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FEDERAL-STATE LAND USE PLANNING COMMISSION FOR ALASKA

REGIONAL PLANNING IN ALASKA

RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED BY THE
JOINT FEDERAL-STATE LAND USE PLANNING COMMISSION

BY

JANET McCABE
JUDY SHULER

APRIL, 1979

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Federal-State
Land Use Planning Commission
For Alaska

April, 1979

Dear Reader:

A look at regional planning in Alaska is particularly timely as the issue of Federal lands designation moves toward resolution. National interest lands will be categorized, additional entitlements will be conveyed to Native corporations and the State. As the highly prized, highly contested lands pass into new hands, it is time to concentrate on developing structures to plan for their management.

This report examines the various types of regional planning, what the planning process can and cannot accomplish, and how it interrelates with other components of land use decisions. It also fulfills part of the Commission's congressional mandate to make recommendations that would improve coordination in land use decisions.

Regional planning is in an information-gathering stage in a number of agencies, largely as a result of recent Federal and State legislation. As might be expected, studies are concentrated in those areas with the greatest number of people, where competition for land and resource use is likewise most keen.

Some plans are inventorying and cataloging resources within geographic boundaries; others are looking at transportation--the links that bind enclaves of people separated by ranges of mountains, stretches of water, marshes, and tundra.

Regional planning has both value and limitation. It does not exist apart from the political process, but is rather a closely interwoven component. Lack of planning is in itself a kind of political decision.

The plethora of planning efforts points to the need for a strong coordinating body, to share information, lessen costly duplication, and avoid public disenchantment with a process that strongly needs its assistance. A look at what is currently being done should be valuable in developing cooperative structures.

The recommendations in this report were adopted by the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission at its April, 1979 meeting.

Sincerely,

Walter B. Parker
State Co-Chairman

Sincerely,

Esther C. Wunnicke
Federal Co-Chairman

REGIONAL PLANNING IN ALASKA

Recommendations adopted by the
Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission

Report by
Janet McCabe
Judy Shuler

April, 1979

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FEATURES OF REGIONAL PLANNING

We ask much of the land, place many demands upon its resources. Often, those demands are in conflict or ask more than the land can bear. Regional planning has emerged as an avenue for inventorying resources and assigning their use. It is an attempt at farsightedness, at anticipating use conflicts and possible misuse or overuse of the land.

Definitions

In this report, regional planning is defined as a process of study and decision making which considers land units at least as large as whole river valleys. The focus is on the use or conservation of lands and resources throughout the unit, regardless of ownership or jurisdictional boundaries. There are three major types of regional planning: (1) comprehensive planning, (2) functional planning, and (3) coordinated community improvement planning. Seldom is any one of these three types of planning conducted exclusive of the other. Interrelationship between various types of regional planning is desirable and often necessary to the success of the process. Each type of regional planning has some elements of the other types.

A vital first step in any of the three types of planning is the definition of what is to be accomplished through the planning process and articulation of goals which will guide the studies and the decisions emerging from the studies. From the identification of purposes and goals, the appropriate planning unit boundaries can be defined.

1. Comprehensive Planning aims at making an overall allocation of lands and resources in a way that will provide maximum public benefits in accordance with the defined goals of the planning process. A current example is the work of the State Department of Natural Resources. This type of planning does not focus on any one particular type of land use. Instead, it seeks to balance, sort, and separate various types of land use so that the overall pattern of human activity and land use within the region is well-distributed in relation to the capability and character of the land. Requirements for location of various types of uses are also considered. Some land uses, such as residences and industry or snowmobiling and skiing, are incompatible if located in the same space. The objective in planning is to allocate these uses to separate areas well-suited for their purposes. Other land uses, such as transportation facilities, must be carefully located in relation to the land uses to which they provide access, and must be planned as a total system to minimize travel costs and distances. Still other land uses, such as service centers along highways and parks and recreation areas, must be distributed for maximum accessibility and utility to people throughout the region. Some forms of resource use, such as critical wildlife habitat, are possible only in certain locations and must be protected from other activities which would destroy them. In short, comprehensive land use planning is a complicated

and complex process of interrelating and weighing public values and land use possibilities and attempting to develop an overall pattern which is responsive to the many sides of the public interest.

2. Functional Planning also views the region comprehensively, but focuses on decisions for a single form of land use or resource. Examples are transportation planning by the State Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, or planning for wildlife habitat, recreation areas or water resources. There is considerable overlap between functional and comprehensive planning. To develop recommendations and decisions about any one form of land use within the region, planners must go through many of the same steps involved in comprehensive planning. Landforms and types must be mapped, usually the region's economy and population must be studied and projected, and conflicting or interrelated uses of the land and resources must be analyzed. Comprehensive planning often incorporates a number of functional plans for specific resources and land uses. Many of the elements of a comprehensive plan, such as transportation or recreation areas, need to be considered separately as a total system in addition to being studied in relation to other land uses within the region.
3. Coordinated Community Improvement, a third form of regional planning, focuses on coordinated community improvements within the context of the region. This type of planning is characterized by the Mauneluk Regional Planning Program in the Kotzebue region and by some Borough plans which incorporate a set of plans for individual communities within the Borough's jurisdiction. Though the primary focus is on communities, planning of this type often includes an analysis of regional land use and regional economic characteristics, and makes projections about individual community growth and development on the basis of studies of the entire region. For example, the Mauneluk plan includes a study of the reindeer industry and reindeer grazing throughout the Kotzebue region.

In remote regions of Alaska, the rationale for coordinated community development planning of this type is particularly strong. Where there are many small communities and the cost of improvements is extremely high, a community's chances of obtaining Federal or State assistance for a needed project are often far better when the community's proposal is part of a group of proposals for projects serving several communities within the region. In turn, Federal and State agencies find it is more efficient and economical to participate in a well-planned and scheduled program for a variety of development projects in the region. In this manner, facilities that are necessarily related, for example, sewer and water improvements, road improvement, and housing can be planned and provided in proper sequence, and economies at scale can be realized.

Particularly in rural Alaska, where communities are small and isolated, a single major economic development could have a potentially overwhelming impact. Sudden growth must be anticipated and

provided for if development is to be a benefit rather than a hardship. In some locations, whole new communities may need to be built. In others, temporary housing for a transient labor force may be the choice. In still others, growth may be part of a permanent community and require new schools, housing, and community facilities. Through planning, people within the region can analyze and select their response to economic development possibilities. For these reasons, it is particularly important to integrate community planning with regional economic planning.

Values and Limitations

There is a tendency to either view land use planning as an unquestionably valuable process, or to dismiss it as a system of bureaucratic delay. Neither of these attitudes accurately reflects the reality of what can and cannot be accomplished through regional planning. To design useful planning programs, it is important to look below superficial assumptions and identify both the values and the limitations of the regional planning process. Basic values of regional planning may be summarized as follows:

1. Informed Decision Making. By arriving at major land and resource decisions through a regional planning process, an agency assures that each decision will have the benefit of a knowledge of larger considerations. Through planning, individual decisions can be considered in relation to the larger surrounding area. Regional planning which incorporates projections of future trends and changes should also expose future implications of current decisions.
2. Institutionalized Communication. By definition, regional planning involves a wide variety of landowners and public and private interests. The focus is on whole natural, economic or social regions rather than on any one particular area of jurisdiction of interest. Thus, a major part of the time and cost of regional planning is devoted to communication, to eliciting participation by the various interest groups. Establishing a regional planning process, in effect, establishes the staff and financial resources necessary to enable people to coordinate with each other about common and inter-related issues.
3. A Process for Prioritizing. Many land use and resource decisions cannot be finalized at a regional scale, but will require a far more detailed level of analysis and decision. Regional planning provides a rational context for selecting areas of activity and conflict and focusing planning and management attention on locations where it is most needed. Establishing priorities on a region-wide, rather than an agency jurisdictional basis, lays the foundation for interagency agreements about projects involving mutual action or exchange.

It is just as important to recognize the limitations of regional planning as it is to identify the values and purposes of the process. A primary limitation in Alaska is simply the fact that much of the land and

resources within Alaska's regions are unknown and unexplored, and their potential is unpredictable. Elsewhere in the Nation, planning and management decisions can be made within a framework of established trends and land use patterns. In contrast, most of Alaska is inaccessible and there is little or no pattern of previous human use or activity to provide trends or economic indicators which can be considered in deciding about future uses. Of even more significance, external factors affecting land use in Alaska are unpredictable, since technology and other components of production are constantly changing. National resource requirements and market conditions, as well as the future technology of transportation and resource extraction, may change radically in the future. Under these circumstances, the most responsible type of regional planning for certain areas is to provide structures and institutions which can make timely and well-informed decisions in the future and to avoid judgments which would now be premature.

A second important limitation of regional planning lies in the fact that the scale of human land use and activity is often very different from the scale of consideration which is needed to view an entire region. Often, major land use conflicts cannot be accurately shown on a regional planning map, and must be identified and analyzed at a far larger scale. In many circumstances, regional planning is valuable in simply selecting areas for more specific attention and in establishing the larger context and regional relationship that must be considered in making area-by-area decisions.

Significant Interrelationships

The preceding sections define the nature of regional planning per se. It is also necessary to look at the interrelationships between regional planning and other components of land use decisions. How does planning relate to the political process? How does planning at a regional level relate to land planning decisions at a larger state or national level or at a more specific local level, and what should be the relationship between planning and action?

1. Professional/Political. Planning is often mistakenly assumed to be a purely rational process involving study of the land and the development of land use decisions from an analysis of facts. Contrary to this assumption, even the most well-informed planning process involves value judgments and choices between the competing interest groups which reflect the political climate of the times. Many forms of land use are competitive; one would destroy the other if they were allowed to coexist in the same location. Decisions must be made about which use will prevail, where, and in what amount. Exercising no land use control is a political decision in favor of the prevailing or predominant use, just as much as a decision to allocate competing uses to different areas is a political decision for some of each.

In regional planning, the process of fact-gathering and analysis is necessarily the work of a staff of planners and other land and

resource experts. Whether the staff is State, Federal, Borough, or nonprofit corporation, or a combination thereof, depends on who is doing the planning. The staff, with the aid of public hearings and other public comment, develops recommendations or proposals from its analysis which, in turn, are adopted, rejected, or amended by the political body. In Alaska, the established regional political bodies are the boroughs or unified municipalities with their planning commissions, assemblies, and mayors. In the Unorganized Borough, the State Legislature or its delegates are the planning authorities. In some regions of the Unorganized Borough, Coastal Zone Planning Commissions may be established and given planning authority.

There are also numerous de facto sources of political authority throughout Alaska. In rural Alaska, the Native regional corporations wield substantial political power, even though they are private corporations and not part of the State and local government. Wherever a region includes extensive Federal lands, Federal managers of that land exert power over what are effectively political choices. Options available to Federal land managers are, of course, limited by Congress.

Political decisions or value judgments are incorporated in regional planning partially as a result of the staff's anticipation of the political climate as it develops recommendations and proposals, and partially through the direct action of the political body itself. Public hearings and review and comment by various interest groups are processes enabling professionals to learn about political values so these values can be reflected in the recommendations presented to the political body. The most satisfactory melding of the political and professional elements of planning decisions tends to occur when the political decision makers are involved early in the planning process so they can become thoroughly educated about the choices involved as the plan is developed.

2. National/State/Regional/Local. Regional planning must also interrelate with planning at both a smaller and a larger scale. Decisions at a national and statewide level influence Alaska's regions just as the composite of actions at a regional level shape the future of the larger area. Decisions at different levels often reflect somewhat different concepts of the public interest, the most obvious example being the different way wilderness is perceived at national and state levels.

The interrelationship between regional and local planning is comparable to that between the state and the region or the Nation and the state. For example, deciding where to locate a major regional service center, such as a hospital, a borough government center, or a community college, impacts all the localities in the region in one way or another. Local communities are shaped by a wide range of outside regional influences. They are affected most acutely, perhaps, by regional economic forces and major transportation

changes, but also by the availability of natural lands and recreation areas in the surrounding region.

Though regional planning is focused on developing land use decisions for a defined regional unit, the process can never be exclusively confined to the boundaries of consideration. Instead, an important part of the regional planning process will be the determination of exterior forces which influence decisions and actions within the region, as well as a careful assessment of the impact of regional decisions on local communities.

3. Planning/Action. A third and critical level of interrelationship is between the process of planning and decision making and the actions that implement plans and test their actual results. Surprisingly, this relationship often gets little attention and is seldom included in the schedule or organization for planning. It is common to assume that line agencies will simply use planning recommendations with no further motivation than the merits of the planning process. Seldom is there a system for reviewing and revising the plan on the basis of how it actually works in practice. Where there is no system for adjusting a plan to reflect experience, a plan with problems tends to be ignored rather than revised.

Needless to say, it is pointless to prepare plans unless they will be used. The basic purpose of all planning is to improve the quality of actions affecting land use and management. Statutes, regulations or organizational structures establishing planning processes should be designed to maintain a strong linkage between planning and action. Planning bodies should have some actual authority for establishing land uses, either through zoning, land classification, or decisions about location of transportation and other public facilities. Another effective though less powerful link between planning and action is a requirement that the planning authority review and report on major actions involving plan implementation. Agency organizational structures and systems should build an overlap between planning and action. There should be a systematic process allowing land managers to report their actions to the planning body and to participate in the periodic review and revision of land use plans.

CURRENT REGIONAL PLANNING

While planning efforts are scattered around the State, southcentral Alaska, with its concentration of people and competing pressures for use of the land and its resources, is current focus of the greatest number of regional plans. With 14 percent of Alaska's land area, this region houses 57 percent of the State's people.

Southcentral Alaska

The Anchorage District Office, Bureau of Land Management, studied the resources of 53.1 million acres in southcentral Alaska, ranging from forests and minerals to scenery. A 500-page report outlines how those assets are now used and projects future use. The study region stretches from Icy Bay, northwest of Yakutat, to Stepovak Bay on the Alaska Peninsula. It includes the Kenai Peninsula Borough, Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Kodiak Island Borough, and the Municipality of Anchorage, and lands selected by four Native regional corporations--Ahtna, Inc., Chugach Natives, Inc., Cook Inlet Region, Inc., and Koniag, Inc. When complete, in mid-1980, the regional plan will pinpoint those lands most likely to remain under jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management, and make recommendations for resource use. Through land use designation, it will provide guidance for disposal or exchange, granting rights-of-way, and managing such uses as off-road vehicles.

Using similar boundaries, the Southcentral Water Resources Study is looking at future conflicts and options for satisfying water needs for electric power, navigation, recreation, fish and wildlife, and water quality control. The three-year, \$1.5 million study will focus on water and related land resource management needs over the next 10 to 25 years, with some consideration for needs 50 years into the future. The study is designed to address issues of regional significance based primarily on existing information, to rank them in importance, to understand and evaluate the interrelationships of water and resource allocation and land use, and to seek agreement among local, State, and Federal governments, private interests and the public on recommended strategies for guiding future development, management, conservation, and preservation of water and related land resources in the region. More than 30 government and private entities are involved in the water study.

In another broad planning effort, the Alaska Region planning team for the U.S. Forest Service is looking at how management of present and proposed national forestlands relates to other landowners throughout Alaska. As a preliminary to their statewide plan, five area guides have been produced to highlight the resources, concerns, and management for 188.8 million acres. Their five areas of focus are Yukon-Porcupine and Copper River-Wrangell areas, and central interior, southcentral, and southeast Alaska. In addition, specific plans for national forestlands are addressed in a Chugach National Forest land management plan to be completed by January 1, 1980. The Forest Service plans seek areas of agreement between the public, various special interest groups, and

government managers in planning for timber, range, fish and wildlife, and water recreation.

Transportation in Prince William Sound, which lies within the boundaries of the Chugach National Forest, is the focus for a study by the State Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. It was begun as an out-of-court settlement after the Alaska Conservation Society and Sierra Club objected to completion of the Copper River Highway link to Cordova. But it has become the prototype for a series of comprehensive looks at all modes of transportation within a region. The Department's studies survey existing facilities for travel by highway, water, air and rail, and analyze future alternatives and their effects on the region.

The Susitna River Basin and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough form the boundaries for a cooperative regional plan between the Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Soil Conservation Service. The two-year project includes a resource bibliography, status and use atlas, water use and needs study in cooperation with the Southcentral Water Resources Study, and recreation studies to appraise community needs for possible additions to State parks. Management authority will apply only to lands owned by the State, and studies focus on those lands, with consideration for activities on adjoining lands. In providing technical assistance, the Soil Conservation Service is looking at resources under all types of ownership.

Another Department of Natural Resources study looks at State lands within the Kenai Peninsula Borough, including an inventory of resources and a survey of the socioeconomic, cultural, and political character of the region. As in other Department of Natural Resources regional plans, land will be classified to determine which is retained by the State and which will pass into private hands. For lands retained by the State, classification outlines the combination of uses that will be permitted or encouraged.

Southeast Alaska

Southeast Alaska is also the focus of several regional planning efforts. The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities is completing its transportation study of the area. The plan acknowledges the area's dependence on marine transportation and explores additional highway and air routes.

The same narrow coastal strip, stretching 600 miles from Dixon Entrance to Yakutat, formed the basis for the U.S. Forest Service area guide mentioned above.

State lands in the Haines-Skagway area, about 349,000 acres, are catalogued in a regional plan developed by the State Department of Natural Resources. Three land management alternatives were proposed, outlining anticipated conflicts, opportunities for resource use, and the anticipated growth in employment and population accompanying each choice.

Northwest and Arctic Alaska

In northwest Alaska, Mauneluk Association, the nonprofit arm of the NANA Regional Corporation, received a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to identify its regional goals for housing and capital improvement, transportation, economic development, and community development. Data collected will provide guidelines for State and Federal agencies which provide services to the region.

National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, north of NANA in the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, is undergoing study by the Bureau of Land Management. The plan considers Natives who live in the reserve or depend upon its resources, and the scenic, historic, recreation and wilderness values, fish and wildlife, and mineral potential. The land use study preparation plan was completed in April of 1979 and a final report on the reserve, including a petroleum exploration program and an analysis of oil and gas development alternatives, will be presented to Congress by January 1, 1980.

In Fairbanks, the Bureau of Land Management intermittently studied the Fortymile River area over the past five years, then set it aside when funds were cut. They expect to complete it around the summer of 1980. When new land management patterns fall into place, the BLM expects to manage between 3 million and 4.5 million of the area's 18 million acres. The study area, which is bordered by the Alaska Range on the south and angles northeast from Delta Junction to cross the Yukon River at Wood-chopper, encompasses the proposed Tetlin Wildlife Refuge, Fortymile Scenic River, and Yukon-Charley National Park.

The Department of Transportation survey of facilities in western and Arctic Alaska encompasses the NANA region, Seward Peninsula, and the North Slope. It also looks at water transportation along the Bering Sea south of Norton Sound. The 18-month, \$1 million study, like other Department of Transportation planning programs, emphasizes factors affecting transportation such as natural physical barriers, population size and character, income, and regional imports and exports. A survey of overall geography, economy, social structure, and environment is included.

Southwest Alaska

A complimentary plan in southwest Alaska, also expected to take 18 months and cost about \$1 million, focuses on the Kenai Peninsula, Kodiak Island, Alaska Peninsula, and the Aleutian Chain. It will consider establishment of regional transportation centers for the distribution of freight, and a possible link with marine transportation along Alaska's west coast.

Statewide

Unified municipalities and boroughs throughout Alaska are also developing plans for their own regions. Local government, with the power to

zone, is empowered to regulate land use by private landowners. Coastal zone management, required by the Alaska Coastal Management Act of 1977, occupies municipal planning efforts around the State. Alaska has received \$4.7 million in program development funds through the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act.

The North Slope Borough Coastal Management Program is looking first at the Prudhoe Bay area in order to have a voice in the proposed joint Federal-State Beaufort Sea oil lease sale. Like most other regional plans, it includes an area inventory and classification of land and waters, and outlines potential uses and conflicts. But it is adamant that long-term needs of fish and wildlife and the subsistence culture that they support be valued above all competing uses.

In the Municipality of Anchorage, coastal zone management has been reduced to a fine scale, showing its effects on an individual parcel of land. An atlas is being produced to accompany the plan, which offers management guidelines for the Municipality's 108 miles of coastline. Coastal zone management is also in various stages in the Matanuska-Susitna and Kenai Peninsula Boroughs, Ketchikan Gateway Borough, and the City and Borough of Juneau and Sitka.

Local governments are also doing comprehensive planning for physical, social, and economic development and more specialized planning for housing, natural resources, capital improvements, transportation, and policy planning. In the Pribilof Islands, Aleutian communities, and Sitka, preliminary planning is underway for bottom fisheries development.

Common Characteristics

The spate of regional planning in Alaska is largely mandated by recent Federal and State legislation. U.S. Forest Service planning is based on the National Forest Management Act of 1976; Bureau of Land Management planning is based on the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. The Southcentral Water Study harkens to the U.S. Water Resources Council established by Congress in 1965. The Alaska Land Policy Act of 1978 launched a major planning effort in the State Department of Natural Resources, requiring that State land be classified before disposal and to determine management policy.

Most regional planning is still in the information-gathering stage. Resource inventories draw heavily on information already in print, dipping into the pot of collected data, picking the brains of other agencies. Some regional plans list as many as 40 other entities as co-participants in their studies, but new pieces of information are added enroute. Archaeological research in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska unearthed 700 new sites, Anchorage coastal zone planners gathered extensive field data because of the scale of their study. Department of Natural Resources planners discovered the need for additional soils surveys.

Legislation requiring the planning efforts also requires that the public and various special interest groups be active partners in selecting among alternative courses of action. Formal public hearings, small group meetings and workshops, newsletters and media advertisements and announcements are common techniques for involving the public.

Length of time required to develop a regional plan from inventory through recommendations averages 18 to 24 months. Span of vision averages 5 years, with some attempts to peer 10, 20, even 40 years ahead. All plans stress periodic updating as conditions change, as new knowledge is acquired. Emphasis seems to be on data collection, with little stress on analysis of findings.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REGIONAL PLANNING

It is clear from our review of regional planning in Alaska that there is no lack of activity and enterprise in this field. A number of agencies at all levels of government are preparing regional plans for various purposes. Still other agencies, such as the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Transportation, have legal directives and budgeting for regional planning and are developing extensive programs for the future. The current array of planning programs includes examples of each of the three types of regional planning described in the first chapter of this report. As is illustrated by the chart on page 17, there are numerous overlapping planning efforts occurring in the same region. Interrelationships between these various types of planning programs as well as significant interrelationships between the professional and political levels of planning and between plan preparation and plan implementation are often muddled and unclear, at least to the affected public.

The need in Alaska is not for additional regional planning structures, but, rather, for a structure which can schedule and coordinate agency regional planning to maximize the net results of the various planning efforts. Coordination is needed not only to reduce costs and obtain maximum results, but also to clarify and simplify the process as much as possible so that it can be easily understood by the public involved. Currently, there are at least six different regional planning efforts being conducted in Southcentral Alaska. People who comment on one of these regional planning programs are confused when they hear about a different regional plan. When there are a number of different and unrelated regional planning projects for the same area, the public tends to become skeptical about the value of participation.

The various sources of leadership for this type of coordination were analyzed in the study of cooperative planning institutions prepared for the Commission in the spring of 1978. The most probable mechanisms at the time of this writing appear to be either a joint federal-state coordinating body, or the strengthening of the State structure for planning coordination. The advantage of the first possibility over simple State leadership would be the direct involvement of the Federal government.

However, for either structure to be truly effective in coordinating the array of planning programs which are underway in Alaska, enabling statutes must invest the coordinating entity with clear-cut responsibilities and powers. At a minimum, the coordinating entity should have the authority to review proposals and budgets for agency regional planning and should have some authority to comment on budgeting for this purpose. Perhaps there should be a provision that would require special measures to override the coordinating entity's recommendations regarding proposed budgets for regional planning.

The coordinating entity must be located at a level of government above departments and bureaus. Leadership must be made up of individuals who

will be objective and independent in relation to the agencies they will coordinate. For this reason, its members should be chosen for their expertise in land and resource matters.

Federal, State, and Native corporate land managers have recently established the Cooperative Land Manager's Task Force which is organized and administered through the Secretary of Interior's office in Alaska. Though this entity plays a valuable role in resolving issues common to the various land managers, it is not designed as a substitute for an entity which could coordinate regional planning. Instead, the Task Force focuses on common management issues, such as fire control, floodplain management and reindeer herding.

The following should be specified as duties of the coordinating entity:

Scheduling and Programming

The coordinating entity should take the initiative in developing an overall program for regional planning throughout Alaska. Different regions of Alaska require different types of regional planning.

The appropriate source of leadership also varies in different regions. In regions with active borough or unified municipal governments, the municipality is an appropriate lead entity for comprehensive planning aimed at allocation and balancing of many land uses. In such regions, there is also a need for certain region-wide functional plans, for example, plans for outdoor recreation areas, schools, libraries, hospitals, and transportation facilities. It is important that the preparation of functional plans of this type be phased as components of the comprehensive plan.

In rural Alaska where there is no borough government, the Mauneluk Corporation provides an example of an appropriate and much needed form of regional planning which emphasizes a strategy for coordinated delivery of community improvements. In regions where the State government is the dominant landowner, the State Department of Natural Resources could assume leadership in some cases in concert with the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.* In areas where the Federal government is the dominant landowner, Federal land managing agencies should assume much of the responsibility for regional planning. However, even though an existing State or Federal agency carries the main responsibility for work on the project, it should be clear that the project is being done under the auspices of the coordinating entity and as such, it is the State and/or Federal regional plan, rather than simply the plan of one of the line agencies. In many cases, establishing the program and leadership for a given region will not be a matter

* This possibility is developed in a report to the Department of Natural Resources by Victor Fischer.

of assigning the responsibility solely to one entity, but, instead, of finding the most effective combination of efforts.

The task of coordinating entities involves taking a statewide view and identifying the types of regional planning that are most needed and appropriate in different regions. From this identification, the coordinator should develop a program outlining priorities for agency attention, scheduling the most efficient sequence of various types of planning work, and identifying lead agencies. Where two planning agencies are involved and their tasks are overlapping, the coordinator should assign the lead responsibility for the task to one of the agencies and arrange for pooling of resources for maximum benefit to all participants.

A great deal of planning work is already underway in Alaska, and effective overall phasing will be difficult for the coordinating entity, particularly during the initial years. However, by taking the long view in developing a comprehensive program for regional planning throughout the State, it should be possible to gradually bring about the changes and accommodations necessary to substantially improve the process.

Establishing Common Methods and Means

By adopting certain common methods and means, such as the same system for classifying natural resources, the coordinating entity could substantially reduce the collective tasks involved in regional planning and make it far easier for the planning entities to communicate with each other as well as with the public. The possibilities are numerous and new opportunities will emerge over time. Among those most obvious at present are the following:

1. Common Boundaries. Regional planning involves different boundaries for different purposes. The boundaries of a wildlife habitat may be substantially different from the appropriate boundaries for transportation planning. However, this reality does not preclude the possibility of establishing common units for data collection. Different planning entities may wish to use different combinations of units, but a common basis of small data collection units would facilitate sharing of information. By establishing a basic system of small units at the present time and maintaining this system, the State will be laying the foundation for assessing and comparing changes in the future. Progress could also be made toward reducing the number of different regional planning boundaries, particularly for types of planning emphasizing natural features of the land.
2. Common Maps. Different planning purposes require different map scales and levels of accuracy. Often, a regional plan must use several scales, a region-wide map showing the overall picture, plus a larger scale with more detail for certain locations of special interest or intensive activity. Despite these varying requirements, agreement about a standard series of base maps fitting different planning purposes would greatly facilitate information sharing and exchange. If agencies are using common base maps, they can easily

transfer information from one another without having to interpolate to accommodate map differences.

3. Common Data Systems. Progress has already been made towards developing a centralized system for collection and management of resource data. State, Federal, and private agencies are cooperating in a survey to identify common data needs, and the requirements and specifications for a centralized information exchange system. The agencies are also utilizing remote sensing techniques to collect resource inventory data that will be fed into the system. Coordinator is the Committee on Natural Resource Information Management (CONRIM), under the Alaska Land Managers Task Force. The entity which coordinates regional planning throughout the State is an appropriate manager for this centralized data source.
4. Common Terms and Categories. Use of common categories for land and resource classification and for land planning would facilitate communication and reduce duplication. Agreement on resource and land classification categories is essential if a common computer mapping system, as discussed in 3. above, is to be developed. Progress towards this objective was achieved in June, 1978, when, at a national level, the Forest Service, the Soil Conservation Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management signed a cooperative agreement to work together in the standardization of procedures each will follow in classifying and inventorying natural resources.

Recently, a team of Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission, BLM, and State Department of Natural Resources planners have experimented with the use of common planning categories for regional planning in an area of joint ownership. They were able to agree on a mutually acceptable set of regional planning categories, included as an appendix to this report.

Organizing Plan Review

The coordinating entity should have authority to schedule public participation and review of various regional planning efforts. The current diversity and complexity of public meetings and review processes is confusing to the public and, in the long run, discourages effective public participation. Planning in Alaska would be much strengthened if one coordinating entity had the responsibility for clarifying the different roles of various planning programs within each region, for explaining the whole system to the public, and for coordinating and scheduling public hearings and participation. Perhaps the existing Alaska Public Forum could be used more as a central means of public communication. Common planning efforts for a single region should be presented as a unit.






In addition, the coordinating entity should establish regional inter-agency review boards comprised of major landowners, government agencies, and interest groups active in the area and should solicit early involvement of these participants in the major decisions of regional planning.





Reenforcing Planning Implementation

Finally, the coordinating entity should stand as a review board and a place of appeal to help strengthen the tie between planning and action. Perhaps a division of the coordinating entity should be charged with conducting a regular comparison between management activity and the adopted regional plan, and preparing a report on the extent to which plans are being implemented. This process is as necessary to the planners as it is to the land managers. Planners need to be regularly informed about the workability of their efforts so that necessary adjustments can be made. Since the coordinating entity is established at a high level of government, it should have the authority to elicit the cooperation of Federal and State land managing entities in plan implementation.

CURRENT REGIONAL PLANNING

Area	Map	Study Leader	Purpose	Focus	Completion Date
Southcentral Region		Anchorage District Office, Bureau of Land Management	Inventory and recommend use for each resource	Lands most likely to remain in BLM management	Mid-1980
Southcentral Region		Southcentral Water Resources Study (Level B)	Reach agreement on conservation, management, development, and preservation of water and related land resources	Water and related land resources under all ownership	June, 1981
Statewide		Alaska Planning Team, U.S. Forest Service	Identify and resolve conflicts in resource use; relate national forest management to goals and resources of other landowners in the State	Existing and potential national forest lands	August, 1979
Preliminary Area Guides:					
Yukon-Porcupine		Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Alaska	Form basis for state-wide management plan of U.S. Forest Service		1978
Copper River-Wrangell		Institute of Social and Economic Research			1977
Southcentral		Alaska Planning Team			Summer, 1979
Central Interior		Alaska Planning Team			1977
Southeast		Regional Forester, Juneau			May, 1979

Area	Map	Study Leader	Purpose	Focus	Completion Date
National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska		NPR-A Study Team, Bureau of Land Management	Report to Congress on values and best uses for scenic, historic, recreation, fish and wildlife, wilderness, and mineral potential, taking into consideration Native dependence on reserve	Petroleum reserve lands	April, 1979
Matanuska-Susitna Borough and Susitna River Basin		Planning and Classification Section, State Division of Lands, and U.S. Department of Agriculture-Soil Conservation Service	Evaluate resource values to classify lands for disposal or retention. Direct management of State lands.	Lands owned by State	Late 1980 to Mid-1981
Kenai Peninsula Borough		Planning and Classification Section	As above	Lands owned by State	Fall, 1979
Haines-Skagway Area		Planning and Classification Section	As above	Lands owned by State	April, 1979
NANA Region		Mauneluk Association (nonprofit arm of NANA)	Identify regional goals for community development in housing and capital improvements, transportation, economic development. Insure that residents approve government service projects before implementation.	Communities within NANA Region	1981

Area	Map	Study Leader	Purpose	Focus	Completion Date
Western and Arctic Alaska		Department of Transportation and Public Facilities	Comprehensive look at all modes of transportation. Identify needs, alternate solutions, and encourage improved services.	Geography, economic, and social structure as it relates to transportation	Mid-1980
Prince William Sound		Department of Transportation and Public Facilities	As above	As above	May, 1979
Southeast Alaska		Department of Transportation and Public Facilities	As above	As above	June, 1979
Southwest Alaska		Department of Transportation and Public Facilities	Look at regional transportation centers, ferry service	As above	Late 1980
Boroughs and Unified Municipalities		Borough and Municipal Planning Departments		Comprehensive planning, coastal zone management, transportation, housing, natural resource and economic development, capital improvements, policy planning, zoning, and land development regulations (varies by community)	Ongoing
North Slope Borough Fairbanks North Star Borough Matanuska-Susitna Borough Bristol Bay Borough Municipality of Anchorage Kodiak Island Borough City and Borough of Juneau City and Borough of Sitka Ketchikan Gateway Borough					

APPENDIX

PROPOSED REGIONAL PLANNING CATEGORIES

Developed by Federal-State Case Study Team
March, 1978

Introduction

These categories are intended to set forth broad statements of land use policy. As such, they could serve as the basic language for making "first-cut" land use allocations on a regional basis. Their use is not intended to substitute for more detailed land management decisions by the respective owners. In short, these categories set an overall context for more specific, area-related decisions. They are designed as the language for the first stage in a two stage planning process, the broad regional first-cut, which is followed by area-by-area management decisions.

These categories were developed by a joint team made up of representatives from the planning staffs of the Bureau of Land Management, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, and the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission. The team met four times between November, 1978, and March, 1979. Our purpose was to draft a mutually acceptable set of regional land use planning categories which could be used by both Federal and State agencies in planning for a region of inter-mixed ownership. The team recognized that the Bureau of Land Management and the State will tend to employ different ends of the spectrum of categories for land under their respective jurisdictions. However, having one common set of categories should make it easier to plan together on a regional basis.

Use of a single planning process and a common terminology should, in turn, simplify and facilitate communication with the public. As people are encouraged to look at whole regions and see the overall pattern and distribution of various types of land uses and land use policies, it will be easier to show different interest groups how and where their concerns are accommodated. By viewing the whole region, private, municipal, State, and Federal owners will have a better understanding of how their lands fit into the whole pattern of land use needs and possibilities.

PROPOSED REGIONAL PLANNING CATEGORIES

- I Natural Areas
- II Dispersed Use Areas
- III Compatible Use Areas
- IV Resource Development Areas
- V Settlement Impact Areas

Areas of Special Concern: (A designation which would be superimposed on locations within any of the above five categories to designate special management attention for (A) Ecological Reserves; (B) hazard areas; (C) points of special historical, cultural, or scenic value; and (D) critical wildlife habitats.)

I NATURAL AREAS

Category Description: This category would apply to areas where management would maintain the character of the natural world without alteration by mankind.

Federal Equivalent: Areas designated to the National Wilderness Preservation System or areas where, under the BLM Planning System, an "initial determination" of wilderness potential has been made (proposed FLPMA Rules: 43 CFR 1601 0-4(p)). Equivalents in National Forests would be areas identified for wilderness designation through RARE II and, in the Tongass National Forest, LUD I areas.

State Equivalent: There is no equivalent to this category in the existing State classification system.

Typical Characteristics:

- 1) An area of roadless undeveloped land retaining its primeval character without permanent improvements or habitation.
- 2) May contain unique ecological, geological or other natural features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historic value.
- 3) Contains outstanding opportunities for physical challenge and solitude combined with a variety of landforms, vegetation, and/or wildlife types.

Management Implications: Management would be consistent with the requirements of the National Wilderness Preservation System. In other words, resource and road development will be prohibited. Motorized access will generally be limited to established uses.

If a Federal wilderness study area does not culminate in wilderness designation, the planning category would automatically be changed to category II, Dispersed Use Areas.

II DISPERSED USE AREAS

Category Description: This category would apply to areas where the primary management goal is protection of the natural environment, but where other activities are permissible if they can be conducted in accordance with the primary objective. Lands would be retained in public ownership.

Federal Equivalent: National Conservation areas as described in Title IV of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee version of H.R. 39 (see page 169, Committee Report). LUD II areas, as used in Tongass National Forest planning.

State Equivalent: Resource assessment classification, public recreation classification, wildlife habitat classification, grazing land classification, greenbelt classification, and State lands available for isolated cabin permits.

Typical Characteristics: This category would generally apply to large contiguous backland regions where, because of remoteness or the character of the land, little human activity is probable. It would also be applicable to large areas necessary to sustain wildlife, and to areas where recreational use is desirable in a near natural environment, but under less restrictive management than would apply to lands in category I, Natural Areas.

Management Implications: Such areas might be used for subsistence, hunting and fishing, relatively dispersed recreation including headquarters sites for hunting and recreational guides, and isolated private cabin permits under the State's new system. Habitat manipulation, research, inventory, and exploration activities would be permitted. Timber cutting would generally be limited to that necessary for noncommercial subsistence purposes or to that required for salvage or habitat manipulation. Mineral development would be permitted under existing law. Road development would be permitted on a special case basis as needed for recreation, mineral exploration, or other purposes consistent with conservation objectives.

III COMPATIBLE USE AREAS

Category Description: This category would apply to areas where management would seek a compatible combination of both amenity (scenic, natural, and recreational) and commodity values. Compatibility would be obtained either by separating uses on an area-by-area basis or by regulating the conduct of certain uses. Lands would be retained in public ownership except that certain lands may

be leased or sold for special resource use purposes such as recreation or agriculture.

Federal Equivalent: Management for multiple use purposes of a type emphasizing amenity or recreational values, but allowing other compatible uses. LUD III areas as used in Tongass National Forest planning.

State Equivalent: Resource management classification, public recreation land classification, and grazing land classification.

Typical Characteristics: Areas under this category would typically combine amenity and commodity values with some degree of accessibility. This category would be appropriate for areas where there is some possibility of future commodity values, but, because of inaccessibility or market conditions, current development is unlikely.

Management Implications: Public recreation and some commodity resource use of public lands would be permitted, but would be managed to insure compatibility and the allocation of lands to the uses for which they are best suited.

IV RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Category Description: This category would apply to areas where management would seek to provide opportunities for intensive development of resources. Emphasis is primarily on commodity or market resources and their use. When conflicts over competing resource uses arise, they would generally be resolved in favor of commodity values. Lands would be retained in public ownership except that certain lands could be leased or sold if necessary to encourage resource development.

Federal Equivalent: LUD IV areas, as used in Tongass National Forest planning.

State Equivalent: Mineral land classification, timber land classification, material land classification, and agricultural land classification.

Typical Characteristics: Areas under this category would generally combine useable access with resource values suitable for economically feasible development.

Management Implications: Timber cutting, material and mineral development, agriculture, and other resource development would be encouraged.

V SETTLEMENT IMPACT AREAS

Category Description: This category would apply to areas which should be planned and managed in some detail, to accommodate the variety of public and private land use needs generated by impending settlement or settlement impact; by the accessibility to a heavily traveled route; or by isolated, but active, resource use, such as a popular recreation lake which attracts lodges, or a mining development which is starting to become the nucleus of a community.

Federal Equivalent: Areas including and surrounding lands designated for conveyance to private parties or areas designated for intensive recreational use through the BLM (FLPMA) planning process. Areas identified as potential National Forest Townsites.

State Equivalent: Classifications for agricultural, industrial, open-to-entry, homesite, residential, private, recreational, utility, reserved-use agricultural, material, watershed, greenbelt, public recreation, and forestland.

Typical Characteristics: Areas under this category will generally be located within the sphere of community influence, along the corridors of main traveled routes, or at heavily used fly-in sites.

Management Implications: Certain lands within this category would be designated for conveyance to private ownership, others would be designated for permanent retention in public ownership to accommodate the public's needs for watershed, intensive use recreation areas, close-in timber cutting areas, greenbelts, and other public purposes.



The Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission for Alaska was created by Congress and the Alaska Legislature to provide a statewide land use planning process that will insure the economic development of the State in a manner that is compatible with the social and economic well-being of the public, their interests, and the environment.

The Commission also is to improve coordination and resolve conflicts between the State, Federal government, and private landowners in the State, and recommend laws, policies and programs to the President, Congress and the Governor of Alaska for a coordinated comprehensive statewide land use planning process.

The Commission, created by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, is headed by the Governor of Alaska or his full-time Co-Chairman, and by a Federal Co-Chairman appointed by the President of the United States. Four Commissioners are appointed by the Secretary of the Interior, and four by the Governor of Alaska.