

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Alaska Region



# Tolsona Resident Zone Request

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# Overview

- Introduction to the request
- Orientation to the regulations
- Quick history of the resident zone
- Tolsona resident zone requests
- Customary and traditional use of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park
- Public hearing
- Effects of the request
- Summary

# Introduction

01/26/2024

To Wrangell-St Elias National Park Superintendent Ben Bobowski

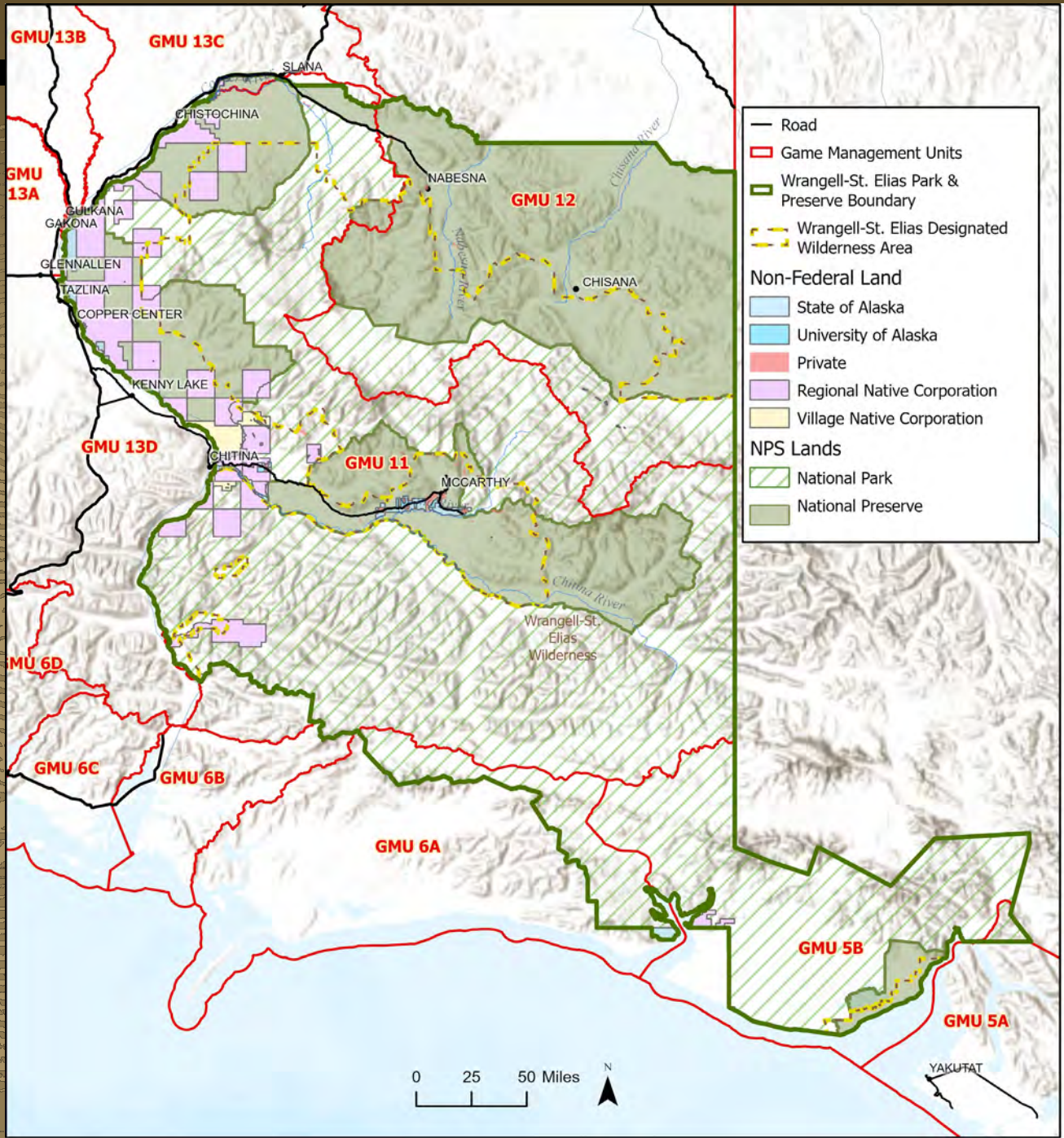
## **Request for Inclusion of Tolsona, Alaska in the Subsistence Resident Zone**

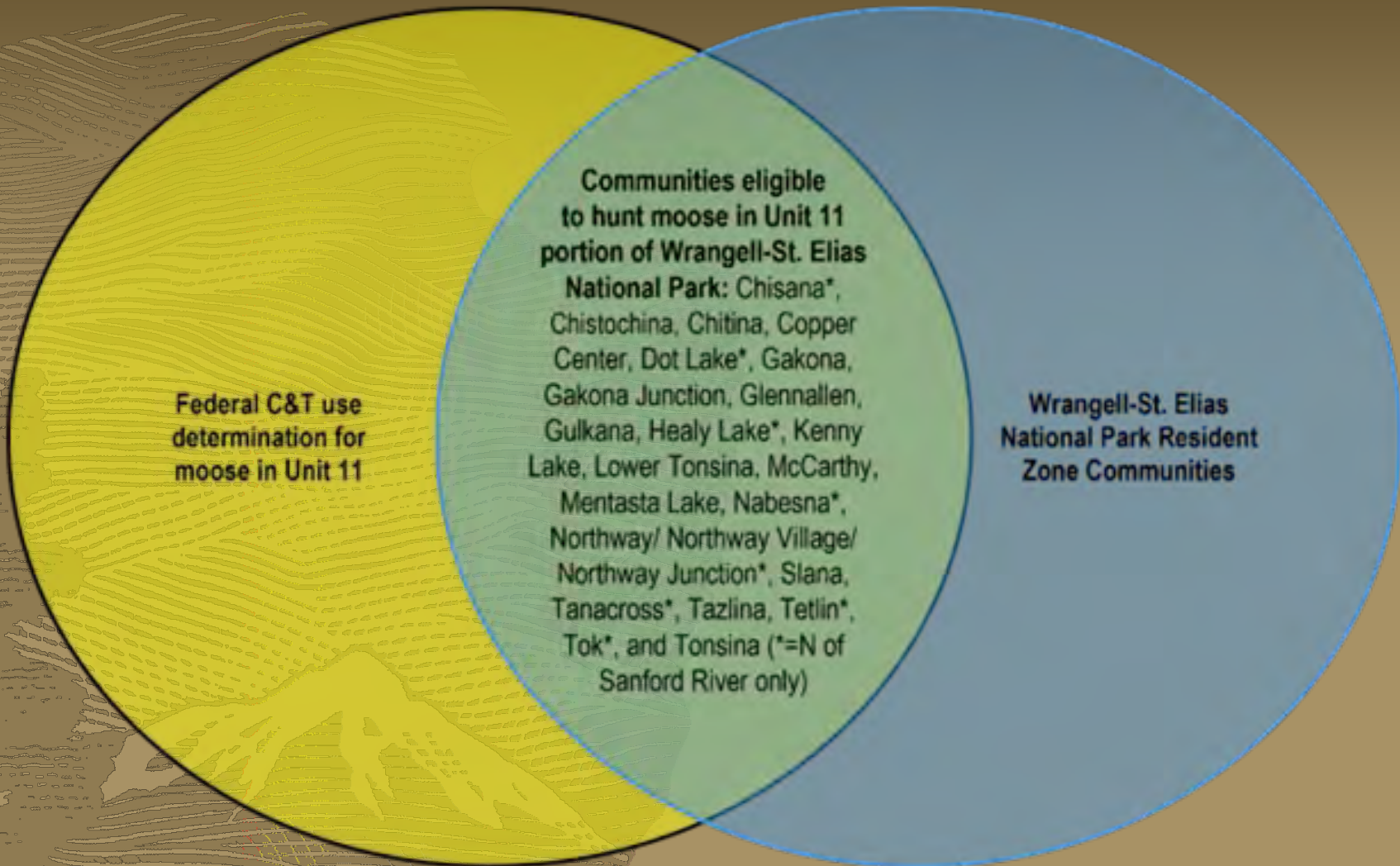
**Background:** Tolsona Alaska has been a named place for countless generations. The State of Alaska formally recognized Tolsona as a community beginning in the 1980s. The Federal Census first recognized Tolsona as a CDP (Census Designated Place) in the 2000 Census. The census counts and number of full time residents in Tolsona has remained very small over both the available census data and the historical counts from before that time. This community has a strong sense of local culture, an Alaska remote lifestyle, strong community ties through:

- Direct family
- Friends who develop ties as strong as family
- Reliance on others to survive in a difficult environment that lacks economic opportunities, jobs, and resources
- Shared resources and the shared efforts that are required to hunt, fish, and gather resources.

These resources include

- Locally available resources
- Resources from other AK Game Management Units to include 11, 12, and 13. These traditional resource areas include land that is now under National Park Service





**Relationship Between National Park Service and Federal Subsistence Management Program eligibility for hunting moose in Unit 11 under Federal Subsistence Regulations.**

# Resident Zone Communities

## 36 CFR § 13.1902 Subsistence.

- Chisana, Chistochina, Chitina, Copper Center, Dot Lake, Gakona, Gakona Junction, Glennallen, Gulkana, Healy Lake, Kenny Lake, Lower Tonsina, McCarthy, Mentasta Lake, Nabesna, Northway/Northway Village/Northway Junction, Slana, Tanacross, Tazlina, Tetlin, Tok, Tonsina, and Yakutat

# Eligibility Criteria

## 36 CFR § 13.430 Determination of resident zones.

(a) A resident zone shall include—

(1) The area within a national park or monument and any lands surrounded by a national park or monument that are not federally owned; and

(2) The communities and areas near a national park or monument which contain significant concentrations of rural residents who, without using aircraft as a means of access for purposes of taking fish or wildlife for subsistence uses (except in extraordinary cases where no reasonable alternative existed), have customarily and traditionally engaged in subsistence uses within a national park or monument. For purposes of determining “significant” concentrations, family members shall also be included.

# Question for consideration

- Has a significant concentration of Tolsona residents customarily and traditionally engaged in subsistence uses on lands within Wrangell-St. Elias National Park?





# Eight Factors: Customary and Traditional Use

- a long-term, consistent pattern of use, excluding interruptions beyond the control of the community or area;
- a pattern of use recurring in specific seasons for many years;
- a pattern of use consisting of methods and means of harvest which are characterized by efficiency and economy of effort and cost, conditioned by local characteristics;
- the consistent harvest and use of fish or wildlife as related to past methods and means of taking: near, or reasonably accessible from the community or area;

# Eight Factors:

## Customary and Traditional Use (cont.)

- a means of handling, preparing, preserving, and storing fish or wildlife which has been traditionally used by past generations, including consideration of alteration of past practices due to recent technological advances, where appropriate;
- a pattern of use which includes the handing down of knowledge of fishing and hunting skills, values, and lore from generation to generation;
- a pattern of use in which the harvest is shared or distributed within a definable community of persons; and
- a pattern of use which relates to reliance upon a wide diversity of fish and wildlife resources of the area and which provides substantial cultural, economic, social, and nutritional elements to the community or area.

# Steps in Process for Evaluating for Resident Zone Status

1. *Archival research and literature review*
2. *Interviews with current Tolsona residents*
3. *Written analysis*
4. *Public Notice*
5. *Public Hearing*
6. **Subsistence Resource Commission recommendation**
7. **Decision point (Park Superintendent)**
8. **Regulatory Change and Environmental Compliance Process**
9. *Proposed rule published in **Federal Register***
10. *Public comment period*
11. *Final rule published in **Federal Register***

# History of the Resident Zone

- "With respect to the situation of local residents in and near certain new national parks and monuments established by this Act, Congress believes that the establishment of these units should protect the opportunity for local rural residents to continue to engage in a subsistence way of life."
- "There is a need to continue the opportunity for subsistence uses of renewable resources, including wildlife, within certain national parks and monuments by local rural residents who have, or are a member of a family which has, an established or historical pattern of subsistence uses within such units."

*(1979 Senate Committee Report)*

# History of the Resident Zone

5  
22

① P E T I T I O N

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED PETITIONERS, WITH THIS SIGNING, DO PETITION THE UNITED STATES PARKS SERVICE TO INCLUDE THE AREA RESIDENTS OF GLENNALLEN INTO THE SUBSISTENCE AND TRADITION USE ALLOWANCE OF THE WRANGLE MOUNTAIN-ST. ELIAS PARK SYSTEM.

PRINT NAME

ADDRESS

PHONE NO.

SIGNATURE

# Tolsona Resident Zone Requests

**April 1999**

Tolsona Community Corporation (TCC) first requests designation of Tolsona as a resident zone community.

**August 2003**

A Tolsona resident inquired about a 13.440 permit but did not formally request a permit. Park staff note that the community may apply for resident zone designation.

**January 2024**

TCC submits formal written request for Tolsona to be designated as a resident zone community.

SRC requests more information on Tolsona's historic use of the park. TCC responds that Tolsona is part of Glennallen.

**1999**

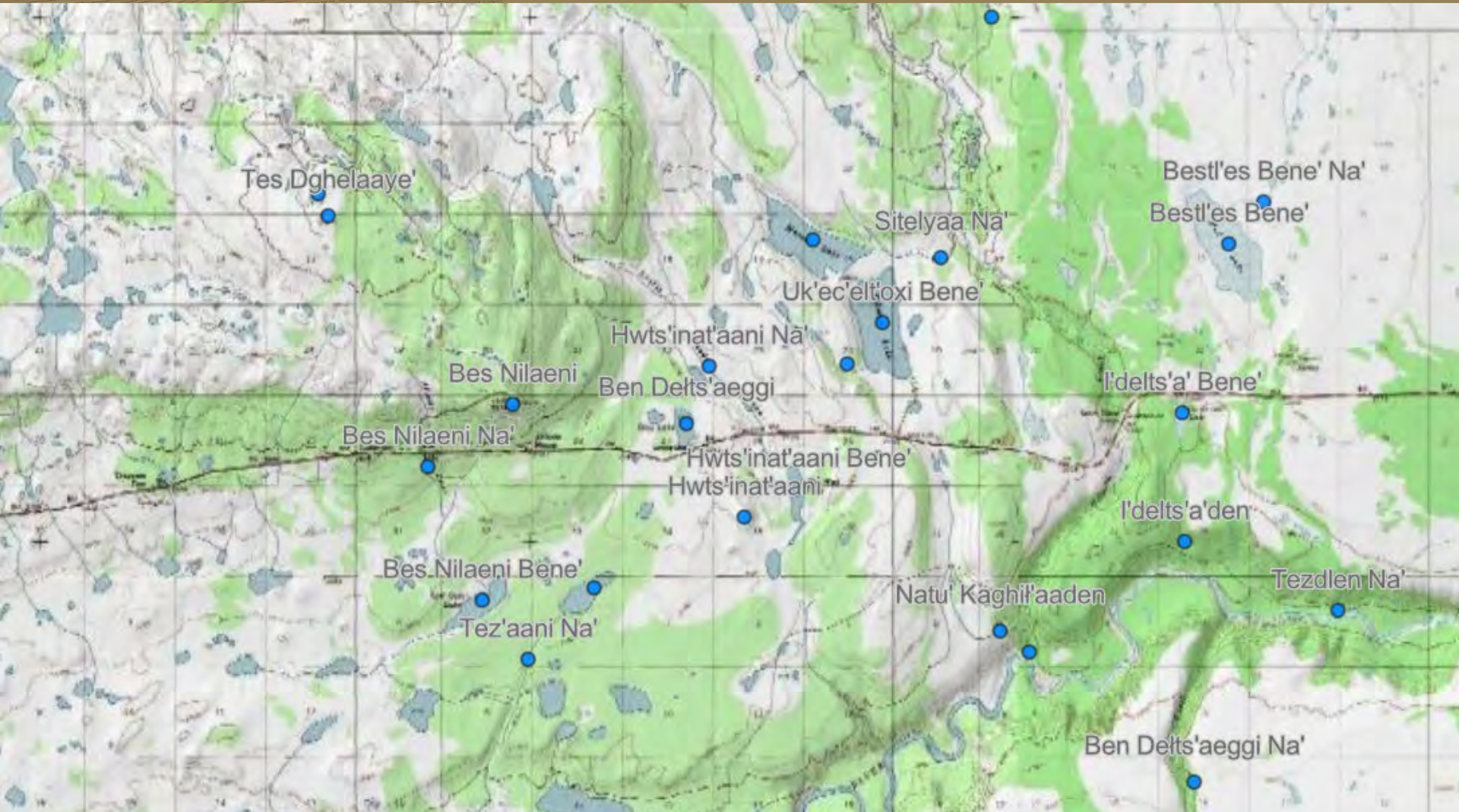
Two Tolsona residents request federal subsistence moose permits in Unit 11. NPS staff informed them that they were eligible for the permit but not portions of the hunt in the park.

**Summer 2023**

NPS Staff review documentary data, interview previous and current Tolsona residents, and complete a written analysis of the request.

**2024-2025**

# Tolsona Community Profile



# Tolsona Community Profile





# Tolsona Community Profile

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS  
1950 CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING  
ALASKA

**CONFIDENTIAL** - This inquiry is authorized by Act of Congress (Pub. Law 80-217, S. C. 86-20) which requires that a report be made. The information furnished is exempt from disclosure under the provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1950 (Pub. Law 86-360).

**FORM P82**

**DATE FIRST STARTED** 28  
**CREATED BY** James B. Cameron

**SHEET NO.** 27

**NAME OF PLACE** Tolsona Creek  
**LOCALITY** Lodge & Cabins  
**ALASKA CENSUS DISTRICT** 3-37

**NAME OF HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD** E. J. Chittin  
**RELATIONSHIP TO HEAD** Head

**NAME OF HOUSEHOLD** Tolsona Creek  
**LOCALITY** Lodge & Cabins  
**ALASKA CENSUS DISTRICT** 3-37

**FOR ALL PERSONS**

**FOR PERSONS 14 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER**

Household	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19a	19b	19c	20	21	22	23	24	25a	25b	25c	26a	26b	26c	26d	26e	26f	26g		
12	347	N	No				VACANT																															
13	245	N	No				VACANT																															
14	122	N	No				VACANT																															
15	347	N	No				Machinists, Howard	Head	W	M	30	Mar	US	000	H Y	Yes	A	Yes	No	No	wh					52	Contractor	Bird's Nest	P	24000	00	00	00	00	00	90		
16							Opal B	Wife	W	F	34	Mar	US	000	H Y	Yes	A	Yes	No	No	H																	
17							Charles	Son	W	M	10	Mar	US	000	H Y	Yes	A	Yes	No	No	H																	
18	248	N	No				Dennis	Head	W	M	32	Mar	US	000	H Y	Yes	45	Yes	No	No	wh					51	Construction	Bird's Nest	P	40000	00	00	00	00	00	00		
19							Alice	Wife	W	F	25	Mar	US	000	H Y	Yes	45	Yes	No	No	H																	
20							Francis	Son	W	M	7	Mar	US	000	H Y	Yes	45	Yes	No	No	H																	
21	249	N	No				Anderson, Melvin	Head	W	M	30	Mar	US	000	H Y	Yes	45	Yes	No	No	wh					52	Truck Driving	Bird's Nest	P	20000	00	00	00	00	00	04		
22							Heda	Wife	W	F	23	Mar	US	000	H Y	Yes	45	Yes	No	No	H	Yes																
23	250	N	No				Judy	Daughter	W	F	1	New	US	000	H Y	Yes	45	Yes	No	No	H	Yes																
24							Cameron, Everett	Head	W	M	32	Mar	US	000	H Y	Yes	47	Yes	No	No	wh					48	Heavy Equipment	Bird's Nest	P	20000	400	00	00	00	00	44		
25							Barthelmy	Wife	W	F	31	Mar	US	000	H Y	Yes	43	Yes	No	No	H																	
26	327	N	No				Swanson, Henry	Head	W	M	38	Mar	US	000	H Y	Yes	A	No	No	No	wh					52	Camp Manager	Bird's Nest	P	20000	600	00	00	00	00	68		
27	352	N	No				Gillespie, Merrill	Head	W	F	30	Mar	US	000	H Y	Yes	A	No	No	No	H					30	Waitress	Colony retirement	P	20000	700	00	00	00	00	89		
28							Larry	Son	W	F	13	New	US	000	H Y	Yes	A	No	No	No	H																	
29	253	N	No				Ronning, Lloyd	Head	X	W	M	19	New	US	000	H Y	Yes	A	No	No	No	wh				52	Physician	Bird's Nest	P	20000	00	00	00	00	00	00		
30							Ronnie	Wife	W	F	22	New	US	000	H Y	Yes	US	No	No	No	wh					28	Truck Driver	Bird's Nest	P	20000	00	00	00	00	00	15		
31							Barthelmy	Son	W	M	1	New	US	000	H Y	Yes	A	No	No	No	H																	
32							Hedgie, Frank	Partner	W	M	40	New	US	000	H Y	Yes	A	Yes	No	No	wh					51	Construction	Bird's Nest	P	20000	500	00	00	00	00	62		
33							Stevens, Carl	Partner	W	M	52	New	US	000	H Y	Yes	45	No	No	No	wh					16	Construction	McK. Construction	P	20000	400	00	00	00	00	40		
34							McClure, Rip	Partner	W	M	47	New	US	000	H Y	Yes	US	Yes	No	No	wh					38	Construction	Gas Plant	P	20000	500	00	00	00	00	35		
35							Park, Donald	Partner	W	M	23	New	US	000	H Y	Yes	A	No	No	No	wh					35	Construction	McK. Construction	P	20000	300	00	00	00	00	30		
36							Bundy, William	Partner	W	M	37	D	US	000	H Y	Yes	Chin	No	No	No	wh					23	Construction	McK. Construction	P	20000	100	00	00	00	00	28		
37							Fitzsimons, Rudy	Partner	W	M	43	New	Australia	000	H Y	Yes	A	Yes	No	No	wh					38	Construction	Bird's Nest	P	20000	500	00	00	00	00	35		

**HOUSEHOLD CONTINUED ON NEXT SHEET**

**CODES TO BE USED IN ITEMS INDICATED**

**ITEM 15. CODES FOR HIGHEST GRADE ATTENDED**

**ITEM 18. CODES FOR RESIDENCE A YEAR AGO**

**FOOTNOTES**

**FOR DISTRICT OFFICE USE ONLY**

Number of these on this sheet: 30  
Number of blank office forms on this sheet: 61  
Number of persons in household: 24

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS  
1950 CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING  
ALASKA

# Tolsona Community Profile

<b>Estimated Population</b>	<b>Geographic Area included in Estimate</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Source</b>
24	Tolsona Census Designated Place	2013	ADF&G Division of Subsistence (Holen et al. 2015, p. 479)
12	Tolsona Census Designated Place	2020	U.S. Census, April 2020
42	Glenn Highway Miles 159.8 to 176.5	2022	Tolsona Community Corporation president citing a 2022 census the corporation conducted
11	Tolsona Census Designated Place	2024	Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, 2024
30 (half seasonal)	Glenn Highway Miles 166 to 176	2024	45-year Tolsona resident

# Tolsona and Glennallen

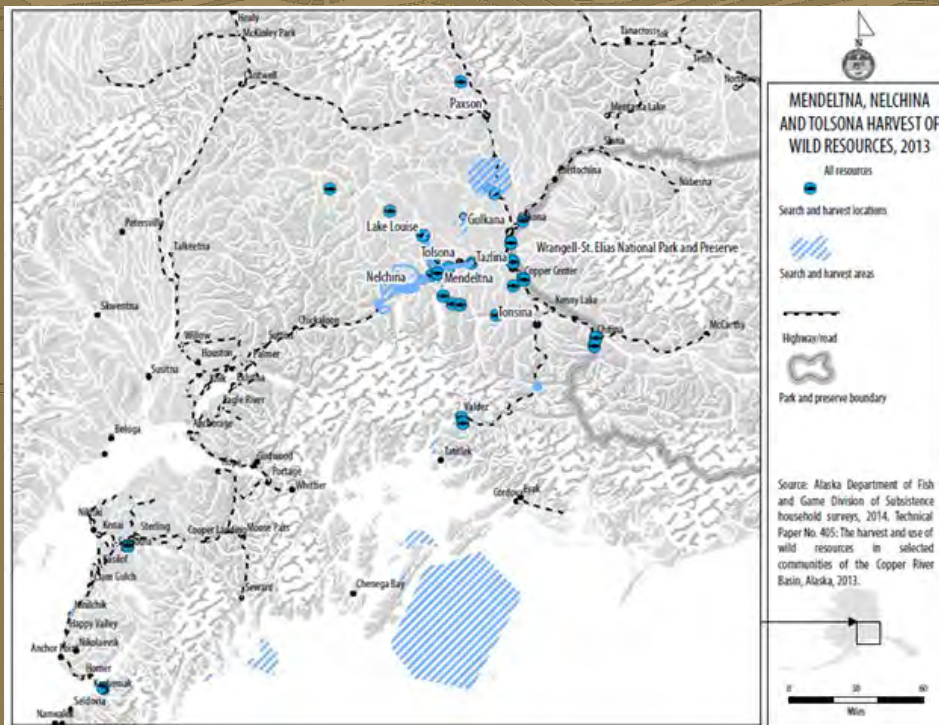
- “We consider ourselves residents of Glennallen. To this day, if someone asks me where I grew up, I answer with Glennallen, Alaska. Why would anyone say they live in ‘Tolsona Community Corporation,’ which is a non-profit agency that files a non-profit tax return?”
- “Tolsona has extremely strong ties to Glennallen as do all other communities.”
- “If you asked someone where you lived, they’d said Tolsona and not Glennallen, 17, 18 miles away.”

# Customary and Traditional Use of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park: Tolsona Subsistence Activities

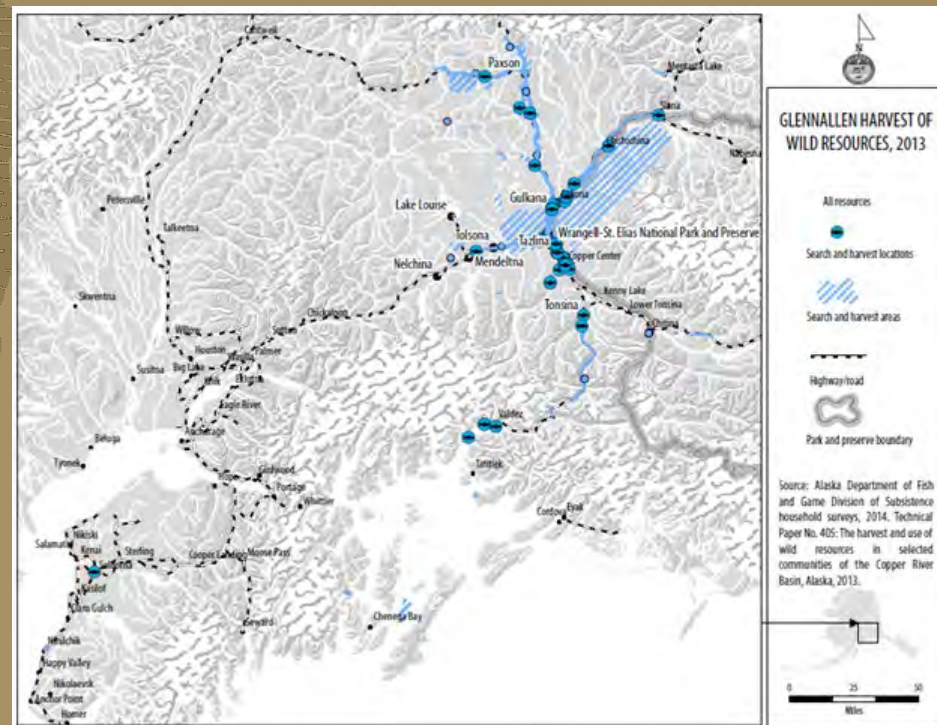
Wild resource category	Participation in subsistence harvesting activities (percentage of residents)	Participation in subsistence processing activities (percentage of residents)
Any Resource	93.8%	100.0%
Plants	81.3%	87.5%
Fish	75.0%	87.5%
Large Land Mammals	50.0%	50.0%
Birds and Eggs	31.3%	37.5%
Small Land Mammals	6.3%	6.3%

Source: Holen et al 2015, pp. 488.

# Customary and Traditional Use of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park: East Glenn Highway and Glennallen Communities Subsistence Use of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park



East Glenn Highway



Glennallen



# Customary and Traditional Use of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park: Summary of Interviews

- 20 former and current residents contacted
- 16 participated in interviews
- 12 were current residents
- 7 with a history of hunting in the national park either prior to 1980 or after 1980 when living in a resident zone community

# Public Hearing

- 14 people attended; 13 current residents, one former resident
- 4 provided testimony about hunting in the national park either prior to 1980 or when living in a resident zone community
- “When that [Nabesna] Road opened up, that made it possible for Native people to use that road for bird hunting. They gathered every fall. That’s just the way it was. October month was their bird collecting. They hunted sheep—we still hunt sheep in them [Mentasta] Mountains just like her grandfather did when...that’s just the way it was.”

# Effects of the Request

- If Tolsona qualifies for designation as a resident zone community, the National Park Service will initiate the regulatory process and complete the required compliance processes to recognize Tolsona as a resident zone community.
- Tolsona residents would become eligible to hunt, trap, and fish in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park under federal subsistence regulations for the species for which they have C&T use determinations, which currently includes black bear, caribou, and moose in various parts of Units 11 and 12.



# Effects of the Request

- If Tolsona does not qualify as a resident zone community, residents with a long-term personal or family pattern of use could apply for and possibly be granted 13.440 permits along with individual C&Ts for species for which the community does not have C&T.

# Effects of the Request

- Tolsona residents will remain federally qualified subsistence users regardless of the outcome of this request and will remain eligible to harvest resources under federal subsistence regulations on all federal lands outside the national park for which they have C&T use determinations.

# Summary

Characteristic	Individuals	Households
Estimated population of Tolsona Census Designated Place (Glenn Highway Mile 166 to Mile 173) from 2020 U.S. Census.	12	8
Estimated population of Tolsona community as defined by Tolsona Community Corporation (Glenn Highway Mile 159.8 to Mile 176.5) (2022)	42	37
Current Tolsona residents with a personal or family pattern of subsistence uses in the national park prior to 1980 <b>with OR without the use of aircraft</b>	7	3
Current Tolsona residents with a personal or family pattern of subsistence uses in the national park prior to establishment of the national park in 1980 <b>without the use of aircraft</b>	3	2*

Source: Census Designated Place population estimates from 2020 U.S. Census. Estimated population of Tolsona community as defined by Tolsona Community Corporation during a 2022 census provided by Tolsona Community Corporation president on January 24, 2025. Other information based on Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve contacts for this analysis. Consistent with the guidance in 36 CFR 13.430 (a)(2) and (c) regarding determining significant concentration, the resident numbers in this table include all people living on a permanent basis in the households of those who were interviewed or testified about their subsistence uses in the national park.

\* Households are located in the Glennallen Census Designated Place, although they identify with Tolsona.

# Question for consideration

- Has a significant concentration of Tolsona residents customarily and traditionally engaged in subsistence uses on lands within Wrangell-St. Elias National Park?

