



News Release

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Contact:

Jim Stratton, National Parks Conservation Association, 907-277-6722, ext. 23

Eleanor Huffines, The Wilderness Society, 907-272-9453

Cliff Eames, Alaska Center for the Environment, 907-274-3647

Bob Randall, Trustees for Alaska, 907-276-4244, ext. 115

Victory for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park in Alaska *Federal Judge rules, stops bulldozer use in America's largest and wildest National Park*

(Anchorage, AK) - Today, U.S. District Judge Ralph Beistline ruled in favor of protecting Wrangell-St. Elias National Park from illegal bulldozer use. The Wilderness Society, National Parks Conservation Association, and Alaska Center for the Environment intervened in support of the Park Service's determination that the Hale family must follow the law and, using the permit process, allow the Park Service to determine what method of access to their property inside the park is appropriate.

"Today is a good day for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and everyone who cares about National Parks in Alaska," said Eleanor Huffines, Alaska Director, The Wilderness Society. "We agree with Judge Beistline and the National Park Service, people cannot bulldoze first and ask permission later."

"The National Park Service has the responsibility for determining what activities are allowed in our national parks," said National Parks Conservation Association Alaska Regional Director Jim Stratton. "Wrangell-St. Elias belongs to all Americans -- not just to the Hales."

The Hale family had applied for a temporary restraining order in federal court in order to use a bulldozer after failing to heed existing Park Service law and regulations providing for access to park inholdings. The ruling of the court will not limit the family's ability to access their property by airplane, horse, and snow machine.

"The Court rightly recognized that access requests have to go through a process to look at environmental impacts, and to protect National Park values," stated Bob Randall, attorney for Trustees for Alaska, the law firm representing conservationists.

Under National Park Service guidelines, the Hale family needs to apply for a permit and the agency must conduct an environmental review to assess possible damage from bulldozer use.

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