

MINUTES
Alaska Resource Advisory Council Meeting
Juneau Federal Building—Juneau, AK
27-28 April 2006

DAY 1-Thursday, April 27, 2006

Council Members Present: Sandra Key, Greg, June McAtee, Teresa Imm, Barbara Fullmer, Charlie Boddy, Tom Crafford, Keith Tryck, David van den Berg, Scott Hala, Suzanne McCarthy, and Greg Beischer. **Council Members Absent:** Phil Driver, Susan Olson, Jim Posey.

BLM Representatives Present: Henri Bisson, Gary Reimer, Ramone McCoy, Stacie McIntosh, Dave Yokel, Lon Kelly, Chris Dewitt, Terry Hasset, Joe Ribar (AFS), Danielle Allen, and Leah Dailey.

Other: Noah Ashley-Owen, North Slope Borough; Rachel James, Alaska Coalition; Kurt Parkan, The Nature Conservancy.

Meeting **CALLED TO ORDER** at 10:31 a.m. by Chair, Sandra Key. Welcome and housekeeping issues addressed.

FEB 2006 RAC MINUTES: Key asked for any comments on the minutes. Van den Berg explained he was not ready to approve the minutes based on the new format. Key proposed that the RAC revisit the minutes on day two in order to give members time for review.

MEETING EXPECTATIONS DISCUSSION: Key said the survey comments were helpful and will lead the way for future RAC meetings. Key said the comments were consistent but a few members did not finish the survey. Key asked these members to complete the survey so the final results could be tallied and shared on day two.

STATE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE: Henri Bisson reported that he will be serving as State Director of Utah for the next six months. He assured the RAC that this is a temporary assignment of about 4-5 months. Other major leadership changes in the BLM were discussed. Bisson then discussed the status of previous RAC resolutions (See Below).

A. RESEARCH AND MONITORING TEAM (RMT) RESOLUTION 05-02: The RMT will meet one more time to discuss the research and monitoring strategy and then the group will become a subgroup of the North Slope Science Initiative (NSSI). The Science Technical Group (STG) just met in Fairbanks and it realizes the complexity of issues ahead. Four members of the STG were on the RMT including the chair (Kim Titus). Key asked Bisson if the STG will reinvent what the RMT has already accomplished. Bisson explained that the RMT made a good start, but some issues were not addressed that need to be. For example, social cultural issues were not previously addressed and now there is a social scientist on board (Stacie McIntosh).

B. EARMP ADDITIONAL CLOSURE RESOLUTION 05-03: Concerns presented by RAC are addressed in the East Alaska management plan.

C. UTILITY CORRIDOR/SUBSISTENCE USE RESOLUTION 05-04: Bisson reported that the BLM will do what it can to protect subsistence use in federal use areas. Bisson reiterated that the issue is very complex. The State of Alaska wants it all, but the Secretary said that will not happen. The State needs to look at individual parcels. The RMP will release a tract in the Denali block that has a low subsistence value. Bisson explained that a meeting will be held with ADNR (Alaska Department of Natural Resources) next week to discuss a small corridor that the State

feels would be beneficial and not impact subsistence. However, there are Sec. 202 security concerns. The final plan will go to the governor's office for a 60-day consistency review to acceptance or denial and suggested fixes. The BLM wants to address concerns up front and identify additional tracts. The BLM will do what it has to do to protect subsistence areas in the corridor. Additionally, the game board has come forward and is attempting to resurrect and develop a proposal to change the tier 2 permit system. Bisson feels the new permit system has merit, but AHTNA is not supportive of the state's proposal and do not want to see it change. Bisson said he believes the new permit plan would improve the situation for the Copper River Basin rather than benefiting just a few individuals. Bisson also noted that a Subsistence RAC has been working to develop a relationship with the area users. McCarthy asked if the BLM had gotten any feedback from the Government to Government discussions with the villages. Bisson explained that the problem was that these are state regulations and not federal, and since the BLM is federal, we can not stick interfere with state regulations.

D. Bering Glacier Field Camp Support Resolution: Bisson explained that the funding that supports this work is being cut. The BLM has no problems this year. The University of Alaska-Fairbanks will be the principle sponsor of the camp and the BLM will provide operations. This will reduce the cost to the BLM. The BLM is hoping for its continued success but will still have a reduced presence at the camp.

E. FIRE RESOLUTION: Tabled until later in the agenda.

MAJOR ISSUES REPORT/DISCUSSION: (See Handout) Bisson gave highlights from the April 2006 Major Issues Briefing Paper. Bisson stated the BLM is done with the Withdrawal Review report; the Washington Office has it for approval. Regarding the NE NPR-A lawsuit, Bisson said the plaintiffs are scheduled to present briefs by late May. Van den berg asked about the nature of the 1998 NE plan lawsuit; Schnieder explained it concerns a leasing program's impact to the critical habitat of the stellar eiders. The NW NPR-A decision is still in limbo; the 9th Circuit Court has not yet reached a decision. Key asked about the NSSI and its funding priorities; Bisson said the Science Technical Group (STG) will deal with funding issues, but the first meeting was issues-based and to get the group up to speed. Bisson explained that the types of positions on the STG are different than the RAC. The STG is comprised of scientists representing a broad base of knowledge and skills. The environmental community is concerned about the lack of environmentalists in the STG. The initial terms were staggered so environmental groups can nominate members with the skills needed by the STG. Bisson then said BLM Alaska was on schedule to meet its land conveyance goals for the year. (See Handout). Imm asked about Legacy Wells, and Bisson said four were prioritized because of coastal erosion (Drew Point, Teshepuk, Cape Simpson, and North Simpson). The other wells are capped and not affected by erosion. Bisson said he is encouraged by the \$4 million the BLM got for well clean up but more is needed. For example, the Dalton well cost about \$5.5 million to clean up and to remove materials from the site. The cost was reduced at the Dalton well since an airstrip and barge were close, additional costs will occur when clean up materials are moved to Prudhoe.

ICEBREAKER/GET ACQUAINTED ACTIVITY: 2 Truths and Lie.

BREAK for lunch at 12:15 p.m. **RECONVENED** at 12:27 p.m. (boxed lunch).

CHARTER REVIEW/DISCUSSION: Beischer explained the need for the RAC charter review every two years; he recommended that unless there are additional items the RAC needs to do/add, the charter should be resubmitted as it currently stands. Bisson said he felt the charter is good and the RAC should not make changes unless they are really needed. Beischer asked about item 9a about Subgroups. He felt the RAC might need to discuss The Nature Conservancy and

then reexamine what the charter says about subgroups. Bisson feels that the subgroup would be ok as he endorses it as a self-assembled group. Van den Berg motioned to accept the charter as presented without changes. Tryck seconded. Vote called for--All in favor. None opposed.

ATTENDANCE DISCUSSION: Key explained the charter states a member will not have 2 consecutive absences without a good excuse. Ideally, she stated, it would be great to have the entire committee every time, but since this will not happen, she asked the group how to deal with absences. Boddy said that meeting dates need to be set and not changed. McCarthy explained that dates should be set (but not in stone) and the RAC should look for group consensus. Furthermore, the meeting agenda should allow adequate time to strategize/plan a yearly schedule. All agreed that RAC members should not be penalized for nonattendance if the dates change and a member is no longer able to attend. Imm suggested that RAC meetings during the legislative session are hard for some members to meet. Key stated that her reason for this discussion is the fact that it is hard when BLM staff put all the effort/money into planning a meeting and there is not a quorum present on the second day; Bisson agreed. Dropouts at the last minute are the biggest problem. Imm suggested that teleconference ability as an option. Bisson mentioned videoconferencing. Key and Boddy said they liked having the handouts ahead of time. Other suggestions stated in the discussion: one person from each group to bird dog the meeting for attendance, more frequent meetings rather than two-day meetings, asking a person that can not attend to report to the others in their respective group. Key called for a conclusion to the discussion: stick with the current RAC schedule, add agenda time to schedule/review upcoming RAC meetings, plan for one additional RAC calendar date at each meeting so one meeting is added each time, try to determine before the meeting if a quorum will attend.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPRESENTATION DISCUSSION: Key suggested that each member needs to know that he/she should not vote on an issue if there is a conflict of interest. Each member will be responsible for his/herself. This could be done in two ways: orally at the time a vote is called for or in writing to advise the RAC and the State Director. Example of a conflict of interest: member has a permit that could be affected by the RAC decision (A BLM RAC member can not financially gain from work as a member of the committee).

PUBLIC COMMENT: No members of the public present at 1 p.m. RAC agreed to suspend discussion of current topic if members of the public arrived and wanted to ask questions or provide comments.

MEMBER ROLES & MEDIA DISCUSSION: Discussion began with the recent press exposure of the RAC/David van den Berg after Day 1 of the Feb. 2006 meeting in Fairbanks. Questions were: How is a RAC member to deal with media exposure? Should the RAC do business as a collective body or can RAC members do interviews representing categorical interests? It was decided that it was acceptable for RAC members to discuss viewpoints with the press, but that RAC members should not represent individual viewpoints as being the collective view of the RAC or the BLM. It is acceptable to speak as an individual or representing the individual's organization. Bisson said a press article based on overheard RAC discussion is out of our control. Key suggested that if one member of the RAC speaks to the press, the other members should be notified. Bisson suggested that if a person talks to the media on his/her own the person should say, "I am coming from this perspective, but other RAC members might have a different perspective."

NO PUBLIC COMMENT at 1:30 p.m.

FAIRBANKS DISTRICT OFFICE UPDATE: Bob Schneider said the Kobuk Seward Peninsula Plan newsletter was being mailed. The BLM's priority state conveyance work has accelerated now that the State has come in with priorities. The Seekins Senate Bill 85 is still in committee—it appears to be dead at this time. No volunteers have been found to staff the Visitor Center at the Dalton Highway. Miners will now be charged fees for permits, site inspections, etc. in the 49 Mile River Area. The Jack White Dredge is a safety and public health hazard; the BLM plans to remove it because it has fallen down and can not be reclaimed. Crafford asked what the extent of the mining fee increase would be. Schneider said fees in the past may have been about \$200, but they will now be around \$500 if a processing fee is necessary. A processing fee is charged if more than 2 staff hours are spent on the process. BLM offices are trying to work out details before the miners submit permits so the BLM does not have to charge for the processing time.

ARTIC FIELD OFFICE UPDATE: Lon Kelly said that Ken Taylor would be updating the RAC on NSSI, that winter work was completed, and that the office is in the process of NPR-A planning discussions. The office is also focusing on eroding wells and the possibility of establishing a small office in Barrow.

ANCHORAGE FIELD OFFICE UPDATE: (Handout) Gary Reimer said the Ring of Fire Final Management Plan is due out in September and the initial draft of the Bay Plan is forthcoming. Regarding bears at the CTF, the office is working with the state office to see if they can get money to collar a few more bears. The solicitor's office has also suggested a risk communication plan to address the situation. A local hire is being planned for Unakleet. Also, plans are to put a field person in Dillingham as well as establish offices in Nome & Toksook Bay.

GLENALLEN FIELD OFFICE UPDATE: (Handout) McCoy stated that the office had come to an understanding on two 17(b) easements--Klutina Lake Road and Craig Road. John Jangala was recently honored by the Anchorage Federal Employees Association with an award; he is currently presenting a paper on Lake Ahtna at a conference in Puerto Rico. Hala recognized the new Tangle Lakes pamphlet and asked what came of the meeting. McCoy explained the new planning directive, Benefits Based Planning. Essentially, the BLM solicits information from public land users. McCoy said the office felt the information was not comprehensive, so this summer plans are to get information from casual users. The BLM is working to open more trails for designated use—proposing two walking trails in the archeological district (part of implementation planning in the RMP). Key inquired about the Arctic Man event. McCoy said the staff moved BLM information distribution to the entrance of the main camp instead of having it at the bar; trash bags were also passed out. The after action report has not yet been finalized.

BREAK at 2:05 p.m.

ANCSA 17(b) EASEMENTS PRESENTATION by Terry Hassett (Handout): Crafford asked who administered the easements; Hassett replied that by statute, administration fell under the Department of the Interior but that administration had been delegated to the BLM. Discussion moved to the very liberal trespassing laws and how the landowner has to prove damages. Key asked if an easement could be closed due to landowner threats; Hassett said no, but a temporary closure can occur as in the case of the tourist visits to see the polar bears at Barrow. Various members asked how easements were surveyed and Hassett explained that many were originally drawn by the USGS and not actually surveyed. Hassett also said that the Glennallen office has been using GPS to survey some easements.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES OF SOUTH NPR-A by Dave Yokel (Handout): Discussion among the RAC and the specialist entailed speculation about why the caribou population is growing and the types of events that could cause a decline (cataclysmic events, harsh winter, disease, etc.). Yokel explained that a herd is defined by those animals that calve in the same area.

SUBSISTENCE USE OF SOUTH NPR-A PRESENTATION by Stacie McIntosh (Handout): McIntosh explained that one of the largest issues was overcoming the perceptions/mistrust of the Natives concerning previous efforts. The current plan is to have public meetings soliciting comments from the intensive, peripheral, and indirect users.

ALASKA FIRE SERVICE (AFS) FIRE SEASON FORECAST: (Handout) Joe Ribar noted that AFS had six prescribed fires in the Kenai Peninsula and two at Ft. Richardson (about 10,000 acres). After the presentation, the RAC discussed the lack of continuity between state and federal laws. Tryck said he wanted to thank the Alaska Fire Service for a great job done.

PUBLIC COMMENT REVISITED: None. Motion to **ADJOURN** the meeting by Key. Seconded by McCarthy. **ADJOURNED** at 5:10 p.m.

DAY 2—Friday, April 28, 2006

Meeting **CALLED TO ORDER** at 8:30 a.m. by Chair, Sandra Key.

RAC EFFECTIVENESS SURVEY DISCUSSION: (Handout) Key said RAC members felt the meetings were effective and that Bisson's State Director Report was valuable. As far as the subcommittee assignments, this was the area of the most hope and the least satisfaction. Other comments: Kudos to the Field Manager's for their knowledge and helpfulness and to the Communication's staff (AK 912) and presenters for providing briefing materials in advance.

RAC 2006 FIELD TRIP VIDEO: Bob Schneider showed a brief video about what to expect on the upcoming field trip to the NPR-A South. David van den Berg presented a gear list for the field trip (Handout). Bisson said that the field trip this summer is the most important field trip ever because of the controversy (resource conflicts & values are significant) associated with the NPR-A South plan.

MINUTES REVIEW: Van den Berg expressed concern that the minutes from the February meeting lacked coverage of pivotal dialog pointing to a RAC consensus on the need for BLM to adopt stronger protection strategies in the southern NPR-A. The RAC discussed delaying the final approval for the Feb 2006 Minutes pending changes recommended by David van den Berg to rewrite the dialog from the original minutes. The group decided to include the additional RAC subcommittee assignments. Motion to approve with Van den Berg's suggested additions by Tryck. Seconded by Boddy. Key stated these will be revisited on the July Field trip if any additional changes need to be made. All members present were in favor. None opposed. Van den Berg is being sent minutes for review/amendment.

WILDLAND FIRE RESOLUTION DISCUSSION: Tryck said the resolution number was changed to 06-02. Key stated that as she reads the resolution, it is about what the fire managers should do but it does not say what the miners/local residents should do. Key stated the resolution needed a stronger community component. Tryck commented that the RAC could not mandate

community involvement, but the resolution could say what managers should do to accomplish this task. Bisson suggested that the AFS could/should go to all communities per the resolution and that a time frame needed to be set into the language of the resolution. Tryck explained he did not want to burden AFS and suggested implementation could be done over the next two years. Tyrck agreed to amend item #1 in the document to read "Over the next two years, fire managers...." Crafford had concerns about the placer miners and the resolution did not suggest consulting the miners. Tryck said this was an excellent idea. Bisson said that the problem was that within the protection zone, no provisions are made for the BLM to manage situations on State, Fish & Wildlife, or National Park lands. Tryck suggested that if this guidance is put into effect on BLM land, then other federal and state agencies might follow suit. Bisson suggested that Tryck add a bullet to the resolution suggesting that the BLM coordinate development of the local fire plans and EMS with other federal managers and the State (ADNR) of Alaska. Boddy said that he thought this resolution raised some of the same issues as the 17(b) easements in regards to the RAC work plan. For example, who would respond? What is the responder's responsibility based on land status? How does it work? Schneider explained the evident complications: the state will not come to an agreement with a consistent policy and the fire plan changes based on land status meetings every day. Schneider said that with boundary fires, response strategies/roles are worked into the operations plan and coordination among the agencies improves with the operation. Health and safety are always the key issues. Key asked what in the resolution would be different for the fire teams. Schneider said he thinks the resolution is good and that if the BLM adopts the resolution, it would be policy and be briefed to the teams at the Incident Management Team briefings.

INTRODUCTION: Key asked Noah Owen-Ashley from the North Slope Borough (NSB) to introduce himself and to explain his reason for attending the RAC meetings. Owen-Ashley is a wildlife biologist from the Department of Wildlife Management and that he is filling in for Tom Lohman. Furthermore, NSB is a formal cooperating agency for the NPR-A South plan. Crafford asked for a definition of a cooperating agency. It was explained that a cooperating agency was one with legitimate concerns in a planning area (hardrock and coal, oil and gas mining, subsistence) and the agency would help in the development of a range of alternatives for the area. A cooperating agency saves time/effort later if the BLM involves them early in the planning process. Schneider said that a formal MOU had been established with the NSB to give them special status. Bisson explained that the National Park Service (NPS) wanted to be a Cooperating Agency but the BLM declined their offer because they have no jurisdiction or lands in the South NPR-A area. The Park Service can still be part of the discussion, but not part of the decision. Bisson further explained that he viewed NPR-A South as a multiple use area and that he would not create a buffer along the NPS boundary. This is the same policy used on the East RMP and the Bering Glacier. The NPS will be able to comment on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) the NPS will be able to give opinions.

DISCUSSION ABOUT THE PRE-PROPOSAL FROM THE NATURE CONSERVANCY (TNC): (See Handout) Lon Kelly explained the basic tenants of the proposal. The RAC discussed the idea of Community Based Planning (CBP) and whether or not the BLM will encourage TNC to lead the effort. Kelly/Schneider explained CBP--the objective is to identify a group of stakeholders, meet with them, and open dialogue. Bisson asked the RAC to consider how comfortable each member is with the process and whether or not the cooperating agency (NSB) is on board. Discussion turned to the merits and weaknesses of TNC. Bisson stated he would like the RAC to understand one important tenant in leadership development, is to get your own employees on board. If the BLM uses its employees vs. paying TNC, the BLM gains the experience and develops its own employees. The RAC asked why the BLM would want to have

the same process completed by the BLM, TNC, and the RAC. Bisson explained that in the past the BLM had its own public involvement process. TNC would create its process and advise the BLM, creating more community ownership of the alternatives. Concerns were raised about the effectiveness and reputation of the TNC in the community. All present agreed that getting the local government buy-in equates to successful planning. Crafford suggested that the TNC might be perceived as a less biased participant than the BLM and then asked if the NSB might take the facilitator role since it is a cooperating agency and has the respect of the locals. As a result of the discussion about planning and the NPR-A, the RAC members agreed that the following statement (bold) should be a record of support in the RAC meeting minutes rather than written as a resolution:

The RAC recommends that the BLM include Community Based Planning in its planning efforts for South NPR-A.

- 1) If Community Based Planning moves forward, the RAC would like to be a part of the process.**
- 2) If the NSB or another entity chooses not to be a leader in Community Based Planning, then the RAC would like to sponsor a subgroup under its FACA charter.**

David van den Berg and Teresa Imm stated an interest for being involved in the Community Based Planning effort. A vote was taken for the statement as written. All present were in favor, and none opposed.

BREAK at 10:30 a.m. **RECONVENED** at 10:45 a.m.

SUBCOMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND ASSIGNMENTS: The RAC discussed what the subgroups should accomplish and deadlines. Individuals not previously on a committee were assigned to either the Coal/Hardrock or the Special Areas Committee. Biescher presented his document on behalf of the Coal/Hardrock subcommittee (handout). Bisson mentioned RS2477 Guidance and will provide information to the RAC.

ADJOURNED for lunch at 11: 15 a.m. Transportation to Island Pub.
NSSI PRESENTATION by Ken Taylor during lunch (Handout).

Meeting called to **ORDER** at 2:05 p.m. at the John Rishel Mineral Information Center (JRMIC).

FIRE RESOLUTION: Tryck presents resolution with previously suggested changes. RAC members agree that the changes are good. Ten members present were in favor of the appended document. One opposed. The three absent RAC members will be polled via email before the resolution is sent forward.

WORK PLAN DISCUSSION: (Handouts) RAC Members discussed the need for items to be moved between the action and information categories. For changes, see the updated 2006 Work Plan (Handout).

JOHN RISHEL MINERAL INFORMATION CENTER (JRMIC) DISCUSSION: McCarthy suggested a letter of support for the JRMIC. Key suggested a resolution because if there is a unanimous show of support, it would go straight to the Secretary. Boddy asked if anyone present was in disagreement with the draft resolution proposal. No comments. Beischer

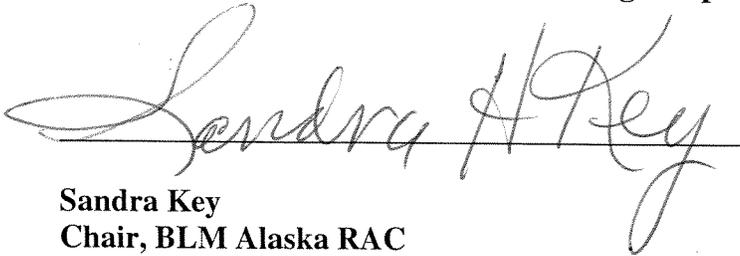
agreed to draft a resolution supporting JRMIC and to circulate it via email to all RAC members. Tryck suggested that he get concerns and comments from constituents via Chris Dewitt, Supervisory Physical Scientist, to use in the resolution. Key suggested that a unanimous resolution on the part of the RAC would be a good idea politically.

Motion to adjourn by Van den Berg. Seconded by Tryck. Meeting **ADJOURNED** at 3:15 p.m.

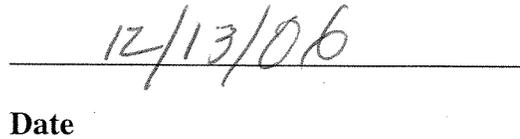
BOAT TOUR--HISTORIC OVERVIEW OF MINING IN ALASKA by
David Stone of Alaska Electric Light and Power, Director of Consumer Affairs.

CERTIFICATION

This document is a fair and accurate summation of the BLM of Alaska Resource Advisory Council meeting of April 27 & 28, 2006.



Sandra Key
Chair, BLM Alaska RAC



Date

Handouts and Presentations (source in parenthesis)

- RAC Agenda, April 27-28 (Office of Communications-AK912)
- Land Transfer Update, April 12, 2006 (Ramona Chinn/Henri Bisson)
- South NPR-A Summer Tour 2006 Preview (Bob Schneider-CD Video)
- BLM Alaska Major Issues, April 2006
- RAC Effectiveness Review Results (Sandra key)
- Backpack Trip Equipment List (David van den Berg)
- Biological Sketches for NSSI, Science Technical Group (Ken Taylor)
- ANCSA Sec 17(b) Easements (Terry Hasset)
- Newsletter of the Kobuk-Seward Peninsula RMP (Gary Reimer)
- BLM Anchorage Field Office RAC Update, April 2006 (Gray Reimer)
- Glennallen Field Office RAC Update, April 2006 (Ramone McCoy)
- Subsistence Use of South NPR-A (Stacie McIntosh)
- The Alaska Minerals Program (Chris DeWitt/Colleen McCarthy)
- Biological Resources of the South NPR-A Planning Area (Dave Yokel)
- Alaska Seasonal Fire Weather/Fire Danger Outlook 2006 (Joe Ribar)
- ALASKA RAC Contact Lists, External and Internal, (AK912)
- News Release for RAC Juneau Meeting (Office of Communications-AK912)
- Feb 2006 DRAFT RAC Meeting Minutes (Office of Communications-AK912)
- 2006 Work Program AK BLM RAC (Office of Communications-AK912)
- 2005 Work Program AK BLM RAC (Office of Communications-AK912)
- BLM-AK RAC Charter 2005 (Office of Communications-AK912)
- Impact Potential Report: Mining in the South NPR-A
 - Report by Aventurine Engineering-March 2006
- 2 Truths and Lie Icebreaker Activity Sheet
- Wildland Fires Resolution 06-02 (Keith Tryck)
- DRAFT Hardrock and Coal Committee Update, April 27, 2006 (Greg)
- DRAFT Proposal for Participatory Planning in South NPR-A (Lon Kelly)
 - Proposal from The Nature Conservancy, April 25, 2006
- Tangle Lakes Archaeological District Brochure (Ramone McCoy)
 - BLM/GI-05/008+8100+050
- Commercial Visitor Services in Alaska (AKSO Public Room)
 - 10/97 Edition
- Juneau-John Rishel Mineral Information Center Brochure (JRMIC)
 - BLM/AK/AE-97/023+3000+930 Rev 2006

