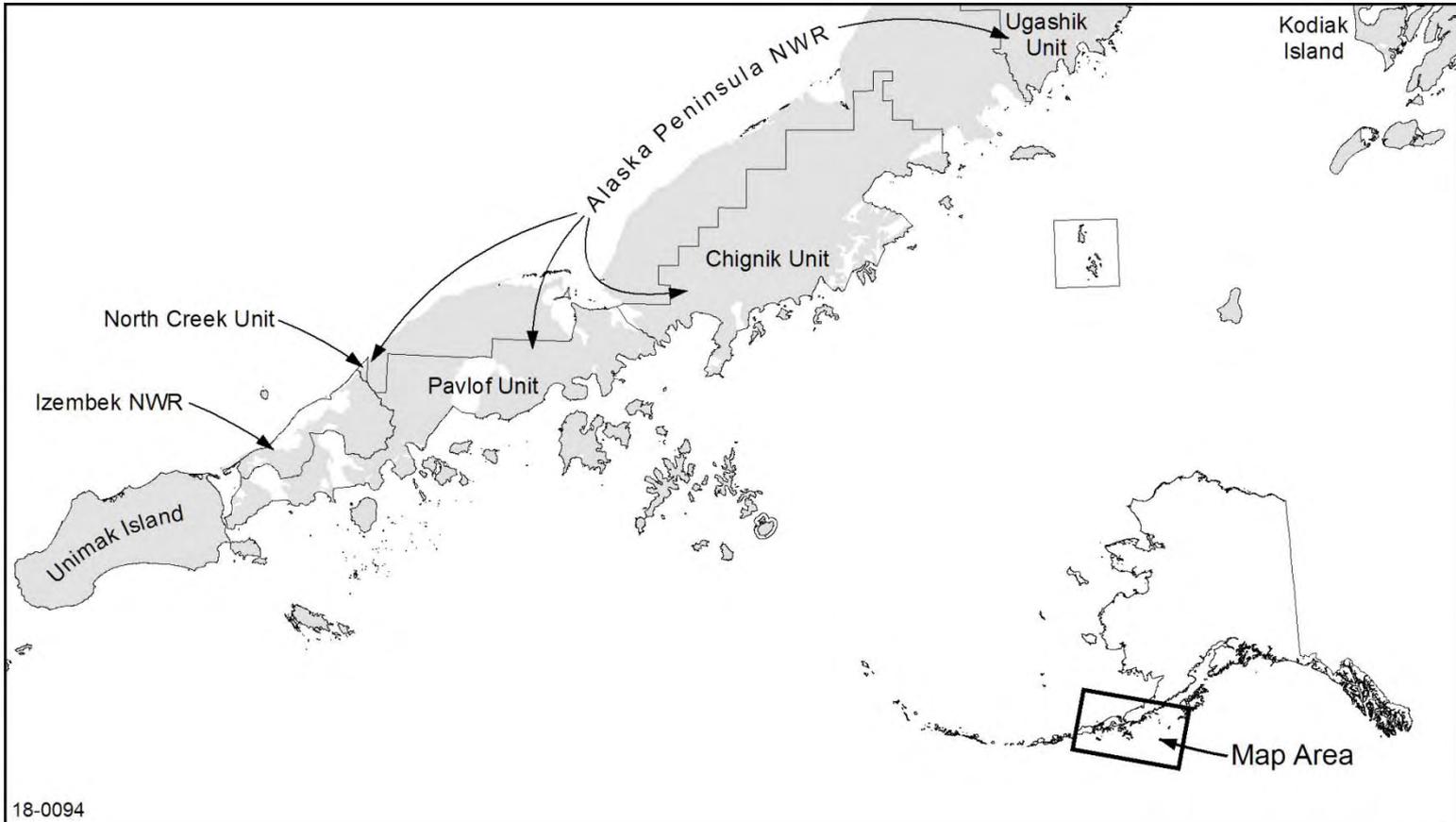
Established in 1960 as Izembek National Wildlife Range

1980, re-designated as Izembek NWR by Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA)

1980, Wilderness was established on Izembek NWR



Izembek NWR



History of Area



- The Izembek Refuge region is rich in cultural history. The Aleut people began inhabiting the region around 3000 B.C. and continue to reside in local communities.
- In 18th and 19th centuries, Russians explored this area and established fur trading posts, often resettling Aleuts in the process.

History of Area



- During WWII, Fort Randall was built at what is now Cold Bay – supported 22,000 troops.
- Depressions from military barracks dot the landscape and old military trails are still visible.



Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act – December 1980

- Passed by Congress to preserve for the benefit, use, education, and inspiration of present and future generations certain lands and waters in the State of Alaska that contain nationally significant, natural, scenic, historic, archeological, geological, scientific, wilderness, cultural, recreational, and wildlife values.
- Subsection 101 sec (c) ...“to provide the opportunity for rural residents engaged in a subsistence way of life to continue to do so”
- Established 56.3 million acres of new refuge system lands, bringing the total to 76.1 million acres of refuge system lands in Alaska.

Izembek NWR ANILCA Purposes



- To conserve fish and wildlife and their habitats;
- To fulfill international treaty obligations;
- To provide opportunities for subsistence;
- To ensure water quality and quantity





Wilderness Act – 1964

- Establish a National Wilderness Preservation System;
- Designated “wilderness areas”;
- “...and these shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, and so as to provide for the protection of these areas, the preservation of their wilderness character, and for the gathering and dissemination of information regarding their use and enjoyment as wilderness...”



Izembek Wilderness



- ANILCA Title XI use of snow machines, motorboats, and airplanes for traditional activities as well as consideration of transportation and utility corridors in Wilderness.



Refuge Resources



Waterfowl, shorebirds and water birds from all over the arctic funnel through Izembek NWR each fall on their way to winter destinations.

More than 98% of the world's Pacific black brant converge on Izembek Lagoon each fall.



Refuge Resources



A large concentration of brown bear can be found on the refuge – in the Joshua Green River Valley more than 150 bear were seen during fall surveys.

Caribou migrate to Izembek each fall and early winter from calving grounds in the north.

Wolves follow the caribou – but are elusive.



Refuge Resources



Seals, sea lions and sea otters inhabit nearby coastal waters.

Beginning in mid-summer, red, pink, silver, and chum salmon return to spawning grounds found within the refuge.



Izembek NWR - Special Recognition



- Aleutian Islands Biosphere Reserve (1976)
 - Conservation of ecosystems and biodiversity is combined with sustainable use of natural resources
 - Key area for global bird conservation
- Wetland of International Importance (1986)
 - Izembek Lagoon meets 7 of 9 qualifying criteria for identifying wetlands
 - First of only 19 sites in the United States
- Globally Important Bird Area (2001)



Refuge Uses - Subsistence



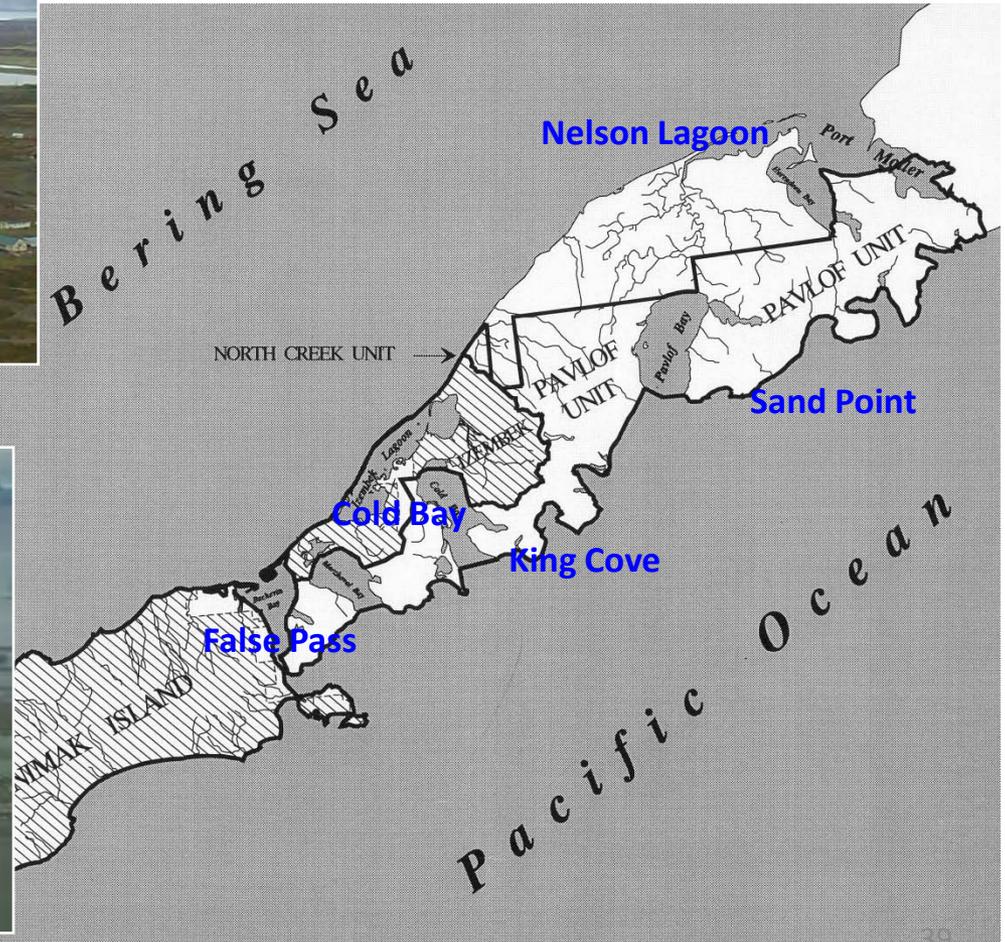
Public Uses



- Hunting
- Fishing
- Wildlife Viewing
- Birdwatching
- Wildlife Photography
- Beachcombing
- Berry Picking
- Trapping
- Hiking



Communities around Izembek NWR



Cold Bay



Population of 90 – as certified by the State of Alaska 2008. Population consists of 17% Alaska Native or part Native.

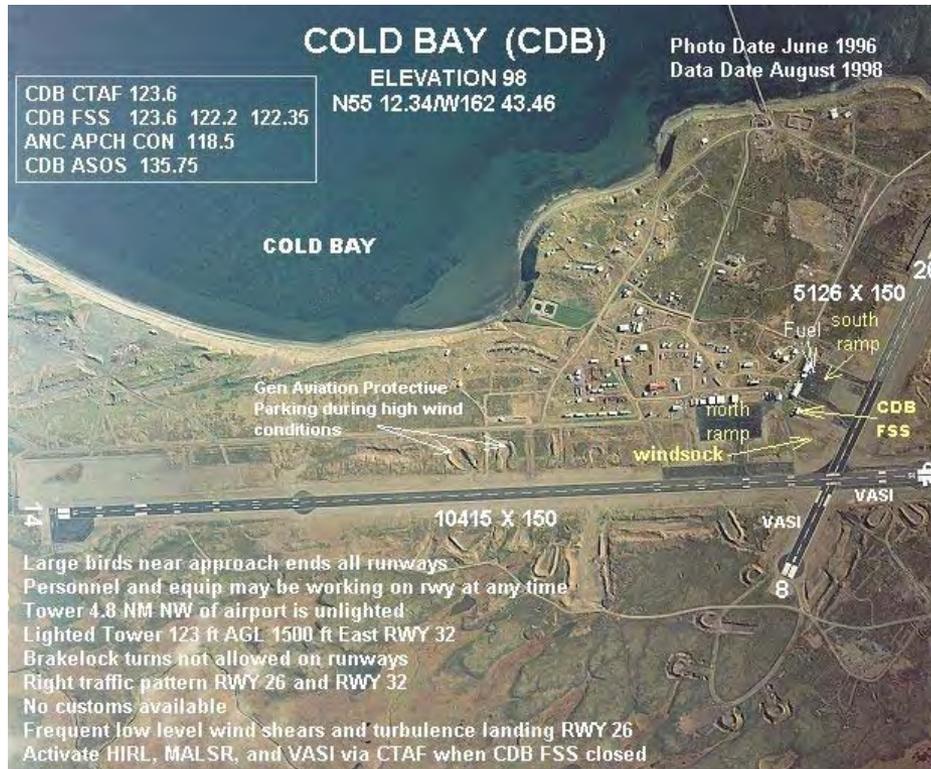
Archaeological sites dating to last ice age indicate the area was once inhabited by a large Native population.

Incorporated in 1982.

State and federal government and airline support services provide the majority of local employment.

Income is supplemented by subsistence activities.

Cold Bay

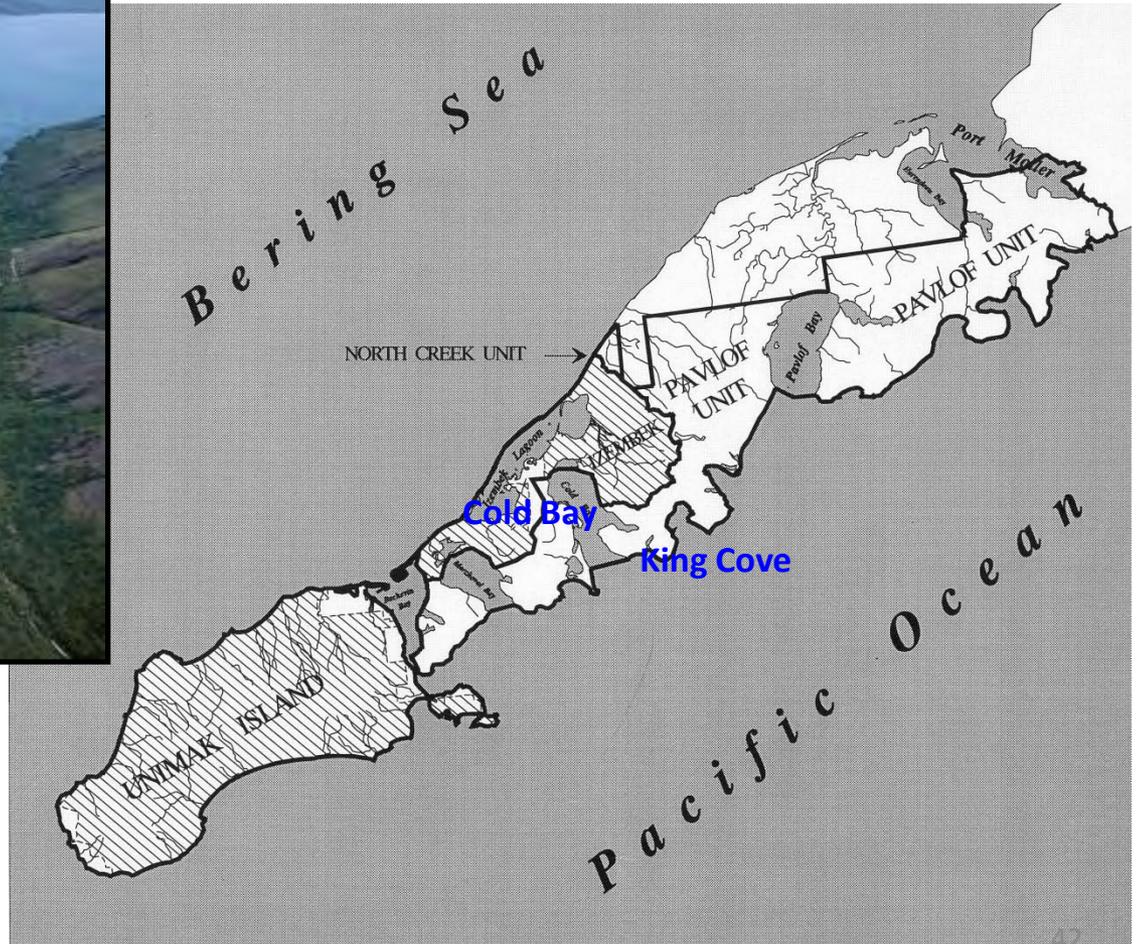


Site of a strategic air base during World War II. At that time, the airport was the largest in the state.

Due to the central location and modern airport, Cold Bay serves as a regional transportation center.

The runway is 10,415 ft long and the crosswind runway is 5,126 ft.

King Cove



King Cove



Population – 750 as certified by State of Alaska 2008. Population consists of 47.9% Alaska Native or part Native. Two Federally – recognized Tribes – Agdaagux Tribe of King Cove & Native Village of Belkfoski .

Founded in 1911 through the development of a salmon cannery. The city was incorporated in 1949. However, the area has been occupied for thousands of years by native peoples.

Economy is dependent upon year-round commercial fishery and seafood processing – Peter Pan Seafood facility is one of the largest cannery operations in Alaska.

Income is supplemented by subsistence activities.



King Cove



King Cove, like many rural communities in Alaska, is only accessible by air and sea.

King Cove does not have an all-weather airstrip like Cold Bay.

Three fatal aircraft crashes including one medical evacuation flight from 1979 – present.

The people of King Cove believe that a road to Cold Bay is primarily for improved quality of life and access to the outside world for the residents of King Cove.





Submit Public Comments:

Today – Oral testimony
- Written comments

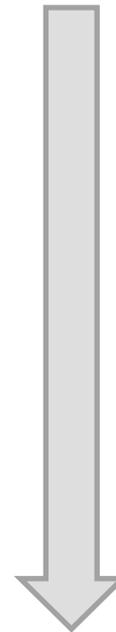
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<http://izembek.fws.gov/eis.htm>

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Thank you for attending. We look forward to your comments.

