

Bering Sea–Western Interior RMP Scoping Meeting

Chuathbaluk Issue Summary

Chuathbaluk, Alaska November 20, 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 Chuathbaluk community scoping meeting. 5 BLM representatives provided a presentation, discussion time around maps, and a sharing session.

Issues and concerns raised:

BLM Land

- “Government Cabin” area along the Kuskokwim refers to area close to or, on BLM land upriver from Chuathbaluk, off the north bank of the river, across from Veahna Creek on the south bank
- Up Aniak Slough to “Big Lake” for “egging” (collecting bird eggs)
- BLM land block east of Chuathbaluk – caribou there
- Map suggestions: creek missing on map (same area upriver of Aniak on north bank into BLM lands toward Pike Lake), also Cobalt Creek = called Mission Creek locally?, add historic Crow Village to map
- BLM land north of Crow Village: trapping is important (20-mile loop)
- BLM land across the river from Chuathbaluk/south and east of Chuathbaluk: wood gathering is VERY important there “100%” of Chuathbaluk gets wood in this area, dead standing swamp kill; trapping is also important in this area
- BLM land north of Chuathbaluk: Hunting + Berries important to Chuathbaluk

Fish-related

- Smelt spawning grounds unknown, they come up to Crow Village, not far beyond
- Pike Lake important for winter use
- Napaimute fishes up on Native-selected on the Hologuk (Ski Creek area)
- Keep development from occurring near rivers/creeks

Wildlife-related

- Primary subsistence resources = bear, moose, berries
- Muskox, moose, bears primary species
- Trapping:
 - has doubled in the village in the last 5-10 years due to declining incomes
 - Too much beaver now, trapped only for personal consumption/use
 - Marten in river valleys, Black marten more valuable than red; Chuathbaluk traps for income
 - Tommy Tom has trapped all the way from Crooked Creek to Flat, Oskowalik; via dog team mushing
- Concerned that the game will move upland in response to increased barge traffic/disturbance
- People travel far downriver to the Kuskokwim Delta to hunt waterfowl and trap muskrats.
- Buckstop Pass - Holitna Pass: caribou until 15 years ago, caribou used to come with 6-7 miles of Chuathbaluk
- Many reindeer herds/herders in the region before (Lisa found reindeer collar bell in her Crow Village garden)
- Reindeer herders just stopped herding them, domestic animals left to mingle in with wild herds

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- Caribou used to travel the Holitna River-west towards Tuluksak, the Tikchik folks hunted there - “Kilbuck herd”
- BLM land block east of Chuathbaluk – caribou there
- Lime Village (Lime Hills) caribou have been back for several years
- Approx. 6-8 muskox in mountains behind Chuathbaluk
- Some believe there are local Peregrine falcons registered, Numbered/tagged?
- Three-step Mountain (on Fish & Wildlife Service lands) has some caribou
- Ray Peterson did many local subsistence studies in the past for an agency

Cultural-related

- Traditional use patterns are dynamic, not static. Plan needs to reflect this into the future because even though we may not hunt caribou or moose in an area now; if they migrate to a new area in the future – we will hunt there. The RMP needs to consider future movement of the animals and that we will follow where the animals go.
- Many hunt alone (solo)
- Ray Peterson subsistence studies
- Dry portage “old trail” - cross to Aniak, winter trail Aniak to Russian Mission, Crow Village to Paimiut slough, trails are on Smithsonian records
- Old trade route; traders came over from the Yukon to trade at Kalskag = “wet route”
- Elder Lucy (seasonal migrations in childhood): spring camp from Chuathbaluk to Kalskag via dog team, one portage. Spring camp for “Parky squirrels” (squirrels for making parkas) 300 squirrels needed for a parka. NYAC mine area hot springs, Crow Village people would go to NYAC Area for spring camp. Then move west to tundra for waterfowl and muskrat in summer – then move upriver with the Salmon to Aniak River for fall camp. Had rains in August.
- Historic travel direction for resource gathering: Crow Village/Chuathbaluk folks moved south, Aniak folks moved north.
- Elder Candy’s (80) family lived subsistence - father told by territorial government to put the kids in school or go to jail

Mineral Potential

- Faulkners live near NYAC/hot springs year-round
- Abandoned mines; cinnabar, quicksilver, gold, arsenic in water
- Need to know where the impacts have been in the past; important for cumulative effects
- Joe Kaninsky Mine (gold) 12 miles off the river, Mission Creek
- Old cinnabar on “left” hand side (west of Owhat River) of mountains behind Chuathbaluk, one old mine in the base of the mountains up in the bowl
- What is going on in the two blocks north of Chuathbaluk (re: W/Ds - overlapping)? Maps show both green and black hatches
- Chuathbaluk recommends to retain the W/Ds south of the river (these blocks are especially important for subsistence activities)
- Keep development from occurring near rivers/creeks
- (Elder Candy) Mixed feelings on mining - young people need jobs, leaning more towards development; if done right, watched and monitored. The young people today do not have access to the same resources we used to have and they need the income more.

Timber and Forest Products

- Go berry picking downriver toward Bethel for salmonberries and blueberries.
- Get wood upriver, above Stony River

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- Logging by Sleetmute and Red Devil, float down in rafts to Chuathbaluk
- There is a mill across the river from Chuathbaluk, on the south side of the river. Elder Garry (82) used to operate the mill with wood harvested from upriver. Garry supplied all the villages between Stony River and Kalskag w/ lumber, he supplied firewood and lumber “slabs.” The mill is now run by “Nelson Brothers Enterprises.” Garry supplied the slabs for all smokehouses on the river.

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