

Fact Sheet: King Cove Land Exchange

- The Aleut community of King Cove (Pop. 925) has maintained for the past 35 years that a one-lane, gravel road to the all-weather airport in neighboring Cold Bay is the only safe, reliable and affordable means to transport patients in medical emergencies.
- King Cove's airstrip, set at the base of two volcanic mountains, is not for the faint of heart. The airstrip is closed an average of 100 days a year by dangerously high winds and foul weather. Nearby Cold Bay has a 10,000 foot, all-weather runway with an instrument approach system built by the U.S. Military during World War II that is closed on average 10 days a year.
- At least 18 deaths have been attributed to the lack of a land route between King Cove and Cold Bay, either because of plane crashes or an inability to get timely medical treatment, including four people who died in a 1980 medevac crash. With only a small clinic and no full-time physician, residents of King Cove must travel 600 miles to Anchorage for most medical procedures, including for childbirth, trauma and major injuries.
- Without land access, the only alternative to evacuate a patient in an emergency during bad weather is to call the U.S. Coast Guard and request a rescue helicopter from as far away as Kodiak at a cost to U.S. taxpayers of as much as \$210,000 a trip.
- The full length of the proposed road would be about 30 miles (of which 18 miles already exist), but only about 12 miles of new road is needed within the refuge to create a one-lane gravel road connection with Cold Bay.
- The Izembek refuge – including federally designated wilderness areas – has more than 40 miles of roads built by the U.S. Military during World War II and used today by federal employees and visiting duck hunters. There are more than 15,500 miles of existing roads within the National Wildlife Refuge System of 562 refuges.
- The Izembek refuge actively promotes¹ the area's world-class hunting opportunities,² particularly for brown bear and waterfowl. The refuge has some of the highest daily sport hunting bag limits anywhere – six Canada geese, two black brant, eight puddle ducks, and 15 sea ducks. That's 31 birds per day, per hunter. Hunters are also permitted to shoot another 20 ptarmigan per day – for a total of 51 birds a day per hunter.

¹ https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Izembek/visit/visitor_activities.html

² <http://www.coldbayalaska.com/hunting.htm>