

**Bureau of Land Management  
Alaska Resource Advisory Council Meeting  
Westmark Fairbanks Hotel and Conference Center  
813 Noble Street  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
November 13 – 14, 2007**

**Day 1: Tuesday, November 13, 2007**

**ATTENDANCE:**

**Council Members Present:** Greg Beischer, Philip Driver, Suzanne McCarthy, June McAtee, Steve de Albuquerque, Michael McDougall, Charlie Boddy. Keith Tryck joined the meeting later the first day. Tom Crafford joined the meeting the second day.

**Council Members Absent:** Sandra Key, Scott Hala, Teresa Imm, Jim Posey, Denise Michaels, and Amalie Couvillion.

**BLM Representatives Present:** Thomas Lonnie, Bob Schneider, Gary Reimer, John Gould, Sharon Wilson, Ramona Chinn, Mary Lynch, Melody Roos

**CALL TO ORDER - 1:02p.m.**

Meeting called to order by Chair Greg Beischer at 1:02 p.m. Beischer expressed disappointment in the number of members at the meeting; one member was ill, but he said BLM had gone to great lengths to put the meeting together and members should make attendance a top priority. He felt if the members volunteered for the Council, they should do their best to show up, especially when meetings are scheduled months in advance.

**Tom Lonnie** called attention to the May minutes, back of the third page, what would be page 6 if the pages were numbered, paragraph in italics entitled “Editors Note.” Explanation: Keith Tryck had asked that comments he had made during a discussion with Rob Collins and Kent Slaughter during a break be added to the minutes because he wanted the council to be aware of them. Tom wanted to make sure the members saw those comments and understand why they were included. Greg said he felt it was appropriate that they be included.

**Suzanne** made a motion to approve both May and July minutes, **June** seconded, no objections, motion passed.

**Beischer introduced two new members to the RAC:** Steve de Albuquerque and Michael McDougall. **Amalie Couvillion (Conservation)**, also new, was out of state and would be in Alaska for the next meeting. Beischer expressed appreciation for the past services of Barbara Fulmer, Susan Olson and David van den Berg, outgoing members of the RAC.

**Mike McDougall (Dispersed Recreation)**, background in fisheries biology with a Bachelor's degree in fisheries. Nominated by the Alaska Trappers Association, currently on their Board of Directors. Lives in Eagle with his wife and two boys. Currently working on a degree in Rural Development through the distance degree program at University of Alaska Fairbanks.

**Steve de Albuquerque (Energy)**, Health, Safety & Environmental Program Manager for ConocoPhillips Alaska. Geology degree from Ferman; has been with ConocoPhillips for 18 years and has worked on exploration production projects in the Lower 48, Canada and the United Kingdom.

## **REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS**

**State Director's Address – Tom Lonnie** thanked everyone for their service on the RAC. He appreciates the members' commitment and time and the work they do. He also expressed appreciation for Dave Van den Berg's past service (Dave was in the room). He said that Hans Neidig, Special Representative for the Secretary in Alaska, could not attend but wanted to pass on his thanks for everyone's service. He addressed the following topics:

- The Secretary of Interior approved the new RAC charter and the bylaws/standard operating procedures. The documents are good products that clarify the RAC's method of operating.
- Managing for Excellence:  
BLM has created the National Operations Center in Lakewood, Colorado, to centralize administrative functions nationally, save dollars to redirect into program work. In Alaska, the BLM has created the Alaska Combined Service Center - Human Resources Office, which combines BLM and Fish and Wildlife Service personnel and travel functions. It has been successful so far, and we have invited other DOI agencies to join. In the second phase, we hope to consolidate the safety programs of both agencies. BLM-Alaska has completed its transition to a three-tier organization. The Anchorage District now oversees the Anchorage and Glennallen Field Offices.
- BLM-Alaska has invited the BLM Director for the start of the Iditarod, and plans to take him on a tour of the North Slope during that trip.
- The February meeting in Barrow signaled the opening of the first BLM office in that community, with Ben Nageak as our representative with the community. That has been highly successful in terms of community relations.
- BLM Director Jim Caswell's Priorities:
  - Healthy Lands Initiative: Much of what you will hear about in the news is energy development in the Rocky Mountain states, where concerns have developed about

balancing our natural resources, such as wildlife, with natural gas development. There is a need for balance across all of our programs.

- Communications continues to be a big issue with the Director. He has set up a blog on the BLM Intranet (internal to employees) with a new topic every two weeks. It was interesting to note that the biggest issue identified by employees was the demographics of the organization in regards to the ages of the employees in the organization, the high number of impending retirements, and the loss of institutional knowledge of the programs and resources.
- The National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) fits in with the Healthy Lands Initiative. BLM-Alaska manages several components of that system. You'll be hearing more about that in terms of increased funding.

### **ANCHORAGE DISTRICT OFFICE UPDATE - Gary Reimer, Anchorage District Manager**

- Last August we had a successful clearing of live anti-tank mine on the Swede Lake Trail, in the Glenallen Field Office area. The military responded and did excellent work, finding one more live mine, one replicate, and fragments. The BLM has posted new signs and posters in the area and conducted safety training with the staff at Swede Lake. BLM is emphasizing the "Stay on the Trail" message.
- Trail and 17(b) easement enhancement work in the Glenallen area. AHTNA Corporation has been happy with BLM's public education program for 17(b) easements, which included a radio public service announcement and a new brochure (in your packets).
- Anchorage Field Office staff has been doing bear education, working with Fish & Game doing radio collar work in the Campbell Creek Science Center area. Found that what we thought were transient bears are resident bears. Most of the protocols for children's activities were based on having transient bears in the area, but we have now changed some of the activities.
- Closed the Campbell Tract airstrip and related aviation areas to recreational use since foot traffic on the airstrip often interfered with aircraft landings. This is still an active runway and is an alternate in case of emergencies.
- ConocoPhillips presented a \$10,000 dollar check to the Campbell Creek Science Center for scholarships that will help schools send their students to Science Center activities.
- The BLM is working to increase partnerships for managing the man camp that supports scientists working at the **Bering Glacier**, encouraging partners to take a larger role in managing the operation. Southern University has enjoyed its

participation and building a coalition with us. Scientists have been from England, New York, and Universities of Alaska Fairbanks and Anchorage. BLM has been working toward integrated science. It is a good opportunity to look at global warming. It is a first-rate camp, easy for the scientists to work from, there is a helicopter, instrumentation; everybody shares their science so all researchers are able to benefit. Users pay fees for the helicopters, fuel and food. There are more base operations and employee costs that need support.

**Greg Beischer asked that the BLM inform the RAC about plans for the Bering Glacier camp and progress toward forming partnerships.**

#### **LAND CONVEYANCES/ANCHORAGE DISTRICT – Ramona Chinn, Deputy State Director, Alaska Lands**

- Displayed map showing areas within Anchorage Field Office boundaries conveyed to ANCSA Corporations and the State.
- BLM reserves 17(b) easements across land conveyed to Native corporations for public access. The brochure about 17(b) Easements in your packet was an interagency (federal and state) and Native corporation effort. Marking easements is an issue that will likely become more prevalent in the future.
- One of the significant actions in the East Alaska Record of Decision (ROD), which was signed this fall, was recommending partial revocation of some lands in the pipeline corridor so those lands that are selected by the state in the corridor can be successfully conveyed to them. A request for the partial revocation of 82,608 acres was sent to the BLM-Washington Office recently, and should be published shortly in the *Federal Register*.
- Fiscal Year 2007 was a successful year from a conveyance standpoint. Seventeen million acres have gone to patent (both Native and state selections), interim conveyance (Native selections) or tentative approval (state selections). The Interim Conveyance and Tentative Approval determinations are temporary, and BLM will follow up with a patent after the lands are surveyed.
- This year is the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Statehood Act. The State of Alaska set up a website referring to key commemorative events that will be taking place. BLM is coordinating land title transfers with some of the events. In Fairbanks next May, they will commemorate the day Congress passed the Statehood Act. We hope to prepare some key conveyance actions for signing during that time to help celebrate the changing land patterns for the anniversary.

## **FAIRBANKS DISTRICT UPDATE – Bob Schneider, Fairbanks District Manager**

- Anaktuvuk River fire: Dave Jandt, Fire Management Officer for the Tanana Zone, met with the Anaktuvuk community October 25, organized a meeting during the Alaska Federation of Natives convention, and is going to Barrow in December to talk about how the fire was managed. The North Slope Borough hasn't been involved in past fire management planning due to the lack of fires up there, but we may need to adjust the fire management plan for their area.
- We have reached an agreement on the NOAA Gilmore Creek partial withdrawal relinquishment and the Fort Knox mine's ability to lease a 63-acre parcel that has a 5-to7-year gold reserve within the NOAA Withdrawal. It is a win-win situation. It will mean a lot to the economics of the Fairbanks community as the mine will continue to operate through 2020.
- The trespass situation on the North Slope: On November 1, the people involved signed a settlement agreement with the BLM and will be owing money as a result of the trespass. They have agreed to participate in an educational outreach program with the military, targeting new military coming to Alaska, teaching them about the importance of safety in arctic travel and to tread lightly when getting off the roads.
- The Dalton Highway Travel Guide won a national award for media at the National Interpreters Conference recently.
- National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska: Oil & Gas operations are slower than in the past. ConocoPhillips will be going into some old lands, the old Spark and Rendezvous wells. Renaissance is scheduled to drill three wells in the Umiat area.
- In 2005 we remediated the JW Dalton well, a legacy well from the 1970s that was washing into the ocean. The next site to remediate is the East Teshekpuk Lake well site. Contaminated soil and solid waste will be excavated and transported to the North Kalikpik site, where it will be stored in a reserve pit. The well will be plugged and abandoned. Work should be done by April 2008.

**Discussion on the Jack Wade Dredge in the Fortymile area.** It was a safety hazard because people were going into it even though it was fenced off, so the BLM elected to demolish the dredge since it could not be moved or rebuilt. When faced with demolishing a historic artifact, the BLM first identifies the object to see if it is eligible for historic status. The BLM collected all the information they could, developed plans, drew diagrams, shot photographs. The State Historic Preservation Office approved the plan for demolition. The BLM developed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Fortymile Miners Association and the State of Alaska to display key pieces of the dredge in Chicken. There was a public process and BLM developed an environmental assessment. When any historic resources older than 50 years are involved, the agency has to give the SHPO a plan of action. The decision is approved through the 106 process at the State

Historic Preservation Office. The BLM Field Manager makes the decision, but there is an appeal process.

When the BLM finds a site of historic value on an active mining claim, it considers the approved plan of operations and takes appropriate action. The BLM objective is to let the mining go forward. The BLM staff takes pictures of the historic site, collects the data and removes any artifacts so the mining operation can continue.

### **CONVEYANCES/FAIRBANKS DISTRICT – Ramona Chinn, Deputy State Director, Alaska Lands**

Villages have until December 10, 2007, to submit their final prioritization of their final selections. Section 1410 of ANILCA allows BLM to work with the Corporation to select additional land.

### **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS UPDATE - Bob Schneider, Fairbanks District Manager**

**The Kobuk-Seward Peninsula RMP Notice of Availability** was published in the *Federal Register* September 28. It's in the process of the Governor's consistency review. Jeannie Cole, Fairbanks District, is the lead planner.

#### **Q: What does it mean to get a protest?**

A: Anyone who comments on the plan during the public comment period of the draft document has the "standing" to protest the Record of Decision. If they didn't participate in the draft by commenting, they cannot protest. In this plan, protests included global warming, public meetings, and subsistence. Comments on the Squirrel River step-down plan included: it should not take three years to do the plan; mining community concerns, the plan did not adequately address Areas of Environmental Concern, general NEPA comments, endangered species, and management of snowmachines.

#### **Q: Are there risks to either species when reindeer herds join with caribou?**

A: Studies on the subject have not provided a conclusive answer. They can interbreed since it is the same species. There have been prohibitions on importing reindeer for many years, so the reindeer on the Seward Peninsula have been here a long time and disease isn't an issue.

One suggestion for alleviating hunting impacts on caribou and moose in the area was to limit the number of guides and have a competitive bidding process. The plan may consider party size and number of people in the party to limit hunters. The BLM may eventually set limits on permits to be in that area. The State owns the land along the river—they might look at how to establish a total number of use days and limit the number of permits for air taxi operators.

## **Eastern Interior Plan**

- Covers an 8 million-acre area northeast of Fairbanks. Resource management plans for the Steese National Conservation Area and the White Mountains National Recreation Area are over 20 years old and need revising. We are combining three to four different plans into one plan and environmental impact statement, with separate records of decision, to get them done in a shorter time period.
- Planning issues will be: fire planning, off-highway-vehicle usage, mining in the Steese, mineral withdrawal, wild & scenic river defined values, commercial and private recreation, land tenure adjustments, identify small parcels the BLM inherits and the method of disposing of those parcels, access/easements and coordinating with adjacent land owners, and evaluating areas for possible Area of Environmental Concern (ACEC) designation.

## **ANCHORAGE DISTRICT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS UPDATE – Anchorage District Manager Gary Reimer**

- Completed East Alaska Record of Decision and close to a record of decision on the Ring of Fire plan. Bering Sea Western Interior Plan is scheduled for a 2009 start; will work with the Northern District Office on that plan.
- Glennallen Field Office has begun implementation plans for the East Alaska planning area, specifically for the Delta River area and the Public Land Order 5150 pipeline corridor withdrawal.
- The Bay Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement should be released soon.
- For the new RAC members, we welcome your comments on future plans. I think input from RAC members made a positive impact on the Bay plan.

Greg Beischer said he thought the most useful thing the RAC could do is understand the issues, comment on the direction of the plans, and contribute advice. The RAC is meant to provide advice and forms of resolutions to the BLM Director. Members should attend meetings so they are up-to-speed and can comment intelligently on the issues.

## **WORKPLAN REVIEW – Greg Beischer, Chair**

The RAC had previously constructed a meaty work plan that was unwieldy and the members didn't have enough time to devote to it. Danielle Allen summarized our work plan into a spreadsheet showing the objectives, the activities, and the people responsible. We have set up committees to work on individual issues.

A review of the committees followed, with members volunteering for issues they were interested in. *Editor's Note: The workplan and the list of members assigned to each committee are attached to these minutes.*

**Q: What is expected of the committee members?**

**A:** Committee members should focus on the issues they volunteered for and provide advice to the RAC. A committee should develop a draft resolution if it thinks one is necessary, and present it to the RAC for formal adoption. Serving on a committee is informal, with no strong requirement.

**Q: What is the viability of the North Slope Science Initiative?**

**A:** Funding is not an issue; the transition into a new Executive Director was causing the program to flounder a little. Part of the problem is the group hasn't met as often as they should. The agencies involved have identified and are addressing the issue.

**Q: What is the issue with Activity 14, the Supplement to the Amended Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska IAP/EIS?**

**A:** The North Slope Borough is a formal cooperating agency with the BLM on the Supplement. Public health impacts on the North Slope residents came up in the scoping meetings. Concerns ranged from air quality for respiratory problems to the effect on subsistence and food sources. The North Slope Borough provided valuable input. We received a lot of comments on air quality, but there is no direct correlation between public health concerns and oil and gas exploration. The rate of smoking would have more of an impact than emissions.

Council members shared experiences with public health concerns being attributed to all types of development in rural areas around the world.

Greg Beischer recessed the meeting for the day at 5:05 p.m.

**Day 2: Wednesday, November 14, 2007**

**CALL TO ORDER - 8:07 a.m.** — Chair, Greg Beischer

**REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS**

**Bob Schneider** introduced Roger Sayre, new BLM employee and project lead for management plan for the **Colville River Special Management Area**. This area was part of the Northeast NPR-A Plan in 1998.

**MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR COLVILLE RIVER SPECIAL AREA, Roger Sayre, Fairbanks District Office Planning & Environmental Coordinator**

Background on the Colville River Special Area Management Plan and Environmental Assessment:

- The National Petroleum Reserve Production Act of 1976 gave authority to provide maximum protection for “significant” resources within NPR-A. The *Federal Register* in 1977 designated 2.3 million acres as the Colville River Special Area to provide maximum protection for the Arctic peregrine falcon. The Colville River Special Area expanded in 1999. Maximum protection does not imply prohibition of exploration or other activities.
- The 1998 Record of Decision (ROD) for the Northeast NPR-A Integrated Activity Plan/EIS directed the BLM to develop a Colville River Management Plan for the Special Area in cooperation with adjacent landowners and other affected parties to address subsistence, wildlife, recreation, paleontological and other issues. No permanent oil and gas facilities, except essential pipeline crossings, would be allowed within one mile of the west bluffs (or bank) of the Colville River. Aircraft shall maintain an altitude of at least 1,500 ft AGL when they are within one-half mile of cliffs identified as raptor nesting sites during the nesting season.
- In 2004 the ROD for Northwest NPR-A Integrated Activity Plan/EIS defined the maximum protection of falcons by designating setbacks, time restrictions, air flight restrictions, operating procedures, and guidance in stipulations and ROPs. The ROD also deferred leasing within the Colville River Special Area until completion of a management plan for South NPR-A and the Colville River Special Area.
- In 2006 the vacated ROD for the Amended Northeast NPR-A Integrated Activity Plan/EIS said to continue with construction and aircraft protections, minimize ground-vehicle motorized use during nesting season, prevent or minimize loss of raptor foraging habitat, and defer leasing in the Colville River Special Area until a management plan is completed.
- Management issues include defining protections for the Arctic peregrine falcon in the Colville River Special Area. The information needed for planning purposes is

scattered among many documents. The concept of “maximum protection” for the Arctic peregrine falcon should be reviewed and possibly refined. The effects of key activities such as subsistence, paleontology research, and recreation need to be analyzed in the context of peregrine falcon management.

- The purpose of the plan is to compile recent survey data and GIS data to identify nest sites and key features into a single planning document to ensure maximum protection of the Arctic peregrine falcon. A unified management plan will provide compliance with the 1998 and 2004 RODs for the Northeast and Northwest NPR-A Integrated Activity Plans/EISs. Protection and management of the Arctic peregrine falcon needs to be applied consistently.
- The alternative to not develop a plan was considered and eliminated. The Secretary of the Interior directed the BLM to develop a management plan for the Arctic peregrine falcon in the Colville River Special Area.

**The proposed action is Alternative 1.** This plan and environmental assessment will focus on the Arctic peregrine falcon, reviewing and clarifying the adequacy of protections, and updating planning maps to include recent survey data. Protections outlined in previous documents will be consolidated and made consistent throughout the Colville River Special Area. Source documents would include the 1983 NPR-A leasing EIS, 1998 Northeast NPR-A IAP/EIS, 1999 Raptor Management Workshop, 2004 Northwest NPR-A IAP/EIS, 2006 Amended Northeast NPR-A IAP/EIS and the 2007 Draft Northeast NPR-A IAP/EIS Supplement.

Other resource elements will be assessed in the context of peregrine falcon management to include subsistence, recreation, paleontological resources, other wildlife, cultural resources, socioeconomics and environmental justice, and mineral geologic exploration.

Elements that have been considered, but are not likely to be evaluated in detail, are air quality, soils, wetlands and floodplains, fisheries and fish habitat, wildland fire, invasive species, Native American religious concerns, hazardous and solid waste, water quality, wild and scenic rivers, wilderness, visual resources, and vegetative resources.

The BLM will coordinate with the North Slope Borough, local governments, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, State of Alaska (DNR, ADF&G, DOT), US Fish & Wildlife Service, key constituent groups (commercial operators, environmental organizations) and the Alaska Resource Advisory Council.

The end product will be a concise environmental assessment focusing on the Arctic peregrine falcon in the Colville River Special Area. From now through June of 2008 the BLM will work on coordination, evaluate environmental impacts, and prepare the plan and the environmental assessment. We will release the management plan and environmental assessment in the summer of 2008 and provide a 30-day comment period.

**Charlie Boddy** commented that since the field trip to the Colville River in 2006, the has RAC favored Alternative 1 to create consistency within the plan. **Greg** asked if the rest of the RAC felt the same? Everyone at the table agreed that they did.

### **17(b) EASEMENT UPDATE, Ramona Chinn, Deputy State Director, Alaska Lands**

Ramona asked for any comments on the new 17(b) Easement brochure in the RAC packets. The brochure is on the BLM website and it is downloadable, so if anyone you know is interested in it, please print it out and share it with them.

**Greg** asked the committee on 17(b) to look through the brochure and provide any feedback. Greg said most people do want to obey the law and not trespass. **Greg, June, Michael and Suzanne will be the committee for the 17(b) issue, with Michael as lead.**

Ramona pointed out that users want to know who owns the land and what uses are allowed. Interagency committees for easement program management will meet twice a year to work out issues.

**THE 100th ANNIVERSARY OF THE IDITAROD—Greg** asked Gary Reimer to discuss the Iditarod celebration.

The Department of the Interior and the BLM, along with other involved agencies, will celebrate the centennial of the Iditarod over a four-year period. The public appreciates the BLM for maintaining the 1400 miles of actively used trails. The BLM is the administrator of the entire trail, but there are other land management entities involved. We are all looking at this centennial as a call to action to get projects completed.

**Greg** commented that the spotlight is focused on Alaska from around the world during the Iditarod. It is something to celebrate and BLM should make the most out of it. It is something to be proud of.

### **END OF FIRE SEASON REPORT - John Gould, Manager, Alaska Fire Service**

- The 2007 fire season was a slightly above-average fire season in terms of numbers, but in terms of acres burned it was below average. The Anaktuvuk River fire brought the acreage numbers up.
- One of the bigger fires was the Mooseheart Mountain fire, which burned in a limited protection area. It was early in the year and threatened a buffalo farm, so the BLM took action to protect those values.
- The Caribou Hills fire burned about 55,000 acres near Ninilchik and 110 buildings, primarily cabins and outbuildings. The success story is that due to the work the BLM

and the State have done with the *Firewise* outreach program, the inhabitants were aware that it was a fire-prone area. A Type II Team was assigned to the fire.

- One other large fire was near Willow, but no structures were burned. A Type II Team from the Lower 48 was assigned during the same time frame.
- Forty crews from around the state were sent to Central Idaho and Western Montana in support of their fires. That was a big project for Alaska Fire Service since we hire the crews, bring them into Fort Wainwright for processing, then fly them to the Lower 48 in a hired jet. This program is important in terms of village employment. The State of Alaska sent engines down for the first time ever to support the Lower 48 fires, which was a big logistical undertaking.
- A number of hazardous fuel reduction projects were completed for the military: 38,000 acres of fuels projects and a multitude of interagency training took place.
- Two new lightning detection points were added within the state so we will be able to cover the state more accurately.
- The AFS decided to not renew a contract with Chugiachmuit for their 20-person crew, due to budget cuts. Funding will be redirected toward initial attack, which is the best value for the dollar. Alaska will be getting 20 new smokejumper positions, which requires a lot of training. With budget cuts we lost exclusive-use contracts for our scooper airplanes, which are a big benefit for us. AFS has started negotiations with the State of Alaska to integrate our operations, since we have parallel organizations.
- In the RAC package is a handout listing the fires north of the range. They are all in monitor status. Management plans designate monitoring for fires in *limited* areas, where we don't take action. We are researching this to see if it is the right plan or if we need to change the process.

**Q: Do lightning detection points enable you to determine where fires might start?**

**A:** Yes, they aid in detection, particularly if it is a dry lightning situation.

**Q: What drove the decision to reevaluate the fire plan up North?**

**A:** The North Slope residents considered the values at risk and concerns were raised on the migratory path of the caribou and health issues due to smoke. We decided we needed to initiate discussion on the fire plan.

**Steve de Albuquerque** said he thought ConocoPhilips people at Alpine would like to enter into those discussions, based on the shutdown of equipment due to smoke.

**BREAK** 9:25 a.m.

**CALL TO ORDER** at 10:02 a.m.

**Public comments were taken (see attachment 1)**

Question after comments from David van den Berg, Executive Director of the Northern Alaska Environmental Center, on the Colville River Management Plan:

**Q: What other values will be considered in the plan?**

**A:** The record of decision said to develop a plan for the special area that focused on the peregrine falcon and other birds of prey. We will take into account how other uses like subsistence and paleontological research might affect the peregrine. The BLM is not prevented from making other plans in the future. This plan will talk about the other resources and we are also considering them in the development of the plan.

After comments on the Bay Plan from Jeremiah Millen, representing the Alaska Wilderness League via teleconference, Greg thanked Mr. Millen for his comments and asked the RAC if there was any discussion.

**Tom Crafford** said he took issue with the characterization of a protest period, when it was intended to be a comment period.

**Tom Lonnie** asked that Gary Reimer clarify the public participation process.

**Gary Reimer** explained that early in the process the BLM issued a draft environmental impact statement, followed by an extensive comment period; comments received were considered in the final of the proposed plan. There is a protest period during which those individuals who participated in the comment period are allowed to file a protest.

**Mr. Millen:** I want to be clear that we are asking the RAC for a delay in the scheduled release date.

**Phil** asked if comments on the EIS were directed at the Pebble Mine?

**Mr. Millen:** No, at Bristol Bay.

**Phil** asked what areas BLM administered in the Bristol Bay Plan? Is it 20%? Is it 5%?

**Mr. Millen:** approximately 3 million acres.

**Gary** added that it was 3 million acres, but land transfers to the State of Alaska and to village corporations at the time of the final EIS would be approximately 1.9 million acres. The BLM estimates that it will manage 1.6 million acres after conveyances, which makes it less than 5 %.

**Tom Crafford** asked if land conveyances were contingent on the completion of the plan?

**Gary** answered that only one would be affected; it is on the state's priority list.

**Greg** told Mr. Millen that three RAC members were on a subcommittee for the plan and his perception was that BLM went out of its way to extend the comment period and they

had a lot of public interaction, particularly relating to subsistence. The RAC would take the comments under advisement and would discuss them later in the meeting.

**Mr. Millen:** Thank you for providing the opportunity for public comment.

**No further public comments.**

**BREAK** 10:27 A.M.

**CALL TO ORDER** at 10:44 a.m.

**Greg:** We will take comments if any other members of the public appear or phone in. Now we will move on to the next item on the agenda.

### **INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT - Scott Guyer, Natural Resource Specialist.**

Scott Guyer presented information on behalf of Jeannie Standley, who had moved out of state and was unable to return for the RAC meeting. Scott will be coordinating the weeds program at the State Office in the future. He referred to the record of decision on CD and a booklet on weeds, which were in the RAC packets. He said the main focus was on weed infestations, although there are other invasives.

Two primary developments that have direct bearing are the national record of decision and the signed programmatic management plan (both on CDs) that recommends limited use of herbicides to manage weeds, along with removal by mechanical means, hand-pulling, or prescribed fire on BLM-managed public lands in 16 Western States, including Alaska.

### **INTRODUCTION**

- **Weed Definitions:** An **invasive weed** is any unwanted plant that is aggressive and undesirable, or exotic or foreign plants that compete with native plants, and have the potential to establish and dominate new habitats. This is a serious issue for land managers. **Noxious weed** is a legal term that describes most problematic invasive non-native weeds. The economic, ecologic or human health consequences are serious. These are particularly difficult to control and many are poisonous, toxic or otherwise harmful.
- **National Weed Facts:** the U.S. spends billions of dollars annually to control invasive plants. The BLM spent \$7.6 million in 2007 to manage invasive weeds. Impacts from weeds increase over time as desirable plants decline, the nutrients and water cycles change, and the wildlife habitat foraging declines. Soil erosion and stream sediment increase, fire regimes become more frequent, and biodiversity and ecosystems decline. The costs of weed control increase exponentially over time if they are not managed effectively.

- **Invasive Weeds in Alaska:** Most lands in Alaska are not yet infested, but weeds are now spreading rapidly. There are more than 30,000 reports of 150+ weed species in Alaska right now. Weeds typically occur where people create vectors for spreading weeds into wildlands through roads, trails, recreation areas and disturbed soils.
- **Cost-effective Weed Management equals prevention:** *Early detection and rapid response* to eradicate new invasions will reduce the need for future vegetation treatments and herbicide use. Prevention can be accomplished through education and regulation. Early detection and rapid response requires local cooperation and experts who can detect and eradicate new invaders.
- **Controlling Established Infestations:** when prevention and early detection and eradication fail, other successful strategies include containment and reduction to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation. Eradication becomes highly unlikely and costly, so the goal becomes management of the infestations.
- **The National Programmatic Vegetation Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) benefits the BLM-Alaska** by providing background information for site-specific analysis and decisions. It gives proven prevention methods, environmental protections, processes to implement, herbicide use safeguards and opportunities to avoid resource degradation and costs. Stipulations that assist prevention include project planning, project development, project implementation and site rehabilitation or restoration. The EIS gives standard operating procedures for the use of approved herbicides that include thorough evaluation of the need for herbicides and the potential impact on the environment. Projects that use herbicides must develop an operational plan, project stipulations and key personnel responsibilities. Communications, safety, spill response, emergency procedures and herbicide-free buffer zones must be specified.
- **The use of herbicides** is controversial, but is often the most effective method. Immediate judicious use will prevent the need for widespread use later. There are special provisions for the protection of cultural resources and special status species.
- **Conclusion,** weeds in Alaska are still manageable. BLM-Alaska can benefit from the lessons learned by other states and agencies. The sooner we act to manage invasive plants, the lower the cost will be economically and ecologically. The EIS and the ROD summarize the direction for effective weed prevention and management. The EIS does not require the use of any specific method of weed control, but gives the managers access to available tools.

Jeannie Standley submitted the following thoughts for RAC consideration:

1. BLM-Alaska should adopt and implement the Standard Operating Procedures and Mitigation Measures outlined in the national ROD and EIS to ensure cost-effective, environmentally responsible management of vegetation and invasive plants.

2. BLM-Alaska should develop or secure expertise to manage vegetation in support of land health and programs such as oil and gas development, mining, forestry, wildlife, subsistence, fisheries, recreation, reindeer grazing, etc.
3. The State of Alaska could help by taking a leadership role in invasive plant management. Leadership has been handled by an all-volunteer group known as the Alaska Committee for Noxious and Invasive Plant Management in Alaska (CNIPM), which has filled a void and performed in a role normally done by the State. CNIPM volunteers have brought land managers together, provided a forum to share information, created educational materials and recommended legislation. There is no designated funding for CNIPM or for the statewide database of weed infestation records, the Alaska Exotic Plant Information Clearinghouse (AKEPIC). The state's leadership is critical in long-term management of undesirable plants.

**Q: Who compromises CNIPM?**

**A:** BLM is a partner in the organization. *[Editor's note: the CNIPM Website is [www.uaf.edu/ces/cnipm/aboutus.html](http://www.uaf.edu/ces/cnipm/aboutus.html)]*

**Q: What is the decision in the national EIS?**

**A:** The ROD talks about what herbicides are available in Alaska. They are included in the ROD, which is on the CD.

**Q: Does the BLM in Alaska have experts in the field of invasive species?**

**A:** Scott Guyer will be assuming the role and working with the professionals at the district offices. There is a lot to learn in the process and there have been inventories completed, but more information is needed.

**Comment:** The national programmatic management plan and EIS provides an overarching umbrella for different options that can be used on BLM-managed public lands across 16 western states, along with a list of approved herbicides. This is the first time the BLM has had one guiding plan that gives consistent directions for all states. Each state will then will complete step-down plans that suit its particular situation.

**Q: What is involved if you want to obtain Alaska DEC approval to apply herbicide?**

**A:** The BLM will have to develop its own environmental assessment to identify the specifics of the herbicide use.

**Keith** said his conflict experience had been with the railroad and along the tracks.

**Guyer** expressed his belief that if the scoping process and public comments were publicized right, the BLM could use herbicide in small areas and prove that it can be successful and safe. To combat the problem effectively, herbicides need to be a part of the solution.

**Suzanne** asked what the recommendations were on adopting standard operating procedures?

**Guyer** said everyone involved in the program will adopt the EIS recommendations for inventories and eradication.

**Tom Lonnie** mentioned this was a major topic 4 or 5 years ago at a RAC meeting in Washington, D.C. The Nature Conservancy was on board with the use of herbicides, and he wondered if an effort to reach out to environmental groups had been made.

**Guyer** replied that was a role of the CNIPM group, and the Nature Conservancy was attending the CNIPM meeting this week. He said the group would be reaching out to as many people as possible.

**Greg** commented that given the scope and damage that invasive species have caused in other places in the world, so far in Alaska we haven't experienced any major ecological or human damage as a result. The State needs to assess the risk, analyze the risk versus the benefit. Is there potential for a plant or animal to invade our environment?

**June** said the Nature Conservancy was helping the Fish and Wildlife Service to eradicate rats on Rat Island. In another situation, Arctic fox were introduced for their fur. The islands made natural containments, so they didn't spread to the mainland, but they wiped out sea birds on the islands. There is now an ongoing program to get rid of the fox.

**Greg** said this is typical of what could go wrong if we don't direct the proper funding and measures. If it hasn't been done it should be.

**Guyer** said that some preventative measures have to do with fire fighting, where equipment, such as bull dozers and fire engines, need to be hosed off and cleaned up before they go off-road. They carry alien seeds that can drop into new areas and next season a new infestation emerges. Alaska has advantages because we don't have a lot of infrastructure and climate helps to slow down growth. Also, we have a small group of people who are serious about invasives and work well together. There are some suspected problems, but we need to do more inventories.

**Greg** said it seems like an adhoc effort—if the risk is relatively low, then that is ok. But if the risk is substantial, we need a strong program to take care of the problem.

**Bob** said the Dalton Highway is the poster child for invasive plant species due to the big trucks and increased tourism traffic into this formerly roadless area of northern Alaska.

**Gary Reimer** said that Anchorage is facing problems, it has people concerned. There is a lot of expertise among the agencies and there is a lot of good sharing among the group.

**Guyer** said the BLM was not seeing a lot of infestations on fire areas, and but sees problems with travel corridors and along streams.

**Greg** said that although Scott mentioned the state taking leadership, between the National Park Service and the BLM, the federal government owns most of the land in Alaska. He thought the invasives transcended land ownership and someone needed to step up and take the lead. He feels strongly that someone should assess the risk.

**Guyer** responded that most of the areas are along right-of-ways under Alaska Department of Transportation responsibility.

**Keith** said it can't be done unilaterally by the BLM, but the BLM could take the lead and bring the State and the Municipality people in, too. Travel corridors are clearly an issue and we have to fight the products coming in. Anchorage and Fairbanks should be part of the solution.

**Charlie** said he thought they should also look at reclamation lands, roads, and gravel pits where we have data that could go into a database for analysis. His company, Usibelli Coal Mine near Healy, had a local seed mix developed strictly for use within the Interior—they give it out to people at the state fair in Fairbanks.

**Guyer** said there is no certified seed program in Alaska. A seed warehouse in Boise provides all the seeds in the West, but there is nothing similar in Alaska. A seed bank in Oregon is working with the Palmer Station at the Alaska Plant Materials Center.

**Charlie** said he was floored by the numbers of invasives they saw on the Dalton: 41 to 65 different species of invasive weed.

**Bob** added that he had met with Pam Miller, a staffer with Northern Alaska Environmental Center, and her concern was the broad aerial application of pesticides that could affect people. She understood that spot treatments were not effective. If we get opposition, it would be from the Center on the broad application treatments.

**Charlie** said just because something is successful elsewhere doesn't mean it will be successful in Alaska. It cost \$6,000 per test to kill off micro-organisms in settling ponds.

**Guyer** said all herbicides have different effective rates on different types of plants. Spot treatments will be used for certain.

**Bob** said they had looked at herbicides to try to determine what is the most effective treatment and the lowest risk, and it was interesting that the herbicide that came up was Roundup—a spot treatment that is fairly short-lived.

**Charlie** said he had used a weed burner versus scalding hot water and vinegar, and the vinegar and hot water application keeps weeds out longer than burning out weeds. The invasives seem to be huge problem from Seward to Anchorage.

**Keith** said it comes down to testing. Warmer temperatures are required for bio-degradation and we have to take the temperature into account for these activities. It would be wise to cut to the testing phase.

**Guyer** said all pesticides require certified applicators and there are instructions on all of the products for application procedures and temperatures required.

**LUNCH:** 11:45 a.m.

**CALL TO ORDER** at 1: 22 p.m.

### **Resolutions and Recommendations**

**Greg** called for discussion of the Alaska Wilderness League request, whether the RAC wanted to recommend delaying the release of the Bay Plan.

**Gary** said he preferred to spend the energy to respond to the comments the BLM had already received so they could get the plan done in the June/July timeframe.

**Greg** reminded the Council that Gary made the point earlier that only those who have commented on the plan previously can protest. The scope is narrow, we don't need to read the document again. We need to take a look at their comments and see if they were properly handled, then protest if necessary.

**Keith** asked what would be the form and nature of the protest. If we're talking about one letter, why would they need an additional month?

**Tom Lonnie** responded that the group wasn't asking for an extra month to protest—the BLM wouldn't be extending the protest period; it would be delaying the release of the final for a month. His goal was to get the document on the street and begin the protest period. The planning process can become a never-ending process.

**Tom Crafford** said there isn't any good time to do these things. Either it's hunting season, the holidays, or working... and you end up with narrow little windows of time you can't work around. It's a fact a life—you must adhere to the process.

**Keith** asked Mr. Lonnie if the BLM could have planned around the Russian Christmas holiday? **Tom Lonnie** said the BLM had planned on getting the plan out the first of December, but there had been delays.

**Greg** said that since the comment period was extended earlier and he believed that the BLM went all-out in this effort, he didn't think the request for delaying the plan was warranted. On the other hand, if there is a lot of controversy in the Bay, the people's perception may be that the government isn't doing everything it can to protect them.

**Keith** asked if anyone thought the RAC should recommend delaying the release of the plan. **June** said she didn't think the holiday excuse was warranted—Russian Christmas

isn't as long as the Christian Christmas, and people don't celebrate it the same way. **Tom Lonnie** said he could see no reason for a delay.

**Decision:** *The RAC did not recommend a delay in the release of the Bay Plan.*

**Other Discussion:**

**Greg introduced discussion on the RAC's work plan.** It was prepared every year, and was the manner in which the RAC members produced their recommendations. He said the RAC members communicate to the BLM just by being here. Another way we communicate is through resolutions. Over the last year the RAC hasn't made any resolutions. If we're not going to do the workplan, then do we need to do something different to officially communicate as a group to the BLM. I would like to hear your comments.

**Keith** said he liked the idea of people with specific interests initiating some kind of action. If BLM managers have issues on their plates, they can ask for the RAC to discuss and recommend action. The action part takes a significant amount of work.

**Greg** said that was his opinion, also... The committees should be active and paying attention to the issues. **Keith** agreed; he liked the idea of the committee bringing forth issues gathered from talking to people.

**Charlie** said this was the best work plan we've used to work on. For example, we should be included on issue distribution lists from the BLM when appropriate. To do the work and do it right it takes time and effort. He felt that if he was more in the loop on what was happening, he could be more effective. We don't want to come to the RAC meeting and be told "this is what is going on," and then go home. We would like to be able to have input and participate in research, analysis, gathering documentation, whatever. We want to be kept informed so we don't get blindsided.

**Greg** asked Tom Lonnie if he had any thoughts on how he would like the RAC to communicate with the BLM.

**Tom Lonnie** answered that hopefully, if the BLM had a discussion on an issue, we would directly ask questions and you would give us honest opinions. You should especially speak up when we are not in agreement. The RAC can develop and pass resolutions, but it can also do what you just did in terms of hearing what was said on the phone during the public comment period, read the letter provided, and give your input. I tell my staff I already know what I think; I need to know what you think. My sense is that if you would like to pass a resolution on something, then go forward with that process.

**Steve** asked what it meant by proposing a resolution.

**Tom Lonnie** said it would be up to the RAC if you want to make a formal resolution or recommendation. Any resolution that is passed by the RAC goes to me, and I pass it on to the Director of the BLM with a cover letter. If it is a unanimous resolution, the Director will pass that on to the Secretary of the Interior. It is a formal, documented process, rather than presenting a general opinion during verbal discussion.

**Greg** added that it is meant to be stronger advice.

**Steve** asked what happened if the group discussed an issue, decided to create a resolution, then voted on the resolution.

**Tom Lonnie** responded that for every major issue in Alaska, he or his staff briefed the BLM Director and his staff in Washington, D.C. During the briefing I would identify when and if a resolution concerning that issue was passed by the RAC. The RAC represents the cross section of people in the state and generally speaks for them.

**Suzanne** said it would be helpful to send information to the RAC members (like the 17(b) conference) in an email as a heads up to the appropriate committee people that a certain type of meeting was going to be held, and if we had the time and were in the right location, we could attend.

**Sharon** said she would work closely with the BLM managers and make sure to get that information to the RAC.

**Gary** said that is where two-way feedback would be helpful. Some of you have varied interests and by letting BLM managers know what your areas of interest are, we can share the information with you.

**Suzanne** said she gets good information from the Glennallen Public Affairs person.

**Keith** asked whether new or different assignments had been made?

**Sharon** reiterated the list of committees and members (Attachment 2 at end of these minutes).

**Keith** said he would meet with John Gould over the winter on the Wildland Fire Management Committee.

**Charlie** said that resolutions communicate in two ways. A resolution gives people a chance to talk about it, even if the resolution doesn't get passed. At least, the discussion occurs and Tom and everyone else hears the discussion, which is valuable in itself.

**Greg** concluded the discussion. He said that if the discussion is the most efficient way to communicate, then attendance is an issue. It's tough to be here, but I think we have to make the meetings and make the time to attend. We need to make the meetings a priority, especially when we're not doing written resolutions.

**Greg** asked if there were any resolutions that anyone wanted to propose or give us warning that they might propose next time?

Greg added: I am going to propose one on the invasive species issue and will talk to others within the conservation section and work with them to craft it. I'm amazed that the environmental community doesn't view it as a higher risk, so I'll talk to them and see what we come up with. I think the BLM should do a risk assessment as to invasive species and the concerns on public lands. We plan and work toward conserving the values on the land, and I believe a lot more thought should be put into the process.

**June** asked about the risks of reindeer running off with caribou—is there a risk to the wild species? **Greg** responded that Bob Schneider had addressed that the day before. He added that in his limited experience, every time a domesticated species mixed with wildlife, there were problems. The BLM needs more study on invasive species. **Gary** said it would be good to get some RAC involvement in the reindeer grazing issue.

**Bob** said that by the field trip in August, the Fairbanks District should have a better risk assessment for treatment of invasives in the Dalton Highway area.

Tom Lonnie mentioned that the Secretary of the Interior was very interested in the book, *Last Child in the Woods*, which explores the impression that children are becoming more detached from the environment and more engrossed in computers and television. He promised to send the RAC members a copy of the book.

Greg Beisher asked if there were any topics the members wanted to discuss at the next RAC meeting. He said he wanted to revisit what Steve was talking about with the social health impacts. He would like to share concerns and considerations from the State side not just from the effects of oil and gas, but from mining and other pending development projects. On the North Slope there are a moderate number of villages that are involved, however, in Southeast Alaska labor for mining projects could be drawn from 56 tribes and villages. One of the troublesome concerns is, where do you draw the line? How are these things going to change the lifestyle of these people? We've heard in the presentations that there are potential negative impacts, and frankly, one of the real outcomes is the increased concern for the health and welfare of these people in rural Alaska with jobs and wages. There doesn't seem to be any consideration given to that. **Tom Crafford** said he would like the background data, the application and the requirement for it.

**Steve said** oil and gas or natural gas activities don't necessarily instigate the social pathology. **Tom Lonnie** said he didn't think it was easy. At many of the international projects they are looking at the health and social welfare effects. That is a legitimate question to explore. It is something that cannot be ignored. The State has submitted some really good comments on this.

**Tom Crafford** said he was not trying to advocate a position one way or the other, but from the State's point of view he would like to advocate a dialogue on the implications

and explore what path to follow. **Tom Lonnie** said the existing mechanism is out there already, we don't need to create something. **Suzanne** said that what comes to mind is the North Slope Science Initiative that has already pulled in the information, just under different areas. Data is already out there. We might consider working on a collaborative project to get people to put together a picture. We might define a new way of thinking about health and mental health and apply it to land use and resources. **Tom Crafford** said that would be a very positive thing.

**Greg** asked that the Council move on to plans for a field trip, set the meeting schedule.

**After discussing the following field trip options,**

- 1) Delta/Gulkana River/Richardson Highway Focus,
- 2) Travel to Steese White Mtn area, or
- 3) Dalton Highway/Utility Corridor focus

**Decision: The Council agreed to the three-day trip up the Dalton Highway, through the Utility Corridor.**

**Greg** started discussion about having three meetings a year instead of four. He would like to see better participation if the Council has only three meetings per year. **Tom Lonnie** told the Council that the BLM did not yet have a fiscal year 2008 budget, but had been told there would be a 12% travel reduction imposed. **Phil** offered that if there is a bigger workload the meeting could be three days instead of two. **Tom Crafford** said that one of the good things about the meetings outside of Anchorage was that the Council members get an opportunity to see different aspects of the state.

**Greg** also thought it was important from the public standpoint, as well as the RAC's, to have the opportunity to come in and testify.

**Greg** said they should set a date for the next RAC meeting, which would be in Anchorage.

**Decision: Sharon** will send out an email to all the members, proposing two sets of dates for the next two meetings:

Anchorage Meeting: March 18-19, March 19-20, March 25-26, or March 26-27.

*Editor's Note: Due to a conflict in the Chair's schedule, the first date set was abandoned and the date of March 25 & 26 was agreed to.*

Field Trip: August 12 through 15, or August 19-22 for the field trip and public meeting.

*Editor's Note: August 12-13-14 was agreed to.*

**Greg** moved to adjourn, Keith seconded. *Unanimous decision*, adjourned at 2:58 p.m.

## **Attachment 1 – Nov. 14, 2007**

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS, 10 a.m.**

#### **David van den Berg, Executive Director of the Northern Alaska Environmental Center** *(written testimony submitted):*

We are pleased that BLM has set its focus, finally, on the Colville River Special Area Management Plan. However, BLM has too narrowly defined the expected outcome of this plan and in a way that is contrary to the mandates contained in the existing Northeast NPRA Integrated Activity Plan.

We recommend that BLM broaden its scope beyond that given in the Work Plan passed out at the RAC meeting. This plan provides this “Outcome Measurement:”

- “BLM will implement a plan to provide maximum protection to the arctic peregrine falcon and its habitat within the Colville River Special Area – consistent with the purposes of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska.”

By contrast, the existing management plan (1998 ROD) provides a broader mandate:

- “The BLM will develop a Colville River Management Plan for the Special Area in cooperation with adjacent landowners and other affected parties to address subsistence, wildlife, recreation, paleontological, and other issues. Prior to launching such a plan, the agency will conduct a raptor workshop to review scientific literature on disturbance to raptors and identify potential mitigation measures. Creation of a Bird Conservation Area as described in Section II.B.6 of the Final IAP/EIS will be explored with other landowners as part of the Colville River Management Plan.” (p.2)

We urge BLM to implement the broader scope of the management plan as defined in the 1998 ROD, and to conduct this work as a formal FACA committee with input from all interested parties.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

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#### **Jeremiah Millen, representing the Alaska Wilderness League via teleconference.**

Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts and concerns with you today, we regret that we could not be here in person to share in the discussion we hope will follow the reading of this letter. First, Alaska Wilderness League would like to inform the RAC and BLM Planners of the recent consolidation of the Alaska Coalition and Alaska Wilderness League. AWL has taken over the Alaska Coalition’s BLM program and it has become a named entity of AWL. All program work and funding has transferred completely.

The intent of this letter is to express our concern over the inconvenient timing of the planned release of the Bristol Bay Proposed Resource Management Plan and final Environmental Impact Statement. Releasing the final during the upcoming holiday season, we believe may prevent adequate public participation. According to BLM's Lead Planner, Chuck Denton, the final Bay Plan is currently scheduled for release on December 7, 2007, to be followed by a 30-day protest period ending January 7, 2008. As stated in our letter submitted to the BLM State Director today:

“Based on the length and complexity of the document, the importance of the resources at stake and the concern surrounding BLM's recommendations to revoke existing ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals throughout the planning area, a delay of the final plan's release and 30 day protest period is warranted to allow the public to comment on the agency's preferred alternative. Given the vast amount of scientific information and anticipated responses to public comments contained in the plan, the time frame is insufficient for members of the public to adequately evaluate BLM's preferred alternative and analysis. This is of particular concern as the final plan's protest period is inconveniently scheduled during the upcoming holiday seasons of Christmas, New Year's and Russian Christmas, which is greatly celebrated through out the planning region.

There are 26 rural communities located in the planning area that are affected by the Bay PRMP/FEIS's management proposals. The residents of these communities are predominantly Native Alaskans whom are dedicated to the preparation and celebration of Russian Christmas, which begins January 7, 2008 and concludes January 14, 2008. Due to the inconvenient timing of the protest period, it will be extremely difficult for residents to provide substantive protest comments before the 30-day protest period closes. The Bristol Bay planning process should promote public discourse and encourage the full involvement of every interested Alaskan with the desire to participate. With this in mind, we request that the holiday season be taken into account and that the Bay PRMP/FEIS release be delayed until at least January 15, 2008 to allow adequate opportunity for public participation”.

AWL requests the RAC's support to encourage BLM to postpone the final Bay plan's release until January 15, 2008 to ensure that every measure is taken to achieve sufficient public participation in the development of this critical document.

Further, we would like to remind the RAC that BLM's Northern Field Office decided it was appropriate to hold an additional ANILCA 810 subsistence hearing during the recent protest period for the Kobuk-Seward PRMP/FEIS. WE believe that additional hearings in the Bay communities are also warranted and will help facilitate public involvement. Therefore, we request the RAC's support in encouraging BLM to organize and conduct information meetings and hearings in regard to the content and impacts of the proposed RMP within the communities of the Bristol Bay planning area. Providing an overview of the final plan will ensure adequate understanding of this complex document by those who will be most impacted by its outcome. Thank you, Jennifer Hillman and Jeremiah Millen

**Activity 1: OHV Usage Policy**

Off-highway vehicle use and associated issues on public lands.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	OUTCOME MEASUREMENT	RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS
Develop option(s) to off highway vehicle use issue(s)	Review (identify) RMP(s) and step down plans for OHV issue(s)	FY 08 11/1/07 – 9/30/08	Plan education and outreach campaign, identify specific OHV routes for designation.	Suzanne McCarthy, Phil Driver, Keith Tryck, Scott Hala, Mike McDougall  Manager: Ted Murphy/ Dave Howell

**Activity 2: East Alaska RMP**

**Status:** BLM released Record of Decision for East RMP in Sept. 2007. Implementation of route designations identified in the RMP can occur after the 30-day appeal period if there are no appeals for the route designations. The plan recommends retention of most of the PLO 5150 withdrawal which reserved lands for the trans-Alaska oil pipeline route.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	OUTCOME MEASUREMENT	RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS
Recommend priority management options for plan implementation	Review management options and make proposals	FY 08 11/1/07 – 9/30/08	BLM will consider or adopt prioritized management options	Suzanne McCarthy, Scott Hala, Mike McDougall  Manager: Gary Reimer

**Activity 3: Kobuk-Seward RMP**

**Status:** The notice of availability for proposed RMP/final EIS published in Federal Register Sept. 2007. Protest period ends Oct. 29, 2007 and Record of Decision to be published either January or Feb. 2008.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	OUTCOME MEASUREMENT	RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS
Recommend priority management options for plan implementation	Review management options and make proposals	FY 08 11/1/07 – 9/30/08	BLM will consider or adopt prioritized management options	Teresa Imm, Tom Crafford, Phil Driver, Denise Michels  Manager: Gary Reimer/ Bob Schneider

**Activity 4: Bay Resource Management Plan**

**Status:** The Final EIS is scheduled for release Dec. 7, 2007.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	OUTCOME MEASUREMENT	RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS
Recommend priority management options for plan implementation	Review management options and make proposals	FY 08 (11/1/07 – 9/30/08)	BLM will consider or adopt prioritized management options	June McAtee, Greg Beischer, Sandra Key  Manager: Gary Reimer

**Activity 5: Management Plan & Environmental Assessment for the Colville River Special Area**

Planning efforts started August 2007 and anticipate completion by spring 2008.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	OUTCOME MEASUREMENT	RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS
Recommend priority management options for plan implementation	Review approach to plan, as developed by BLM	11/2007 – late spring to early summer, 2008	BLM will implement a plan to provide maximum protection to the arctic peregrine falcon and its habitat within the Colville River Special Area – consistent with the purposes of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska.	Sandra Key, Teresa Imm, Suzanne McCarthy, Steve de Albuquerque, Amalie Couvillion  Manager: Lon Kelly  Project Manager: Roger Sayre

**Activity 6: ANCSA 17(b) Easement Management**

Section 17 (b) of Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act provides BLM a mechanism to consult the state and reserve public use and access easements across land conveyed to Native corporations

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	OUTCOME MEASUREMENT	RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS
Informational	Track 17 (b) committee work	FY 08	Review attainment of goals of 17(b) committee	<b>Lead:</b> Mike McDougall <b>Members:</b> Greg Beischer, June McAtee, Suzanne McCarthy  Manager: Ramona Chinn

**Activity 7: Conveyances: Land Transfer Program**

The BLM in Alaska is responsible for transferring land to individual Alaska Natives, Native Corporations, and the State of Alaska under three major statutes: the Native Allotment Act of 1906, the Alaska Statehood Act, and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). The analysis, adjudication, outreach, survey, and conveyance work necessary to implement these laws is referred to as the Alaska Land Transfer Program.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	OUTCOME MEASUREMENT	RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS
Informational	Update done at meetings on conveyances within the Anchorage & Fairbanks districts	FY 08 (11/1/07- 9/30/08)	Review status of 2008 fiscal year conveyance goals	Committee will be formed as-needed.  Manager: Ramona Chin

### Activity 8: Invasive Species Management

Invasive species including weeds, insects and aquatic species have the potential to seriously harm the economic, recreational and environmental values of Alaska public lands.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	OUTCOME MEASUREMENT	RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS
Recommend priorities for invasive species program	Evaluate & propose prevention, early detection/rapid response & containment control strategies	FY 08 (11/1/07 – 9/30/08)	Review progress of invasive species program	Keith Tryck, Tom Crafford, Sandra Key, Mike McDougall, Charlie Boddy, Greg Beischer  Manager: Ted Murphy/ Dave Howell

### Activity 9: North Slope Science Initiative

Formally established in the Energy Bill of August 2005, the North Slope Science Initiative's purpose is to increase collaboration between agencies and to integrate inventory, monitoring and research activities across the North Slope of Alaska.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	OUTCOME MEASUREMENT	RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS
Informational	Have regular updates on the NSSI oversight and tech group activities	FY 08 (11/1/07 – 9/30/08)	Track the implementation of monitoring plan as recommended by Research & Monitoring Team	Sandra Key, Teresa Imm, Phil Driver, Steve de Albuquerque, Amalie Couvillion  Manager: John Payne

### Activity 10: Wildland Fire Management

Successful wildland fire management requires community members and fire managers work together on local fire plans to protect residents and their structures and coordinate with other fire managers serving overlapping jurisdictions.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	OUTCOME MEASUREMENT	RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS
Informational	updates on collaborative activities	FY 08 (11/1/07- 9/30/08)	Review effectiveness of fire plans and public outreach	Keith Tryck, Suzanne McCarthy, Charlie Boddy  Manager: John Gould

### Activity 11: Rural Alaska Energy Program

Currently, the BLM Rural Energy Program is in the process developing a five-year plan that will incorporate not only coal bed natural gas, but other potential energy sources such as geothermal and wind that rural Alaska villages could use as local energy sources

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	OUTCOME MEASUREMENT	RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS
Informational	Regular updates on five-year plan.	FY 08 (11/1/07 – 9/30/08)	Drilling and/or studies will determine the feasibility of CBNG or other alternative energy sources in villages.	Teresa Imm, Jim Posey, Denise Michels, Steve de Albuquerque, Charlie Boddy <b>Manager:</b> Ted Murphy

**Activity 12: BLM Reorganizational Studies**

BLM is currently engaged in a nationwide staffing review that may result in substantial staff reorganization.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	OUTCOME MEASUREMENT	RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS
Informational	Regular updates on BLM's Managing for Excellence initiative	FY 08 (11/1/07 -9/31/08)	To examine whether BLM is achieving its core mission of caring for land for current & future generations	<b>Manager:</b> Tom Lonnie, who will give the RAC updates as changes are made to the organization.

**Activity 13: Eastern Interior Resource Management Plan**

Pre-planning work on the Eastern Interior Resource Management Plan (EIRMP) is complete and scoping will begin early in 2008. The Eastern Interior planning area includes 34 million acres, 10.6 million acres of which are BLM-managed public lands. The area includes five National Landscape Conservation System units.

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	OUTCOME MEASUREMENT	RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS
Recommend priority management options for plan implementation	Review management options and make proposals	FY 08 (11/1/07 – 9/30/08)	BLM will consider or adopt prioritized management options.	Mike McDougall, Suzanne McCarthy, Keith Tryck  Manager: Bob Schneider/ Lenore Heppler  Project Manager: TBD

**Activity 14: Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Supplement**

The BLM began developing the Supplement in December 2006 in response to a September 25, 2006, U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska decision that the 2005 Northeast NPR-A Amended Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (IAP/EIS) failed to adequately address cumulative impacts. The Notice of Availability for the Draft Supplemental IAP/EIS was published on August 24, 2007. The public comment period ended November 6, 2007

OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	OUTCOME MEASUREMENT	RESPONSIBLE MEMBERS
Informational	regular updates on the status of supplement	FY 08 (11/1/07 – 9/30/08)	Lease sale may occur in fall of 2008.	Steve de Albuquerque, Amalie Couvillion, Teresa Imm  Manager: Ted Murphy Project Manager: Jim Ducker