

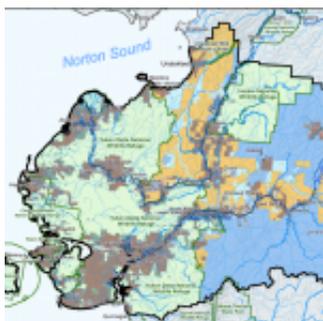
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BLM to write land use plan for 10 million acres in southwest Alaska

by [Ben Matheson](#) on November 5, 2013



Bering Sea Western
Interior Planning Area /
credit: BLM

The Bureau of Land Management is beginning a four year planning process to set a strategy for over 10 million acres of BLM land across a vast section of southwest Alaska. [The Bering Sea Western Interior](#) planning area runs from the coast up the Kuskokwim to Nikolai and follows the Yukon River up to Grayling.

The resource management plan lays out management goals, and rules for how people use the lands. BLM staff will be out in communities to hear about current uses of lands. Jorjena Daly is the Resource Management Plan lead for BLM.

“All the issues, concerns, and opportunities that we hear from the public during the scoping period will help set the sideboards essentially or the topics we will eventually address in our land use planning document,” said Daly.

The first meetings are set for in Lower and Upper Kalskag on Friday. Bethel’s meeting will be November

20th. The process also includes a close look at subsistence resources. BLM specifically issues permits for subsistence moose hunts in unit 21E around Anvik and in 22A around the Eastern Norton Sound. Daly says BLM want to hear from residents experiences.

“[For example] what changes are effecting or might effect in the future the way the public fishes and hunts on those lands. What changes people would like to see around them, and how BLM can manage those resources in the future,” said Daly.

Legislation in ANCSA allows the secretary of the Interior to withdraw and reserve lands, in effect closing areas to mining or mineral leasing. Two major sections of so called D-1 lands cover about 6 million acres. The agency is required to exam those withdrawals during the process.

“And when we do this we determine through public involvement if there is a valid need to retain the withdrawals,” said Daly. “And then what we do is essentially make a recommendation on whether to lift the withdrawals and modify them in some way.”

Scoping goes through January 17th. The next two years will include drafting the plan. It will include and Environmental Impact Statement detailing positive and negative impacts of management alternatives. The final plan should be ready in 2017. [The planning website can be accessed here.](#)

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