

# Chapter V: Consultation and Coordination

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# Chapter V: Consultation and Coordination

## A. Introduction

This chapter describes the public participation opportunities made available through the development of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS and the formal consultation that has occurred to date. It also lists the preparers of the document and the agencies and organizations that received copies of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS for review.

There have been and will continue to be many ways for the public to participate in the planning process for public lands under the jurisdiction of the Fairbanks District Office and the Anchorage Field Office. The Kobuk-Seward Peninsula RMP/EIS was prepared by an interdisciplinary team of specialists from the Fairbanks District Office and the Alaska State Office of the BLM. Technical review and support were provided by Anchorage Field Office, Fairbanks District Office, and State Office staffs. The State of Alaska has participated in the development of the document. Table 5-1 at the end of this chapter lists the preparers of the document. Members of the planning team have consulted formally or informally with numerous agencies, groups, and individuals in the RMP development process. Consultation, coordination, and public involvement occurred as a result of scoping and alternative development meetings and reviews, meetings and briefings with State, Tribal, and local government representatives, and informal meetings and individual contacts.

## B. Public Participation Opportunities

Several steps of the planning process require that the public be provided the opportunity to participate. Major public participation events are described below.

### 1. *Scoping*

Scoping for the Draft RMP/EIS was initiated with publication of a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register on January 30, 2004. Besides identifying issues of concern, nominations for special management areas such as ACECs and Wild and Scenic Rivers were requested during scoping. The formal scoping period concluded on April 29, 2004, although comments received after that date were also considered.

During scoping, nine public meetings were held in nine locations to explain the planning process and gather input (March-April 2004). Scoping meetings were held in Fairbanks and Anchorage as well as seven communities within the planning area. Meetings were held in both Kotzebue and Nome as these are the two major hubs for the planning area. Village meetings focused on villages that were close to large blocks of BLM-managed land. Village meetings were held in Buckland, Kiana, Kivalina, Koyuk, and Shaktoolik. News releases to local and regional media sources advertised the times and locations of the scoping meetings. A total of 92 people attended these meetings.

## **2. Draft RMP/EIS Public Meetings and Subsistence Hearings**

On May 5, 2006 a Notice of Availability for the Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Draft RMP/EIS was published in the Federal Register by the Environmental Protection Agency (Federal Register 2006a). This began a 90-day comment period on the Draft RMP/EIS. Based on requests from the public and local government, the comment period was extended until September 15, 2006 for a 132-day comment period. Between May 22 and July 19, 2006 BLM held public meetings in Shaktoolik, Koyuk, Nome, Buckland, Kotzebue, Kivalina, Noorvik, Kiana, Ambler, Point Hope, Anchorage, and Fairbanks. Several of these meetings had to be rescheduled due to weather or other emergency situations.

The first part of the meeting consisted of a PowerPoint presentation summarizing the alternatives in the Draft RMP followed by an informal question and answer session. BLM staff were available to answer questions and discuss alternatives. After this informal discussion, a formal hearing was held. The meeting format varied slightly based on the size of the group and their desire to ask questions or give spoken testimony.

The purpose of the formal hearings held at the end of each meeting was to gather testimony on the impacts to subsistence from alternatives presented in the Draft RMP. The ANILCA Section 810 Analysis, presented in Appendix D of the Draft RMP/EIS concluded that both the No Action Alternative (Alternative A) and the cumulative case would significantly restrict subsistence uses and therefore required that subsistence hearings be held in the area affected by the proposed action. Alternative A was found to significantly restrict subsistence use and needs in the Squirrel River area due to the impacts to subsistence users by increased competition in this heavily used area, as well as the associated displacement of resources and OHV issues. This finding applied to the communities of Kiana, Kotzebue, Noorvik, and possibly Ambler. The Final Section 810 Analysis can be found in Appendix D of this document.

Formal hearings were planned for all ten public meetings held within the planning area. In a few cases, none of the meeting participants wanted to provide public testimony and thus no hearing was held. Spoken testimony from village elders and subsistence users were taken at meetings in Shaktoolik, Koyuk, Nome, Noorvik, Kiana, Ambler, and Point Hope. No hearings were held in Fairbanks or Anchorage. Additional comments on impacts to subsistence were given to BLM through written comments.

## **3. Other Outreach Efforts**

A Web site was established for the RMP in January 2004. The purpose of the Web site was to provide the public with information about the planning process, schedule, and planning area, to post maps and planning documents as they became available, and to provide the public with contact information. RMP team members were listed on the Web site with their e-mail addresses. A scoping report, summarizing public comment and the results of scoping was posted on the Web site in August 2004. Unfortunately, due to security concerns, the Kobuk-Seward Peninsula RMP/EIS Web site was not available to the public from April 8, 2005-January 2006. The Draft RMP/EIS was posted for viewing on the Web site on May 5, 2006. The Proposed RMP/Final EIS was posted for viewing on the Web site after publication of the Notice of Availability by the Environmental Protection Agency. Currently, the Web site can be accessed at <http://www.blm.gov/ak/ksp>.

Throughout the development of the RMP/EIS and Proposed RMP/Final EIS, all individuals and organizations on the mailing list received copies of the Kobuk-Seward Peninsula RMP newsletter. This newsletter summarized where the BLM was in the process and how the public could become and stay involved in development of the plan. The mailing database developed over the life of the plan currently contains over 400 names.

Briefings on the Draft RMP/EIS were conducted for governments and organizations upon request or at regularly scheduled meetings. The Alaska Miners Association was briefed on the Draft RMP/EIS before release. The Northwest Arctic and Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Committees were updated on the status of the plan at each of their regularly scheduled meetings. The Northwest Arctic Borough and Alaska Congressional Delegation were briefed shortly after release of the Draft. The BLM Resource Advisory Committee was updated at regularly scheduled meetings and consulted during development of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The State of Alaska was provided an opportunity to comment on the preliminary Draft RMP/EIS. Both the State and Northwest Arctic Borough were given an opportunity to review the BLM's response to comments on the Draft and a prepublication copy of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

## C. Consultation

### 1. *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service*

Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is required under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 prior to initiation of any project by BLM that may affect any federally listed or endangered species or its habitat. This RMP/EIS is considered to be a major project and this document defines potential impacts to threatened and endangered species as a result of management actions proposed in the RMP.

Informal consultation was initiated with a request for a list of Federally listed threatened or endangered plant, animal, or fish species or habitats present in the planning area on July 8, 2004. The FWS identified two listed species that may be affected by activities within the planning area: Steller's eider and spectacled eider. The planning area includes breeding and molting range for the spectacled eider. Steller's eider breeds and winters outside the planning area but likely migrates through the area. On December 27, 2006 the FWS proposed to list the polar bear as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (Federal Register 2006), initiating a 12 month review to assess the current status and future of the species. Polar bears may occur within the planning area, along river drainages north of Cape Thompson that drain to the ocean, particularly within 25 miles of the coast.

The Draft RMP was submitted to the FWS for comment and informal consultation. During the public comment period, BLM met with FWS to discuss the process for further consultation on Steller's and spectacled eider.

Concurrent with the development release of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS a biological assessment was developed and submitted to the FWS for consultation on Steller's eider,

spectacled eider, and conference on polar bear. The results of the Section 7 consultation will be incorporated into the Final RMP/EIS and Record of Decision.

The NMFS is responsible for the administration of the Endangered Species Act as it applies to listed cetaceans and pinnipeds in Alaska. These include seven species of endangered whales, the threatened eastern population of Stellar sea lions, and the endangered western population of Stellar sea lions.

Informal consultation was initiated August 2, 2004, when the BLM described the planning process and requested a list of Federally listed threatened or endangered marine mammals and critical habitats present in the planning area. On December 30, 2004, NMFS responded with a letter stating that “No endangered marine mammals, nor designated critical habitats, for which the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) bears responsibility under the Endangered Species Act are likely to occur within the project area.”

On January 25, 2005, a second letter was submitted to NMFS to initiate consultation on Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). The planning area includes Essential Fish Habitat for all five species of salmon. An analysis of effects on Essential Fish Habitat is contained in Chapter IV, section (B)(3)(a) Fish of this document. The Draft RMP was submitted to NMFS for comment and, if necessary, additional consultation. Policy and management direction for EFH is contained in Chapter II, section (B)(1)(c)(3)(d) Essential Fish Habitat. A description of EFH in the planning area is included in Chapter III, section (B)(7)(a)(2) Fish Habitat Description.

Based upon comments submitted by the FWS, the Service’s Marine Mammal Office was informally consulted during development of the Proposed RMP/EIS regarding walrus and polar bears. Additional information was included in the Proposed RMP based on this consultation.

## **2. Tribal Consultation**

In recognition of the government-to-government relationship between tribes and the Federal government, letters were sent to 25 tribal governments to inform them of the planning process and to request government-to-government consultation. The letters also requested their input on issues and concerns to be considered during the planning. Representatives of tribes were invited to the public scoping meetings held in the planning area. Letters requesting input on issues and concerns were also sent to both the regional Native corporations and the non-profit Native corporations within the planning area.

A copy of the Draft RMP/EIS was sent to all tribal entities for review and comment. Five tribes commented during the public comment period. A copy of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS will be sent to all tribal entities.

## **D. Collaborative Efforts**

### **1. Cooperation with the State of Alaska**

Because of the high percentage of State-selected lands within the planning area, the BLM has involved the State of Alaska from the beginning of this planning process. A joint BLM-State staff

position was created, with that person acting as liaison between the State of Alaska and the BLM in this planning process. This has been effective in facilitating information exchanges and reviews of draft materials by State personnel. The State reviewed the BLM's draft alternatives, preliminary draft RMP, response to comments, and preliminary Proposed RMP/Final EIS. These reviews produced a preferred strategy on management of State-selected lands. The State provided formal comments on the Draft RMP/EIS and these have been incorporated into Appendix J "Response to Comments."

The State was given an opportunity to review the pre-publication version of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

## **2. Other Collaborative Efforts**

A variety of public involvement strategies have been implemented throughout this planning process to improve communication and promote an understanding of the issues and the process in developing the RMP/EIS. A subgroup was formed by the Alaska Resource Advisory Council (RAC) under the provisions of the RAC charter to assist the BLM in addressing planning issues.

The RAC is a 15-member advisory panel that provides advice and recommendations to the BLM on resource and land management issues. Membership includes Alaskans from around the state who represent the energy industry, tourism, commercial recreation, environmental interests, archeological interests, elected officials, Alaska Native organizations, and the public-at-large. The RAC as a whole was kept informed of progress on the plan through briefings at quarterly meetings. Members of the RAC's Kobuk-Seward Peninsula plan subgroup were kept informed through e-mail and newsletters. RAC members were also invited to review the BLM's draft alternatives. In December 2006, the RAC was briefed on the number and type of comments received and planned changes to the Preferred Alternative (Alternative D) in response to comments. RAC members provided comments on the recreation management issue in the Squirrel River. In February 2007, the RAC was updated on progress on the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

BLM provided the Northwest Arctic Borough a briefing on the Draft RMP/EIS in May 2006 at the beginning of the public comment period. A Borough staff member attended most of the public meetings held within the planning area. Both the Northwest Arctic Borough and the North Slope Borough were given an opportunity to review the pre-publication version of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

## **E. Plan Distribution**

Since initial scoping, the BLM has maintained a mailing list of individuals, businesses, special interest groups, and Federal, State, Tribal, and local government representatives interested in the development of the Kobuk-Seward RMP/EIS. In an effort to reduce printing costs, notices were mailed to everyone on the mailing list in March 2007 to remove those no longer interested in the process. In addition, copies of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS were also made available on CD-ROM rather than in paper format. Copies of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS are also available for public inspection at the following locations:

- BLM Fairbanks District Office
- BLM Anchorage Field Office
- BLM Alaska State Office, public room, Anchorage
- BLM Nome Field Station
- Noel Wein Library, Fairbanks
- Keyoayah Kozga Library, Nome
- Chukchi Consortium Library, Kotzebue
- Anchorage Municipal Library, Anchorage
- Alaska State Library, Juneau
- Northwest Arctic Borough, Kotzebue
- Tuzzy Consortium Library, Barrow
- Selawik National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters, Kotzebue

The Proposed RMP/Final EIS is available electronically at the Kobuk-Seward Peninsula RMP Web site: <http://www.ak.blm.gov/ksp>.

Concurrent with the distribution of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, a Notice of Availability was published by the Environmental Protection Agency in the Federal Register to mark the beginning of the 30-day protest period. BLM also published a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register announcing the availability of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS.

Hard copies or CD-ROMs when requested of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS have been distributed to the following organizations, agencies, and individuals who requested them, or as required by regulation or policy.

#### **Federal Government Agencies**

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Region 10, Seattle Office  
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Nome  
USDI U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Fairbanks  
USDI U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage  
USDI U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Selawik National Wildlife Refuge  
USDI U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management  
USDI National Park Service, Western Arctic Parklands  
USDI National Park Service, Bering Land Bridge  
USDI Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance  
USDI Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Office  
USDI Bureau of Land Management, Washington Office, Planning Group  
USDI Bureau of Indian Affairs, Juneau  
National Marine Fisheries, Alaska Region, Anchorage

#### **State Government Agencies and Organizations**

Alaska Department of Commerce and Economic Development  
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Alaska Department of Natural Resources  
Alaska Department of Public Safety  
Alaska State Historic Preservation Office

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities  
Honorable Frank Murkowski, Governor of Alaska

**Local Governments and Committees**

City of Ambler  
City of Brevig Mission  
City of Buckland  
City of Deering  
City of Elim  
City of Golovin  
City of Kiana  
City of Kivalina  
City of Kobuk  
City of Kotzebue  
City of Koyuk  
City of Nome  
City of Noorvik  
City of Point Hope  
City of Selawik  
City of Shaktoolik  
City of Shishmaref  
City of Shungnak  
City of Teller  
City of Wales  
City of White Mountain  
Northwest Arctic Borough  
North Slope Borough  
USDI, BLM, Resource Advisory Council (RAC)  
Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Committee  
Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Committee

**Native Corporations**

Arctic Slope Native Association  
Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, Barrow  
Bering Straits Native Corporation, Nome  
Iñupiat Community of the Arctic Slope  
Kawerak Inc., Nome  
Maniilaq Association, Kotzebue  
NANA Regional Corporation, Kotzebue  
Shaktoolik Native Corporation  
Shishmaref Native Corporation  
Sitnasuak Native Corporation  
Solomon Native Corporation  
Teller Native Corporation  
Tigara Corporation  
Wales Native Corporation  
White Mountain Native Corporation

**Tribal Governments and Committees**

Ambler Traditional Council  
Chinik Eskimo Community, Golovin

Kiana Traditional Council  
Kotzebue IRA Council  
Mary's Igloo Traditional Council  
Native Village of Brevig Mission  
Native Village of Buckland  
Native Village of Council  
Native Village of Deering  
Native Village of Elim  
Native Village of Kivalina  
Native Village of Kobuk  
Native Village of Koyuk  
Native Village of Notatak  
Native Village of Point Hope  
Native Village of Point Lay  
Native Village of Shaktoolik  
Native Village of Shishmaref  
Native Village of Shungnak  
Native Village of Wales  
Native Village of White Mountain  
Nome Eskimo Community  
Noorvik Native Community  
Selawik IRA Council  
Solomon Tribal Council  
Teller Traditional Council

**Congressionals**

U.S. Representative Donald Young  
U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski  
U.S. Senator Ted Stevens

**State Legislators**

Senator Donald Olsen, Senate District T  
Representative Reggie Joule, House District 40  
Representative Richard Foster, House District 39

**Non-governmental Organization and Businesses**

Arctic Research Commission  
Alaska Audubon  
Alaska Coalition  
Alaska Miners Association  
Alaska Outdoor Access Alliance  
Alaska Quiet Rights Coalition  
Conoco Philips Alaska Inc.  
Dowl Engineers  
Mactec Engineering and Consulting  
Midnight Sun Adventures  
National Parks Conservation Association  
Northern Alaska Environmental Center  
Kawerak Reindeer Herders Association, Nome  
Tryck Consulting  
Trustees for Alaska

Usibelli Coal Mine, Inc.  
Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group

### Other Interested/Affected Individuals

The Kobuk-Seward Proposed RMP/Final EIS was also mailed to individuals who requested either a hard copy or a CD version. Additional copies of the plan will be mailed out upon request.

## F. List of Preparers

The Proposed RMP/Final EIS was prepared by an interdisciplinary team of specialists and included expertise from outside the Fairbanks District Office. Table 5-1 lists the members of the planning team and their area of expertise. Abbreviations for BLM offices and agencies include Fairbanks District Office (FDO), Anchorage Field Office (AFO), Alaska State Office (ASO), and Environmental Careers Organization (ECO).

**Table 5-1. Kobuk-Seward RMP/EIS Planning Team**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Agency</b>	<b>Area of Expertise</b>
Carol Belenski	BLM-ASO	Visual Information Specialist
Boyce Bush	BLM-FDO	Realty Specialist
Rob Brumbaugh	BLM-AFO	Leasable Minerals
Jeanie Cole	BLM-FDO	RMP Project Lead, ACEC, Wildlife
Jim Deininger	BLM-FDO	Locatable Minerals, Mineral Materials
Roger Delaney	BLM-FDO	Wilderness
Caron Gibson	BLM-ASO	Writer/Editor
Cindy Hamfler	BLM-FDO	GIS Specialist
Shelly Jacobson	BLM-FDO	Central Yukon Field Office Manager
Kyle Joly	BLM-FDO	Livestock Grazing, ACEC, Wildlife
Mike Kasterin	BLM-ASO	Social and Economic Conditions
Lon Kelly	BLM-FDO	Wild and Scenic Rivers
Ben Kennedy	BLM-FDO	Soil, Water, and Air
Thomas Lonnie	BLM-ASO	BLM Alaska State Director
Stacie McIntosh	BLM-FDO	Subsistence, Section 810 Analysis
Craig McCaa	BLM-FDO	Public Affairs Specialist
Mark Meyer	BLM-ASO	Locatable Minerals
Randy Meyers	BLM-FDO	Forestry, Vegetation, Special Status Plants
Dave Parker	BLM-FDO	Fisheries, Special Status Fish
Gary Reimer	BLM-AFO	Anchorage Field Office Manager
Robert Schneider	BLM-FDO	Fairbanks District Manager
Crystal Schiffbauer	ECO	GIS Specialist, Fire Regime Condition Class
Bill Hedman	BLM-FDO	Cultural and Paleontological Resources
Tom Sparks	BLM-AFO	Recreation, Travel Management, OHV
Doug Stockdale	BLM-FDO	Public Affairs Specialist
Wayne Svejnoha	BLM-ASO	Hazardous Materials
Skip Theisen	BLM-FDO	Fire Management
Cal Westcott	BLM-FDO	Recreation, Visual Resources

