

Bering Sea–Western Interior RMP Scoping Meeting

Aniak Issue Summary

Aniak, Alaska November 19, 2013

These Issue summaries are created by the BLM after each community meeting. These documents summarize what was shared and are provided to each community for verification or revisions before being considered final.

Attendance:

10 people attended the Aniak community scoping meeting. 5 BLM representatives provided a presentation, discussion time around maps, and a sharing session.

Issues and concerns raised:

“We look to the future in a positive way, but we are concerned about losing our past way of life.”

BLM Land

- Kolmakof River - important moose hunting; especially important for folks who didn't get a Tier II permit
- Trail between Holy Cross and Aniak – to Paimute Slough (on Fish and Wildlife Service land) travel on BLM land to get to Paimute Slough to hunt north towards Holy Cross (ptarmigan, moose, bear) and to go fishing (Pike). Trail from Aniak to Holy Cross used by both snowmachines and ATVs almost year-round.
- Oskowalik River - important for all the same reasons, moose hunting in the fall
- Pike Lake - important for lake fishing (pike), some float plane access, berry picking, spring and fall waterfowl, moose hunting, ptarmigan hunting,
- BLM lands south of Aniak – important for trapping and Mulchatna Caribou Herd
- Owhat River NE of Aniak - recent transfer of lands in area between TKC and Calista
- Many of the lands along the river banks are TKC lands and are open only to TKC shareholders unless by special permit; makes the BLM lands that much more valuable
- How much potential is there for energy development?
- BLM lands are very important to non-TKC shareholders. (The Kuskokwim Corporation)
- Keep withdrawals closed (to mining), benefits moose and habitat for other animals

Fish-related

- Concern was expressed about mercury in the Kuskokwim River.
- Pike fishing is important at Pike Lake -

Wildlife-related

- Winter Moose Hunts - cannot hunt within 1/2mile of Yukon River according to Subsistence Regulations. Makes getting a moose more difficult.
- Supportive of wolf-hunting/predator hunting on BLM lands
- easy access to black bear, too many black bear
- Kilbuck Mountains - Kilbuck herd converging with Mulchatna herd
- Beaver populations have spiked, get into subsistence nets
- Tribal members living in cities are denied subsistence permits
- Currently, outfitters and guides operate in the area; they take from the communities but don't return to the communities; don't hire local, compete for resources
- BLM lands south of Aniak – important for trapping and Mulchatna Caribou Herd
- Will there be any changes in subsistence and tribal members' rights?
- Map Suggestion: missing a creek that flows north from the Kuskokwim between Upper Kalskag and Aniak onto BLM lands. This creek is used during high water years to access moose on BLM lands.

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Public Safety-Hazardous Materials

- Ongoing abandoned mine investigations – Is BLM continuing to look for AML?
- Still old CAT trails across the landscape from mining heydeys.
- Concerns about Red Devil; use lessons learned to inform stipulations, terms, and conditions on future mining activities; avoid Red Devils in the future
- Ensure independent 3rd party testers/remediation specialists are involved in mining reclamation

Mineral Potential

- Why isn't Oskowalik listed as high potential? Rare earth mineral maps show area as 'high.'
- Granite/hard-rock potential north of or near-to Aniak - Need for river rip-rap, roads, dikes, etc.
- Is Donlin mine in a Mining District? If so, which one? How much of that District is on BLM lands? (Dave Cannon)
- How much more development related to mining is expected or could occur on BLM lands?

Timber and Forest Products

- Berry picking - folks travel as far as Napaimute (upriver) for berries
- Has BLM completed any timber stand assessments in this area?
- White spruce and balsam poplar
- Firewood up the Holitna River, is quality enough for milling dimensional lumber and could it power barges with sawmill byproduct from milled lumber? Timber potential good, byproducts of processing dimensional lumber could be effectively used for biomass/pellets
- BLM lands on either side of the Kuskokwim at Stony River are important sources of dimensional wood and firewood. Many harvest timber upriver around Stony River and make log rafts to transport wood downriver, as far as Bethel sometimes.
- Lime Village (up Stony River) also has some higher quality timber with potential for milling.
- There is potential for a mill, use AVCP as model
- No major fire in a long time, has resulted in even-aged stands
- Energy costs + TKC rules have resulted in high-water harvest phenomenon (since no one owns the high-water). During high water, people will go cut timber right on the banks of the river – in addition to gathering the timber that has been washed downriver and is lying on the banks or islands.

Cultural

- Historic native campsites on west side of Pike Lake

Other

- BLM lands also used for photography
- Aniak = highest kilowatt hour costs in the nation
- Comm sites, towers, and turbines typically don't interfere with access to historical trails/access
- Map Suggestions: modify legend to show Withdrawals on BLM-unencumbered with orange/gold background. Add Napaimute to map. Missing a creek that flows north from the Kuskokwim between Upper Kalskag and Aniak onto BLM lands. This creek is used during high water years to access moose on BLM lands.
- Several corridors are proposed (roads, pipelines) and these could benefit the communities, but we also like things the way they are now. (dilemma, torn about it)
- The proposed road between the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers would have an associated pipeline to transfer heating fuel, concern expressed over the hazards of fuel transport. Hazards associated with above-ground pipeline (vandalism)
- Supportive of local filming that would bring income and awareness of the area.

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