

*Bureau of Land Management
Alaska Resource Advisory Council Meeting
Atwood Building
Anchorage, Alaska
August 14-15, 2018*

Tuesday, August 14, 2018

Council members present: RAC Chair Kathryn Martin, Stan Foo, Suzanne Little, Bronk Jorgensen, Brennan Cain, Lee Hart, Sara Longan, Gary Morrison, P.J. Simon, David Krause, Rosie Barr

Council members not present: Faith Martineau, John Hopson Jr., Mark Billingsley, Teresa Imm

BLM representatives present: Ted Murphy (Associate State Director), Nolan Heath, Erika Reed, Tom Heinlein, Geoff Beyersdorf, Serena Sweet, Kathy Van Massenhove, Dave Mushovic, Lesli Ellis-Wouters, Jim Hart

Representative of other agencies: None

Members of the public present (or on conference line): Sarah Taylor (Sen. Sullivan's office)

Quorum reached

RAC Chair Martin called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

RAC Chair Martin introduced **Joe Balash**, Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management, Department of the Interior.

Balash offered comments, thanking the RAC members for all they do. Balash distributed business cards and invited RAC members to call with questions. With everything happening in Alaska on the federal side, we have a lot of opportunities – we'll be able to accomplish a lot [mentioned strategic appointments, Sen. Murkowski's position in the U.S. Senate].

Balash said he is working with **Murphy** and **Reed** on some very particular things.

RAC Member Little asked if the nominations for this committee could be made a priority. Many times our meetings are delayed because we don't have a quorum.

Balash said it was a problem nationwide earlier this year. A lot of those things are happening in a timelier manner now.

RAC Member Morrison asked about a permanent Alaska state director.

Balash responded that there was an administrative oversight. Rating panel should be done this week, and the director's review board will meet Aug. 31.

RAC Member Hart asked if BLM had a similar act like the Park Service's Restore our Parks Act.

Balash discussed the growing understanding of the maintenance backlog for BLM-managed lands. They are identifying priorities that are not recurring; if there are appropriations for capital investments from legislation, we will spend.

RAC Member Little asked that DOI continue its lawful obligation to continue to consult with Federally recognized tribes.

Balash responded that the Secretary has a deep connection with the tribes. Balash has spent a lot of time in [villages] because it is an important aspect of the job.

RAC Member Simon expounded on RAC Member Little's plea to include villages and corporations

RAC Chair Martin asked about the return of Gulkana lands and **Balash** stated he is working with the attorney general and others, and will include the villages and corporations.

Ellis-Wouters gave a RAC nominations update. BLM Alaska sent in a second call for nominations. Should go out in September; new members identified in December.

Until BLM Alaska gets the new nominations through, the Alaska RAC will not have a quorum.

RAC Chair Martin made an addition to agenda, Brennan will bring up resolution tomorrow.

RAC Member Jorgensen made a motion to approve agenda with edits, **RAC Member Longan** seconded. Motion passed.

RAC Member Simon moved to approve the minutes, **RAC Member Foo** seconded

RAC Member Morrison — Correction to the minutes, page three, **RAC Member Morrison** was not surprised. Change surprise to concerned.

RAC Member Simon — Correction to the minutes, first page, members of the public, Joy Huntington, not Jay.

RAC Member Longan — For clarification, Faith Martineau is currently approved by DOI to represent Category 1, Energy & Minerals. Member Longan is approved to serve Category 3, State Energy Representative, term ending January 2019. Present and future nomination cycles may be utilized to change or update which categories are served, and by whom.

RAC Member Cain — Correction to the minutes, page 6, change confluence to influence

Minutes approved with edits.

Murphy — Karen's last day as acting State Director is Aug. 31. Not sure when her replacement will be announced.

RAC member reports:

RAC Member Little — Some concerns about [National Environmental Policy Act] streamlining. I have concerns about why we're doing this. NEPA is the Magna Carta of environmental law. Existing NEPA regulations are long-standing, a lot of case law, it is especially important for environmental justice. Have we really looked at what causes the long NEPA / EIS timelines? Looking at the streamlined agency administrative actions, they seem to eliminate or restrict public participation and real causes of delays haven't been identified, such as personnel shortages, or lack of action by approvers in Washington DC. The streamlining policy looks to provide a pathway to approval, rather than address the problems currently causing delays. CEQ regs already require timely and efficient execution. Speeding it up and cutting the public out of the process is not the answer.

RAC Member Jorgensen — Mining subcommittee hasn't met because the summer is tough to meet. Would like to get with Erika about withdrawals being lifted; still need information about the Brown Book.

RAC Member Foo — Miners are concerned about the integrity of the bond pool and increased cost. ACECs continue to be a concern for miners. We're encouraged by the streamlined NEPA process. I don't think it's coming to decisions faster, but more efficiently. For projects to take six years to come to a decision is ridiculous. We're very encouraged about efforts to address efficiency and reduce redundancies.

RAC Member Cain — Contaminated ANCSA lands is a significant issue. A lot of progress is being made, but there's a long way to go. Conveyances are still an issue. The remaining selections continue to be a challenge. Part of it is disagreements between state and Native entities regarding boundaries. The issue has been on hold a long time, but it will have to be addressed. Trespass and 17b easements are still issues.

RAC Member Hart — A lot going on in recreation in the state, will overlap with secretarial orders. Good news is we have Alaska fellows studying rec impacts to the state, including trails and salmon. Summit of the Outdoors in Valdez is happening in September. Topics will include recreation-related service providers. Candidates, as well as current cabinet members, will attend. We're tracking the heliskiing lawsuit.

RAC Member Longan — Glad the RAC is still meeting. I believe this body can provide input for RMPs, especially BSWI and Central Yukon since they are currently under development. The placer mining subcommittee has been very effective in the past — the IM on upland mine reclamation is a big success, where the State, BLM, mining community, and NGOs worked together to draft the IM, problem-solve recurring issues, and issue guidelines for more consistent oversight. The NEPA streamlining is important for all of us. The RAC should consider ways to inform BLM on how effective streamlining should look? The RAC is a public forum; I suggest

we use this forum to inform the public and constituents we represent. The Six-year or longer NEPA reviews we have seen in Alaska, reportedly, has been a burden on the stakeholders and affected communities. Shorter NEPA timelines could help address, more quickly, the issues that are informed through the NEPA and/or FLMPA process, such as land conveyances, land classifications, and analyses to allow responsible development.

RAC Member Simon — Per environmentalists, the Hog River Gold Mine was polluting the river with muddy water. I visited, along with several chiefs, and drank water from the supposed muddy water. The mine is important to the local population for work. There's a big push on the [] river to open it for mining. I'm a strong supporter for the guide community who want more access to BLM-managed lands.

RAC Member Krause — We're engaged in a lot of the efforts BLM is involved in. I was surprised about the ASLM's comments regarding the [NPR-A Integrated Activity Plan]. We believe in the IAP, it struck a good balance between development, conservation, and subsistence. Our belief is development can move forward, but protections should also be kept in place. With climate change, there are variables that should be considered in any future development.

Regarding the seismic application, what is happening? There's inconsistent messaging. We're curious if there will be a comment period. Also, the plan that was deemed incomplete is the one posted online; and on the website it identifies a scoping period, but will there be a comment period?

RAC Chair Martin — People driving in either go through Tok and Fairbanks, or down to Valdez. Tok roads are in poor condition.

RAC Member Barr — I will have to leave, but will be calling in later.

Subcommittee reports

ANCSA subcommittee, RAC Member Cain — Did not meet. RAC Member Cain provided a brief update on ANCSA subcommittee-related matters and discussed whether they had an updated list for who was on the subcommittee.

Placer subcommittee, RAC Member Jorgensen — Did not meet. Things seem to be going very well between mining and BLM. Will meet by conference call and see how the season went and see how we can help the BLM.

RAC Member Little asked about the status of the water column rehabilitation policy development.

RAC Member Jorgensen said he don't know that's been finalized. [clarified Suzanne was referring to Best Management Practices]

RAC Member Longan suggested the Placer sub-committee evaluate which mining topics could be addressed next - - citing the successful development of the Upland Mining IM (IM-AK-2017-

011). Which issues are persisting in the Fortymile District that might benefit from sub-committee action?

Recreation subcommittee, RAC Member Hart — Did not meet. Have been talking to Nolan, especially about bulleted objectives. Interested in the heliskiing issue.

ACEC subcommittee, RAC Member Foo — We've had some initial conversations; thanks Serena and Lesli for facilitating. I see the ACEC conversation being a part of a bigger discussion. I know from the mineral side, there is an interest in streamlining the planning process and including the ACECs in that streamlining process. Part of the problem is the name – how do you define a concern?

RAC Member Krause — I want to thank **RAC Member Foo**; I think we've worked to clarify language and nuance.

RAC Member Foo — It's good common feedback

RAC Member Simon — From the Native side, there is concern if the ACECs will inhibit access to subsurface, recreation, and hunting.

RAC Member Foo — It is very much an access issue.

Trapper Cabin subcommittee, RAC Member Morrison — We've shared all the information we have on the cabins, we met this morning as a group. Got things going for recommendations; we're going to meet again after the RAC. We have non-RAC members who have been very helpful, as have the BLM staff. We may have a draft proposal for the next full RAC.

Recess until 10:30.

NEPA Streamlining, Murphy — Previewed the coming briefings. He explained other processes, such as *Federal Register* notice reviews, are also being streamlined.

NEPA streamlining, Sweet [presentation on file]

RAC Member Little — We are learning how ACECs are established. It would be helpful if BLM would give the RAC a briefing about how the RMP process works and where can we go to find more information?

Sweet — Additional information on the updated guidance can be found at <https://www.doi.gov/nepa>

RAC Member Little asked how government-to-government (G2G) and cooperating agency consultations are fitting into the administration's streamlining policies?

Sweet said Streamlining doesn't affect how we work G2G and cooperating agencies. It will affect timing.

RAC Member Little stated some plans comment periods will fall over the holiday season and expressed concern that a 90-day comment period is not enough time.

RAC Member Jorgensen said there's a holiday every month and was in agreement with the streamlining.

RAC Member Jorgensen asked if the policy falls on all agencies.

Sweet said it affects all Department of the Interior agencies; it will not affect the Department of Defense, for instance.

RAC Member Krause asked if there was a time requirement prior to a Notice of Intent which **Sweet** said there was none.

RAC Member Foo said he was encouraged by streamlining and wanted to know if the Army Corps of Engineers was looking into streamlining?

A: **Sweet** said there was discussion about where the Corps would be housed under the administration's proposed agency reorganization, but the process is still undecided.

Public comment:

Sarah Taylor, Sen Sullivan's office, read a written statement by **Zack Knavel**, trapper, (on file).

Randy Zarnke, Alaska Trappers Association president — The process of the last 30 years hasn't worked. Since the last meeting, the issue hasn't been rectified. We're happy the subcommittee has been stood up, and we're really happy we're trying to solve this problem so we can get trappers back out on the land, in cabins that meet their needs, and in a way that protects the land.

RAC Chair Martin asked Zarnke what his organization was doing and **Zarnke** replied that it was individual initiative.

RAC Member Morrison — I appreciate **Zarnke's** work. Thanks.

Nate Turner, trapper — We have a couple hundred miles of trap line. We freeze in every fall, come up in the spring. This is a really important issue. I've met with several friends, and they're all excited [about the subcommittee]. I'm happy for BLM's willingness to work on these concerns.

RAC Member Gary Morrison — Trapper Cabin Subcommittee will meet after the RAC.

Break, reconvene at 1:15.

NEPA workload and prioritization, Murphy and Sweet

Gave a run-through of projects BLM Alaska is working on.

Sweet reminded the RAC about the [planning webpage](#).

GMT2 supplemental EIS — Final EIS expected by the end of Sep.

RAC Member Little asked about the Regional Mitigation Strategy which **Sweet** said was revised and under internal review.

Willow development — A *Federal Register* notice was published for the Willow Master Development Plan Environmental Impact Statement. Comment period closes Sep. 6. We're working to do as much NEPA as we can now to reduce the amount of NEPA required for the individual projects. There are no proposals for roads, though there will likely be ice roads. This EIS will follow the 150-page requirement. **Sweet** gave the current [meeting schedule](#) for scoping.

Coastal Plain Leasing EIS — Currently working the draft EIS.

Ambler Road EIS — Scoping is complete, BLM is currently developing alternatives.

RAC Member Foo asked if there was a public access alternative, which **Sweet** said the applicant has not proposed public access as part of the project; therefore none of the alternatives include public access.

RAC Member Simon asked if Alakaket is a cooperating agency and **Sweet** confirmed they were

Donlin Gold Mine – The Department of the Interior signed a joint ROD with the Army Corps of Engineers.

RAC Member Little wanted to know if they adopted the north or south route and **Sweet** said the north route.

AKLNG and ASAP – BLM is a cooperating agency. ASAP is much further ahead in the process, with a joint ROD coming September or October.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is the lead for AKLNG.

RAC Member Simon asked about a status on Public Land Order (PLO) 5150 conveyances. **Reed** said the Central Yukon RMP is analyzing the lifting of PLO 5150. The planning process will make the recommendation; it will be completed by April 2019. The decision itself will fall on the Secretary [of Interior].

RAC Chair Martin asked if there was a requirement to coordinate with land owners because Ahtna hasn't been contacted by anyone and the routes will pass over 35-55 miles of Ahtna land.

Sweet said she would check with the Corps.

Squirrel River Special Recreation Management Area — The draft is anticipated for this fall.

Haines Planning Area — BLM is currently working the alternatives. It should be out in the next couple months; it does fall under the one-year schedule.

CYRMP — The CYRMP does fall under the one-year schedule, starting April 27, 2018.

RAC Member Simon said the people along the Tatonduk/Koyukuk River in the Central Yukon RMP area want to be able to placer mine. They will likely bring this up. Placer, sluice box, and trapping are all means of income.

Beyersdorf said he will check to see if the issue has been brought up and the project manager has been in contact with tribes in the area.

Bering Sea Western Interior (BSWI) RMP — The draft RMP is being prepared, the Notice of Availability will be in early 2019.

RAC Member Little asked if G2G was going to take place and **Beyersdorf** said the obligation would be fulfilled, but not sure if location visits would take place.

Murphy said we're meeting the timelines by moving people and resources to meet the need. We have a lot of decisions coming up this fall.

RAC Chair Martin asked about funding and **Sweet** said there has been supplemental funding for the EISs and RMPs.

RAC Member Little questioned BLM being able to adequately consult with Tribes at such speed. **Murphy** said it will take a lot of worrying along the way. They will be challenged to write succinctly and without redundancies. Documents will be referenced, not included in the NEPA documents. Will it be easy? No. But we'll get it done.

RAC Member Jorgensen said there is a long list to accomplish this year and wanted to know if the list would be this long again next year. **Murphy** expects it will look like this through the end of this administration.

RAC Member Little asked about funding for BLM's involvement in ANWR leasing and **Murphy** said they would receive roughly \$800,000 which covers the contracting cost and some labor.

RAC Member Longan — BLM is supported by multiple agencies and multi-jurisdictional science programs. For example, NSSI is supporting BLM coordinating science efforts to help fill data gaps, and offering scientific peer reviews as it relates to the development of the Coastal Plain Leasing EIS and seismic EA.

RAC Member Little asked why the NPR-A wasn't on the presented list of BLM priority projects, but she knew there were things going on. **Murphy** said there is no new information and we haven't done anything to modify the IAP yet. It'll be there.

RAC Member Simon — I like your comment, this is Alaska, we'll get it done. Thinking of the 800-mile pipeline, there was a lot to get done.

RAC Member Jorgensen expressed concerned that smaller issues might get lost under the large projects.

RAC Chair Martin said the RAC will need numbers from **Reed** for the resolution.

RAC Member Jorgensen asked for a PLO update.

Reed — Two packages went to the Washington Office [regarding lifting PLOs] — 200,000 acres in Goodnews Bay; 1.2 million acres in the Fortymile Package. The ASLM is aware. BLM Alaska is also working the Seward Peninsula area, which is a state priority. Working an area north of Glennallen, and another in eastern Alaska. BLM Alaska is using contractors, but it's a steep learning curve. Also using other BLM offices' staff.

RAC Member Jorgensen asked about the routing of these actions and **Reed** informed him that it was a very long list. The ASLM is asking for a review of that chain and asking to remove people who don't need to be included.

RAC Member Jorgensen wanted to know if most groups were favorable of this action and **Reed** said her staff was working from plans where the public process is complete.

Resolution 18-01 — **RAC Member Little** made a motion to approve; seconded by **RAC Member Hart**.

RAC members then discussed language. Recommended the 'acres' language reflect the workload better. **Reed** offered to work with RAC Members Martin and Cain on the language during recess.

Recess at 2:13.

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Council members not present: Faith Martineau, John Hopson Jr., Mark Billingsley, Theresa Imm

BLM representatives present: Ted Murphy (Designated Federal Official), Nolan Heath, Shelly Jones, Tom Heinlein, Geoff Beyersdorf, Kent Slaughter, Serena Sweet, Mike McCrum, Lesli Ellis-Wouters, Jim Hart

Representative of other agencies:

Members of the public present (or on conference line): Sarah Taylor (Sen. Sullivan's office via conference line), Jamie Marunde, Leanna Heffner (Northwest Boreal Landscape Conservation Cooperative)

Proceedings

Quorum reached.

RAC Chair Martin called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Discussed edits to a resolution to request additional funding to complete the land conveyance actions by BLM; **RAC Chair Martin** and **RAC Member Little** will work on the cover letter.

Resolution passed as edited.

Red Devil update, Mike McCrum [presentation on file]

RAC Member Little asked about the permitting for this mine when it was opened.

McCrum said they stopped mining in 1971. The Clean Water Act was passed shortly before that, Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act was passed 9 years after.

RAC Member Foo said he believes the Kuskokwim region is a mercury district.

McCrum said there is mercury mineralization throughout the region.

RAC Member Jorgensen asked [referencing installation of a weir in Red Devil Creek to stop tailings from migrating] if there is a secondary goal to stop fish from swimming up the creek.

McCrum said it wasn't a goal, but it is what happened. When fisheries biologists went in, they found salmon fry. We're working with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game; the weir is temporary.

RAC Member Little asked if the hazardous waste facility in Oregon where mercury contaminated material is sent, stores or treats the waste? Has there been discussion of forming a hazardous waste facility in Alaska?

McCrum said the facility stores the tailings. There has been discussion about a hazardous waste facility in Alaska, but the permitting for a hazardous waste site is extremely complex.

RAC Member Cain asked if we use community input.

McCrum said we are required to get community comments after we have a proposed plan. However, the outreach up to this point was purely informational to give the communities time to consider the details before a proposed plan.

RAC Member Hart asked if outreach starts in spring, what is the timeline for the action to be completed?

McCrum said there were multiple agencies involved, both state and federal, and it's signed at the Secretary's level. We're hoping to get a Record of Decision within a year.

RAC Member Little asked if in Mr. McCrum's experience compressing outreach to a 6-month period would allow for an adequate job.

McCrum said if our team was able to move forward decisively, we could have done a good job. But when you're dealing with multiple agencies, it's difficult. It's also a complicated issue.

RAC Member Foo said longer timelines don't do much good either. He also wanted to know where the Kuskokwim Corp. (TKC) stood.

McCrum agreed that long timelines aren't ideal, but given the number of agencies involved, it can't always be helped. This township is a mandatory selection for the village. That complicates this situation. This has been discussed with TKC, their position is the removal and offsite disposal of the tailings is the only alternative they support.

RAC Member Cain wanted to know if there other "Red Devils" in the pipeline.

McCrum said there are other mine sites being tracked, but this is the largest, most complicated site.

RAC Member Hart commented that the mine was in operation 30 years, and 18 years of no action was astonishing and asked if there was any way to remediate more quickly?

McCrum clarified that BLM didn't get management of the site until 1988, that's when we took the first samples. It's also very hard to move quickly with so many people involved; we need to seek concurrence. CERCLA is a very deliberative process

RAC Member Hart asked if there were dedicated staff within the other agencies just for Red Devil.

McCrum said there are staff who've worked on Red Devil for years, but they have other projects and sites they're working additional to Red Devil.

RAC Member Krause asked about the mine owners.

McCrum said this mine was owned by individuals. The miners have passed away, and further, there were no environmental regulations when they were mining. There is no way to conduct cost recovery for this mine.

End of Red Devil discussion.

RAC Member Krause asked to include a discussion on the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska at 10 a.m.

RAC Members approved the addition to the agenda.

NEPA Process, Serena Sweet [presentation on file]

Sweet emphasized that nothing about NEPA streamlining changed any of the requirements for consultation.

RAC Member Little asked for details on the agency's plans to streamline NEPA for the key Alaska projects currently underway.

Sweet said the plans were still being worked out. With the new requirements, we're trying to figure out how this will fit into our schedules.

RAC Member Little expressed disbelief that there were no plans if a ROD has been announced to be achieved by April.

Sweet said the BLM was still working internally to develop a process.

Murphy clarified that we will have a collaborative process. There won't be any shortcuts, but things will be moving rather quickly.

RAC Member Foo stated that although it's a challenging objective, but he believed the BLM is up to the task. The key is to keep public informed of the process. It's no longer acceptable for people to say "we're not available this year" – the public bears some responsibility.

Murphy said part of the streamlining is making the documents shorter and more readable, making it easier for people to digest it and comment; there is a time efficiency involved in the process as well.

RAC Member Hart stated that compressing timelines will stress already overstressed resources. She wanted to know if there will be more money to make sure BLM can proceed with thorough and well-executed processes?

Sweet said additional funding for staff and contracts has been requested. Staff from other agencies and states have assisted as well. We don't have the plans in place, but we are building up those resources.

RAC Member Hart wanted to know how the board should assist, should they lobby for more money?

Murphy stated that the Bureau could not ask the RAC to do that. However, he stated there was a commitment from the Assistant Secretary of Land and Minerals Management Joe Balash to help secure the funds needed.

RAC Member Krause said there were steps the administration can take, such as assigning a state director. How does that fit in to streamlining?

RAC Member Little mentioned that yesterday she asked why the NPR-A's Integrated Activity Plan wasn't on the key project list presented and [Murphy] said there was nothing to report. Little said that today in the paper the ASLM has already made decisions "Trump Officials Working To Open NPRA to More Oil Drilling"; this shows the process is cooked. Apparently, decisions are being made with little to no public input. The legal requirements for consultation will be swept under the rug. The power and decision-making is being kept at the top and high-level politicals are pre-cooking development with industry with lip-service and limitations being given to public involvement and public discourse. Seems there is no concern from those making decisions about the people who have to live with results of the decisions.

RAC Member Martin asked to hear thoughts from the representative of Sen. Sullivan's office.

Sara Taylor said she would include the funding comment in my notes, and I'll forward them to the Senator. She agreed that taken the process away from the public is troubling. Especially when you see the amount of activity across the state.

RAC Member Foo said he doesn't believe people don't have time to formulate a thought on a process 20 years in the making. This isn't happening 'suddenly.'

RAC Member Hart said something is broken in the communication chain when Murphy said yesterday he didn't know, then to see something about it in the paper? This is not confidence building.

Ellis-Wouters said they're not asking us to cut out processes, they're asking us to be more efficient in our processes. It's a goal, and there are ways to ask for more time if it is warranted.

RAC Member Krause [citing personnel and leadership shortfalls] Our focus is misplaced, especially since the government isn't fully in place. We have a bureaucratic log jam. We want things to go faster, but everyone is short staffed. The execution is backwards.

RAC Member Little wanted to know how the RAC could provide input if the BLM hasn't given much information other than a vague calendar. There are regulatory and statutory requirements and timelines – even if you move quickly, you can't make it happen. If you release a DRAFT RMP in mid-October and have a 90-day comment period that closes mid-January, then you'd have to revise the plan and release the Final EIS and Proposed Plan for which there is a 60 Governor's protest period. Can you squish that into 30 days? I don't think your schedule will work.

RAC Member Jorgensen said The Eastern Interior plan took a decade – that is just as painful as a compressed schedule. People who commented forgot they commented. BLM had to search records to see who could protest. BLM will do their best.

Murphy said our takeaways are the process will have to be open; we won't cut corners, but the people will have to be staged and ready.

RAC Member Krause wanted to know how the agency was going to head off shortcuts? We have high-level officials saying one thing, and regional directors and higher-ups saying another.

RAC Member Simon stated the state is in the greatest financial trouble we've been in for a long time and we rely on development. Oil taxes build our schools and roads and provide jobs. We need it, but keep it balanced.

Murphy said there is flexibility, but we need to stay on the path until we need the flexibility.

Sweet said we're going to plan to be successful; we'll only ask for the flexibility when needed.

RAC Member Longan said compressing BLM's review times would still require sufficient consultation and feedback from the public and cooperating agencies. In relation to the Governor's 60-day consistency review, potentially being shortened to 30 days, this will require official feedback from the Governor's Office and the State. As a reminder, the State of Alaska, often through DNR's Office of Project Management & Permitting (OPMP), serves as a Cooperating Agency throughout the NEPA and FLPMA reviews. This participation begins at scoping and remains throughout the entire review process. Sometimes, this timeline is 5 years or longer - - - the NPR-A reviews spanned almost 20 years. Therefore, the issues that would need to be addressed are often well known.

RAC Member Cain said he thought the RAC members have done a great job representing their individual groups. He wanted to repeat other RAC members' comments about striking a balance.

End of NEPA process discussion.

Anchorage District Office update, Tom Heinlein [handout on file]

Heinlein gave an overview of each of the field offices and what they're doing. Explained the extent of the district, pointing to the handouts.

RAC Member Little asked if the District had any unfilled positions?

Heinlein said he had a couple, but we are in pretty good shape. Glennallen is working on the Haines amendment to the Ring of Fire Resource Management Plan, finalizing the alternatives. Anchorage District is focusing on specific projects. The District is able to accomplish other priority work, such as subsistence.

RAC Member Hart asked if the Trans-Alaska Trail was on the District's project list.

Heinlein said it was, but would have to get more specific information.

RAC Member Jorgensen said there are very few field offices in the actual field, Glennallen being the exception and wanted to know if there were any plans to close Glennallen? I think there should be more field locations instead of everything concentrating to an ivory tower in Anchorage.

Heinlein said we're not closing Glennallen, but we are looking at gaining efficiencies in partnership with other agencies, such as shared warehouses and living quarters and facilities.

RAC Chair Martin expressed support for hiring someone with a connection to the area. Marnie [Graham, new GFO Manager] is great.

Anchorage Field Office (AFO):

Most AFO people live and work in Anchorage, but we do have two people in Nome.

- We've been focused on Donlin up until this week with the signing of the Joint ROD.
- The Bering Strait Western Interior (BSWI) RMP is our focus now. Draft release is expected in October.
- Also working the Squirrel River plan with one focus being big game transporters and guides.
- Red Devil Mine is also an AFO project.

RAC Member Hart asked about providing feedback on Heliskiing and wanted to know if heli-biking was being considered.

Heinlein said heli-biking is on our radar. Recreation is a RAC subcommittee.

RAC Member Simon wanted to know if BLM was monitoring ticks on BLM-managed public lands.

Heinlein said they had not.

RAC Member Little wanted more details on the BSWI RMP release.

Heinlein said preliminary outreach with our partners would be initiated, then we will work with the required outreach.

Campbell Creek Science Center

Nancy Patterson is the manager (only the second manager for the center).

Looking at business planning and programming and ways to work with other districts, especially in working with youth and expanding public understanding regarding items like placer mining.

End of Anchorage District Office discussion.

Fairbanks District Office (FDO), Geoff Beyersdorf [handout on file]

Eastern interior Field Office

Facts:

- 92 placer mining compliance inspections this year;
- Working on lifting (Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act 17 d-1) withdrawals
- Seeing an increase for commercial recreation opportunities.

FDO staff has extensive training regarding streams and reclamation.

- Most projects this summer have been on the Fortymile River.
- This year is the 50th anniversary of Wild and Scenic River Act; FDO had an Artist in Residence on the Fortymile Wild and Scenic River

There was a state fuels (trees/timber) review; BLM will work in cooperation with state, federal, and Tribes. Looking at conducting fuels reduction in the wildland/urban interface.

RAC Member Little stated if Fairbanks has 13 of 66 positions vacant, it would be hard to streamline if you don't have people to do the work.

Beyersdorf said there was a hiring freeze in place because of budget concerns. That is being relaxed and we are actively working on that.

RAC Member Jorgensen said his interface with BLM activities had a rough winter. We've been working through those issues; BLM staff has been helpful. BLM produced a mining video and received low participation from the miners because of a lack of trust that BLM would do the right thing with the footage they shot. I believe that video has potential to solve a lot of the mistrust. It could act as a bridge with some of the miners.

RAC Member Simon stated he hoped BLM will give guide concessions soon. To [RAC Member Jorgensen's] point, there is a mistrust; people don't want to deal with the BLM. A friend had a \$500 fine levied for cutting down seven trees.

Jones stated she was happy to hear Erika Reed was going up to the Ft. Knox Gold Mine ceremony; I was proud of BLM's role in making that possible. The Eastern Interior Field Office was key in making that happen.

Beyersdorf then explained the background of the lifting of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) withdrawal that allowed a state selection to fall into place, and made possible the subsequent conveyance to the state. Once it was state land, the state permitted the mine to expand.

RAC Member Jorgensen said a lot of the staff is new, compared to the people who've been here for years. There have been a lot of BLM actions over the years causing mistrust you may not be aware of. It is getting better, but there is a history.

Central Yukon

Current work priorities:

- Central Yukon Resource Management Plan
- Ambler EIS. BLM is lead for the Ambler right-of-way.
- Alaska Liquefied Natural Gas pipeline, Alaska Stand Alone Pipeline — BLM is a cooperating agency in both.
- 81 compliance inspections
- 5 operators regarding reclamation
- 6 modifications permits
- Mineral material sales
- Dall sheep population surveys
- Tracking caribou
- Invasive plants, especially along the Dalton Hwy.

Beyersdorf addressed a concern expressed by RAC members who asked why abandoned cabins are a problem. FDO is busy – additional to the abandoned cabins, we have 80 abandoned mines. At one abandoned cabin we pulled out drums of fuel. Abandoned structures are seldom empty; not easy to deal with.

RAC Member Cain asked about the trapper cabin issue, we had people lease our lands and, when we get it back, we have contamination we need to clean up. Also, if land is conveyed to us with contamination, the state can come after us.

Murphy said the BLM is not supposed to convey contaminated lands, but we don't always know.

Jones mentioned an amnesty day for miners to bring hazmat out for collection by federal agencies. She said we should look into doing those again.

Beyersdorf continued his update on the Fairbanks District regarding forming partnerships with agencies for at-risk youth.

In regard to current planning efforts, the FDO spent two months setting up developing Memorandum of Understanding with villages and Government to Government consultation.

RAC Member Little commented that the FDO has done an excellent job with outreach. The Anchorage Office should emulate efforts made by CYFO and EIFO.

RAC Member Morrison added about complimenting FDO staff on the public-use facilities along the Haul Road. The facility at the Yukon River Crossing, the person managing the facility knew within 24 hours what the road conditions further down the road would be.

RAC Member Simon said Doyon has holdings in Cold Foot, and FDO staff do an excellent job with outreach.

End of Fairbanks District Office discussion.

Lunch recess at 12 p.m. Reconvened at 1:30 p.m.

Arctic District Update, Shelly Jones, [spreadsheet on file]

Gave an overview of the Coastal Plain seismic permit EA

RAC Member Krause asked if there would be a comment period?

Murphy replied there will be a review period.

RAC Member Hart asked about imagery of lines in the tundra from previous seismic operations. Are there plans to share the seismic info to minimize impact?

Jones answered that methods and vehicles are lower ground pressure than previous generations; we expect fewer long-term impacts than we saw from the studies in the 1980s.

RAC Member Foo asked if the seismic would take place in the Winter and **Jones** replied that it was planned for January.

Jones gave a GMT 1 overview and project update.

Washington Office's priorities for the Arctic District are GMT2, Coastal Plain, Willow, and the NPR-A Integrated Activity Plan (IAP). The NPR-A IAP rewrite has been tabled because of workload.

Update on NPR-A activity:

- Covered ConocoPhillips' activities; plugging an exploratory well and GMT construction.
- Legacy well update.
- North Slope community winter access trail ROW

- Arctic Slope Telephone Association Cooperative fiber optic ROW; route follows the Walakpa Gas Field Pipeline to its terminus, then parallels winter travel corridor to Ataqusak.
- Working with NSSI to figure out how to minimize impacts in the Arctic from aviation.

RAC Member Simon asked about dirigibles coming to Alaska and **Jones** replied that she heard of the possibility, but hasn't been approached.

RAC Chair Martin wanted to know about community involvement.

Jones replied that there have been meetings with the villages about Coastal Plain seismic and leasing and **Murphy** added that cooperating agency status has been afforded to Arctic Village, Venetai, Nuiqsuit and Kaktovik.

RAC Member Longan said the Arctic District has contributed to NSSI's efforts regarding the aircraft disturbance effort [through the Aircraft Disturbance Working Group]. The next NSSI Science Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) meeting anticipated to be Oct 23-24 in Anchorage will provide an update to efforts of the Aircraft Disturbance Working Group and several other North Slope priority projects. RAC members are welcome to attend.

End of Arctic District Office update discussion.

AFS update, Kent Slaughter [presentation on file]

Alaska had a slow fire season this year. Had a spike of lightning-caused fires in June. Most were surface fires.

AFS has started exporting crews. Held back a load and a half of smoke jumpers. AFS has eight type 2 EFF crews; had 23 in 2017. Five of those crews are in Lower 48.

Put out a contract for a Dehaviland Dash 8. Better range and speed than CASA 212 (a turboprop powered short take-off and landing medium cargo aircraft).

End of AFS update

RAC Member Hart asked if the RAC could get an update on how the BLM is dealing with recreation in light of the Secretarial Order on recreation.

Heath replied there has been a data call from the BLM Washington Office. From there, they will figure out a national strategy. Tom Bikauskas is the POC at BLM Alaska

RAC Roundtable

Ellis-Wouters reminded the RAC about nominations.

RAC Members' terms expiring in October — Foo, Simon, Hopson, Billingsley, Morrison, and Cain

January — Jorgensen, Imm, and Little

Ellis-Wouters — I have re-nominations for everyone except Billingsley (not seeking nomination) and Simon. The RAC needs representation in other categories, especially commercial recreation. Archaeological is another category, natural resources academia, and public at large. At least one person has to be an elected official (quoting FLPMA), and according to the SOP, it can be a tribal elected official.

RAC Member Little reiterated her concerns on the department is too focused on doing things quickly and lacks focus to do things right. **Ellis-Wouters** replied that cutting corners is the wrong impression. The outreach will happen, and things will be done correctly.

RAC Member Cain stated that “be a good neighbor” and “build trust” priority could be achieved through the trapper cabin and contaminated lands issues.

RAC Member Longan said when the subcommittees meet, they are typically aware of community concerns and can invite stakeholders and members of the public to contribute to and help address sub-committee efforts. I encourage the formal RAC and subcommittees to consistently meet and help advise BLM on the important range of topics under consideration.

RAC Chair Martin said the BLM staff members assigned to subcommittees need to be committed to communicate with the subcommittee members. The ANCSA subcommittee was a slow start. The subcommittees do help with community engagement. I would also like to see an ACEC workshop.

RAC Member Foo said it is a question of timing. We were looking at Sep. or Oct. Serena is working nationally on the planning process, and ACECs are part of that. We’re hoping for October/November timeframe.

RAC Member Longan reiterated the State of Alaska’s interest in seeing improved, more transparent development of ACEC’s and clarification of the ACEC selection criteria. This remains important to the State, especially as the Central Yukon and BSWI RMPs advance.

RAC Member Hart asked for the minutes in a more timely fashion. **RAC Member Morrison** added he would like more review time. **RAC Chair Martin** and **Ellis-Wouters** agreed to provide minutes earlier.

Proposed date and location for the next RAC meeting.

RAC Member Morrison said it will be important for our Trapper Cabin Subcommittee to meet, most live around Fairbanks.

Feb 6-7, Fairbanks, next meeting. Theme: Updates on everything. Send agenda items to **RAC Chair Martin** and **Ellis-Wouters**.

RAC Member Little suggested to ask the Alaska State Governor to address the RAC.

RAC Chair Martin agreed, **RAC Member Longan** said the state could help with the invitation.

RAC Member Simon asked for the Secretary to come out [acknowledged the Assistant Secretary for Lands and Minerals Management visited the day before].

Public comment: None.

Motion to adjourn, **RAC Member Cain**, second, **RAC Member Foo**.

Adjourned 3:30 p.m.

DRAFT