



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Alaska State Office  
222 West Seventh Avenue, #13  
Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7599  
<http://www.ak.blm.gov>



1610 (040)

JUN -9 2006

Dear Reader:

Enclosed for your review is the Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (Proposed RMP/Final EIS) for the lands administered in the Ring of Fire by the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) Anchorage Field Office (AFO). The Proposed RMP/Final EIS is a refinement of the Preferred Alternative (Alternative D) presented in the Draft RMP/EIS released in September 2005.

The Draft RMP/EIS was available for a 90-day public comment period ending on December 29, 2005. As a result of a specific mapping error, the comment period was extended for 30 additional days and officially ended on January 30, 2006. Approximately 783 comments were received. Chapter 6 of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS contains an analysis of, and BLM responses to, the comments received on the Draft RMP/EIS. When reviewing changes between the Draft RMP/EIS and the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, it is most effective to have both documents available for comparison purposes. The BLM's responses to public comments reference page numbers in both the Draft RMP/EIS and the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

As a result of public comment and internal review, Alternative D has been modified and is now considered the Proposed Action. Both the Proposed RMP/Final EIS and the Draft RMP/EIS are available from the AFO. The Proposed RMP/Final EIS is subject to a 30-day protest period. **The protest period ends 30 days after the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Notice of Availability is published in the Federal Register.**

The Proposed RMP/Final EIS contains land use planning decisions which go into effect at the time the Record of Decision (ROD) is signed. These decisions require no additional planning or National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) analysis and are subject to public protest. The Proposed RMP/Final EIS also contains implementation decisions which may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) following the publication of the ROD and Approved Plan, which is anticipated for September 2006. The ROD will include information on the appeal process.

A letter of protest must be filed in accordance with the planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610.5-2(a) (1). Any person who participated in the Ring of Fire RMP planning process and has an interest which is or may be adversely affected may protest this proposed land use plan and/or decisions contained within it (see 43 CFR 1610.5-2) during the 30-day review and protest period. The protest period begins when the EPA publishes its Notice of Availability of the final environmental impact statement in the *Federal Register*. Only those persons or organizations who participated in the planning process leading to this Proposed RMP may protest. A

protesting party may raise only those issues submitted for the record during the planning process leading up to publication of this Proposed RMP. New issues may not be introduced into the record at the protest stage.

To be considered complete, your protest must contain, at a minimum, the following information:

1. The name, mailing address, telephone number, and interest of the person filing the protest.
2. A statement of the issue or issues being protested.
3. A statement of the part or parts of the Proposed RMP being protested. To the extent possible, this should be done by reference to specific pages, paragraphs, sections, tables, maps, etc., included in the document.
4. A copy of all documents addressing the issue or issues that you submitted during the planning process, or a reference to the date the issue or issues were discussed by you for the record.
5. A concise statement explaining why the Alaska BLM State Director's proposed decision is believed to be incorrect. This is a critical part of your protest. Take care to document all relevant facts. As much as possible, reference or cite documents. A protest that merely expresses disagreement with the Alaska BLM State Director's proposed decision, without any data, will not provide us with the benefit of your information and insight. In this case, the Director's review will be based on the existing analysis and supporting data.

To be considered "timely," your protest, along with all attachments, must be postmarked no later than the last day of the protest period. There is no provision for an extension of time. Although not a requirement, we suggest that you send your protest by certified mail, return receipt requested. Press releases on the actual date ending the protest period will be sent to local and regional media contacts and a newsletter will be sent to all contacts on the Ring of Fire RMP mailing list.

Protests must be in writing. Electronic mail and faxed protests will not be accepted as valid protests unless the protesting party also provides the original letter by either regular or overnight mail postmarked by the close of the protest period. Under these conditions, the BLM will consider the email or faxed protest an advance copy and it will receive full consideration. If you wish to provide the BLM with such advance notification, please direct faxed protests to the attention of the BLM protest coordinator at 202-452-5112, and emails to Brenda Hudgens-Williams@blm.gov.

Regular Mail

Director (210)  
 USDI Bureau of Land Management  
 Attn: Brenda Williams  
 P.O. Box 66538  
 Washington, D.C. 20035

Overnight Mail

Director (210)  
 USDI Bureau of Land Management  
 Attn: Brenda Williams  
 1620 L Street N.W., Suite 1075  
 Washington, D.C. 20036

At the end of the 30-day protest period and after the Governor's 60-day consistency review, the ROD and the Approved Resource Management Plan (RMP/ROD) will be prepared. Approval will be withheld on any portion of the Proposed RMP under protest until final action has been completed on such protest. The RMP/ROD will include a description of the appeal process for implementation decisions that can be appealed to IBLA.

**Freedom of Information Act Considerations/Confidentiality**

All communications submitted, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the AFO in Anchorage, Alaska, during regular business hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays. Communications, including names and addresses of respondents, will be retained on file in the same office as part of the public record for this planning effort. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or address from public inspection or from disclosure under the "Freedom of Information Act," you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

I thank the individuals and organizations who participated in this planning process. Your interest is appreciated. I hope your involvement will continue as we move forward to implement and monitor the plan and manage the public lands and resources administered by the AFO.

Sincerely,

**AGTING**



Julia Dougan  
State Director

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