



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

# News Release

Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Office, Office of Communications  
222 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue #13, Anchorage AK 99513-7504  
Tel: 907-271-5555 Fax: 907-271-5421  
[www.blm.gov/alaska](http://www.blm.gov/alaska)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Lesli Ellis-Wouters, [lellis@blm.gov](mailto:lellis@blm.gov); 907-271-4418

**News Release No. 17-01**

**Date: Jan. 5, 2017**

---

## **BLM Approves Management Plan for Alaska's Eastern Interior**

*Agency plan balances use for 6.5 million acres of public land in the interior of Alaska*

ANCHORAGE – The Bureau of Land Management announced a new Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Eastern Interior Planning Area in east-central Alaska that increases recreational access for the public while at the same time ensuring continued access for mining and development. This plan and its balanced approach resulted from vast stakeholder input.

The RMP covers approximately 6.5 million acres of BLM-managed public land in the Fortymile area, the Steese National Conservation Area, and the White Mountains National Recreation Area. In addition, the plan covers BLM-managed lands in the subunits of Draanjik (formerly known as the Upper Black River) and along the highway system—areas that, partially due to their remoteness, have never before been included in a BLM land-use plan.

“People rely on these public lands for their livelihood, for subsistence, for recreation, for access to state and private lands and many other reasons,” said Geoff Beyersdorf, District Manager of the BLM Fairbanks District Office. “Over eight years, we have listened and taken the public’s concerns into account. With approval of these plans, we can move forward with management of these public lands in a way that balances use, development, and conservation.”

Prior to developing the plan, the BLM met with stakeholders, working extensively with the Chalkyitsik Village Council, Gwichyaa Zhee Gwich’in Tribal Government, the State of Alaska, White Mountains’ recreational users and miners from the Fortymile area. These stakeholders provided key information about their current and anticipated future uses of the lands in the planning area. The RMP was then developed to address such stakeholder issues as climate change, fisheries, minerals, recreation and visitor services, subsistence, water quality, and wildlife.

The plan successfully balances responsible development, protection of critical subsistence use, and the conservation of important habitats for a number of fish and wildlife species. Highlights of the plan include:

- Allowing for off-highway vehicle use, with some site-specific guidelines, on 6.5 million acres of BLM-managed land;

- Ensuring that more than one million acres remain open to continued development in the Fortymile Mining District; and
- Protecting priority habitats for moose, caribou, fish and other wildlife critical for subsistence use.

The BLM approved the preferred alternative under four new Records of Decision.

The approved Resource Management Plan and Records of Decision are available online at: [www.blm.gov/alaska](http://www.blm.gov/alaska). Additional information is available from Jeanie Cole, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, at 907-474-2340.

###

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.