



Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska

Supplemental Draft Plan Released

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has released the Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A) Draft Supplemental Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (IAP/EIS). The BLM proposes to amend its 1998 Northeast NPR-A IAP/EIS Record of Decision. The agency completed a Northeast NPR-A Amended IAP/EIS in January 2005. The U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska found the cumulative effects analysis in the 2005 Amended IAP/EIS document to be inadequate. The recently released Supplemental IAP/EIS addresses the issues raised by the court and otherwise updates the analysis of future management options in the Northeast NPR-A.

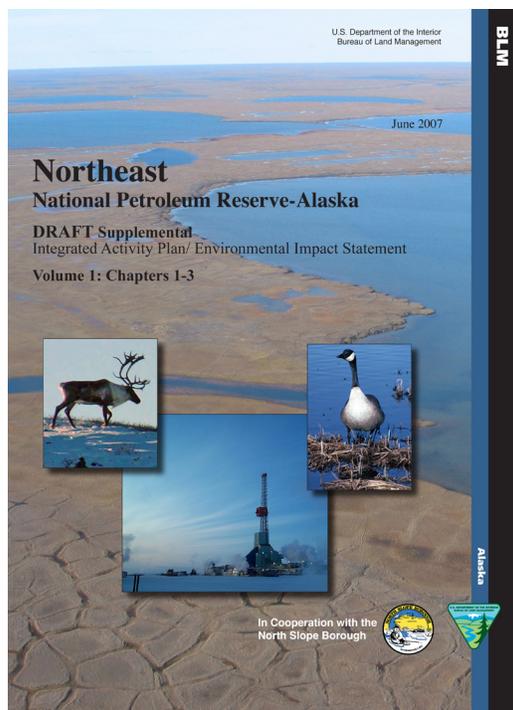
The Northeast NPR-A planning area covers 4.6 million acres of public lands administered by the BLM on Alaska's North Slope in the northeast portion of the NPR-A. It includes portions of the Colville River Special Area and Teshekpuk Lake Special Area.

The Amended and Supplemental IAP/EIS: A Quick Comparison

The Draft Supplemental IAP/EIS is not an entirely new document. Much of the contents, including the alternatives, are the same or very similar to what was in the Amended IAP/EIS issued in January 2005. Changes in the Supplemental IAP/EIS include:

- Cumulative impact analyses of potential oil and gas leasing in both the Northeast and Northwest NPR-A have been expanded.
- Reasonably foreseeable oil and gas development is based on an increased price of oil.
- Impact of commercial gas development related to a proposed gas pipeline is included.
- Impact assessments now consider the proposed listing of the polar bear as a threatened species.
- Area studies that have been reported since 2005 are included.
- Public health is analyzed as a separate topic.
- New potential mitigation measures have been added to address impacts to public health and birds.

Although the Draft Supplemental IAP/EIS has alternatives that are essentially the same as those in the Amended IAP/EIS, the BLM has not identified a preferred alternative. The agency wants to consider public comments prior to selecting a preferred alternative in the Final Supplemental IAP/EIS. In addition, the Supplemental IAP/EIS, unlike the Amended IAP/EIS, has benefited by having the North Slope Borough as a cooperating agency.



Alternatives

The alternatives are essentially unchanged from the 2005 Amended IAP/EIS and are outlined below.

Alternative A (No Action Alternative):

- continues management established in the 1998 IAP/EIS Record of Decision;
- makes land north and east of Teshekpuk Lake unavailable for leasing but does allow for oil and gas leasing in other portions of the Northeast NPR-A;
- establishes setbacks around streams and lakes to protect habitat and subsistence activities; and
- uses prescriptive rather than performance-based stipulations.

Alternative B:

- withholds 213,000 acres northeast of Teshekpuk Lake from leasing;
- retains the setbacks around streams and lakes provided by the 1998 IAP/EIS and establishes new setbacks north and east of Teshekpuk Lake; and
- uses performance-based stipulations and ROPs.

Alternative C:

- makes all of the planning area available for leasing;
- retains the setbacks around streams and lakes provided by the 1998 IAP/EIS and establishes new setbacks north and east of Teshekpuk Lake; and
- uses performance-based stipulations and ROPs.

Alternative D:

- defers Teshekpuk Lake (approximately 211,00 acres) from leasing indefinitely;
- prohibits permanent oil and gas facilities (except pipelines) on approximately 217,000 acres to the north and east of Teshekpuk Lake, which contains many lakes that are important to goose molting;
- divides the area north of Teshekpuk Lake into seven tracts (45,900 to 58,000 acres) where no more than 300 acres of permanent surface disturbance would be allowed per tract;
- prohibits permanent oil and gas facilities (except pipelines) in habitat important for caribou calving and movement;
- retains the setbacks around streams and lakes provided by the 1998 IAP/EIS and establishes new setbacks north and east of Teshekpuk Lake; and
- uses performance-based stipulations and ROPs.

Commenting on the Draft IAP/EIS

The BLM welcomes comments on the Draft Supplemental IAP/EIS. The BLM is especially interested in any corrections to the information presented in the IAP/EIS. In addition, the BLM would like to hear about your ideas for additional mitigation measures. Mitigation measures are actions that reduce or eliminate potential impacts before, during, or after an activity. The document already contains a number of protective measures in the form of lease stipulations and ROPs. For example, ROP E-7 requires a minimum pipeline height of 7 feet for above-ground pipeline to allow caribou to move easily under pipelines. Information about the protective measures currently under consideration can be found in Chapter 2 of the document.

The public comment period opened on August 24 and will close on October 23. You can send a comment by:

Mail

Northeast NPR-A Supplemental IAP/EIS Comments
ENSR Corporation
Suite 490
1835 South Bragaw Street
Anchorage, AK 99508

Online

http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/planning/npra_general/ne_npra/ne_npr-a_supplement.html

Fax

1-888-907-3677
(nationwide toll-free number)

You can also hand-deliver your comments to the BLM at the contractor's address listed above or at the BLM Public Information Center in the Federal Building, 222 W. 7th Avenue, in Anchorage. Finally, you can attend a public meeting and submit verbal or written comments. All meetings will be attended by BLM staff, and a court reporter will be present to record all verbal comments. Meetings held at villages near the planning area will also serve as Section 810 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) hearings. The BLM will collect and record information about impacts to subsistence at these hearings.

Public Meeting Schedule:

Open house at 6 pm
Meeting starts at 7 pm

Location	Date	Place
Barrow*	September 24	North Slope Borough Assembly Room
Atqasuk*	September 25	Community Center
Wainwright*	September 26	Community Center
Anchorage	October 1	Howard Johnson Plaza, 239 W. 4th Avenue, Kenai/Kodiak Room
Bethel	October 2	Assembly Room, Cultural Center, UAF Kuskokwim Campus
Washington, DC	October 4	Capital Hilton
Anaktuvuk Pass*	October 9	Community Center
Fairbanks	October 10	Noel Wien Library Meeting Room
Nuiqsut*	October 11	Kisik Community Center

Meetings marked with an * will also serve as subsistence hearings pursuant to ANILCA 810.

Getting a Copy of the Supplemental Draft IAP/EIS

Paper and CD versions of the Supplemental Draft IAP/EIS are available at the following places:

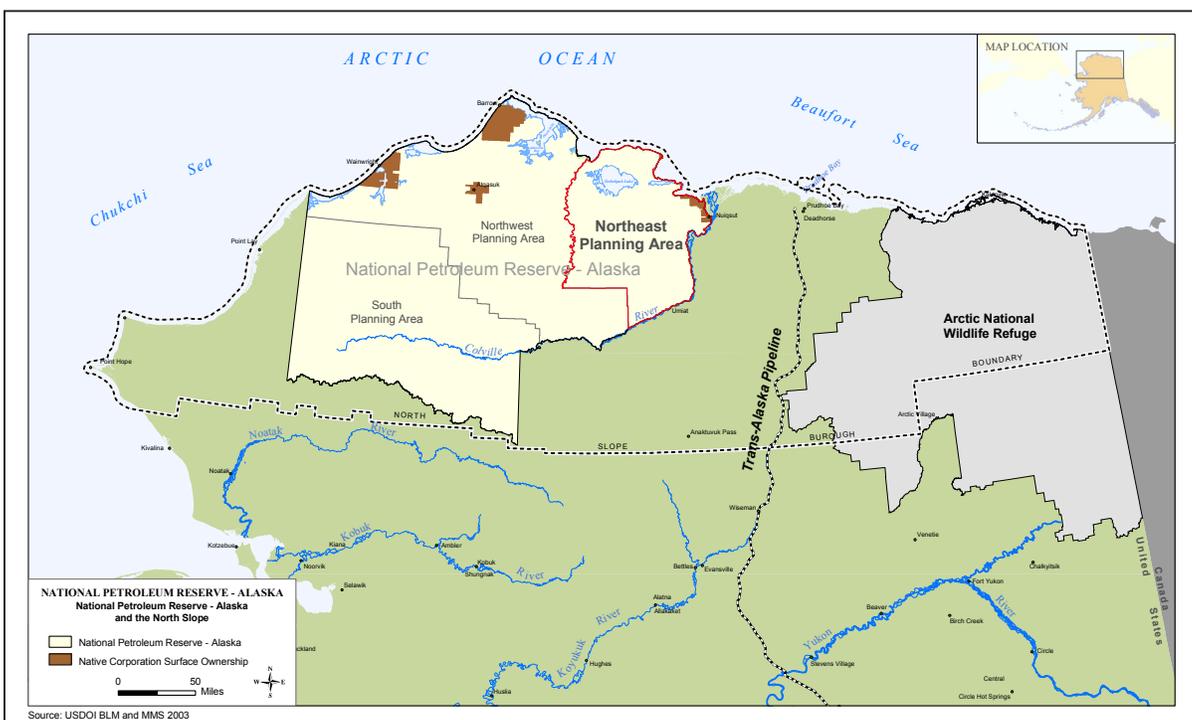
Location	Address
BLM Public Room	222 West 7th Avenue, #13 Anchorage, Alaska 99513
BLM Public Room	1150 University Avenue Fairbanks, Alaska 99709

The Supplemental Draft IAP/EIS also is available for review at Alaskan libraries in Anchorage, Barrow, Fairbanks, Nuiqsut, and Wasilla and at several libraries in the Lower 48.

The document is available online at:

http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/prog/planning/npra_general/ne_npra/ne_npr-a_supplement.html

If you want to be on the mailing list, or taken off the mailing list, please call 907-271-3130.



How Comments Are Used

Comments that identify substantive issues (such as, but not limited to, gaps in the analysis, corrections to data used, or proposed mitigation measures) will be considered in the Final Supplemental IAP/EIS. The Final Supplemental IAP/EIS will include comments and responses, and will identify which sections were changed as a result of comments.



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