



Chapter V: Consultation and Coordination

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CHAPTER V: CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

A. Introduction

This chapter describes the public participation opportunities made available through the development of the East Alaska Proposed RMP/Final EIS, the formal consultation that has occurred to date, and collaborative efforts conducted with the State of Alaska and the Alaska Resource Advisory Council (RAC). It also lists agencies and organizations that received copies of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS for review, and lists preparers of the document. There have been and will continue to be many ways for the public to participate in the planning process for public lands under the jurisdiction of the Glennallen Field Office.

The East Alaska RMP/EIS was prepared by an interdisciplinary team of specialists from the Glennallen Field Office and the BLM Alaska State Office. The State of Alaska has participated in the development of the document. Technical review and support were provided by both the field office and State office staffs.

Members of the RMP team have consulted formally or informally with numerous agencies, groups, and individuals in the RMP development process. Consultation, coordination, and public involvement occurs as a result of scoping and alternative development meetings, meeting and briefing with the Federal, State, and Tribal government representatives and informational meetings with interested individuals and organizations.

B. Public Participation Opportunities

Several steps in the planning process require that the public be provided an opportunity to participate. Major public participation events are described below and include a number of opportunities that are not required in the planning process. Appendix F contains a list of specific events convened as the Proposed RMP/Final EIS was developed.

1. Scoping

Scoping for the East Alaska RMP/EIS was initiated with the publication of a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register on March 18, 2003. Identification of issues, concerns, and nominations for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and Wild and Scenic Rivers were requested during scoping. All scoping comments and input were collected through the meeting process and as well as via email and U.S. Mail. The scoping period ended on June 18, 2003.

Throughout the scoping period, a total of 30 public meetings were held, mostly within the Copper River Basin. The meetings were widespread and focused on scattered small communities and villages within the planning area. Meetings were also held at the larger towns and cities of Anchorage, Cordova, Fairbanks, and Valdez. At communities within the Copper River Basin, two meetings were held: the first to identify issues and concerns and the second to discuss how (or if) those issues and concerns would be addressed within the RMP. One hundred ninety-two people attended these scoping meetings. News releases to local media sources and flyers posted at key locations advertised the scoping meeting times and locations within each affected community.

2. Draft Alternative Development

Another round of public meetings was held from late April through early June 2004 to gather comments and input on the draft alternatives. No BLM preferred alternative was identified at that point. The public was asked which alternative they supported and if they had any changes to contribute to the formulation of a preferred alternative. One hundred eighty-five people attended the draft alternative meetings.

Over 500 packets of information were distributed to the public and organizations for review at these meetings and upon request. The packet included a summary of the East Alaska RMP and the planning process, maps of proposed designated areas, comparative alternative tables, a glossary, and a comment form. Comments were collected and compiled from electronic means, comment forms, and written responses.

Briefings were also held to present alternative packets to Ahtna Native Corporation, Tazlina Village Council, Chickaloon Village Council, Chitina Village Council, Eyak Village Council, the Mat-Su Borough, the Cordova City Planner, and the Copper Valley Development Association (Copper Valley does not have a borough). In addition, the Alaska RAC was presented with an alternative packet. They subsequently formed a sub-committee to make recommendations on the issue of OHV management.

3. Draft RMP/EIS public meetings and subsistence hearings

On April 29, 2005 a Notice of Availability for the East Alaska Draft RMP/EIS was published in the Federal Register by the Environmental Protection Agency (Federal Register 2005.) This began a 90 day comment period on the Draft. From May 16th through May 26th BLM held public meetings in Chistochina, Glennallen, Valdez, Cordova, Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Delta Junction with attendance of 134 stakeholders.

At each public meeting, seven stations were set up around the room, one for each of the seven issues. Stations consisted of a map related to the issue, an alternative summary table showing exactly what is being proposed for each alternative, and an informational sheet that explained the more complex ideas and relationships that affected each issue. Those in attendance could easily focus in on the issues that were most important to them and had all of the information needed to gain an understanding of what is being proposed. BLM staff were available to answer any questions. After this “open house,” a formal public hearing was held. The meeting format varied slightly based on the size of the group and their desire to ask questions or give spoken testimony.

The main purpose for the public hearings held at the end of the meeting was to gather testimony on the impacts to subsistence by alternatives presented in the Draft. Alternative B of the Draft RMP/EIS proposed the revocation of Public Land Order 5150 which makes up the transportation and utility corridor that houses the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System. This action, as identified by the ANICLA section 810 Analysis, would significantly restrict subsistence uses and therefore required that subsistence hearings be held in the area affected by the proposed action.

Seven subsistence hearings were held and spoken testimony heard from village elders, Ahtna Inc., rural Alaskan residents, and the youth of the community as to the impacts revocation of PLO 5150 would have on their subsistence lifestyle. BLM also hosted a special session of the Southcentral Federal Regional Subsistence Advisory Council to allow the council to hear testimony on the revocation of PLO 5150 and submit a formal comment.

4. Other Outreach Efforts

Briefings were conducted for organizations upon request. The Alaska Outdoor Council, Alaska Coalition, Alaska Miner's Association, and the Alaska Outdoor Access Alliance each received a briefing for their members two to three months prior to the release of this document. These meetings allowed for open conversation about the preferred alternative, provided a chance for the public to be included on the mailing list, and address concerns about the plan. These meetings also provided an opportunity for the BLM to develop a relationship with those stakeholders they serve.

Concurrently with scoping, an East Alaska RMP website was developed containing information about the East Alaska planning process and a method to post comments and questions. This website continues to be utilized as a medium to distribute information and is kept current. The East Alaska Draft RMP/EIS and Proposed RMP/Final EIS, with all associated maps and appendices, are also available on the website.

Due to uncontrollable circumstances, the BLM websites nationally were offline during the 90-day public comment period on the Draft. This adversely affected the public's ability to download and view the Draft RMP/EIS as well as access information regarding public meeting times and locations and methods and deadlines for commenting. The Glennallen Field Office sent a postcard to all those on the mailing list explaining the situation and how to obtain a hard copy or CD of the Draft RMP/EIS document. Public meetings were advertised in the local media and front office staff were supplied with information to answer questions they may receive from the public regarding the public meetings and deadlines for comments. The Draft RMP/EIS was posted on alternative websites, the State of Alaska's and BeringGlacier.org which is a site BLM sponsors but was not affected by the network outages. Over 400 CDs and 300 hard copies of the document were distributed and could be requested through the Glennallen Field Office or the BLM State Office in Anchorage.

An East Alaska RMP newsletter has been sent out at several stages of the planning process. This newsletter is used to inform the public of meetings, where we are in the planning process, and contact information for the planning team. A mailing database has developed over the life of the plan and currently contains over 1400 names of individuals and organizations who are notified about plan developments through email and hard copy newsletter.

C. Consultation

1. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Consultation

Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is required under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 prior to initiation of any project by the BLM that may affect any Federally listed or endangered species or its habitat.

The Glennallen Field Office submitted a project description, including a detailed description of the alternatives, as well as a species list request to Fish and Wildlife Service. This request was followed by a letter from Fish and Wildlife Service stating, “[t]he Service concurs with your determination that no adverse effects are expected to result from the actions described in the preferred alternative to the East Alaska Resource Management Plan” (FWS 2004). Concern was raised by FWS over potential for oil and gas development on State lands in the Bering Glacier area and the potential effects on the Kittlitz’s murrelet, a candidate species for listing. Potential effects to this species are displayed in the analysis in Chapter IV.

Because of the conclusion of no adverse effects to threatened or endangered species or critical habitat determined through informal consultation, no biological assessment was conducted.

2. National Marine Fisheries Service Consultation

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is responsible for the administration of the Endangered Species Act as it applies to listed cetaceans and pinnipeds in Alaska. These include seven species of endangered whales, the threatened eastern population of Stellar sea lions, and the endangered western population of Stellar sea lions.

Informal consultation was initiated by the Glennallen Field Office through a letter describing the planning project and area and alternatives. NMFS responded with a letter stating, “[d]ue to the inland location of most of the planning area, threatened or endangered marine mammals do not occur in the vicinity, and critical habitat for the above listed species would not be affected” (NMFS 2004). The letter also stated that the planning area contains Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for all five species of salmon and requested analysis of effects to this habitat. This analysis is contained in Chapter IV of this document.

3. Tribal Consultation

In accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as well as in recognition of the government-to-government relationship between Native Villages and Corporations and the Federal government, two letters inviting cooperation were sent and 11 government-to-government meetings were held throughout the planning process.

Scoping meetings were held with Ahtna Native Corporation and with each Tribal Government in the area. The purpose was to develop issues and concerns for management of BLM lands in the area. These meetings have resulted in the development of three different Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with different village corporations: Cheesh-Na, Chitina, and Tazlina. These MOUs will facilitate coordination with the villages throughout the planning process and open the door to increased coordination and consultation after the plan is completed. In addition, the BLM has a contract with a cultural anthropologist to work with the Village Councils and elders to identify cultural, traditional, and subsistence sites or areas important for maintenance or protection.

D. Collaborative Efforts

1. Cooperation with the State of Alaska

Because of the high percentage of State-selected lands within the planning area, the BLM has involved the State of Alaska from the beginning of this planning process. In May 2002, a letter was sent inviting the State of Alaska to participate in the process as a cooperator. A joint BLM-State position was been created, with that person acting as liaison between the State of Alaska and the BLM in this planning process. This has been effective in facilitating information exchanges and reviews of draft materials by State personnel.

Constant involvement throughout the planning process has taken place with the State of Alaska, and several meetings have been held between the State and the BLM at varying levels of authority to discuss the East Alaska RMP. These meetings have produced a preferred strategy on the management of State-selected lands.

E. Formal Government to Government Agreements

Formal agreements between governing entities serve to open lines of communication as well as facilitate coordination of management efforts. Currently BLM has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the following government entities:

- Ahtna Native Corporation (in progress)*
- Cheesh'na Tribal Council of Alaska*
- Chickaloon Village (Nay'dini'aa Na')*
- Chitina Traditional Indian Village Council (in progress)*
- Native Village of Eyak*
- Native Village of Tazlina Tribe of Alaska *
- State of Alaska

* Denotes MOU developed as a direct result of this land use planning process.

F. Plan Distribution

Since initial scoping, the BLM has maintained a mailing list of individuals, businesses, special interest groups, and Federal, State, Tribal, and local government representatives interested in the development of the East Alaska RMP/EIS. The January 2006 East Alaska RMP Newsletter, sent to this mailing list, contained a way to request a copy of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The newsletter also noted that the Proposed RMP/Final EIS could be downloaded from the plan website that is currently online. Those who respond with a request for a hard copy will receive one. CD-ROMs with the Proposed RMP/Final EIS will also be developed to reduce printing costs and paper waste as a method for reviewing the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

Copies of the East Alaska Proposed RMP/Final EIS are available for public inspection at the following locations:

- Anchorage Field Office
- BLM Alaska State Office, public room, Anchorage
- Chugach National Forest Office, Cordova
- Delta Junction Public Library
- Denali National Park and Preserve Office
- Fairbanks Public Library
- Glennallen Field Office
- Glennallen Public Library
- Kenny Lake Public Library
- Matanuska-Susitna Borough Offices
- Northern Field Office
- Valdez Public Library
- Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve Office

The Proposed RMP/Final EIS is also available electronically at the East Alaska RMP website, <http://www.ak.blm.gov/gdo/landplan/index.html>.

Concurrent with the distribution of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, a Notice of Availability was published by the EPA in the Federal Register to mark the beginning of the 30-day protest period. The BLM also published a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register announcing the availability of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

Hard copies, or CD-ROMs when requested, of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS have been distributed to the following organization, agencies, and individuals who requested them, or as required by regulation or policy.

Federal Government Agencies

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Region 10, Seattle Office
USDA Forest Service, Chugach National Forest, Cordova
USDA Forest Service, Chugach National Forest, Yakutat Field Station
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
USDI U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage
USDI National Park Service, Alaska Region, Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program
USDI National Park Service, Denali National Park and Preserve
USDI National Park Service, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve
USDI Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance
USDI Bureau of Land Management, Washington Office, Planning Group
USDI Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Office
USDI Bureau of Indian Affairs, Anchorage

State Government Agencies and Organizations

Alaska Department of Administration
Alaska Department of Community and Economic Development
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Advisory Committee
Alaska Department of Law
Alaska Department of Natural Resources
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Safety
Alaska Department of Health and Safety
Honorable Frank Murkowski, Governor of Alaska

Local Governments and Committees

Cantwell Community, Inc
City of Cordova
City of Fairbanks, City Planning
City of Valdez, Planning and Zoning
Copper Valley Economic Development Council

Denali Borough
Denali Citizens Council
Fairbanks NorthStar Borough
Matanuska-Susitna Borough
USDI, BLM, Resource Advisory Council (RAC)
Yakutat Borough

Tribal Governments and Committees

Ahtna Inc.
Ahtna Heritage Foundation
Alaska Federation of Natives
Alaska Village Initiatives
Chickaloon Village Traditional Council
Cheesh-na Tribal Council
Chitina Native Corporation
Chitina Traditional Village Council
Chugach Alaska Corporation
Copper River Native Association
Eyak Preservation Council
Gakona Village Council
Gulkana Village Council
Mentasta Traditional Council
Mount Sanford Tribal Consortium
Native Village of Cantwell
Native Village of Eyak
Native Village of Kluti-Kaah
Pedro Bay Village Council
Tazlina Village Council

Congressionals

U.S. Representative Donald Young
U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski
U.S. Senator Ted Stevens

State Legislators

Representative John Harris, District 12
Representative Woodie Salmon, District 6
Senator Gene Therriault, District F
Senator Albert Kookesh, District C

Non-governmental Organization and Businesses

Alaska Alpine Club
Alaska Center for the Environment
Alaska Coalition
Alaska Coop. Fish and Wildlife Research
Alaska Dog Musers Association

Alaska Fish & Trails Unlimited
Alaska Fly Fishers Association
Alaska Friends of the Earth
Alaska Frontier Trappers Association
Alaska Miners Association
Alaska National Heritage Program
Alaska Outdoor Access Alliance
Alaska Outdoor Council
Alaska Professional Hunters Association
Alaska Quiet Rights Coalition
Alaska Rifle Club
Alaska Snowmachine Association
Alaska State Snowmobile Association
Alaska Wilderness Council
Alaska Wilderness Studies
Alaska Wildlife Alliance
Alyeska Pipeline Service Company
Cascadia Wildlands Project
Copper Country Alliance
Copper River Watershed Project
Cordova District Fishermans United
Curry Ridge Riders
Ecotrust-Copper River Program
Maclaren River Lodge
MACTEC Engineering and Consulting
Matanuska Valley Sportsmen
National Parks Conservation Association
Nevada Star Resource Group
NOLS Alaska
Northern Alaska Environmental Center
Pacific Legal Foundation
Sierra Club
The Nature Conservancy
The Wolf Pack
Weston's Camp

Other Interested/Affected Individuals

The East Alaska Proposed RMP/Final EIS was also mailed to individuals requesting either a hard copy or the CD version by April 15, 2005. Additional copies of the draft will be mailed out upon request.

G. Interdisciplinary Team

The Draft RMP/EIS was prepared by an interdisciplinary team of specialists, as listed in Table 43, and included expertise from across the state. Organizations include the Environmental Careers Organization (ECO). BLM office abbreviations include the Alaska State Office (ASO), Northern Field Office (NFO), and the Glennallen Field Office (GFO).

Table 43. List of Preparers

Name	Agency	Area of Expertise
Ramone Baccus McCoy	BLM-GFO	Field Office Manager
Andi Bauer	BLM-ASO	Writer/Editor
Brenda Becker	BLM-GFO	Lands and Realty
Henri Bisson	BLM-ASO	BLM Alaska State Director
Marcia Butorac	BLM-GFO	Recreation, Facilities
Travis Calderwood	BLM-GFO	Forestry, Noxious and Invasive Plant Species
Tom Dilts	ECO	Recreation Opportunity Spectrum, Visual Resources
Heath Emmons	BLM-GFO	Recreation, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Trails
Marnie Graham	BLM-GFO	Public Affairs, Outreach Specialist
Denton Hamby	BLM-GFO	Recreation, Wild and Scenic Rivers
John Jangala	BLM-GFO	Cultural Resources and Paleontological Resources
Tami Jindra	BLM-GFO	EARMP website design and upkeep
Lauri Jones	BLM-GFO	GIS Specialist
Mike Kasterin	BLM-ASO	Social and Economic Conditions
Cory Larson	BLM-GFO	Recreation, Trails
Mary Lynch	BLM-AFS	Fire
Tamara Hamby	ECO	Cartography, Planning Support
Holli McClain	BLM-NFO	Visual Resources
Dave Mushovic	BLM-GFO	Realty Specialist
KJ Mushovic	BLM-GFO	Recreation, Special Recreation Permits
John Rego	BLM-GFO	Geology, Minerals
Liz Rice	BLM-GFO	Public Affairs Specialist
Bruce Rogers	BLM-GFO	Land Use Planner, NEPA Specialist, EARMP Project Lead
Kari Rogers	BLM-GFO	Wildlife, Sensitive Status Plant Species, Bering Glacier
William Runnoe	BLM-GFO	Recreation Lead
Mike Sondergaard	BLM-GFO	Soils, Water, Air, Vegetation, Hazardous Materials
Elijah Waters	BLM-GFO	Fisheries, Subsistence

