



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Alaska State Office
222 West Seventh Avenue, #13
Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7504
<http://www.blm.gov/ak>

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May 31, 2011

Instruction Memorandum No. IM-AK-2011-022
Expires: 09/30/2013

To: District Managers, Field Office Managers, and Deputy State Directors

From: State Director

Subject: 43 CFR 3809 National Environmental Policy Act Evaluation for BLM-Alaska

Program Area: Planning and Resources

Purpose: This Instruction Memorandum (IM) describes the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) evaluation process for authorizations under 43 CFR 3809 at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) District and Field Offices in Alaska. A subsequent written report will address the results of this evaluation process and provide guidance for compliance with NEPA and 43 CFR 3809.

Policy/Action: An internal 43 CFR 3809 NEPA evaluation will occur at each District and Field Office. See attachment "43 CFR 3809 NEPA Evaluation Process" for a description of the evaluation process.

The evaluation will determine needed adjustments, if any, in Alaska's offices to fulfill all NEPA requirements associated with 43 CFR 3809. The results from the evaluation will help determine training needs and the necessity of statewide policy or guidance to assist offices in complying with NEPA and 43 CFR 3809.

The Alaska State Office will lead a 43 CFR 3809 NEPA Evaluation Team. The Evaluation Team will review current NEPA documentation and procedures prepared by Field Offices related to 43 CFR 3809 authorizations. Doug Herzog and Rob Brumbaugh will lead the Evaluation Team. The team members include: Lenore Heppler, Beth Maclean, James Whitlock, Larry Jackson, Gary Foreman, Melanie Hunter, Cara Staab, Matthew Varner, Ingrid McSweeny, and Steve Lundeen.

The Evaluation Team will schedule a site visit at each office to conduct interviews regarding the office's NEPA process related to mining surface management and to review documents for surface management and mining decisions. Managers should inform the Evaluation Team leaders if there are specific documents that should be reviewed. The Evaluation Team will prepare a written report outlining the results of the evaluation, including findings and recommendations.

Timeframe: The 43 CFR 3809 NEPA evaluation will begin in early November 2010 and the written report will be available by February 2011.

Budget Impact: The budget impacts from this evaluation are unknown. It is possible that the findings of this evaluation could impact the budget.

Background: The need for this evaluation is identified in IM No. AK-2009-027 as Action Item A-2, "Complete an in-depth Mining (3809) Program NEPA Evaluation." Although the IM noted deficiencies in adherence to many NEPA-related program requirements, the reason and necessity for the 43 CFR 3809 NEPA evaluation is based on the heightened attention and increased public interest on mining surface management authorizations and the potential future land use plan recommendations to revoke ANCSA 17(d)(1) mineral withdrawals. Such an evaluation should identify ways to improve NEPA analysis associated with 43 CFR 3809 authorizations.

Manual/Handbook Sections Affected: None.

Coordination: The BLM Alaska State Office developed this IM and all Alaska District and Field Offices provided review.

Contact: For more information, contact Doug Herzog, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, at 907-271-3202 or Rob Brumbaugh, Geologist, at 907-271-4429.

Signed by:
Julia Dougan
Associate State Director

Authenticated by:
Anita R. Jette
Records Specialist

Attachment

[BLM Alaska 43 CFR 3809 NEPA Evaluation Process \(13 pp\)](#)