

Steese Minerals Management

Eastern Interior Draft Resource Management Plan

BLM-Alaska Eastern Interior Field Office

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Steese Subunit and Existing Minerals Management

Steese Subunit Stats

- Subunit boundary encompasses 4.2 million acres.
- 1.3 million acres in this area are managed by the BLM.
- Approximately 53,000 acres within the subunit are either State or Native selected.

Current Status of Minerals Management

- All BLM-managed lands in the Steese NCA are currently withdrawn from mineral leasing and entry by a variety of PLOs and federal laws.
- The Birch Creek WSR Corridor (within one-half mile of the banks) is withdrawn from mineral entry and leasing under ANILCA 606(a)(2) and administered pursuant to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.
- Mining is occurring on some valid existing claims that existed before the withdrawals were enacted.
- No lands within the Steese Subunit are open to leasing of either fluid minerals (oil and gas) or solid minerals (coal). There are no existing mineral leases.
- Locatable mineral activity is limited to valid existing claims.

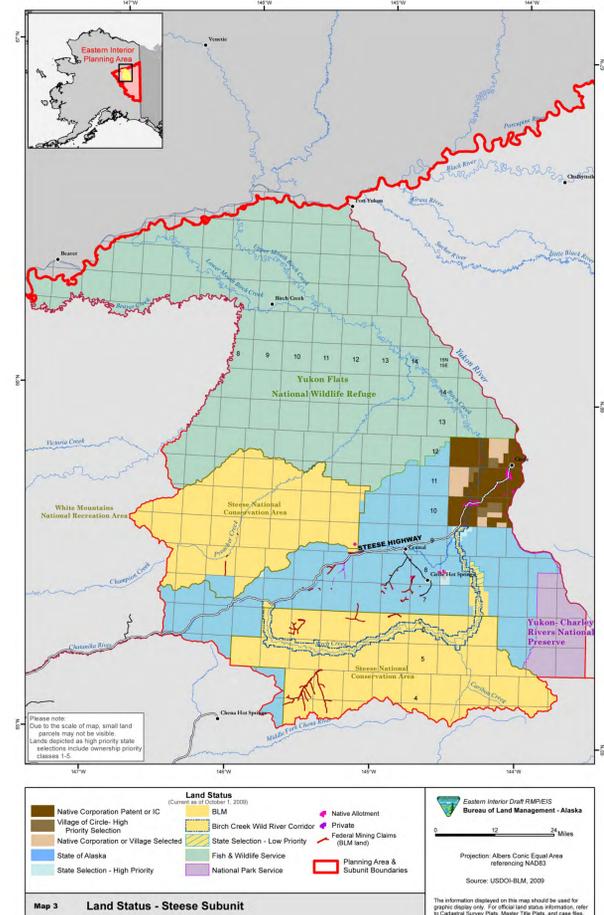
Comparison of Alternatives - Minerals Management

Program	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
Fluid Leasable Minerals (e.g., oil and gas)	323,000 acres (27% of the Steese NCA) recommended to be opened to the mining laws and mineral leasing.	42,000 acres open with no surface occupancy; 3,000 acres open with standard stipulations; 1,231,000 acres closed. 100% Steese NCA closed.	214,000 acres open with minor constraints; 71,000 acres open with standard stipulations; 992,000 acres closed. 80% Steese NCA closed.	524,000 acres open with minor constraints; 169,000 acres open with standard stipulations; 583,000 acres closed. 54% of the Steese NCA closed.
Solid Leasable Minerals (e.g., phosphate and sodium)	This decision was not implemented and the entire subunit remains withdrawn.	45,000 acres open; 1,231,000 acres closed.	285,000 acres open; 992,000 acres closed.	693,000 acres open; 583,000 acres closed.
Locatable Minerals (e.g., gold mining claims)		The Steese NCA would be closed.	80% of the Steese NCA would be closed.	54% of the Steese NCA would be closed.
Salable Minerals (e.g., sand and gravel)	1,276,000 acres (entire subunit) open.	45,000 acres open; 1,231,000 acres closed.	1,207,000 acres open; 69,000 acres (Birch Creek closed)	1,276,000 acres open; 0 acres closed.

Process for Opening Areas to Mineral Entry

1. At the State level, BLM recommends areas to open or closed to mineral entry in a resource management plan.
2. At the Washington level, BLM completes a formal process in which they make recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior regarding modifications to existing land withdrawals.
3. The Secretary reviews and lifts the withdrawals. Lands would then be open to mineral entry.

Steese Subunit Map



Summary of the Preferred Alternative (C) - Locatable Minerals

GOAL: Maintain or enhance opportunities for mineral exploration and development, while maintaining other resource values.

Approximately 80% or 992,000 acres in the following areas would be closed to locatable mineral entry :

- The Mount Prindle and Big Windy Hot Springs RNAs
- The Birch Creek, Rock Creek, Wolf Creek, Pinnell Mountain Trail, and Rocky Mountain Uplands RMZs
- That portion of the Clums RMZ that overlaps with the Steese ACEC
- The Bachelor Creek portion of the Preacher Creek RMZ
- The Steese ACEC
- All Riparian Conservation Areas
- Zone 3 disposal land (federal mining claims outside the Steese NCA and Birch Creek WSR Corridor)
- BLM's Central administrative site
- Harrison Creek reclamation area

All remaining lands in the Steese Subunit, approximately 20% or 285,000 acres, would be open to locatable mineral entry. Within the Steese NCA, this includes most of the Harrison RMZ, part of Preacher Creek RMZ, and Clums RMZ (except that part that is within the Steese ACEC).

