

Central Yukon Resource Management Plan Public Scoping Meeting Notes Anaktuvuk Pass * November 20, 2013



Planning Team

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Questions and Comments during the Presentation:

Planning Area and Planning Process

Is this plan that will be developed similar to the NPR-A Management Plan? *BLM: This is similar in that the lands are still BLM lands. The [National] Petroleum Reserve Alaska (NPR-A) was set-aside specifically for development that but these lands weren't. The planning process is similar but that the NPR-A process is different as it is different legislation that sets that process.*

How and what exploration studies does BLM do? *BLM (Shelly): BLM does not do anything with oil exploration. But if the companies propose it they might be involved with a permit and do partner with the other agencies and the state on the wildlife studies.*

What about special studies [related to tundra travel]? What does the State do for studies now? *BLM: noted the State had done a lot of studies on tundra travel.*

Land Ownership and Land Use

Commenter noted they would not like any roads around this area especially emanating from the Dalton Highway. He would be concerned with any type of road even if it is to Ambler. What if there is a big coal mine on the way to Ambler; what environmental impacts would they have on the air quality and the water quality?

The Upper Nigu River is not far from there. Does the community have time to figure out what we are concerned about and say we do not want the State to take over this area – especially the area south of Umiat?

How much of the lands does the State want to take over?

What are the lands that are special areas and how do you nominate them – like historic sites? *BLM: If BLM keeps these areas it could. The wilderness study area is a special area as it is very unique and the only one BLM has. But it could in the future become a wilderness designated area that was recommended to congress for some of the acres, But even if that doesn't happen if the public and enough people express an interest you could nominated special habitats, historical sites or even hazards.*

At one point, all the lands must have been BLM-managed lands before they were selected.

The State lands in the foothills are really our land. A lot of that land (that belongs to the State because it says on a piece of paper)...that land is our land, since a long time ago.

What is the status of the Road to Umiat project? *BLM: Described that was part of the road to resources initiative of the State. That project looks at the shortest path from the Dalton Highway to the resource.*

That road that they are proposing to Ambler would be another possible impact on us. It will have unforeseen impacts. Are we going to be impacted by caribou from the other side? The new generation needs to think in those terms. I am glad there are some younger people here. For us we have been fighting for a long time, but that doesn't mean that we are dead. the old generation still is doing the speaking on it.

Is the road to Umiat is that a closed thing or are they diverting between Point Lay and Point Hope in that area? Where is the road to Umiat on the maps in that area (pointing)? How close is it to here?

Group discussion of where road was proposed to Wainwright, where it was proposed and the alternative that was selected in the EIS. *BLM noted that one route was not selected and instead another on State lands was that is between an ACEC and Galbraith route. This may be because this area is not a special designated area.*

The Umiat Road route would have a significant impact on the way the [caribou] herd moves. The herd sometimes goes up there and then swings back around and on our areas of the road proposed that way. It is just something to think on maybe. On the Umiat project there were 4 or 5 alternatives and the ones they wanted were from Galbraith straight. The Alternative 1 all along from Galbraith to Umiat I know they did their studies but it was all through cultural and traditional sites, even graves.

Subsistence and Traditional Way of Life

When studies are done on caribou, do you know how it is affecting the migration? Are there any studies that have been done about this? *BLM: The Western Arctic caribou herd was researched in regards to the Red Dog Mine road and the affects it has on caribou that people then used to think about available information. There are also studies about how and if and how the Dalton Highway affect migration of herds. Some experience says it does affect the migration and some says it does not.*

Scientists don't live here and don't migrate with the caribou the way we do. We feel about our caribou and they do not migrate through Anaktuvuk Pass like they used to. Do the studies themselves affect how they migrate? Is it affecting the migration every time the state or BLM or others try to do the studies? *BLM: Talked about how the caribou are radio collared and the importance of the date and then the impacts to the animals and how animal is collared. ADFG puts the fewest radio collars the caribou on without darting to reduce the stress.*

Hunters now have to go a long way out to hunt caribou. The hunt is hurt by diverting the leaders of the migration.

The problem is that the caribou are not coming down through Anaktuvuk like they used to. Anaktuvuk should have more caribou coming through than they have now. The Western Arctic, Teshekpuk Lake, and Central Arctic herds come through, but they never get the Porcupine herd. We used get the Porcupine herd to a long time ago before the construction of the Dalton Highway.

BLM [Question to audience]: Do people from Anaktuvuk in past or more recently get out onto BLM lands on snowmachine in the winters – do people use the BLM lands areas?

We trap all the way up to Galbraith Lake to Nuiqsut and down to Umiat. Commenter noted that Nuiqsut residents trap a long way- all the way to Nigu Crossing and use these areas all the way to Umiat also. From Foothills to Umiat is where trapping occurs. There is lots of trapping for wolverine. Trapping requires a lot of traveling and a big place. The trapping area is much bigger than the map provided.

We used to walk to Nuiqsut and that is a historic route that was used as a trading center on the Brooks Range. They would go the Colville Delta every year for Nunavut. My family – my mother she was born on the Canadian side and we used to walk back and forth and back and forth again. By walking that is a long way! Think of use of how far our own people [people from Anaktuvuk Pass] go that is a long long ways. My Dad used to walk to the Killik River and back to Anaktuvuk Pass. This is something we know about; this is where they hunted wolf pups from May to June. Those guys had to walk just to get something to eat. For those who used to walk to Toolik Lake and back, we did this because we had to survive.

Having been around in the pipeline era, there was signage created and references to cultural areas with some of the names up here. If there is significance to any features on the road [Dalton Highway], then it needs to talk about the whole area our area, our hunting grounds. We have been talking about them forever. Being here pre-pipeline and a part of that area forever, it is what we would die for. The main part of our culture that we have is tied so close to the caribou culture. I think for the first time Nuiqsut is feeling that. Nuiqsut they are surrounded by the oil companies and they say want to go hunting south and there is this and they want to go up north and there is this and they want to go east and there is a pipeline and of course all those others that are being built up on the east side. For the first time they are feeling so frustrated and so I think they are being choked. And I just wanted to say we have been a part of this thing and I think those cultural people that are on the pipeline south of us and elsewhere; if you are going to be using some of that information I think you should think a little on that of course because they have their

own area and we have our own area and we are nomadic and I am one of those last that traveled from over inland.

It is the information that is being presented in the corridors to the south of us that we know that and ours is special. You have to be pretty tough to live up here. There are no rivers to talk about, there are not roads to talk about, and we live here and we loved it. All those people (referring to map of planning area south) those people are representing their own ideas and for us that is the most affected voice where we are and I just - am a major stakeholder - and these guys here (pointing south) are going to get to use our land and they are going to get a benefit out of it. I think I know where I am coming from in a way but it is important that they need to think about some of these things and the impact. We do have an impact here that we can talk about, but not so much there.

Special Areas

We are in the Central Arctic Management Area (the Dalton Highway is just south and east of us). Is there a way for lands in that area, that we think are special places or special habitat (for species like wolves and sheep) to still be designated as special areas?

Wilderness - What are you studying in terms of flying over protected wilderness areas? *BLM): We are studying the wilderness area making sure it does not have any developments and stays natural looking, or making sure there are no roads or other things that might detract from the wilderness values of it. Someone flies over it to check on it once a year.*

How do we tell you about special areas that need protection?

Cultural Resources

People need to be careful about how travel occurs across the tundra over these parts because of burial areas and religious crosses that are located northwest of here. Some people know, but not all people need to know where they are.

When they did the archeological studies on the Galbraith corridor for the proposed road to Umiat there were a lot of archeological sites that they found along that corridor like fire pits and sites. When we were in a lot of those meeting one of the elders said they used to walk to Toolik Lake and do a lot of stuff at Toolik Lake and even the Galbraith areas and the Nigu area.

BLM [Question to audience]: Do you notice that Sukakpak Mountain it is such a prominent mountain that I have wondered if it has a special significance to local people - that big spire of the side of the Dalton Highway? The tourists seem to really like it. Discussion that this is an important area - there are a lot of stories about that.