



Central Yukon

Resource Management Plan



Frequently Asked Questions: Withdrawals and Mining

What is a ANCSA 17(d)(1) withdrawal?

Section 17(d)(1) in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) authorized the Secretary of Interior to withdraw and reserve public lands for study and classification. This was done through a series of Public Land Orders (PLOs) issued between 1972 and 1975.

Have withdrawn lands been opened in the past in Alaska?

Some of the 17(d)(1) withdrawals in Alaska were modified in the early 1980s, opening about 10 million acres to mineral leasing and the general mining laws. None of the withdrawals in the Central Yukon Planning area, however, have been modified since the early 1970s.

Are there 17(d)(1) withdrawals in the planning area?

Yes there are seven withdrawals in the planning area. These close parts of the planning area to mineral entry and location under the 1872 mining law, and to mineral leasing under the mineral leasing laws. PLOs 5180 and 5186 allow for metaliferous mineral location.

What is a metaliferous mineral?

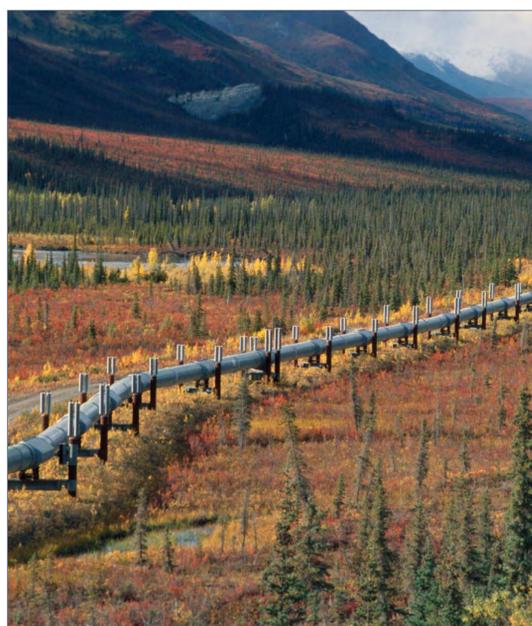
Metaliferous minerals are minerals that contain or would yield through standard processes metals or alloys such as gold, silver, copper, tin, and zinc.

What are locatable, salable, and leasable minerals?

Locatable minerals are minerals for which the right to explore, develop, and extract mineral resources is established by the staking of mining claims, under the General Mining Law of 1872. Examples include metallic minerals (such as gold, silver copper, zinc) and non-metallic minerals (such as gypsum, diatomaceous earth, fluorspar). A withdrawal is required to close areas to locatable minerals.

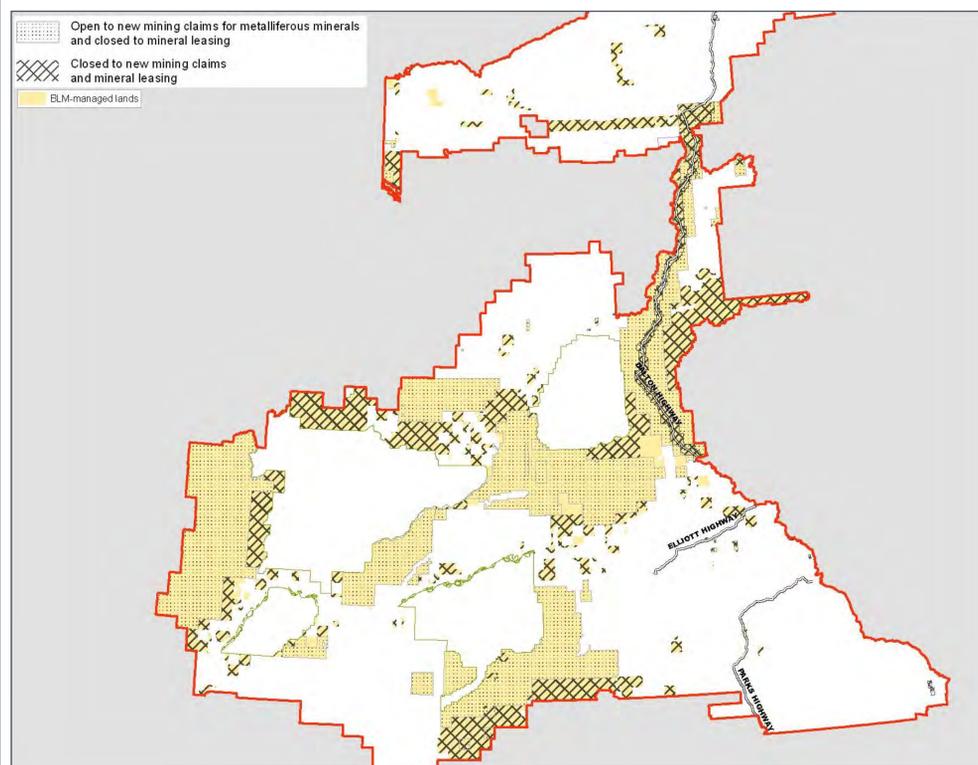
Leasable minerals are defined by the Mineral Leasing Act and are either solid or fluid leasable minerals. Solid leasable minerals include coal, oil shale, native asphalt, phosphate, sodium, potash, potassium, and sulfur. Fluid leasable minerals include oil, gas, coalbed natural gas, and geothermal resources. Exploration and production of these minerals on BLM lands may only occur on leases acquired by competitive leasing. The BLM can close lands to leasing with a decision in the RMP. No withdrawal is needed.

Salable minerals, also called mineral materials, include sand, gravel, dirt, and rock. The majority of the BLM's mineral material sites in Alaska are for sand and gravel. The primary users are the State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (for highways and airports) and Alyeska Pipeline Service Company (for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System). BLM sells mineral materials to the public at fair market value, but gives them free to states, counties, or other government entities for public projects.



Trans-Alaska Pipeline

Existing ANCSA Withdrawals in the Planning Area



Public Land Order	Effect
5169, 5173, 5179, 5184, 5254	Withdraws from location and entry under the mineral laws and from leasing under the leasing laws
5180 and 5186	Withdraws from entry under the mineral laws (except location for metaliferous minerals) and from leasing under the leasing laws.

Photo courtesy of Dennis R. Green

Existing Minerals Management

About 60 percent of the planning area is open to location of mining claims for metaliferous minerals.

The remainder of the area is closed to new mining claims although there are valid existing claims that predate the withdrawals in some areas.

Most if not all BLM-lands in the planning area are currently closed to mineral leasing.

The entire planning area is open to sand and gravel sales.

1. At the state level, the BLM recommends areas to open or closed to mineral entry in a resource management plan.
2. At the Washington level, the BLM completes a formal process in which it makes 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.

Questions to Consider

Are there areas that should be opened to new mineral entry?

Are there areas that should be closed to mining?