

Central Yukon Resource Management Plan



Newsletter 2 • March 2015

This is the second of several newsletters about the Central Yukon Resource Management Plan (RMP), which the BLM is developing to guide future management of 13.1 million acres of public land in central and northern Alaska for the next 15 to 20 years. The Central Yukon RMP is a major planning effort that will take several years to complete. During the planning process (outlined on page 3) we hope to hear from *you!* The schedule includes numerous opportunities for you to get involved.

The recently concluded scoping phase of the plan was our chance to identify concerns of importance to the public. We want to thank everyone who participated in the 16 meetings we held in 15 communities in and around the Central Yukon RMP planning area. We also thank those who submitted comments by mail or email, as well as those who nominated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) for our consideration. Your time and thoughts are greatly appreciated throughout this planning process.

The comments you have provided through the scoping process included several recurring themes. We received numerous comments that mentioned:



Field manager Shelly Jacobson looks at maps with residents of Venetie during a public scoping meeting.

- Management and use of natural resources
- Impacts to local and subsistence economies
- Public safety
- Managing lands for multiple uses

In this newsletter, we summarize these and other common issues and concerns that surfaced during the scoping process. We also describe how we are using public comments (including ACEC nominations), what is next on the agenda, and how you can continue to participate. We look forward to your continued interest and participation in the RMP's development. Our goal is a plan that reflects your values and concerns about future management of the affected lands.

Shelly
Shelly Jacobson
Field Manager

Alaska



What We Learned from Scoping



Public scoping meeting in Allakaket.

After the scoping period ended, we analyzed your comments to identify relevant issues to be addressed in the Central Yukon RMP. This analysis resulted in a report that highlights common themes, concerns and issues brought to our attention during scoping. The scoping report is now available on the BLM website (www.blm.gov/ak/cyrm) or by request from the BLM. The report does not make decisions or set forth policies — its purpose is to help ensure that the Central Yukon RMP addresses issues most important to the community members and anyone who may be affected by the BLM's decisions.

The 16 public scoping meetings consisted of a brief open house followed by a presentation by the Field Manager and

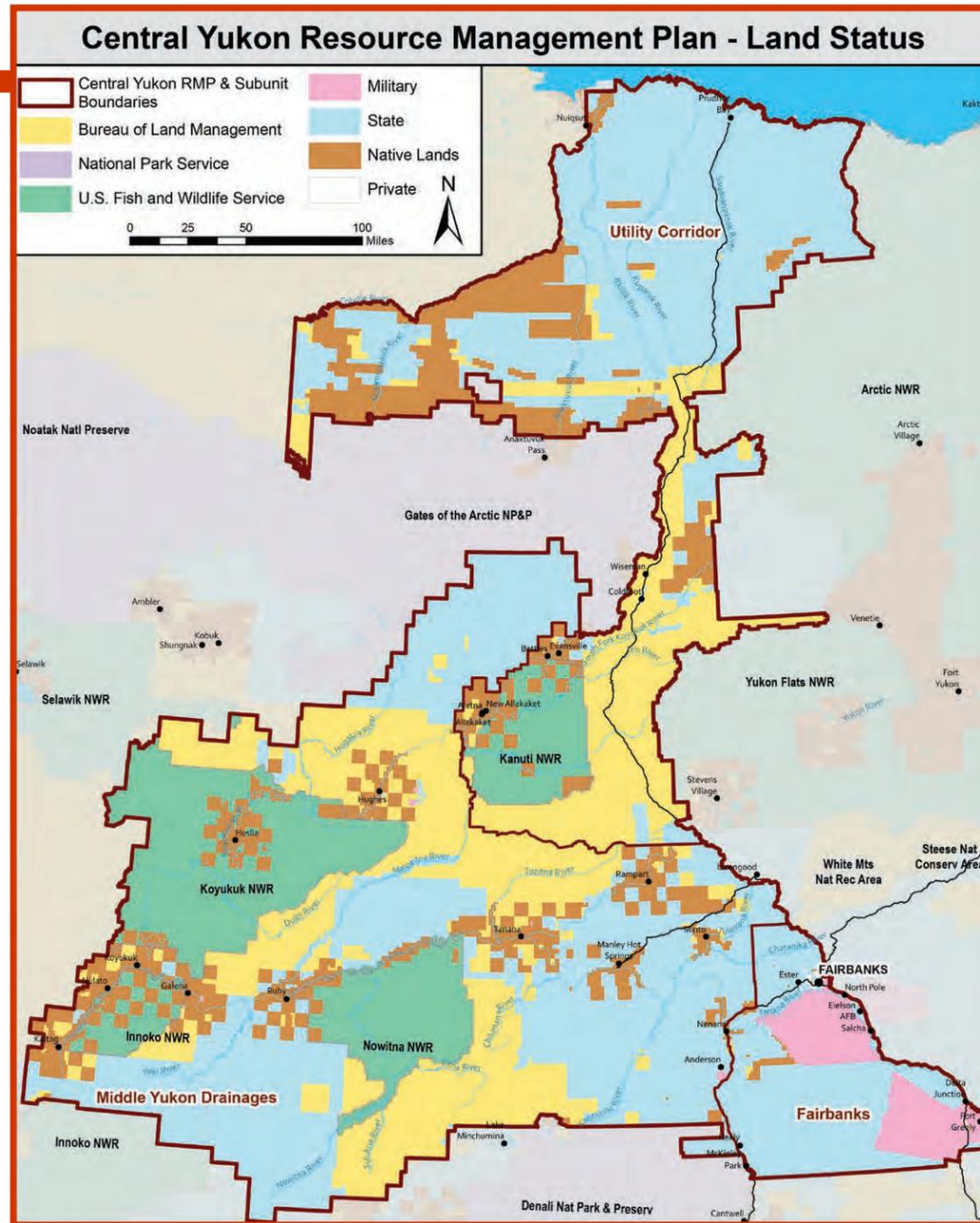
then public comments. A total of 291 people signed in at the meetings. Outside of the scoping meetings, over 70 individuals, agencies, and organizations submitted written comments. Additionally, the BLM received 2,900 letters via email.

The scoping process helped us identify several common issues or concerns. (Issues are matters of controversy or dispute over resource management activities or land use. Addressing each issue typically leads to a range of alternatives, providing a variety of possible management actions.) During our analysis of public comments, we will give special attention to the 13 planning issues shown below as we develop alternatives for the Draft RMP and Environmental Impact Statement in coming months.

Issues Identified during Scoping for the Central Yukon RMP

After we analyzed your scoping comments, the BLM identified 13 preliminary planning issues.

- Access and Comprehensive Travel Management
- Climate Change
- Fish and Aquatic Species Habitat
- Invasive and Non-native Species
- Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act Withdrawals
- Utility Corridor Withdrawal
- Mining
- Sand and Gravel
- Recreation and Visitor Services
- Subsistence
- Wildlife Habitat
- Water Quality, Wetlands, and Riparian Habitat
- Wilderness Characteristics



Slight Change to Planning Area

In January 2015 the BLM adjusted the boundaries of the Anchorage and Central Yukon field offices. The adjustment creates a contiguous management block of land in Western Alaska and will provide for improved management of key habitats.

As a result of the boundary adjust-

ment, the BLM also adjusted the planning area boundaries for the Central Yukon and Bering Sea-Western Interior (BSWI) RMPs. For the Central Yukon RMP the main change is that the eastern portion of the Nulato Hills has been transferred to the BSWI planning area. The map above shows the revised boundary in the southwest corner of the planning area. The revised Central

include, these areas are each described in the Scoping Report. A complete list of ACECs nominations, as well as maps of existing and proposed ACECs in the planning area, will be included in a separate ACEC report that the BLM will soon provide on the Central Yukon RMP website (www.blm.gov/ak/cyrm). Information on the Nulato Hills ACECs will be included in the BSWI ACEC report, which will be available online at

Yukon planning area boundary encompasses 55.9 million acres of land, including 13.1 million acres of BLM-managed public lands.

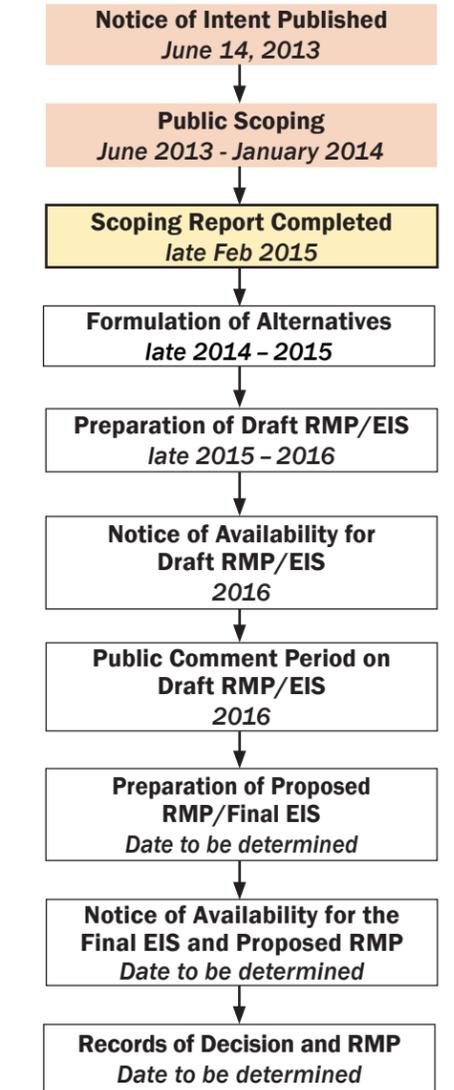
ACEC Nominations

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) are areas where special management attention is needed to protect important resources or to protect human life and safety from natural hazards. Previous planning efforts led to the designation of 24 ACECs and 9 Research Natural Areas (or RNAs, a special kind of ACEC for scientific research) in the Central Yukon planning area. Five of these ACECs and one RNA are located in the Nulato Hills and will be considered in the BSWI RMP.

During the scoping period, the BLM accepted nominations for adding new ACECs or expanding or altering existing ones. With a few exceptions that

Planning Timeline

This timeline shows the entire planning process. Orange boxes indicate already completed steps.



www.blm.gov/ak/planning/bswi. The BLM is currently evaluating all of the nominations and existing designations before determining which configuration of ACECs will be included in the various alternatives of the Draft RMP.

Download a copy of the scoping report on our website or request one by mail!





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Stay Involved

The BLM is now developing Preliminary Alternatives for the Draft RMP. These alternatives will propose varying levels of resource use and conservation. Next fall the BLM hopes to visit interested communities in the planning area to present the Preliminary Alternatives and invite public input.

Another major opportunity to provide input will come when the Draft RMP/EIS is published (currently scheduled for early 2016). The BLM will announce the availability of the draft document in the *Federal Register*, and a public comment period will follow. We will distribute the draft document to tribes, Alaska Native corporations, elected officials, regulatory agencies, and members of the public, and we will also post it on the project website. Another round of public meetings will follow in interested

communities. We'll let you know about these meetings through this newsletter, local media, mailings, and our website.

In the meantime, visit the website to see new information and updates, including these documents:

- Analysis of the Management Situation (coming soon)
- ACEC Report (coming soon)
- Wilderness Characteristics Inventory
- Visual Resource Inventory
- Wild and Scenic Rivers Inventory



If your tribe, organization, or community would like the BLM to meet with you during any phase of the Central Yukon RMP planning process, please contact us. We want to hear from **you**.

Contact Us

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www.blm.gov/ak/cyrmp