

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE**

January 27, 2025

1:37 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Robyn Niayuq Burke, Co-Chair
Representative Maxine Dibert, Co-Chair
Representative Carolyn Hall
Representative Donna Mears
Representative Zack Fields
Representative Dan Saddler
Representative George Rauscher
Representative Julie Coulombe

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Bill Elam

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

OVERVIEW(S) : DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

BRENT GOODRUM, Deputy Commissioner
Department of Natural Resources
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-presented an overview regarding the Alaska Department of Natural Resources.

JOHN BOYLE, Commissioner
Department of Natural Resources
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-presented an overview regarding the Alaska Department of Natural Resources.

JOHN CROWTHER, Deputy Commissioner
Department of Natural Resources
Anchorage, Alaska

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ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:37:01 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR ROBYN NIAYUQ BURKE called the House Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:37 p.m. Representatives Coulombe, Fields, Rauscher, Saddler, Hall, Mears, Dibert, and Burke were present at the call to order.

OVERVIEW(S): Department of Natural Resources

[1:37:46 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE announced that the only order of business would be the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

[1:38:12 PM](#)

BRENT GOODRUM, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources, co-presented a PowerPoint overview regarding the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) [hard copy included in the committee file]. He prefaced his presentation by commenting on Executive Order 136 submitted by Governor Dunleavy to the legislature requesting that committee members hold their questions regarding Executive Order 136 until the House Resources Standing Committee hearing on HSCR 1. He stated that a significant need and priority for the state of Alaska is to improve food security by getting more land into agricultural production, increasing access to affordable loans, improving infrastructure, leveraging USDA agricultural production programs, and continuing support of market access for agricultural producers. He showed Slide 7, titled "Division of Agriculture," which highlighted accomplishments in Fiscal Year 2024 (FY 24) and read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Mission: To promote and encourage development of an agriculture industry in the State

FY2024 Accomplishments:

- Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund - provided over \$6 million in loans supporting new or expanded agricultural and mariculture operations

- United States Department of Agriculture Grants - administered over \$10 million in grants including Microgrants for Food Security, Specialty Crop Block Grants and Local Food Purchase Program
- Inspections - ensured over \$100 million of agricultural products met domestic and international buyer requirements
- Future Farmers of America - 17 schools and over 450 enrollees
- Partnerships - hosted international trade activities with the Western U.S. Agricultural Trade Association and the Washington and Hawaii State Departments of Agriculture

MR. GOODRUM moved to slide 8, which continued the division's overview of FY 24 accomplishments and presented FY25 priorities. The slide read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

FY2024 Accomplishments:

- Feed Grain Reserve - 4 producers are currently under contract
- Plant Materials Center - cleaned about 50,000 pounds of native seed and over 96,000 pounds of cereal grains for commercial growers
- Plant Materials Center - provided over 40 varieties of foundation, disease-free seed potatoes (totaling over 1,000 pounds) for Alaska commercial potato producers

FY2025 Priorities:

- Administer the \$2.2 million Regional Food Systems Infrastructure Grant
- Support getting more agricultural land into production
- Plant Materials Center infrastructure projects to increase seed cleaning capacity and efficiency

MR. GOODRUM moved to slide 9, titled "Division of Forestry & Fire Protection," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

The division's two core functions are fire protection to keep Alaskans and their investments safe, and forest management to drive economic activity.

Alaska's Forest Resources Program

Mission: Develop, conserve, and enhance Alaska's forests to provide a sustainable supply of forest resources for Alaskans

Alaska's Fire Management Program

Mission: Safely manage wildland fires that pose a threat to life, property, and critical infrastructure on 150 million acres of land throughout the State of Alaska

MR. GOODRUM described the department as "both bullish and determined" to further expand and grow the forest economic sector in Alaska. He moved to slide 10, which continued the overview of the division's forestry and fire protection and read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Timber Management:

- Sold 33.6 million board feet in new timber sales appraised at \$2.9 million
- Harvested 25.2 million board feet and generated \$1.7 million in timber receipts
- Maintained 128 miles of forest road with a mix of division staff and contractors

Growing the Forestry Economic Sector in Alaska:

- Increasing sustainable timber supply, expanding state forests, increasing road access, long-term timber sales, reforestation
- Timber industry contributes approximately 1,200 jobs and \$58 million to Alaska's economy

Alaska Lumber Grading:

- 109 individuals trained in 7 different communities throughout Alaska, covering each region of the state
- Adding a wood-drying workshop in 2025

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JOHN BOYLE, Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources, co-presented the overview regarding DNR. He responded to a question from Representative Fields regarding profits from timber sales, explaining that the biggest expense of timber harvesting is building roads. When an operator builds roads in an area, the state allows them to deduct the cost of building roads from timber receipts. The value for Alaskans is not always reflected in the baseline number because the roads allow public access for recreation, hunting, and fishing.

1:49:14 PM

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER spoke in favor of maintaining funding for the timber industry and said he was one of the 109 people certified in the timber grading program described by Mr. Goodrum. He summarized previous legislation and pointed out its applicability to the information and data DNR presented in the PowerPoint.

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COMMISSIONER BOYLE responded to a question by Representative Saddler concerning logging roads opening up in remote areas by describing his experiences visiting Alaska's small timber operators and how impressed he was with the log cabin kits, furniture, and other entrepreneurial ideas from the logging industry in Alaska. He explained that the industry is sustainable and creates economic opportunities for loggers, sawyers, truck drivers, and millers to name a few. Although it doesn't "have the big flashy numbers that oil and gas post," it is an important economic driver. If forests are managed well, the timber industry is sustainable; there is greater forest health; wildfire risks are reduced; and it adds to economic diversification. He explained that Scandinavian countries such as Sweden are at a similar latitude as Alaska with a comparable mix of boreal forests, but they have a multi-billion-dollar timber industry. He pointed out that Alaska has that same potential. The challenge is that the trees have an 80-to-100-year maturity cycle, so investments in the forests would not be seen for many years. He stated that the forest industry "continues to be an excellent diversified sector of Alaska's economy and one that, if well-managed, is sustainable in perpetuity."

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MR. GOODRUM continued with slide 11, titled "Division of Forestry & Fire Protection," a continuation of the division's overview. The slide read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Preparedness:

- Trained 224 new firefighters during 5 wildland fire academies
- 158 Emergency Firefighters (EFF) performed statewide non-emergency hazardous fuels work

- o Stable employment for rural Alaskans and rebuilding responsive village fire crews through training, fuels reduction work and fire deployments
 - \$10.2 received in federal funding to support firefighter training, enhanced technologies, and volunteer fire departments
 - Division is the state's Community Wildfire Defense Grant manager - 3 Alaskan applicants were awarded \$3.1 million to develop fire preparedness adaptations
- Prevention:
- 104 outreach events and over 1,500 announcements delivered with a focus on public education, outreach and fire awareness

MR. GOODRUM described the types of training firefighters received at the wildland fire academies as well as non-emergency hazardous fuels work. He discussed the grants received and how they were applied to create resilient landscapes, increase public safety, protect resources, and conserve natural resources. He pointed out the human cost of fires and that fire-adapted communities reduce fire costs.

MR. GOODRUM moved to slide 12, titled "Division of Forestry & Fire Protection," a continuation of the division's overview. The slide read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Mitigation:

- Implemented 12 active hazardous fuel projects combining private sector contractors, Alaskan fire crews and local government agreements
- Created resilient landscapes (hazardous fuels treatments) around Alaskan communities to increase public safety, protect of critical infrastructure and conserve natural resources
- Fire-adapted communities reduce suppression costs

Suppression:

- 2024 was an average season with 379 fires on just under 700,000 acres
- Division aircraft flew 1,445 hours on fire missions and dropped 250,000 gallons of retardant in suppression efforts
- Values protected: Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, mining infrastructure and highway corridors. Fires responses in populated areas of the Matanuska-Susitna, Fairbanks North Star and Kenai Peninsula boroughs

resulted in the protection of over 500 primary residences and over 100 remote recreational cabins

MR. GOODRUM explained that resilient landscape work was completed in McGrath, Dillingham, Houston, Meadow Lakes, Caswell, Sterling, McCarty, Fairbanks, Delta Junction, and Tok. He pointed out that during 2024 the division's forestry firefighters helped clear roads after the winter storm in Fairbanks; assisted in Kotzebue after the winter sea storms and subsequent flooding; provided support to North Carolina and Florida during the Hurricane Helene response; and mobilized personnel to provide wildland fire response to the devastating wildfires in California.

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COMMISSIONER BOYLE responded to a question from Representative Rauscher regarding wildfires on federal lands by explaining that the responsibility for fire response is basically divided equally. The state handles wildfire response south of the Yukon River and southern Alaska with the state being the primary responder even on federal lands. The federal government will take responsibility for fires in the northern part of Alaska, including fires that start on state land. The Alaska wildfire response teams have had a good working relationship with the federal government's fire service.

COMMISSIONER BOYLE, in response to a question from Representative Fields regarding catastrophic fires, explained that the division works in concert with other entities such as communities and federal land management services.

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The committee took an at-ease from 2:02 to 2:03 p.m.

[2:03:50 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MEARS explained the importance of dealing with wildland fires and said she looked forward to addressing these issues at a future time.

REPRESENTATIVE DIBERT described the fire danger in the Fairbanks area and said she looked forward to a presentation by Norm McDonald [Alaska Division of Forestry and Fire Protection] when the committee can take a deeper look at this topic.

2:05:17 PM

JOHN CROWTHER, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources, co-presented the overview regarding DNR. He specifically focused on DNR's Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys (DGGs) and described it as an "unsung division." He explained that the DGGs is a complex division with diverse subject matters. He described it as an "in-house geoscience team" that dealt with subjects ranging from hydrology, mineral resources, resource development, and cryosphere hazards such as the permafrost. He showed slides 13 through 17, which were titled "Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys." Slide 13 provided the DGGs mission statement and an example of a geologic map. The slide read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Mission: To determine the potential of Alaska land for production of metals, minerals, fuels, and geothermal resources; the locations and supplies of groundwater and construction material; and the potential geologic hazards to buildings, roads, bridges, and other installations

Mineral Resources:

- Completed 380 person-days (over 3,500 square miles) of geologic mapping of Interior Alaska's mineral-rich Yukon Tanana Upland
- Completed year 2 of 3 on major geophysical survey of Kuskokwim Mineral Belt—including Donlin, Nixon Fork, and Illinois Creek deposit areas
- Published survey of Seward Peninsula's prospective areas for graphite—a critical mineral for batteries
- Published new data used by mineral-exploration companies, scientific researchers, and land managers

MR. CROWTHER showed the final slide regarding the DGGs, titled "FY2025 Priorities," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Resource Development:

- Continue to advance multi-year airborne geophysical surveying in Southwest Alaska: Collect Donlin Gold area data, publish 2024 Illinois Creek area survey
- Continue bedrock geologic mapping in the mineral-rich Yukon-Tanana Upland (Interior Alaska) and publish new map of the Mount Harper-Richardson area

- Conduct field work on North Slope and Cook Inlet petroleum systems to attract new exploration investment and characterize carbon sequestration potential

Hazards and Public Safety:

- Complete landslide mapping and assessment for Wrangell and Ketchikan
- Publish flooding assessments for at-risk western Alaska communities
- Continue to monitor 35 of Alaska's hazardous volcanoes & provide accessible data
- Complete an ice-penetrating radar survey of the Mendenhall Glacier near Juneau to assist in glacial lake outburst flood research

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MR. CROWTHER moved to slide 14, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Energy Resources:

- Initiated a new Applied Geothermal Energy Program
- Conducted 30 days of helicopter-supported geologic studies of the North Slope
- Collected 2 bedrock cores in collaboration with the U.S. Geological Survey that provide insight into Nanushuk reservoirs and oil source rocks
- Participated in Department of Energy Carbon Ore Rare Earth - Critical Minerals project to assess the potential of Alaska coals as an unconventional source of Rare Earth Elements and critical minerals
- Began work on the Alaska Railbelt Carbon Capture and Storage project in collaboration with University of Alaska Fairbanks and private sector partners

MR. CROWTHER responded to questions from Representative Fields concerning the proposed Usibelli carbon sequestration project. He explained that the state has been working with the University of Alaska work group to study the regulatory framework a geologic information concerning carbon sequestration potential in the state. The work group has been looking at reservoir locations for carbon storage. Regarding the time frame, the regulations associated with that program are being finalized, so licensing for state land will be available this year. Next, he moved to slide 15, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Geologic Hazards:

- Responded to over 330 requests for assessment of geologic hazards, including responses by DGGS to state and federally declared natural disaster events
- Collected 366 square miles of new lidar, near-shore bathymetry, and other elevation data
- Evaluated nearly 14,000 square miles for geologic hazards
- Published 30 hazards-related reports and datasets

Hydrology and Surficial Geology:

- Collected field data near Anaktuvuk Pass and in Northwestern National Petroleum Reserve Alaska to support Arctic Strategic Transportation and Resources (ASTAR) construction materials and hydrology work
- Conducted geologic mapping to evaluate construction materials, geologic hazards, and energy resources, including part of the proposed West Susitna Access Corridor

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MR. CROWTHER, in response to a question from Representative Coulombe, explained that the employees who respond to the geologic hazards also are in the "preparation and information distribution business" regarding potential hazards as well as being available for responding to events. In addition, they work on Federal Emergency Management Act paperwork, compile specific data sets, publish hazards-related reports, and provide relevant information to communities.

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MR. CROWTHER continued with slides 16 and 17 regarding DNR geologic information, geologic materials, volcanology, and the Alaska geospatial office. The slides read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Geologic Information Center:

- Prepared, published, and distributed 78 new geologic publications to the public
- Leveraged state-of-the-art data facility to economically serve over 36 terabytes of digital geologic data and information from the division website and geoportals

- Increased the accessibility and value of over 70 geologic maps by converting them into a common digital data standard
- Supported more than 20 field projects and emergency response activities with data, hardware, software, and safety equipment Geologic Materials Center:
- Hosted a 2-week Santos core workshop focusing on Nanushuk oil (including senior international executives), a legislative tour, and a Sen. Murkowski staff tour
- Received \$345,000 federal match grant to offset costs for hyperspectral core-scanning project

Volcanology:

- Alaska Volcano Observatory staff visited 122 stations across 17 volcanoes and participated in 4 geologic studies
- Issued 543 volcanic-activity notices, responding to eruptions at 4 volcanoes and unrest at 5 others
- Carefully watching unrest at Mount Spurr volcano, ~ 80 miles from Anchorage: increased seismicity, uplift, summit heating—new magma likely emplaced beneath the volcano

Alaska Geospatial Office:

- Coordinated 30,000 square miles of lidar collection and contracting across state and federal partners
- Contracted \$4.4 million to support coastal mapping goals under the Alaska Mapping Executive Committee
- Serves on the National Geospatial Advisory Committee representing states' interests in federal mapping programs

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MR. CROWTHER responded to a question from Representative Hall regarding a federal program for volcano monitoring by explaining that DGGs works with the United States Department of Geologic Surveys to upgrade the active or known historically active volcanos. This question was followed by slide 17 regarding the DGGs, titled "FY2025 Priorities," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Resource Development:

- Continue to advance multi-year airborne geophysical surveying in Southwest Alaska: Collect Donlin Gold area data, publish 2024 Illinois Creek area survey

- Continue bedrock geologic mapping in the mineral-rich Yukon-Tanana Upland (Interior Alaska) and publish new map of the Mount Harper-Richardson area
- Conduct field work on North Slope and Cook Inlet petroleum systems to attract new exploration investment and characterize carbon sequestration potential

Hazards and Public Safety:

- Complete landslide mapping and assessment for Wrangell and Ketchikan
- Publish flooding assessments for at-risk western Alaska communities
- Continue to monitor 35 of Alaska's hazardous volcanoes & provide accessible data
- Complete an ice-penetrating radar survey of the Mendenhall Glacier near Juneau to assist in glacial lake outburst flood research

[2:20:05 PM](#)

MR. CROWTHER responded to a question by Representative Saddler regarding evaluating the state's rare earth elements and strategic minerals by describing the status of that project. On a related subject, he pointed out that the division is continuing its assessment of Alaska's geothermal resources.

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COMMISSIONER BOYLE responded to a question by Representative Dibert by discussing the geologic hydrogen workshop presented at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. He explained that the state has mafic and ultramafic rocks which are conducive to creating geologic hydrogen and discussed what type of geologic systems are necessary to produce and trap hydrogen. This potential is currently being evaluated, but using hydrogen as an energy source is "early science." This is an area that could have a bright future in the state.

[2:23:31 PM](#)

MR. GOODRUM continued the presentation, with slides 18 and 19, titled "Division of Mining, Land & Water" pointing out that thousands of Alaska jobs and tens of millions of dollars in state revenues depend on the active management of state land and water. The slides read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

FY2024 Accomplishments:

- Generated \$37.9 in revenue for FY2024, an 8.7% increase from FY2023
- Eliminated patent issuance backlog, allowing for immediate issuance to the purchaser once due diligence is complete. Previous timeline was 9 months
- Completed planning efforts for the Matanuska Valley Moose Range and Jonesville Public Use Area
- Conveyed a total of 733 acres to three different municipalities
- Generated \$5.9 million in revenue for the Land Disposal Income Fund, a 9.1% increase from FY2023
- Sold 165 parcels of land to the public totaling approximately 1,177 acres
- Issued 75 permits to appropriate water and 187 certificates of appropriation

FY2025 Priorities:

- Continue to responsibly authorize permits, leases and easements to develop the state's resources and help diversify the state economy
- Focused acquisition of 4.8 million acres in remaining statehood entitlement lands through legislation and acquisition requests
- Finalize a decision for the Ambler Road easement authorization to the Alaska Industrial Development and Export

Authority (AIDEA)

- Maintain our efforts to implement the Governor's "Unlocking Alaska" initiative

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MR. GOODRUM responded to a question from Co-Chair Burke concerning employee retention and its relationship to permitting by explaining that the Division of Mining, Land, and Water has improved recruitment and retention rates.

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COMMISSIONER BOYLE responded to a question from Representative Saddler regarding resolving questions of navigable waters. He expressed optimism that the state would be able to establish rightful ownership of the disputed submerged lands.

[2:29:19 PM](#)

MR. CROWTHER continued the presentation with slides 21, 22, and 23, titled "Division of Oil & Gas." Slide 21 described the division's mission statement and read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Mission: Manage lands for oil, gas and geothermal exploration and development in a fair, transparent manner to maximize prudent use of resources for the greatest benefit of all Alaskans; facilitate safe, environmentally conscious operation and maintenance of common carrier pipelines

The Division of Oil and Gas (DO&G) conducts lease sales, collects royalties, authorizes oil and gas activities, and regulates common-carrier pipelines on state land.

DO&G provides commercial analysis, economic modeling, financial risk assessments, audits, and other professional services to ensure the state receives maximum value for its oil and gas resources.

MR. CROWTHER proceeded to slides 22 and 23, which summarized the division's FY 24 accomplishments and read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

FY2024 Accomplishments:

- Verified and receipted \$1.8 billion in royalty, net profit share lease revenues, rents, bonus bids, unit actions and federal payments
- Oversaw activities on 36 oil and gas units and four lease operations
- Conducted 5 areawide lease sales and managed over 1,600 lease actions
 - o Area-wide lease sales resulted in \$5.4 million in bonus bids and more than 159,972 acres leased
 - o Collected \$364,250 in leasing application fees and \$15.6 million in lease rent payments
- Royalty audits recovered \$4.4 million in royalty and Net Profit Share Lease revenue including interest
- Continued releasing seismic and well datasets for oil and gas exploration projects that received tax credits under Alaska Statutes 43.55.023 and .025 through the Alaska Geologic Materials Center in

coordination with the Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys

FY2024 Accomplishments (continued):

- Reviewed comprehensive interpretation and analysis of geological, geophysical, and engineering data leading to the formation of four new units encompassing over 305,166 acres of State of Alaska oil and gas leases
- Received five new pipeline right-of-way lease applications
- Issued 51 lease, land, water, and material actions and 151 oversight activities including inspections, reports, reviews, and surveillances, and provided other right-of-way (ROW) lease support for transportation pipeline systems and pipeline work on state lands
- Performed 202 ROW lease compliance and oversight monitoring actions
- Delivered oil production forecasts to the Department of Revenue to generate the state's oil revenue forecast
- Continued to assess and actively manage Cook Inlet natural gas resources

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MR. CROWTHER proceeded with an overview of the Office of Project Management and Permitting (OPMP). He showed slide 25, which described the mission statement and read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Mission: To coordinate state multi-agency regulatory reviews and authorizations while collaboratively engaging federal agencies on land use planning and policy initiatives to maintain and enhance the state's economy and quality of life, and to maximize the value of Alaska's vast natural resources

The Office of Project Management & Permitting (OPMP) supports private industry, regulatory agencies, and the Alaskan public by implementing a multi-agency permit coordination program to ensure consistent, defensible, transparent, and timely permit decisions.

MR. CROWTHER showed slide 26, which listed FY 24 accomplishments including large projects, mining and energy projects, and

associated transportation corridors. He then moved to slide 27, titled "Federal Plans & Activities," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

OPMP monitors federal actions and facilitates state and federal coordination, consultation, review, and consolidation of state comments asserting the state's legal rights and interests.

- National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A) Integrated Activity Plan and Rule
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Resource Advisory Council
- Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Coastal Plain Oil & Gas Leasing Program Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS)
- Ambler Access Road SEIS
- Outer Continental Shelf planning, lease sales, and renewable energy working groups
- Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) reviews
- BLM Conservation and Landscape Health Rule (Public Lands Rule)
- Central Yukon Resource Management Plan (RMP)
- Izembek Land Exchange
- Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) 17(d)(1) SEIS
- Proposed Changes to National Environmental Policy Act (of 1969) (NEPA)
- Biological Integrity, Diversity, and Environmental Health (BIDEH) Rule
- U.S. Forest Service National Old Growth Amendment

MR. CROWTHER completed his overview of the OPMP with slide 28, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]]:

Arctic Strategic Transportation and Resources (ASTAR):

- Partners with Department of Transportation & Public Facilities and the North Slope Borough (NSB); OPMP to identify and advance community and regional infrastructure and resources needs that offer the most cumulative benefit to the region. OPMP initiated and coordinated environmental analysis for the Triangle Community Road and initial design work for test road in the Arctic using more localized materials.

Carbon Offset Projects:

- OPMP was authorized in FY2023 to administer the Carbon Offset Program. The program allows DNR to develop carbon management projects on state lands and generate state revenue by selling carbon offset credits. The Carbon Offset Program manager finalized regulations and contracted with an Alaska-based carbon project developer and forestry consultant for assessment and development of forest carbon projects on state lands.

[2:38:35 PM](#)

MR. GOODRUM continued the presentation with slides 29 and 30, titled "Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation," which described the mission of the department and summarized the FY 24 accomplishments. These slides read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

FY2024 Accomplishments for Alaska State Parks:

- Self-funded at a rate of 51 percent via fees, electronic fee stations, public use cabins, and admissions
- 90 electronic fee stations installed, with 23 pending installation, will increase efficiency and revenue
- Record visitation that continues to climb from 2021, primarily from Alaska resident use
- Issued 678 commercial use permits, 307 special use permits, via new online permitting portal
- Park Rangers responded to over 46 search and rescue missions

FY2024 Accomplishments for Outdoor Recreation:

Office of Grants:

- 108 active and pending outdoor recreation grants

Office of Boating Safety:

- Held 351 classes, 54 pool sessions, total reach of 10,115 participants

Office of History & Archaeology:

- State Historic Preservation Office reviewed 1,738 projects, signed nine major agreements, amended eight other major agreements

Alaska Historical Commission designated as Alaska's America250 commemoration coordinator

Office of Design & Construction:

- Awarded \$10.6 million in FY2024
- Completed 9 construction and construction-related projects in CY2024

MR. GOODRUM moved to slide 31, titled "Support Services Division," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Mission: Provide client-focused, efficient and cost-effective financial, budget, procurement, human resource, information technology and recording services to the Department of Natural Resources and the public

FY2024 Accomplishments:

- DNR Future Leaders Summit - facilitation, mentorship and coordination
- Fiscal section expanded use of ticketing system improving visibility, efficiency, and establishment of metrics which drive further improvement.
- Information technology staff supported the implementation of Starlink to several outlying offices resulting in improved internet response time.

Recorder's Office:

- Improved access and efficiency by expanding eRecording, enhanced search functions, and streamlined workflows

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MR. CROWTHER continued the presentation with slide 32, titled "Alaska Mental Health Trust Land Office." He pointed out that the Alaska Mental Health Trust manages the lands and programs for those who experience behavioral health disorders and developmental disabilities. The revenue pays for its own operations and is distributed to its beneficiaries. The slide read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Mission: Protect and enhance the value of Alaska Mental Health Trust Lands, including minerals, coal, oil and gas, timber and real estate, while maximizing revenue from those lands over time to support mental health services

FY2024 Accomplishments:

- Generated more than \$17 million to fund programs for Alaska Mental Health Trust beneficiaries who experience behavioral health disorders and developmental disabilities

- Timber sales generated over \$1.9 million in revenue and supported roughly 150 jobs. The Trust Land Office (TLO) has 4 active timber sales ranging from 4 to 8 years remaining under contract and an estimated total of 47.5 million board feet of timber to be harvested.
- Financed land contracts and outright land purchases are projected to earn the TLO more than \$10.5 million over the lifetime of the contracts, not including interest, for FY2024.
- 7 subdivision projects were completed across 3 different communities. The TLO currently has 10 subdivision development projects in various phases of active development in 5 different communities across the state. Along with the work on projects in active development, initial feasibility work began on 11 additional subdivision projects in FY2024.

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COMMISSIONER BOYLE completed the presentation by showing slide 33, titled "Office of the Commissioner," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

FY2024 Accomplishments:

- Actively promoted Alaska resources to global investors
- Continued to advance statehood defense issues while working with senior federal agency leadership
- Provided consistent and timely guidance to division leadership teams and communicated DNR activities to the public, stakeholders, and state agencies
- Developed Alaska's natural resources through effective, thorough and streamlined permitting processes

COMMISSIONER BOYLE explained that in the course of promoting and marketing Alaska to global investors, he found many people don't consider investing in Alaska. He pointed out that Alaska has 49 of the 50 identified rare earths and critical minerals which are necessary components to produce more energy, to meet the needs of data centers, to power Artificial Intelligence, and to meet the needs of the new global economy. The underpinning of all these systems from electrical distribution, generation, chips, and energy demands revolves around access to these rare earths and minerals. Alaska, "being blessed with such a rich endowment of these important resources" can become a great place to invest

and do business. Alaska has a tremendous foundation with great rocks, forests, and lands, with a world class park system and outdoor recreational economy.

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COMMISSIONER BOYLE responded to a question by Representative Hall concerning outside investment in Alaska by explaining investors are still learning about the state's potential. He stated that in addition to Alaska's rich endowment, the state also has better environmental stewardship than many other states and countries.

[2:54:06 PM](#)

COMMISSIONER BOYLE, in response to a question by Representative Saddler concerning the workforce, explained that Alaska saw a drawdown of resource development and subsequent decline in workforce during the Covid 19 pandemic. He explained that employment is rebounding. For example, close to \$18 billion of investment is going to North Slope development, and "it is humming." In actuality, there are too few people and there is not enough equipment to meet the needs of the projects and the exploration work. That is driving an influx of construction jobs. A similar situation is occurring regarding mining. Minerals such as antimony and germanium are in demand on a global scale, and Alaska is working to meet some of the demand. The result is a relatively robust employment situation.

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MR. CROWTHER added that the department is emphasizing development of new projects that will create long term future employment opportunities for a new generation of year-round workers.

[2:58:30 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE highlighted the importance of education to meet the needs of the industry.

[2:59:23 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Resources Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 2:59 p.m.

