



News

Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Office, External Affairs
222 W. 7th Avenue #13, Anchorage AK 99513-7599
Tel: 907-271-5555 Fax: 907-271-5421

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Jody Weil, (907) 271 4418

News Release AK-06-06
Date: January 11, 2006

Interior Department approves BLM amendment to Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska 1998 plan

Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior, Chad Calvert has approved a plan amendment for the northeast corner of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. The amendment, developed by the Bureau of Land Management, will guide leasing, exploration and development in the Petroleum Reserve for the next 10 to 20 years using lease stipulations and required operating procedures similar to those adopted for the adjacent northwest area of the Petroleum Reserve in 2004.

The Record of Decision, signed January 11, 2006 contains a number of changes to the Final Amended Integrated Activity Plan and Environmental Impact Statement released in January 2005. "As a result of comments from local government, North Slope residents, and various organizations, a number of modifications have been included specifically to benefit subsistence users and wildlife values in the northeast planning area," said BLM-Alaska State Director Henri Bisson. "Also, the plan will allow us to refine and adapt our management as new research and new technologies emerge," said Bisson.

Modifications to the final amended IAP/EIS include the following:

- An expansion of the "No Surface Occupancy" restriction protecting sensitive goose molting habitat area north of Teshekpuk Lake from 217,000 to 242,000 acres.

- The establishment of an additional "No Surface Occupancy" restriction protecting 47,000 acres of important caribou habitat and calving area located southwest of Teshekpuk Lake. The ROD reflects a total of approximately 188,000 acres of protection for caribou calving habitat southeast (141,000) and southwest (47,000) of the Lake.

-more-



News

Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Office, External Affairs
222 W. 7th Avenue #13, Anchorage AK 99513-7599
Tel: 907-271-5555 Fax: 907-271-5421

Northeast Petroleum Reserve plan, page 2

-The Establishment of an additional “No Surface Occupancy” restriction protecting 9,700 acres for caribou movement northwest of Teshekpuk Lake. The ROD reflects a total of approximately 56,000 acres of protection for corridors east (45,000 acres) and northwest (9,700 acres)

-Implementation requirements for a formal workshop(s) with federal, state and local, North Slope Borough representatives, and North Slope Science Initiative members and others, to recommend ways to minimize the impact of pipelines on subsistence users and wildlife resources.

-Deletes language that would consider applications for the construction of publicly funded community roads within the Teshekpuk Lake Caribou Habitat Area.

-Requires a minimum three-year study focused on protecting molting geese that utilize the lakes north of Teshekpuk Lake. The study must be completed before BLM will authorize construction of any proposed permanent facilities within the Goose Molting Area.

-Defers leasing of the Colville River Special Area until a river management plan is completed.

“Subsistence activities in the planning area, particularly hunting and fishing are exceedingly important to local residents. We have listened to their concerns and added these additional provisions to the plan to assure that local traditions can continue,” said Bisson.

Other provisions of the plan, such as deferring leasing on Teshekpuk Lake remain unchanged.

The entire Record of Decision, approximately 75 pages long and accompanying maps are available for review on the BLM’s website at www.ak.blm.gov.

BLM estimates that the Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska may contain as much as two billion barrels of economically recoverable oil. This decision opens the way for an additional oil and gas lease sale, probably in the fall of 2006.

###