

Dear AQRC members,

The Kachemak Bay State Park and Wilderness Park Management Plan update is in the process of being adopted after one final public comment period. AQRC is concerned about several recommendations in the plan that will affect the natural soundscape and quiet of the park. Comments are due by January 22, 2021. Send your comments to: [kbsp.comments@alaska.gov](mailto:kbsp.comments@alaska.gov)

(To see the plan: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/plans/kbay/kbayplan.htm>)

**Helicopters:** If helicopter scenic flight tours and landings are continued to be authorized at Grewingk Glacier there needs to be a cap on the total number of landings per day and recommendations on flight paths and altitudes. Helicopter activity should never disturb wildlife or dominate the soundscape of the Grewingk Glacier area. Flight path and altitude recommendations are needed to protect wildlife including goats, bear and moose and minimize noise to the greatest extent possible for people enjoying hiking, skiing and mountaineering in the park. There should be requirements for flying to and from the Grewingk Glacier at an altitude that minimizes the noise on the ground, avoiding overflying sensitive wildlife habitat and popular trails and limiting the number of flights. No heli-skiing should be permitted within the park including the Sadie-Tutka Management Unit.

**Wosneseski Lake:** Float plane landings should not be allowed on the lake. Logical flight paths to and from the lake will affect multiple trails within the park. These trails have been constructed to allow people to enjoy part of the rugged, wild country that the park encompasses. Hikers should be able to expect that they will enter a region where the natural soundscape prevails. Overflights will negatively impact their trail experience.

**Upper Hazel Lake:** The lake should not be opened up to aircraft landings or motor boat use. It is within the Kachemak Bay Wilderness Park and the wilderness needs to be protected from mechanized noise. To provide for a multitude of experiences in the park it is necessary to limit what activities can take place at different locations. Not allowing aircraft and motor boats on the lake is the best way to “protect and preserve this land and water for its unique and exceptional wilderness value”. One of the exceptional wilderness values is the natural soundscape.

**Jet skis:** It is important to comment that jet skis should continue to be banned in Kachemak Bay State and Wilderness Park. Marine waters within the park are managed under joint jurisdiction of ADFG and DPOR. The proposed language in the KBSWP management plan bans jet skis at the moment, but language in the management plan also states that if the Kachemak Bay and Fox River Flats Critical Habitat Areas are open to jet skis that the marine waters within the state park may also be opened to jet skis. Unfortunately, ADF&G did lift the ban on jet skis in the Kachemak Bay and Fox River Flats Critical Habitat Areas beginning January 9<sup>th</sup>. This proposed action not only undermines critical habitat designation, it will set the stage for more use of jet skis in protected marine waters elsewhere in Alaska. Jet ski activity should continue to be banned in Kachemak Bay State Park and State Wilderness Park. These are loud machines, intended to be strictly fun for the user but not for other users and wildlife. "The difference between jet skis and motorboats, and the crux of the jet ski noise problem, is that jet skis continually leave the water. This magnifies the noise in two ways. First, without the muffling effect of the water, the engine's exhaust is much louder — typically by 15 dBA; an airborne jet ski has the same noise impact on a listener at the water's edge as an in-water jet ski 8 times closer, or the same as 32 identical in-water jet skis at the same distance. Second, each time the jet ski re-enters the water, it smacks against the surface with an explosive “whomp” — sometimes with a series of them." It is unrealistic to presume that those on jet skis will tour the marine waters of KBSPWP at a moderate, steady speed going in a more or less straight course typical of a boat to reduce noise or disturbance to wildlife. Many studies have shown that jet ski activity would be detrimental to marine mammals and seabirds and negatively impact the natural soundscape whether kayaking in the fiords or being onshore. Tell the planning team that you do not want KBSPWP opened to jet ski activity.

Thank you for helping preserve the natural soundscape that enhances all of our experiences on Alaska's public lands and water.

Sincerely, Brian Okonek, Alaska Quiet Rights Coalition