

**Bureau of Land Management (BLM)  
Eastern Interior  
Resource Management Plan  
And Environmental Impact Statement  
Frequently Asked Questions**

**How can I get information about the Eastern Interior Resource management Plan (RMP) planning process?**

To access the Eastern Interior planning page on the Internet, go to:

<http://www.blm.gov/ak>

Look under “In the Spotlight” for Eastern Interior Resource Management Plan.

To request printed copies of information, contact Jeanie Cole by phone at 907-474-2340, by email at [jeanie\\_cole@blm.gov](mailto:jeanie_cole@blm.gov), or in writing to: Bureau of Land Management, Eastern Interior Field Office, 1150 University Avenue, Fairbanks, AK 99709.

**What opportunities will I have to provide input into the planning process?**

Comments are welcomed anytime during the development of the RMP and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The formal scoping period runs from February 29 through August 15, 2008. When the Draft RMP/EIS is released (estimated Spring/Summer 2009) there will be a 90-day public comment period on the draft plan.

**How do I submit comments?**

Written comments can be submitted to BLM, attention Jeanie Cole at the address listed above.

E-mail comments can be submitted to: [eirmp\\_comments@blm.gov](mailto:eirmp_comments@blm.gov)

**What will happen to my comments?**

Comments provided during the scoping process will help us focus the RMP/EIS on those issues and management concerns that are most important to the public. They will also help us develop the Draft RMP/EIS alternatives. Comments received on the Draft RMP/EIS will help us refine the alternatives and the analysis of impacts, and select a preferred alternative for the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

**How do I make my comments the most effective?**

Comments should be clear, concise, and relevant to the planning process. Comments that are solution-oriented and provide specific examples are more effective than those that simply oppose or support the proposed project. Comments that contribute to developing alternatives for the RMP are also effective. Comments are particularly helpful early in the process, such as during the scoping period, when they help ensure that reasonable alternatives are analyzed and considered in the Draft RMP/EIS.

Commenting is not a form of “voting.” In other words, the number of comments supporting or opposing a proposal does not directly translate into the BLM’s approval or denial of the action.

Numerous comments that repeat the same basic message will typically be responded to collectively. In addition, general comments stating that an action will have “significant environmental effects” will not help the BLM make a better decision unless the relevant causes and environmental effects are explained.

In addition to public comment, the BLM also receives other information and data, such as operational and technical information, that will also be considered when developing the RMP/EIS. The RMP must also comply with all applicable Federal laws and regulations and BLM policy.

To get more information on how to comment on Environmental Impact Statements, see the *A Citizen's Guide to the NEPA: Having Your Voice Heard* (Council on Environmental Quality, December 2007). The section *How to Comment* begins on page 27. This document is available on the Internet at: [http://www.nepa.gov/nepa/Citizens\\_Guide\\_Dec07.pdf](http://www.nepa.gov/nepa/Citizens_Guide_Dec07.pdf)

### **What if my community is not scheduled for a scoping meeting?**

We will consider and try to accommodate requests for additional meetings.

### **What is a 17(d)(1) withdrawal?**

This refers to Section 17(d)(1) in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) of 1971. ANCSA authorized the Secretary of Interior to withdraw and reserve public lands for study and classification. This was done through a series of Public Land Orders (PLOs) issued between 1972 and 1975. The PLOs closed the lands to disposal and appropriation under public land laws, including mining and mineral leasing. The withdrawals kept the lands unencumbered for selection by ANCSA corporations, and prevented the creation of new third-party interests that would interfere with land conveyance. The withdrawals also allowed the BLM time to study and classify the lands.

### **Will BLM consider the 17(d)(1) withdrawals in during the planning process?**

It is Department of Interior policy to review existing withdrawals during land use planning to determine if there is a valid need to retain the withdrawals. The 17(d)(1) withdrawals served their purpose by holding the status quo until the BLM could classify the lands. It is now time to look at the withdrawals and make determinations for managing these lands in the future.

### **If the 17(d)(1) withdrawals are revoked, would that make lands within the planning area available for mineral development?**

Lifting the (d)(1) withdrawals would open some of the lands in the planning area to leasable and locatable minerals. In some cases, lifting the (d)(1) withdrawals would not have an immediate effect. Lands selected by ANCSA corporations and the State of Alaska remain “segregated” (unavailable) to leasable or locatable mineral entry. Additionally, the White Mountains National Recreation Area, the Steese National Conservation Area, and some lands within designated wild river corridors are withdrawn from mineral entry and leasing under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) or the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. In some cases, the Secretary of Interior has the authority to modify the ANILCA withdrawals, and make lands available for mineral entry and/or leasing. In other areas, the Secretary does not have this discretion.