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Comments: I write today to strongly oppose the USFS proposal that would remove restrictions from permits for cabins within ANILCA lands. It just plain violates the intent of the Act to change the phasing out of these permits as the original claimant and immediate family no longer can meet the legal requirements of the permit.

There is no logical reason for this change. The intent of the Act was clear. It is about the ever-increasing value of maintaining the natural integrity of the lands, water and wildlife. I can only guess there is some political pressure at hand here. That is the exact wrong reason to change the phasing out of what were unauthorized cabins on public land, not private land.

The fact that the FS would even consider this new amendment of the permitting process for those cabins that are in designated wilderness areas tells me the whole proposal is ill-thought. Structures don't belong in wilderness. The FS must not change its policy. Let the phase-out of cabins allowed by ANILCA stand, as was the original intent. To change this policy would undermine ANILCA and the Wilderness Act.

To let the current permit system for these illegal-in-the-first-place cabins to stay in the immediate family via direction of ANILCA was a fair compromise. This proposed compromise of a compromise is just a lose-lose for the American public.

For two years, back in the mid-80's, I worked as a seasonal for BLM in the Fortymile country. I saw my share of what were essentially illegal cabins built on public land. In one case, my bosses sent a crew of smokejumpers out from Fairbanks to clean up an ungodly mess that the 'squatters' had left around the area. In the 3 or 4 days they were there, I can't recall anymore how many boatloads of waste, junk and garbage they brought to the landing where the road crossed the river. BLM's plan was to destroy the cabin, as it should well have been.

That was the worst one. There were others that were pretty much a mess, showing a significant disrespect for both BLM and the public. Part of my job was to identify old cabin sites within the river system. There were several that had never been documented before. One thing I learned in the nearly 12 months that I worked up there is that far too many of the squatters, and even those with valid permits, show very little respect for the land and water. I like to add, which was considered an oddity, was we found one old trapper cabin that the current 'user' kept in tip-top shape and the area around it was neat as a pin. A true anomaly.

In closing, I must reiterate my opposition to the new proposal to alter the cabin permit process in direct violation of both ANILCA and the Wilderness Act.