

ALASKA LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE FILES 1900-1900 00/2

4302 SRES SJR 3 - SJR 5

1182

*Handwritten:*  
Kool  
Stan

DENALI CARIBOU CALF  
MORTALITY STUDY

1st Progress Report  
June 10, 1984

Francis J. Singer  
Anthony Cleavenger

A study of the causes for the low calf crops in the Denali caribou herd was initiated on April 26, 1984. The objective in 1984 closely follow the recommendations of the Davis Caribou Committee of November 1983 and include:

- 1) Placing 40 mortality collars on newborn calves;
- 2) Conducting an April yearling ratio;
- 3) Completing cow antler and dropped udder ratios in mid-May;
- 4) Analyzing caribou licks for heavy metals;
- 5) Measurement of snow depth on calving grounds;
- 6) A review of Murie's and other historical information during periods of the herd's decline.

Nearly 100 hours have been flown on the project to date, 83 of those hours with a Jet Ranger II helicopter on contract from May 11 - June 4. Personnel of the Office of Resources Management, Denali National Park, participated in all phases of the project, particularly capture, and Bob Cunningham and Tom Griffiths were instrumental in obtaining approval, direction and housing for the project. Rod Boertje, of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, participated on the yearling ratio flight, Tom Bergerud (University of Victoria, British Columbia) helped on the first udder count, Dr. James Foster (D.V.M., Woodland Park Zoo, Seattle, Washington) supervised necropsy and pathology work on calves, and Dr. Foster and Warren Ballard of Alaska Department of Fish and Game necropsied the five intact calves. Bruce Dale (National Park Service) will direct the heavy metals analysis.

A summary of the study's findings to date include:

Capturing

1. A total of 43 calves were captured and 42 were collared and released. Only 1 calf died from study-induced causes -- a golden eagle killed it before it could rejoin its mother. Capturing was difficult and required all or parts of six helicopter days (6.8 calf captures per day). Over 1/3 of all calves chased escaped.

JUL 16 1984

### Calf Mortality

2. Twelve of 42 calves (29%) died of natural causes; nine were probably bear kills (2 by grizzly, 7 by either grizzly or black), two were likely wolf kills, and one was bear or wolf. All the predation was on calves less than ten days old, but oddly enough only the golden eagle killed a calf that was less than five days old. Surplus killing by bears occurred with five calves not eaten.

### April Yearling Ratio

3. A total of 600 caribou was surveyed on April 26, 1984. We observed 46 yearlings per 100 cows, and 88 male yearlings per 100 female yearlings. This is an exceptionally high yearling ratio and equalled the Delta herd's ratio for the same time. It is totally out of line with the Denali herd calf ratios reported, 1975 - 1983. Cow antler retention (= pregnancy rate) was 93%. Bull ratio was 20 bulls per 100 cows but 32 (84%) of 38 bulls were young bulls, suggesting if mature bulls were sampled, the herd's bull ratio would be double or more, i.e. 40-50. If so, the herd's bull ratio is much higher than was reported in the late 1970's (this can not be verified until the 1984 fall rut).

### Cow Pregnancy and Sex/Age Ratios

4. Calving spanned over three weeks with the earliest calving to the east at Stony Creek (peak of May 12), then at Moose Creek (peak about May 23), and with a long peak (May 23 - 30) at Turtle Hill (see Figure 1). As a result, we conducted two udder counts on May 23 (N= 659 animals) and the second on May 30 - June 3 (N= 1210 animals). Pregnancy rate, as suggested by dropped udders, was very high in the core calving areas -- 96% at Moose Creek, 97% at Stony Creek, 94% in the Kantishna Hills, and was lowest in the west -- 81% at Turtle Hill, and 77% from Muddy River to Swift Fork. Much of the herd wintered (February - March) west of the Muddy River before moving east to Stony Creek, and the higher rate of barren cows there is convincing evidence that many non-pregnant cows never made the early move (April) east to Stony Creek. Overall, herd pregnancy rate was 83% which is very close to the overall average for Alaska herds.
5. Bull and yearling ratios also varied a great deal amongst the seven identified calving areas (see Table 1). Yearlings were relatively more abundant where caribou numbers were more dense (core areas) and bulls were more common in the peripheral calving areas. In addition, we saw scattered bulls (typical groups 2-4) in areas removed from any cows (N=9 bulls along Stampede Road, N=34 bull in the Kantishna Hills east, N=34 bulls

near Sanctuary River) but it was beyond our resources to sample them.

Herd Size

6. We counted 1,210 caribou on our second udder count, and calculated the lowest minimum total estimate for this herd as 1700 animals. Our extrapolation is based on two assumptions: a) we sighted only about 70% of the caribou based on the number of radio-collared calves seen during systematic transects, and b) at least 100 additional old bulls (see also Table 1) were not counted on the calving areas. Troyer's best estimate of the herd in 1979 was 1094. Numerous statements have been made that the herd has stabilized 1972 - 83 at between 1200-1500 animals, but there is no evidence for either herd stability or for this numerical estimate.

Calving Success

7. Calving success (calves per 100 cows) varied greatly amongst the seven northern calving areas used (see Table 1). Since the pregnancy rate was high in all the areas we assumed the differences reflect differences in predation rates.

Table 1. Sex/age ratios of the Denali caribou herd, May 1984, on seven northern calving areas.

Calving Area	Total Caribou	Ratio Per 100 Cows			% of Pregnant Cows	% of Young Bulls <sup>1/</sup>
		Calves	Yearlings	Bulls		
Estok	20	83	0	150	83	22
Shushna Flats	26	69	0	62	100	38
Stony Creek	20	84	55	29	97	56
Moose Creek	211	76	20	22	91	56
Turtle Creek	221	40	60	6	86	100
Muddy-Swift Fork	368	59	24	16	77	38
Kantishna Hills	176	53	9	46	94	56
Last Udder Count (May 29 - June 2):	1210	47	25	15	83	

<sup>1/</sup> Young bulls = 2-3 year olds with short antler velvet.

8. Mortality collars were placed on calves in only four of the seven calving areas and in one of those four (Turtle Hill) the sampling was inadequate (only three collars for 106 cows). Table 2 presents three indices to calving success -- calf mortality collars, differences between dropped udders and calf ratios, and differences between the highest and the lowest calf count. Only the first

and third indices were directly comparable, and neither of these techniques indicate immediate post-calving mortality such as still born calves, abandoned calves, etc.

Estok Hill and Moose Creek had the highest calving success and Stony Creek and Turtle Hill the lowest (see Table 2). Only at Turtle Hill were we aware of evidence of wolf activity. One study deficiency is a lack of knowledge of wolf packs and active dens. The overall lack of wolf activity this summer (one active den, five pack-areas with no known active dens, the Savage pack not located for the second year) may be cause for concern about the wolf population, although the lack of wolf activity may simply result from a lack of information.

Table 2. Comparison between calf ratio, mortality collar, and udder count estimates of calf mortality, 1984.

Calving Area	Calf Ratio Data			Collar Data			Udder Data
	High-est	Low-est	Differ-ence	No. Collars	No. Dead	Percent Dying	Greatest Difference Between Udder Ratio and Calf Crop
Estok	95	83	-12	3	0	0	0
Stony Cr.	85	44	-41	20	8	40	57
Moose Cr.	74	76	+2	12	1	8	15
Turtle Hill	40	32	-12	3	0	0	54



Mr. QUARLES. Some of that land is agricultural land, though, isn't it?

Mr. GRAHAM. Alan Epps may want to comment on that.

Mr. EPPS. Alan Epps with the Cooperative Extension. You're right, there are some agricultural lands. In fact, part of the area that the State has indicated up here on this map for selections, the bulk of it, in fact, does fall into agricultural soil groups, however, it is approaching a rather high altitude and would be considered somewhat marginal from an agricultural standpoint, except for some of the more short season crops that will tolerate a light frost. Other than that, the agricultural impact of the extensions here are rather slight.

Mr. HARVEY. Any other comments on agriculture or forestry?

Mr. ANTHONY. The amount of timber there is more than adequate for the hard rock mining in the district.

Mr. QUARLES. All right. The next issue is the non-Federal lands, the land selections. It appears we have no one from the State Departments Natural Resources here to read their assessment.

#### *State and Native Land Selections*

Mr. HESSON. Jack Hession, Alaska Coalition. In view of the committee's interest in the identification of conflicts, I think it's appropo to mention that at least two of the State's identification areas are in conflict with the habitat requirements of the McKinley herd, as outlined by Mr. Troyer. Namely, in the Cantwell area and in the Stampede critical habitat areas.

Mr. HARVEY. The State selections are in conflict with the habitat? I don't understand.

Mr. HESSON. In view of the phrase that the State uses, more intensive uses, they've identified them for mineral potential, for a number of nonpark values. To give you an example, in the Cantwell area, they're interested in mineral values. The State has a location-type mining law, in which case that area would be wide open to mining at the same time that the caribou were attempting to use it for critical habitat.

Mr. HARVEY. I understand. It's the anticipated use, rather than the ownership problem?

Mr. HESSON. Yes, and Mr. Gordon reminds me that currently State legislature and the Alaska Society as a whole is embroiled in the issue of homesites, homesteads, and disposal of the public domain of the State. In that case, of course, there is even more threat to the caribou habitat. Thank you.

Mr. HARVEY. Any other other comments?

Mr. MORGRIDGE. I'm, Dean Morgridge, Alaska Oil & Gas Association. The area I want to talk about is know as the Minchumina Basin, and I'll give a very brief geographic description of the boundaries. On the southeast, it generally follows the foothills of the Alaska Range, down about as far as the Castle Hills, on the south end, generally along the north fork of the Kuskokwim River, on the northwest, the Zitziana River, as far as the Tanana on the north, and the eastern boundary is generally south from the Vil-

Mr. LEGGETT. Oh, class II and class III soils?

Mr. EPPS. Right.

Mr. LEGGETT. And in the class II soils you can grow—

Mr. EPPS. The class II soils are equivalent to the midwest of class I, that's where you grow your corn in Iowa and so forth. It's deep soil, 3 to 4 feet, well drained, nearly level, highly inducive to intensive agriculture. Then each of the various bills, of course some of these you might realize that we did not have great warning that we were going to have this meeting and I had to put this together as quickly as I possibly could in order to present it to you.

Mr. LEGGETT. You talk about reindeer range impact. Outside of the 25,000 reindeer in Seward and the reindeer around Nunavk, how many other reindeer do you have?

Mr. EPPS. At the present time we don't have a great many of them, the same as we don't have a great many grain farms, but the potential is there and we feel that it should at least be recognized as potential and the option not closed.

Mr. LEGGETT. Well, would the option be closed to a refuge area?

Mr. EPPS. Historically it has, particularly when the fact that Secretary of Agriculture is the only one that can allow reindeer graz in H.R. 39, restricts, or allows grazing and H.R. 39 says that with the Wilderness Act, all references to the Secretary shall be to the Secretary of the Interior, so this would eliminate it under H.R. 39. Some of the others would not, I think it's a possibility. Again, however, as much the same with the exploration of the oilfield on the Kenai Moose Range, this information in the past has been generated by BLM and not Fish and Wildlife Service where there is a cooperative working relationship.

Aug 8  
1977

Note  
Kowaloky & J  
Per  
(T.O.E) test

Mr. LEGGETT. OK, lets see, our time is 11:15. We've reviewed the economics here to a degree. Obviously we could spend all day on this but we have to allocate our time. This has been very helpful to the committee. If you have any additional materials you want to supplement or if you want to clarify any of these tables, feel free to mail any additional addendum materials to our office in Washington. Thank you all very much, you've been extremely helpful.

Now we have panel No. 2. Gentlemen, you may proceed in any order that you care to make your presentations. Who's the delegate leader, do we have any? [No response.] If you'll give me your names from left to right.

Bob Shipley. Peter Scholes. Jack Hession. Dee Frankfourth.

Mr. LEGGETT. ~~And that must be Mr. Gordon who's left. Ladies first,~~ all right. Nice to have you before the committee.

STATEMENT OF DEE FRANKFOURTH, ALASKA CENTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. FRANKFOURTH. Thank you very much. Chairman Leggett, subcommittee members, my name is Dee Frankfourth and I'm speaking on behalf of the Alaska Center for the Environment.

Mr. LEGGETT. All right, if you want to use the microphone up there you can or you can stay where you are.

Ms. FRANKFOURTH. If you can hear me fine I'd prefer—

Mr. LEGGETT. Can the folks in the back hear?

*From motions/resolutions of Land Use Advisors Committee, May 11, 1984, Kodiak, Alaska*

Dunkle Mine:

A MOTION was made by Steve Silver, regarding Dunkle Mine, that Alternative #7, on page 12 of the Study Group's Report, be endorsed by the Land Use Advisors with the editorial changes in the last sentence to read "Dunkle Mine" instead of "Kantishna Hills", and "12,411 acres" to read "18,000 acres".

Thus, Alternative #7 would read:

"In this alternative, the existing park boundary in the Dunkle Mine area would be adjusted to exclude significant mineralized lands. A land exchange (for other areas of significant natural, cultural, or recreational values outside the park) would be a condition of removing these areas from the park.

Specific land exchange possibilities would be subjected to further analysis and negotiations between the State of Alaska and the Department of Interior. Portions of the Dunkle Mine area which could be considered for exchange involve approximately 18,000 acres." (See Map attached to Minutes and made a part of the record.)

Wayne Ross seconded the motion and a show of hands vote was taken with ten (10) of the Advisors voting affirmative and one (1), Peter Scholes, voting negative.

V. KENAI NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

A MOTION was made by Wayne Ross that the Land Use Advisors Committee recommend to the Alaska Land Use Council that they oppose the following provisions in the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan:

- (1) the proposed wildlife viewing area between Skilak Lake and the Sterling Highway if said area is closed to big game hunting by the Federal Government, (p.3-45);
- (2) the opening of the Swanson Lake Canoe System to motorized access, (p.3-46); and
- (3) any involuntary acquisition of private inholdings, (p. viii).

The motion was seconded by Steve Silver. A show of hands vote was taken with ten (10) of the Advisors voting affirmative and one (1), Peter Scholes, abstained. .THE MOTION PASSED.

be accommodated. He noted, however, that occasions may arise where other base maps may be more appropriate and the Council's action should take cognizance of that.

MR. ANGAPAK stated that this was a move in the right direction and he hoped that this project would be a step in updating all the existing maps in the State of Alaska including rural areas.

Ms. WUNNICKE joined the Council meeting at this point.

4. Kantishna Hills/Dunkle Mine Study

MR. WIGGINS wanted to have placed into the record of this Council meeting a copy of a letter addressed to him from Mr. Gabriele J. Paone, the Agency Ethics Officer for the Department of Interior (Attachment A). Mr. Wiggins stated that during the course of this study, one of the subcontractors, who had been retained by the U.S. Bureau of Mines, in the study group, was a company where his wife had been employed. Upon discovering this, he had ceased all of his participation in the study, and set forth the details in a communication to the Agency Ethics Officer. In accordance with 18 U.S. Code, Section 208, and under Executive Order 11222, Mr. Wiggins asked them to rule on the possibility of a conflict of interest or violation of any regulations under the U.S. Code or the Executive Order with regards to his continued participation. He called attention to the second paragraph of the response from Mr. Paone, which reads:

"The circumstances surrounding the DOWL/PLANGRAPHICS contract do not prohibit you from performing any official duties required of you in connection with the study group's report. You may vote at the Council meeting on the acceptance or rejection of the recommendations contained in the study group's report and you may make recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior, to the President and to the Congress relative to the overall study. You are not prohibited in any way from participating in the Council's deliberations on the issue nor must you abstain from any further participation in the deliberations on the matter."

MR. WIGGINS asked that this letter be placed in the record so there is a clear indication that the matter had been dealt with. He then asked the Council members if any of them had any concern with respect to his continuing to participate in the Council's deliberations or his voting or any comments regarding this matter. None of the members had any objections to

*From minutes of Alaska Land Use Council, May 23, 1984, Anchorage, Alaska*

the response from the Department of Interior and agreed that this should not result in any type of conflict.

MR. WIGGINS suggested that when the Council got to the point of taking action on the Kantishna Hills/Dunkle Mine Study, that they consider separating the two areas so it is clear what the Council is intending to do. He stated that in reading all of the literature, he observed that there is a tremendous amount of confusion as to whether actions taken applied to the areas individually or together. He asked that when the Council members referred to one or the other, that they specify which area they were talking about. He also asked that the Council note his memorandum (C.M. #017/84 (Attachment B)), stating his intentions with respect to the study.

MR. CONTOR pointed out on a map the locations of both Kantishna Hills and the Dunkle Mine area. He complimented the Study Group on doing a very professional job in compiling a considerable amount of information and reaching a reasonable consensus, which is addressed in a letter of May 3, 1984 to the Alaska Land Use Council from himself and Esther Wunnicke. He stated that it is a good example of compromise among the various agencies involved. He said that the National Park Service is simultaneously doing a general management plan for Denali National Park, which will have recommendations for these two areas that are well within the range of alternatives of the Environmental Impact Statement and the Study Report. He asked the Council to note page 15 of the Study Group Report, where all of the members of the Study Group recommended that the National Park Service, Department of Environmental Conservation and the Department of Natural Resources work together in achieving better compliance in mining practices in the Kantishna area. He said that notice had been served to the miners and the National Park Service would try to get at least settling ponds on all of the placer claims. At the same time, the Study Report mentions that not enough is known about the mortality of the Denali caribou herd to make a long range decision on the Dunkle Mine area. That study is now underway and he said that at the conclusion of the study, in approximately two to three years, the National Park Service will be in a better position to make a recommendation on the future of the Dunkle township. He stated that at this time there is reason to believe that both mining and caribou can be compatible in the Dunkle area, but it is premature to make a valid, long range recommendation.

MS. WUNNICKE said that she felt the Study Group did a fine job and if the status quo were maintained in Kantishna there would still be the opportunity for some mineral development there. She said that the recommendations of the Study Group provide for expanded mineral development in the Kantishna area under a leasing system, which there would not otherwise have been under the status quo. Recognizing that this is a recommendation to the Congress and there will be many factors going into any Congressional action, the maintenance of the status quo might be the end result anyway. She stated that she still supports the Study Group's recommendation with respect to that ability to expand mineral development in the Kantishna area. She said that, regarding the Dunkle township, there is a recognition that the caribou studies need to be completed and the NPS should refrain from adjudicating the mining claims until the caribou studies are finalized. Also, pending the completion of these studies, it is important to reconsider exchanging the Dunkle township for some others that would more appropriately be in the park and allow the Dunkle township to be open to mining. She stated that the Department of Natural Resources was very much aware of the letter from the Federal Cochairman, as well as communications from members of the Alaska Legislature, but she supported the recommendation of the Council following that of the Study Group.

MR. WIGGINS noted the correspondence Ms. Wunnicke spoke of, the letter of May 19, 1984 from Gary Thurlow, Matanuska-Susitna Borough Manager (Attachment C), a letter from the Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas dated May 21, 1984 (Attachment D), and a letter from members of the Alaska State Senate Committee on Resources, dated May 19, 1984 (Attachment E). He asked that these letters be made a part of the record of this meeting.

MS. WUNNICKE stated that it appeared the recommendations made in the correspondence were all alternatives discussed and were already a part of the study.

MR. CONTOR suggested that these three letters, the letter of May 10, 1984 from Mr. Wiggins to the Alaska Land Use Council, as well as the recommendations of the Land Use Advisors Committee, be included in the comment section of the final Environmental Impact Statement.

MR. WIGGINS stated that he had no objections to this. All this constitutes input to the Land Use Council, and

further input to people who, subsequent to this point in time, will consider it in making decisions, namely the Secretary of Interior and Congress. He said they should have the benefit of each and every piece of input.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. CONTOR THAT THE COUNCIL  
✓ ACCEPT THE STUDY GROUP'S REPORT AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS, INSTRUCT THE STUDY GROUP TO  
PREPARE THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT,  
AND TRANSMIT IT TO THE SECRETARY OF INTERIOR AT  
THE END OF THE THIRTY (30) DAY PUBLIC REVIEW  
PERIOD. THE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS. WUNNICKE.

MR. WIGGINS asked MR. CONTOR if the motion signifies the Council's endorsement or concurrence with the recommended alternative.

MR. CONTOR stated that the intent of the motion was to accept and send it forward without any particular editorial comment on any of the alternatives, because any action on this would require Congressional action, which will institute another public involvement and comment process.

MR. WIGGINS wanted clarification of the motion that it was not the intention of the motion to signify any preference by the Council.

MR. CONTOR said that the intention was to simply accept it as a good report and send it forth to Congress. He stated that the report indicates the preferences of the various agencies on pages 15-16.

MS. WUNNICKE stated she assumed that the forwarding of the Memorandum of May 3, 1984 from the Study Co-Leaders to the Council, in which the recommendations of the Study Group were discussed, would constitute support of the preferred alternatives, leaving open the Dunkle question for further study with respect to the caribou.

MR. CONTOR stated that his intention was not to comment either way, for or against any preferred alternative because that has been done by the study group. He said that the National Park Service would be making a different recommendation in its general management plan. The final decision is in the hands of Congress and he feels it would not be pertinent or relevant to editorialize further.

MS. LEASK asked if Congress was looking to the Land Use Council for recommendation on this.

MR. WIGGINS said that, in his judgment, the Council has an obligation to Congress to make a recommendation.

MS. WUNNICKE said she supported MR. WIGGINS' view, and agreed that the ultimate action is that of Congress, but it is the obligation of the Council as a body, to make a recommendation to Congress.

A MOTION IN THE FORM OF A SUBSTITUTION TO THE MAIN MOTION WAS MADE BY MR. CONTOR THAT THE ALASKA LAND USE COUNCIL CONCUR WITH THE STUDY GROUP'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS, INSTRUCT THE STUDY GROUP TO PREPARE THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT, AND TRANSMIT IT TO THE SECRETARY OF INTERIOR AT THE END OF THE THIRTY (30) DAY PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD. THE SUBSTITUTE MOTION WAS SECONDED BY MS. WUNNICKE.

MR. WIGGINS raised the point that he wanted to be sure that in three months from now, there would not be any dispute as to what the Council did, and asked if everyone was clear on the motion's intent.

A voice vote was taken and THE MOTION AS SUBSTITUTED PASSED with one objection, that being from the Cochairman, MR. WIGGINS; the other thirteen members of the Council voting in the affirmative.

MS. WUNNICKE expressed her thanks to the Land Use Advisors for the care they took in expressing this issue and also noted again the fine job she felt the Study Group did.

##### 5. Trespass Policy and Enforcement

MR. WIGGINS stated that the Staff Committee recommends three specific parts in Council Memorandum #005/84: 1) the Project Group be allowed to make a presentation to the Council; 2) the efforts underway to accomplish the products be identified in the work program item #14 be disbanded; and 3) and that the Staff Committee be directed to write a new work program item based upon the recommendation obtained in the inter-agency trespass report dated February 15, 1984.

DEAN KREBS, Bureau of Land Management gave a brief presentation regarding the recommendations contained in the report. Following are the recommendations made by the Study Group:

- a) The Work Group draft an unauthorized use policy statement to be endorsed by the Land Use Council. They further advised that would only be possible



*Citizens' Advisory Commission*  
*on Federal Areas*  
November 28, 1984

515 Seventh Avenue  
Suite 310  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
(907) 456-2012

Warm Greetings to you.

Staff also extends our thanks to those who have given us some help on projects recently and throughout this last year.

Projects during 1984 included reviewing and commenting on the following management plans (listed by management agency). If you wish information on any of them, let us know.

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

General Management Plans:

Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve

Statements for Management:

Kobuk Valley National Park

Noatak National Preserve

Alternatives Workbooks:

Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve

Wild and Scenic Rivers Studies:

Study Recommendations for Koyuk, Kanektok, Yukon  
(Ramparts Section), Sheenjek and Squirrel Rivers

Proposed Regulations:

36 CFR, Part 13

Cabins and other structures

36 CFR, Part 9

Minerals Management: Mining and Mining Claims

**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

Resource Management Plans:

Steese National Conservation Areas

White Mountain National Recreation Area

**U. S. FOREST SERVICE**

Noranda/Greens Creek Boundary Adjustment

Quartz Hill/ U.S. Borax EIS

Coronation, Warren and Maurelle Islands Wilderness Plan

1985-Resource Planning Act Program

Misty Fiords National Monument EA & Management Direction

West Chichagof-Yakobi EA

Russell Fiord Wilderness Area EA

South Prince of Wales Wilderness EA

Tebenkof Wilderness EA

**U. S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**

Comprehensive Conservation Plans

Kenai National Wildlife Refuge

Becharof National Wildlife Refuge

Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge

Izembek National Wildlife Refuge

**OTHER**

Proposed Bristol Bay Cooperative Management Plan and

Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Plan responsibility: Alaska Land Use Council and

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

One of the Commission's major project in 1984 was a result of the proposed National Park Service regulations for the use and construction of cabins and other structures on National Park lands in Alaska. Public concern arose late in May when it was discovered that many rural residents throughout the State were unaware of the regulations and would not have an adequate amount of time to comment on them. The Commission immediately requested an extension of the comment period. The U.S. Department of the Interior then set August 3 as the close of the review period. However, no additional public meetings were scheduled by the National Park Service.

At this point the Commission decided to hold a series of meetings in those areas which would be directly affected by the proposed regulations. Commission staff distributed approximately 200 copies of the proposed regulations. Then in July, the Commission sponsored meetings in Eagle, Coldfoot, Kotzebue and Glennallen. Many valuable comments and insights on how the proposed regulations would impact cabin users and occupants were received at the meetings. A total of 72 people attended the four meetings. Another dozen letters and written comments were also received, many from remote areas in the bush. This information was used during the Commission's review of the regulations and incorporated into the formal written comments submitted to the National Park Service.

The Commission is being involved at an earlier point than ever before in the planning process for various public lands. Staff attended several meetings of some of the subsistence resource commissions established for the National Parks in Alaska. Commission staff also participated in a meeting of the interagency Quartz Hill Resource Advisory Group.

The Commission has also worked on other topics of interest to the public. These involved the issue of RS-2477 rights-of-way across federal lands, the administration of the local hire program authorized by section 1308 of ANILCA and the question of ownership of "trespass" cabins on National Park lands in Alaska.

On October 30, a joint meeting of the Commission and the Alaska Land Use Council Advisors Committee was held in Anchorage. The two groups jointly discussed goals and objectives and then reviewed current planning issues of common interest. A joint resolution requesting Alaska Land Use Council backing and pursuit of a land exchange for the Dunkle Mine in the Denali National Park was passed unanimously.

On October 31, the Commission held its regular meeting. A summary is enclosed for your review. Also enclosed is a new brochure on the Commission. Call if you wish more information.

Commission Staff



# RECORDS CERTIFICATION

I, the undersigned, an employee of the State of Alaska, do hereby certify that the microfilm images on this microform are accurate reproductions of the original records of the State of Alaska as accumulated during the regular course of business, and that it is the established policy and practice of this State to microfilm its records and to dispose of the original records after microfilm reproductions have been made.

James Smith  
Signature of Camera Operator

11/24/89  
Date

SJR

5

# Alaska State Legislature

ARLISS STURGULEWSKI, Chairman  
BETTYE FAHRENKAMP, Vice Chairman  
JACK COGHILL  
DICK ELIASON  
VIC FISCHER  
RICK HALFORD  
FRED ZHAROFF



POUCH V  
JUNEAU, ALASKA. 99811  
(907) 465-4907

## Senate Committee on Resources

MEMORANDUM

February 21, 1985

TO: All Members  
Senate Resources Committee

FROM: Staff  
Senate Resource Committee

RE: SJR 5 Requesting that the Alaska Land Use Council oppose adoption of the Steese National Conservation Area and the White Mountain National Recreation Area Resource Management Plans.

Enclosed in this packet are:

- 1) A memo from Senator Fahrenkamp with some of the background and concerns about the Steese and White Mountain management plans.
- 2) A memo from Sally Gibert, of OMB, on how state responses are put together for conservation system unit reviews.
- 3) An exchange of letters between the State and the Department of Interior regarding the management plans for the Steese and White Mountain areas.
- 4) A letter from Hugh Fate Jr., temporary chairman of the Land Use Advisory Council, to Vern Wiggins, Chairman of the Alaska Land Use Council, on the Steese and White Mountain management plans.

This hearing will be teleconferenced and it is expected that there may be a good bit of public testimony from a number of diverse viewpoints.

**Circle Mining & Recording District**

BOX 1872  
CENTRAL, ALASKA 99730

February 11, 1985

FEB 19 1985

WINTER ADDRESS  
P.O. Box 82330  
Fairbanks, Ak 99708

SJR5

Esther Wunnicke, Commissioner  
Department of Natural Resources  
Pouch M  
Juneau, Ak 99811

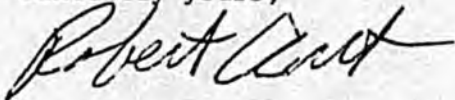
Dear Commissioner Wunnicke;

At the DNR Mining Advisory Committee meeting held November 20 at the Fairbanks Airport you were asked to litigate the Federal Reserved Water Rights on the Birch and Beaver Wild and Scenic Rivers in the Steese and White Mountains area. You indicated at that time that you were considering litigating the matter in the Sitka area.

The Circle Mining District supports this effort in Sitka. However, members of the Circle Mining District have water rights pursuant to AS 46.15 and feel the issue should be raised in the Steese National Conservation Area.

Your attention to this matter would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,



Robert Ault, President

CC: Senator Arliss Sturgulewski  
Representative Dick Shultz

**BLM Director To Decide  
Protests On Steese/White  
Mountains Plans**

FROM  
ENERGY QUARTERLY

The director of the Bureau of Land Management has received a total of 26 formal protests on the management plan and final EIS for the Steese/White Mountains areas. All but a few of those protests came from either mining groups or environmental groups. The director will decide on an individual basis whether to affirm a protest, sustain BLM's decision, or make some modification of the decision.

The **Steese plan** has required very careful balancing of resource uses because Congress set the area aside as Alaska's first national conservation area and required that multiple use must be attained while giving special emphasis to caribou and maintaining sustained yield and environmental quality.

BLM believes that mining can be done in the area. State Director Mike Penfold said, "We can improve water quality and have mining at the same time." Yukon Resource Area Manager Mike Green also noted that even though there are a lot of mining claims within the Steese area, active mining is primarily concentrated in the south Steese segment north of Birch Creek. The rest of the Steese area, he said, "has lots of claims but hardly any ongoing activity."

The plan opens a large part of the Steese area to mineral entry and leasing. It also calls for a five-year inventory and assessment of minerals. BLM is now working with the Alaska Division of Geological and Geophysical Survey, the federal Bureau of Mines and the U.S. Geological Survey to pinpoint the data that is needed for a minerals inventory detailed enough to allow BLM to make well-informed decisions when allocating mineral and other land uses.

BLM will now open 75 percent of the Steese area for mining, do the inventory, and then re-evaluate the plan in three years to determine what changes, if any, should be made.

The State of Alaska raised one objection to the provisions of the plan. It objected to BLM's setting water quality standards different from those set by the State. For this reason BLM will be modifying that part of the final plan. The final plan will not contain specific statements about percentages of effluents that will be allowed, etc., but instead will require BLM to cooperate with the State and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to establish water quality standards. It will require miners to meet current State and federal discharge limitations in all parts of the Steese National Conservation Area.

To satisfy recreation needs, the Steese plan calls for 108 miles of new trails and seven new facilities (primarily shelters).

To protect wildlife habitat, the Steese plan closes current caribou calving areas to new mineral entry and specifies the improvement of moose habitat by prescribed fire. Management emphasis is to be placed on caribou, Dall sheep and peregrine falcons. No commercial timber harvest would be allowed in the Steese area. The plan calls for the establishment of two research natural areas for scientific research.

The **White Mountains** area was set aside by Congress as a national recreation area. For this reason, when preparing the management plan for this area, BLM has to consider recreation to be the primary land use. All other land uses must be considered secondary.

The plan therefore specifies that 56 percent of the area is to be managed for primitive recreation and 44 percent for semi-primitive recreation. It calls for building 163 miles of new trails and 17 new facilities. It closes 56 percent of the area to all off-road vehicles except snowmachines.

Approximately 44 percent of the area will be open for leasing oil and gas and leasing lode deposits but closed to the leasing of placer deposits. Existing placer mining operations would be prohibited from exceeding current state and federal discharge limits. (The language for the final version of the plan is also being modified to satisfy the state's objection.) The plan requires BLM to rehabilitate fish habitat in Nome Creek and to establish three research natural areas. No commercial timber harvest would be permitted.

~~It was postponed opening the Kotzebue/George planning area to oil and leasing until September of 1985.~~

~~The decision to postpone was made because of the huge backlog of lease assignments that stacked up for processing last spring. At that time the Secretary of Interior halted the approval of assignment of non-producing leases less than 2560 acres. During the three-month period when no approvals were being made, applications came in to BLM for processing.~~

## Repairs Underway On Sag In Trans-Alaska Pipeline

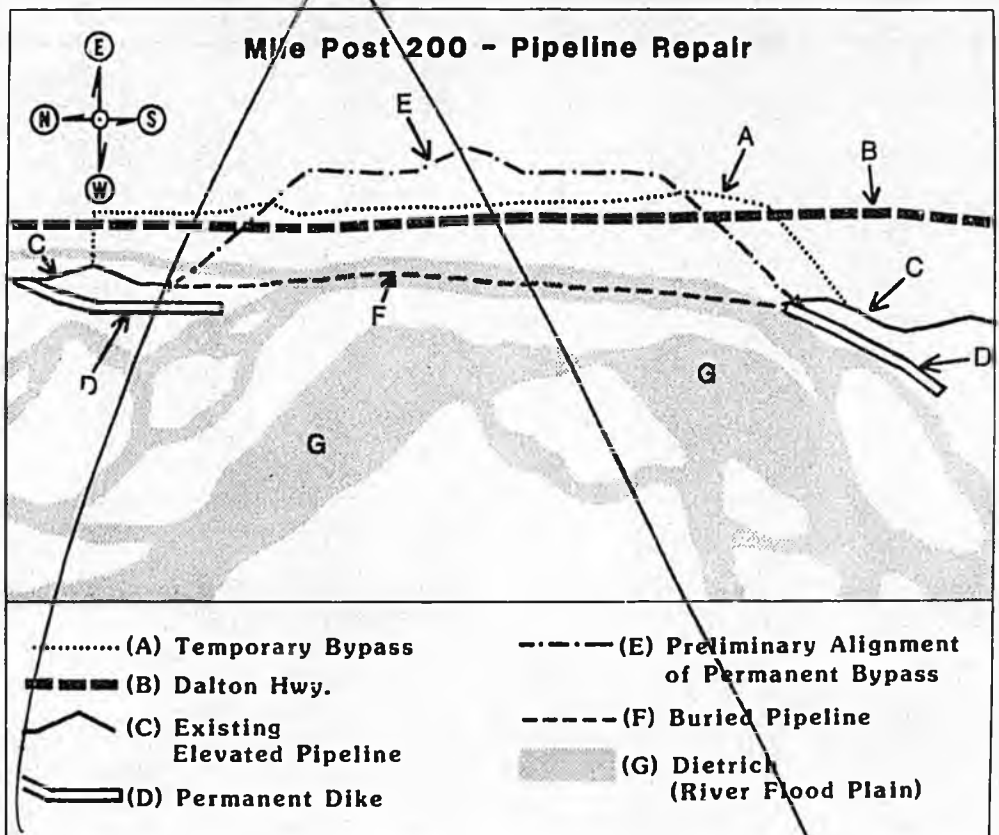
BLM is monitoring and overseeing Alyeska Pipeline Service Company's work to bypass a segment of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline that sagged as much as 15 feet where it passed under the Dietrich River about 200 miles south of Prudhoe Bay.

Now under construction is a temporary dual pipeline to bypass the sag (see drawing). The company expects to complete the temporary bypass by about mid-January. Two temporary lines (A) of 24-inch and 30-inch pipe will cross under the Dalton Highway (B) through insulated culverts, then run above ground parallel to the highway for about a mile, then cross back under the highway again to rejoin the existing pipeline south of the area where the sag developed (F).

After the temporary pipeline is in operation, Alyeska will build a permanent above-ground bypass of 48-inch pipe farther to the east on higher ground (E). This repair method will allow uninterrupted flow of oil through the pipeline.

The company has set up a temporary construction camp complete with pipe fabrication shops and a crew of about 200, has prepared a workpad, has brought the temporary pipe to the site, and is now installing the culverts. Alyeska is maintaining an ice dike to divert water from the area around the sag. Surveying and soils tests are also being done east of the highway in preparation for construction of the permanent realignment. Alyeska has also developed an oil spill contingency plan and built dikes to contain the oil in the event of a spill.

Last summer Alyeska detected and reported to BLM that the pipeline had settled in a half-mile area where it is buried under the floodplain of the Dietrich River. Apparently the line passed over an ice lens that had not been detected in the extensive soils tests done before the pipeline was built.



*As this issue of ENERGY QUARTERLY went to press, events associated with the pipeline repair were changing rapidly. Some elements of this story may no longer be current.*

—Editor

STEESE RESOLUTION

Senator Fahrenkamp

2/20/85

A. Recognizes that

1) Steese National Conservation Area was created for:

- a. multiple use
- b. sustained yield
- c. maintenance of environmental quality

2) White Mountain National Recreation Area was created for:

- a. public recreation
- b. utilization of natural resources when compatible with recreation

3) Per ANILCA, plans must be developed by December 1985

B. Outlines concerns with the plan

1) Water quality management and enforcement is the State's right

2) Mineral assessment hasn't been performed

3) Access

- a. Off Road Vehicles (ORV) limited to 1500 lbs.
- b. Motorized access prohibited through designation of half of White Mountain area as "primitive".
- c. RS 2477's and other existing state trail systems haven't been identified.
- d. Doesn't acknowledge Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the State and BLM on RS 2477's.

C. Calls for the legislature, as the policy making body, to be given opportunity to review the plans for consistency with state policies.

PLAN APPROVAL PROCESS PER FEDERAL REGULATIONS (43 CFR 1610.3-2)

A. Federal plans must be consistent with:

- 1) officially approved or adopted resource related plans
- 2) officially approved or adopted resource related policies and programs

B. Feds aren't accountable for ensuring consistency if they aren't notified in writing by the State government of inconsistencies.

C. Consistency Review Process

- 1) State BLM Director submits proposed plan to the Governor
- 2) Governor has 60 days to identify inconsistencies and provide written recommendations to BLM.
- 3) Any recommended changes not raised during the initial public comment period must receive public comment.
- 4) BLM Director accepts or rejects the Governor's recommendations and notifies the Governor in writing of the decision.
- 5) 30 day appeal period if the State's recommendations are not accepted.

## STATE REVIEW PROCESS OF FEDERAL PLANS

- 1) The federal agency (National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, BLM) submits a plan to CSU (Conservation System Unit) office.
- 2) CSU distributes to each state department for specified period of review (30-60 days).
- 3) Each department develops in-house procedures for formulating agency comments and "determining agency policy".
- 4) CSU consolidates comments; works with agencies to iron out any inconsistencies; drafts response.
- 5) Response is reviewed by agencies. If there is not consensus, they continue to consult to work it out. To date, no response has been "elevated" and no formal elevation process has been developed.

STEESE CONSISTENCY REVIEW

State Identified as Inconsistent

BLM Response

Water quality provisions

Will revise plan per State's comments.

State Also Commented On

1) ANILCA mandated mineral assessment

1) not possible in plan's five year time frame

a. urge BLM to seek funding

a. "fully intend to seek" funding

b. provide process for revising plans based on any new mineral information.

b. plan stipulates automatic 3-year evaluation and revision process.

2) Access

2) Access

a. RS 2477's - MOU

a. will reference MOU

b. urge seasonal restrictions on ORV use for habitat protection.

b. not necessary to restrict

3) Schedule of intended revisions to plan.

3) Plan stipulates 3-year evaluation of plan

Concerns NOT identified by the State as inconsistent

- 1) Mineral Closures
  - a. 25% of Steese Area (176,000 acres) closed to mineral location
  - b. no new placer claims in White Mountain Area
  - c. were done without adequate mineral assessment
  - d. miners assert that the bulk of highly mineralized areas are closed.
- 2) Access
  - a. "primitive" designation of White Mountain Area (50%) restricts motorized access
  - b. 1500 lb. weight limit for ORV's
  - c. plan doesn't formally recognize RS 2477's
- 3) Overall concern: Plans imply that mineral activity is incompatible with other resources and uses of the area.

# MEMORANDUM

# State of Alaska

Division of Governmental Coordination

2600 Denali, Ste. 700

Anchorage, AK 99503

TO: State CSU Contacts  
See Distribution List

DATE: February 1, 1985

FILE NO: CSU-General

TELEPHONE NO: 274-1581

FROM: Sally Gibert *SG*  
State CSU Coordinator

SUBJECT: CSU Nuts and Bolts

Attached is a "nuts and bolts" description of how consolidated State responses are put together for conservation system unit (CSU) reviews. It was developed in response to the increasing number of agency and public inquiries about the State's review procedures. Feel free to further distribute to anyone who may have questions about the process.

Please note that this is not a job description for the State CSU Coordinator. It is only a portion of the Coordinator's overall function which is intended to assure maximum consideration of State interest in the federal CSU planning process and to facilitate maximum cooperation and coordination between State and federal agencies.

Attachment

Distribution

R. Walkinshaw, DNR  
J. Beelman, DEC, Fbx  
J. Bergstrand, DOT/PF  
J. Widdis, DOT/PF  
D. Wilkerson, DEC  
S. Haavig, DEC, S.E.  
T. Cuning, ADF&G  
P. Freer, DCRA  
I. Waits, DCRA, Anch  
B. Petrie, APA  
R. Henderson, F&WP  
S. Fischer, DLaw  
S. Hajenga, DC&ED  
C. Laird, DC&ED  
E. Plate, DLabor  
M. Nordale, DR  
E. Pagano, DMA  
H. Reynolds, Ded  
B. Sundberg, DPS  
J. Pugh, H&SS  
B. Lietch, DEC  
B. Ross, D.C.  
J. Geldhof, DLaw

OFFICE OF  
MANAGEMENT & BUDGET

FEB 03 1985

GOVERNMENTAL  
COORDINATION

Distribution

2.

February 1, 1985

N. Farquar, DNR  
R. Bayliss, DEC  
C. Lindh, DGC  
A. Kyle, OMB  
E. Lipson, DOT/PF  
D. Frankfourth, DNR  
E. Leask, AFN  
S. Leaphart, CACFA  
J. Sorice, DGC, Fbx  
D. Douglas, DGC, Juno  
C. Lindh, DGC  
M. Frankel, ALUC  
E. Lipson, DOT/PF  
D. Frankfourth, DNR  
E. Leask, AFN  
S. Leaphart, CACFA  
R. McCoy, ALUC  
R. Davidge, DOI  
J. Mazzoni, FWS  
N. Olson, FWS  
P. Jerome, FWS  
C. Hardy, FWS  
L. Kerr, FWS  
L. Hart, NPS  
J. McCabe, NPS  
L. Nebel, NPS  
B. Welch, NPS  
S. DeLecnardis, BLM  
D. Fish, BLM  
D. Dworsky, BLM  
W. Sheridan, USFS

# STATE OF ALASKA

## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET  
DIVISION OF GOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

BILL SHEFFIELD, GOVERNOR

STATE CSU COORDINATOR  
2600 DENALI STREET, SUITE 700  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99503-2798  
PHONE: (907) 274-1581

### Nuts and Bolts of Building the State's Comments on Conservation System Unit (CSU) Planning Documents

January 1985

#### Purpose

The purpose of coordinated CSU review is to ensure that federal agencies receive a single consolidated response from the State consistent with statewide policies. The Division of Governmental Coordination within the Office of Management and Budget facilitates the reviews through the State CSU Coordinator located in the Anchorage Regional Office.

#### Applicable documents

Documents subject to coordinated CSU review include draft planning documents submitted by the National Park Service (General Management Plans), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Comprehensive Conservation Plans), and the Bureau of Land Management (Resource Management Plans). Other documents which undergo coordinated CSU review include wilderness reviews; wild and scenic river studies, various pre-planning documents such as issue statements and proposed management objectives; and follow-up documents and regulations implementing these plans as appropriate. (State responses to plans or actions proposed by the U.S. Forest Service are coordinated through the Central office of the Division of Governmental Coordination in Juneau.)

#### Distribution

At the time a document is made available for public review in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the applicable federal agency submits the document to the State CSU Coordinator. The Coordinator immediately distributes the document with a brief cover memo to each State department. The cover memo indicates a date when individual department comments are due to the Coordinator; if the document should be reviewed for consistency with relevant standards of the Alaska Coastal Management Program; and any other pertinent information. In most cases, the public review period is either 60 or 90 days in accordance with NEPA, in which case individual agencies usually have 30 or 60 days respectively to develop department comments.

### Agency Review

All departments are given the opportunity to comment on all documents submitted for public review. A document is submitted directly to the Commissioner's office, or more commonly, a designated department "CSU Contact." These Contacts then review the document and/or further distribute it within the department to collect that agency's comments. It is expected that each department will submit a single agency response, consolidating intradepartment comments as necessary. Each department is responsible for developing its own in-house procedures for formulating the agency's comments and determining agency policy.

### Drafting the State Response

At the end of the specified departmental review period, the Coordinator consolidates the comments received and develops draft State comments consistent with current State policy and positions. If it appears that there are inconsistencies or potentially conflicting comments submitted by two or more agencies, the Coordinator contacts these agencies informally through the designated CSU Contact to identify the inconsistency(s). Clarification and a mutually satisfactory solution is usually achieved easily and quickly with a few phone calls between the affected agencies and/or the Coordinator. The Coordinator then distributes the draft State letter back to the commenting agencies via the designated CSU Contact. (Occasionally the draft will also be sent to a non-commenting department if the Coordinator determines that the draft State position may be of particular interest to them.)

### Finalizing the State Response

When the draft State letter is received by each agency, it is the responsibility of the department's CSU Contact to determine if the letter is consistent with department policies and objectives as well as their best understanding of overall State interests. If substantive revisions are subsequently made to the draft, commenting agencies affected by the change are given an opportunity to review the revised letter. This process is repeated until consensus is reached. No formal "elevation" process has been developed to date since consensus has always been possible among the agencies and the Division of Governmental Coordination.

### Agency/Coordinator Relationships

The relationship between the State CSU Coordinator and each agency is somewhat tailored to the needs and structure of each department. Depending on individual department procedures, department staff other than the designated department Contact may work directly with the Coordinator on specific issues. In these instances, it is essential for the designated CSU Contact

and/or Commissioner's office to be aware of these discussions to ensure that they are consistent with department policy. This responsibility lies with the department though the Coordinator facilitates this coordination as much as practicable. The Coordinator assists any agency as requested to develop the best procedure for each department's input into the CSU review process.

**BLM Director To Decide  
Protests On Steese/White  
Mountains Plans**

From  
ENERGY QUALITY

The director of the Bureau of Land Management has received a total of 26 formal protests on the management plan and final EIS for the Steese/White Mountains areas. All but a few of those protests came from either mining groups or environmental groups. The director will decide on an individual basis whether to affirm a protest, sustain BLM's decision, or make some modification of the decision.

The **Steese plan** has required very careful balancing of resource uses because Congress set the area aside as Alaska's first national conservation area and required that multiple use must be attained while giving special emphasis to caribou and maintaining sustained yield and environmental quality.

BLM believes that mining can be done in the area. State Director Mike Penfold said, "We can improve water quality and have mining at the same time." Yukon Resource Area Manager Mike Green also noted that even though there are a lot of mining claims within the Steese area, active mining is primarily concentrated in the south Steese segment north of Birch Creek. The rest of the Steese area, he said, "has lots of claims but hardly any ongoing activity."

The plan opens a large part of the Steese area to mineral entry and leasing. It also calls for a five-year inventory and assessment of minerals. BLM is now working with the Alaska Division of Geological and Geophysical Survey, the federal Bureau of Mines and the U.S. Geological Survey to pinpoint the data that is needed for a minerals inventory detailed enough to allow BLM to make well-informed decisions when allocating mineral and other land uses.

BLM will now open 75 percent of the Steese area for mining, do the inventory, and then re-evaluate the plan in three years to determine what changes, if any, should be made.

The State of Alaska raised one objection to the provisions of the plan. It objected to BLM's setting water quality standards different from those set by the State. For this reason BLM will be modifying that part of the final plan. The final plan will not contain specific statements about percentages of effluents that will be allowed, etc., but instead will require BLM to cooperate with the State and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to establish water quality standards. It will require miners to meet current State and federal discharge limitations in all parts of the Steese National Conservation Area.

To satisfy recreation needs, the Steese plan calls for 108 miles of new trails and seven new facilities (primarily shelters).

To protect wildlife habitat, the Steese plan closes current caribou calving areas to new mineral entry and specifies the improvement of moose habitat by prescribed fire. Management emphasis is to be placed on caribou, Dall sheep and peregrine falcons. No commercial timber harvest would be allowed in the Steese area. The plan calls for the establishment of two research natural areas for scientific research.

The **White Mountains** area was set aside by Congress as a national recreation area. For this reason, when preparing the management plan for this area, BLM has to consider recreation to be the primary land use. All other land uses must be considered secondary.

The plan therefore specifies that 56 percent of the area is to be managed for primitive recreation and 44 percent for semi-primitive recreation. It calls for building 163 miles of new trails and 17 new facilities. It closes 56 percent of the area to all off-road vehicles except snowmachines.

Approximately 44 percent of the area will be open for leasing oil and gas and leasing lode deposits but closed to the leasing of placer deposits. Existing placer mining operations would be prohibited from exceeding current state and federal discharge limits. (The language for the final version of the plan is also being modified to satisfy the state's objection.) The plan requires BLM to rehabilitate fish habitat in Nome Creek and to establish three research natural areas. No commercial timber harvest would be permitted.

~~... George Opening  
... September~~

~~... George planning area  
leasing since September of 1985.~~

~~The decision to postpone was made because of the huge backlog of lease assignments that stacked up for approval last spring. At that time the Secretary of Interior halted the approval of assignment of new producing leases less than 2560 acres. During the three-month period when no approvals were made.~~



# United States Department of the Interior

IN REPLY REFER TO  
1600 (934)

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Alaska State Office  
701 C Street, Box 13  
Anchorage, Alaska 99513

OCT 1 1984

Governor William Sheffield  
Juneau, Alaska

Dear Governor Sheffield:

Enclosed are the recently completed Proposed Resource Management Plans and Final Environmental Impact Statements for the White Mountains National Recreation Area and the Steese National Conservation Area. After final approval, these plans will guide future management actions for these units. In accordance with 43 CFR 1610.3-2, we are submitting these documents to you to be reviewed for consistency with State or local plans, policies, or programs.

The regulation allows sixty (60) days for this review. In order to meet our schedule for final approval of the plans, we are providing you with advance photocopies of the documents, while printing for public distribution is still underway. The text of these photocopies is identical to the text of the documents which are being printed.

Both plans have been coordinated with the State of Alaska's Conservation System Unit Planning Office since the beginning of the planning process. The CSU Planning Office provided us with useful comments and recommendations on the Draft Resource Management Plans/Environmental Impact Statements. A detailed response to these comments is given in Chapter V of each document.

Some of the major issues raised by the CSU Planning Office concerned wildlife, water quality, and rights-of-way claimed by the State under R.S. 2477. Many of the recommendations have been incorporated into the Proposed Resource Management Plan.

In regard to wildlife, habitat protection provisions have been strengthened in both plans. Areas open to mineral development have been substantially reduced in each unit. Also specific stipulations which will be applied to any surface-disturbing activity have been added.

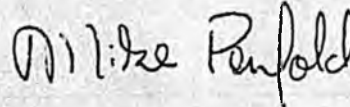
Specific stipulations have been provided to insure protection of water quality. Also, certain critical areas, including the entire White Mountains National Recreation Area, will remain closed to new placer mining, because of the danger which placer mining poses to existing water quality. Only valid existing claims will be allowed to develop in these areas. These will be required to adhere strictly to State and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) water quality standards and classifications. In addition to the State and EPA standards the Steese plan provides for a zero down-stream effluent standard for the major remaining clearwater tributaries South of Birch Creek.

Subsistence uses are described and analysed in more detail in the Final EIS. This revised analysis was used in the preparation of the Proposed Plans. We find that there would be no significant restriction of subsistence uses under either of the Proposed Plans.

We propose to work cooperatively with the State as it identifies roads and trails which will be claimed as rights-of-way under R.S. 2477. As indicated in my letter of September 7, 1984, to the ALUC, BLM will continue to manage these roads and trails pending formal assertion of rights by the State under R.S. 2477.

It is our belief that there are now no inconsistencies between our plans and State plans, policies, or programs. Should your review identify any such inconsistencies, please submit suggested recommendations to my office no later than November 30, 1984.

Sincerely yours,



Michael J. Penfold  
State Director

Enclosures:

1. Proposed Resource Management Plans
2. Final EIS's

# STATE OF ALASKA

## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET  
DIVISION OF GOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

BILL SHEFFIELD, GOVERNOR

STATE CSU COORDINATOR  
2600 DENALI STREET, SUITE 700  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99503-2798  
PHONE: (907) 274-1581

December 7, 1984

OFFICE OF  
MANAGEMENT & BUDGET

JAN 3 1985

GOVERNMENTAL  
COORDINATION

Michael J. Penfold  
State Director  
Bureau of Land Management  
701 C Street, Box 13  
Anchorage, AK 99513

Dear Mr. Penfold:

The State of Alaska has completed the review of the Steese National Conservation Area and White Mountains National Recreation Area Proposed Resource Management Plans and final Environmental Impact Statements pursuant to 43 CFR 1610.3-2. We appreciate this opportunity to review and comment on these proposed plans. The State recognizes the difficulties the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has encountered in addressing resource development and protection of natural values consistent with the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) and other federal and State regulations. The State appreciates BLM's efforts to accommodate our comments on the previous drafts. The following comments are intended to assist BLM in correcting and finalizing the Resource Management Plans.

While the State acknowledges the range of options available under the federal Clean Water Act for regulating water quality, we nonetheless find these two plans to be clearly inconsistent with State water quality regulations, policies, and programs. References to specific permit limits and standards such as 0.7 ml/l settleable solids maximum, "zero downstream effluent standard", "no degradation", and "no downstream effect" should be eliminated from the texts. The plans should be modified to reflect applicable State and federal laws and regulations, recognizing the authorities delegated to the State prescribed for establishment, management and enforcement of water quality standards under the federal Clean Water Act.

We recommend that BLM recognize the recently initiated research studies by State and federal agencies involving placer mining. An important goal of these multi-faceted studies is to examine and develop new mining methods, technologies, and best management practices for placer mining, which will seek ways for placer miners to achieve water quality standards and remain

economically viable. We further urge BLM to make a commitment to joint cooperative efforts in pursuing placer mining and resource studies. BLM should evaluate and consider the results and conclusions of these efforts when making land management decisions.

Finally, we request that BLM incorporate language in both plans to the effect the BLM will cooperate with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency for the purpose of preventing, eliminating or diminishing the pollution of State waters, consistent with the federal Clean Water Act, the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and State Water Quality Standards.

The State has some additional concerns with these documents which, while not matters of consistency, are of considerable importance nonetheless.

The plans recognize that a mandated ANILCA Section 1010 mineral assessment must be performed, and indicate that BLM anticipates assistance from information collected by private entities. Reliance on such privately funded research will not satisfy this requirement. While we recognize that time and funding limitations have precluded BLM's accomplishing the required assessment, we strongly urge BLM to seek funding to complete an adequate mineral assessment which fulfills the intent of Section 1010. We also urge BLM to include in the plans a process by which the information collected will be used to revise the plans, including opening additional areas if warranted by the new information and if consistent with the purposes for which the respective areas were established in ANILCA.

As a further indicator of the State's concern for basing land management decisions on the best possible data, the Division of Geological Survey (DGGs) within the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requests consideration of a cooperative mineral assessment effort using the Resource Appraisal methodology. This methodology, which is a statistically accurate means of assessing mineral potential, is currently being refined in cooperation with the Bureau of Mines. The State is prepared to assist BLM in applying this methodology in the Steese and White Mountain areas.

State agencies have identified several specific concerns related to identification and management of trails and transportation corridors which provide access to and within these units. Policies assuring reasonable access are an important consideration in the planning efforts due to their key role in the utilization and enjoyment of these areas. Our concerns include the following:

- . The need for continued coordination with the State as implementation of the Tanana Basin Area Plan begins, including BLM assistance in development of the follow-up Tanana Basin Trail Plan;
- . The need for continued coordination with the State to assure that access points are compatible with adjacent land uses;
- . The need for BLM to continue to coordinate and work cooperatively with the State in the identification and management of Revised Statute (RS) 2477's and other trails claimed by the State, consistent with the spirit and intent of the recently signed Memorandum of Understanding between BLM, DNR, and The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT/PF).

The plans should acknowledge the State's efforts to deal with access and BLM's intent to cooperate and coordinate with these efforts. The plan should outline the process by which BLM and the State (DOT/PF, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), DNR) will work cooperately to assure that reasonable access is maintained in a manner compatible with the respective agencies' management objectives. These State departments are available to discuss how this coordination will occur.

The ability of BLM to meet its objectives for access will depend in part on agreement and cooperation with the State, since several of the identified trail and transportation corridors extend beyond the unit boundaries onto State land. We recommend that BLM work with the Northern Regional Office of DNR as well as other State agencies to ensure that the intended use of lands within the units for access purposes are consistent with management objectives for State lands outside the two units. Several existing and proposed trails, trailheads and corridors are on State land. It should be noted on the maps or in the text that these corridors extend beyond the unit boundary onto State land. It should be clarified that BLM will cooperate with the State regarding these extensions. The process for accomplishing this coordination should be mentioned.

Further, BLM's need for corridor extensions should be incorporated and addressed in DNR's Tanana Basin Trails Plan which is currently underway in Fairbanks. Through the trail planning effort, BLM and the State can work to ensure that the use and establishment of these trails and corridors are consistent with Statewide goals and management objectives for State land as identified in the Tanana Basin Area Plan. Possible inconsistencies that need to be addressed are: The routing of trails through land disposal areas; management consistency between trail corridors; and the recommendation to legislatively designate the Chatanika River a State Recreation River.

Overall, the State and BLM need to manage these corridors to meet the needs of recreational users while providing access for resource development as well.

The documents generally describe existing access and public rights-of-way claimed under RS 2477. However, we are concerned with the implications of the statement, "The status of many miles of trail is presently uncertain, making it difficult to determine who has the authority to regulate use, who has the responsibility for maintenance and public safety, etc." (p. 280 SNCA, and p. 273 WMNRA). We appreciate BLM's consideration of the uncertainty of trails status but request clarification of intent regarding access in these situations. Maps and lists detailing existing trail systems for the State of Alaska were sent to BLM in April, 1974, with written claim to ownership of these trails. Copies of letters and memorandums to this effect are enclosed. Reference to the trails indicated on these maps should be incorporated into these plans. If BLM needs additional information, the State will assist in identification of appropriate access in a manner which is mutually compatible with our respective agency objectives. To clarify BLM's intent with regard to RS 2477 rights-of-way, we request that the plans include the following language in the spirit of the MOU:

"The BLM will work cooperatively with the State of Alaska to identify all rights-of-way pursuant to Revised Statute (RS) 2477 within the SNCA and WMNRA boundaries for administrative purposes. When rights or titles are granted directly by statute, such as RS 2477, these rights can only be abrogated in the court system."

We commend BLM for the significant improvements made to these plans in specifying mitigation measures. It is now possible to begin to judge the effects of proposed actions and measures to minimize impacts. We appreciate a number of the specific improvements made to protect terrestrial and aquatic habitats. We must emphasize the importance of BLM actively monitoring recreational and development activities in both units and developing viable mitigation measures to insure that subsistence and other uses of fish and wildlife resources are maintained as development takes place. However, monitoring of development activities and implementation of the mitigation process is dependent upon funding, and the State urges BLM to actively seek such funding.

The State is interested in assuring that these plans will be dynamic and current. We request that a schedule of intended revisions to the plans be included so that we may be assured of BLM's responsiveness to new information and future changes that occur in the areas. Studies and assessments of possible significance include mineral potential, fish and wildlife resources, recreational use patterns, and improved mitigation measures and resource extraction techniques.

The page-specific comments below may apply to both the Steese and White Mountains units, though only one document may be cited:

Page 59, (WMNRA) - For the White Mountains unit, no exchanges are intended by the State yet the map on page 59 shows a block of State land to be acquired by exchange. This is apparently a block discussed in the Steese document. This should be clarified in the White Mountains document also.

Page 135, (WMNRA) - It should be noted that contrary to the statement on this page, Beaver Creek is listed in ADF&G's Anadromous Fish Waters Catalog (number 334-40-11000-2810-3100). King and chum salmon occur to a point about 2.5 miles downstream from Warren Creek.

Page 152, (SNCA) - The discussion of possible land exchanges is incomplete. For the Steese unit, there is no explanation of the purpose for the intended exchanges nor the intended management of the acquired lands. Nor is there any indication of how the management intent for those lands will be accomplished if the exchanges do not take place.

Page 227, (SNCA) - With regard to the FEIS', we are concerned with BLM's reply #2 on this page (and page 225 of the WMNRA document). This reply to a point raised in the State's comments on the draft EIS's for these areas is based on a partial reading of the CEQ document in question. Contrary to BLM's contention, the CEQ guidelines address mitigation that lies within the authority of the managing agency.

Specifically, the guidelines state that "to insure that environmental effects of a proposed action are fairly assessed, the probability of the mitigation measures being implemented must also be discussed." This statement accurately reflects our concern. The 43 CFR 3809 regulations are within BLM's jurisdiction. However, since much of the mitigation of effects in these plans depends upon the use of those regulations, and since the 3809 program depends upon a full commitment of funding and manpower, we feel the likelihood of implementation to the extent called for in the plans should be discussed as stated in our original response.

Page 256, Multiple Use Management Prescription (SNCA) - The south block of the Steese unit has some geothermal resource potential as indicated by the proximity of reported hot springs at Big Windy Creek, Flat Creek, Upper Charley Creek, east of the Salcha River, north of the Salcha River, and at Chena and Circle Hot Springs.

The north unit has less potential but is underlaid by a sedimentary basin that may be the source of hot springs near the Dall River. While there is no current proposal to develop geothermal resources in this area, we hope there can be provision in the management of the Steese unit for eventual development of this potential in a manner compatible with other uses of the unit should the need for it arise.

266-267, RIGHTS-OF-WAY and OTHER REALTY ACTIONS (SNCA) - In paragraph 3 on p. 266, and paragraph 1 on p. 267, no mention is made of the provision that Wild River crossings may require permits under Section 404 and 401 of the Clean Water Act.

Page 270, Pinnell Mountain Trail - Due to the open terrain traversed by this trail, it would be more appropriate to vary the width of the "Primitive" corridor on the basis of topography, rather than an arbitrary distance of one-half mile. In some areas, the Primitive designation may be too narrow to reasonably buffer trail users from the effects of possible motorized activities or other land uses that would significantly detract from the enjoyment of the trail. By the same token, there may be other portions of the "Primitive" designation that are unnecessarily wide.

Page 273, 274 (SNCA) - We wish to comment on the authorization for unrestricted use of light (less than 1500 lb.) off-road vehicles (ORV) within the Semi-primitive Motorized Restricted Management and Special Management units of the SNCA. BLM is restricting mineral development activities in these areas (through closure in one unit and seasonal restriction in the other) based largely on the value of wildlife habitat, especially caribou habitat, and the ANILCA language regarding caribou in this unit. Consequently, we urge the BLM impose seasonal restrictions for ORV use in the Restricted and Special Management Zones during caribou calving periods. This would treat all SNCA users equitably and would help fulfill the intent to protect the special values identified in ANILCA.

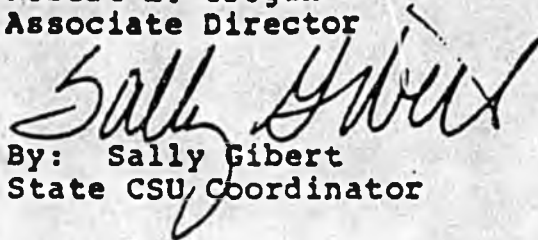
Page 299, (SNCA) Appendix D. We request the BLM reference ADF&G's authority under Alaska Statutes 16.

SNCA Proposed Plan Map - We note that the fold out map does not indicate that T.7N, R.8E., F.M. is actually State land. Notwithstanding any land exchange considerations, further versions of this map should reflect current status.

Thank you for the opportunity to review these plans. If we can be of any assistance in clarifying these comments, please do not hesitate to call this office. We look forward to final plans which will be consistent with the State's policies and programs and which fulfill the purposes of these units as specified in ANILCA.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Grogan  
Associate Director



By: Sally Gibert  
State CSU Coordinator

Attachments

cc: S. Leaphart, CACFA  
J. Leask, AFN  
R. McCoy, ALUC  
R. Davidge, DOI  
M. Frankel, ALUC  
State CSU Contacts



# United States Department of the Interior

IN REPLY REFER TO

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Alaska State Office  
701 C Street, Box 13  
Anchorage, Alaska 99513

1610 (934)

January 11, 1985

Robert Grogan  
Associate Director  
Division of Governmental Coordination  
Office of Management and Budget  
State of Alaska  
Pouch A.W. Juneau, AK 99811

OFFICE OF  
MANAGEMENT & BUDGET

JAN 16 1985

GOVERNMENTAL  
COORDINATION

Dear Mr. Grogan:

We appreciate the time and effort which you and other offices of the State of Alaska have given to reviewing and commenting on the BLM's Proposed Resource Management Plans (RMPs) for the Steese National Conservation Area (SNCA) and the White Mountains National Recreation Area (WMNRA). We are pleased with your agreement that most points of the plans are consistent with the plans, policies, and programs of the State. With the inclusion of some of the State's suggestions, we feel we have reached an acceptable balance between resource development and protection of natural values.

You stated that both plans are inconsistent with State water quality regulations, policies and authorities. We recognize the authorities delegated to the State for establishment, management and enforcement of water quality standards under the Federal Clean Water Act; therefore, statements in the plans relating to specific limits or standards such as 0.7 ml/l settleable solid maximum, "zero downstream effluent," "no degradation" or "no downstream effect" are being removed from the final plans. The current standards will be incorporated by reference only. An important goal of these plans is to insure that the water quality of both Birch Creek and Beaver Creek is consistent with the purposes for which the rivers were designated under the provisions of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. A jointly developed Federal-State water quality monitoring program might be appropriate in this regard, and the following statement will be added to the White Mountains Plan (p. 260); and to the Steese Plan (p. 268) under sub-heading "Water Resource Management."

The Bureau will cooperate closely with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the purpose of establishing water quality standards and for preventing, eliminating or diminishing the pollution of State waters consistent with: the Federal Clean Water Act; the purpose for which the wild and scenic rivers were established under the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act; and State Water Quality Standards.

As a land manager, we have the responsibility and authority to require stipulations for effluent discharge from activities permitted on public lands under our administration to reduce the effect on other resources. We wish to cooperate fully with the State in a joint commitment to improve placer mining methods and technologies which will seek ways to achieve water quality standards and retain an economically viable mineral industry. We would readily accept the opportunity to participate in ongoing studies. As we have done in the past, BLM will evaluate and consider the results of such studies and utilize this data when formulating land management decisions. With the above changes, we feel the plans will be consistent with State plans, policies and programs and will be accepted by the Governor.

The following is in response to the additional concerns listed in your letter, even though such were not matters of consistency:

Mineral Assessment:

We appreciate the State's concern that mineral assessment for both areas are less than complete. However, Section 402(a) of ANILCA requires the Bureau to complete a land use plan for each area within five years, and additional inventory was not possible within this time frame. We agree that singular reliance on privately funded research and assessment will likely not fill the inventory needs, but as you are aware, the plans call for an effort to acquire additional information for the areas, and resources have been requested to expand upon the existing assessment. In the meantime, we are working with the State Division of Geological/Geophysical Survey, the Bureau of Mines, and the U.S. Geological Survey, in an effort to further develop mineral assessments of these and other lands in Alaska. Any proposed study will also receive review and comment by the mineral industry, so the best utilization of Government and private mineral assessment capabilities can be made.

New data generated from the mineral inventory will be incorporated into the three year evaluation/revision process; and if new land use decisions are needed, they will be proposed at that time. This would hold true for not only new minerals data, but for all new data. A phrase to this effect will be added to the Monitoring and Evaluation section of each plan.

In several instances you describe the need for the BLM to obtain additional funding, e.g. for mineral inventory and for monitoring development, and you encourage the Bureau to actively seek such funding. We have recognized in the plan the necessity to pursue these management options in order to effectively and efficiently manage the resources within the two units. Consequently, we fully intend to seek the dollars necessary to accomplish the objectives as outlined in the plans.

R.S. 2477 and Trail Access:

We did receive some maps in 1974 showing the State's transportation plan; however, the letter accompanying the maps, while claiming ownership of roads and trails, did not purport to be an R.S. 2477 claim and BLM had to consider them

informational only. Even if we had received complete documentation of such claims at that time, we had no authority to acknowledge or consider them. It is only since the passage of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) in October, 1976, that we have had authority to record R.S. 2477 claims on our records.

We have previously advised the State that the maps submitted in 1974 are not definitive enough to allow us to plot any of the "claimed" R.S. 2477's on our records. Subsequent to that notification, the BLM Fairbanks District Office and the Department of Natural Resources, Northcentral District Office have executed an Memorandum of Understanding outlining the process necessary to note such claims to our records within their administrative area.

We will include the following language in our planning documents to cover continuing cooperative efforts to get R.S. 2477 claims noted on our records:

"The BLM will work cooperatively with the State of Alaska to identify all rights-of-way claims made pursuant to R.S. 2477 within the SNCA and WMNRA boundaries for administrative purposes only. The validity of such claims can only be determined in a court of competent jurisdiction."

In addition to R.S. 2477 rights-of-way, your letter speaks to outlining ways to assure that reasonable access is maintained in a manner compatible with respective agencies' management objectives. It is our feeling that now is the appropriate time to prepare an analysis of transportation needs involving the respective State and Federal Transportation and Land Managing agencies. The analysis would address the existing and future access needs and propose how best these needs could be met. It would also identify where access routes presently exist and which ones, if any, are duplicative. We envision that such an analysis would help resolve some of the questions raised in your letter concerning coordination with the Tanana Basin trail plan, compatibility with adjacent lands, etc. For purposes of defining the scope of such an analysis, our district office will contact your Fairbanks Offices of DOT, and DNR.

#### Plan Revision:

Each plan stipulates a three-year evaluation of the plan and its effectiveness in meeting and protecting local as well as National needs (see White Mountains, p. 280 and Steese p. 286). The process will be coordinated with local, State, and other Federal interests.

The evaluation will become part of the RMP file, and available for public inspection. Any part of the plan can be amended, whenever a significant change in data or the management situation occurs (Planning regulations 43 CFR 1610.5-5). Review and amendment procedures require full public involvement under the rules of the National Environmental Protection Act, and the best and most recent information will be used.

Offer Comments:

In reference to your page specific comments we offer the following explanations. The proposed plans do not speak to exchanges except for the one township which lies within the North Steese unit. The purpose of the exchange would be principally to consolidate ownership of the land lying within the conservation system.

We acknowledge the correction concerning anadromous fisheries within Beaver Creek, and it will be noted in the final plan.

Your comment associated with the implementation of 43 CFR 3809 is well taken; however, it has been and will continue to be our objective to effect those management practices and to obtain whatever funding is necessary to accomplish these tasks. We feel that a significant step to achieving that objective can be made through the joint water quality program suggested earlier in this letter.

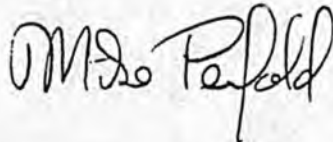
Geothermal resource development has been and will be considered in those areas which are open, approximately 75% of the Steese Unit.

Your concern associated with ORV's within the caribou calving areas was considered during the formulation of the plan; however, because of the general inaccessibility of the area, and the lack of ORV use currently, we felt it was not necessary to close the area on a seasonal basis. The District Manager has the authority to enforce an emergency closure if needed and if ORV's become a problem in the future, seasonal closures are certainly something that would be considered in a revision.

We intend to cooperate fully with the State in implementing these plans. The additional concerns cited in your letter are appreciated. They have been noted, and forwarded to our Fairbanks District Manager for consideration and coordination with local State officials.

Upon your concurrence with the actions set forth in this response, the Area Manager will prepare a consolidated Record of Decision (ROD). The ROD will include all changes as identified above and resolution of all protests being handled by the Director, Bureau of Land Management. We expect to have a summary of changes prepared for the Alaska Land Use Council meeting (Feb.) and final publication is expected this summer.

Sincerely yours



Mike Penfold  
State Director

cc:  
Sally Gibert  
2600 Denali Street, Suite 700  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

HUGH B. FATE, JR., D.M.D.  
P.O. Box 1111  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99707  
Telephone 907-456-5600

COPY FOR YOUR  
INFORMATION

January 23, 1985

Mr. Vern Wiggins  
Co Chairman  
ALASKA LAND USE COUNCIL  
1689 "C" Street, Suite 100  
P. O. Box 100120  
Anchorage, Alaska 99510-01200

Dear Mr. Wiggins:

I am compelled to articulate a very deep concern about the manner in which a specific segment of public testimony is allowed on the record, and hence, used to influence the General Management Plan development and decision making process of the participating Federal and State agencies.

Public Law 96-487, otherwise known as ANILCA, provides very specific language of intent under Title I, Section 101 (d). That intent is unmistakable and clearly obviates the formation of any additional Wilderness designation as defined under Title I, Section 102 (4) and (13). Several Federal agencies are flouting the law under the guise of the Public Hearing process. They are using shadow words to administratively form additional de facto wilderness which Congress declared by law should not be formed. When questioned on how this could happen in the face of ANILCA, the answer is invariably that public testimony favors a wilderness classification, (although most of this testimony comes from a very well organized, well endowed and powerful pro-preservation group).

Examples of the above statements are the GMP's, soon to come before the Alaska Land Use Council, for the Steese National Conservation Area, (Title IV, Section 401 (a) and (d) and the White Mountain Recreation Area (Title IV, Section 403). In these cases, Primitive areas have been designated. When questioned as to the meaning of "Primitive", representatives of the BLM conceded that there was absolutely no difference between Wilderness classification and the agency designation of Primitive. To further exacerbate this situation, Section 401 (a) (Steese Conservation Area, "A program of Multiple Use and Sustained Yield") appears to have been curtailed to a great degree. The mandate for a recreational area for all has been obviated by the de facto wilderness designation which now mantles a great proportion of the White Mountain (Section 403) area. The de facto designation negates any possibility of vehicular transportation into the area. Although the BLM has softened its position by acknowledging RS2477 Rights of Ways into the area, it nevertheless leaves it to the courts to ultimately decide the questions of vehicular access. We all recognize the delays and costs in time that this procedure would cause.

Mr. Vern Wiggins  
Alaska Land Use Council  
January 23, 1985  
Page two

In the meantime, the GMP for the White Mountain Primitive area not only neglects to plan for proper public transportation into the area, but ensures that only a very few rugged young canoeists and backpackers could utilize the one waterway and hiking trails in the area, provided the canoe is dropped by helicopter.

Yet, fifty miles away, the second largest population in the State will be unable to pursue the recreation, including hunting, intended in Section 101 (b).

The mineral and resource assessment called for by the Act will be circumvented by the Primitive designation. Here again, the lack of any type of enabling plans allowing for these assessments, at any time now or in the future, may well contribute to a debilitating affect on the economy of the State or needs of the Nation.

Very important questions arise from these activities. Should public testimony speaking to a wilderness designation be admissible as testimony to be weighted and considered in the development of GMP's? If the law forbids further wilderness designation, then the question is moot and the testimony specific to wilderness designation would not be germane and hence not admissible as testimony for the record. No longer would the agencies feel compelled, or in fact, have to use testimony as a shield.

Another important question relates to the extent of culpability or liability that an agency or person in that agency incur if they knowingly circumvent the public law.

It is of vital importance that the agencies involved in the development of GMP's thoroughly know the law, then adhere to the law in spite of outside pressures. This would certainly make the jobs of ALUC or LUAC much easier and would expedite the implementation of ANILCA without potential litigation or future harm to the State and Nation.

Sincerely yours,

*Hugh B. Fate, Jr. D.M.D.*

Hugh B. Fate, Jr., D.M.D.  
Temporary Chairman  
LUAC



# Northern Alaska Environmental Center

218 DRIVEWAY  
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99701  
(907) 452-5021

FEB 22 1985

February 20, 1985

Senator Bettye Fahrenkamp  
Pouch U  
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Senator Fahrenkamp:

The Northern Alaska Environmental Center is adamantly opposed to Senate Joint Resolution No. 5 which pertains to the Steese National Conservation Area and the White Mountains National Recreation Area. This resolution is intended to support the views of one special interest group and does not reflect the views of interior Alaska residents or the best interests of the State. The effect of this type of one sided resolution is to further polarize the conservation and mining communities to the detriment of all those involved.

We find it particularly disturbing that, while you refer to the record of public comment in SJR 3 (Dunkle mine township resolution) where it supports your point of view, you fail to acknowledge the public input in the case of the Steese/White Mountain plans. The Bureau of Land Management has repeatedly indicated that over 80% of the comment on these plans came from within the State of Alaska and by a margin of over three to one the comment favored protection of primitive recreation, wildlife habitat and water quality. Your resolution does not reflect the views of Alaska residents.

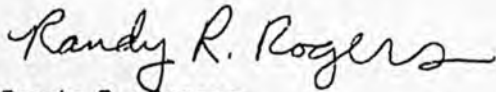
SJR 5 blatantly disregards the importance of primitive recreation opportunities to interior Alaska residents. Primitive, non-motorized recreation is the preference of many Fairbanksans. The White Mountains National Recreation Area is the only accessible area in the Fairbanks region where non-motorized recreation management is proposed. The State's Tanana Basin Area Plan, which covers over 12 million acres of land, does not propose a single acre for non-motorized recreation. It becomes more and more difficult to obtain a backcountry permit to experience the wilderness of Denali National Park. In fact, the proposed final management plans for the Steese NCA and White Mountains NRA designate only about one third of the total area for non-motorized recreation. If the non-motorized recreation designations are eliminated from the plans as you propose, it will be the primitive recreation enthusiasts that are discriminated against, not the motorized recreationists.

If the Bureau of Land Management does not approve these plans as you have requested in SJR 5, both areas will remain closed to all new mineral entry. New mineral entry into the Steese/White Mountain areas can only be authorized through the resource management plans.

The Northern Center has acknowledged the historic mining district within the Steese NCA and urged cooperation between conservationists and miners in this area. While we want to see the water quality of Birch Creek improved, we realize this cannot happen overnight. Keeping in mind the fact that the majority of the mining claims within the White Mountains NRA have recently lapsed due to lack of assessment work (indicating low mineral potential), we ask that you acknowledge the primitive recreation and wildlife habitat values of the White Mountains.

We oppose SJR 5 because of its disregard for the views of local residents and because it will hinder the interior mining industry rather than benefit it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Randy R. Rogers".

Randy R. Rogers  
Executive Director

cc: Fairbanks Legislative Delegation  
Senate and House Resource Committees



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Alaska State Office  
701 C Street, Box 13  
Anchorage, Alaska 99513

MAR  
IN REPLY REFER TO  
1610 (934/280)1985

SJR 5

March 5, 1985

Senate Resource Committee Chairman  
Ms. Arliss Sturgulewski  
Pouch V  
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Senator Sturgulewski:

I greatly appreciate the recent discussion we had on the Steese and White Mountain plans. As we discussed, the Bureau of Land Management has some concerns about the information presented in the Senate Joint Resolution #5.

The Steese and White Mountains are currently closed by law to new development. The plans, when approved, will open more than 60% of the lands to mineral development. While this does not open all the land, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) does place several restrictions on how these lands will be managed. In particular, the White Mountain legislation identifies public outdoor recreation as a high priority and the Steese legislation points out protection of Caribou and the Birch Creek Wild River. The overall policy for managing the BLM lands recognizes the need to protect the special values defined by law while providing multiple use.

We think that, we have fulfilled the needs of ANILCA legislation while achieving a reasonable balance between the needs of adjacent land managers, and resource use and development. Of significant importance is the dynamic flexibility of these plans. Through the revision process, new information, technologies, and data can be integrated into the plans to meet changing public needs and fully protect the resources.

Additionally, I have notified the Governor that the BLM will make changes in the plans to reflect some of his concerns. Some of the points addressed in this resolution would be modified by these changes. These are listed below, and in the enclosed letter to the Land Use Council members.

- 1) The BLM recognizes the State's authority to establish and manage water quality standards;
- 2) While the White Mountains calls for about 55% of the area to be primitive, this classification does not restrict snowmobiles, and the plan does allow for reasonable access to valid existing mining claims under a permit system. Other recreational vehicle uses are allowed in appropriate locations, as established by the plan and the authorized officer.
- 3) The BLM does recognize the existing State trail system.

- 4) The Plans recognize the MOU that was signed by BLM and the State regarding RS 2477, and we have agreed to other RS 2477 changes recommended by the State. Also, as you know, valid RS 2477 is in effect a grant from the Federal Government that is not extinguished or affected by any land use plan we develop.
- 5) While not raised in the resolution, the BLM is actively pursuing funding for a mineral inventory on the Steese & White Mountain lands. We are getting good support for this from the State DGGs.

The BLM feels that the points raised in this resolution are useful in that they address issues that have had a lot of public input and have Statewide implication. We do not, however, feel they should delay the approval and implementation of these plans. Further delay will only cause the land to remain withdrawn from all uses as they are now.

I understand that the legislature has a great amount of interest in how plans of this nature are coordinated within State Government. We feel the coordination processes within State Government is a matter for the State to decide. However, it is most helpful to the Bureau to have one point-of-contact with which to coordinate on draft and final land use plans. It is difficult for us to coordinate between the various interested State agencies who will often have different points-of-view. It is also important for us to be able to work early with State agencies, as plans are being developed. For example often DOT, Fish and Game, or other departments have information and data that are most helpful to us in the development of plans.

It is clear that the many wounds from D-2 days are yet unhealed. There will be many in the public we serve that will want to refight D-2. This realistically will make the task of planning land use within conservation units difficult.

Please call if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely yours,



Michael J. Penfold  
State Director



# United States Department of the Interior

IN REPLY REFER TO

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

1610 (934/280)

Alaska State Office  
701 C Street, Box 13  
Anchorage, Alaska 99513

Alaska Land Use Council  
1689 "C" Street, Room 100  
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

Dear Land Use Council Member:

On December 7, 1984, I received a letter from the Office of the Governor which outlined the results of the Governor's review of the Steese and White Mountains Proposed Resource Management Plans for consistency with the plans, policies, and programs of the State of Alaska.

We have modified the language of the plans pertaining to water quality in order to meet the Governor's consistency requirements. We have also modified the plans to address some of the other concerns raised in the Governor's letter.

In order to facilitate your review of these modifications, I have directed my staff to develop a summary listing of them. A copy of that listing is attached. The left-hand column enumerates the points raised in the Governor's letter; the right-hand enumerates the ways in which we have addressed those points in the modified proposed plans.

It is our hope that this document will be of assistance to you and will help to confirm that we have adequately addressed the Governor's consistency requirements.

We appreciate your continued interest in the completion of these plans. We are hopeful the Council will concur in principle with these plans, recognizing that the Director of the Bureau of Land Management must still respond to the protests received during the 30 day protest period.

Sincerely yours,

1 Enclosure

Encl. 1 - Summary Listing of the Modified PRMP's.

## Summary of Modifications

### Comments from the Office of the Governor

1. References to specific permit limits and standards such as 0.7 ml/l settleable solids minimum, "zero downstream effluent standard," "no degradation," and "no downstream effect" should be eliminated from the texts.

2. The plans should be modified to reflect applicable State and Federal laws and regulations, recognizing the authorities delegated to the State prescribed for establishment, management and enforcement of water quality standards under the Federal Clean Water Act.

3. We recommend that BLM recognize the recently initiated research studies by State and Federal agencies involving placer mining. An important goal of these multi-faceted studies is to examine and develop new mining methods, technologies, and best management practices for placer mining, which will seek ways for placer miners to achieve water quality standards and remain economically viable. We further urge BLM to make a commitment to joint cooperative efforts in pursuing placer mining and resource studies. BLM should evaluate and consider the results and conclusions of these efforts when making land management decisions.

### Responses from the Bureau of Land Management

1. We have deleted all references to specific permit limits and standards. (SNCA, pp. 254, 263, 268 and WMNRA, pp. 247, 265, 268).

2. We have incorporated the following language in both plans:

The Bureau will cooperate closely with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the purpose of establishing water quality standards and for preventing, eliminating or diminishing the pollution of State waters consistent with: the Federal Clean Water Act; the purpose for which the wild and scenic rivers were established under the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act; and State Water Quality Standards. (SNCA, p. 268 and WMNRA, p. 260)

3. We have incorporated the language in both plans:

The BLM will cooperate fully with the State in a joint commitment to improve placer mining methods and technologies which will seek ways to achieve water quality standards and retain an economically viable mineral industry. The BLM will accept the opportunity to participate in the State's ongoing placer mining studies and will evaluate and consider the results of such studies and utilize this data when formulating land management decisions. (SNCA, p. 288; WMNRA, p. 281).

4. Finally, we request that BLM incorporate language in both plans to the effect that BLM will cooperate with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the purpose of preventing, eliminating or diminishing the pollution of State waters, consistent with the Federal Clean Water Act, the Federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and State Water Quality Standards.

5. The plans recognize that a mandated ANILCA Section 1010 mineral assessment must be performed and indicate that BLM anticipates assistance from information collected by private entities. Reliance on such privately funded research will not satisfy this requirement. While we recognize that time and funding limitations have precluded BLM's accomplishing the required assessment, we strongly urge BLM to seek funding to complete an adequate mineral assessment which fulfills the intent of Section 1010. We also urge BLM to include in the plans a process by which the information collected will be used to revise the plans, including opening additional areas if warranted by the new information and if consistent with the purposes for which the respective areas were established in ANILCA.

4. See #2, above. See also SNCA, p. 263:

All operators producing water-borne effluent must obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit and meet the requirements of that permit. In cooperation with ADEC and EPA, water quality will be monitored along streams to ensure compliance.

and WMNRA, p. 260:

The Bureau will cooperate closely with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in the enforcement of State and Federal water pollution laws. All mining operations will be required to keep water-borne effluent within present ADEC and EPA limitations, and reclamation of disturbed ground would be required to prevent erosion resulting in stream sedimentation. These requirements would be enforced under the Surface Management Regulations (43 CFR 3809). See also SNCA, p. 281 and WMNRA, p. 274.

5. We have incorporated the following language in both plans:

The BLM is working with the State Division of Geological/Geophysical Survey, the Bureau of Mines, and the U.S. Geological Survey, in an effort to further develop mineral assessments of these and other lands in Alaska. Any proposed study will also receive review and comment by the mineral industry, so the best utilization of Government and private mineral assessment capabilities can be made. Information gathered through exploration by private companies would also assist the Bureau in meeting this legal requirement. Such information, in combination with information which will be collected on wildlife and other resources, would be very useful in evaluating possible amendments to this plan. (SNCA, pp. 271, 273, 287 and WMNRA, pp. 255, 263 and

6. BLM's need for corridor extensions should be incorporated and addressed in DNR's Tanana Basin Trails Plan which is currently underway in Fairbanks. Through the trail planning effort, BLM and the State can work to ensure that the use and establishment of these trails and corridors are consistent with Statewide goals and management objectives for State land as identified in the Tanana Basin Area Plan.

7. To clarify BLM's intent with regard to RS 2477 rights-of-way, we request that the plans include the following language in the spirit of the MOU:

"The BLM will work cooperatively with the State of Alaska to identify all rights-of-way pursuant to Revised Statute (RS) 2477 within the SNCA and WMNRA boundaries for administrative purposes. When rights or titles are granted directly by statute, such as RS 2477, these rights can only be abrogated in the court system."

8. The State is interested in assuring that these plans will be dynamic and current. We request that a schedule of intended revisions to the plans be included so that we may be assured of BLM's responsiveness to new information and future changes that occur in the areas. Studies and assessments of possible significance include mineral potential, fish and wildlife resources, recreational use patterns, and improved mitigation measures and resource extraction techniques.

6. We have incorporated the following language in both plans:

The BLM proposes to cooperate with the State of Alaska and with other Federal agencies in the preparation of an analysis of transportation needs involving the respective State and Federal Transportation and Land Managing agencies. The analysis would address the existing and future access needs and propose how best these needs could be met. It would also identify where access routes presently exist and which ones, if any, are duplicative. (SNCA, p. 280 and WMNRA, p. 273).

7. We have incorporated the following language in both plans:

The Bureau will work cooperatively with the State of Alaska to identify all right-of-way claims made pursuant to Revised Statute 2477 within the WMNRA/SNCA boundaries for administrative purposes only. The validity of such claims can only be determined in a court of competent jurisdiction. (SNCA, p. 280 and WMNRA, p. 273).

8. We have incorporated the following language in both plans:

The evaluation process will be coordinated with local, State and other Federal interests. The evaluation will become part of the RMP file and available for public inspection. Any part of the plan can be amended, whenever a significant change in data or the management situation occurs (Planning regulations 43 CFR 1610.5-5). Review and amendment procedures require full public involvement under the rules of the National Environmental Protection Act, and the best and most recent information will be used. (SNCA, p. 287 and WMNRA, p. 280).

9. Page 135, (WMNRA) - It should be noted that contrary to the statement on this page, Beaver Creek is listed in ADF&G's Anadromous Fish Waters Catalog (number: 334-40-11000-2810-3100). King and chum salmon occur to a point about 2.5 miles downstream from Warren Creek.

9. This correction is included among the FEIS Corrections.

# Alaska State Legislature

BETTYE FAHRENKAMP, Chairman  
ROBERT H. ZIEGLER, SR., Vice Chairman  
DICK ELIASON  
PAUL FISCHER  
VIC FISCHER  
BOB MULCAHY  
ARLISS STURGULEWSKI



POUCH V  
STATE CAPITAL  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811  
(907) 465-3834  
(907) 465-3835

## Senate

### Committee on Resources

October 29, 1984

Honorable William Sheffield  
Governor  
Pouch A  
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Governor:

I would like to call to your attention the resource management plan for the Steese National Conservation Area (SNCA) recently released by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). This plan, which would guide management of 1.2 million acres of federal land north of Fairbanks, encompasses the drainage through which Birch Creek flows. As you know, this drainage is the site of the State's ongoing intensive study of the effects of placer mining on water quality.

Governor, we are both very well aware that the miners are unable to meet current water quality standards, and the State agencies that manage water quality and mining activity have recognized this as well. We are also both aware of the State's \$4 million commitment to examine our water quality standards, to gather data necessary to determine how the standards should be applied to individual streams, and to assist in the development of technologies and practices that may enable the miners to meet both State and Federal water quality criteria.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is also currently examining mining technologies and economics in their process of developing effluent guidelines for the placer mining industry. In recognition of the State's commitment to resolve water quality conflicts on our placer mining streams, the EPA has allowed the State until early 1986 to conduct research and provide input into EPA's guideline development process.

In light of the State's strong commitment to the water quality issue, and the cooperative relationship we have developed with EPA in this regard, I am gravely concerned about the mineral provisions of the Steese National Conservation Area plan. Generally, the BLM is calling for improved water quality in Birch Creek, which I think you would agree is a goal the State is committed to as well. However, BLM proposes to accomplish this through mechanisms that could effectively preclude placer mining in the Birch Creek drainage.

Governor  
October 29, 1984  
page 2

Specifically, the plan calls for compliance with the requirements of the EPA's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, which limits turbidity to a maximum increase of 25 NTU. The plan also calls for no degradation of water quality on specific tributaries of the Birch. As we have discussed, Governor, these are mandates that cannot be met, and are in fact the basis for the State's ongoing research effort. It should be noted that these mandates are in addition to submittal of a plan of operation on which BLM will conduct an environmental assessment, and a diligent monitoring effort that will be undertaken by BLM. Further, large portions of the highly mineralized area within the SNCA will remain closed to mineral entry under the plan.

I am aware of the federal designation of the Birch Creek, and recognize that the Wild and Scenic River Act addresses protection of the values, including water quality, for which the river was designated. However, I am also aware that the Act was not intended to affect the State's jurisdiction over water quality. I feel strongly that not only must Alaska assert its management authority over its waters, but that BLM must accept the State's solid commitment to the water quality of Birch Creek as well.

Governor, I urge your thorough review of the Steese National Conservation Area plan, and your utmost consideration of the State's protest opportunity. I strongly believe that the minerals management criteria contained in the SNCA plan are inconsistent with the State's current placer mining research and enforcement policies. It is critically important that the State be allowed to bring its study efforts to completion, and that the Bureau of Land Management be made to address how the results of the State's research will be accommodated in the plan.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Bettye Fahrenkamp  
Chairman

cc: Hon. Ted Stevens  
U.S. Senator

Sally Gibert  
CSU Planning Office

Michael Green  
BLM

BF/ss

# Alaska State Legislature

BETTYE FAHRENKAMP, Chairman  
ROBERT H. ZIEGLER, SR., Vice Chairman  
DICK ELIASON  
PAUL FISCHER  
VIC FISCHER  
BOB MULCAHY  
ARLISS STURGULEWSKI



POUCH V  
STATE CAPITAL  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811  
(907) 485-3834  
(907) 485-3835

## Senate

### Committee on Resources

November 8, 1984

William J. Sheffield  
Governor, State of Alaska  
Pouch A  
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Governor:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide specific comments on the proposed Resource Management Plans and final Environmental Impact Statements for the Steese National Conservation Area (SNCA) and the White Mountains National Recreation Area (WMNRA).

These plans, recently released by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), would guide management of over 2 million acres of federal land north of Fairbanks. Although the plans reportedly embody the multiple use concept of land management, a concept I heartily support, I do not feel the plans give adequate consideration to the highly mineralized zones in this area. Further, I am particularly concerned that the minerals management and water quality criteria contained in the plans are inconsistent with the State's current placer mining research and enforcement policies, and in fact suggest an effort to diminish the State's authority to manage water quality and set water quality standards.

For example, the Steese plan would require that any future mining activity on four major tributaries of Birch Creek have a "zero" downstream effect on water quality. This would effectively establish a water quality standard which is far more stringent than current State standards, and, as we are both well aware, cannot be met by the miners. This unrealistic standard is therefore tantamount to prohibiting mining activity on the many valid existing claims on these four tributaries, and further, is contrary to the language of Section 402 (c) of ANILCA which clearly states that regulation of mineral activity will be reasonable, and will ensure that, to the maximum extent practicable, such activity will be consistent with the protection of the other resources in the area. Establishing an unattainable standard is neither reasonable nor practicable.

Governor Sheffield  
November 8, 1984  
page 2

Further, the Steese Environmental Impact Statement asserts that "zero downstream discharge would require total recycling of all water." Recycling, by the BLM's own admission, has not proven to be cost effective, and the State's mining grants program has been initiated precisely to assist in development of technologies and methods that will enable water quality standards to be met economically. Requiring recycling not only limits a miner's options, but limits the applicability of the State's ongoing efforts to develop best mining practices, and to study mixing zones, flocculants, and various other technologies. The current State research on placer mining should be recognized, and specific mining techniques should not be dictated.

Another attempt by BLM to set water quality standards is found on page 268 of the White Mountains plan. In addition to requiring that all existing operations have a "zero" effect on receiving waters within five years, the plan states: "These limits (.7 ml/l settleable solids and 25 NTU over natural conditions) are the maximum discharges the BLM will permit, regardless of whether EPA changes its standards." As you know, these are the solids and turbidity limits contained in the EPA's current National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit, which is based on current state standards for fishable and swimmable waters. Changes in water quality standards, although requiring EPA approval, are clearly the prerogative of the State. To infer that BLM will dictate water quality standards is wrong. The responsibility of EPA and the State must be reflected here, and BLM's role must be clearly defined.

Also worth noting is BLM's proposal to accomplish improved water quality on the Birch Creek by monitoring discharge from all placer mines in the drainage, "including those outside of the SNCA boundaries." Although Section 9 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (P.L. 90-452) states that regulations (BLM's regulations for surface management under 43 CFR, Subpart 3809, for example) must provide safeguards against pollution of the river involved, Section 15 (d) of the act states that the jurisdiction of a state over a river area shall be unaffected by the act, provided that such jurisdiction may be exercised without impairing the purposes of the act or its administration. Again I assert that management of water quality is the State's right, and that it is not within the authority of BLM to establish, monitor, and enforce water quality standards.

A critical aspect of water quality which BLM must address prior to implementing either plan is the current State program in the Birch Creek drainage. This two-year cooperative effort by the Departments of Fish and Game, Environmental Conservation, and

Governor Sheffield  
November 8, 1984  
page 3

Natural Resources recognizes the importance of improved water quality, but unlike the Steese and White Mountain plans, strives to accomplish this goal through a broad spectrum of methods that will allow for development of a viable mining industry as well. Not only must the plans recognize the State's program, they must ensure that the results of the State's research will be applied in managing these areas. Prior to implementing unreasonable regulations and standards, the BLM should take advantage of the data gathered by the State during the 1984 season, and ideally through the remainder of the program.

Other provisions of the mineral portion of the plan also warrant attention. Both plans propose to provide additional opportunities for new mineral development. In fact, some 75% of the land in the SNCA will be opened for mineral location; approximately 44% of the WMNRA will be opened to mineral leasing but no new placer claims will be allowed. Investigation of available geologic data, however, indicates that many of the most highly mineralized areas will be unavailable for mineral development. This is particularly true in the White Mountains area, over half of which is classified as primitive and unavailable for mineral leasing. The low potential of available lands coupled with overly restrictive management regulations will effectively ensure that little, if any, new mineral development will occur.

The social and economic impact on Fairbanks and the State will be severe. The placer mining industry contributed some \$30 million to the Fairbanks economy in 1982, and an equal or greater amount in 1983 and 1984, much of that from operations in areas either directly or indirectly affected by these proposed plans. BLM concludes that the costs of meeting the proposed management directives would increase operating costs of a placer gold operation from 10% to 100% over current levels, and would make most operations uneconomical, in fact precluding a number from operating. Again, I stress ANILCA, which calls for reasonable regulation of the mining industry.

This leads to another area of concern, which is the failure of the BLM to clearly indicate how the mandate in Section 1010 of ANILCA, which directs the Secretary to assess the oil, gas, and other mineral potential on all public lands in the State of Alaska, will be fulfilled. The plans recognize that a mineral assessment of these lands is needed, yet statements in the plans indicate that any minerals assessment will have to be accomplished by private entities following implementation of the plans. In light of the decisions being made in regard to minerals in these two plans, it is imperative that BLM undertake an organized and adequately funded program to complete a full mineral survey of these two areas. Such a program should involve the U.S. Bureau of Mines, U.S. Geological Survey, the Division of Geological and Geophysical Survey of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, and private contractors.

Governor Sheffield  
November 8, 1984  
page 4

One final comment. The question of access to mining claims, and access generally, needs to be more fully addressed in the plans. Much of the White Mountains area, for example, has been administratively designated "primitive", a classification which limits motorized access. Although access to mining claims should be guaranteed, assurance of this is warranted, and in this case, State initiative may be what is necessary. As you know, the State and BLM have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding outlining the procedure for assertion of RS 2477 rights of way. The State should move ahead quickly to assert its claims to the rights of way within the Steese and White Mountains areas. Formal recognition by the BLM of these rights of way prior to implementation of the plans will be beneficial to all parties concerned, particularly the various user groups.

Recommendations:

1. The State's responsibility of protection and maintenance of the quality of Alaska's waters and their uses must be acknowledged, and BLM's role in managing water quality must be clearly defined. The establishment of water quality standards is the State's right, and it is not within the authority of BLM to establish, monitor, and enforce water quality standards.
2. The mineral management provisions of the plan must comply with Section 402(c) of ANILCA, which calls for reasonable regulation of mining activities. The unattainable standard of zero downstream effect on water quality would effectively prohibit mining activity, is therefore not reasonable, and should be deleted from the plan. Requiring compliance with standards established by the State and EPA would appropriately recognize the State's authority to manage water quality.
3. Specific mining techniques should not be dictated. Although recycling may allow current water quality standards to be met, the plan should not preclude development and use of other, more cost-effective technologies.
4. Numerical limits for turbidity and settleable solids should not be specified. The plan must allow for possible future revision of standards by the State or EPA.
5. BLM's authority to monitor and enforce water quality standards on drainages upstream from the SNCA should be clarified to reflect section 13(d) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, which confirms that the State's jurisdiction over the river is to remain unaffected.
6. The plans must recognize the current research efforts of the state with regard to placer mining, and agree to give consideration to the results of that effort. The BLM should take advantage of the data gathered by the state.

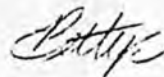
Governor Sheffield  
November 8, 1984  
page 5

7. The economic impact of implementing the plans as currently written must be openly stated. The effect of unattainable standards and closure of highly mineralized areas would be cessation of mining activity, and should be represented as such.

8. The plans should outline how and when a minerals assessment of these two areas will occur.

Governor, the management plans for the Steese National Conservation Area and the White Mountains National Recreation Area do not appear to be consistent with the policies and programs of the State of Alaska, nor do they comply with the language of ANILCA. I ask that you consider my comments as you prepare your response to the Bureau of Land Management on these two plans, and urge you to formally protest the mineral and water quality provisions of the plans until the above recommendations are addressed.

Sincerely,



Bettye Fahrenkamp  
Chairman

BF:ss

# STATE OF ALASKA

BILL SHEFFIELD, GOVERNOR

## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

STATE CSU COORDINATOR  
2600 DENALI STREET, SUITE 700  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99503-2798  
PHONE: (907) 274-1581

OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET  
DIVISION OF GOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

FINAL

December 7, 1984

rec 12-14-84

Michael J. Penfold  
State Director  
Bureau of Land Management  
701 C Street, Box 13  
Anchorage, AK 99513

Dear Mr. <sup>Mike</sup> Penfold:

The State of Alaska has completed the review of the Steese National Conservation Area and White Mountains National Recreation Area Proposed Resource Management Plans and final Environmental Impact Statements pursuant to 43 CFR 1610.3-2. We appreciate this opportunity to review and comment on these proposed plans. The State recognizes the difficulties the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has encountered in addressing resource development and protection of natural values consistent with the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) and other federal and State regulations. The State appreciates BLM's efforts to accommodate our comments on the previous drafts. The following comments are intended to assist BLM in correcting and finalizing the Resource Management Plans.

While the State acknowledges the range of options available under the federal Clean Water Act for regulating water quality, we nonetheless find these two plans to be clearly inconsistent with State water quality regulations, policies, and programs. References to specific permit limits and standards such as 0.7 ml/l settleable solids maximum, "zero downstream effluent standard", "no degradation", and "no downstream effect" should be eliminated from the texts. The plans should be modified to reflect applicable State and federal laws and regulations, recognizing the authorities delegated to the State prescribed for establishment, management and enforcement of water quality standards under the federal Clean Water Act.

We recommend that BLM recognize the recently initiated research studies by State and federal agencies involving placer mining. An important goal of these multi-faceted studies is to examine and develop new mining methods, technologies, and best management practices for placer mining, which will seek ways for placer miners to achieve water quality standards and remain

economically viable. We further urge BLM to make a commitment to joint cooperative efforts in pursuing placer mining and resource studies. BLM should evaluate and consider the results and conclusions of these efforts when making land management decisions.

Finally, we request that BLM incorporate language in both plans to the effect the BLM will cooperate with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation and the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency for the purpose of preventing, eliminating or diminishing the pollution of State waters, consistent with the federal Clean Water Act, the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and State Water Quality Standards.

The State has some additional concerns with these documents which, while not matters of consistency, are of considerable importance nonetheless.

The plans recognize that a mandated ANILCA Section 1010 mineral assessment must be performed, and indicate that BLM anticipates assistance from information collected by private entities. Reliance on such privately funded research will not satisfy this requirement. While we recognize that time and funding limitations have precluded BLM's accomplishing the required assessment, we strongly urge BLM to seek funding to complete an adequate mineral assessment which fulfills the intent of Section 1010. We also urge BLM to include in the plans a process by which the information collected will be used to revise the plans, including opening additional areas if warranted by the new information and if consistent with the purposes for which the respective areas were established in ANILCA.

As a further indicator of the State's concern for basing land management decisions on the best possible data, the Division of Geological Survey (DGGS) within the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requests consideration of a cooperative mineral assessment effort using the Resource Appraisal methodology. This methodology, which is a statistically accurate means of assessing mineral potential, is currently being refined in cooperation with the Bureau of Mines. The State is prepared to assist BLM in applying this methodology in the Steese and White Mountain areas.

State agencies have identified several specific concerns related to identification and management of trails and transportation corridors which provide access to and within these units. Policies assuring reasonable access are an important consideration in the planning efforts due to their key role in the utilization and enjoyment of these areas. Our concerns include the following:

- . The need for continued coordination with the State as implementation of the Tanana Basin Area Plan begins, including BLM assistance in development of the follow-up Tanana Basin Trail Plan;
- . The need for continued coordination with the State to assure that access points are compatible with adjacent land uses;
- . The need for BLM to continue to coordinate and work cooperatively with the State in the identification and management of Revised Statute (RS) 2477's and other trails claimed by the State, consistent with the spirit and intent of the recently signed Memorandum of Understanding between BLM, DNR, and The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT/PF).

The plans should acknowledge the State's efforts to deal with access and BLM's intent to cooperate and coordinate with these efforts. The plan should outline the process by which BLM and the State (DOT/PF, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), DNR) will work cooperately to assure that reasonable access is maintained in a manner compatible with the respective agencies' management objectives. These State departments are available to discuss how this coordination will occur.

The ability of BLM to meet its objectives for access will depend in part on agreement and cooperation with the State, since several of the identified trail and transportation corridors extend beyond the unit boundaries onto State land. We recommend that BLM work with the Northern Regional Office of DNR as well as other State agencies to ensure that the intended use of lands within the units for access purposes are consistent with management objectives for State lands outside the two units. Several existing and proposed trails, trailheads and corridors are on State land. It should be noted on the maps or in the text that these corridors extend beyond the unit boundary onto State land. It should be clarified that BLM will cooperate with the State regarding these extensions. The process for accomplishing this coordination should be mentioned.

Further, BLM's need for corridor extensions should be incorporated and addressed in DNR's Tanana Basin Trails Plan which is currently underway in Fairbanks. Through the trail planning effort, BLM and the State can work to ensure that the use and establishment of these trails and corridors are consistent with Statewide goals and management objectives for State land as identified in the Tanana Basin Area Plan. Possible inconsistencies that need to be addressed are: The routing of trails through land disposal areas; management consistency between trail corridors; and the recommendation to legislatively designate the Chatanika River a State Recreation River.

Overall, the State and BLM need to manage these corridors to meet the needs of recreational users while providing access for resource development as well.

The documents generally describe existing access and public rights-of-way claimed under RS 2477. However, we are concerned with the implications of the statement, "The status of many miles of trail is presently uncertain, making it difficult to determine who has the authority to regulate use, who has the responsibility for maintenance and public safety, etc." (p. 280 SNCA, and p. 273 WMNRA). We appreciate BLM's consideration of the uncertainty of trails status but request clarification of intent regarding access in these situations. Maps and lists detailing existing trail systems for the State of Alaska were sent to BLM in April, 1974, with written claim to ownership of these trails. Copies of letters and memorandums to this effect are enclosed. Reference to the trails indicated on these maps should be incorporated into these plans. If BLM needs additional information, the State will assist in identification of appropriate access in a manner which is mutually compatible with our respective agency objectives. To clarify BLM's intent with regard to RS 2477 rights-of-way, we request that the plans include the following language in the spirit of the MOU:

"The BLM will work cooperatively with the State of Alaska to identify all rights-of-way pursuant to Revised Statute (RS) 2477 within the SNCA and WMNRA boundaries for administrative purposes. When rights or titles are granted directly by statute, such as RS 2477, these rights can only be abrogated in the court system."

We commend BLM for the significant improvements made to these plans in specifying mitigation measures. It is now possible to begin to judge the effects of proposed actions and measures to minimize impacts. We appreciate a number of the specific improvements made to protect terrestrial and aquatic habitats. We must emphasize the importance of BLM actively monitoring recreational and development activities in both units and developing viable mitigation measures to insure that subsistence and other uses of fish and wildlife resources are maintained as development takes place. However, monitoring of development activities and implementation of the mitigation process is dependent upon funding, and the State urges BLM to actively seek such funding.

The State is interested in assuring that these plans will be dynamic and current. We request that a schedule of intended revisions to the plans be included so that we may be assured of BLM's responsiveness to new information and future changes that occur in the areas. Studies and assessments of possible significance include mineral potential, fish and wildlife resources, recreational use patterns, and improved mitigation measures and resource extraction techniques.

The page-specific comments below may apply to both the Steese and White Mountains units, though only one document may be cited:

Page 59, (WMNRA) - For the White Mountains unit, no exchanges are intended by the State yet the map on page 59 shows a block of State land to be acquired by exchange. This is apparently a block discussed in the Steese document. This should be clarified in the White Mountains document also.

Page 135, (WMNRA) - It should be noted that contrary to the statement on this page, Beaver Creek is listed in ADF&G's Anadromous Fish Waters Catalog (number 334-40-11000-2810-3100). King and chum salmon occur to a point about 2.5 miles downstream from Warren Creek.

Page 152, (SNCA) - The discussion of possible land exchanges is incomplete. For the Steese unit, there is no explanation of the purpose for the intended exchanges nor the intended management of the acquired lands. Nor is there any indication of how the management intent for those lands will be accomplished if the exchanges do not take place.

Page 227, (SNCA) - With regard to the FEIS', we are concerned with BLM's reply #2 on this page (and page 225 of the WMNRA document). This reply to a point raised in the State's comments on the draft EIS's for these areas is based on a partial reading of the CEQ document in question. Contrary to BLM's contention, the CEQ guidelines address mitigation that lies within the authority of the managing agency.

Specifically, the guidelines state that "to insure that environmental effects of a proposed action are fairly assessed, the probability of the mitigation measures being implemented must also be discussed." This statement accurately reflects our concern. The 43 CFR 3809 regulations are within BLM's jurisdiction. However, since much of the mitigation of effects in these plans depends upon the use of those regulations, and since the 3809 program depends upon a full commitment of funding and manpower, we feel the likelihood of implementation to the extent called for in the plans should be discussed as stated in our original response.

Page 256, Multiple Use Management Prescription (SNCA) - The south block of the Steese unit has some geothermal resource potential as indicated by the proximity of reported hot springs at Big Windy Creek, Flat Creek, Upper Charley Creek, east of the Salcha River, north of the Salcha River, and at Chena and Circle Hot Springs.

The north unit has less potential but is underlaid by a sedimentary basin that may be the source of hot springs near the Dall River. While there is no current proposal to develop geothermal resources in this area, we hope there can be provision in the management of the Steese unit for eventual development of this potential in a manner compatible with other uses of the unit should the need for it arise.

266-267, RIGHTS-OF-WAY and OTHER REALTY ACTIONS (SNCA) - In paragraph 3 on p. 266, and paragraph 1 on p. 267, no mention is made of the provision that Wild River crossings may require permits under Section 404 and 401 of the Clean Water Act.

Page 270, Pinnell Mountain Trail - Due to the open terrain traversed by this trail, it would be more appropriate to vary the width of the "Primitive" corridor on the basis of topography, rather than an arbitrary distance of one-half mile. In some areas, the Primitive designation may be too narrow to reasonably buffer trail users from the effects of possible motorized activities or other land uses that would significantly detract from the enjoyment of the trail. By the same token, there may be other portions of the "Primitive" designation that are unnecessarily wide.

Page 273, 274 (SNCA) - We wish to comment on the authorization for unrestricted use of light (less than 1500 lb.) off-road vehicles (ORV) within the Semi-primitive Motorized Restricted Management and Special Management units of the SNCA. BLM is restricting mineral development activities in these areas (through closure in one unit and seasonal restriction in the other) based largely on the value of wildlife habitat, especially caribou habitat, and the ANILCA language regarding caribou in this unit. Consequently, we urge the BLM impose seasonal restrictions for ORV use in the Restricted and Special Management Zones during caribou calving periods. This would treat all SNCA users equitably and would help fulfill the intent to protect the special values identified in ANILCA.

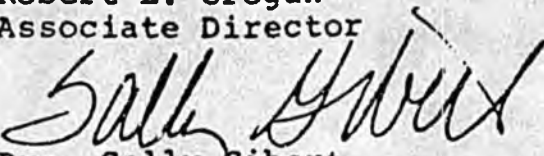
Page 299, (SNCA) Appendix D. We request the BLM reference ADF&G's authority under Alaska Statutes 16.

SNCA Proposed Plan Map - We note that the fold out map does not indicate that T.7N, R.8E., F.M. is actually State land. Notwithstanding any land exchange considerations, further versions of this map should reflect current status.

Thank you for the opportunity to review these plans. If we can be of any assistance in clarifying these comments, please do not hesitate to call this office. We look forward to final plans which will be consistent with the State's policies and programs and which fulfill the purposes of these units as specified in ANILCA.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Grogan  
Associate Director



By: Sally Gibert  
State CSU Coordinator

Attachments

cc: S. Leaphart, CACFA  
J. Leask, AFN  
R. McCoy, ALUC  
R. Davidge, DOI  
M. Frankel, ALUC  
State CSU Contacts



## *Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas*

515 Seventh Avenue  
Suite 310  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
(907) 456-2012

December 3, 1984

Mr. Robert F. Burford  
Director  
Bureau of Land Management  
1800 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Burford,

Pursuant to 43 CFR, §1610.5-2 the Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas is protesting certain issues and statements in the Proposed Resource Management Plans and Final Environmental Impact Statements for the Steese National Conservation Area (SNCA) and the White Mountains National Recreation Area (WMNRA). These issues and statements are inconsistent with sections of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and various State and federal regulations.

The Commission has participated in every stage of the planning process for these two areas since planning began in 1982. Comments on both draft RMP/EIS's were submitted to the Fairbanks District Office of the BLM on April 2, 1984. The comments are reproduced in the current documents.

### WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The major issue of concern to the Commission is that of water quality. The State of Alaska has established water quality standards which are approved by the Environmental Protection Agency. Current State standards allow .7 milliliters per liter for settleable solids and a maximum increase of 25 Nephelometric Turbidity Units over natural conditions.

On page 263 of the RMP for the White Mountains NRA, the statement is made that the current limits for settleable solids and turbidity are "...the maximum discharges the BLM will permit, regardless of whether EPA (State of Alaska) changes its standards." It then continues to state that within five years all existing operations must have a "zero" effect on receiving waters.

Robert F. Burford  
December 3, 1984

Page 3

Conservation and Natural Resources is examining new mining methods and technologies which would allow operations to meet water quality standards and at the same time remain economically viable.

Although the plans fail to address the State's program, the conclusion is made in both plans that the same methods being examined by the study to improve water quality such as recycling, mixing zones, use of flocculants and other innovative technologies are unworkable and dismissed as unfeasible. The results of the program may eventually yield the determination that these methods may not be satisfactory for achieving desired goals, however, prior to implementing unreasonable standards and regulations, the BLM should take advantage of all data and information generated during this study.

Any stipulatio., or management guideline contained within the Resource Management Plans for the Steese NCA and the White Mountains NRA must be amended to specifically state that the establishment, monitoring and enforcement of water quality standards is the prerogative of the State of Alaska. The BLM should cooperate to the fullest extent possible with the current State program in the Circle Mining District.

Several individuals have expressed concerns regarding the instream flow study to be conducted on the Birch Creek NWR and the Beaver Creek NWR and the federally reserved water right for these two rivers.

In quantifying the federal water right for either NWR, the BLM must consider all existing reservations of water rights. Section 13(c) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act states that: "Designation of any stream or portion thereof as a national wild, scenic or recreational river area shall not be construed as a reservation of the waters of such streams for purposes other than those specified in this act, or in quantities greater than necessary to accomplish these purposes."

Additionally, paragraph (b) states: Under the provisions of this Act, any taking by the United States of a water right which is vested under either State or Federal law at the time such river is included in the national wild and scenic rivers system shall entitle the owner thereof to just compensation. Nothing in this Act shall constitute an express or implied claim or denial on the part of the Federal Government as to exemption from State water laws."

Robert F. Durford  
December 3, 1984

Page 5

The Commission recommends that prior to the implementation of these RMP's, the BLM prepare a detailed environmental impact statement on the economic effects of the management restrictions and stipulations to be imposed upon the mining industry in these two areas.

#### MINERALS MANAGEMENT

Both plans propose to provide additional opportunities for new mineral development. In fact, some 75% of the land in the Steese NCA will be opened for mineral location. Approximately 44% of the White Mountains NRA will be opened to mineral leasing, but no new placer claims will be allowed. Investigation of available geologic data, however, indicates that many of the most highly mineralized areas will be unavailable for mineral development. This is particularly true in the White Mountains NRA, where over half of the area is classified as primitive and unavailable for mineral leasing. The low potential of available lands coupled with overly restrictive management regulations proposed for the two areas, will effectively ensure that little, if any, new mineral development will occur.

One area of concern that has recently come to the attention of the Commission is the failure of the BLM to clearly indicate how the mandate in Section 1010 of ANILCA will be fulfilled. The Alaska Mineral Resources Assessment Program is designed to provide information on the potential for oil and gas and other minerals on all of the public lands in Alaska. The statement is made in both plans that: "Information gathered through exploration by private companies would assist the Bureau in meeting this legal requirement. Such information, in combination with information which will be collected on wildlife and other resources, would be very useful in evaluating possible amendments to this plan(s)."

On page 150 of the RMP for the Steese NCA and page 146 for the White Mountains NRA, it is pointed out that little or no exploration in the areas closed to mineral development is expected, since, where there is no opportunity for development, there is no incentive to explore. It is not reasonable to depend upon private entities to invest in exploration activities in order to provide information to satisfy the BLM's statutory requirements for Section 1010. The additional information to be gathered on wildlife and other resources will not be accomplished through the efforts of private organizations.

Robert F. Burford  
December 3, 1984

Page 7

Minerals management requirements for the semi-primitive motorized unit of the Steese NCA indicate that seasonal restrictions will be imposed between May 1 and June 15 and between August 15 and September 30 if a mining operation interferes with caribou calving or migration.

The caribou hunting season in the state game management units which encompass the Steese NCA usually runs from August 10 until September 20. It is difficult to imagine that a stationary mining operation would present greater hazards to migrating caribou than would a number of hunters actively pursuing those same animals. It is also unlikely that a mining operation would significantly impede any caribou migration in this area as the animals are widely dispersed and generally use the high ridges, whereas most mining operations occur in the stream drainages.

#### RECREATION MANAGEMENT

Recreation is another significant aspect of both plans. Much of the White Mountains NRA has been classified as "primitive". This primitive classification amounts to an administratively designated wilderness area and limits the range of recreational opportunities.

A number of people have expressed concern that classifying over half of the White Mountains NRA as primitive limits access almost exclusively to hikers and backpackers and will prevent its use by large segments of the population. There is also the possibility that, as use levels increase, it will become necessary to limit the number of persons using the area in order to protect its "primitive" values. This will further decrease the opportunities to enjoy the area. Similar problems exist with the Steese NCA.

At the October 31, 1984 meeting of the Commission, a resolution was passed dealing with the use of recreational vehicles in the Steese NCA and the White Mountains NRA. Commission members feel that a 1500 pound weight limit for recreational vehicles is too restrictive and should be increased to 5000 pounds. There are types of vehicles that have a low ground pressure and do not have a significant impact on the terrain. An active monitoring program can ensure that protective measures can be implemented if a problem with use levels is identified or if significant adverse impacts occur. (A copy of the resolution is attached.)

Robert F. Burford  
December 3, 1984

Page 9

As a result of the analysis of the river's viewshed, the river corridor for the Beaver Creek NWR was reduced from an initial proposed acreage that was 93% of the maximum allowable down to 88% of maximum allowable. The corridor for the Birch Creek NWR was reduced from 96% of the maximum allowable down to 92%.

The ALUC agreed unanimously to adopt the river plans, in concept, at the August 31, 1983 meeting. These reductions were to be included in the final river plans that were submitted to Congress in December of 1983.

The Commission strongly protests any attempt to prohibit or restrict any activity that is determined to be within the "viewshed" of the Birch Creek NWR or the Beaver Creek NWR, but that is not within the actual corridor itself, based solely upon criteria for VRM Classes. We would consider any such effort to be contrary to the original river plans, previous actions by the BLM to reduce the size of the river corridors and a failure to fully recognize valid existing rights.

#### RIGHTS-OF-WAY AND OTHER REALTY ACTIONS

The question of access in general needs to be more fully addressed in the plans. The recently signed Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Alaska and BLM on the issue of RS-2477 rights-of-way should be included in the final text of the RMP's for the two areas. Additionally, formal recognition by the BLM of any rights-of-way claimed by the State under the grant, prior to such time as the final RMP's are implemented, will be beneficial to all users of the two areas.

Access for mineral development or any other purposes in the Steese NCA or the White Mountains NRA should not be restricted to the corridors identified in the proposed RMP's. If the need arises for corridors, other than those identified in the plans, an application under Title XI of ANILCA could be complicated by restrictions for access corridors written into the plans.

The plans should clearly acknowledge that additional rights-of-way may be established under Title XI or other appropriate regulations if the need is demonstrated.

Both plans contain errors with regard to processing of right-of-way applications from individuals. The statement is made that: "In the case of applications from individuals, the costs of processing may be recovered from the applicant." (Steese, p. 280 and White Mtns., p. 273)

Robert F. Burford  
December 3, 1984

Page 11

included in the final RMP's. The reply by BLM stated that such a list would be extremely lengthy and would not be appropriate. While we agree that such an appendix may be lengthy, we strongly protest the claim that it is not appropriate.

The Commission is concerned that these plans do not represent a true multiple use program for the resources in the two areas. While the Commission found the original draft plans to be seriously deficient in their management directions and proposals, they nevertheless provided more reasonable opportunities for mineral development and a wider range of recreation alternatives.

The current documents convey an overall impression that mineral activity is considered to be incompatible with all other resources and uses of the two areas. This is simply not the case.

While there can be no argument that mineral activity may at times have adverse impact on other resources such as fish and wildlife and habitat, reasonable measures can be taken to ensure that those impacts are not significant nor irreversible.

Some 176,000 acres of the Steese NCA are withdrawn from any new mineral entry because they are identified as crucial caribou habitat. It is interesting to note that mining began in the Circle Mining District in 1893 and coexisted with a large and healthy Fortymile caribou herd through the late 1940's. The drastic decline in the size of the herd which occurred in later years, long after the peak period of mining activity had passed, was more a result of poor management and over-harvest of the resource than from a substantial loss in habitat due to mineral activities.

Most of the roads and trails currently used by the public in these two areas were originally established to support mining activities. Several BLM public use cabins in the areas are actually restored miners' cabins.

The Commission fully appreciates the need to improve the water quality of the Birch Creek NWR and to preserve the present water quality of the Beaver Creek NWR. Certainly, this is one of the primary motivations behind the State program now being conducted in the Circle Mining District. However, to implement overly restrictive standards for mineral management in these two areas is contrary to the spirit of ANILCA.



## Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas

515 Seventh Avenue  
Suite 310  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
(907) 456-2012

### A RESOLUTION PERTAINING TO THE USE OF OFF-ROAD VEHICLES IN THE STEESE NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA AND THE WHITE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMISSION ON FEDERAL AREAS:

WHEREAS the Bureau of Land Management policy in the proposed Resource Management Plans for the Steese National Conservation Area and the White Mountain National Recreation Area has established a 1500 pound limit on vehicle weight for recreational use; and

WHEREAS with permits, mining vehicle weights are not limited; and

WHEREAS the 1500 pound weight limit will encourage wastage of game; and

WHEREAS thousands of Alaskans have acquired types of vehicles that do not cause significant damage to the terrain; and

WHEREAS this policy was proposed by the Bureau of Land Management due primarily to budget constraints for monitoring recreational vehicle use and not because a problem with such use now exists;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas that the Bureau of Land Management establish a policy to allow vehicles of up to 5000 pounds for recreational use in these areas.

*Phil R. Holdsworth*  
for Phil R. Holdsworth, Chairman

PASSED OCTOBER 31, 1984

# Alaska State Legislature

ARLISS STURGULEWSKI, Chairman  
BETTYE FAHRENKAMP, Vice Chairman  
JACK COGHILL  
DICK ELIASON  
VIC FISCHER  
RICK HALFORD  
FRED ZHAROFF



POUCH V  
JUNEAU, ALASKA. 99811  
(907) 465-4907

## Senate Committee on Resources

February 21, 1985

### Announcement of Senate Resources Committee Meetings

Friday February 22 1:30 - 3:30 Butrovich Room

SJR 5 Requesting that the Alaska Land Use Council oppose adoption of the Steese National Conservation Area and the White Mountain National Recreation Area Resource Management Plans.

SJR 10 Requesting that the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities expedite the identification and establishment of rights-of-way for roads and trails on federal Bureau of Land Management plats which qualify under RS 2477.

Monday February 25 1:30 - 3:30 Butrovich Room

HB 7 "An Act relating to the release of confidential records and reports of the Department of Fish and Game; and providing for an effective date."

Overview by the Department of Natural Resources: Susitna Plan  
Tanana Plan  
Bristol Bay Plan

SJR 14 Urging the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to postpone the proposed cattle slaughter on Simeonof Island.

Wednesday February 27 1:30 - 3:30 Butrovich Room

SB 105 "An Act relating to the Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge; and providing for an effective date."

SB 11 "An Act relating to the fisheries business tax."

Friday March 1 1:30 - 3:30 Butrovich Room

Overview: Limited Entry Commission

SB 83 "An Act amending the Limited Entry Act."



# United States Department of the Interior

IN REPLY REFER TO

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

1780 (930)

Alaska State Office  
701 C Street, Box 13  
Anchorage, Alaska 99513

OCT 10 1984

Memorandum

To: Members, ALUC

From: State Director, BLM

Subject: Steese National Conservation Area and White Mountain  
National Recreation Area Final Plans

Enclosed are advance copies of the Steese National Conservation Area and White Mountain National Recreation Area final EIS and proposed plans. These plans have been formally submitted to the Governor for consistency review as required by the BLM planning regulations. A copy of the transmittal letter to the Governor is included for your information.

After notice is published in the Federal Register, which we anticipate will be on November 2, 1984, there will be a 30 day protest period before the plans become final. Protests will be accepted during the 30 day period from agencies, groups or individuals who commented on the draft plans.

We will be asking Council members to approve the plans at the November Council meeting.

Enclosure

*Don DePefeld*