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**Memorandum**

U. S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Refuge Supervisor - South

Refuge Manager, Alaska Peninsula/Becharof  
National Wildlife Refuges

DATE: September 27, 1988

SUBJECT: Final Report - 1987 Public Use Camp - Ugashik Narrows

We are submitting the final report for the 1987 Public Use Camp at Ugashik Narrows. The preliminary results were reported in the 1987 Alaska Peninsula/Becharof Refuges Annual Narrative.

If you have any comments please call me at 246-3339.

*Ronald E. Hood*

Attachment

- CC: Realty
- Public Use and Information
- Library - Regional Office
- Togiak Refuge
- King Salmon Fishery Assistance Office
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game, King Salmon
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Dillingham

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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

# memorandum

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Ugashik Narrows Public Use Field Camp  
Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge  
19 June - 2 September 1987

by

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and

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BRIAN LANE  
CHARLES SLOAN  
DANIEL THOMPSON

Key Words: Ugashik Narrows, Narrows, Public use  
Alaska Peninsula, Guide use, Client use  
Commercial fishing lodges, Use days

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Alaska Peninsula/Becharof National Wildlife Refuge  
Post Office Box 277  
King Salmon, Alaska 99613

AUGUST 1988



Alaska Resources  
Library & Information Services  
Anchorage, Alaska

## ABSTRACT

During the summer of 1987 (June 19 to September 2) a public-use field camp was established at the Ugashik Narrows, Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge to collect site specific public use data.

During the 74-day survey period, 83 visiting parties with 364 total people were contacted and interviewed. The 83 parties spent a total of 565 use-days. Sixty-seven (81%) of the parties utilized the Narrows on a day-use basis. Only 16 (19%) parties camped or stayed over night. There were 57 guided parties and 20 unguided parties. The one-day fly in trips for the guided parties averaged 4.1 hours use per day. The unguided parties averaged 3.2 days use. Peak use days were July 6, 7, 20 and 25 with 19, 23, 27 and 22 people respectively. A total of 12 different fishing lodges/outfitters utilized the Narrows during the survey period.

## Introduction

The rivers and lakes within the Alaska Peninsula/Becharof Refuges provide world-class fishing opportunities. Game fish include burbot, Dolly Varden/Arctic char, Arctic grayling, rainbow trout and five species of Pacific salmon. In large lakes, northern pike and lake trout are common. In 1981, the world record Arctic grayling was caught in the "Narrows", between Upper and Lower Ugashik Lake, Ugashik Unit.

Access to the numerous fishing areas on the refuges is generally limited to float equipped aircraft. The areas most utilized for sport fishing are Upper and Lower King Salmon Rivers, Big, Gertrude, Featherly and Painter Creeks and Upper and Lower Ugashik Lakes including the Narrows.

Over 36 outfitters and commercial lodges, which offer fishing packages, are permitted on the refuges and promote wilderness fishing experiences. Most operators of these lodges promote catch and release angling for resident fish species. They offer a variety of package programs that include lodging and air transportation to the fishing areas. These package deals may range in price from \$1500 to \$5000 depending on the length of stay and quality of amenities offered by the lodge.

Even though estimates indicate that over 90 percent of all sportfishing is by non-locals, very little information is available concerning the numbers of recreationists that use site specific areas on the refuges. (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. 1985.) The information that is available was generated by staff knowledgeable about public use patterns on the refuges and from random observations by aircraft. No actual studies or surveys have ever been conducted. Concern has been expressed by refuge staff, Alaska State Department of Fish and Game personnel and local fishing guides that historical "hot spots" such as the river between Upper and Lower Ugashik Lakes (Narrows) and Gertrude Creek have been getting too much fishing pressure and that trophy-size fish are on the decline.

In the summer of 1987, a public-use field camp was established at the Ugashik Narrows to collect site-specific creel and public-use data. This site was chosen because it received the most concern from local fishing guides about over crowding by people and aircraft.

Specific objectives of the study were to determine:

1. the number and size of parties utilizing the Narrows;
2. whether the party was guided or unguided;
3. party purpose;
4. length of time parties spent at the Narrows and the peak use period;
5. method of transportation to the Narrows;
6. visitor's state or country of origin.

## Study Area

The Narrows is located on the Alaska Peninsula Refuge, 78 miles south of King Salmon (Figure 1). It is a 0.35 mile long river between Upper and Lower Ugashik lakes. The upper lake is approximately 85 square miles in

size and the lower lake is 72 square miles in size. Both lakes are drained by the Ugashik River that flows west to Bristol Bay and the Bering Sea. The Ugashik lakes are located on the boundary between the Aleutian range (east) and the Nushagak - Bristol Bay lowlands (west).

The surficial geology of the Narrows consists of glacial moraines and associated glacial drift. The constriction at the Narrows is formed by terminal moraines between Upper and Lower Ugashik lakes. It was formed at least 9000 years ago at the end of the Pleistocene (Henn, 1978). Six prehistoric (7000-6500 B.C.) human occupation sites are located at the narrows. These are the earliest known human habitation sites on the Alaska Peninsula. The Narrows was probably used as a seasonal use site for fishing and hunting. The Narrows forms a heavily used game crossing and concentrates migrating salmon.

There are also two 14h(1) sites (Native Historical Place) located at the Narrows that were selected by the Bristol Bay Native Corporation. (Figure 2). Parcels A and B total 72.0 acres. These sites were investigated and substantiated by Bureau of Indian Affairs archaeologists in 1985. (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1986).

Two private commercial fishing lodges are also located at the Narrows. One actively operates on a seasonal basis; however, the other was sold to a Japanese firm that has lodges on Lake Iliamna, but is not yet in operation at the Narrows. Both lodges have Special Use Permits to operate at the Narrows. One outfitter also has a cabin under permit on the west side of the Narrows on Parcel B of the Bristol Bay Native Corporation 14h(1) site.

### Methods

The refugees obtained permission from the outfitter on the west side of the Narrows to utilize his A-frame cabin as a headquarters for the public use camp. The camp was manned by two volunteers and two Biological Technicians at various times depending on what type of work was scheduled. The camp was in operation from June 19th to September 2nd. All parties or individuals that visited the Narrows were interviewed by staff to determine party purpose, length of time spent at the site, transportation method, whether they were guided or not and what state or country they were from. All data was recorded on a public use survey form (Appendix 1). In addition to public use data, the team recorded daily weather information, daily bird observations, and they participated in the waterfowl brood surveys. Also, in cooperation with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (Fish and Game), detailed creel census data was collected four days per week from all fishermen utilizing the Narrows. All creel data was recorded on "Mark Sense Forms" and is presently being summarized by Fish and Game.

A small visitor contact area was developed by the staff at the cabin headquarters. It contained area maps, various refuge brochures and pictures of wildlife found in and near the Narrows.

Since the prime fishing area at the Narrows is only approximately 2000 feet long, very little problems were encountered in observing visitors when they arrived. The groups were generally contacted immediately to obtain initial

survey data and then again when they departed to obtain total time spent. Most guides were cooperative and enthusiastic about the survey.

### Results

During the 74 day survey period, 83 visiting parties were contacted and interviewed for public use details. Fifty-one of the parties flew in by float equipped aircraft, and 32 arrived by boat. Sixty-seven (81%) of the 83 parties utilized the Narrows on a day-use basis. Only 16 parties (19%) camped or stayed overnight. Fishing was the overwhelming activity of all the groups. Seventy-four (89%) indicated that fishing was the primary reason they visited the Narrows. Other than lodge resupply trips and one party that spent the night due to bad weather, only two groups visited the Narrows with sightseeing as their primary purpose.

The 83 parties spent a total of 565 use days visiting the Narrows (Table 1). Of the 57 guided parties, 93% utilized the Narrows on a one-day, fly-in basis. Their one day trips averaged 4.1 hours use. Whereas only 45% of the unguided parties were one-day, fly-in trips. Their trips averaged only 2.8 hours use. All unguided parties averaged 3.2 days use and ranged from one to nine days. The guided parties constituted 276 (78%) of the clients but only 287 (52%) of the use days (compared with unguided party use). This disparity between the number of clients and use days in the guided and unguided segment again relates directly to the fact that the guided parties were primarily one-day, fly-in use and the unguided parties were overnight campers staying multiple days.

Table 1. Total client and guide usage, Ugashik Narrows, June to August 1987.

	Number Parties	Number Clients	Number Guides	Total Number People	Trip Length <sup>a</sup> Days	Client Use Days	Guide Use Days	Total Use Days
Guided <sup>b</sup>	57	191	85	276	1.1	193	94	287
Unguided <sup>b</sup>	20	78	--	78	3.2	267	--	267
Resupply	3	1	2	3	1.3	--	4	4
Unknown	3	7	--	7	1.0	7	--	7
Totals	83	277	87	364		467	98	565
Percent guided	69	71	--	76	--	42	--	52
Percent Unguided	31	29		24		58		48

<sup>a</sup>Use during any part of a day was considered one day use.  
<sup>b</sup>Mt. Peulik Lodge clients included in this category.

The average number of clients per guide was 2.3 and the number of clients per guided party was 3.4. In the unguided segment, the number of people

per party was 3.9. The size of all parties (guided/unguided) ranged from 1.0 to 11.0 and the number of clients per guide ranged from 0.5 to 7.0.

The peak use days for number of parties and number of people occurred on four days in July (Table 2). The most parties that utilized the Narrows on any one day was seven and occurred on July 7th. Four of these parties arrived by boat and three arrived by aircraft. Most fishing takes place on the west fork of the Narrows (west side of the island).

Table 2. Peak use days at Ugashik Narrows, June-August 1987.

Date	Number Parties	Number People
July 6	4	19
July 7	7	23
July 20	5	27
July 25	5	22

The guides all try to park float planes on the east side of the island (East fork) because of the slack water and to keep the planes away from the best fishing area. There is only room for three aircraft at that location. Aircraft that come in when that area is full, usually park out of the Narrows on the north shore of Lower Ugashik Lake. The preferred fishing area in the Narrows is only 2,000 feet long and part of that area includes the rapids that extends into Lower Ugashik Lake. A total of 12 different fishing lodges/outfitters utilized the Narrows in the 74-day survey period (Table 3).

Table 3. Total client and guide use by commercial fishing lodges, Ugashik Narrows, 1987.

Lodge Name	Total Parties	Total Clients	Total Guides	Total People
Bear's Den Lodge	21	76	33	109
King Salmon Lodge	8	36	12	48
Mt. Peulik Lodge	7	29	2	31
Iliamna Lake Resort	11	15	13	28
Frenchy Lamoureux	5	16	6	22
No-See-Um Lodge	4	15	5	20
Enchanted Lake Lodge	3	13	5	18
Kulik Lodge	3	11	4	15
Point Adventure	2	9	2	11
Brooks Lodge-Katmai	1	2	2	4
King Ko Inn	1	3	2	5
Kodiak Outfitters	1	0	1	1
Non-lodge related	13	45	0	45
Unknown	3	7	0	7
Totals	83	277	87	364



Bear's Den Lodge accounted for 21 (25.3%) of the parties and 109 (30.0%) of the total people. This lodge is located at the outlet of Lower Ugashik Lake on the Ugashik River on private property. All of their parties were transported to the Narrows by boat.

Mt. Peulik Lodge is also privately owned and located a half mile above the Narrows on Upper Ugashik Lake. This lodge caters to German clients and is very selective concerning the numbers of parties and clients it entertains. It only accounted for seven (8.4%) of the parties and 31 (8.5%) of the clients.

All but two of the lodges were under Special Use Permit to utilize the refuges. One of those (No-See-Um Lodge) has since secured a Special Use Permit. The clients that visited the Narrows this year were from 19 different states, the District of Columbia and four foreign countries, which included Germany, Switzerland, France and Italy.

### Discussion

The information gathered during the 1987 field season indicates that the Narrows is one of the most heavily used areas by the public on both the Alaska Peninsula/Becharof refuges. The study should be continued in 1988 to adequately monitor the characteristics and magnitude of use. Thresholds for the numbers of aircraft and people should be developed to protect the aquatic and terrestrial resources.

The camp and data gathering should begin near June 15, 1988 since this is when the guides begin to use the Narrows. The data gathering should continue through the month of September. The 1987 study ended on August 31. However, there was a significant amount of use during September that included hunters and fishermen. Over 21 parties (75 individuals) were contacted between September 7 - 16, 1988 while refuge staff were conducting law enforcement patrols. This segment of use must be included in the survey.

With the three private parcels of land and the two 14h(1) sites, Refuge land bordering the Narrows is extremely limited. This fact may be significant in the future if public use controls or other limitations are deemed necessary to protect the resources at the Narrows.

### Recommendations

1. Run field camp data collection from June 15 to September 30.
2. Coordinate U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service public use data with Alaska Department of Fish and Game fishery data to develop maximum public use thresholds and fish harvest regulations.
3. Purchase in fee title the Brod, Myers, and the Atlantic and Pacific Tours Company land at the Narrows.

4. Plan and develop facilities at Narrows for refuge subheadquarters to be run seasonally (6 months) and function as a visitor center, obtain public use data, and enforce refuge regulations.
5. Develop cooperative agreements with Bristol Bay Native Corporation concerning public and corporation use limitations of the 14h(1) sites. These sites should be protected from any type of desecration and development.

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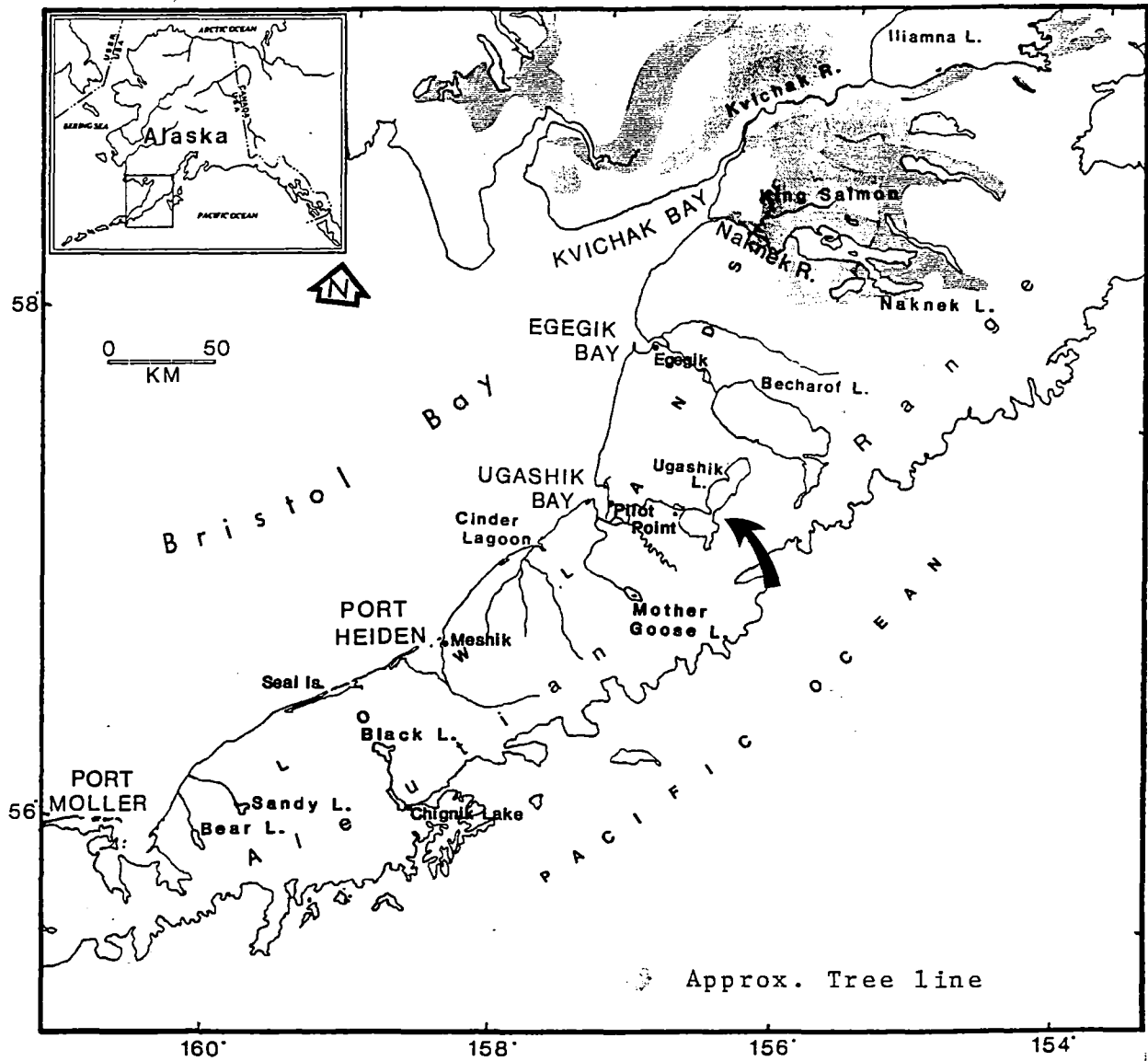


Figure 1. Location of Ugashik Narrows, Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge (Map modified from Wilk, Wilk and Kuntz, 1986).

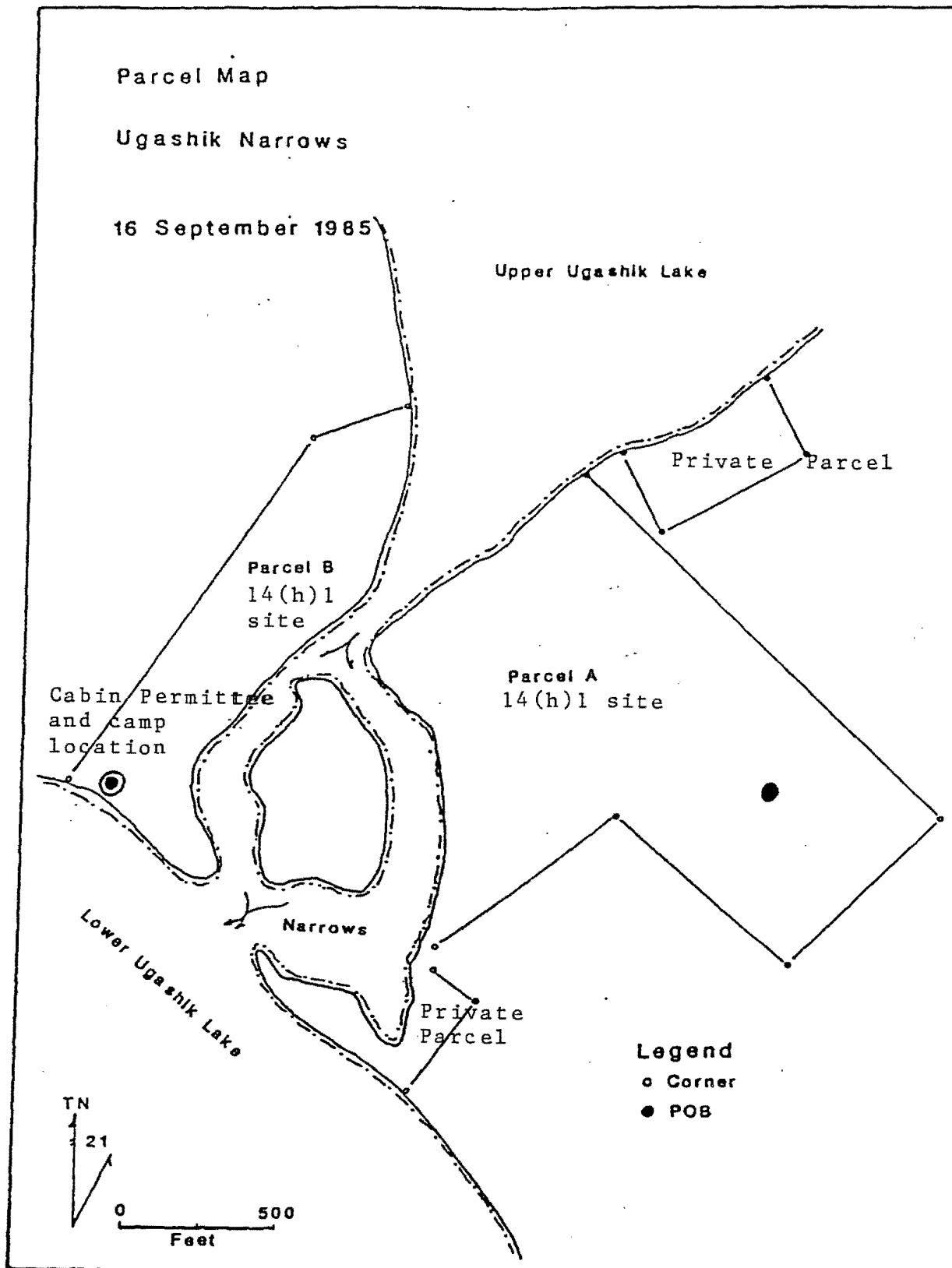


Figure 2. Locations of 14(h)1 sites and private parcels Ugashik Narrows, Alaska Peninsula Refuge (Figure modified from Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1986).

ALASKA PENINSULA/BECHAROF  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

PUBLIC USE SURVEY

Camp Location \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_ Survey Team Members \_\_\_\_\_

Party No.	Party Purpose	Date/Time		Aircraft Type/No.	Guided Y/N	Guide/Lodge Name	No. of Clients	No. of Guides	No. Use Hours/Days		State or Country Each Client
		Arrive	Depart						Lake/River Clients	Guides	
9											
	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service 1011 E. Tudor Road Anchorage, Alaska 99503										