Anchorage, Alaska December 4, 2013

This Issue summary was created by a contractor after the Anchorage combined Central Yukon (CY) RMP and Bering Sea-Western Interior (BSWI) RMP meeting and is intended to summarize questions, issues, and concerns shared at the meeting. Some of the comments below apply to one plan, some to both plans; as indicated in parentheses.

Attendance:

52 people were in attendance at the Anchorage scoping meeting, 4 of whom joined over the phone.

Issues and concerns raised:

NEPA/Purpose & Need

(Manzer – BSWI) There is an absence of "minerals" from your "issues to consider" in both plans. You have "soil" and "management of resources- mining" in the BSWI plan, but there is an absence of minerals from both plans. Minerals are a federal/BLM resource. I find this oversight egregious. Both of these areas have a long and storied mining history with a lot of potential development too. I hope it doesn't speak to lack of cognizance of the importance of minerals and mining in these areas.

(Warden – – both plans) This may be the first time people are hearing this information. One of the things we can do as the public is to develop our own alternatives and submit them to BLM for consideration. Can we submit Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) or Wild and Scenic River designation suggestions? If the Scoping deadline is Jan 17, many of us couldn't put something together by January 17, when would you be willing to take those types of information from us after the scoping comment deadline? *BLM: By Jan 17 we would like to get as much as we can about the scope of issues from the public. There are several other opportunities for review and involvement in our process. Particularly if you are partnering with us, you can be involved in team meetings and discussions that we're working on in our office. Even if you're not a partnering agency, as a member of the public, there are intervals…draft stages in the process…where you can still express your ideas and opinions and it's possible they can be incorporated throughout the process. It's never too late to contribute good ideas, but certain times are better than others. Scoping is the time period for BLM to get the breadth of issues. Development of the range of alternatives is the next step.*

(Miller – both plans) We have a crisis of Yukon River Salmon. Chinook salmon had their worst year ever in 2012. This should be a major focus of each plan: the Central Yukon, Eastern Interior, and I'm going to call it the Bering Sea Plan. I can't speak for the villages, but I can speak for the watershed and this is our state's most remarkable fishery and it is in trouble.

(Miller – BSWI) The "bizwop" *[Bering Sea-Western Interior = BSWI]*? The planning area acronym does not mean anything to the places we care about. I would urge you not to use the acronyms among anyone in public.

(Little – both plans) I would encourage you to standardize the types of maps that you put up so that each planning area has similar map opportunities online. Some of the maps available for BSWI are not available for the Central Yukon (CY) Plan. The RMP materials should use the same kinds of terminology. It seems there are several types of terminology used in the CY, BSWI, and Eastern Interior Resource Management Plan (RMPs) for the mining withdrawals under [ANSCA]d1 designations and mining

designations. *BLM: When I use the term "leasing" as opposed to "mining", I am referring to "leasable materials" such as oil, gas, coal, and geothermal resources. I think you'll continue to hear that term throughout the BSWI planning process. What we're working on in regards to "leasing" is what we have for "locatable and salable mineral resources", which will be a report. The BSWI has a Locatable and Salable Mineral Potential Resources Report that is available online. That study and technical report was completed in 2010. It outlines all the potential for locatable and salable minerals in the BSWI planning area. Salable minerals were the gravel pits that Shelly was talking about. When roads are constructed- gravel pits, mineral material permits, that sort of thing. That's what we call salable minerals. Locatable we generally think of as our load and placer mining operations that occur on BLM lands. In BSWI there is a lot of gold potential there. There is a forthcoming report that will address oil, gas, geothermal and coal. That's how we explain the difference between the two. I think the confusion maybe came from the Eastern Interior RMP which may have referred to mining as "leasable". BLM produced a poster handout [available online- www.blm.gov/ak/planning] that tries to explain it. What Eastern Interior was doing may have been new to BLM, but not new to the State, which was to lease a locatable material. In other words, Eastern Interior RMP wants to lease a locatable resource…like gold. To the State of Alaska, those claims can be leased. I think that was possibly being proposed- offering the opportunity to lease a locatable mineral.*

[Walker – both plans] Thank you for your efforts with this plan. The people involved in scoping care about the process and the results. This is a great opportunity.

(Miller – both plans) I would really recommend that there be a translation from BLM regulatory language to common usage of terms, e.g. oil, gas, coal, coal bed methane, specific minerals, etc. Each map should say oil, gas... There should be a key that has more detail. People really don't understand your terms. It's great, you're really ahead of the last plan [Eastern Interior RMP] having these maps at scoping, but they're meaningless when you don't know what a "mineral" is. They're too general. You need people to see what's in their front yard, backyard, upstream, downstream.

Government to Government Consultation

(Wassilie- both plans) I did not see a Tribal liaison contact or Tribal advisory council on your presentation contacts. Tribes should advise management decisions that would affect subsistence resources and the water resources of subsistence resources. There are 67 western Tribes and 15 central Tribes in your two RMP planning areas. The President came out with [Executive Order] 13175 and Title 8 really recommends Tribal liaisons in this planning aspect. *BLM: All Tribes have been offered the opportunity for Government to Government consultation. Many have taken up the offer. And they can do it at any time too.*

(Thomas – BSWI) We have been bombarded by agencies and organizations that want to hear from Crooked Creek or speak on behalf of Crooked Creek because we are 12 air miles south of the [proposed] Donlin Mine. In my lifetime, our village has never received this level of scrutiny. Our Tribe has been angered by outside agencies and organizations telling us things and telling us that we don't know what we're doing. We speak for ourselves; do not take anyone else's comments when it comes to Crooked Creek.

(Salmon – Eastern Interior/both plans) Chalkyitsit is a village over on the eastern interior under the Eastern Management Plan. I would like to comment on Government to Government relationship with

BLM. I don't think Tribes are in a leadership position. BLM just reads off everything they are going to do. I don't think the Tribes even know what the outcome will be with the plans.

(Thomas – BSWI) I am a little bit concerned about this process here. I feel like decisions have already been made and there is a plan is in the process of being finalized, but we didn't have a chance to say anything. President Clinton signed EO 13175 and that resulted in a Tribal Consultation Policy. I served on that Board as an alternate. It took 2.5 years to write it. I felt that Alaska was not represented properly. They only put two of us on it; one from Southeast and me, from Southwestern Alaska. It's like I tell someone in Florida how to behave. I felt we should have more input from Alaska; our Tribes should have been better presented. We needed someone from the north, south, west and interior. I just feel like this [RMP] is already a done deal. I feel like the plan is already made. You're doing this because you're required by this order to do it. A lot of people, people in the cities, seem well aware of what is coming. People like us who are on the front lines, it's like we don't have a chance to stand up and be counted. This will affect us, very, very much so.

(Ahthangard – both plans) We need to have effective communication from Tribal membership. We need to have our recommendations at a level where we are going to be effective in affecting the "boxes" that are being put on the map. The fragmentation of the process requires us to go to many different meetings when resources like caribou and fish are regional in scale. We're only allowed to have continued micromanagement of our lands.

Climate Change

(Wassilie – both plans) Is there a climate change adaption plan within the RMP? Climate Change Adaptation Plans should be a priority due to the changes we are seeing including erosion of villages. Would your Climate Change Adaption Plan account for the massive seasonal changes we are experiencing? *BLM: Thank you and maybe we can answer your questions afterwards if you have time, but a short answer- it might not be the same thing that you call it, but we do consider climate change in the plans…not only what the future might be in several different scenarios, but how things within our management control might contribute to or how to balance those things given that we don't exactly know what the future holds. So… I could talk to you a little bit afterwards [about this topic].*

Land Use

(Wassilie- both plans) We are concerned about the impact to water resources from mining and new access roads to new mining sites including the road to Ambler.

(Manzer – BSWI) I would advocate for the concept of multiple use. It appears that BLM's recent practices are straying away from this, e.g. in establishing FLPMA. I think you can safely have both. Natural resource development projects provide jobs and opportunities; for people not only in remote areas, but here [in Anchorage].

(Thomas – BSWI) Historic contamination from Red Devil does not seem to have impacted subsistence practices (picking berries, hunting, trapping, and fishing) of Crooked Creek residents as demonstrated by the hair samples collected by Yukon Kuskokwim Tribal Health Corporation. None of us have dangerous amounts of mercury in our system. However, when there was a test hole dug at Red Devil, there was a spike in mercury in our river. As long as you leave it alone, we don't have a spike.

(Warden – BSWI) I don't understand the concept of withdrawals and their corresponding land orders. I need more clarity. *BLM provided a detailed explanation to this question. In summary, there are two major withdrawals in the BSWI: Public Land Order (PLO) 5180 that comprises 4 million acres of public land and PLO 5184 that comprises 2 million acres. PLO 5180 (4m acres) where it occurs on top of unencumbered BLM land is open to mining and where it occurs over state or native – selected lands (encumbered with a selection) is closed to mining. PLO 5180 (2m acres) is all closed to mining.*

(Frankevich – both plans): Could you clarify the quantity of conservation system units (CSUs) that BLM manages? A gentleman made a guess that 60% of federal lands are CSUs. I think CSUs are about 50% of federal lands and BLM manages 30% of those. Can anybody clarify? *BLM: I'm certain there's someone here who can say, but it's not me. The BLM does manage some CSUs, but definitely that is not the majority of our lands. None of the Central Yukon Field Office lands are considered CSUs. I also appreciated his comment about the remaining federal lands that are not designated CSUs are governed by FILPMA for multiple-use.*

(Miller – both plans) This is a huge plan and the threshold decisions that are going to be made in these plans…are the vast acres of withdrawals are lifted or not? If they are lifted, under ANILCA, it is very difficult to put back…the withdrawals for mining and oil and gas. So that is one of the most important decisions. But look at this plan- how is BLM going to manage? There is a proposal to open…I don't know… say 3 or 6 million acres in the Eastern Interior Plan. How are they going to have enough staff to monitor, plan, manage, and do compliance? It's unrealistic. Those kinds of considerations are important when you look at the scope of what we have today and what we have in the future- and the pace of lifting these withdrawals…especially when you see the [Native] corporations don't have their full entitlements yet.

(Miller – CY) In reference to the Utility Corridor Plan- we're got a lot of oil and gas pipelines that may yet come through that corridor. There are still a lot of plans that would go through that area, so it should still be managed as a utility corridor. There shouldn't be new roads [in the corridor]; it is a very important region.

(Manzer – both plans) I think there has been some mischaracterization of the purpose of these withdrawals-5180 and 5184. The purpose of the withdrawals was not to close the lands to locatables or leasing; the purpose was to close the lands for ANSCA selection and to not encumber those lands should they become selected by ANSCA corporations. That is an important distinction. Those lands were not enacted just to close those lands to mining; it was to make them available for ANSCA selection. Since many ANSCA corporations, especially those out along in the Calista region are nearing entitlement, the reason for the withdrawals has become mute.

Cultural Resources
(Wassilie- BSWI) How would cultural resources be impacted? How would the Iditarod National historic Trail be impacted by the pipeline to the proposed Donlin Gold project?

Special Designations
(Olsen- both plans) Does the passage of an RMP result in a formal recommendation to Congress that a wilderness area be designated? *BLM: BLM is precluded by law from recommending Wilderness, but other people can.*

(Manzer – both plans) We are fortunate to have so many spectacular, protected wilderness areas. There are enough wilderness areas within Federal lands. I think 60 percent of all federal land in the State is located within Conservation System Units.

(Miller – both plans) Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) are great. Keep them. Manage them well. Expand them if it is necessary in order to achieve their purpose. The public and the Tribes may have new ones that are relevant today that weren't relevant 20 years ago. Have the ACECs mean something. Have people outline the areas they care about.

(Miller – both plans) ACECs should not be open to mining and oil and gas. Then you're setting yourself up for hard fights forever.

Water Resources
(Shepherd- both plans) I haven't heard any specific discussion about water rights. I note that the BLM or the federal government potentially contains federal reserve water rights that haven't been adjudicated. I believe ANILCA provisions require or authorize the federal government to pursue in-stream flows on behalf of Tribal governments. Is there going to be a discussion on that in the plan? BLM: *I don't know if it's necessarily an RMP-level planning decision. BLM does have a program to establish water rights in certain streams. It's an on-going inventory and monitoring program. We monitoring several streams right now- we collect data for about 5 years and then we move forward was a water rights applications. If you have certain streams where you think we should be doing that, we would take your comments.*

Traditional Way of Life
(Ahthangard – both plans) Many regions of our State have concerns about changes to our lands and waters. I am concerned about what this would do to our traditional ways of life; our migratory routes that we depend upon for feeding our families. Although some of these maps are a thousand miles away from where I live currently, our animals migrate through these areas and it's going to be affecting them. The health and well-being of our Tribal people who will be staying in these areas, surrounded by these changes, will be affected by these changes. It's going to affect whether any efforts to get these minerals. Our animals will be affected by these changes. Any changes to the quality of our air and water will affect our animals. When you take out the minerals, it will put chemicals into our animals which will go into our bodies, our breasts, into our kidneys, into our livers, in to our future generations. That's the most important part about what's going on here today. It's not about putting boxes on a map, it's changing the way that we live in our lands and waters and the animals that we depend upon to feed our families. Some of these other areas have other resources to consider, but some communities don't have a lot of [subsistence] resources so it takes a lot of money to get food from other areas to our areas. You can see from the Yukon how it has been devastated by poor planning efforts and poor management efforts. These concerns are increasing in quantification the further you go from our centralized areas of population into the rural areas. It is impacting our way of life; it is very concerning. We have resolutions throughout the state that support some of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd [working group] recommendations. We have resolutions to protect our Arctic Ocean. We have about 20 so far and we've only been working on it a few months. But the biological diversity of our ocean and the migratory routes of our foods are really important for the health and well-being for future generations. It is the cumulative effects of these types of efforts to change the lands and waters that are causing the most concentrated impacts.

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