



National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska

# Alpine Satellite Development Plan

National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska

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## BLM Releases Final Environmental Impact Statement

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has released the Alpine Satellite Development Plan (ASDP) Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) to examine ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc.'s (CPAI) proposed action to develop five satellite oil accumulations in the northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska and the Colville River Delta. The BLM developed the FEIS with cooperating agencies—U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), and the State of Alaska. The FEIS examined the potential impacts of CPAI's proposal and contains the preferred alternative.

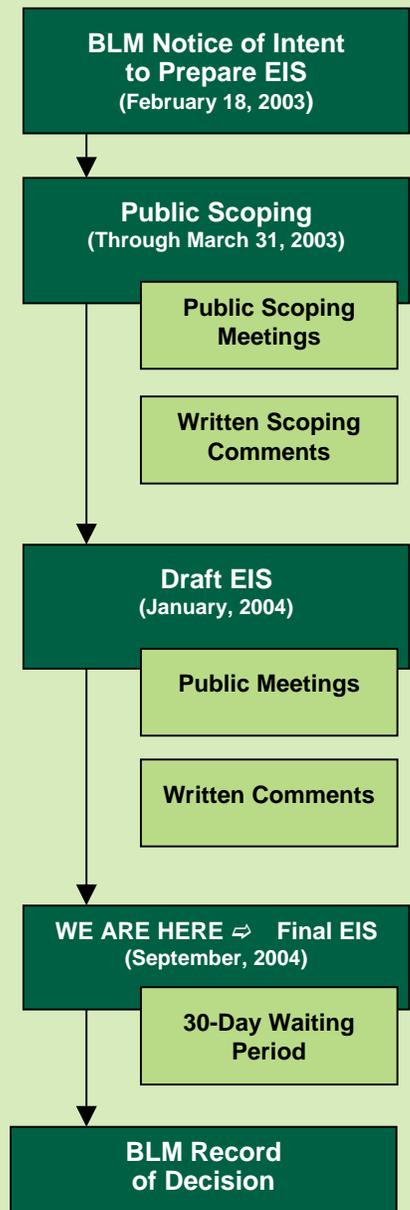
The FEIS will be available for public review for 30 days following the date the EPA publishes the Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*. (Check the project website—[alpine-satellites-eis.com](http://alpine-satellites-eis.com)—for the date.) Following this 30-day period, the BLM will issue a Record of Decision.

### The Preferred Alternative

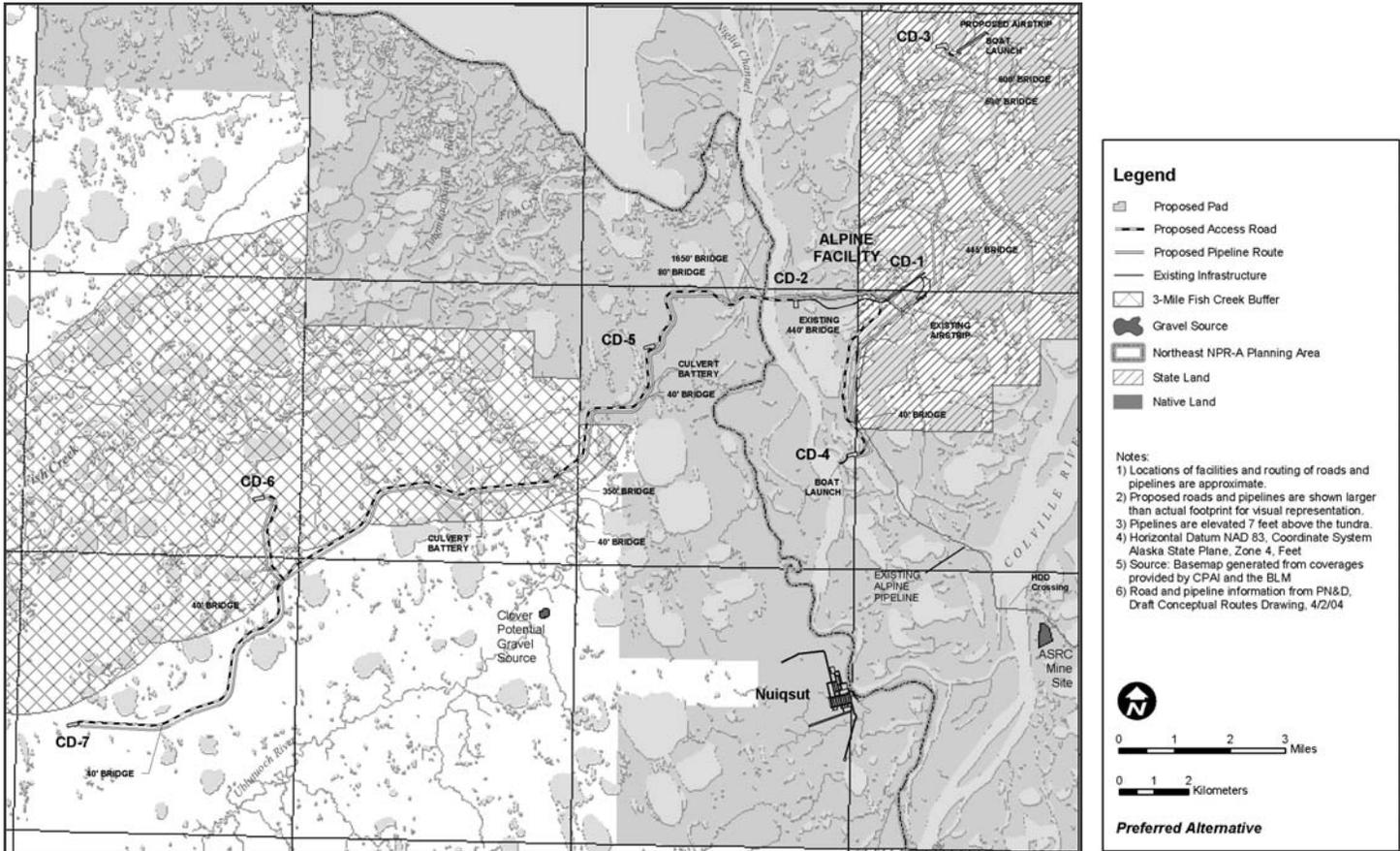
CPAI's proposed development plan includes the five satellite drilling pads—two in the Colville River Delta (one on State of Alaska land and one on land owned by the Native corporation for the village of Nuiqsut—Kuukpik Corporation); one on land owned by Kuukpik Corporation within the Petroleum Reserve; and two on federal lands administered by BLM within the Petroleum Reserve. CPAI proposes to place 20-30 wells on each pad and to transport the unprocessed, three-phase (oil, gas, and water) product to the Alpine Central Processing Facility for processing and shipment through existing pipelines to market.

The FEIS evaluates a range of alternatives, consistent with applicable law, by which to accomplish the proposed action while mitigating adverse impacts. The Preferred Alternative includes components from each of the action alternatives analyzed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and reflects consideration to public and agency comments, regulatory needs, and further mitigation of environmental concerns. The Preferred Alternative would authorize development of the five pads at the locations requested by CPAI. Gravel roads would connect CD-4 through CD-7 to the Alpine Central Processing Facility; CD-3 would be accessed by use of an airstrip or by ice road. Substantial portions of the road and pipeline on BLM-managed lands would be moved outside of a setback from Fish Creek, bridges across the Nigliq Channel

### Alpine Satellite Development Plan EIS Schedule



The federal Bureau of Land Management is the lead agency for the Alpine Satellite Development Plan EIS. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Coast Guard, and the State of Alaska are cooperating agencies.



Note: CD-1 and CD-2 are existing facilities; proposed facilities include CD-3 through CD-7.

## ASDP EIS Preferred Alternative

and the Ublutuoch River would be from bank to bank, all pipelines would be elevated a minimum of 7 feet above the ground as measured at the vertical support members, and all power lines would be placed in cable trays mounted on the vertical support members.

Also included in the FEIS is an analysis of hypothetical full-field development (FFD) for an 890,000-acre Plan Area. Though FFD is not proposed at this time, BLM considers it likely that development besides that currently proposed by CPAI will occur in this area. As a result, the FEIS analyzes alternative development options for potential future development. This approach provides an overview of proposed and potential future development in the area. BLM will not make a decision for FFD as part of the ASDP EIS process. Instead, decisions on future proposals

for developments in the area would be addressed through additional NEPA analysis.

### Impacts of the Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative reduces impacts of CPAI’s proposal to the natural and human environment while still allowing development. The Final EIS examines impacts that would result from the Preferred Alternative, CPAI’s proposal, and other alternatives. Impacts of the Preferred Alternative include:

#### *Physical Environment*

The Preferred Alternative would create a long-term impact to over 300 acres of soils and land surface area by mining gravel from up to 65 acres to cover approximately



250 acres with fill for drilling pads, roads, and an airstrip. Because of routing of roads to minimize impacts within the Fish Creek setback and to avoid Lake 9323 just north of CD-4, the Preferred Alternative covers approximately 10 more acres than the alternative proposed by CPAI. Placement of roads, pads, and bridges could affect the surface hydrology and stream channels by increasing scour, sedimentation, shoaling, and bank erosion. The Preferred Alternative seeks to reduce the potential for such problems by establishing water flow criteria and requiring bridges longer than those proposed by CPAI over the Nigliq Channel and the Ublutuoch River. Impacts to air quality would be short-term and emissions of air pollutants would not be consequential.

### *Biological Environment*

In addition to the approximately 315 acres of vegetation that would be covered or disturbed to extract gravel, vegetation would also be impacted by dust, gravel spray, snow accumulations, water impoundments, thermokarsting, and temporary ice roads and ice pads. These impacts could include altering of plant communities or changes in productivity. Under the Preferred Alternative, some impacts may occur in parts of an area of approximately 3,150 acres. One percent or less of any vegetation community in the plan area, including key wetlands, would be impacted. Although individual animals will be disturbed, displaced, or killed, there would be negligible effects on fish, bird, and mammal populations. (An exception to this might be if a very large spill reached an important habitat for a bird species at a critical time.) Terrestrial mammals will be disturbed and, at least in the early years of the project, displaced from areas near the development.

### *Social Systems*

Taxes and royalties on CPAI's project will increase North Slope Borough, state, and federal government revenues. The total work force to build the project is projected to peak during construction in 2006 at over 500; many fewer individuals will be employed to conduct drilling and operations. The great majority of these jobs are anticipated to be held by people from outside the North Slope. Nevertheless, social system impacts will be greatest for residents of Nuiqsut. The proposed facilities add to the existing oil production infrastructure in areas of important subsistence fish, bird, and mammal harvesting. Local residents are reluctant to hunt near oil facilities, so construction of the proposed development may effectively reduce traditional hunting areas. The Preferred Alternative places the pipeline 7 feet or higher above the tundra, in contrast to CPAI's original proposal of 5 feet. This reduces, but does not eliminate, the potential that the pipeline will impede

caribou and hunter movement. Consequently, subsistence hunting could require more lengthy travel and the associated increase in effort, cost, and risk. Reduced or disrupted subsistence harvests, should they occur, could impact the social structure of Nuiqsut that depends heavily on the sharing of subsistence foods. Nuiqsut's social system could also be impacted by increasing contact with non-residents and increasing job opportunities and income.

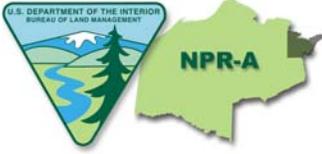
### **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

The USACE is evaluating ConocoPhillips Alaska's proposal to develop 5 new drill sites and a gravel mine. It is anticipated that a revised Public Notice would be published to coincide with the issuance of the Final EIS. The Public Notice comment period would run concurrent with the FEIS 30-day waiting period and would solicit public comment on the proposed project. USACE contact information would be in their notice. For more information about the USACE regulatory program visit their website at <http://www.poa.usace.army.mil/reg>.

### **EPA Permitting Decision**

EPA potentially has a permitting decision to make on the disposal of wastewater from camps. The alternatives presented in the FEIS discuss the use of a general or an individual National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Questions can be directed to Cindi Godsey at (907) 271-6561 or toll free at 1 (800) 781-0983. Comments should be submitted in writing to:

Cindi Godsey  
EPA, 222 West 7th Avenue, Box 19  
Anchorage, Alaska 99513



**Bureau of Land Management**  
Division of Resources, Lands, and Planning  
222 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, #13  
Anchorage, Alaska 99513

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Anchorage, AK



## For More Information

The FEIS is available in either hard copy or on compact disk at the following addresses—

### **BLM Public Room**

222 West 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, #13  
Anchorage, AK 99513-7599

### **BLM Public Room**

1150 University Avenue  
Fairbanks, AK 99709

## Final EIS Available for review at these locations—

ARLIS/Alaska Resources Library  
3150 C Street, Suite 100  
Anchorage, AK 99503

Anchorage Municipal Libraries  
Z.J. Loussac Library  
3600 Denali Street  
Anchorage, AK 99503-6093

Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources  
Public Information Center  
550 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue Suite 1260  
Anchorage, AK 99501

Fairbanks North Star Borough  
Public Library  
1215 Cowles Street  
Fairbanks, AK 99701-4313

Trapper School Community Library  
PO Box 167  
Nuiqsut, AK

Tuzzy Consortium Library  
5421 North Star Street  
P.O. Box 749  
Barrow, AK 99727