



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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News

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**Service to Prepare Environmental Impact Statement for the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge
Land Exchange**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today that it has published a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a proposed three-party land exchange that would allow a road to be constructed between the communities of King Cove and Cold Bay. The exchange would add 56,393 acres to the Izembek and Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuges, designate 43,000 acres as wilderness, transfer 1,600 acres of refuge lands on Sitkinak Island to the State, and create a 206-acre, 9-mile corridor through Izembek Refuge upon which the road would be constructed.

The proposed road between King Cove and Cold Bay has been discussed for more than a decade. The 1997 King Cove Health and Safety Act provided \$37.5 million for a marine link between the communities, improvements to the King Cove airstrip, and a medical clinic in King Cove. A \$9 million hovercraft has been operating between the communities since 2006, providing that marine link.

In recent developments, the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, signed into law on March 30, 2009, directed the Secretary of the Interior to develop an EIS to evaluate the land exchange referred to above. If the EIS leads to a decision to support the land exchange, a finding of "public interest" by the Secretary would also be required before the exchange could be completed.

Although the Notice of Intent will be published, progress on the environmental impact statement itself will be delayed until funds are secured for the project, which is estimated to cost approximately \$2 million.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

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