

03/18/16
BUREAU OF
LAND
MANAGEMENT
LAND USE
PLANNING
UPDATE

<TARGET><BILL></BILL><SUBJECT>03-18-16 BUREAU OF LAND
MANAGEMENT LAND USE PLANNING
UPDATE</SUBJECT><COMM>SRES29</COMM></TARGET>

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT BRIEFING PAPER

DATE: March 18, 2016
FROM: Bud C. Cribley, State Director, BLM Alaska
SUBJECT: Alaska State Senate Resources Committee Requested Presentation

REQUEST

The Alaska State Senate Resources Committee extended an invitation to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to present on the Resource Management Plans (RMPs) recently presented to groups such as the Alaska Professional Hunters Association. Specifically, the Senator and her committee members expressed interest in:

- How the proposed plans will impact the following stakeholders:
 - local residents in proximity to Bureau land;
 - users of Bureau land (hunters, fishermen, hikers, mushers, cyclists, developers; etc.).
- The role public comments and stakeholder input have played in the development of the plans, and what further steps remain in the process to give stakeholders an opportunity to offer their insights.

BACKGROUND

State of Alaska Operations

Commercial Hunting Guides and Guide Use Areas (State of AK info)

- Non-residents who hunt Brown Bear, Dall Sheep, or Mountain Goat must be accompanied in the field by licensed Alaska Big Game Registered Guide-Outfitter or be accompanied in the field by an Alaska resident 19 years or older who is within the second degree of kindred
- Nonresident aliens (non-U.S. citizens) hunting any big game must be accompanied in the field by an Alaska Big Game Registered Guide-Outfitter
- 1300+ guides currently permitted by state
- The State of Alaska is divided into 26 Game Management Units (GMU). The Big Game Commercial Services Board has divided each GMU into Guide Use Areas (GUAs). Some GMUs have only one GUA while others have multiples GUAs
- GUAs have a mix of landownership patterns (State, BLM-managed, Native Corp, etc.)
- A Master/Registered Guide-Outfitter must register with the DNR the GUA which they will be providing big game services in annually, at least 30 days prior to providing big game services

Guide “Concession” versus BLM Permit “Allocation”

The term “concessions” is how the State described their 2013 proposed process to determine selection and distribution of commercial hunting guides on state-managed lands in GUAs. The BLM worked with the State and had an MOU to apply the same “allocation process” on BLM-managed lands if the process was accepted. The BLM uses the term “allocation” (not concession).

Under the FWS and NPS competitive guide concession programs, exclusive use areas are awarded to guides after an extensive application and ranking process. The guide retains

exclusive operating use of an area for 5 years. Often this period is extended another 5 years if the guide complies with the terms of the awarded concession.

The Western Interior RAC feels that adopting a competitive concession (allocation) program on BLM land will reduce competition and pressure on the resource because the guide(s) holding the concession will have a vested interest in maintaining the resource over time and act as an incentive to improve stewardship of resources in the area.

BLM Special Recreation Permits

The BLM has discretion to choose whether or not to authorize new Special Recreation Permits (SRP) or renew existing SRPs. All SRPs have terms and conditions that must be followed to maintain good standing with BLM or, risk loss of the permit. BLM uses SRPs to authorize and manage activities of state-approved commercial hunting guide operators on BLM lands. All hunting guides and some transporters who operate on BLM-managed public land do so with BLM-authorized SRPs. Commercial Hunting SRPs authorize how commercial guides may access and use BLM-managed lands, they DO NOT authorize or manage any aspect of state-approved hunting regulations. Simply put, SRPs authorize where a hunting guide can "access" and "camp" on BLM-managed land. Some guides access and camp on BLM land, then hunt on state land.

BLM-Alaska (similar to the State) has no set maximum number of SRPs on BLM-managed lands within each Guide Use Area (GUA). Therefore, SRPs are currently issued on a first-come-first-served basis after NEPA analysis is completed.

When BLM receives a new SRP application, the BLM assesses effects of the proposed action on subsistence resources through ANILCA Section 810 Analyses. The BLM also assesses the effects of the proposed action on: 1) resource availability; 2) access to the resource, and; 3) abundance of the resource. BLM holds 810 hearings if there is a "positive" finding in the 810 Analysis or if no impacts are found in a "high interest" area.

Commercial uses of BLM-managed lands may be limited based on decisions made in RMPs or other specific NEPA documents. For example, SRPs may be approved until an affected area's "desired use level" is reached. A desired use level is determined in resource management plans, recreation area management plans or, in their absence, through analysis of resources and visitor use for each area utilizing the areas recreation setting character, limits of acceptable change, or other methods. When a desired use level is reached in an area, no additional permits are issued and new permits may be made available only when certain conditions are met. Example conditions may include: management objectives to increase the number of allowable users within a use season or by lengthening the use season or a new areas for use become available.

SRP denials are rare however, the BLM may deny an SRP application or renewal based on various factors, including: state licensing requirements; the results of an environmental analysis; the applicant's past performance, including previous convictions for violating federal or state laws or regulations; and the inability of the managing office to issue, manage and monitor the proposed use; among others.

Some recent BLM proposals related to current RMPs include commercial big game hunting SRP allocation limits (total number of SRPs per GUA) and zoning of permitted operations to minimize conflicts among different user groups operating in the same area at the same time (Attachment 1).

CONTACT INFORMATION

Marlo Draper (supervises vacant BLM State Recreation Lead)
Renewable Resources Branch Chief
907-271-5546
mdraper@blm.gov

ATTACHMENTS

Statewide Planning Area Map
ADD RMP-specific attachment

ATTACHMENT 1

BLM CURRENT SITUATION / BLM-AK LAND USE PLANNING

Bering Sea-Western Interior RMP (BLM Anchorage Field Office)

- 2013 – 13 hunting guide SRPs issued
- 120 “recreation visits” for guided hunters
- RMP status – “Preliminary Alternative Concepts” – preliminary concepts outreach in 2015 to gather public input on
 - Maximum of 30 - 40 hunting guide SRP holders within planning area (allocated by GUA), based upon a 10-year average use per GUA
 - Length of SRP – 1 to 10 years
 - Extent of SRP – 2 to 3 GUAs
 - distance between commercial hunting guide camps
 - Community buffers
 - 0 - 25 mile buffer around villages where NO commercial hunting guide SRPs activities would be authorized
 - some communities could be buffered while others may not be
 - No proposed *process* to select guides
 - whether or how to address “outfitters” and “transporters” (in addition to “guides”)
- Currently, the BLM AFO requires transporters to have a SRP when gear, equipment, and/or guide services are provided to their passengers on BLM lands

Squirrel River Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) (BLM Anchorage FO)

- Kobuk Seward Peninsula RMP (2006) – Step down EA for Squirrel River SRMA being developed (draft due in few weeks)
- 10 guides and 8 transporters currently operating in GMU 23-06
- Social conflicts from recreation/guide use in high demand hunting area due to concentrations of caribou
- EA will only cover access and camping
- The BLM lands in this area have been designated as a Special Recreation Management Area to better address social issues (e.g., conflicts between different user groups) and to enhance management of the area
- The number of BLM authorizations for camping and access activities, in conjunction with state-approved commercial hunting activities in 2015 is 6 guide/outfitters and 5 transporters
- BLM is attempting to find a balance between commercial recreation operations and resource protection in this area
- Potential solutions and opportunities currently being analyzed or considered include:
 - Allocate 1-3 guide-outfitters and 1-3 transporters within GUA 23-06
 - Develop a fair and reasonable rating system for selection of commercial recreation providers
 - Establish an agreement with the State with any allocations on all lands within GUA 23-06 (not just BLM lands)

- Produce a transportation management plan to address off-highway vehicle use by commercial recreation providers
- Recommend “above ground level” flight elevation by transporters over noise-sensitive areas and other activities in the area (e.g. 2,000 ft.)
- Increased adaptive management efforts, to include how and where permit monitoring shall occur

Dalton Corridor Programmatic EA (BLM Central Yukon Field Office)

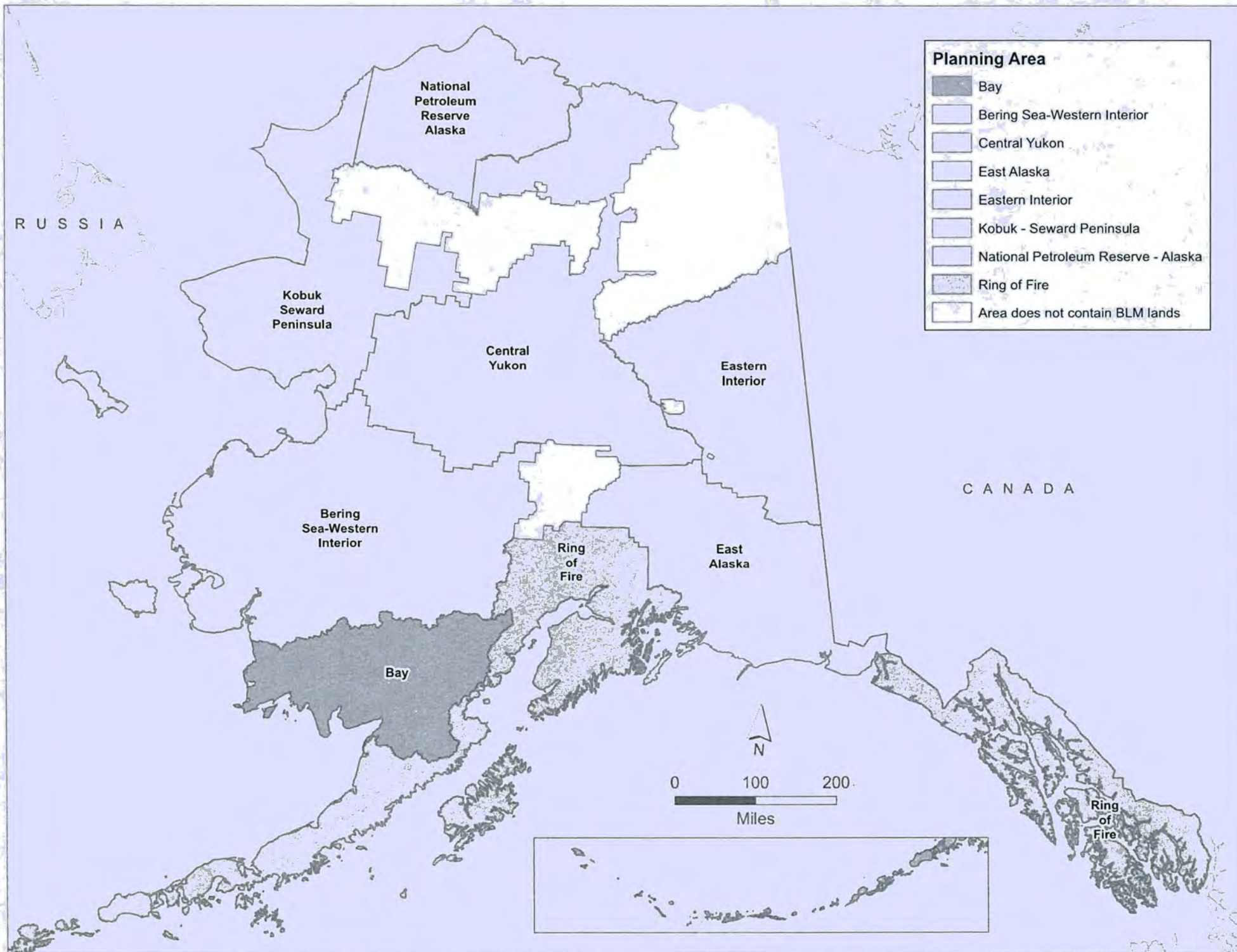
- Programmatic EA – “Issuance of Special Recreation Permit in the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area Dall Sheep Hunting in GUA 24-03”
- 2016 – 5 big game hunting guide SRPs (Dall sheep and brown bear focus)
- Applications for guides are due 6 months prior to guide operations
 - Annual review with 810 and categorical exclusion
 - early deadline established to allow BLM to evaluate cumulative impacts of all guide SRPs in the Central Brooks Range
- No guides have been denied
- Guides are assigned specific geographic areas
- Under the programmatic EA, up to 12 clients are permitted to hunt sheep on BLM lands in GUA 24-03. In reality, take of sheep under BLM SRPs is much less (1-2 per year)
- Conflicts with local subsistence users remain

Central Yukon RMP (BLM Central Yukon Field Office)

- Status – developing preliminary alternatives
- 2016 – Nine big game hunting guide/outfitter SRPs
- The CYFO requires the SRP holders to submit annual post use reports to document harvest, number of clients, and user days
- Guide-related issues that may be addressed in CY RMP:
 - Competition for resources or space
 - Guide limits and selection process
 - Exclusion areas
 - Dall sheep and impacts of guided hunting

Eastern Interior RMP (BLM Eastern Interior Field Office)

- Status – preparing Final EIS
- No guide allocation determinations were made in the EI RMP
- The Field Office will embark on a NEPA analysis to determine the capacity for guides and review possible allocations in 2016



Bureau of Land Management Land Use Planning Update

BLM Alaska

Bud Cribley, State Director

Lesli Ellis-Wouters, Chief Office of Communications

Jorjena Barringer, Project Manager Bering Sea-Western Interior RMP

Alaska State Senate Resources Committee

March 18, 2016



Topics

- Land Use Planning Process Overview
- Stakeholder involvement
- Eastern Interior RMP
- Central Yukon RMP
- Bering Sea-Western Interior RMP
- Questions



What is a Land Use Plan?

BLM Mission:

Sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Land Use Plans:

- Long-range (approximately 20 years)
- Comprehensive (consider all natural resources)
- Make resource decisions (protection, special designations)
- Landscape-level (versus specific proposed projects)
- Manage change over time and resolve issues that exist
- Replace existing plans that do not manage current issues

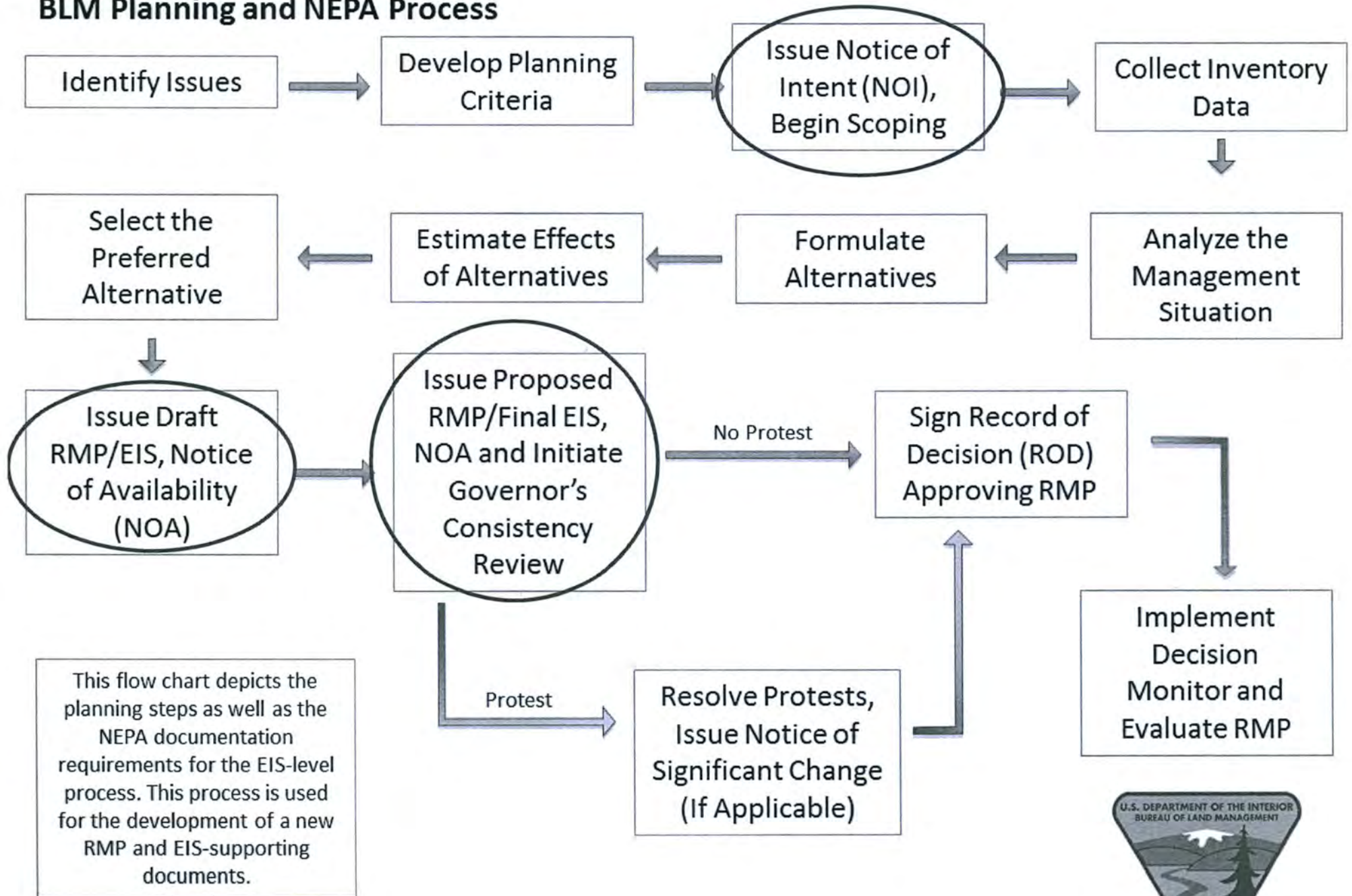
What a LUP does NOT do

Land Use Plans do not:

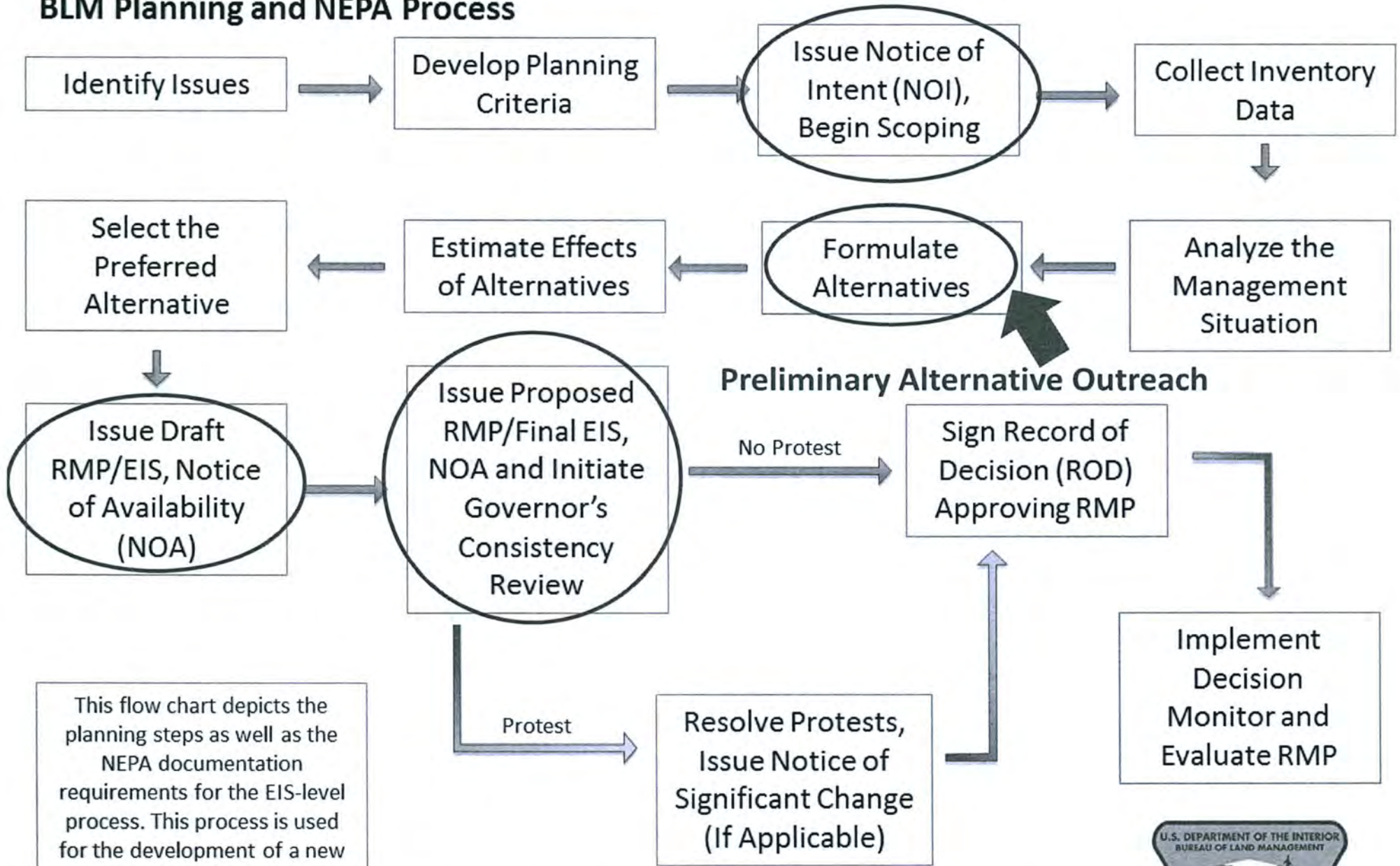
- Lift existing withdrawals (makes recommendations only)
- Affect land conveyances
- Change hunting and fishing regulations
- Resolve R.S. 2477 rights-of-way
- Designate ANCSA 17(b) easements
- Increase or fund law enforcement efforts
- Affect predator control on BLM-managed lands
- Make site-specific project decisions:
 - BSWI will not make decisions related to Donlin
 - CY will not make decisions related to Ambler Road
 - EI will not make decisions on Victoria Creek Road



BLM Planning and NEPA Process



BLM Planning and NEPA Process

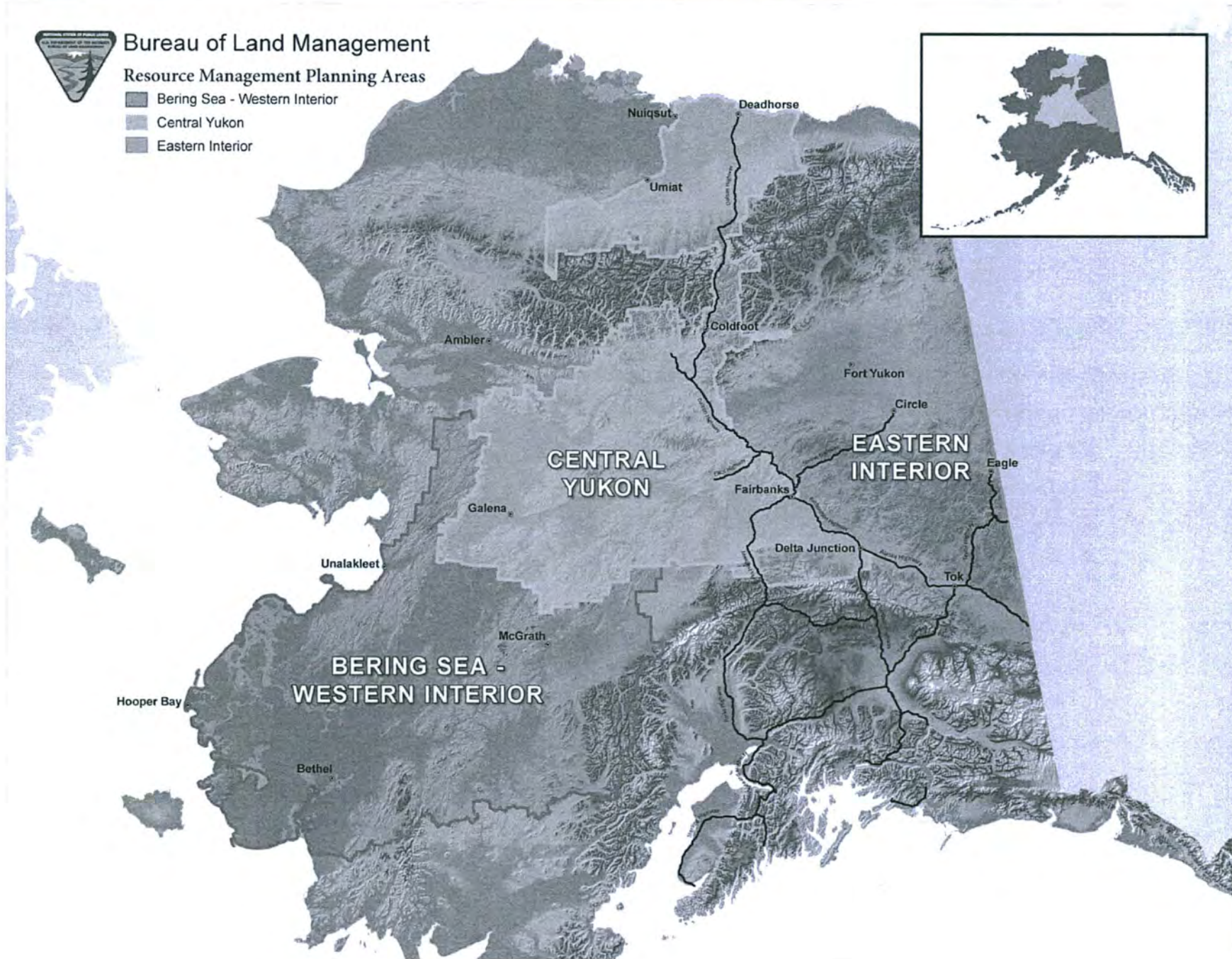


This flow chart depicts the planning steps as well as the NEPA documentation requirements for the EIS-level process. This process is used for the development of a new RMP and EIS-supporting documents.

NEW PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT STEP



Ongoing BLM Alaska Planning Efforts



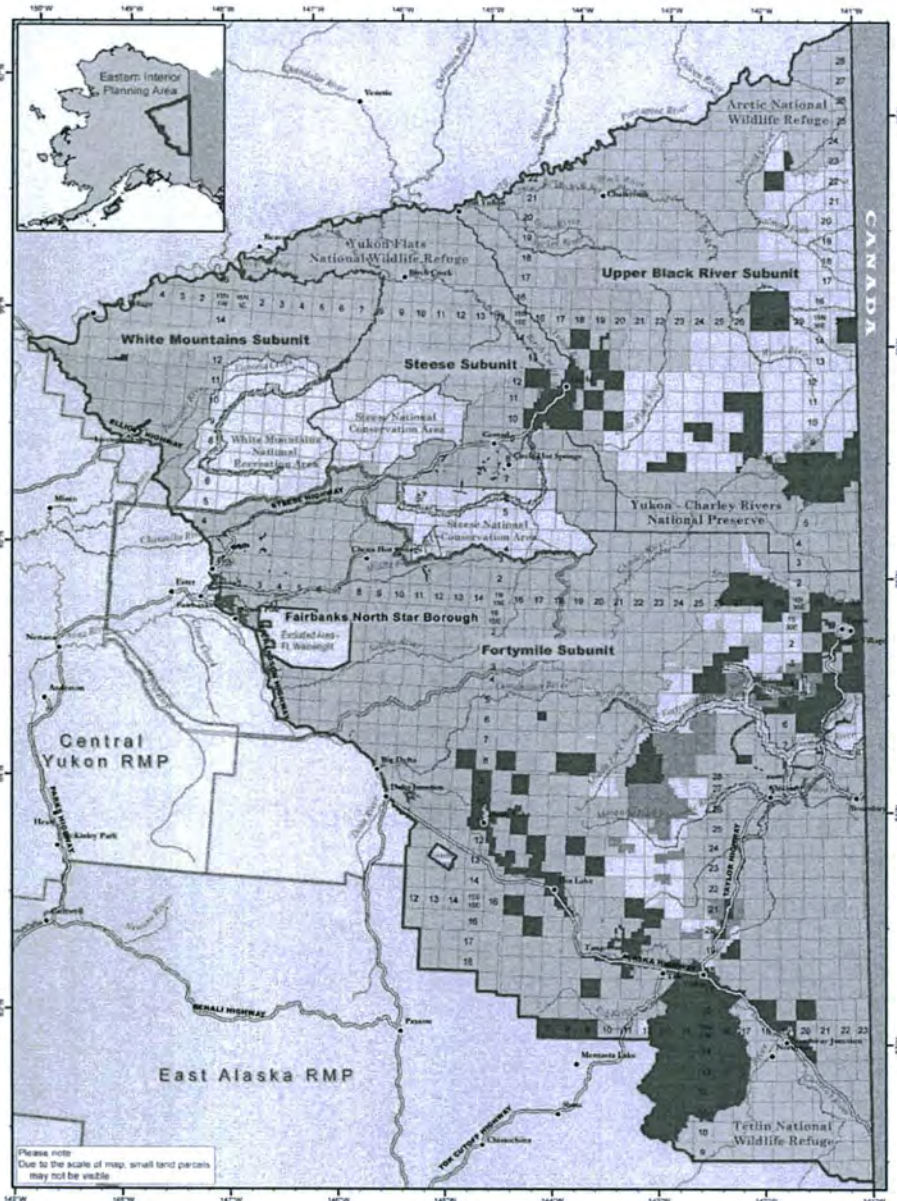
BLM

Alaska



Eastern Interior RMP

Cooperator Review	March-April 2016
Release PRMP/FEIS	May 2016
Protest / Governor Consistency Review	May- June 2016
Resolve protests / Consistency issues	July – October 2016
Issue RODs	Nov 2016



Land Status
(Current as of January 11, 2014)

Native Corporation Patent or IC	BLM - Wild & Scenic River	Planning Area and Subunit Boundaries
Native Corporation or Village - High Priority Selection	Fish & Wildlife Service	
Native Corporation or Village Selected	National Park Service	
State of Alaska	Other Federal	
State of Alaska - Selection	Military	
Bureau of Land Management	Native Allotment	
	Private	
	Federal Mining Claims - BLM land	

Eastern Interior Proposed RMP Final EIS
Bureau of Land Management - Alaska

0 24 48 Miles

Projection: Albers Conic Equal Area referencing NAD83

Source: USDO-BLM, 2014

The information displayed on this map should be used for graphic display only. For official land status information, refer to Cadastral Survey Plats, Master Title Plats, and lease files.

Map 1 Land Status and Planning Area Subunits

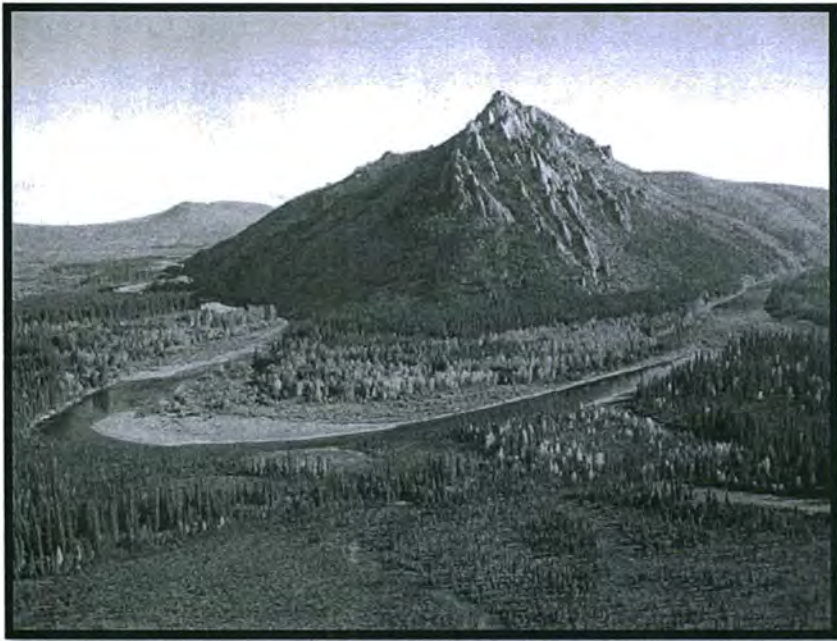


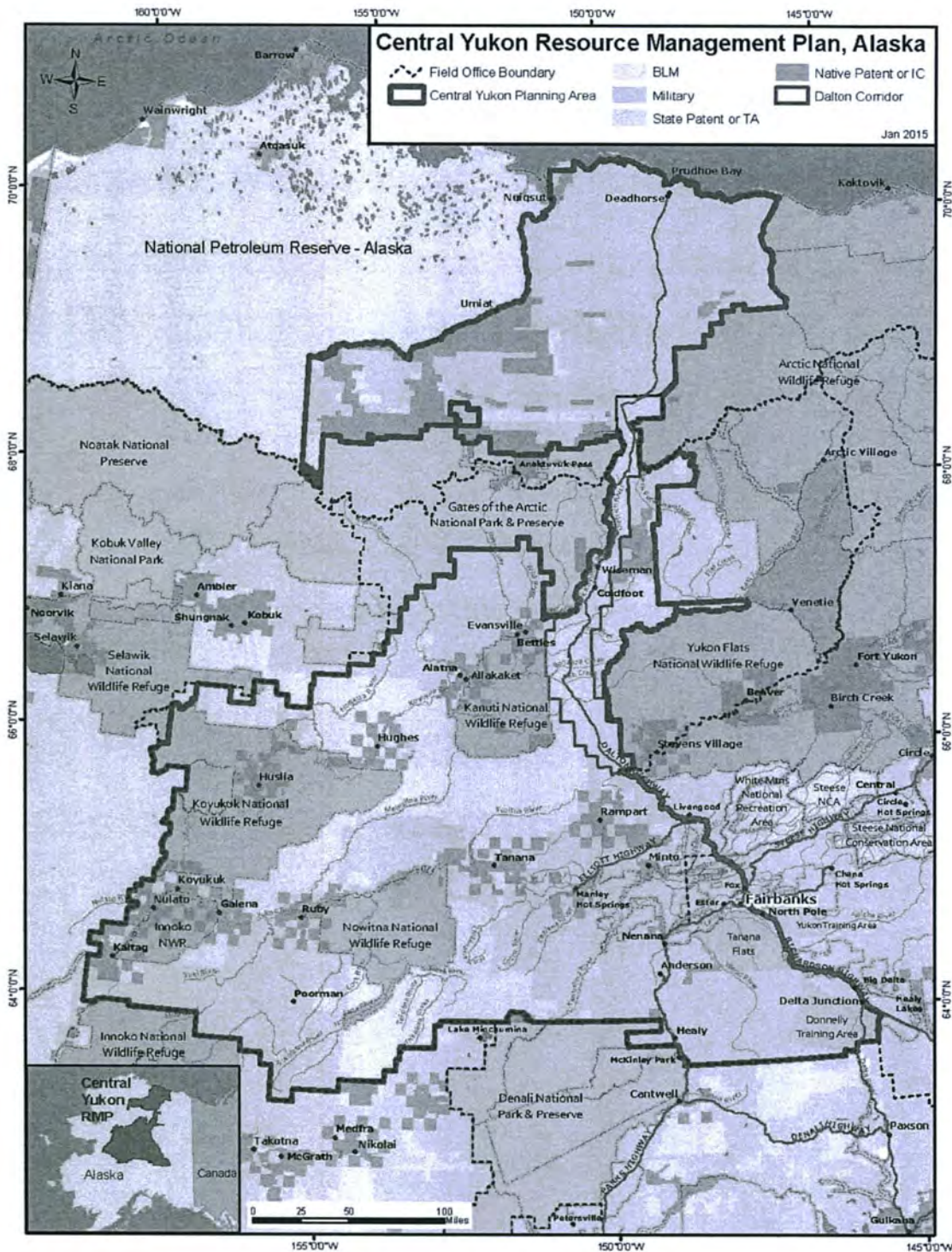
Eastern Interior RMP

No hunting guide permit allocation determinations were made in the RMP.

Further steps for stakeholder input:

- State is currently reviewing as cooperating agency
- Protest period
- Governor's consistency review
- Supplemental rule process to implement travel management and camping stay limits
- Step down recreation and travel management plans within five years





Central Yukon RMP

**13.1 million acres
BLM-managed land**

**24 remote
communities**

**Many other land
owners adjacent to
BLM lands**



PROCESS MILESTONES

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Notice of Intent to Prepare RMP	2013	Notice published in Federal Register
Public Scoping	2013-2014	180-day Public Scoping Period Public Scoping Meetings/Online Open House Tribal Consultations
ACEC Nomination Period	2014	120-day Nomination Period
Preliminary Alternatives	2015-2016	← <i>We are here now</i>
Preliminary Alternatives Outreach	2016	120-day Public Comment Period Public Meetings/Online Open House Tribal Consultations
Refine Alternatives	2016	
Prepare Draft RMP	2016-2017	
Notice of Availability of Draft RMP/EIS	2017	Notice published in Federal Register 90-day Public Comment Period Public Meetings/Online Open House Tribal Consultations, ANILCA 810 Hearings
Revise RMP	2017-2018	
	2018	Notice published in Federal Register Online Availability 30-day Protest Period 60-day Governor's Consistency Review
Record of Decision and Approved RMP	2019	Online Availability



PLANNING ISSUES FROM SCOPING

- Utility Corridor Withdrawal – Public Land Order 5150
- Access and Travel Management
- Invasive Species
- Minerals Management and Withdrawals
- Sand and Gravel
- Recreation and Visitor Services on Dalton Highway
- Subsistence
- Management of Wildlife Habitat



Special Recreation Permit Issues

- 9 commercial hunting guides, 5 in the Dalton Highway area
- Concern about preserving quality of the hunts; conflicts between commercial operators
- Subsistence users in Wiseman concerned BLM is permitting too much commercial take of Dall sheep on BLM lands in Guide Use Area 24-03
- Cumulative impacts of commercial guided, resident, and subsistence hunting on Central Brooks range sheep
- Central Yukon RMP still early in the process. Will be going out to public with draft alternatives in late 2016
- State of Alaska is a cooperating agency on the RMP

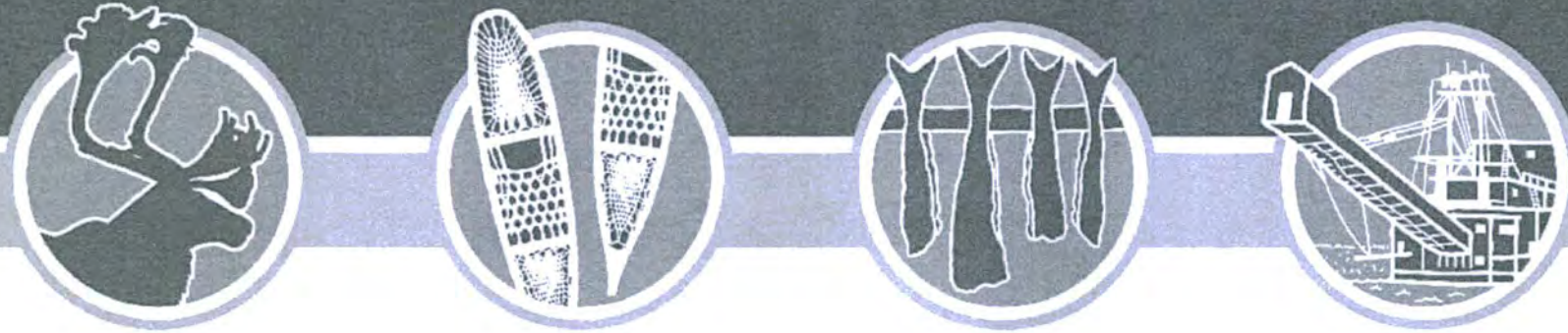


Utility Corridor Withdrawal – PLO 5150

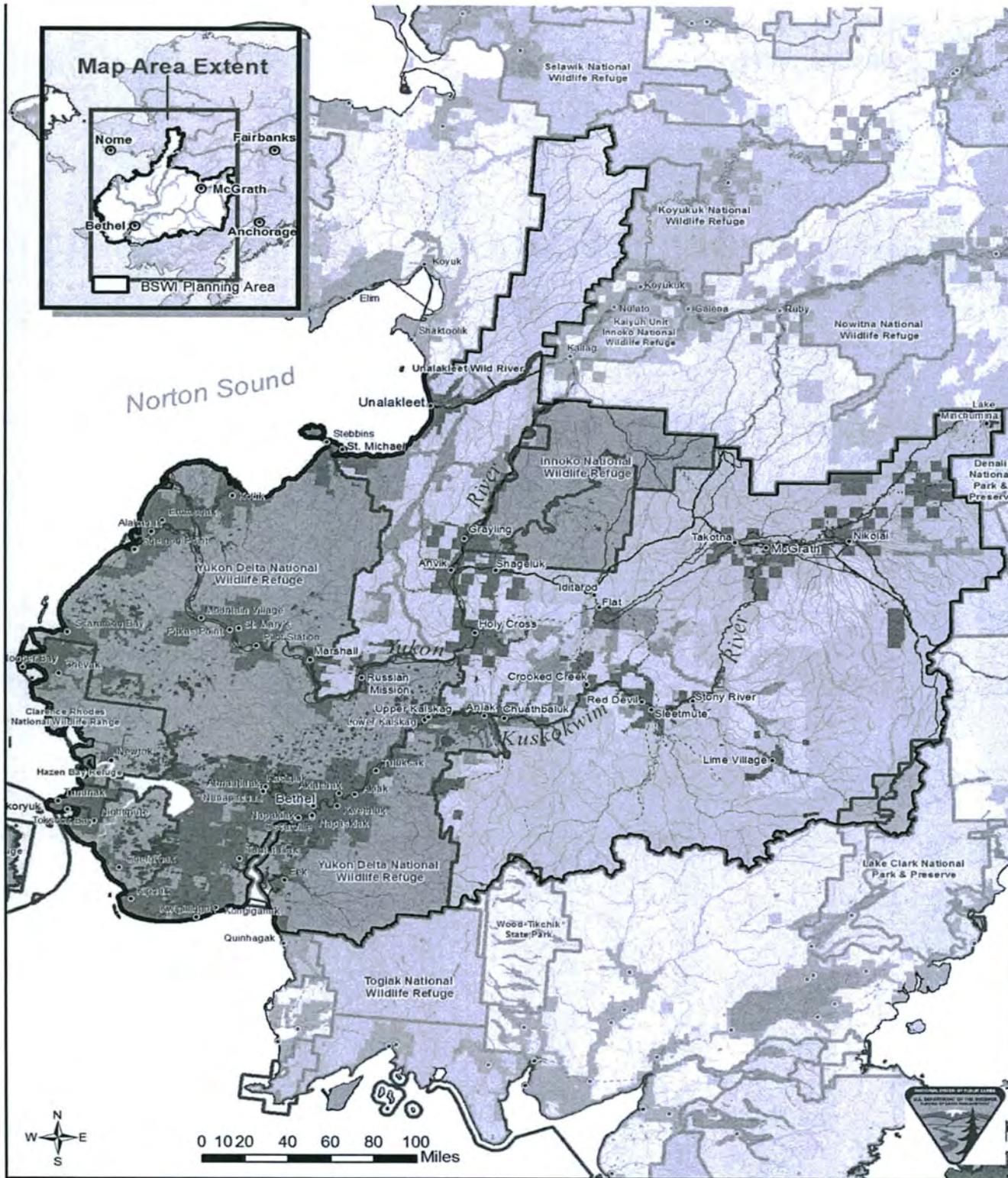
- State of Alaska has selected lands in the Utility Corridor and would like title to these lands
- BLM must modify PLO 5150 before lands can be conveyed to State
- Conveying lands to the State will change how subsistence is managed
- Reduced BLM presence along the Dalton Highway corridor



Bering Sea-Western Interior Resource Management Plan



The Anchorage Field Office vision for the Bering Sea-Western Interior planning area is to sustain the diverse and intact ecosystems that support traditional subsistence lifestyles while recognizing the importance of BLM lands to rural economies.



**62.3 million acre
planning area**

**13.4 million acres
BLM lands**

**26 communities
close to BLM land**



BSWI Planning Process



PROCESS MILESTONES

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Notice of Intent to Prepare RMP

2013

180-day Public Scoping Period
Public Scoping Meetings/Online Open House
Tribal Consultations

1) Public Scoping

2013-2014

2) ACEC Comment Period

2014

120-day Nomination Period

Develop Preliminary Alternatives

2015

3) Preliminary Alternatives Outreach

2015

120-day Public Comment Period
Public Meetings/Online Open House
Tribal Consultations

We are here now → Refine Alternatives

2015-2016

Prepare Draft RMP

2016-2017

4) NOA of Draft RMP/EIS

2017

Notice published in Federal Register
90-day Public Comment Period
Public Meetings/Online Open House
Tribal Consultations
ANILCA 810 Hearings

Revise RMP

2017-2018

5) NOA of Proposed RMP/Final EIS

2018

Notice published in Federal Register
Online Availability
30-day Protest Period
60-day Governor's Consistency Review

Protest Period
Governor's Consistency Review

Record of Decision and Approved RMP

TBD



3 MOST RECENT PLANNING MILESTONES

1. **Scoping 2013-2014 (180-days)**
2. **ACEC Comment & Nomination Period May – Aug 2014 (120 days)**
3. **Preliminary Alternatives Outreach Feb – June 2015 (100 days)**

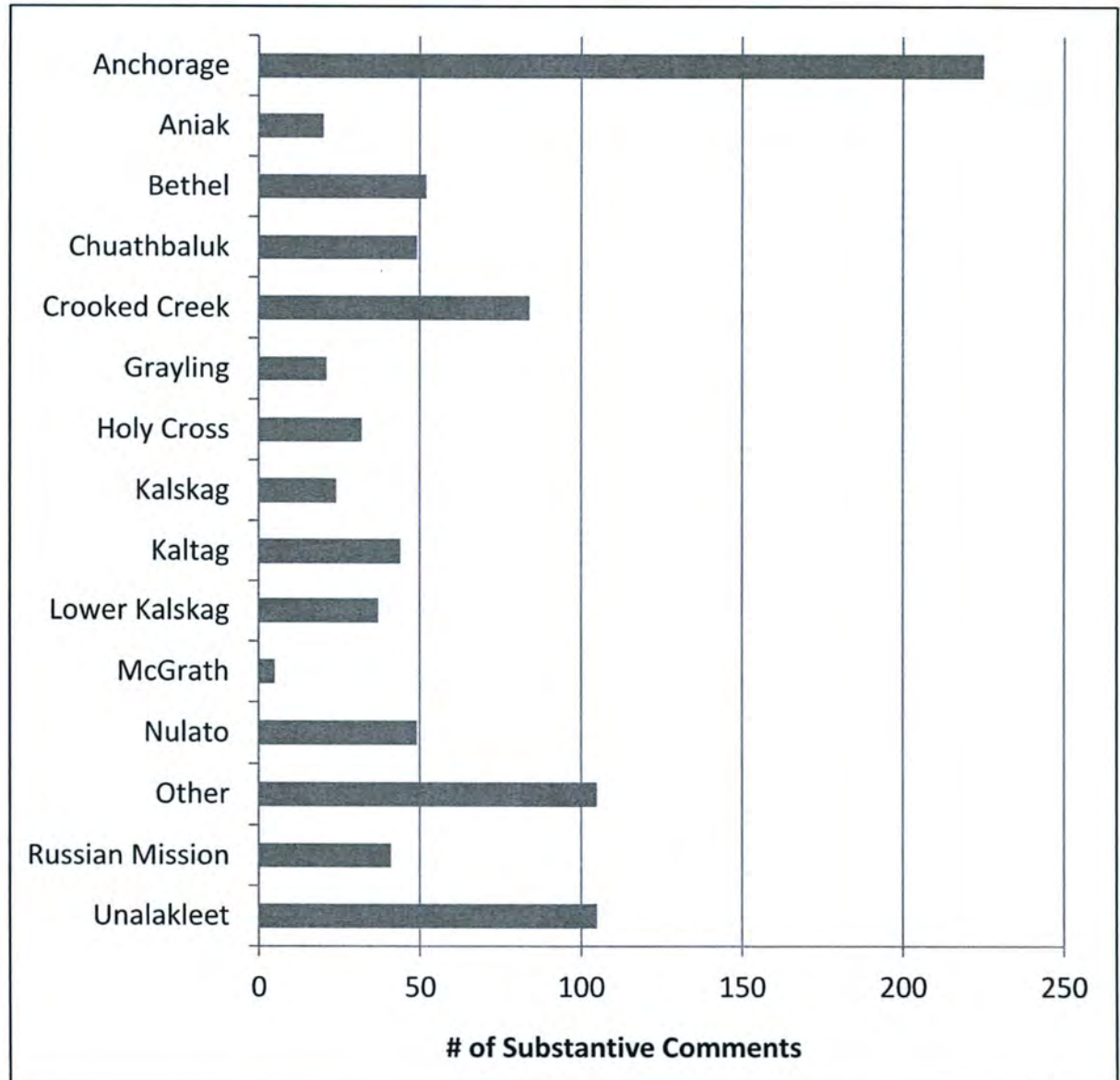
Goal 1 - Input on Draft Preliminary Alternative Concepts.

Goal 2 - Input on Inventories/Reports & Next Steps:

1. Visual Resource Inventory
2. Lands with Wilderness Character Inventory Report
3. Watershed Analysis Framework Process
4. Wild and Scenic River Eligibility Report
5. ACEC Report on Relevance and Importance Criteria



COMMUNITY COMMENT COUNT





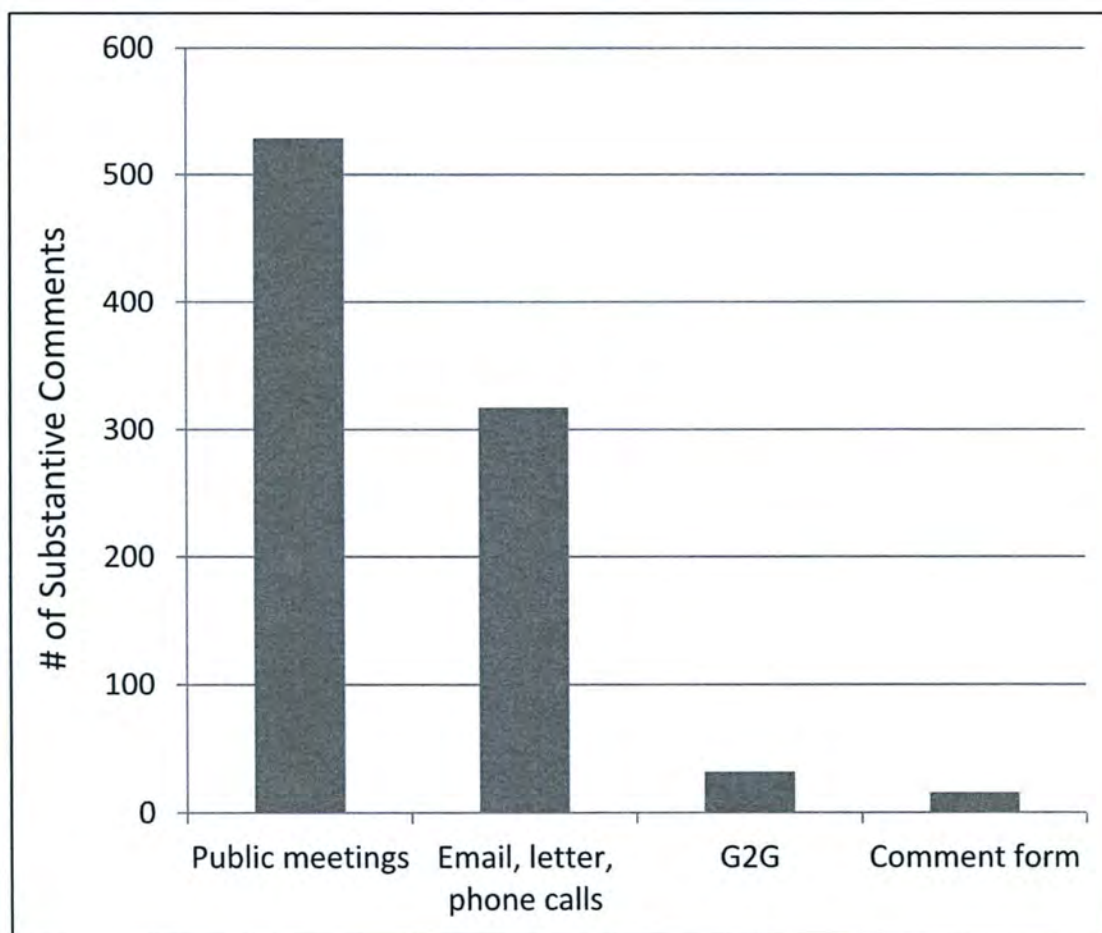
PRELIM ALTS COMMENTS RECEIVED

Affiliation	Number of Submissions	Commenters
State	2	Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas
Local	1	City of Nikolai
Tribal	4	Holy Cross Tribe, Nikolai Edzeno Village Council (2 submissions), Koyukuk Tribal Council
ANCSA Regional Corporation	4	Calista Corporation, Cook Inlet Region, Inc., Doyon Limited, The Kuskokwim Corporation
Industry Organizations	3	Alaska Miners Association, Donlin Gold, Resource Development Council
Interest Groups	4	Alaska Track Association, Association of Village Council Presidents, The Center for Water Advocacy, The Pew Charitable Trusts
Individuals	14	Unidentified (3 submissions), Anchorage (3 submissions), Unalakleet (2 submissions), Aniak (1 submission), Chuathbaluk (1 submission), Fairbanks (1 submission), Grayling (1 submission), Nikolai (1 submission), Russian Mission (1 submission)
Total	32	



893 SUBSTANTIVE COMMENTS

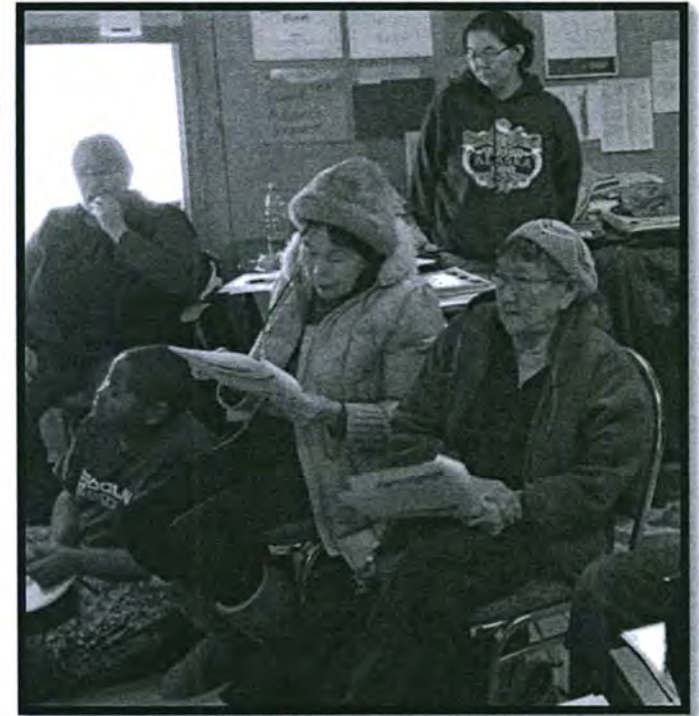
- Public meetings— ~ 60%
- Email, letter, phone calls— ~35%
- Government-to-government meetings— ~ 4%
- Comment form— ~ 2%





MOST FREQUENT ISSUE CATEGORIES

- Issue 11: Travel Management (118 comments)
- Issue 23: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (90 comments)
- Issue 4: Forestry (70 comments)
- Issue 14: Minerals and Mining (65 comments)
- Issue 1: Fish and Aquatic Resources (60 comments)
- Issue 19: BLM Land Ownership, Management, and Use (59 comments)
- Issue 2: Wildlife (58 comments)
- Issue 27: Subsistence (58 comments)
- Issue 22: Wild and Scenic Rivers (49 comments)





SPECIAL RECREATION PERMITS (SRPs)

Permit Activity (number of permits)	Recreation Visits* in 2013
Dog sled rides (1)	8
Big game hunting guide-outfitting (13)	120
Snowmobile racing (1)	265
Dog sled racing (2)	290
Human-powered endurance events (1)	50

****One entrance per individual per day to BLM public lands is a reportable visit***



2015 ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS

Outfitter-Guide & Transporter - related Goals & Objectives

- 1) Established an allocation limit for commercial big game guide-outfitters within each Guide Use Area of the planning unit.
- 2) Establish a buffer zone between guide-outfitter operating areas and rural communities.



2015 ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS

Transporter Operations

Alternative #1: Require all transporters to be under a SRP (e.g., air taxis, boat operators, horseback).

Alternative #2: PUBLIC suggests feedback and submit **written comment** (Spring 2015)

Alternative #3: All transporters, who are not Guide Outfitters, would NOT be required to obtain a SRP if requirements (stated within 43 CFR 2932.12(a)) are met... the BLM may waive a permit requirement when the use begins and ends on non-public lands or related waters, traverses less than a total of 1 mile of public lands or 1 shoreline mile, and poses no threat of significant damage to public land or water resource values.

Require licensed transporters operating on BLM- managed lands within the planning area to have a SRP when they provide passengers with gear, equipment, and/or guiding service on BLM lands.



2015 ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS

Hunting Guide-Outfitters

Alternative #1:

Within one year of the approved plan, establish the following allocation limits for big game G-O operating within each GUA of the planning area:

18-02 (1), 18-03 (1), 19-01 (1), 19-02 (1), 19-03 (1), 19-04 (1), 19-05 (1), 19-06 (1), 19-07 (2), 19-08 (2), 19-09 (2), 19-11 (1), 19-12 (5), 19-13 (1), 20-02 (1), 21-01 (4), 21-02 (1), 21-03 (1), 22-07 (4), 23-05 (1).

- Maximum of 33 G-Os within the planning area (allocated by GUA identified above)
- G-Os may not operate in more than 2 GUAs on **BLM land** within the planning area.
- No SRPs authorized within 25-mile radius of established community
- Continue to evaluate G-Os and transporter activities on a case-by-case basis
- For new SRP holders, permits would be issued for 1-year and may be extended for up to 10-years total, with annual validation requirements



2015 ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS

Hunting Guide-Outfitters

Alternative #2: YOU suggest feedback and submit written comment (Spring 2015)

Alternative #3:

- Special Recreation Permits for G-Os may be authorized near established communities in the planning area
- Maximum of 40 G-Os within planning area (allocated by GUA)
- Each G-O may operate in up to 3 GUAs
- New SRP holders may be given an initial multi-year permit for a period up to 10-years, with annual validation requirements.
- Allocation limits on G-Os would be established on a case-by-case basis at the time of permit granting or renewal. These allocation limits would be determined, in part, based on observed conflict with other uses.



UPDATE

DEC 2015: BLM presented agency updates

- Big Game Commercial Services Board
- Alaska Professional Hunters Association Annual Meetings

RESULTED IN

- Multiple inquiries and questions
- Field Office - targeted outreach to APHA and all hunting permittees in the BSWI RMP planning area (18)
 1. Provided information
 2. Requested comments
 3. Participated on conference call to answer questions

PUBLIC COMMENT

- 4 comments received and will be considered as we develop our full range of alternatives for the Draft RMP

PLAN WEB SITES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

BSWI: www.blm.gov/ak/planning/bswi

Email: BSWI_RMP_Comment@blm.gov

CY: www.blm.gov/ak/cyrmp

Email: Central_Yukon@blm.gov

EI: www.blm.gov/ak/eirmp

Email: Eastern_Interior@blm.gov

Thank you!

