

SECTION VI

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

VI. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

A. INTRODUCTION: Management of public lands on Alaska's North Slope, including the Northeast NPR-A Planning Area, is of considerable public interest, not just within the State of Alaska, but throughout the Nation. Expertise on the resources of the planning area is also widely dispersed. People knowledgeable about the resources are found in many agencies of the Federal, State, and North Slope Borough (NSB) governments and in academia, environmental interest and study groups, industry, and the people who call the North Slope home.

The BLM has reached out to all these groups to obtain information on the issues and the resources of the planning area. The following discussion begins by summarizing this effort focusing on five elements: our formal "scoping" work, a series of workshops and meetings held to pool resource information and develop ideas for future management, multiple reviews of drafts of parts of the IAP/EIS, special cooperative arrangements with the State and the NSB, and publications that have kept the public informed of our progress. The section then concludes with a brief description of the groups contacted during the planning process and a list of the BLM and MMS authors of the plan.

B. FORMAL SCOPING: The formal scoping period began when BLM published a Notice of Intent (Notice) to prepare the Northeast NPR-A IAP/EIS in the *Federal Register* on February 13, 1997. This initiated a 30-day public scoping period. Scoping comments also were requested through the NPR-A internet web site (<http://aurora.ak.blm.gov/npra/>); comment sheets distributed at public meetings; advertisements in the *Anchorage Daily News*, *Arctic Sounder*, and *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*; announcements on KBRW public radio (Barrow); and the *npr-a report*, a newsletter distributed by the BLM-Alaska Office of External Affairs. (The newsletter has since been renamed the *npr-a update*.) These announcements requested public comment on the wide range of resources of the planning area and for ideas on its future management. The Notice also included a call for nominations from the oil industry for lands within the planning area to be considered for oil and gas leasing.

During the formal scoping period, BLM met with a wide range of interested parties. This included representatives of environmental groups; the oil industry; North Slope village and corporate leaders; and leaders of NSB, State, and other Federal land-management and resource-protection agencies. Public meetings were held in Barrow, Atkasuk, Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Nuiqsut during March and April 1997. These meetings were facilitated and electronically recorded and subsequently transcribed into a written record. An interpreter was present at the meetings in the North Slope communities. More than 175 people attended those meetings, and 101 written comments were received during the scoping period. The formal public scoping period ended April 18, 1997, following an extension to accommodate scheduling conflicts that delayed the Nuiqsut public meeting.

C. WORKSHOPS AND MEETINGS: The BLM and the Minerals Management Service (MMS), which has helped BLM develop the IAP/EIS, have held four workshops or meetings to obtain information and/or develop alternatives. The first of these was the *NPR-A Symposium* held April 16-18, 1997, in Anchorage. It was convened to provide BLM and MMS with the most current information on resources and their uses in the northeast planning area and the potential impacts that may incur from various land use activities. More than two dozen speakers from government agencies, academia, industry, and private consulting companies gave presentations during the three-day symposium, which was attended by more than 130 people. A synopsis of the sessions was published in the *NPR-A Symposium Proceedings: Science, Traditional Knowledge, and the Resources of the Northeast Planning Area of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska* (MMS, 1997).

The following week, BLM held a *planning meeting* with representatives from MMS, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and the NSB to review the scoping issues and formulate management alternatives. The first preliminary draft of the alternatives resulted from this meeting.

The *Teshekpuk Lake Waterfowl/Caribou Impact Analysis Workshop* was held May 21-22, 1997, in Fairbanks to provide BLM with specific guidance for developing maximum protective measures for waterfowl and caribou in the Teshekpuk Lake area under an alternative that would allow for economically feasible oil and gas leasing in that area. On the first day, academic, industry and other nonagency biologists and other specialists presented pertinent background information. On the second day, there was one panel each for caribou and waterfowl. These panels consisted of Federal, State, and Borough government representatives with expert knowledge of waterfowl and caribou biology and wildlife interactions with North Slope oil- and gas field operations. The FWS provided invaluable GIS data on waterfowl. A summary of these proceedings can be found in Appendix E.

An *NPR-A Subsistence Impact Analysis Workshop* was held August 19-21, 1997, in Nuiqsut to provide BLM with specific guidance on protective measures for subsistence resources and users under alternatives which would allow oil and gas leasing. A workshop panel consisted of Federal, State, Borough, and tribal government representatives from Barrow, Atkasuk, Nuiqsut, and Anaktuvuk Pass with both scientific and traditional knowledge of subsistence resources and their uses in the planning area. Public meetings were held in Nuiqsut and Barrow in conjunction with the subsistence workshop to solicit additional information from local residents for the panel's consideration. A summary of these proceedings are included in this document as Appendix F.

D. PEER REVIEWS: The BLM and MMS implemented a formal peer review process for the preliminary draft EIS that included specialists from the U.S. Geological Survey (including its Biological Resources Division), FWS, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Forest Service, National Weather Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (USDO), State of Alaska, and the NSB. The peer reviewers examined early drafts of Sections II, III, and IV and responded in writing with corrections and suggestions for changes. In addition authors and reviewers engaged in individual conversations before, during, and after the review to exchange information. Some sections were sent out for a second series of reviews. Prior to going to print, staff of the FWS, State, and NSB joined with those of BLM and MMS to review of the entire document. The comments at all stages of the review have been constructive and exceedingly helpful. The BLM and MMS, not the reviewers, though, remain responsible for the descriptions of the environment and the impacts of the alternatives, and only BLM is responsible for the range of alternatives.

E. STATE AND NSB COOPERATION: Early in the IAP/EIS process, BLM invited the State and the NSB to join with us in this planning effort. The Borough helped coordinate scoping meetings, the subsistence workshop, and other contacts on the North Slope, provided much of its unique GIS data and research reports, and regularly consulted with BLM's leadership on the plan. The BLM also funded a new State position to assure smooth communication of state concerns and information between its managers and resource specialists on the one hand and the BLM/MMS planning team on the other. The State's coordinator was based in BLM's offices in Anchorage and was integrated into the planning team.

F. PUBLICATIONS: The BLM has distributed four issues of the *npr-a update*. The first, published for the formal scoping period, introduced the plan and solicited comments. The second reported to the public on the issues raised during scoping. The third newsletter updated readers on the plan, including Secretary Babbitt's visit to the NPR-A and the North Slope. The fourth issue of the *npr-a update* announced the publication of this draft IAP/EIS and the public meetings to be held to obtain comments on it. In addition, the BLM has periodically updated its NPR-A internet web site initiated during formal scoping. The draft IAP/EIS also will be available over the Internet.

G. AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

CONSULTED: The following agencies and organizations have been contacted during the planning process.

Federal Agencies

- U.S. Department of Agriculture
 - National Resources Conservation Service
 - U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Department of Commerce
 - National Marine Fisheries Service
 - National Weather Service
- U.S. Department of Defense
 - U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Department of Energy
- U.S. Department of the Interior
 - Fish and Wildlife Service
 - Minerals Management Service
 - National Park Service
 - U.S. Geological Survey
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

State of Alaska Agencies and Commissions

- Department of Fish and Game
- Department of Natural Resources
- Department of Regional and Community Affairs
- Department of Transportation/Public Facilities
- Division of Governmental Coordination

VI. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

University of Alaska, Institute of Social and Economic
Research
University of Alaska, Natural Heritage Program

Municipal Governments

North Slope Borough
City of Anaktuvuk Pass
City of Atkasuk
City of Barrow
City of Kaktovik
City of Nuiqsut
City of Wainwright

Native Alaska Organizations

Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission
Alaska Federation of Natives
Arctic Slope Native Association
Arctic Slope Regional Corporation
Atkasuk Inupiat Corporation
Barrow Whaling Captains Association
Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope
Native Village of Atkasuk
Native Village of Barrow
Native Village of Nuiqsut
Kuukpiik Corporation
Ukpeagvik Inupiat Corporation

Following is a partial list of other organizations (for a complete mailing list, contact:

Bureau of Land Management, Office of External Affairs
(912), 222 W. 7th Ave., Anchorage, AK 99513)

Alaska Center for the Environment
Alaska Miners Association
Alaska Oil and Gas Association
Alaska Outdoor Council
Alaska Visitors Association
Alaska Wildlife Alliance
Alyeska Pipeline Service Company
Anardarko Petroleum Corporation
ARCO Alaska
BP Exploration
Chevron USA
Cominco Alaska
Ducks Unlimited Inc.
Exxon
Greenpeace
National Audubon Society
Northern Alaska Environmental Center
Phillips Petroleum
Sierra Club
The Nature Conservancy
Trustees for Alaska
Union Oil Company
Union Texas Petroleum Company
Wilderness Society
Elected Officials

U.S. Senator Ted Stevens
U.S. Senator Frank Murkowski
U.S. Representative Don Young
Governor of Alaska Tony Knowles
Alaska State Senators
Alaska State Representatives

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VI. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

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