

Chapter II: Alternatives

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Chapter II: Alternatives

A. Introduction

This chapter outlines Alternatives that describe different approaches to the management of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) public lands and resources in the Bay planning area (Figure 1.1). Each Alternative represents a complete and reasonable set of objectives, actions, and allocations that will guide future management of public land and resources in the planning area should it be selected.

Four Alternatives are presented in this chapter. They are described in Section B. The Alternatives provide a range of choices for meeting BLM planning and program management requirements and resolving the planning issues identified through scoping. Alternatives were developed using an interdisciplinary team process that included BLM staff specialists and other interested agencies and entities. To begin the Alternative development process, goals and desired future conditions were identified by the planning team in consideration of public comment received through scoping as well as direction established by Bureau-wide initiatives and mandates. Each Alternative analyzed in the Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) emphasizes a different combination of resource uses, allocations, and restoration measures to address issues and resolve conflicts among uses, so program goals are met in varying degrees across the Alternatives. Each Alternative is designed to guide future management and resolve land management issues identified during the early stages of the planning process. Implementation of decisions in any Alternative would be subject to the limits of available funding.

The planning decisions identified for each Alternative generally apply to lands within the Bay planning area currently under BLM management, including unencumbered Federal public lands, State-selected lands, and Native-selected lands outside of the National Park and National Wildlife Refuge systems. Exceptions to the general applicability of the Alternatives described in this chapter are as follows:

- Management of the military withdrawals for the King Salmon Air Force Base would be the same under all Alternatives. These lands were withdrawn for military purposes by Public Land Order 6893. BLM is the Secretary of the Interior's authorized delegate and retains jurisdiction of mineral and vegetative resources on the installations. However, the agency's authority is limited in scope. Under all Alternatives, BLM will continue to permit non-military activities consistent with the withdrawal orders and only with the concurrence of the military.
- Management of all other withdrawals other than Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) 17(d)(1). These lands will remain withdrawn. They will not be available for fluid mineral leasing, locatable or salable mineral entry.
- Management of the Federal subsurface estate, within BLM's responsibility, in components of the National Wildlife Refuge System would be the same under all Alternatives. BLM is responsible for oil and gas leasing within refuges. The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA)(1980) Section 206 withdrew new and expanded components of the National Park System from the mining laws. Provisions of ANILCA (Sections 304(b) and 1008 require that no leasing take place in refuges when the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) determines the leasing to be incompatible with the purposes of the refuge. The determination of compatibility is fulfilled through the development of refuge comprehensive conservation plans. The USFWS has not determined that lands they manage in the Bay planning area are compatible with oil and gas leasing. Under all Alternatives, BLM would only undertake leasing on refuge lands if the surface management agency determines that oil and gas leasing is appropriate; in such cases, BLM would undertake the NEPA process, preferably with the surface management agency as a "cooperating agency" for purposes of preparation of the NEPA document.

A common set of Stipulations and Required Operating Procedures are integral to the management decisions for the action Alternatives. Stipulations and required operating procedures are developed

through the RMP process and are based on knowledge of the resources in the planning area and current industry practices. The Stipulations are specific to oil and gas activities. They constitute significant restrictions on the conduct of operations under a lease. All oil and gas activity permits issued subsequent to a lease will comply with the lease Stipulations appropriate to the activity under review. Required Operating Procedures are requirements, procedures, management practices, or design features that would be applied as applicable to all types of permitted activities on BLM-managed lands in the planning area. Required Operating Procedures have been developed to ensure that objectives identified within the Alaska Land Health Standards (BLM 2004) are met in carrying out permitted activities and management practices. The Required Operating Procedures and Stipulations specific to this planning area are discussed in detail in Section E of this chapter.

B. General Description of Alternatives

1. Alternative A: No Action

Alternative A represents the continuation of current management practices. It is also called the No Action Alternative. This Alternative would include continued management under guidance of the existing Southwest Management Framework Plan (1981) for the Goodnews Block only, and other management decision documents affecting all BLM-managed lands in the entire planning area. Management set forth in the Alaska Land Use Plan Amendment for Wildland Fire and Fuels Management (2005) is one such document. Direction contained in existing laws, regulations and policy would also continue to be implemented, sometimes overriding provisions in the Southwest MFP. The current levels, methods and mix of multiple use management of BLM land in the planning area would continue, and resource values would receive attention at present levels. No lands would be open to oil and gas leasing, including leasing for coalbed natural gas (CBNG), and large tracts would remain closed to Locatable Minerals exploration or development due to retention of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) 17(d)(1) withdrawals. No Special Management Areas, such as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs), or Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSRs), would be designated or recommended in this RMP for BLM-managed lands within the planning area, and lands would remain unclassified for off-highway vehicles (OHVs) and visual resources. In general, most activities would be analyzed on a case-by-case basis and few uses would be limited or excluded as long as their actions were consistent with State and Federal laws. Oil, gas, locatable mineral activities, and other permitted activities would be guided by requirements in specific Plans of Operations on a project-specific basis. The BLM publication, *Placer Mining in Alaska - A Guide to Mitigation and Reclamation* (BLM 1989), is incorporated by reference for Required Operating Procedures for Locatable Minerals.

2. Alternative B

Alternative B highlights actions and management that would facilitate resource development. All BLM unencumbered lands would be open to Leasable and Locatable Mineral exploration and development unless they were withdrawn under some authority other than ANCSA 17(d)(1) (e.g. Military withdrawal, FERC withdrawal). Selected lands whose selection is relinquished or rejected would also be open to mineral exploration and development. All ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals would be revoked, allowing increased potential for mineral exploration and development. The BLM-managed lands within the planning area would be designated as "open" to OHV use. No SRMAs would be identified. In all areas, the focus would be on management of permits. As with Alternative A, no Special Management Areas (SMAs) would be designated and visual resources would be managed as Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class IV. Oil, gas, locatable mineral activities and other permitted activities would be guided by requirements in specific Plans of Operations on a project-specific basis. The BLM publication, *Placer Mining in Alaska - A Guide to Mitigation and Reclamation* (BLM 1989), is incorporated by reference for Required Operating Procedures for Locatable Minerals.

3. Alternative C

Alternative C emphasizes actions and management that protect and enhance renewable resource, archaeological, and paleontological values. Oil and gas leasing and mineral exploration and development would be more constrained than in Alternatives B or D, and where Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) are proposed, mineral materials exploration and extraction would be excluded to protect important resources. Two ACECs, the Bristol Bay ACEC and the Carter Spit ACEC, would be established, plans developed for the areas, and specific measures adopted to protect or enhance values within these areas. All BLM-managed lands within the planning area would have a “limited” to OHV designation, allowing for limitations on OHV activities to protect habitat, soil and vegetation, cultural resources, and recreation experiences. No SRMAs would be identified. In all areas, the focus would be on management of permits. ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals would be maintained as an interim measure at locations where proposed Wild and Scenic rivers are located until Congress has had an opportunity to act on the proposals, in order to protect or maintain resource values. Three river segments, a portion of the Alagnak River, and portions of the Goodnews River mainstem and Goodnews River Middle Fork would be recommended for WSR designation. Portions of these rivers recommended for a Wild River designation would be managed for VRM Class III, the proposed ACECs would be managed as VRM Class III, and most of the remainder of the BLM-managed lands within the planning area would be managed as VRM Class IV. Resources would be protected through Stipulations, Required Operating Procedures, and project-specific requirements.

4. Alternative D: Preferred Alternative

Alternative D provides a balance of protection, use, and enhancement of resources. ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals would be revoked, and the majority of unencumbered lands and any selected lands whose selection is relinquished or rejected, would be open to oil and gas leasing and development subject to seasonal or other constraints, and to mineral location. One ACEC would be established, the Carter Spit ACEC. Plans would be developed, and specific measures adopted through Stipulations, Required Operating Procedures, and project-specific requirements, to protect values within this area. The ACEC would be closed to Salable Mineral entry. No WSRs would be recommended. Specified lands in the Goodnews Bay and Bristol Bay areas would be managed up to ½ mile from established winter trail or road systems at VRM Class III (Table 2.4). BLM lands in the full visible foreground up to one mile from the boundaries of CSUs would be managed at VRM Class III. The proposed ACEC would be managed at VRM Class III, and all other BLM lands would be managed at VRM Class IV. All BLM-managed lands within the planning area would have a “limited” OHV designation, allowing for limitations to be placed on OHV use to protect habitat, soil and vegetation resources, and/or recreation experiences. For Leasable Minerals, 1,768,450 acres would be open to mineral leasing subject to minor constraints. As with Alternative C, resources would be protected through Stipulations, Required Operating Procedures, and project-specific requirements.

C. Alternatives Considered But Not Carried Forward

The Bay RMP has considered a full range of Alternatives consistent with the goals of the plan. BLM has considered, but eliminated from detailed analysis, Alternatives that would address the issues that were not within the scope of the plan. These issues are listed and the reasons for not further considering them are provided here.

1. Nomination of the Kvichak River as a Wild and Scenic River

Among the issues listed but not addressed in an Alternative is the proposed nomination of the Kvichak River as a WSR. Recently a Recordable Disclaimer of Interest finding was issued by the Bureau of Land Management for the Kvichak River. This Disclaimer clarifies that the Federal government does not have a

competing interest (with the State of Alaska) in the submerged lands. Because BLM does not have jurisdiction for the Kvichak River, the proposal was not carried forward.

2. Nomination of Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs)

BLM Anchorage Field Office (AFO) considered SRMA status for each block of BLM unencumbered land within the Bay planning area. However, the use patterns and types of recreation opportunities to justify SRMA status were not found.

D. Detailed Descriptions of the Alternatives

This section provides a detailed description of proposed management, organized into four categories: Resources, Resource Uses, Special Designations, and Social and Economic Conditions. Goals are listed under each resource, resource use, or program. They are followed by a description of objectives, management actions, and allocations proposed to achieve the goals and to address issues. Goals are consistent across Alternatives. Objectives, management actions and allocations may change by Alternative. Management that is common across the Alternatives is presented first, followed by descriptions of management by Alternative.

1. Resources: Air Quality, Soil, Vegetation, and Water Resources

a) Vegetation, Wetlands, and Riparian Habitat

(1) Goals

- BLM will maintain and protect vegetative land cover that provides for healthy fish and wildlife habitat on BLM-administered lands.
- Treatments to alter the vegetative composition of a site, such as prescribed burning, seeding, or planting will
 - be based on the potential of the site and will retain or promote infiltration, permeability, and soil moisture storage;
 - contribute to nutrient cycling and energy flow;
 - protect water quality and fish habitat;
 - help prevent the introduction and spread of noxious weeds;
 - contribute to the natural diversity of plant communities, plant community composition, and structure;
 - maintain proper functioning condition;
 - support the conservation of Special Status Species.
- BLM will take action to minimize the destruction, loss, or degradation of wetlands and riparian areas, and to preserve and enhance their natural and beneficial values. Desired ecological conditions for wetlands-riparian areas are described in the BLM Alaska Statewide Land Health Standards (BLM 2004).

(2) Alternative A

This Alternative would continue existing management. The Southwest MFP (1981), applicable only to the Goodnews Block, provides little guidance related to vegetation other than that of the Walpole poppy. The BLM would manage so as to maintain or improve the quality of the range through proper management of livestock and fire. Proposed permitted or authorized uses would be analyzed through the appropriate NEPA document. Based on this analysis, mitigation would be developed to minimize impacts from proposed activities to vegetative resources. The resulting mitigation measures would be included in the

permit that authorized the use. The BLM would continue to comply with applicable policy relative to management of riparian vegetation.

(3) Management Common to All Action Alternatives (B, C, and D)

(a) Inventory and Monitoring

- Support monitoring and assessment of riparian areas for proper functioning condition, as defined in the BLM manual Technical Reference 1737-3. Develop maintenance and restoration projects. Priority areas will include rivers determined suitable for inclusion as wild or scenic, designated ACECs, areas known to be in need of restoration, and riparian areas within anticipated or ongoing mining activity.
- Assess impacts of OHV trails, especially in high-use areas where riparian and wetland resources or water quality are at risk.
- Lessees and all parties receiving BLM authorizations for activities impacting riparian and/or wetlands would be required to comply with protective measures listed in the Required Operating Procedures, Stipulations, Standard Lease Terms, and project-specific requirements.

(b) Management Decisions

- Vegetation treatments will be designed to achieve desired conditions clearly described in individual burn plans or timber sales. Desired conditions will be based on the ecological capability of a given site and will be expressed as cover types or seral stages within cover types, based on management objectives.
- Vegetation treatments will be designed to prevent introduction of noxious weeds. Prescribed burn plans will contain a segment on known occurrence of noxious weeds within planned burning areas and strategies for post-burn monitoring or treatment.
- Timber sales are not anticipated; however, should they occur, machinery used in timber sales will be inspected for noxious weed seeds, especially if it is brought in from outside the planning area.
- Burn plans for large burns will prescribe conditions that result in a mosaic of burned or unburned areas within the burn unit. Smaller burns may not require a mosaic, dependent on objectives.
- Timber sales will rely, to the extent possible, on natural regeneration through proper site preparation.
- Permitted livestock grazing is not expected to occur; however, should it occur, it will be conducted in a manner that maintains long-term productivity of vegetation. Animals will not be picketed in riparian areas. In areas of low grass production, operators will pack in weed-free hay or concentrated feed.
- Currently there is known habitat in the planning area for Special Status plant species, based on several inventories. However, one specific population location is known. If other specific populations or individual Special Status species are located, measures will be taken to protect these populations or individuals through site-specific buffers or management prescriptions.

(c) Land Use Requirements

Resource protection would be applied on a site-specific basis for permitted activities and uses that affect vegetation based on guidelines provided in the Required Operating Procedures, as described in Section E of this chapter. Oil and gas leases would be subject to the Oil and Gas Lease Stipulations, also listed in Section E.

b) Soil, Water and Air

(1) Goals

- Resource Protection - maintain, improve, and restore the health of watersheds. Ensure that watersheds are in, or are making significant progress toward, a properly functioning physical condition that includes stream banks, wetlands, and water quality. BLM will protect and enhance the quality of air resources associated with BLM-managed lands in the planning area as well as consider, if practicable, minimizing the impacts of smoke to human health, communities, recreation and tourism from wildfire and prescribed burns. Smoke and its public health impacts are a parameter in fire suppression decisions. BLM will manage soils to promote healthy, sustainable, fully functioning ecosystems by maintaining the soils, which support a wide range of public values and uses.
- Air and water quality should meet or exceed local, State, and Federal requirements. A goal is to minimize negative impacts to soils and wetland vegetation and prevent soil erosion. Maintain desired ecological conditions as defined by the BLM-Alaska Statewide Land Health Standards.
- Resources Use - support planning, use authorizations, compliance, and special designations.
- Service to Communities - support collaboration in shared watersheds.
- Management Excellence - promote program financial efficiency and improve data quality, security, and availability.

(2) Alternative A

This Alternative would continue existing management. The Southwest MFP (1981), which applies only to the Goodnews Block in the Bay planning area, contains little guidance relative to management of soil, water, and air resources. The use of OHVs on interim managed encumbered lands is limited to 1,500 pounds curb weight as defined by the State's "Generally Allowed Uses on State Land," (Appendix F). This Alternative also recommends that the BLM file for water rights under State law to secure water for needed BLM uses on an as-needed basis. To date, the BLM has not filed for water rights in the planning area. Proposed permitted or authorized uses would be analyzed through the appropriate NEPA document. Based on this analysis, the BLM would develop mitigation to minimize impacts from proposed activities to soil, water, and air resources. The resulting mitigation measures would be included in the permit that authorized the use. The BLM would continue to comply with applicable legislation, Federal regulations, and policy relative to soil, water, and air.

(3) Management Common to All Action Alternatives (B, C, and D)

(a) Inventory and Monitoring

- Develop a water quality sampling protocol step down plan and determine baseline water quality values in areas having critical aquatic habitats or have potential for significant impacts due to permitted activities. Monitor for significant alterations to water quality value and water flow in accordance with State and Federal regulations.
- Collect data necessary for an Alaska instream water reservation on water bodies having critical aquatic habitats, within ACEC boundaries, or nominated for NLCS designation.
- Contract soil surveys in areas of high resource value or proposed development as needed.

(b) Management Decisions

- In cooperation with the appropriate Federal, State, local or Native requirements, identify area-wide use restrictions, or other protective measures, to ensure compliance with the Clean Water Act, State water quality standards, and Federal wetlands and floodplain requirements.
- In order to comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act and protect the quality and quantity of drinking water, BLM will consult with owners/operators of potentially affected, Federally-regulated public

water supply systems when proposing management actions in State-designated Source Water Protection Areas. The locations of public water supply systems and Source Water Protection Areas are available from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Drinking Water and Wastewater Program.

- File for water rights under State law, when necessary, to secure water needed for BLM management purposes.
- BLM will stipulate that all direct or authorized emission-generating activities occurring on BLM-administered lands within the planning area comply with the Federal and State air quality laws and regulations. All permittees will be required to mitigate any activity that may result in air pollution. BLM will also implement interagency wildland fire smoke mitigation measures adopted by the Alaska Wildland Fire Coordination Group and consider public health and safety in all fire management activities.
- BLM will provide for a wide variety of public land uses without compromising the long-term health of soil resources. BLM will require permittees to mitigate for all activities that may cause accelerated soil erosion, and to follow Stipulations and Required Operating Procedures.

(c) Land Use Requirements

Resource protection would be applied on a site-specific basis for permitted activities and uses that affect soil, water and air based on guidelines provided in the Required Operating Procedures, as described in Section E of this chapter. Oil and gas leases would be subject to the Oil and Gas Leasing Stipulations also listed in Section E.

c) Floodplains

(1) Goals

- Reduce flood damage and loss of life and property.
- Minimize the impacts of floods on human safety, health and welfare.
- Sustain, restore and preserve the natural resources, ecosystems, and other functions of the floodplain, and the other beneficial values served by floodplains. Beneficial processes include maintaining the frequency and duration of floodplain/wetland inundation.

(2) Alternative A

This Alternative would continue existing management. Proposed permitted or authorized uses would be analyzed through the appropriate NEPA document. Based on this analysis, BLM would develop mitigation to minimize impacts from proposed activities to floodplains. The resulting mitigation measures would be included in the permit that authorized the use. BLM would continue to comply with applicable legislation, Federal regulations, and policy pertaining to floodplains.

(3) Management Common to All Alternatives

Floodplain management guidelines are defined within Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management). For administrative purposes, the 100-year floodplain serves as a basis for floodplain management on public land. If available, floodplain boundaries are based on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). If FEMA maps are not available, floodplain boundaries will be based on the best available information. The following are steps to be taken in order to determine whether an activity will be allowed in the floodplain.

- Before taking any action, determine whether the proposed action will occur within a floodplain.
- Provide for public review.
- Identify and evaluate practicable Alternatives for locating in the floodplain.
- Identify the impacts of the proposed action.

- Minimize threats to life, property and to natural and beneficial floodplain values, and restore and preserve natural and beneficial floodplain values.
- Re-evaluate Alternatives including no action.
- Issue findings and a public explanation.
- Implement the action (or no action).

In addition, BLM may undertake projects as required to restore and preserve the natural and beneficial values served by floodplains. Stipulations and Required Operating Procedures apply to Alternatives B, C, and D.

d) Fish and Wildlife

(1) Goals

(a) Fish

- Work in conjunction with other programs and agencies to manage riparian areas.
- Achieve fish habitat stability and manage the aquatic habitat of various life stages of anadromous and resident fish.
- Provide for the continuing availability of fish habitat that contributes to the social, scientific, and economic aspects of the local communities and the nation.
- Determine and maintain or restore the fisheries potential of the aquatic habitat in BLM jurisdiction in the Bay planning area.

(b) Wildlife

- Maintain high enough quality and quantity of habitat to support healthy wildlife populations.
- To the extent practical, mitigate impacts to wildlife species and their habitats from authorized and unauthorized uses of BLM-managed lands.
- In cooperation with ADF&G, ensure a natural abundance and diversity of wildlife resources and habitat.

(2) Alternative A

This Alternative continues current management. The Southwest MFP (BLM 1981), which applies only to the Goodnews Block in this planning area, excepts "crucial habitat" from opening to various kinds of settlement entry and calls for preparing habitat management plans for wildlife and riparian habitat. Outside of crucial habitats, and outside of the Goodnews Block, other uses would be mitigated to prevent any significant alterations in wildlife populations. Proposed permitted or authorized uses would be analyzed through the appropriate NEPA document. Based on this analysis, mitigation would be developed to minimize impacts from proposed activities. These mitigation measures would be included in the permit that authorized the use.

(3) Management Common to All Action Alternatives (B, C, and D)

(a) Inventory and Monitoring

i. Fish

- BLM Alaska has a Master Memorandum of Agreement with the State of Alaska for management of fish and wildlife (Appendix G).
- Inventory and monitor fish habitat in cooperation with ADF&G, other Federal agencies, private non-profit corporations and tribal agencies.
- Inventory habitat for Special Status fish species.

- In cooperation with ADF&G, monitor priority species population trends where issues exist or are pending and populations may be impacted.

ii. Wildlife

- Manage fish and wildlife in accordance with BLM Alaska's Master Memorandum of Agreement with the State of Alaska for management of fish and wildlife.
- In cooperation with ADF&G and other Federal agencies, BLM will monitor habitats and populations of important subsistence species to provide information necessary to develop subsistence regulations and bag limits on Federal lands, monitor priority migratory bird species, identify habitats of importance to special status species, and identify habitats for priority species.

(b) Management Decisions

i. Fish

- Develop activity plans that address fish habitat and population management issues where appropriate.
- Additional site-specific objectives and habitat management actions for priority species will be made through activity level planning or as mitigation on proposed activities.

ii. Wildlife

- In cooperation with ADF&G ensure a natural abundance and diversity of wildlife habitat to assist ADF&G in ensuring sustained populations and a natural abundance of wildlife.
- BLM will work cooperatively with ADF&G, other Federal agencies, and adjacent land managers to implement the Mulchatna Caribou Herd Monitoring Plan, the Western Brown Bear Management Area planning group, the Unit 18 Goodnews/Arolik Moose Moratorium and Restoration Plan, the migratory bird MOU, Boreal Partners in Flight Conservation Plan, and other cooperative management efforts of which BLM is a part.

(c) Land Use Requirements

- BLM will consult with USFWS and NMFS under Section 7 of the ESA for all actions that may affect listed species or designated critical habitat, or confer if actions are likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a proposed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of proposed critical habitat.
- BLM will participate in the ESA Threatened and Endangered Species Recovery Plans, and will take into consideration the BLM Special Status sensitive species.
- All permitted activities would operate under the Stipulations, Required Operating Procedures, and Standard Lease Terms provided in Section E of this chapter. These procedures were developed through the EIS process and are based on current knowledge of resources in the planning area and current permitting procedures.

(4) Alternative B

This Alternative would be the same as Alternative A. Stipulations and Required Operating Procedures would apply.

(5) Alternative C

This Alternative would be the same as Alternative B with the exception that a Fish and Wildlife Habitat Management Plan would be developed for management of habitat supporting a variety of wildlife species in the Carter Spit ACEC and the Bristol Bay ACEC. For Fluid Leasable Minerals, portions of the planning area comprising the Goodnews, Koggiling, Yellow Creek, Kvichak, Iliamna West, Alagnak, and Klutuk Blocks would be open to leasing subject to seasonal restrictions or other minor constraints. Stipulations, Required Operating Procedures, and project-specific requirements would apply.

(6) Alternative D

This Alternative would be the same as Alternative B with the exception that a Fish and Wildlife Habitat Management Plan would be developed for management of habitat supporting a variety of wildlife species in the Carter Spit ACEC. For Fluid Leasable Minerals, portions of the planning area comprising the Goodnews, Koggiling, Yellow Creek, Kvichak, Iliamna West, Alagnak, and Klutuk Blocks would be open to leasing subject to seasonal restrictions or other constraints. Stipulations, Required Operating Procedures, and project-specific requirements would apply.

Tables 2.1 and 2.15 describe special provisions for fish and wildlife habitat management under each Alternative.

Table 2.1. Fish and Wildlife Habitat - Summary of Alternatives

| | |
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| Alternative A | Proposed permitted or authorized uses analyzed through the NEPA process on a case-by-case basis. Mitigation measures developed to minimize impacts from proposed activities would be included in the permit that authorized use. |
| Alternative B | Same as Alternative A. Stipulations, Required Operating Procedures, and project-specific requirements apply. |
| Alternative C | <p>Same as Alternative B. In addition, a Fish and Wildlife Habitat Management Plan would be developed for the Carter Spit ACEC and the Bristol Bay ACEC.</p> <p>For Fluid Leasable Minerals, Goodnews, Koggiling, Yellow Creek, Kvichak, Iliamna West, Alagnak, and Klutuk Blocks would be open to leasing subject to seasonal restrictions or other minor constraints.</p> <p>A 300-foot minimum setback on BLM unencumbered lands would be designated on segments of the East and South Fork Arolik River, Faro Creek, and South Fork Goodnews River. This setback would protect riparian areas and soils adjacent to sensitive habitat for salmon and freshwater fish.</p> |
| Alternative D | <p>Same as Alternative B. In addition, a Fish and Wildlife Habitat Management Plan would be developed for the Carter Spit ACEC.</p> <p>For Fluid Leasable Minerals, Goodnews, Koggiling, Yellow Creek, Kvichak, Iliamna West, Alagnak, and Klutuk Blocks would be open to leasing subject to seasonal restrictions or other minor constraints.</p> <p>A 300-foot minimum setback on BLM unencumbered lands would be designated on segments of the East and South Fork Arolik River, Faro Creek, and South Fork Goodnews River. This setback would protect riparian areas and soils adjacent to sensitive habitat for salmon and freshwater fish.</p> |

e) Special Status Species

(1) Goals

- Identify, conserve and monitor the abundance of Special Status Species and their habitats through conservation and management of crucial plant and animal habitat and food base.
- Manage habitats consistent with the conservation needs of Special Status Species and BLM sensitive species, and in a manner that will not contribute to the need to list any species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).
- Manage plant and animal resources and wildlife habitat to ensure compliance with the ESA and to ensure progress towards recovery of listed species.

- Manage habitats consistent with the conservation needs provided in Recovery Plans for listed species.

(2) Alternative A

This Alternative would continue current management practices. The Southwest MFP (BLM 1981), applicable only to the Goodnews Block, does not contain any specific guidance for the general management of Special Status Species, which would be managed according to BLM policy, applicable laws, and Federal regulations. Land use proposals would be addressed on a case-by-case basis through interagency cooperation and the NEPA process with project-specific requirements and mitigation on proposed actions. If actions authorized, funded, or carried out by the BLM had the potential to affect any Federally-listed species or designated critical habitat, consultation under Section 7 of the ESA would be initiated with USFWS. Proposed permitted or authorized uses that may affect special status species are analyzed through the appropriate NEPA document. Based on this analysis, mitigation is developed to minimize impacts from proposed activities. The resulting mitigation measures are included in the permit that authorizes the use.

(3) Management Common to All Action Alternatives (B, C, and D)

(a) Inventory and Monitoring

- Identify botanically unexplored BLM lands within the planning area and prioritize for floristic inventory.
- Inventory project sites for Special Status Species plants on an as-needed basis.
- Monitor Special Status Species plant populations and associated habitats for population trends and threats.
- Contribute data on Special Status Species plant locations, population numbers, and trends (and voucher specimens as needed) to the Northern Plant Documentation Center (University of Alaska Fairbanks Museum Herbarium) and Alaska Natural Heritage Program in a cooperative effort to build a statewide rare plant database.
- Inventory habitat and plant and animal populations for Special Status Species on public lands for reasonable population levels in accordance with the ESA.
- Cooperate with USFWS and other agencies to monitor habitats and populations of Threatened and Endangered Species (T&E).

(b) Management Decisions

- Plant and wildlife resources and habitat will be managed to insure compliance with the ESA, to ensure progress towards recovery of listed threatened or endangered species, and to prevent listing of additional species.
- T&E evaluations will occur on all actions proposed and mitigation or consultation carried out where listed species may occur.
- Additional site-specific actions needed to manage habitat for priority species will be made through activity level planning or as mitigation on proposed activities. A special habitat management area should be proposed for the Carter Spit/Goodnews Bay area for Steller's eiders.

(c) Land Use Requirements

- Cooperate with USFWS in the development and implementation of recovery plans, management plans, conservation strategies for T&E that occur on BLM lands.
- Wildlife resources will be managed to comply with the ESA to ensure recovery of listed species and to prevent listing of additional species.
- Consult with USFWS or National Marine Fisheries Service under Section 7 of the ESA for all actions that may affect listed species or designated critical habitat or confer if actions are likely to

jeopardize the continued existence of a proposed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of proposed critical habitat.

f) Fire Management and Ecology

(1) Goals

- Protect human life and property.
- Provide appropriate management response on all wildland fires, with an emphasis on firefighter and public safety.
- Management of wildland fires and fuels will focus on maintaining intact and functioning within their historical range the key ecosystem components.
- Reduce adverse effects of fire management activities
- Management decisions are based on land use and resource objectives.
- Continue interagency collaboration and cooperation.

(2) Alternative A

Under Alternative A, current management would continue. Wildland fire would be used to protect, maintain, and enhance natural resources and, as much as possible, function in its natural ecological role. The Southwest MFP (BLM 1981), applicable only to the Goodnews Block, requires that BLM preserve forest resources until the economics for harvest are more favorable; protect commercial grade timber stands; manage moose habitat emphasizing high value moose winter range and benefit moose browse by prescribed burning out of viewshed; identify and protect from fire caribou habitat with substantial lichen component; provide for a natural fire occurrence (mosaic) where other important resource values would not be harmed; protect and preserve cultural sites; include constraints in Burn Plans to protect climax-dependent species, swan and raptor habitat, recreation and view shed; and prohibit OHVs from areas after a burn to prevent erosion.

Throughout the Bay planning area, rehabilitation and restoration efforts would be undertaken to protect and sustain ecosystems, public health and safety, and to help communities protect infrastructure. Current guidance for fire management is provided by the BLM-Alaska Land Use Plan Amendment for Wildland Fire and Fuels Management (BLM 2005). Under this Alternative, BLM would continue to cooperate and collaborate with other Federal, State, and Native land managers, and with other suppression organizations to address issues and concerns related to wildland fire management in Alaska and to implement operational decisions. Fire Management programs would emphasize the protection of human life and site-specific values while recognizing fire as an essential ecological process and natural agent of change to ecosystems. This Alternative recognizes wildland fire use for resource benefit as a viable management tool. Vegetative communities would be monitored for cumulative effects of wildland fire and suppression activities as funding permits. Fuels management projects and prevention programs would be proposed and funded on a case-by-case basis.

(3) Management Common to All Action Alternatives (B, C, and D)

(a) Inventory and Monitoring

- Monitor the number and size of wildland fires for cumulative impacts on wildlife habitat, particularly caribou winter range.
- Monitor vegetative communities for cumulative effects of wildland fire and suppression actions.
- Monitor cultural resources for effects of wildland fire and suppression actions.

(b) Management Decisions

- Fire management strategies must recognize the role of wildland fire as an essential ecological process and natural change agent.

- Fire management planning, preparedness, prevention, suppression, fire use, restoration and rehabilitation, monitoring, research, and education will be conducted on an interagency basis.
- BLM will work together with its partners and other affected groups and individuals to prevent unauthorized ignition of wildland fires.
- Manage vegetation adjacent to populated areas to reduce risk of wildfires.
- Use wildland fire and fuel treatments to meet resource objectives.
- Reduce risk and cost of uncontrolled wildland fire through wildland fire use, prescribed fire, manual or mechanical treatment.
- Reduce adverse effects of fire management activities.
- Continue interagency collaboration and cooperation.
- Apply the fire management options for fire suppression (Critical, Full, Limited, or Modified) appropriately and effectively. A full discussion of fire management categories can be found in Chapter III.

(4) Alternative B

Alternative B would be the same as Alternative A. Stipulations and Required Operating Procedures would apply.

(5) Alternative C

Alternative C would be the same as Alternative A, except that Stipulations and Required Operating Procedures would apply, and fire strategies specific to the areas would be included in the Management Plans for the proposed Carter Spit ACEC and Bristol Bay ACEC.

(6) Alternative D

Alternative D would be the same as Alternative A, except that Stipulations and Required Operating Procedures would apply, and fire strategies specific to the area would be included in the RMP for the proposed Carter Spit ACEC.

Table 2.2. summarizes Fire Management and Ecology for the Alternatives.

Table 2.2. Fire Management and Ecology - Summary of Alternatives

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Alternative A | This Alternative would allow Wildland fire use for resource benefit and to meet land use and resource management objectives. |
| Alternative B | Same as Alternative A. |
| Alternative C | Same as Alternative A. Fire strategies would be developed for Carter Spit and Bristol Bay ACECs. |
| Alternative D | Same as Alternative A. Fire strategies would be developed for Carter Spit ACEC. |

g) Cultural and Paleontological Resources

(1) Goals

- Identify, protect, and preserve significant cultural resources.
- Manage cultural and paleontological resources for a variety of uses, including scientific use, conservation for future use, public education and interpretation, traditional use (in the case of Cultural Resources), and experimental use.

(2) Alternative A

Under Alternative A, current management would continue. Currently, decisions regarding specific inventory, data recovery, monitoring and stabilization projects are made through the statewide program workshops and the cultural resource business plan. The Southwest MFP (BLM 1981), applicable only to the Goodnews Block of the Bay planning area, requires protecting significant Cultural Resources and developing a paleontological resource management program for the protection and research of paleontological resources.

Decisions about avoidance or other forms of mitigation of impacts to cultural and paleontological sites would be made based on weighing the relative value of the resources, the effects on development interests, and the interests and needs of the present and future public. Priorities for inventory would be assigned based on a combination of expected development activities and resource values. Non-destructive data recovery (e.g. mapping) would be done as necessary based on management needs and resource values. Limited destructive forms of data recovery (testing and excavation) and limited collection of artifacts and specimens would be allowed when other information is limited and/or the resource is threatened. Most sites would be designated as suitable for current research. Known and newly discovered sites would be assigned to multiple use categories. Suitable sites would be designated for educational/interpretive purposes in areas having general public access. Cultural sites would be designated for traditional use as they are identified.

(3) Management Common to All Action Alternatives (B, C, and D)

(a) Inventory and Monitoring

- Continue to conduct non-Section 106 related inventories as funds are available.
- Monitor cultural and paleontological resource sites in danger of alteration or destruction from natural or human-made causes, including wildland fires and the effects of fire suppression.
- Develop partnerships to achieve goals.

(b) Management Decisions

- All cultural properties on BLM-administered lands in the Bay planning area would be managed for their scientific use (preserved until their research potential is realized).
- Identify area wide criteria or site-specific restrictions that apply to special cultural resource issues, including traditional cultural properties that may affect location, timing, or method of development or use of other resources in the planning area. Identify measures to proactively manage, protect, and use cultural and paleontological resources.

(c) Land Use Requirements

All actions that may impact cultural resources will comply with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Sections 106 and 110, and with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), as well as laws governing the protection or consideration of cultural resources. When any Federal undertaking, including any action funded or authorized by the Federal Government with the potential to directly or indirectly affect any archaeological or historic site is planned, a consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) under the 1997 National Cultural Programmatic Agreement and the 1998 State Protocol that stands in place of 36 CFR 800. If archaeological or historic sites are identified in the project area their significance will be evaluated to determine their eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The State requests that the SHPO be notified if archaeological or historic sites are identified through this planning process. The State may request that recreational or commercial uses be precluded in order to protect archaeological and historic sites.

(4) Alternative B

Alternative B would be similar to Alternative A. Under Alternative B, decisions regarding avoidance of sites would be made after considering input from interested parties. When avoidance is not possible, given the overall benefits of the development, mitigate the impacts. Priority for non-Section 106 survey

and inventory would be assigned to broad areas because of the likelihood of development impacts. Non-destructive data recovery would be conducted in areas where development is anticipated; destructive data recovery would be allowed in mitigation when avoidance is not feasible for the approved development project. Most sites would be designated as suitable for current research use. Allow other uses only to the extent that they do not restrict research use. Balance public use designations with other resource developments. Required Operating Procedures and Stipulations would apply.

(5) Alternative C

Alternative C would be similar to Alternative A. Under Alternative C, impacts to cultural and paleontological resources would be avoided except when it is physically impossible to do so. Priority for non-Section 106 survey and inventory would be assigned based on the value of the resource. Priority would be given to areas known to include important and/or numerous sites. Non-destructive data recovery would be conducted in areas of known or expected high resource values; destructive data recovery would be allowed to address important research topics when part of the site would be left intact for the future. Destructive data recovery would also be allowed in cases when there is danger of destruction of significant cultural resources by natural forces. Most sites would be reserved for conservation for future use unless threatened. Uses that would lead to destruction or major changes in sites would be avoided.

Under Alternative C, Stipulations and Required Operating Procedures would apply, and cultural and paleontological resource strategies and priorities specific to the SMAs would be developed for the proposed Carter Spit ACEC and Bristol Bay ACEC and the nominated Wild Rivers, the Alagnak River, Goodnews River mainstem, and Goodnews River Middle Fork.

(6) Alternative D

Alternative D would be similar to Alternative C. Under Alternative D, Stipulations and Required Operating Procedures would apply, and cultural and paleontological resource strategies and priorities specific to the SMA would be developed for the proposed Carter Spit ACEC.

Table 2.3 provides the comparison of how these management actions proposed for cultural and paleontological resources are applied under each Alternative.

Table 2.3. Cultural and Paleontological Resource Management - Summary of Alternatives

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Alternative A | Identify, protect, and preserve significant cultural and paleontological resources; manage cultural and paleontological resources for a variety of scientific, conservation, public education, interpretation, traditional, and experimental use. |
| Alternative B | Same as Alternative A. |
| Alternative C | Same as Alternative A. Develop cultural and paleontological resource strategies and priorities for Carter Spit and Bristol Bay ACECs. |
| Alternative D | Same as Alternative A. Develop cultural and paleontological resource strategies and priorities for Carter Spit ACEC. |

h) Visual Resources

(1) Goals

Protect the quality of scenic values of these lands.

What Do VRM Classes Mean for Future Management?

The objectives for the VRM classes are:

| Class | Objective |
|-------|--|
| I | Preserve the existing character of the landscape; change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and should not attract attention. |
| II | Preserve the existing character of the landscape; change to the characteristic landscape may be seen, but should be low and should not attract the attention of the casual observer. |
| III | Partially retain the existing character of the landscape; change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate and may attract attention, but not dominate the view of the casual observer. |
| IV | Provides for action that would make major modifications to the existing character of the landscape; change to the characteristic landscape can be high, dominate the view, and be the major focus of the viewer. |

(2) Alternative A

Alternative A would continue current management. The Southwest MFP (BLM 1981), applicable only to the Goodnews Block, contains guidance for the general management of Visual Resources. It requires that all proposed management activities be evaluated using the visual resource management contrast rating system. In that way, areas that have not been classified for visual resources can be evaluated. The following guidance is provided:

The MFP VR-1 Objective states "Allow only very limited visual change in areas designated "Wild" portions of Wild and Scenic Rivers." These areas are to be designated VRM Class I which provides for primarily natural ecological changes in visual resources, but does not preclude limited management activities.

The MFP VR-2 Objective is to "Maintain the visual quality of the planning area." The planning area is virtually undisturbed by human activities. Any major development would be highly visible from aircraft. Development should be designed for minimum impact to visual resources and to reduce unnecessary surface disturbance."

The MFP multiple-use recommendation calls for evaluating all proposed management activities using the visual resource management contrast rating system and encourage activities that are compatible or designed to be compatible with the character of the natural landscape.

Current management practices require that a specialist analyze the visual resource impacts of proposed actions on a case-by-case basis. BLM's policy is to minimize impacts to visual resources and place stipulations on permits to accomplish this goal. To date, most VRM actions in the planning area have been applied to communication tower permits and have addressed mitigation issues related to structure heights and color schemes.

Under Alternative A, no VRM classes would be established on BLM-managed lands within the Bay planning area. The visual resources of an area would be identified and assigned inventory classes using the BLM visual resource inventory process (Manual 8400). The principles of the visual contrast rating

system (Manual 8431) would be used to identify mitigation measures and to develop stipulations to meet the objectives of the assigned inventory class.

(3) Management Common to All Action Alternatives (B, C, and D)

(a) Inventory and Monitoring

All BLM unencumbered, State-selected, and Native-selected lands within the Bay planning area would be inventoried for scenic qualities, sensitivity level analysis, and distance zone classification utilizing the visual resource inventory system as described in BLM Manual 8410 - Visual Resource Inventory. VRM Inventory Classes would be assigned based upon this analysis.

(b) Management Decisions

- Visual resources within the planning area would be managed at the assigned VRM Inventory Classification unless and until VRM Management Classes are established in the final RMP/EIS.
- All proposed actions within the planning area would be analyzed individually for impacts on visual resources utilizing the Visual Resource Contrast Rating System as described in BLM Manual 8431 - Visual Resource Contrast Rating. This analysis would determine if the potential visual impacts from proposed surface-disturbing activities or developments would meet VRM Inventory Class management objectives assigned for the area, or whether design adjustments would be required.
- All Actions would be mitigated to reduce impacts on visual resources utilizing design techniques including proper siting and location, reducing unnecessary disturbance, and the repetition of the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the existing visual landscape. Design strategies and appropriate stipulations will be employed to ensure that surface-disturbing activities are in harmony with their surroundings and VRM management classes.
- Consult with neighboring Federal, State, and Native corporation land managing agencies to coordinate compatible VRM management along common boundaries.

(4) Alternative B

Under Alternative B, all lands in the Bay planning area would be managed as VRM Class IV. The principles of the visual resource contrast rating system (Manual 8431) would be used to identify mitigation measures and to develop stipulations to meet the objectives of VRM Class IV. Development would be allowed with mitigation. Stipulations and Required Operating Procedures would be applicable (Section E of this Chapter).

(5) Alternative C

Under Alternative C, BLM lands in the full visible foreground based on GIS analysis up to five miles from established winter trail/road systems would be managed at VRM Class III, including trails in the Goodnews Block (Goodnews to Quinhagak coastal and Arolik River routes; Goodnews Bay to Dillingham route), and the blocks in Bristol Bay (Dillingham to Aleknagik; Dillingham to Koliganek; Ekwok to Naknek; New Stuyahok to Levelock; and Naknek to King Salmon). BLM lands in the full visible foreground up to five miles from main river travel routes would be managed at VRM Class III, including portions of the Goodnews Block (North Fork Goodnews River; Middle Fork Goodnews River; South Fork Goodnews River; and East Fork Arolik River) and Bristol Bay blocks (Nushagak River; Kvichak River; Lower Mulchatna River; and Alagnak Wild River).

BLM lands in the full visible foreground up to five miles from the boundaries of Togiak NWR, Becharof NWR, Katmai NPP, and Lake Clark NPP would be managed at VRM Class III.

The proposed Carter Spit and Bristol Bay ACECs would be managed at VRM Class III. The proposed National WSRs, a portion of the Alagnak River, Goodnews River and Middle Fork Goodnews River would be managed at VRM Class III.

All other BLM lands would be managed at VRM Class IV. Stipulations and Required Operating Procedures, located in Section E of this chapter, would apply (Figures 2.1 - 2.6).

(6) Alternative D

Under Alternative D, BLM lands in the full visible foreground based on GIS analysis up to 1/2 mile from established winter trail/road systems would be managed at VRM Class III, including trails in the Goodnews Block (Goodnews to Quinhagak coastal and Arolik River routes; Goodnews Bay to Dillingham route), and the blocks in Bristol Bay (Dillingham to Aleknagik; Dillingham to Koliganek; Ekwok to Naknek; New Stuyahok to Levelock; and Naknek to King Salmon).

BLM lands in the full visible foreground up to 1/2 mile from main river travel routes would be managed at VRM Class III, including portions of the Goodnews Block (North Fork Goodnews River; Middle Fork Goodnews River; South Fork Goodnews River; and East Fork Arolik River) and Bristol Bay blocks (Nushagak River; Kvichak River; Lower Mulchatna River; and Alagnak Wild River).

BLM lands in the full visible foreground up to one mile from the boundaries of Togiak NWR, Becharof NWR, Katmai NPP, and Lake Clark NPP would be managed at VRM Level III. The proposed Carter Spit ACEC would be managed at VRM Class III.

All other BLM lands would be managed at VRM Class IV. Stipulations and Required Operating Procedures, found in Section E of this Chapter, would apply (Figures 2.1 - 2.6)

Tables 2.4 and 2.15 provide the comparison of how these management actions proposed for visual resource management are applied under each Alternative.

Table 2.4. Visual Resource Management - Summary of Alternatives

| | Classification of BLM-administered unencumbered lands for Visual Resource Management | VRM Classification in Special Management Areas |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Alternative A | No VRM classes would be established on BLM-administered lands within the Bay planning area. | No Special Management Areas would be recommended. |
| Alternative B | All lands in the Bay planning area would be managed as VRM Class IV (Figures 2.1 - 2.6). | No Special Management Areas would be recommended. |
| Alternative C | <p>BLM lands in the full visible foreground based on GIS analysis up to 5 miles from established winter trail/road systems would be managed at VRM Class III including (Figures 2.1 - 2.6):</p> <p>Goodnews Bay region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goodnews to Quinhagak coastal and Arolik River routes • Goodnews Bay to Dillingham <p>Bristol Bay region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dillingham to Aleknagik • Dillingham to Koliganek • Ekwok to Naknek • New Stuyahok to Levelock • Naknek to King Salmon <p>BLM lands in the full visible foreground up to 5 miles from main river travel routes would be managed at VRM Class III including:</p> <p>Goodnews Bay region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Fork Goodnews River • Middle Fork Goodnews River • South Fork Goodnews River • East Fork Arolik River <p>Bristol Bay rivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nushagak River • Kvichak River • Lower Mulchatna River • Alagnak Wild River <p>BLM lands in the full visible foreground up to five miles from the boundaries of Togiak NWR, Becharof NWR, Katmai NPP, and Lake Clark NPP would be managed at VRM Class III.</p> <p>All other BLM lands would be managed as VRM Class IV.</p> | <p>Proposed Carter Spit and Bristol Bay ACECs would be managed at VRM III.</p> <p>Proposed National WSR Alagnak River (Wild, Recreational) would be managed at VRM Class III.</p> <p>Proposed National WSR Goodnews River and Middle Fork Goodnews River (Wild) would be managed at VRM Class III.</p> |
| Alternative D | <p>BLM lands in the visible foreground up to 1/2 mile from established winter trail/road systems would be managed at VRM Class III including (Figures 2.1-2.6):</p> <p>Goodnews Bay region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goodnews to Quinhagak coastal and Arolik River routes • Goodnews Bay to Dillingham <p>Bristol Bay region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dillingham to Aleknagik | Proposed Carter Spit ACEC would be managed at VRM Class III. |

| | Classification of BLM-administered unencumbered lands for Visual Resource Management | VRM Classification in Special Management Areas |
|--|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dillingham to Koliganek • Ekwok to Naknek • New Stuyahok to Levelock • Naknek to King Salmon <p>BLM lands in the visible foreground up to 1/2 mile from main river travel routes would be managed at VRM Class III including:</p> <p>Goodnews Bay region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Fork Goodnews River • Middle Fork Goodnews River • South Fork Goodnews River • East Fork Arolik River <p>Bristol Bay rivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nushagak River • Kvichak River • Lower Mulchatna River • Alagnak Wild River <p>Manage BLM lands in the visible foreground up to one mile from the boundaries of Togiak NWR, Becharof NWR, Katmai NPP, and Lake Clark NPP at VRM Class III.</p> <p>All other BLM lands would be managed as VRM Class IV.</p> | |

2. Resource Uses

a) Forest Products

(1) Goals

- Manage forests and woodlands to sustain their health, productivity, and biological diversity.
- Consistent with other resource values, provide opportunities for personal use of forest resources and for commercial timber harvests, should any viable commercial-grade trees become available.

(2) Alternative A

Alternative A would continue current management. Under this Alternative, requests for forest resources would be considered on a case-by-case basis as permits were received. Forested lands would be managed for a sustained yield of forest products. The Southwest MFP (1981), which applies only to the Goodnews Block within the Bay planning area, provides for the use of forestry products in the Goodnews Block with priority areas opened for settlement entry. No potential commercial harvest areas have been identified for BLM-administered lands in the planning area. No commercial timber harvesting is anticipated within the life of this plan, due to the lack of commercial grade timber on BLM lands in the Bay planning area.

(3) Management Common to All Action Alternatives (B, C, and D)

(a) Inventory and Monitoring

Should any exist, BLM will identify potential commercial harvest areas and high interest personal use areas. If any of these areas are identified within the proposed ACECs, management will be consistent with the objectives of the proposed ACEC.

(b) Management Decisions

- All forestry management practices would be conducted consistent with guidelines described in the Stipulations and Required Operating Procedures (Section E of this Chapter).
- The natural range of variation in plant composition and structure and the high value of natural resources will be sustained.
- Issue permits to authorize harvest of personal use firewood and house logs consistent with 43 CFR 5400 on a case-by-case basis.
- Issue free use permits to harvest vegetative products for personal use consistent with 43 CFR 5500 on a case-by-case basis.

(4) Alternative B

Under Alternative B, forested lands would be managed for the public a variety of forest products including firewood, house logs, and other forest products for personal or household use. The feasibility of prescribed fire, wildland fire, or salvage logging in localized areas of beetle-killed spruce would be assessed. Requests for forest products would be considered on a case-by-case basis as applications were received. Required Operating Procedures, Stipulations, and project-specific requirements would apply.

(5) Alternative C

Under Alternative C, forested lands would be managed as in Alternative B. In addition, further restrictions on harvest of forest products would apply in the Carter Spit ACEC and the Bristol Bay ACEC and suitable rivers.

(6) Alternative D

Under Alternative D, forested lands would be managed as in Alternative B. In addition, further restrictions on harvest of forest products would apply in the Carter Spit ACEC.

b) Livestock and Reindeer Grazing

(1) Goals

- Avoid conflicts between livestock grazing uses, fisheries and wildlife habitat, and subsistence.
- Determine the suitability and compatibility for livestock range, and the capability and allocation of forage for native wildlife and livestock in Bay area ecosystems.
- Maintain habitat needed to support healthy populations of wildlife to meet population viability and human use demands, as required by FLPMA and the Land Health Standards.

(2) Alternative A

Alternative A would continue current management practices. The Southwest MFP (1981), which is applicable only to the Goodnews Block in the Bay planning area, allows seasonal grazing for domestic livestock and reindeer on a local level where public demand warrants and where compatible with other resources. Livestock grazing would be managed on a case-by-case basis as permits are received. The type of livestock permitted would be limited to reindeer. Incidental grazing by pack animals associated with special recreation use permits would be considered on a case-by-case basis. Conflicts with wildlife and subsistence, compatibility, and suitability would be taken into consideration.

(3) Management Common to All Action Alternatives (B, C, and D)

(a) Inventory and Monitoring

- Currently there is no livestock or reindeer grazing in the Bay planning area, nor has any interest been expressed. In the future, should there be renewed interest, BLM would work cooperatively with ADNR, ADF&G, NRCS, NPS, and the Federal Subsistence Program to monitor range conditions to provide the necessary information to manage all aspects of grazing activities. BLM would also work with NRCS and others to assess seasons of use, grazing systems, suitability and compatibility.
- BLM would inventory habitat to ensure priority for wildlife species, and that no conflicts or threats are created.

(b) Management Decisions

- Currently no livestock or reindeer grazing exists in the Bay planning area, and no interest has been expressed. Should BLM receive requests for grazing, BLM Anchorage Field Office (AFO) will consider livestock grazing on a case-by-case basis after suitability, and compatibility determinations have been made.
- Avoid conflicts between grazing, habitat requirements of fish and wildlife, and other human uses.
- Develop allotment management plans for any proposed grazing that includes grazing systems and fire management and allows for maintaining long-term native vegetative communities, composition, diversity, distribution and productivity.
- Allow incidental grazing of pack animals associated with special recreation permits on a case-by-case basis consistent with the permitting process for special recreation use permits, Required Operating Procedures and the Alaska Statewide Land Health Standards.
- Special recreation permits and casual use of grazing animals require evaluation for suitability and compatibility before authorizing use.
- Grazing permits would be subject to Required Operating Procedures and project-specific requirements, which will help maintain habitat needed to support healthy populations.

(4) Alternative B

Alternative B would be the same as Alternative A, with the addition of Management Common to All Action Alternatives. Required Operating Procedures, Stipulations, and project specific requirements would apply.

(5) Alternative C

Alternative C would be the same as Alternative B. No grazing or domestic pack animals would be allowed in the Carter Spit ACEC, the Bristol Bay ACEC, or designated WSRs.

(6) Alternative D

Alternative D would be the same as Alternative B. No grazing or domestic pack animals would be allowed in the Carter Spit ACEC.

Table 2.5. provides the comparison of management actions proposed for livestock and reindeer grazing under each Alternative.

Table 2.5. Livestock and Reindeer Grazing - Summary of Alternatives

| Resource | Alternative A | Alternative B | Alternative C | Alternative D |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Livestock and Reindeer Grazing | Alternative A would continue current management. Livestock grazing would be managed on a case-by-case basis as permits were received. Livestock permitted would be limited to reindeer | Same as Alternative A. Permits subject to Required Operating Procedures. | Same as Alternative A. Permits subject to Required Operating Procedures. | Same as Alternative A. Permits subject to Required Operating Procedures. |
| Grazing Management in Special Management Areas | Grazing permitted in the Bay planning area. | Grazing permitted in the Bay planning area | No grazing or domestic pack animals allowed in Carter Spit ACEC, Bristol Bay ACEC, or designated WSRs. | No grazing or domestic pack animals allowed in Carter Spit ACEC. |

c) Minerals

Lands currently under selection by the State and Native corporations are segregated from locatable mineral entry and location, and from mineral leasing to avoid potential encumbrances on selected lands prior to conveyance. These lands comprise approximately 1,327,553 acres out of the 2,503,822 acres currently managed by the BLM. Therefore, decisions made within this land use planning effort to “open” areas for mineral exploration or development by revoking withdrawals would not go into effect unless selected lands are retained long-term in Federal ownership. In other words, these BLM-administered lands would never be conveyed to the State or Native corporations in the future.

c.1. Fluid Leasable Minerals (Oil and Gas)

(1) Goals

Public lands and Federal mineral estate will be made available for orderly and efficient exploration (including geophysical exploration), development and production of fluid leasable minerals, including oil, natural gas, tar sands, coal bed methane and geothermal steam, unless a withdrawal or other administrative action is justified in the national interest.

(2) Alternative A

Under Alternative A, current management would continue. Approximately 2,503,822 acres of BLM-administered lands (100%) would be closed to leasing. No oil and gas leasing would occur under Alternative A and no BLM-administered lands would be identified as open for fluid mineral leasing in the Bay planning area. Appropriate NEPA analysis must be completed and approved before Federal oil and gas lease sales can occur. Additionally, no withdrawal review would occur and all ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals would remain in place, pending future legislation or unrelated management direction. However, where drainage occurs, that is, where Federal oil and gas resources are being drained from

lands otherwise unavailable for leasing, there is implied authority in the agency having jurisdiction of those lands to grant authority to the BLM to lease such lands.

The Southwest MFP (BLM 1981), which addresses only the Goodnews Block of the planning area, called for opening all BLM-administered public lands to oil and gas leasing under Section 1008 of ANILCA (PL 96-487 Title 10 §1008).

(3) Management Common to All Action Alternatives (B, C, and D)

- Lands currently under selection by the State and Native corporations are segregated from mineral leasing to avoid potential encumbrances on selected lands prior to conveyance.
- Areas for potential leasing would be identified consistent with the goals, standards, and objectives for natural resources within the planning area. Areas where oil and gas development could coexist with other resource uses would be open to leasing under Standard Lease Terms or with added stipulations. Stipulations describe how lease rights are modified. Table 2.6 summarizes the number of acres available and unavailable for leasing in the planning area by Alternative.
- Oil and Gas Stipulations and Required Operating Procedures described in Section E of this chapter apply to all BLM-managed lands in the Bay planning area open to oil and gas leasing. Stipulations notify the leaseholder that development activities may be limited, prohibited, or implemented with mitigation measures to protect specific resources. The stipulations would condition the leaseholder's development activities and provide BLM the authority to require other mitigation or to deny some proposed exploration and development methods.
- Additional Stipulations and Required Operating Procedures might also be required based on site-specific NEPA compliance. Additional information can be provided to the lessee in the form of a lease notice. This notice does not place restrictions on lease operations, but does provide information about applicable laws and regulations, and the requirements for additional information to be supplied by the lessee.
- The BLM land use planning process determines availability of Federal lands for oil and gas leasing where BLM is the surface management agency. For Federal oil and gas where the surface is managed by another Federal agency, the BLM will consult with that agency before issuing leases.
- All areas open to mineral leasing would be open to geophysical exploration, except those lands containing No Surface Occupancy (NSO) restrictions, which would only be available for geophysical exploration in winter conditions, subject to Stipulations and through Casual Use as described in 43 CFR 3150.05(b) during non-winter conditions. On a case-by-case basis geophysical exploration may be allowed in areas closed to oil and gas leasing based on the nature and level of impacts from the exploration, and consistency with other applicable policy. Oil and gas geophysical exploration activity on public lands in Alaska, the surface of which is administered by the BLM, is governed by regulations found at 43 CFR Subparts 3150, 3152, and 3154. A Federal oil and gas lease is not required to conduct geophysical exploration. The BLM will review Notices of Intent to Conduct Geophysical Exploration (NOI) in the planning area and develop appropriate mitigation measures so as not to create undue and unnecessary degradation. A site-specific environmental analysis will be prepared for each NOI filed. The oil and gas lease stipulations developed in this document serve as the starting point for developing required mitigation measures for each NOI.
- Geothermal resources would be available for leasing in areas open to oil and gas leasing. Areas closed to oil and gas leasing are also closed to geothermal leasing. There are no Known Geothermal Resource Areas (KGRAs) in the planning area. A site-specific environmental analysis would be prepared should interest be expressed in exploring for or developing geothermal resources in the planning area. This analysis would address the application of stipulations and develop additional mitigating measures over and above the lease stipulations required. Stipulations developed in this document for oil and gas leases would be applied to any geothermal lease issued if appropriate.
- Coal bed natural gas (CBNG) development is authorized by the same process as oil and gas.
- Public lands available for oil and gas leasing would be offered first by competitive bid at an oral auction. Stipulations, terms, and conditions would be applied at the time of leasing. Leasing of

available lands under jurisdiction of another Federal agency would only occur following consultation, and consent if necessary, from the surface managing agency. Notices of Intent to conduct geophysical exploration would be reviewed and mitigation measures developed so as not to cause undue or unnecessary degradation for other resources.

- Where oil or gas is being drained from lands otherwise unavailable for leasing, there is implied authority in the agency have jurisdiction of those lands to grant authority to the BLM to lease such lands (43 CFR 3100.0-3(d)). Leasing of such lands would only occur following consultation, and consent if necessary, from the surface managing agency.
- The terms of existing oil and gas leases cannot be changed by the decisions in this document. However, when the lease expires, the area will be managed for oil and gas according to the decisions made in this RMP/EIS.

No Surface Occupancy

No Surface Occupancy (NSO) is a limitation of oil and gas leasing. It denotes an area that is open for mineral leasing, but that analysis has found that in order to protect other resources, no well sites, tank batteries, or similar facilities are to occupy the surface of specified lands, unless site-specific analysis shows that resource values can be protected.

Table 2.6. Acres of Federal Mineral estate Available/Unavailable for Fluid Mineral Leasing

| | Alt A | Alt B | Alt C | Alt D |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Acres <i>Available</i> for Oil and Gas Leasing | 0 | 2,499,823 | 2,484,698 | 2,499,823 |
| Under Standard Lease Terms | 0 | 2,499,823 | 713,893 | 729,018 |
| Under Minor Constraints | 0 | 0 | 1,768,450 | 1,768,450 |
| Under Major Constraints | 0 | 0 | 2,355 | 2,355 |
| Acres <i>Unavailable</i> for Oil and Gas Leasing | 2,503,822 | 3,999 | 19,124 | 3,999 |
| Discretionary | 2,503,822 | 3,999 | 3,999 | 3,999 |
| Non-Discretionary | 0 | 0 | 15,125 | 0 |

As described in BLM Manual 1624, Federal oil and gas resources (including CBNG) fall into one of the following categories relative to restrictiveness:

- **Areas open to leasing, subject to the terms and conditions of the standard lease form.** These are areas where it has been determined through the planning process that the standard terms and conditions of the lease form are sufficient to protect other land uses or resource values.
- **Areas open to leasing, subject to minor constraints such as seasonal restrictions.** These are areas where it has been determined through the planning process that moderately restrictive lease Stipulations may be required to mitigate impacts to other land use or resource values. This category of leases frequently involves timing limitations such as restricting construction activities in important designated big game habitats, or controlled surface use Stipulations such as creating a buffer zone around a key resource.
- **Areas open to leasing, subject to major constraints such as NSO Stipulations on an area more than 40 acres in size or more than one-quarter mile in width.** These are areas where it has been determined through the planning process that highly restrictive lease stipulations are required to mitigate impacts to other lands and resource values. This category also includes areas where

overlapping minor constraints would severely limit development of fluid minerals. This category of leases may prohibit the construction of well production and support facilities. These areas can be subject to directional drilling, if technologically and economically feasible.

- **Areas closed to leasing.** These are areas where it has been determined through the planning process that other land uses or resource values cannot be adequately protected with even the most restrictive lease stipulations. Appropriate protection can be ensured only by closing the lands to leasing through either statutory or administrative requirements.

What is Drainage?

Drainage of oil or gas occurs whenever an oil or gas well on property adjacent to BLM-administered subsurface estate produces from a reservoir or reservoirs that extend onto both properties. In such a case, Federal resources are being drained through a well on lands owned or administered by others, and BLM would lease the Federal subsurface estate or, at a minimum, pursue an agreement for payment of royalties on the government's share of the oil and gas produced.

(4) Alternative B

Under Alternative B, all existing ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals would be revoked to allow increased opportunities for exploration, development and production of fluid leasable minerals pending Native and State conveyances.

Approximately 1,177,705 acres of BLM unencumbered lands and any State-selected or Native-selected lands (1,322,118 acres) whose selections are relinquished or revoked would be open to fluid mineral leasing subject to standard lease terms. There would be no restriction under this Alternative for seasonal closures or for NSO. Additionally, oil and gas Stipulations #6 and #7 in Section E of this chapter would not be applicable under this Alternative. Withdrawals, other than the ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals, would close approximately 3,999 acres to leasing.

(5) Alternative C

Under Alternative C, lands available for fluid mineral leasing would be reduced and subject to more constraints than in Alternatives B or D. All but 15,125 acres of existing ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals would be revoked to allow increased opportunities for mineral exploration and development, pending Native and State conveyances.

Approximately 713,893 acres of BLM-managed lands, all of which are State-selected or Native-selected lands, would be open to fluid mineral leasing subject to standard lease terms should they be relinquished or revoked and return to long-term Federal ownership. Approximately 1,768,450 acres of unencumbered BLM lands and any State- or Native-selected lands (716,385 acres) whose selections are relinquished or revoked would be open to fluid mineral leasing subject to minor constraints. This includes two proposed ACECs (Bristol Bay and Carter Spit). To protect caribou habitat on identified aggregation areas, oil and gas exploration and development activities would not be permitted from May 20 through August 15. Oil and gas exploration and development activities would not be permitted from May 1 through June 15 to protect calving caribou; from June 15 through August 15 to protect the Mulchatna Caribou Herd, Nushagak and Northern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd in their post calving aggregations and insect relief areas; from April 10 through July 15 for migratory bird nesting located in the forest and woodland habitat of the Bristol Bay area; from May 1 through July 15 for open or shrub habitat types; from May 10 through September 15 for seabird colonies; and from April 15 through August 15 for raptors. These seasonal restrictions would be dependent upon the actual location of the species in question.

Total Acreage subject to no surface occupancy (NSO) is 2,355 acres. Areas subject to NSO include a 300 foot buffer on either side of the East and South Fork Arolik River, Faro Creek, and South Fork

Goodnews River to protect riparian areas and soils adjacent to sensitive habitat for salmon and freshwater fish.

Existing withdrawals of approximately 3,999 unencumbered acres would remain closed to fluid mineral leasing. In addition, existing ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals for proposed Wild River segments of the Alagnak, Goodnews and Goodnews Middle Fork rivers (15,125 acres) would remain closed to fluid mineral leasing until Congressional action is completed.

(6) Alternative D

Under Alternative D, existing ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals would be revoked to allow for increased opportunities for exploration, development and production of fluid leasable minerals pending Native and State conveyances. This Alternative would not propose Wild River designations for the Alagnak, Goodnews and Goodnews Middle Fork rivers.

Approximately 729,018 acres of unencumbered BLM lands and any State-selected or Native-selected lands (425,082 acres) whose selections are relinquished or revoked would be open to fluid mineral leasing subject to standard lease terms.

Approximately 1,768,450 acres of unencumbered BLM lands and any State-selected or Native-selected lands (716,385 acres) whose selections are relinquished or revoked would be open to fluid mineral leasing subject to minor constraints. To protect caribou habitat on identified aggregation areas, oil and gas exploration and development activities would not be permitted from May 20 through August 15. Oil and gas exploration and development activities would also not be permitted from May 1 through June 15 to protect calving caribou; from June 15 through August 15 to protect the Mulchatna Caribou Herd, Nushagak and Northern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd in their post calving aggregations and insect relief areas; from April 10 through July 15 for migratory bird nesting located in the forest and woodland habitat of the Bristol Bay area; from May 1 through July 15 for open or shrub habitat types; from May 10 through September 15 for seabird colonies; and from April 15 through August 15 for raptors. These seasonal restrictions would be dependent upon the actual location of the species in question.

Total Acreage subject to no surface occupancy (NSO) is 2,355 acres. Areas subject to NSO include a 300 foot buffer on either side of the East and South Fork Arolik River, Faro Creek, and South Fork Goodnews River to protect riparian areas and soils adjacent to sensitive habitat for salmon and freshwater fish.

Existing withdrawals (other than ANCSA 17(d)(1) lands), of approximately 3,999 unencumbered acres would remain withdrawn from fluid mineral leasing.

Lands available subject to minor (seasonal) constraints are roughly 1,768,450 acres, with 773,767 acres on selected lands. To protect caribou habitat on identified aggregation areas, oil and gas exploration and development activities will be closed from May 15 through August 15. An additional closure to protect calving caribou will restrict exploration and development activities from May 1 through June 15. Closures will protect the Mulchatna Caribou Herd, Nushagak and Northern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd in their post calving aggregations and insect relief areas from June 15 to August 15. Closures are required for the migratory bird nesting period of April 10 to July 15 for forest and woodland habitat types in Bristol Bay, May 1 to July 15 for open or shrub habitat types, May 10 to September 15 for seabird colonies and April 15 to August 15 for raptors. These closures would be dependent upon the actual location of the species in question.

There are no oil and gas leasing closures proposed with the exception of existing withdrawals that make up approximately 3,999 acres. This figure does not include lands closed due to existing ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals. These withdrawals would be revoked to allow for oil and gas exploration and development, pending Native and State conveyances.

Tables 2.7 and 2.15 provide the comparison of how these management actions proposed for fluid leasable minerals are applied under each Alternative.

Table 2.7. Fluid Leasable Minerals - Summary of Alternatives

| Management Action | Alternative A (Current management) | Alternative B | Alternative C | Alternative D (Preferred Alternative) |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| Areas Open to Fluid Mineral Leasing Subject to Standard Lease Terms | No BLM-administered lands would be open for fluid mineral leasing. | 2,499,823 acres (99%), 1,327,671 acres of which are State- or Native-selected. | 2,484,696 acres (99%), all of which are State- or Native-selected. | 2,499,823 acres (99%), 1,176,629 of which are State- or Native-selected. |
| | Notwithstanding the provisions listed within this management action, BLM may lease lands in cases where oil and gas is being drained from the Federal subsurface estate by wells drilled on adjacent lands. Oil and Gas Stipulations and Required Operating Procedures described in Section E of this Chapter apply to all BLM-managed lands in the Bay planning area open to oil and gas leasing. | | | |
| Areas Closed to Fluid Mineral Leasing (Discretionary) | All BLM lands would be closed to fluid mineral leasing. | Existing withdrawals other than ANCSA 17(d)(1) of approximately 3,999 unencumbered acres would remain withdrawn from fluid mineral leasing. | Approximately 19,124 acres (>1%) which are unencumbered BLM lands. Existing withdrawals of approximately 3,999 unencumbered acres would remain withdrawn from fluid mineral leasing | Existing withdrawals other than ANCSA 17(d)(1), of approximately 3,999 unencumbered acres would remain withdrawn from fluid mineral leasing. |
| (Non-Discretionary) | | | Proposed Wild River segments of the Alagnak, Goodnews and Goodnews Middle Fork rivers (15,125 acres). ANCSA 17 (d)(1) withdrawals would be retained for these river segments as an interim measure to provide an opportunity for Congressional action. | |
| Total Acres Unavailable | 2,503,822 | 3,999 | 19,124 | 3,999 |

| Management Action | Alternative A (Current management) | Alternative B | Alternative C | Alternative D (Preferred Alternative) |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| Areas Open to Fluid Mineral Leasing Subject to Seasonal or Other Minor Constraint | No Federal leases would occur on BLM-managed lands within the Bay planning area. | No acres are subject to seasonal or other minor constraints. Stipulations #6 and #7 (Section E) do not apply under this Alternative. | 1,768,450 acres (42%), none of which are State-selected or Native-selected. Carter Spit ACEC (62,862 acres). Bristol Bay ACEC (989,202 acres). To protect caribou and their habitat, oil and gas exploration and development activities would be limited on identified aggregation areas (insect relief, post calving, and migration) between May 20 and August 15. To minimize disturbance to calving caribou, oil and gas exploration and development activities will be restricted from May 1 to June 15. | 1,768,450 acres (42%), none of which are State-selected or Native-selected. Carter Spit ACEC (62,862 acres). To protect caribou and their habitat, oil and gas exploration and development activities would be limited on identified aggregation areas (insect relief, post calving, and migration) between May 20 and August 15. To minimize disturbance to calving caribou, oil and gas exploration and development activities would be restricted from May 1 to June 15. |
| Areas Open to Fluid Mineral Leasing Subject to No Surface Occupancy Constraint | No Federal leases would occur on BLM-managed lands within the planning area. | 0 acres. Stipulations #6 and #7 (Section E) do not apply under this Alternative | 2,355 acres (>.1 %). A 300-foot minimum setback on BLM unencumbered lands on segments of the East and South Fork Arolik River, Faro Creek, and South Fork Goodnews River. This setback would protect riparian areas and soils adjacent to sensitive habitat for salmon and freshwater fish. | 2,355 acres (>.1%). A 300-foot minimum setback on BLM unencumbered lands on segments of the East and South Fork Arolik River, Faro Creek, and South Fork Goodnews River. This setback would protect riparian areas and soils adjacent to sensitive habitat for salmon and freshwater fish. |

c.2. Solid Leasable Minerals

Currently there are no known coal resources on BLM-administered lands in the Bay planning area. The Governor of any state with an approved regulatory program may request that the Secretary of the Department of the Interior enter into a cooperative agreement to grant the State the authority to implement the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 on Federal lands. At present, Alaska has no such agreement in place. However, should coal operations be developed on Federal lands, an agreement would likely be developed between the State and the Office of Surface Mining defining the regulatory role of the State in these mining operations (30 CFR 745).

(1) Goals

- Public lands and Federal mineral estate will be made available for orderly and efficient exploration, development and production of solid leasable mineral resources (including coal and oil shale, and non-energy leasable minerals (including potassium, sodium, phosphate and gilsonite), unless continued withdrawal from mineral entry is justified in the national interest.
- All solid leasable minerals actions will comply with goals, objectives, and resource restrictions (mitigations) to protect other resource values in the planning area.

(2) Alternative A

Under Alternative A, current management would continue. No BLM-administered lands would be identified as open for solid leasable mineral leasing in the Bay planning area. The Southwest MFP (BLM 1981), which addresses only the Goodnews Block of the planning area, called for providing opportunities for leasing or permitting of coal reserves on all BLM-administered public lands.

(3) Management Common to All Action Alternatives (B, C, and D)

The following management direction applies to all BLM-administered lands within the Bay planning area.

(a) Land Use Plan Decisions

- Leasing and exploration licensing are subject to BLM standard lease terms and BLM-Alaska's Oil and Gas Stipulations and Required Operating Procedures, located in Section E of this chapter.
- Coal and oil shale exploration and leasing will comply with the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended, the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, the Federal Coal Leasing Amendments Act of 1976, the Mineral Leasing Act for Acquired Land of 1947 and other Federal resource and environmental laws, coal regulations and coal planning criteria.
- Identify BLM-administered public lands acceptable for further consideration for coal leasing and the methods under which such development may take place, consistent unsuitability assessment procedures outlined in 43 CFR 3461, including
 - Areas unacceptable for further consideration for coal leasing and development by all mining methods.
 - Areas acceptable for further consideration for coal leasing and development by only certain stipulated mining methods.
 - Areas acceptable for further consideration for coal leasing and development by all mining methods.
- All unencumbered BLM-administered lands within the Bay planning area subject to coal leasing under Part 43 CFR 3400.2 are open to coal exploration and study through the issuance of an exploration license. To date, no areas within the Bay RMP have been identified as having economic coal reserves. Therefore, the coal screening process (as identified by 43 CFR 3420.1-4) has not been conducted for this plan. Interest in exploration or leasing of Federal coal would be handled on a case-by-case basis. If an application for a coal lease should be received in the

future, an appropriate land use and environmental analysis, including the coal screening process, would be conducted to determine whether or not the coal areas are acceptable for further consideration for leasing under 43 CFR 3420.1-4(e). The Bay RMP/EIS would be amended as necessary.

- Should coal operations be developed on Federal lands, an agreement would likely be developed between the State of Alaska and the Office of Surface Mining defining the regulatory role of the State in these mining operations (30 CFR 745).
- The Mineral Leasing Act authorizes the leasing of Federal lands for the development of oil shale. However, there are currently no regulations governing the leasing of oil shale. Oil shale will be leased on a case-by-case basis and issued under the authority of 30 U.S.C. Chapter 3A, Subchapter V, Section 241.
- Solid leasable minerals include chlorides, sulfates, carbonates, borates, silicates or nitrates of potassium or sodium and related products; sulphur, phosphate and related minerals; oil shale, coal and gilsonite (including all vein-type solid hydrocarbons). The likelihood of commercially valuable deposits of these minerals occurring on BLM-managed lands in the planning area is not presently known. If solid leasable mineral deposits (excluding oil shale and coal) were discovered, subsequent leasing, exploration, and development would be analyzed on a case-by-case basis and would be subject to regulations under 43 CFR 3500 (Leasing of Solid Minerals other than Coal and Oil Shale). Non-energy leasable minerals exploration and leasing will comply with the Mineral Leasing act of 1920, as amended, the Mineral Leasing Act for Acquired Land of 1947, as amended, Federal resource laws, the Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1946, non energy leasable minerals regulations and planning criteria.
- Lands under selection by the State and Native corporations are segregated from mineral leasing. The categories and constraints identified in this section only apply on lands retained in long-term Federal ownership.
- Oil and gas Stipulations prescribed for Federal mineral development in split estate situations apply only to the development of the Federal minerals. These stipulations do not dictate surface management.

Stipulations, Required Operating Procedures, and project-specific requirements would apply.

c.3. Locatable Minerals and Salable Minerals

(1) Goals

Maintain or enhance opportunities for mineral exploration and development while preventing undue and unnecessary degradation of other resource values from the development of locatable mineral resources. Tables 2.8 and 2.15 provide a comparison of the locatable and salable mineral management actions proposed under each Alternative.

(2) Alternative A

Under Alternative A, current management would continue. All ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals would remain in place, pending future legislation or unrelated management direction. Approximately 152,746 acres would be available for locatable mineral entry. Other withdrawals of approximately 3,999 acres would remain closed to Locatable and Salable Mineral entry. Approved Plans of Operations would contain stipulations based on site-specific resource concerns.

The Southwest MFP (BLM 1981), which addresses only the Goodnews Block of the planning area, required reviewing areas presently closed to the various mining laws and the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 for potential opening under those laws. However, this action was never implemented.

(3) Management Common to All Action Alternatives (B, C, and D)

(a) Inventory and Monitoring

- Identify areas open and closed to the operation of the mining laws and mineral material disposal.
- In open areas identify area-wide terms, conditions, or other special considerations needed to protect resource values.

(b) Management Decisions

- Mining of locatable minerals and salable material, including existing mineral claims, would be subject to the surface management regulations found in 43 CFR 3809. Surface occupancy under the mining laws will be limited to uses incident to the mining operation. Bonding will be required in accordance with BLM policy. Specific measures that would be utilized to minimize surface impacts and to facilitate rehabilitation and revegetation of mined areas can be found in the Required Operating Procedures in Section E of this chapter.
- All operations must file a Plan of Operations with BLM. The Plan of Operations must be approved prior to commencement of on-the-ground activities. Areas withdrawn from mineral location in which valid existing rights are being exercised require the filing of a Plan of Operations.
- Lands under selection by the State and Native corporations are segregated from locatable mineral and salable material entry. For State- and Native-selected lands, revocation or modification of ANCSA (d)(1) withdrawals as indicated below only apply if lands are retained in long-term Federal ownership.

(c) Land Use Requirements

Mining of locatable minerals and salable material will be subject to the surface management regulations found in 43 CFR 3809.

(4) Alternative B

Under Alternative B, ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals would be revoked and approximately 1,176,269 acres of BLM unencumbered lands and any selected lands (1,327,553 acres) which selection is revoked or relinquished would be available for locatable entry and the sale of mineral materials. Within the Bay planning area, approximately 3,999 acres would remain withdrawn from mineral entry due to withdrawals other than ANCSA 17(d)(1). Exploration and development would be guided by Required Operating Procedures, and project-specific requirements (Section E).

(5) Alternative C

Under Alternative C, ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals would be revoked. Approximately 1,176,269 acres of BLM unencumbered lands and any selected lands (1,327,553 acres) which selection is revoked or relinquished would be available for locatable entry and the sale of mineral materials with the following exceptions. Within the Bay planning area, approximately 3,999 acres would remain withdrawn from mineral entry due to withdrawals other than ANCSA 17(d)(1). Bristol Bay ACEC and Carter Spit ACEC would be closed to locatable mineral exploration and development (1,052,065 acres). The proposed Wild River segments of the Alagnak River, Goodnews River mainstem, and Goodnews River Middle Fork (15,125 acres) would retain the ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals until Congress has an opportunity to act on their nominations. Exploration and development would be guided by Required Operating Procedures and project-specific requirements (Section E).

(6) Alternative D

Under Alternative D, ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals would be revoked and approximately 1,176,269 acres of BLM unencumbered lands and any selected lands (1,327,553 acres) which selection is revoked or relinquished would be available for locatable entry and the sale of mineral materials. Within the Bay

planning area, approximately 3,999 acres would remain withdrawn from mineral entry due to withdrawals other than ANCSA 17(d)(1). Carter Spit ACEC would be closed to mineral material sales (62,863 acres). Exploration and development would be guided by Required Operating Procedures, and project-specific requirements (Section E).

Tables 2.8 and 2.15 provide the comparison of management actions proposed for locatable minerals under each Alternative.

Table 2.8. Locatable Minerals and Salable Minerals - Comparison of Alternatives

| Management Action | Alternative A (Current Management) | Alternative B | Alternative C | Alternative D (Preferred Alternative) |
|--------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Locatable Minerals | <p>152,746 acres would be identified as open for locatable mineral entry.</p> <p>Within the Bay planning area, approximately 3,999 acres would remain withdrawn from mineral entry due to withdrawals other than ANCSA 17(d)(1).</p> | <p>ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals would be revoked.</p> <p>Approximately 1,176,269 acres of unencumbered lands would be available for locatable mineral entry.</p> <p>Selected lands would be made available if the selection is revoked or relinquished.</p> <p>Within the Bay planning area, approximately 3,999 acres would remain withdrawn from mineral entry due to withdrawals other than ANCSA 17(d)(1).</p> | <p>Same as Alternative B, except the following lands would be closed to locatable mineral entry:</p> <p>Exceptions (Selected): Proposed wild river segments of the Alagnak, Goodnews mainstem, and Goodnews Middle Fork (15,125 acres).</p> <p>Exceptions (Unencumbered): Proposed Carter Spit ACEC (62,863 acres) and Bristol Bay ACEC (989,202 acres) would be closed to mineral entry.</p> <p>ANCSA 17 (d)(1) withdrawals for these river segments would be retained as an interim measure to provide an opportunity for Congressional action. Within the Bay planning area, approximately 3,999 acres would remain withdrawn from mineral entry due to withdrawals other than ANCSA 17(d)(1).</p> | <p>Same as Alternative B, except the following lands would be closed to locatable mineral entry:</p> <p>Exceptions (Unencumbered): Proposed Carter Spit ACEC (62,863 acres) would be open but would be subject to more stringent Required Operating Procedures.</p> <p>Within the Bay planning area, approximately 3,999 acres would remain withdrawn from mineral entry due to withdrawals other than ANCSA 17(d)(1).</p> |
| | Approved Plans of Operations would contain stipulations based on site-specific resource concerns. | Same as Alternative A, with the addition that an approved Plan of Operations will contain guidelines as listed in the Required Operating Procedures in Section E. | | |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| <p>Salable Minerals</p> | <p>Approximately 1,176,269 acres of unencumbered lands would be available for sale of mineral materials.</p> <p>Selected lands would be made available if the selection were revoked or relinquished.</p> <p>Within the Bay planning area, approximately 3,999 acres of unencumbered lands would remain withdrawn from mineral entry due to withdrawals other than ANSCA 17(d)(1).</p> | <p>Same as Alternative A, except the following lands would be closed to sale:</p> <p>Exceptions (unencumbered):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed Carter Spit ACEC (52,862 acres) Proposed Bristol Bay ACEC (989,202 acres) <p>Exceptions (Selected):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed Wild river segments of the Alagnak, Goodnews mainstem, and Goodnews Middle Fork (15,125 acres). <p>ANSCA 17 (d)(1) withdrawals would be retained for these river segments as an interim measure to provide an opportunity for Congressional action.</p> | <p>the following lands would be closed to sale:</p> <p>Exception (unencumbered):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed Carter Spit ACEC (62,862 acres) |
| | <p>Approved Plans of Operations would contain stipulations based on site-specific resource concerns.</p> | <p>Same as Alternative A, with the addition that approved Plans of Operations would contain guidelines as listed in the Required Operating Procedures in Section E.</p> | |

k) Recreation Management

(1) Goals

- Manage recreation to maintain a diversity of recreational opportunities.
- Improve access to appropriate recreation opportunities.
- Ensure a quality experience and enjoyment of natural resources
- Provide for fair value in recreation on BLM-administered lands

(2) Alternative A

Under Alternative A, all unencumbered BLM-administered lands in the Bay planning area (1,176,269 acres) and selected lands (1,327,553 acres) until they are conveyed would be managed as "Roaded Natural" under the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (Table 2.9).

Table 2.9. Current ROS Class Acreages and Descriptions for BLM-Administered Lands in the Bay Planning Area

| Class (acres/% of planning area) | Description |
|---|--|
| Primitive 0 Acres (0 %) | Area is characterized by essentially unmodified natural environment of fairly large size. Concentration of users is low and no conflicts with users are evident. Sights and sounds of road systems are nonexistent and area is remote. Human-built structures are few and far between, or are inconspicuous. Vegetation and soils remain in a natural state. |
| Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized 0 Acres (0 %) | Area is characterized by a predominantly unmodified natural environment of moderate to large size. Concentration of users is low, but there is often evidence of other area users. Area is generally free of motorized trails and roads. Sights and sounds of transportation systems (mainly air) are encountered. Local traditional subsistence use is evident but impacts are fairly minimal. Vegetation and soils are predominantly natural but some impacts exist. |
| Semi-Primitive Motorized 0 Acres (0 %) | Area is characterized by a predominantly unmodified natural environment of moderate to large size. Concentration of users is low, but there is often evidence of other users. Area is accessible to specialized OHVs but is generally not accessible to most four-wheel drive vehicles. Sights and sounds of the road system may or may not be dominant. Some portions of the area may be distant from road systems, but all portions are near motorized trails. Vegetation and soils are predominantly natural but localized areas of disturbance may exist. Local traditional subsistence use is evident but environmental impacts are minimal. |
| Roaded Natural 2,503,822 Acres (100 %) | Area is characterized by a generally natural environment with moderate evidence of sights and sounds of humans. Resource modification and utilization practices are evident, but harmonize with the environment. Concentration of users is low to moderate, and rustic facilities may exist for user convenience and safety. The area is accessible to conventional motorized vehicles and roads are maintained on a regular basis. Sights and sounds of the road system are evident and traffic levels may be highly variable. Areas of localized vegetation and soil impacts exist. User concentrations are low to moderate but may be high in popular recreational sites such as waysides, trailheads, and water access points. |
| Rural 0 Acres (0 %) | Area is characterized by a substantially modified natural environment. Resource modification and utilization practices are obvious. Sights and sounds of humans are readily evident and concentration of users is moderate to high. Some facilities may be designed for use by a large number of people. Areas typically are readily accessible to conventional motorized vehicles and are in areas where other camp structures are fairly common. Traffic levels are fairly constant. Areas of modified soil and vegetation exist. |
| Urban 0 Acres (0 %) | Area is characterized by a highly modified environment, although the background may have natural elements. Vegetation is often exotic and manicured. Soils may be protected by surfacing. Sights and sounds of humans predominate. Large numbers of users should be expected. Modern facilities may exist for the convenience and comfort of large numbers of people. |

(3) Management Common to All Action Alternatives (B, C, and D)

- Opportunities for commercial recreation will be provided consistent with area objectives for recreation management.
- The entire planning area would be designated as an Extensive Recreation Management Area. Management would be for dispersed recreation use, and no facilities would be developed. No significant amounts of recreational staffing would be expended for the area.
- Camping associated with commercial activities would be prohibited without written authorization from BLM. Short-term commercial camping would be limited to 14 days within a 28-day period. After a camp has been occupied for 14 days, the camp must be moved at least 28 miles. Short-term camping associated with non-commercial activities would be permitted for less than 14 days in one location.
- With respect to the limits of acceptable change, detailed recreation planning inventories such as Visual Resource Management (Table 2.4) and the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (Table 2.10) developed and documented for the Bay planning area would be utilized to determine existing and future desirable limits for the recreation program.

What Are "Limits of Acceptable Change"?

As developed by George Stankey and others (1985), using Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) is a process that requires deciding what kinds of conditions are acceptable in recreational settings, then prescribing actions to protect or achieve those conditions. The objective of the LAC system is not to prevent change but rather to control it, and to decide what management actions are required to maintain or enhance the desired conditions.

The LAC process consists of four major components:

- Specifying acceptable and achievable resource and social conditions, defined by a series of measurable parameters.
- Analyzing the relationships between existing conditions and those judged to be acceptable.
- Identifying objectives and management actions necessary to achieve those conditions.
- Planning and implementing a program of monitoring and evaluating program effectiveness to see if objectives are being met.

(4) Alternatives B, C and D

Under Alternatives B, C, and D the entire recreation area setting, including all unencumbered BLM-administered lands (1,176,269 acres) and selected lands (1,327,553 acres) until they are conveyed, would be managed as Semi-Primitive Motorized (Table 2.9).

Table 2.9 and Table 2.15 provide a comparison of the recreation management actions proposed under each Alternative.

I) Travel Management - Off-Highway Vehicles

(1) Goals

- Manage access to BLM-administered lands and water.
- Ensure protection of natural and cultural resources from OHV impacts.
- Improve access to appropriate recreation opportunities on BLM-administered lands and water.
- Incorporate BLM's national strategy for motorized off-highway vehicle use.
- Provide OHV access consistent with the provisions of ANILCA

- Manage OHV access for resource development by applying Required Operating Procedures and Stipulations.

(2) Alternative A

Under Alternative A, there would be no OHV designations within the Bay planning area.

(3) Management Common to All Action Alternatives (B, C, and D)

(a) Inventory and Monitoring.

Inventory trails in order to identify all existing trails and assess trail density and resource impacts. Inventory and assessment information would also be used to prioritize trail maintenance needs.

(b) Management Decisions

- Consider all access to public lands, including recreational, traditional, commercial, industrial, public roads and airstrips.
- Vehicle weight limits for OHV activities in “limited” designation areas would be to 2,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR includes load capacity) on unencumbered BLM managed lands. Encumbered (Selected) BLM managed lands, those lands selected by the State and Native corporations, will be managed similar to the State of Alaska’s *Generally Allowed Uses on State Land* [11 AAC 96.025] (Appendix F), which allows using an all-terrain vehicle with a curb weight of up to 1,500 pounds.
- Any activity-level plan or integrated activity plan (IAP) such as for an ACEC, would include a trails inventory in the activity planning area, would describe specific resource concerns or conflicts, and could describe specific designated trails and trail conditions or limitations of use (seasonal, vehicle class). Such a planning process would include public, State, and Native coordination. These plans would identify and prioritize specific maintenance needs and opportunities for trail development or loops. BLM unencumbered lands would be first priority for implementation-level planning.
- OHVs will use existing trails whenever possible (i.e. subsistence hunting need for game retrieval), consistent with the State’s Conditions on Generally Allowed Uses (11 AAC 96.025) (Appendix F). OHV use will be conducted in a manner that minimizes disturbance of vegetation, disturbance of soil stability, or impacts to drainage systems; changing the character of, polluting, or introducing silt and sediment into streams, lakes, ponds, seeps, or marshes; and disturbance of fish and wildlife. Snowmachines will be allowed open cross-country travel when adequate snow cover is present, that is, adequate to avoid crushing vegetation or removing ground cover.
- All proposals for OHV management under consideration would be consistent with Section 811 of ANILCA, which allows for “appropriate use for subsistence purposes of snowmobiles, motorboats, and other means of surface transportation traditionally employed for such purposes by local residents, subject to reasonable regulation.

What is Meant by “Open,” “Limited,” and “Closed” OHV Designations?

To comply with BLM regulation 43 CFR 8342.1, all BLM lands must be designated in one of the following three categories:

- “Open” - OHVs may travel anywhere; cross-country travel is permitted.
- “Limited” - OHVs are restricted to certain areas or specific trails, with restrictions that can include vehicle weight, type of vehicle, seasonal limitations, or travel restricted to designated trails.
- “Closed” - no OHV activity is allowed.

(4) Alternative B

Under Alternative B, All lands within the Bay planning area would be designated as “open” to OHV use.

(5) Alternative C

Under Alternative C, All lands would be designated as “limited” to OHV use, allowing for limitations on OHV activities to protect habitat, soil and vegetation, cultural resources, and recreation experiences. Additional limitations within the proposed Carter Spit ACEC and Bristol Bay ACEC would be defined through the development of activity plans to meet the objectives of the proposed SMAs.

(6) Alternative D

All lands would be designated as “limited” to OHV use, allowing for limitations on OHV activities to protect habitat, soil and vegetation, cultural resources, and recreation experiences. Additional limitations within the proposed Carter Spit ACEC would be defined through the development of activity plans to meet the objectives of the proposed Special Management Area.

Tables 2.10 and 2.15 compare the OHV management actions proposed under each Alternative.

Table 2.10. Comparison of Alternatives - Recreation Management. Off-Highway Vehicles and Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

| Management Actions | Alternative A - Current Management | Alternative B | Alternative C | Alternative D - Preferred Alternative |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| Travel Management on BLM Administered Unencumbered Lands | | | | |
| Designation of BLM-administered unencumbered lands for Off-Highway-Vehicle (OHV) Use | There would be no OHV designations on BLM-managed lands within the planning area. | <p>All unencumbered BLM-managed lands within the planning area would be designated as "open" for OHV use.</p> <p>Required Operating Procedures and Stipulations apply to authorized or permitted activities.</p> | <p>All unencumbered BLM-managed lands would be designated as "limited" for OHV use.</p> <p>Vehicle weight limits for OHVs would be 2,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR, includes load capacity). Allowing OHV travel on designated roads and trails vs. existing roads and trails would be addressed through the development of an activity plan if any significant resource impacts are observed.</p> <p>Limitations within the proposed Bristol Bay and Carter Spit ACECs would be defined through the development of activity plans to meet the objectives of the proposed Special Management Area.</p> <p>Required Operating Procedures and Stipulations apply to authorized or permitted activities.</p> | <p>All unencumbered BLM managed lands would be designated as "limited" to OHV use.</p> <p>Vehicle weight limits for OHVs would be 2,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR, includes load capacity). Allowing OHV travel on designated roads and trails vs. existing roads and trails would be addressed through the development of an activity plan if any significant resource impacts are observed.</p> <p>Limitations within the proposed Carter Spit ACEC would be defined through the development of activity plans to meet the objectives of the proposed Special Management Area.</p> <p>Required Operating Procedures and Stipulations apply to authorized or permitted activities.</p> |
| | No route restrictions; cross-country travel allowed everywhere on BLM lands within the planning area. | Same as Alternative A. | The "limited" designation is the same as the State's "Generally Allowed Uses on State Land," which requires OHVs to stay on existing trails whenever possible (Appendix F). | Same as Alternative C. |

| Travel Management on BLM Administered Encumbered Lands | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| Designation of interim BLM-administered encumbered lands for Off-Highway-Vehicle (OHV) Use | There would be no OHV designations on BLM-managed lands within the planning area. | <p>All interim BLM-managed encumbered lands within the planning area would be designated as “open” for OHV use.</p> <p>Required Operating Procedures and Stipulations apply to authorized or permitted activities.</p> | <p>All interim BLM-managed encumbered lands would be designated as “limited” for OHV use.</p> <p>The “limited” designation is the same as the State’s “Generally Allowed Uses on State Land,” which requires OHVs to stay on existing trails whenever possible (Appendix F).</p> <p>Vehicle weight limits for OHVs would be 2,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR, includes load capacity). Allowing OHV travel on designated roads and trails vs. existing roads and trails would be addressed through the development of an activity plan if any significant resource impacts are observed.</p> <p>Required Operating Procedures and Stipulations apply to authorized or permitted activities.</p> | <p>All interim BLM-managed encumbered lands would be designated as “limited” to OHV use.</p> <p>The “limited” designation is the same as the State’s “Generally Allowed Uses on State Land,” which requires OHVs to stay on existing trails whenever possible (as described in Appendix F).</p> <p>Vehicle weight limits for OHVs would be 2,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR, includes load capacity). Allowing OHV travel on designated roads and trails vs. existing roads and trails would be addressed through the development of an activity plan if any significant resource impacts are observed.</p> <p>Required Operating Procedures and Stipulations apply to authorized or permitted activities.</p> |
| Recreation Opportunity Spectrum for BLM Administered Unencumbered Lands | | | | |
| Designation of BLM-administered unencumbered lands for Recreation Experience Opportunities. | Manage as “Roaded Natural” under the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum. | Manage the entire recreation area setting as Semi-Primitive Motorized. | Same as Alternative B | Same as Alternative B. |

m) Renewable Energy

(1) Goals

Make BLM-managed lands available for development of renewable energy sources.

(2) Alternative A

Currently there are no permits issued for renewable energy facilities. No areas have been classified for hydropower in the Bay planning area. Requests for permits to develop renewable energy sources would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

(3) Management Common to All Action Alternatives (B, C, and D)

(a) Management Decisions

Potential exists for the development of a variety of sources of renewable energy on BLM-administered lands in the Bay planning area, including solar, wind, and biomass renewable energy facilities. No authorizations for these purposes have been issued on BLM-administered lands within the planning area to date, nor has any interest been expressed. BLM would consider applications for permit or lease to conduct such developments, subject to the constraints for leasing and permitting, on a case-by-case basis.

(b) Land Use Requirements

Permits for development of renewable energy would include Required Operating Procedures, Stipulations and project-specific requirements that minimize impacts to resources. Required Operating Procedures and Stipulations can be found in Section E of this chapter.

n) Lands and Realty Actions

(1) Goals

- Meet public needs for use authorizations while minimizing adverse impacts to other resource values.
- Adjust land ownership to consolidate public land holdings, acquire lands with high public resource values, and meet public and community needs.
- Assist with Alaska goal of completing the Alaska Lands Transfer program by established timeframes.
- Satisfy State and local government land use needs as well as public and/or private demonstrated needs as they arise.
- Identify disposal areas based on specific disposal criteria and other evaluation factors identified in this plan.
- Revoke BLM-held withdrawals deemed inappropriate and restore them to the public domain.
- Revoke withdrawals for other agencies at their request, provided that the lands are suitable to be restored to the public domain.

(2) Alternative A

Under Alternative A, the Lands and Realty program would continue in its current role of supporting other BLM programs, providing for land use authorizations, and supporting the BLM-Alaska State Office in conveyances. No specific lands would be identified for disposal, exchange, or acquisition. Land use authorizations such as FLPMA leases and permits would continue to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, as would other unauthorized uses, such as trespass cabins. Withdrawal review would not occur for

ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals or other smaller administrative withdrawals. Some uses would continue to be constrained by such withdrawals.

(3) Management Common to All Action Alternatives (B, C, and D)

(a) Land Tenure Adjustments

Land tenure adjustments could consist of a sale or an exchange. BLM may identify disposal areas by parcel or by specific areas that would be subject to disposal based on the application of the specific disposal criteria (FLPMA, Section 203 or 206) and other evaluation factors (e.g. resource values and concerns, accessibility, public investment, encumbrances, and community needs) identified in this plan. A goal of future adjustments would be to exchange identified isolated parcels of land for those which would help BLM to consolidate its unencumbered lands.

Lands withdrawn from the public land laws or segregated by State or Native selection would not be offered for disposal until such time as the State and Native corporations reach full entitlement.

(b) Entitlement and Settlement

BLM Anchorage Field Office (AFO) will assist in the conveyance of lands pursuant to legislative mandates. These mandates include the Alaska Statehood Act (1958), ANCSA (1971), and the Native Allotment Act (1906).

(c) Sales

Public lands meeting one or more stated criteria could be disposed of through FLPMA Section 203 (43 CFR 2710). No specific parcels available for sale are identified in this RMP.

What is the R&PP Act?

The Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act (43 CFR 2740, as Amended, 2001) authorizes the sale or lease of public lands for recreational or public purposes to State and local governments and to qualified nonprofit organizations. Examples of typical uses under the Act are historic monument sites, campgrounds, schools, fire houses, law enforcement facilities, municipal facilities, landfills, hospitals, parks and fairgrounds. Lands patented under this Act contain a reversionary clause in the patent, requiring continued use for the intended purpose.

(d) Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act Sales

Lands identified for disposal under this authority that are selected by either the State or Native corporations would have to be fully adjudicated before BLM would entertain a sale. In order to be analyzed for disposal under the R&PP Act (43 CFR 2740, as amended, 2001), the following conditions must exist:

- Lands must be readily accessible to a qualified applicant.
- The qualified applicant must have a defined purpose for the land and secure funding to develop it.
- R&PP sales would not be implemented on lands withdrawn for another agency without that agency's approval.
- Lands within a proposed SRMA or ACEC would not be considered available under R&PP, nor would lands acquired by the Federal government for inclusion in the proposed Special Management Area.

- In most instances, BLM would first lease lands under this Act and only convey the lands after the project is constructed in compliance with an approved development and management plan. An important exception to this would be tracts proposed as sanitary landfills, which would always be sold. They would not be leased.
- Application for tracts to be used as a sanitary landfill would only be conveyed with a clause that would prohibit reversion to the Federal government.
- Existing leases must be converted to patents if the lands are used for sanitary landfills.

No lands in the Bay planning area have been identified for disposal under this authority.

(e) Recreation and Public Purposes Leases

A lease allows the lessee to conduct authorized activities on BLM lands, at less than fair market value; however, the land remains in Federal ownership. Should the land be patented (authorized for sale), the land would be removed from Federal ownership to the lessee. R&PP leases would not be issued for sanitary landfill purposes. In the case of a patent for an existing lease of a sanitary landfill, it is possible for the land to be patented without a reversionary clause preventing the land from returning to Federal ownership (reverter clause).

(f) Airport and Airway Improvement Act of September 3, 1982

BLM would continue to process airport conveyances as requested by the Federal Aviation Administration. Each conveyance must contain appropriate covenants and reservation requested by the Federal Aviation Administration. As a condition to each conveyance, the property interest conveyed must revert to the Federal government in the event the lands are not developed for airport or airway purposes or are used in a manner inconsistent with the terms of the conveyance.

(g) Exchanges

BLM would seek to put in place mutually benefiting public interest land exchanges, which are authorized in Alaska by FLPMA, ANCSA, and ANILCA. Where feasible BLM will consider land exchanges to resolve issues of split estate of ownership of surface and subsurface resources. When considering public interest, full consideration must be given to efficient management of public lands and to secure important objectives including protection of fish and wildlife, cultural resources, and aesthetic values; enhancement of recreational opportunities; consolidation of mineral holdings for more efficient management; expansion of communities; promotion of multiple use values, and fulfillment of public needs. Exchanges would not be pursued until State and Native entitlements are fulfilled. Parcels of land in the Iliamna East block, Iliamna West block and two sections east of Aleknagik have been identified in this RMP/EIS for potential exchange.

(h) Withdrawals

Chapter 3 discusses the numbers and types of withdrawals on BLM lands in the Bay planning area and their purposes. Under all Alternatives, BLM would maintain the withdrawals other than ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals until the agency for which the land was withdrawn requested relinquishment of the withdrawal. Under Alternatives B, C, and D, BLM would relinquish ANCSA 17 (d)(1) withdrawals, except that in Alternative C, ANCSA 17(d)(1)s would be retained in the locations of three nominated WSRs until Congress had opportunity to act on the nominations.

ANCSA 17(d)(1) Withdrawals

Under the authority of ANCSA Section 17(d)(1), a series of public land orders were issued which withdrew and reserved lands for study and classification. These orders closed or segregated the lands to all forms of appropriation under the public land laws including mining and mineral leasing except for PLO 5180, which allowed location for metalliferous minerals. The review of these withdrawals within the Bay planning area is addressed in this RMP/EIS. The revocation of the ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals would remove the segregations and open the lands.

(i) Acquisitions

BLM Anchorage Field Office (AFO) does not anticipate acquiring lands within the Bay planning area during the life of this plan except perhaps through exchange or donations.

(j) Land Use Authorizations

A Land Use Authorization is an authorization issued by BLM to use BLM public lands. There are two kinds of authorizations. Category 1 includes leases, permits, and easements authorized under FLPMA; Category 2 is Rights-of-Way.

The State of Alaska and Native corporations have selected BLM-administered lands in the Bay planning area for conveyance. State and Native selections affect land use authorizations.

Selected and Unencumbered Lands

The term "selected lands" refers to selections on those BLM lands made in Alaska pursuant to the Alaska Statehood Act (1958) and ANCSA (1971). The selection serves to withdraw the lands from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws. Selected lands continue to be managed by BLM, but depending on the selecting entity, BLM is required to obtain concurrence or to seek and consider comments on any authorization to use the lands issued by BLM, depending on the selecting entity. The term "unencumbered lands" refers to lands that are managed by BLM without these constraints.

- **Native-selected lands.** Prior to issuing a use authorization the views of the Native corporation shall be obtained and considered. Monies received for any use authorization on Native-selected lands would go into an escrow account to be disbursed to the Native corporation upon conveyance.
- **State-selected lands.** In accordance with 906(k) of ANILCA, BLM must receive a letter of concurrence from the State of Alaska prior to issuance of any use authorization. BLM may then incorporate State terms and conditions in the use authorization if they comply with Federal laws and regulations. Money received for any use authorization on State-selected lands would go into an escrow account to be disbursed to the State upon conveyance. If the State objects to the use authorization, BLM would not issue it. If the proposal is for an authorization on land that has been top-filed by the State, pursuant to 906(e) of ANILCA, a letter of concurrence is not required if it has been determined to have no effect.

(k) FLPMA Leases

Stipulations and Required Operating Procedures would apply, and NEPA compliance is necessary for FLPMA Leases.

All FLPMA leases would be at fair market value rental. Cabins or permanent structures used for private recreation cannot be authorized under this authority. Proposals for leases for commercial use cabins would be considered on a case-by-case basis. Currently there are no commercial use cabins located on BLM lands in the Bay planning area. 43 CFR 2920.1-1 clarifies when a lease, permit, or easement is required.

(l) FLPMA Permits

FLPMA permits are short-term revocable authorizations to use public lands for a specific purpose. Permits are also issued at fair market value rental. According to 43 CFR 2920.2-2, they may be granted for a land use if BLM determines that the use is in conformance with the agency plans, policies, and programs, local regulations, and other requirements, and will not cause appreciable damage or disturbance to the public lands, their resources, or improvements.

In general:

- Cabins or permanent structure permits would not be issued for private recreation purposes.
- Trapping shelters would be authorized with short-term (maximum three year) permits renewable at the discretion of BLM.
- Shelters, tent platforms, and other temporary facilities and equipment used for hunting and fishing are allowed on BLM lands under Section 1316 of ANILCA, as stated above.

(m) FLPMA Easements

A FLPMA easement is an authorization for a non-possessory, non-exclusive interest in lands that specifies the rights of the holder and the obligation of BLM to use and manage the land in a manner consistent with the terms of the easement. Each proposal for an easement would be considered on a case-by-case basis and, as established in 43 CFR 2920.7, would contain terms and conditions protecting the environment and public health and safety.

(n) Rights-of-Way

A Right-of-Way is public land authorized to be used or occupied pursuant to a Right-of-Way grant. These grants are non-exclusive and authorize the holder to construct, operate, and maintain a project for a specified use for a specified amount of time. Rental fees for the Rights-of-Way would be at fair market value. BLM may exempt, waive or reduce rent for a grant under certain circumstances except that there are no reductions or waivers for Mineral Leasing Act authorizations. The construction of new roads and Rights-of-Way would recognize valid existing rights.

Rights-of-Way for oil or gas pipelines and their related facilities are issued under the authority of Section 28 of the Mineral Leasing Act (1920). In accordance with 43 CFR 2880, BLM shall place stipulations on these Rights-of-Way requiring:

- Restoration, revegetation, and curtailment of erosion.
- Compliance with air and water quality standards.
- Control or prevention of damage to the environment, to public or private property, and hazards to public health and safety.
- Protection of the subsistence interests of those living along the Right-of-Way.

Stipulations and Required Operating Procedures (located in Section E of this chapter), and project-specific requirements would apply.

Title V of FLPMA authorizes the issuance of Rights-of-Way for other uses, such as transportation systems (roads and trails), water pipelines and reservoirs, systems for generation and transmission of electric energy (hydro power and wind energy), and various types of communication sites. According to 43 CFR 2800 and ANILCA, BLM may grant such Rights-of-Way provided that:

- The natural resources located on public lands administered by a government agency, where the public lands are adjacent to private or other lands, are protected.
- Unnecessary and undue environmental damage to the lands and resources are prevented.
- The utilization of Rights-of-Way in common with respect to engineering and technological compatibility, national security and land use plans is promoted.
- Coordination, to the fullest extent possible, takes place with the State, local governments, interested individuals and appropriate non-governmental entities.
- Transportation corridors and communication sites will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

(o) Unauthorized Use

Unauthorized cabins may become the property of the U.S. Government and be managed as administrative sites, as emergency shelters, or as public use cabins. Possible management actions with respect to unauthorized cabins include removal of the structure, relinquishment to the U.S. Government for management purposes, and authorization by lease or permit for legitimate uses if they are consistent with identified area objectives.

Possible management actions for cabins under lease and permits would be the same as the latter two cases listed above. Criteria for prioritizing unauthorized cases are:

- Situations involving new unauthorized construction, public safety, or public complaints.
- Areas identified for long-term Federal management.
- Selected lands on which resources are being removed without authorization or where resource damage is occurring.
- Other selected lands.

(p) 17(b) Easements

Section 17(b) of ANCSA provided for the reservation of easements across Native village and Native corporation lands to provide public access to publicly owned lands or major waterways for the purpose of communication, transportation, utilities, and other similar public uses. BLM is responsible for identifying and reserving these easements during the conveyance process. The management of these easements lies with BLM or, under a Memorandum of Understanding, the appropriate Federal land manager. BLM does not have a similar agreement for transferring easement management to the State of Alaska. Consequently, BLM retains management responsibilities for easements reserved to access State lands.

BLM would continue to administer ANCSA Section 17(b) easements that have been reserved in patents or interim conveyances to ANCSA corporations as staffing and budgets allow. ANCSA 17(b) easement management will be transferred to the NPS or the USFWS for those easements that access lands administered by these agencies or are wholly within the boundaries of the park, preserve, Wild and Scenic River corridor, or refuge. On BLM-administered lands, BLM will continue to locate, mark and sign, GPS survey, map, and monitor ANCSA 17(b) easement locations as staffing and budgets allow. BLM reserves easements to ensure access to Federal, State, and municipal corporation lands as ANCSA conveyances occur. BLM would continue to identify, sign, map, monitor use, and realign ANCSA 17(b) easements, with priority based on:

- Easements with safety hazards.
- Easements accessing lands that are permanently managed by BLM or are important to BLM programs.

- Easements receiving high use.
- Easements required to implement an activity or implementation plan.
- Easements where land owners have made a request.
- Easements where environmental damage is occurring.

(q) Conservation Easements

BLM would continue to manage conservation easements for the specific purpose for which they were acquired. Currently there are no conservation easements on BLM-administered lands in the Bay planning area.

(4) *Alternative B*

Under Alternative B five isolated parcels in the planning area would be identified for exchange in order to consolidate BLM long-term holdings. Existing ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals would be revoked. Avoidance or exclusion areas would be identified on a case-by-case basis. Required Operating Procedures and Stipulations would apply to permitted activities.

(5) *Alternative C*

Under Alternative C no lands would be identified for disposal or land exchange. Existing ANSCA 17(d)(1) withdrawals would be revoked, except that those on proposed wild river segments of the Alagnak River, Goodnews River mainstem, and Goodnews River Middle Fork would be retained until Congressional action is completed. The Carter Spit ACEC and the Bristol Bay ACEC would be identified as avoidance areas for Land Use Authorizations. Required Operating Procedures and Stipulations would apply to permitted activities.

(6) *Alternative D*

Under Alternative D, as in Alternative B, five isolated parcels in the planning area would be identified for exchange. Existing ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals would be revoked. The Carter Spit ACEC would be identified as an avoidance area for Land Use Authorizations. Required Operating Procedures and Stipulations would apply to permitted activities.

Tables 2.11 and 2.15 provide the comparison of Alternatives for Lands and Realty.

Table 2.11. Comparison of Alternatives - Lands and Realty

| Management Actions | Alternative A - Current Management | Alternative B | Alternative C | Alternative D - Preferred Alternative |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Withdrawals | ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals would be retained. Withdrawals other than ANCSA 17(d)(1) would be retained (3,999 acres). | ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals would be revoked. Withdrawals other than ANCSA 17(d)(1) would be retained (3,999 acres). | Same as Alternative B. Existing (d)(1) withdrawals on proposed Wild River segments of the Alagnak, Goodnews mainstem, and Goodnews Middle Fork would be retained (15,125 acres) until Congress has opportunity to act on the nominations (Figures 2.9 and 2.10). | Same as Alternative B. |

| Management Actions | Alternative A - Current Management | Alternative B | Alternative C | Alternative D - Preferred Alternative |
|---------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| Land Use Authorizations | Land Use Authorizations: Right-of-Way avoidance areas, or exclusion areas, would be identified on a case-by-case basis. | Same as Alternative A. | Same as Alternative A. The proposed Carter Spit ACEC (62,862 acres) and the proposed Bristol Bay ACEC (989,202 acres) would be identified as avoidance areas for Land Use Authorizations. | Same as Alternative A. The proposed Carter Spit ACEC would be identified as an avoidance area for Land Use Authorizations (62,862 acres). |
| Disposal or Land Exchange | No lands identified for disposal or land exchange. | Five parcels would be identified in the Iliamna East planning block for land exchange: Chulitna River, T1N, R32W. Sections 21, 23, 28 (2,559 acres). Chekok Creek, T2 and 3 S, R30W. (14,676 acres). T11S R37W Sec. 2, 3, 4, 9, 10; Sec. 16, 21 portions. (3,532 acres). T9S R72W Sec. 18. BLM land that is not State selected but may be topfiled; however, it is not priority (605 acres). Aleknagik Vicinity, T10S R53W Sec. 7, 18, if not conveyed out of Federal ownership. | Same as Alternative A. | Same as Alternative B. |

3. Special Designations

a) Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

(1) Goals

To highlight areas where special management attention is needed to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, and scenic values, fish and wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes through designation of ACECs.

(2) Alternative A

Alternative A is a continuation of current management practices. Currently there are no SMAs designated for BLM-administered lands in the Bay planning area. Under this Alternative, there would be no designated ACECs.

(3) Management Common to All Action Alternatives (B, C, and D)

- Designation of an ACEC would not encumber selected lands within the proposed boundary. Selected lands would be managed to maintain the resource values of the lands until conveyance. The ACEC management prescription would not attach to conveyed lands. Following adjudication of all selections, Special Management Area boundaries may be adjusted.
- Additional site-specific actions or monitoring needed to manage ACECs would be made through ACEC-specific planning.
- A mining Plan of Operations would be required on any mining activity within an ACEC. Required Operating Procedures and project-specific requirements would be in effect.

(4) Alternative B

Under this Alternative, no areas would be proposed for designation as an ACEC.

(5) Alternative C

Under Alternative C, 1,052,065 acres would be designated as ACECs in two separate areas (Figures 2.7 and 2.8). BLM has identified two areas that contain lands, should they remain in long-term BLM ownership, which will benefit from a more focused management approach that would be provided by a designation as Special Management Areas. The proposal will not encumber any State-selected or Native-selected lands but will provide BLM with the necessary tools to devote additional resources to management through more site-specific planning for these areas should they remain in long term BLM ownership.

(a) Carter Spit ACEC

The Carter Spit and adjacent spits and wetlands would be designated as an ACEC to include 62,863 acres, all of which are BLM lands unencumbered by a valid selection currently in place. Should some adjacent lands currently selected not be conveyed but remain in BLM administration for the long term, they may be added to the ACEC after all conveyances are finalized. In addition to measures described in Section E, Required Operating Procedures and Stipulations, measures identified within the ACEC to protect scenic, wildlife, fisheries, botanical, and cultural values would include:

- Limiting OHVs to designated trails
- Opening the area to leasable mineral entry subject to Required Operating Procedures, Stipulations, and project-specific requirements such as subject to seasonal closures
- Opening the area to locatable mineral entry but closing it to mineral materials, subject to Required Operating Procedures and project-specific requirements
- Designating the area as a Right-of-Way avoidance area

- Closing the area to grazing

(b) Bristol Bay ACEC

The Bristol Bay blocks of BLM land would be designated as an ACEC to include 989,202 acres, all of which are BLM lands unencumbered by a valid selection currently in place. Should some adjacent lands currently selected not be conveyed but remain in BLM administration for the long term, they may be added to the ACEC after all conveyances are finalized. In addition to measures described in Section E of this Chapter, Required Operating Procedures and Stipulations, measures identified within the ACEC to protect scenic, wildlife, fisheries, botanical, and cultural values would include:

- OHVs would be limited to designated trails.
- The area would be open to leasable mineral entry subject to Required Operating Procedures, Stipulations, and project-specific requirements such as subject to seasonal closures.
- The area would be open to locatable mineral entry but closed to mineral materials, subject to Required Operating Procedures and project-specific requirements.
- The area would be designated as a Right-of-Way avoidance area.
- The area would be closed to grazing.

(6) Alternative D

Under this Alternative, 62,863 acres would be designated as an ACEC in one area. BLM has identified an area that contains lands, should they remain in long-term BLM ownership, which will benefit from a more focused management approach that would be provided by a designation as a Special Management Area. The proposal will not encumber any State-selected or Native-selected lands but will provide BLM with the necessary tools to devote additional resources to management through more site-specific planning for this area should it remain in long-term BLM ownership.

(a) Carter Spit ACEC

The Carter Spit and adjacent spits and wetlands would be designated as an ACEC to include 62,863 acres, all of which are BLM lands unencumbered by a valid selection currently in place. Should some adjacent lands currently selected not be conveyed but remain in BLM administration for the long term, they may be added to the ACEC after all conveyances are finalized. In addition to measures described in Section E of this Chapter, Required Operating Procedures and Stipulations, measures identified within the ACEC to protect scenic, wildlife, fisheries, botanical, and cultural values would include:

- OHVs would be limited to designated trails.
- The area would be open to leasable mineral entry subject to Required Operating Procedures, Stipulations, and project-specific requirements such as subject to seasonal closures.
- The area would be open to locatable mineral entry but closed to mineral materials, subject to Required Operating Procedures and project-specific requirements.
- The area would be designated as a Right-of-Way avoidance area.
- The area would be closed to grazing.

The preceding information is summarized in Table 2.12 and Table 2.15.

Table 2.12. Comparison of Alternatives - Special Management Areas.

| Management Actions | Alternative A (Current Management) | Alternative B | Alternative C | Alternative D (Preferred Alternative) |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| Recreation Management Areas | No recreation management areas would be established. | All BLM lands in the Bay planning area would be managed as an Extensive Recreation Management Area. | Same as Alternative B. | Same As Alternative B. |
| Wild and Scenic Rivers | No National System designations would be recommended. | Same as Alternative A. | The following river segments would be recommended for National WSR System designation: Bristol Bay Region (Figure 2.9): Alagnak River, portion (Wild, Recreational)(626 acres) Goodnews Bay Region (Figure 2.10): Goodnews River, mainstem (Wild)(7,138 acres) Goodnews River, middle fork, portion (Wild)(7,361 acres). 17 (d)(1) withdrawals for these river segments would be retained as an interim measure to provide an opportunity for Congressional action. | Same as Alternative A. |
| Area of Critical Environmental Concern | No Areas of Critical Environmental Concern would be recommended. | Same as Alternative A. | The following areas of unencumbered BLM land would be proposed as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern* (Figures 2.7 and 2.8): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bristol Bay ACEC (989,202 acres) Carter Spit ACEC (62,862 acres) | The following area of unencumbered BLM land would be proposed as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern.* (Figure 2.8): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carter Spit ACEC (62,862 acres). |
| * Should the contiguous block of selected land to the south of the proposed Carter Spit ACEC be returned to BLM administration, all or a portion of it would be included in the Carter Spit ACEC. | | | | |
| Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat | BLM would manage wildlife habitat and address concerns on a case-by-case basis during review of permits. | Same as Alternative A. In addition, BLM would develop a habitat management plan for the proposed Carter Spit ACEC. | | |

(b) Wild and Scenic Rivers

i. Goals

- Identify and recommend for designation any rivers in the planning area that are suitable for designation as components of the National WSR System.
- Identify and develop protection strategies for outstanding river-related values in the planning area.
- Protect water quality.

What is the Role of the RMP Process in the Wild and Scenic River Designation Process?

BLM identifies rivers in the planning area that are *eligible* and *suitable* for inclusion in the National WSR System.

Eligibility is based on the physical attributes of a river. *Eligible* rivers are free-flowing and possess one or more “outstandingly remarkable values” such as exemplary scenery, recreation opportunities, or characteristics that are unusual enough to attract visitors to the region, geologic features that are rare or unique to the region, and regionally or nationally important fish or wildlife.

Suitability is a management determination of the appropriateness of adding eligible rivers to the National WSR System. BLM assesses a number of factors, including the manageability of adding the river to the system (cost, legal jurisdiction), support for designation, and the compatibility of designation with other overall management of the area.

If BLM determines that a river is eligible and suitable as part of the National WSR System, it will recommend its designation in the Record of Decision (ROD) for the RMP. The Secretary of the Interior can choose to forward or change the recommendation, and Congress and the President must ultimately decide whether to make the river part of the system.

Alternative A would continue current management practices. Under this Alternative, no rivers, river segments, lakes, or streams would be evaluated for eligibility or suitability for inclusion in the National WSR System.

iii. Alternative B

Under Alternative B no rivers would be recommended as suitable for designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

iv. Alternative C

Under Alternative C, three river segments, a portion of the Alagnak River, a portion of the Goodnews River mainstem, and a portion of the Goodnews River Middle Fork would be found eligible and suitable for recommendation to Congress for designation as Wild Rivers in the National WSR System (Figures 2.9 and 2.10). ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawals would be retained at these locations until Congress had an opportunity to act on the recommendation, precluding oil, gas, and solid mineral exploration or development.

v. Alternative D

Alternative D would be the same as Alternative B.

The rationale for not carrying the eligible and suitable rivers identified in Alternative C forward to Alternative D is due to the complexity of managing three river segments located where there is a patchwork of land ownership, where the proposed water bodies are short segments of larger rivers, and (based on formal scoping) where there is a demonstrated lack of support by residents using the rivers.

Recommendations for Wild and Scenic River (WSR) designation under each Alternative are summarized in Tables 2.12 and 2.15. (Figures 2.9 and 2.10).

4. Social and Economic

a) Public Safety: Abandoned Mine Lands and Hazardous Materials

(1) Goals

- Protect public health and safety and environmental resources by minimizing environmental contamination from chemical, biological and radiological sources on public lands and BLM-owned or operated facilities.
- Comply with Federal and State hazardous materials standards and that all Federal and State mandates, laws, Executive Orders, regulations and policies are met.
- Maintain the health of ecosystems through location, assessment, cleanup, and restoration of contaminated sites.
- Manage oil and hazardous materials related risks, costs and liabilities.
- Integrate environmental protection and compliance with all environmental statutes into all BLM activities.

(2) Alternative A

BLM would continue to comply with Federal and State oil and hazardous materials management laws and regulations. As sites were discovered, they would be remediated. The Southwest MFP does not provide any guidance on hazardous materials management or abandoned mine lands.

(3) Management Common to All Action Alternatives (B, C, and D)

(a) Management Decisions

- Impacts caused by past hazardous materials management on BLM lands will be mitigated subject to the availability of funds.
- BLM will prevent creation of new hazardous material sites through implementation of best management practices for all land use permits, leases, ROW, and mining claims and will include pollution prevention measures in all permits, leases, and grants of ROW.

(b) Land Use Requirements

BLM will coordinate and consult with appropriate regulatory agencies for all cleanup plans, and will notify and coordinate hazardous materials activities with specific Native corporations on Native-selected lands.

b) Subsistence

(1) Goals

- Maintain and protect subsistence opportunities.
- Determine how the management actions, guidelines, and allowable uses prescribed in response to the other issues will affect subsistence opportunities, resources, and the socio/economic environment.
- Maintain sufficient quality and quantity of habitat to support healthy populations of important subsistence species of fish and wildlife.

- BLM will effectively manage subsistence harvests through regulations established by the Federal Subsistence Board, and in cooperation with ADF&G, other Federal agencies, the Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils, and the subsistence users.
- Ensure that rural residents engaged in subsistence use have reasonable access to subsistence resources on public lands.
- To the extent possible, minimize displacing resources from traditional harvest areas due to permitted activities.
- Avoid user conflicts over multiple use resources. Involve subsistence users in issue identification and conflict resolution.

(2) Alternative A

Under this Alternative, the BLM would continue to manage subsistence in accordance with sec. 802 of ANILCA. Before the BLM approves of any action, the effect of such use, occupancy, or disposition on subsistence uses and needs would be evaluated in compliance with Sec. 810 of ANILCA. The Southwest MFP (1981), applicable to the Goodnews Block only, does not provide any specific direction on subsistence management. However, the decisions under wildlife to protect wildlife habitat and to mitigate impacts of other uses on wildlife provides support for the subsistence program. Under this Alternative, most activities would be analyzed on a case-by-case basis and few uses would be limited or excluded. This Alternative provides few constraints on activities that have the potential to negatively affect subsistence resources.

(3) Management Common to All Alternatives (A, B, C, and D)

The opportunity for subsistence uses by rural residents on Federal public lands in Alaska is assured by law [sec. 802(1) of ANILCA]. Decisions made within this RMP will not affect BLM's role in administration of subsistence on Federal public lands. Under all Alternatives, BLM will continue to carry out or participate in the following administrative functions:

- **Involve Subsistence Users in Issues Identification.** Ten Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils (SRACs) were established in Section 100.22 of the Subsistence Management Regulations for Public Lands in Alaska as an administrative structure to provide a "meaningful voice for subsistence users in the management process. The Bay planning area encompasses parts of the Bristol Bay and Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Federal Subsistence Regions. BLM field staff members as well as those of other agencies meet twice each year with both Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils to identify emerging issues in conservation, allocation, and appropriate regulation of subsistence harvests.
- **Manage Land/Habitat; Assess Impacts to Subsistence.** ANILCA Section 810 establishes a distinct set of requirements for assessment of potential impacts to subsistence from Federal land decisions. These supplement the discussion of potential impacts to subsistence resources and uses found as part of conventional NEPA environmental reviews.
- **In a Multi-agency Setting, Monitor Resource Populations Used for Subsistence Purposes.** When these monitoring efforts are focused on key subsistence resources, they are a major contribution to the quality of subsistence management efforts.
- BLM will work cooperatively with ADF&G and other Federal agencies to implement the Mulchatna Caribou Herd Monitoring Plan, the Western Brown Bear Management Area planning group, the Unit 18 Goodnews/Arolik Moose Moratorium and Restoration Plan, the migratory bird MOU, Boreal Partners in Flight Conservation Plan, and other cooperative management efforts of which BLM is a part.
- **In a Multi-agency Setting, Manage Subsistence Harvests through regulations established by the Federal Subsistence Board.** With heavy reliance on SRAC input and interagency coordination, the development of subsistence regulations is a multi-step process.