



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BLM-Alaska to Issue a Supplement to the Eastern Interior

Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement and Extend the Comment Period

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced today its intention to release a Supplement to the Eastern Interior Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) and extend the comment period for the Draft RMP/EIS past the current deadline of July 30, 2012. The Supplement, expected in coming weeks, will amend Alternative D of the Draft RMP/EIS to address hardrock mineral leasing in the White Mountains National Recreation Area. The Supplement will be available for a minimum 90-day public comment period. The BLM will continue to accept comments on the Draft RMP/EIS during this 90-day comment period, and will schedule additional public meetings and Section 810 subsistence hearings for the Supplement. The availability of the Supplement and the closing date for the extended comment period will be published in the *Federal Register* and on the BLM Eastern Interior RMP Home Page through www.blm.gov/ak when the Supplement is released for public comment.

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act withdraws the White Mountains National Recreation Area from the mining laws, but allows the Secretary of the Interior to issue leases for hardrock minerals if such leasing would not have significant adverse effects on the recreation area. The Draft RMP/EIS released in February considered hardrock mineral leasing in the White Mountains but did not analyze it in detail. Public comments received in response to the Draft RMP/EIS prompted the BLM to conduct further legal research on this issue. As a result, the BLM decided that the Supplement was needed to analyze a full range of alternatives and to obtain public comment on hardrock mineral leasing in the White Mountains. Although

release of the Supplement will delay the planning schedule for the RMP/EIS, the BLM concluded that addressing the issue of hardrock mineral leasing now is preferable to risking even longer delays by waiting until later in the planning process.

For information about the Eastern Interior planning process, visit the Eastern Interior RMP Home Page at www.blm.gov/ak or contact the BLM at (907) 474-2340 or (800) 437-7021 (within Alaska).

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The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, recreational and other activities on BLM-managed land contributed more than \$130 billion to the U.S. economy and supported more than 600,000 American jobs. The Bureau is also one of a handful of agencies that collects more revenue than it spends. In FY 2012, nearly \$5.7 billion will be generated on lands managed by the BLM, which operates on a \$1.1 billion budget. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.