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Bureau of Land Management

News Release

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BLM-Alaska Announces Management Plan for Alaska's Eastern Interior *Agency designates 6.5 million acres for off-highway use and ensures continued mineral development in the Fortymile Mining District*

ANCHORAGE – The Bureau of Land Management announced the availability of the Proposed Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Eastern Interior planning area in east-central Alaska. The Eastern Interior plan covers 6.5 million acres of BLM-administered public land and resources, including the White Mountains National Recreation Area, the Steese National Conservation Area, and the Fortymile area. In addition, the plan covers BLM lands in the upper Black River area and along the highway system—areas that, partially due to their remoteness, have never before been included in a BLM land use plan.

The broad plan strikes the right balance between responsible development, protection of critical subsistence use, and the conservation of important habitats for a number of fish and wildlife species. The preferred alternative in the Final EIS allows for off-highway vehicle use, with some site-specific guidelines, on 6.5 million acres of BLM-managed land; more than one million acres for continued development in the Fortymile Mining District; and protection of priority habitats for moose, caribou, and other wildlife critical for subsistence use.

“We’ve worked hard to listen to the concerns of a diverse group of local stakeholders who rely on these public lands for their subsistence, mineral development, and recreation,” said BLM Alaska State Director Bud Cribley. “The result is a plan that balances resource use and development in a way that conserves important natural and cultural values.”

The BLM developed the Eastern Interior Proposed RMP/Final EIS with extensive local involvement, including the Chalkyitsik Village Council, Gwichyaa Zhee Gwich’in Tribal Government, the State of Alaska, and miners from the Fortymile area. All of these stakeholder groups provided important information about their current and anticipated future uses of the lands in the planning area.

The Federal Register will publish the Eastern Interior Proposed RMP/Final EIS Notice of Availability on Friday, July 29, beginning a 30-day public protest period and 60-day Governor’s

consistency review for the proposed plan. The BLM expects to release a final decision on the proposed plan in December 2016.

The Eastern Interior Proposed RMP/Final EIS and instructions for filing a protest are available online at www.blm.gov/ak/eirmp. Protest instructions are in the Dear Reader Letter and at 43 CFR 1610.5-2.

The plan is available to review at the BLM Fairbanks District Office located at 222 University Avenue, Fairbanks, Alaska 99709, and from the BLM Alaska State Office Public Information Center (Public Room) at 222 W. 7th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99513.

For more information about the Eastern Interior Proposed RMP/Final EIS or to request a CD, contact the BLM at (907) 474-2200 or (800) 437-7021.

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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. The BLM's mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America's public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. In Fiscal Year 2015, the BLM generated \$4.1 billion in receipts from activities occurring on public lands.