

Bering Sea - Western Interior

Resource Management Plan

BLM



Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Report on the Application of the Relevance and Importance Criteria

BLM Alaska
Anchorage Field Office

April 2015

Alaska



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List of Acronyms

ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
ADFG	Alaska Department of Fish and Game
AFO	Anchorage Field Office
AHRS	Alaska Heritage Resource Survey
AKNHP	Alaska Natural Heritage Program
ANCSA	Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act
ANILCA	Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BLM	United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management
BSWI	Bering-Sea Western Interior
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CYFO	Central Yukon Field Office
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act
INHT	Iditarod National Historic Trail
MFP	Management Framework Plan
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NSEDC	Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation
PLO	Public Land Order
RMP	Resource Management Plan
SWMFP	Southwest Management Framework Plan
TCP	Traditional Cultural Property
U.S.C.	United States Code
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
USFWS	United States Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service
WAMCATS	Washington-Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System
WSR	Wild and Scenic River

Summary

As part of the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Bering Sea-Western Interior (BSWI) Resource Management Plan (RMP), Anchorage Field Office (AFO) staff analyzed whether existing and nominated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) met the relevance and importance criteria set forth in 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1610.7-2 and BLM Manual 1613, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

The interdisciplinary team analyzed a **total of 25 ACECs** (see **Appendix A for maps listed by figure number below**):

Eleven ACECs were existing as shown in Figure 1, “Existing ACECs in BSWI Planning Area Overview Map”. Figure 2, “BSWI RMP Public Land Order Withdrawals for Existing ACECs”, is one indicator of the current management of the area and may be used as an aid to determine if future special management would be required for those existing ACECs carried forward to alternative development. Public Land Order Withdrawals are covered in more detail under the “Current Management” subheadings found in Chapter 3, Sections 3.3.1 through 3.3.25.

Sixteen ACECs were nominated as shown in Figure 3, “Nominated ACECs in BSWI Planning Area WEST Map” and Figure 4, “Nominated ACECs in BSWI Planning Area (East Map).” Figure 5, “BSWI RMP Public Land Order Withdrawals for Nominated ACECs” is one indicator of the current management of the area and may be used as an aid to determine if future special management would be required for those nominated ACECs carried forward to alternative development. Public Land Order Withdrawals are covered in more detail under the “Current Management” subheadings found in Chapter 3, Sections 3.3.1 through 3.3.25.

All 25 existing and nominated ACECs are shown together in Figure 6, “Nominated and Existing ACECs in the BSWI Planning Area.”

The areas found to meet both the relevance and importance criteria will be carried forward to consider whether any special management would be required (Section 2.3) and considered under alternatives for potential designation and management in the RMP (BLM Manual 1613.21). Chapter 4 presents the summary of findings for relevance and importance for all existing and nominated ACECs.

Chapter 1. Introduction

During the scoping period for the BSWI RMP (July 18, 2013 to January 17, 2014), the BLM presented information on ACEC guidance, existing ACECs, and requested public input on both existing and nominated ACECs. In addition, the BLM sought public comments, nominations, and modifications, during a specific comment period on ACECs from May 1 to August 29, 2014.

The BSWI interdisciplinary team members reviewed all BLM-managed lands in the planning area to determine whether any areas should be considered for designation as an ACEC. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) requires priority shall be given to the designation and protection of ACECs. ACECs are defined in FLPMA¹ as “areas within the public lands where special management attention is required (when such areas are developed or used or where no development is required) to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards.” The following analysis and the resultant findings for ACEC relevance and importance criteria has been performed pursuant to FLPMA Section 202(c)(3) (43 U.S.C. 1712), 43 CFR 1610.7-2, and BLM Manual 1613, “Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.” In addition, all pre-existing and newly nominated ACECs were treated similarly in the evaluations of relevance and importance; there was no deference given to one over another (see Table 1 on the next page and Figure 6 in Appendix A).

¹ Section 103(a) (43 U.S.C.1702) and in 43 CFR 1601.0-5(a)

Table 1. All Existing and Nominated ACEC Acreages in the BSWI Planning Area

ACEC Name (highlights indicate overlapping acreage with like color)		Existing Acres	Nominated Acres
1.	Anvik River ACEC (existing)	115,106	
2.	Kuskokwim River Raptor Nesting Habitat ACEC (existing)	6,072	
3.	Peregrine Falcon Nesting Habitat ACEC (existing)	8,096	
4.	Drainages of the Unalakleet River ACEC (existing)	415,184	
5.	North River ACEC (existing)	137,349	
6.	Sheefish Spawning Area ACEC (internally and externally nominated)		698,260
7.	Grayling Area Habitat ACEC (externally nominated)		98,682
8.	Anvik River Watershed ACEC (Anvik Tribal Council nominated: 249,607 acres which is inclusive of some acreage from no. 1)		249,607
9.	Bonasila River Watershed ACEC (externally nominated)		291,136
10.	Anvik Traditional Trapping Area ACEC (externally nominated)		21,699
11.	Old Anvik Village Area ACEC (externally nominated)		60,259
12.	Unalakleet River Watershed ACEC (Native Village of Unalakleet nominated: 251,978 acres which is inclusive of some acreage from no. 4)		251,978
13.	Egavik Creek Watershed ACEC (externally nominated)		60,052
14.	Golsovia River Watershed ACEC (externally nominated)		21,771
15.	Tenmile River Watershed ACEC (externally nominated)		36,278
16.	Unalakleet ACEC (Pew Trust nominated: 1,520,015 acres, which is inclusive of some acreage from no.4 and no.12)		1,520,015
17.	Box River Treeline RNA ACEC (existing)	13,592	
18.	Inglutalik ACEC (existing)	71,716	
19.	Kateel River ACEC (existing: 568,681) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (USFWS nominated: 675,630 acres total – inclusive of some existing Kateel River ACEC acres) • (Koyukuk Tribal Council nominated: 311,663 acres total – inclusive of some existing Kateel River ACEC acres) • (BLM nominated: 876,600 acres total – inclusive of existing ACEC, FWS nominated, and Koyukuk Tribal Council nominated acres; as well as additional lands that were not within the existing ACEC or nominated) 	568,681	307,919*
20.	Ungalik River ACEC (existing)	112,719	
21.	Gisasa River ACEC (existing and externally nominated)		278,057
22.	Shaktoolik River ACEC (existing)	192,591	
23.	Tagagawik River ACEC (externally nominated)		301,044
24.	Nulato River ACEC (externally nominated)		342,824
25.	Honhosa River ACEC (externally nominated)		93,412
Total Acreages Existing ACECs		1,641,106	4,325,074
Total Acreage Existing and Nominated ACECs		5,966,180	

* Additional nominated Kateel River ACEC acres encompassed in BLM nominated

Chapter 2. Requirements for ACEC Designation

To be eligible for designation as an ACEC, an area must meet the relevance and importance criteria described in 43 CFR 1610.7-2 and BLM Manual 1613, **and need special management**. The determinations in this report deal strictly with the relevance and importance criteria, and not special management attention. The ACECs that meet both the relevance and importance criteria will be carried forward and further analyzed in the Draft RMP/EIS, where special management will be addressed.

Relevance and importance are defined as follows:

Relevance: There shall be present a significant historic, cultural, or scenic value, a fish or wildlife resource or other natural system or process, or natural hazard.

Importance: The above described value, resource, system, process, or hazard shall have substantial significance and value, which generally requires qualities of more than local significance and special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern. A natural hazard can be important if it is a significant threat to life or property.

2.1 Relevance

An area meets the relevance criterion if it contains one or more of the following:

1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value (including but not limited to rare or sensitive archeological resources and religious or cultural resources important to Native Americans).
2. A fish and wildlife resource (including but not limited to habitat for endangered, sensitive, or threatened species or habitat essential for maintaining species diversity).
3. A natural process or system (including but not limited to endangered, sensitive, or threatened plant species; rare, endemic, or relic plants or plant communities that are terrestrial, aquatic, or riparian; or rare geological features).
4. Natural hazards (including but not limited to areas of avalanche, dangerous flooding, landslides, unstable soils, seismic activity, or dangerous cliffs). A hazard caused by human action might meet the relevance criteria if it is determined through the resource management planning process to have become part of a natural process.

2.2 Importance

An area meets the importance criterion if it meets one or more of the following:

1. Has more than locally significant qualities that give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource.
2. Has qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change.
3. Has been recognized as warranting protection to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA.

4. Has qualities that warrant highlighting to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare.
5. Poses a significant threat to human life and safety or to property.

2.3 Special Management Attention

Special management is not addressed in this report and will be addressed with those ACECs that are recommended for further analysis in the Draft RMP/EIS. Special management attention refers to “management prescriptions developed during preparation of an RMP or amendment expressly to protect the important and relevant values of an area from the potential effects of actions permitted by the RMP, including proposed actions deemed to be in conformance with the terms, conditions, and decisions of the RMP” (BLM Manual 1613.12). Thus, these are management measures that would not be necessary and prescribed if the relevant and important values were not present.

A management prescription is considered to be special if it is unique to the area involved and includes terms and conditions specifically to protect the values occurring within the area. BLM Manual 1613 includes the following guidance on incorporating management prescriptions for potential ACECs into appropriate alternatives:

During the formulation of alternatives, management prescriptions for potential ACECs are fully developed. Management prescriptions will generally vary across the plan alternatives. If there is no controversy or issues raised regarding the management of a potential ACEC, it may not be necessary to develop a range of management alternatives. In other words, management prescriptions may not vary significantly across alternatives. A potential ACEC (or portion thereof) must be shown as recommended for designation in any or all alternatives in the Draft RMP in which special management attention is prescribed to protect the resource or to minimize hazard to human life and safety. Because special management attention must be prescribed in at least one plan alternative, each potential ACEC will appear as a recommended ACEC in at least one plan alternative. (BLM Manual 1613.22.B)

Designation is based on whether or not a potential ACEC requires special management attention in the selected plan alternative [i.e. proposed RMP]. (BLM Manual 1613.23)

Chapter 3. ACEC Evaluations

Chapter 3 includes a summary of general comments received on the modification of existing ACECs, removal of existing ACECs, general support for ACECs, and considerations for future nominations. This section is followed by more ACEC-specific comments, nominations, and a table that organizes each evaluation. The following Chapter 4 summarizes the findings in Chapter 3 and lists those ACECs that will be carried forward to the alternative development phase.

3.1 General comments received on the modification or removal of ACECs, support for ACECs, and other considerations

The following list is a summary of general comments received from the public during the ACEC comment period, ending in August, 2014. The BLM did not formally respond to these comments. The BLM will consider these comments, as well as future public comments received, regarding ACECs in the planning area. The following comments *reflect suggestions received from the public* for the modification of existing ACECs, removal of ACECs, support for ACECs, and other considerations:

- Portions of existing ACECs are no longer on BLM-managed lands due to land conveyances.
 - ◆ Some ACECs in the planning area have had significant reductions in the acreage of land managed by the BLM since the original plans that designated the ACECs. Where significant portions of the ACEC are no longer under BLM jurisdiction, the ACEC designations no longer apply and should be eliminated or, if ACEC designation of the remaining BLM-managed lands is determined appropriate, it should be reduced to only those areas remaining under exclusive BLM control.
- Existing ACEC designations are not necessary to protect the resource values that were used to justify the designation; existing federal and state laws and regulations adequately protect these resources.
 - ◆ Before designating new ACECs and when reviewing existing ACECs, BLM needs to consider existing state and federal regulations. In many instances, existing laws and regulations already protect the “critical” resources of that area identified in the ACEC. In these areas, ACEC designation is largely redundant and not necessary. For example, some ACECs were established to protect the entire watershed of salmon spawning streams, yet existing water quality standards and ADFG Title 16 authorities as well as other federal requirements such as Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and the current listings under the Endangered Species Act provide adequate protection.
 - ◆ Since the original management plans were approved, there have been many changes to the land use regulations pertaining to activities such as mining. The rewrite of the 43 CFR 3809 Regulations in 2001, along with new requirements from other agencies such as Alaska’s Title 16 Authorities protecting salmon, and tightened water quality standards have put many new stringent requirements on Alaskan Miners today. The protection these new standards provide, such as stream buffers and stream reclamation should be considered prior to ACEC designation.
 - ◆ Some ACECs were established primarily for fish habitat protection. Considering the existing federal and state authorities that protect fisheries, BLM should explicitly state why existing protections do not adequately protect these areas and why their fisheries

- resources are particularly unique: Gisasa River ACEC; Inglutalik River ACEC; Kateel River ACEC; North River ACEC; Shaktoolik River ACEC; and Ungalik River ACEC.
- ACECs should be reviewed with consideration given to federal lands already designated as Conservation System Units under the ANILCA.
 - ◆ Within the boundary of the planning area there are three National Wildlife Refuges representing a significant acreage of the area. The area also borders four additional refuges and two National Parks all removed from multiple-use management. These conservation system units, all created under ANILCA, represent many different types of ecosystems and resources of interior Alaska.
 - ◆ The resources of these conservation system units should be considered prior to establishing new, or maintaining existing, ACECs.
 - Discussion of and proposed management of ACECs should not consider mineral resource development a “threat.”
 - ◆ BLM is charged by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLMPA) with managing federal public lands for multiple uses, including specifically mineral resources. Multiple-use management requires that BLM allow for access to mineral resources and opportunities for future mineral development; mining-related activities should not be viewed as a “threat” to other resources.
 - Consider a reduction or elimination of ACEC designations that are unwarranted.
 - Consider mineral potential in the ACECs.
 - Consider increased access to and across public lands for resource and community development.
 - Discourage additional ACEC land use restrictions inhibiting access to areas in Alaska.

3.2 Specific comments received on the modification or removal of ACECs, support for ACECs, and other considerations

The following comments reflect suggestions *received from the public* for specific (named) ACECs regarding the modification of existing ACECs, removal of ACECs, support for ACECs, and other considerations:

- Anvik River ACEC
 - ◆ Request that the Anvik River not be designated in the BSWI RMP and if it is, BLM explicitly state why existing protections do not adequately protect this area. BLM needs to consider existing state and federal regulations that already protect the “critical” resources of that area identified in the ACEC. In these areas, ACEC designation is redundant and not necessary, e.g., the Anvik River ACEC was established to protect a salmon stream, yet existing water quality standards and ADFG Title 16 authorities as well as other federal requirements such as Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and the current listings under the Endangered Species Act provide adequate protection.
- Peregrine Falcon Nesting Habitat ACEC
 - ◆ This ACEC was designated to protect peregrine falcon habitat. In 1981 when the Southwest Management Framework Plan (SWMFP) was adopted by BLM, peregrine

- falcons were on the endangered species list. They have subsequently been delisted (in August 1999); hence these areas should be reevaluated.
- Expression of support for an important sheefish spawning area.
 - ◆ Local Athabaskan name for the Big River is “Zidlaghe Zighashno” which translates as “Sheefish Harvest River,” and is very important to the local people. Sheefish spawn in relatively small and specific locations and the identified area is the only known spawning area for sheefish along the Kuskokwim. Disturbance of this area could negatively affect sheefish population along the entire river.

3.3 Specific ACEC Evaluation Tables

The following sections, 3.3.1 through 3.3.25, represent the analysis for each existing and nominated ACEC.

3.3.1 Anvik River ACEC

BACKGROUND

Existing or New Nomination: Existing

Size: 115,106 Acres

Current Management of the Area:

Wildlife: North American Breeding Bird surveys have been conducted on the Anvik River annually since 1997, as part of a nationwide census to determine bird population trends. The surveys detected 43 species of song birds, shorebirds, waterfowl and raptors, including rusty blackbird, a BLM special status species. In 2003, harlequin duck aerial helicopter surveys were conducted in the upper portions of the Anvik River (Otter Creek, Swift River, and Beaver Creek) watershed to determine use of the habitats during spring migration by harlequin duck breeding pairs. The survey found low densities of harlequin ducks equal to 0.007 pairs/km of river surveyed (Seppi 2003). Harlequin ducks have been considered a BLM sensitive species, but were removed from the list in 2008.

Fisheries: The BLM submitted an application for reservation of water to the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on September 14, 2007 (DNR file application LAS 27140) for the middle segment of the Anvik River, from the confluence of Beaver Creek downstream to the border of BLM-managed land.

The purpose of this reservation is to maintain year round flows necessary to sustain fish and wildlife habitat, migration, and propagation within and adjacent to the Anvik River. Unregulated and free-flowing waters of the Anvik River are necessary components of a healthy riparian and in-stream ecosystem that supports a variety of species.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) operates the Anvik sonar site on the Anvik River to monitor escapement of summer chum salmon to the Anvik River drainage. The Anvik is believed to be the largest producer of summer chum salmon in the Yukon River drainage (Bergstrom et al. 1999, McEwen et al. 2011).

The Alaska Board of Fisheries classified Yukon River summer chum salmon as a stock of management concern at its September 2000 work session. The Policy for the Management of Sustainable Salmon Fisheries² directs ADFG to access salmon stocks in areas addressed during the Board of Fish regulatory cycle to identify stocks of concern, and in the case of Yukon River summer chum salmon, to reassess the stock of concern status (Bergstrom et al. 2009). The Anvik sonar site on the Anvik River is used to provide timely and accurate reporting information to help Yukon River fishery managers ensure the Anvik River biological escapement goal (BEG) of 350,000 to 700,000 summer chum salmon is met (McEwen et al. 2011). This assessment is necessary to determine if summer chum salmon abundance will meet downstream harvest and upstream escapement needs (McEwen et al. 2011). “Since 1979, the Anvik River sonar project has been located approximately 76 km upstream of the confluence on the Anvik and Yukon Rivers, 5 km below Theodore Creek at latitude 62° 44.208’ N, longitude 160° 40.724’ W. The land is public, managed by the BLM, and leased to ADFG for public purposes until 2023” (McEwen et al. 2011).

Lands and Realty: The existing Anvik River ACEC occurs within lands withdrawn by PLO 5180. Portions of the ACEC are not covered by this PLO and are open to the public land laws. PLO 5180 withdrew lands (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws (except locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study to determine the proper classification of the lands under section 17(d) (1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

The lands are currently managed under the 1981 Southwest Management Framework Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to leases, permits, rights of way, and easements.

Nominator(s): existing ACEC, not new nomination.

Rationale provided by nominator: N/A

Anvik River ACEC Evaluation Table

Original Intent:

In 1981, the Anvik River and its drainages were identified as being important spawning habitat for the largest population of chum salmon in the Yukon River system. Subsistence and commercial fishing were dependent upon this resource. The Anvik River area also supported a large population of trophy-class grizzly/brown bears.

Current Application of Original Intent:

Fisheries: The original intent is still relevant for the largest population of summer chum salmon in the Yukon River that utilize the spawning habitat on the Anvik River. ADFG operates the Anvik sonar counter on the Anvik River to monitor escapement of summer chum salmon into the Anvik River (Bergstrom et al 2009). The escapement is used to determine if chum salmon run strength allows for subsistence and commercial fishing in the Yukon River. The protection of spawning habitat for the largest population of summer chum salmon in the Yukon River through an ACEC is still applicable to the original intent.

² (SSFP 5 AAC 39.22)

Anvik River ACEC Evaluation Table			
General Location	General Description	Acreage	Values Considered
<i>See Figure 1 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>Anvik River</i>	<i>115,106 acres</i>	<i>Fish, Grizzly, Brown Bear, Moose</i>
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?			
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination	
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: Yes	<p>The Anvik <i>may</i> contain relevant values. While most known cultural resources are concentrated on the lower Anvik River (on land outside of BLM-managed lands), most of the upper Anvik has not been subjected to intensive pedestrian survey. Known sites on BLM-managed land (UKT-063, XHC-026, XHC-070) have not been formally evaluated for eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Previous surveys by the BLM archaeologist and by BIA archaeologists have found a low to medium potential for significant cultural resources along the Anvik River. Because of the known fisheries resources on the Anvik, there is also the potential for Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs) within this area. It is likely that if additional surveys and tribal consultation were conducted, and if sites or TCPs were evaluated for NRHP eligibility, that some would be found eligible.</p>	
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Fisheries: Yes	<p>The drainage is important for chum salmon and local subsistence resources (Fish and Aquatic Habitat Report Anvik River, Alaska 1979). The Anvik River is considered the largest single wild stock producer of summer chum salmon in the Yukon River drainage and possibly the world (Bergstrom et al. 1999).</p> <p>The ADFG has monitored escapement into the Anvik River using the Anvik River sonar site since 1979. In 2004 the Board of Fish established the biological escapement goal for the Anvik River of 350,000 to 700,000 summer chum salmon into the Anvik River (McEwen, 2011).</p> <p>This population of summer chum salmon is</p>	

Anvik River ACEC Evaluation Table		
	Wildlife: Yes	<p>relevant for subsistence and commercial villages along the Yukon River that harvest them for food, barter, and commercial sales.</p> <p>The Anvik River watershed provides habitats for populations of moose, black bears and brown bears, as well as shrub habitats for at least 45 species of land birds, waterfowl, shorebirds and raptors. The watershed exists in a pristine state, with little permanent human development, and an intact ecological hierarchy including predators (wolves, brown bears, black bears, lynx) to terrestrial and aquatic prey species, including 4 species of salmon. This large parcel of land is also situated between two Wildlife Refuges and may help to provide some connectivity between them.</p>
3. A natural process or system		n/a
4. Natural Hazards		n/a
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	<p>Cultural: No</p> <p>Wildlife: No</p> <p>Fisheries: Yes</p>	<p>Cultural: There are no known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC that have been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. If the resources were found to be eligible, it would most likely be for local significance.</p> <p>It is a natural intact ecosystem, but is not unique from other portions of the planning area or other areas of the state.</p> <p>The Anvik River produces many of the fish that escape into the Yukon River, contributing to an internationally significant fisheries resource.</p> <p>The importance of the Anvik River beyond the local area relates to its connection to the internationally significant Yukon River. The United States and Canada have signed the Yukon River Salmon Agreement December 4, 2002 (U.S Dept. of State Archive 2002). A treaty between the Government of Canada</p>

Anvik River ACEC Evaluation Table		
		<p>and the Government of the United States recognizes the uniqueness of the Yukon River and its salmon fisheries as: having a principal goal to rebuild and conserve stocks; provide benefits to the fisheries of both countries on this river system; recognition that subsistence fisheries in Alaska have priority over other fisheries; recognition that aboriginal fisheries in Yukon have priority over other fisheries in Yukon; that salmon stocks originating from the Yukon River in Canada are harvested by fishers of both Canada and the United States; that effective conservation and management of these resources are of mutual interest; that considerable work remains to be done to understand the composition of stocks in the various Yukon River fisheries; and to develop effective management techniques based on precautionary management approaches (Treaty Canada and U.S. 2009).</p> <p>The 2012 summer chum salmon run comprised approximately 2.1 million fish passing Pilot Station sonar (JTC 2013). Pilot Station sonar is located on the Yukon River near the village of Pilot Station. The preliminary cumulative summer chum salmon commercial harvest for Districts 1 and 2 combined was 207,849 (JTC 2013). Commercial harvest district 1 and 2 are on the lower Yukon River. This commercial harvest of summer chum salmon contributes to local, state, and national economy and food source.</p>
Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	<p>Cultural: No</p> <p>Wildlife: No</p> <p>Fisheries: Yes</p>	<p>There are no known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC that have been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.</p> <p>Wildlife species found within the Anvik watershed are common throughout the state.</p> <p>Summer chum salmon are unique in that the Anvik River is the largest producer of summer chum salmon in the Yukon River drainage (Bergstrom et al. 1999).</p>

Anvik River ACEC Evaluation Table		
Has been recognized as warranting protection	Cultural: No Wildlife: No	Cultural: There are no known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC that have been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare		n/a
Significant threat to human life/safety or property		n/a
<i>Summary of Important Values:</i>		
Additional Rationale:	Cultural: The Alaska Heritage Resource Survey (AHRS) and BLM files were consulted for known cultural resources within the ACEC. It is also the expert opinion of Ken Pratt, a BIA archaeologist who has done extensive work along the lower Anvik, that was also informally consulted regarding the potential for cultural resources along the middle and upper Anvik is low (Kenneth Pratt, personal communication 2013).	
Additional Rationale:	Fish: The Anvik River provides important spawning habitats for the largest population of summer chum salmon in the Yukon River system. Subsistence and commercial fishing are dependent upon this resource. The important values of the Anvik River include spawning habitat and healthy watershed function.	
Additional Rationale:	Wildlife: The large, significant run of chum salmon on the Anvik River support a population of brown bears within the watershed and beyond, as well as create a cascade of nutrients that support fish and wildlife species in the lower part of the food web. For this reason, the chum salmon population in the Anvik river warrants protection.	
Rationale:	Other, Subsistence: Rural residents along the Yukon River benefit from chum salmon spawned and reared in the Anvik River. As chinook salmon numbers have declined in recent years, the significance of chum salmon from the Anvik River for food security has increased. During a 2012 response to a poor Chinook salmon run and the need to: 1) fulfil the Canadian border passage objective based upon the interim management escapement goal (IMEG); and, 2) meet Alaska escapement needs and provide for subsistence use; NO commercial periods targeting Chinook salmon were allowed in the Yukon River main stem or in the Tanana River (JTC 2013). Using in-season assessment and run timing information, portions of districts that indicated a low abundance of Chinook salmon were opened to summer chum salmon commercial fishing (JCT 2013), indicating the increased importance of this chum salmon run as chinook numbers decline. The 2013 preliminary cumulative summer chum	

Anvik River ACEC Evaluation Table	
	<p>salmon commercial harvest for Districts 1 and 2 (Districts 1 and 2 comprise fishing districts on the lower Yukon River) combined was 207,849 fish, with a 2013 total of 2,421 Chinook salmon reported incidental harvest in Districts 1 and 2 during the summer season (JCT 2013).</p> <p>These recent 2013 harvest numbers identify the importance of summer chum salmon, supported largely by the Anvik River, and the benefits to the subsistence and commercial fisheries of the lower Yukon River communities. A portion of these summer chum salmon utilize spawning habitat within the Anvik River ACEC.</p>
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?	
<p>Fisheries: Yes, this ACEC meets both the relevance and importance criteria.</p> <p>Wildlife: No. The wildlife species that exist on the Anvik Watershed are not threatened or endangered, and are not unique within the planning area or statewide.</p> <p>Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important.</p> <p>Fisheries resources were found to be relevant and important.</p> <p>Cultural resources were found to be relevant but not important.</p>	

3.3.2 Kuskokwim River Raptor Nesting Habitat ACEC

BACKGROUND

Existing or New Nomination: Existing

Size: 6,072 Acres

Current Management of the Area:

Wildlife: As part of the post-delisting, surveys for the peregrine falcon nesting and productivity surveys were done on the Kuskokwim River between Aniak and McGrath from 2000-2004, and again in 2008, 2011, and 2013. These surveys concentrated on the cliff nesting habitats along that portion of the Kuskokwim River. These surveys showed a recovery in the number of nesting pairs of peregrine falcons on cliff nesting habitats along the Kuskokwim River from the low population levels during the 1970s and 1980s when the species was listed as threatened under the endangered species act (Seppi 2007).

Lands and Realty: The existing Kuskokwim River Raptor Nesting Habitat ACEC occurs within lands withdrawn by PLO 5184. PLO 5184 withdrew lands (subject to valid existing rights) withdrawn by section 11 of the Alaska Native Claims Act from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws and from location and entry under the mining laws (which includes locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. PLO 5184 also withdrew the lands from selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act until 1975. The lands were reserved for study and review by the Secretary of the Interior for the purpose of the classification or reclassification of any lands not conveyed pursuant to section 14 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). PLO 5184 also withdrew lands by section

11 of ANCSA lying between 58 degrees north and 64 degrees north latitude and 161 degrees west longitude not withdrawn as any part of the National Wildlife Refuge and made these lands, subject to valid existing rights from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Statehood Act and entry under the mining laws and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study and review by the Secretary of the Interior for the purpose of the classification or reclassification of any lands not conveyed pursuant to section 14 of the ANCSA. PLO 5184 also allowed the Secretary to administer the lands under applicable laws and regulations and granted the authority to enter contracts and to grant leases, permits, rights-of-way, or easements.

The lands are currently managed under the 1981 Southwest Management Framework Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to leases, permits, rights of way, and easements.

Nominator(s): existing ACEC, not new nomination.

Rationale provided by nominator: N/A

Kuskokwim River Raptor Nesting Habitat ACEC Evaluation Table			
Original Intent:			
In 1981, The Kuskokwim River area was important nesting habitat for bald eagles, golden eagles, osprey, and gyrfalcons. The concentration of these important or endangered species was the basis for ACEC designation.			
Current Application of Original Intent:			
Although peregrine falcon numbers have increased or remained steady since the species was delisted from the ESA in 2000, cliff nesting habitat along the Kuskokwim River remains important for the species and other cliff nesting raptors (gyrfalcon, peregrine falcons, golden eagles, rough-legged hawks). The portion of the Kuskokwim river between Aniak and McGrath provides cliff nesting habitat for at least 20 peregrine falcon pairs annually (Seppi 2007).			
General Location	General Description	Acreage	Values Considered
<i>See Figure 1 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>3 sites along the Kuskokwim River downstream of Crooked Creek</i>	<i>6,072 acres</i>	<i>Bald eagles, golden eagles, osprey, gyrfalcons</i>
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?			
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination	
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Fisheries: No Cultural: No	Fisheries: No important fish habitat in raptor nesting habitat. The nominated ACEC is for raptor nesting habitat and not for cultural resources. There are no known cultural resources located within this ACEC.	

Kuskokwim River Raptor Nesting Habitat ACEC Evaluation Table		
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Wildlife: Yes	Although recommended in the 1981 Southwest MFP, an ACEC to protect peregrine falcon habitat has not been implemented. BLM lands within the Kuskokwim River corridor between McGrath and Aniak should be recognized for peregrine falcon and rough-legged hawk nesting habitat and raptor productivity. The bluffs and cliffs along the Kuskokwim River provide nesting habitat for many species of raptors, and are not found in abundance in other portions of the planning area. The cliff nesting habitats are situated along the river corridor and provide an important food source for nesting raptors. The cliff habitats along the river in that area produce at least 20 peregrine and 20 rough-legged nests annually (Seppi 2007).
3. A natural process or system		n/a
4. Natural Hazards		n/a
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	Wildlife: No	Cliff nesting habitats on the Kuskokwim River provide nesting areas for the North American population of peregrine falcons, and other raptors. The several remaining nest sites were active in the mid-1980s and the current status of these sites is unknown. These species tend to move their nest sites over time. The location accuracy of the past nest sites is not certain. In addition, the land they were on may have been conveyed out of BLM management. The location of possible nest sites that exist today would be located farther from the river. Additionally, peregrine nest surveys conducted along the river in 2008 and 2011 indicate that peregrine populations have increased since 2001, the year of the original post-delisting surveys. Since the delisting of the peregrine falcon, populations are stable or increasing and therefore, the species is not considered important for purposes of ACEC designation.

Kuskokwim River Raptor Nesting Habitat ACEC Evaluation Table		
	Fisheries: No Cultural: No	There is no fisheries habitat in raptor nesting. There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC
Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	Cultural: No Wildlife: No	There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC. Peregrine falcon was delisted from the ESA in 1999, and North American populations have recovered. Cliff nesting habitats are found in other areas of the planning area and the state. Adverse changes are not anticipated in the planning area that would make peregrines vulnerable to population declines.
Has been recognized as warranting protection	Cultural: No Wildlife: No	There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC. Although cliff nesting habitats are important to peregrines, the population has recovered and has been delisted under ESA. No significant threats to peregrines currently exist or are anticipated within the ACECs.
Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare		n/a
Significant threat to human life/safety or property		n/a
<i>Summary of Important Values:</i>		
Rationale:	Cultural: None. The AHRS and BLM files were consulted for known cultural resources within the ACEC.	
Rationale:	Fish: N/a	
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?		
No, raptor nest sites can be protected under the migratory bird treaty act, as well as through land use authorization permit terms and conditions that provide buffers around active nests. Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important. Fisheries resources were not found to be relevant or important. Cultural resources were not found to be relevant or important.		

3.3.3 Peregrine Falcon Nesting Habitat ACEC

BACKGROUND

Existing or New Nomination: Existing

Size: 8,096 Acres

Current Management of the Area:

No other peregrine falcon habitat or populations surveys work has been done in the planning area since the 1981 SWMFP, outside of the Kuskokwim River between Aniak and McGrath.

Lands and Realty: The existing Peregrine Falcon Nesting Habitat ACEC occurs within lands withdrawn by PLO 5184 and PLO 5179. A small portion of the ACEC is not covered by a PLO and the lands are open to the public land laws. PLO 5184 withdrew lands (subject to valid existing rights) withdrawn by section 11 of the Alaska Native Claims Act from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws and from location and entry under the mining laws (which includes locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. PLO 5184 also withdrew these lands from selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act until 1975. The lands were reserved for study and review by the Secretary of the Interior for the purpose of the classification or reclassification of any lands not conveyed pursuant to section 14 of the ANCSA. PLO 5184 also withdrew lands lying between 58 degrees north and 64 degrees north latitude and 161 degrees west longitude not withdrawn as any part of the National Wildlife Refuge and made these lands, subject to valid existing rights from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Statehood Act and entry under the mining laws and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study and review by the Secretary of the Interior for the purpose of the classification or reclassification of any lands not conveyed pursuant to section 14 of the ANCSA. PLO 5184 also allowed the Secretary to administer the lands under applicable laws and regulations and granted the authority to enter contracts and to grant leases, permits, rights-of-way, or easements.

PLO 5179 withdrew identified lands by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws (which includes locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. PLO 5179 also withdrew the lands from selections by regional corporations under section 12 of ANCSA. The lands were reserved for study and possible recommendations to the Congress as additions or creation as a unit of the National Park, Forest, Wildlife Refuge, and Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

The lands are currently managed under the 1981 Southwest Management Framework Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to leases, permits, rights of way, and easements.

Nominator(s): existing ACEC, not new nomination.

Rationale provided by nominator: N/A

Peregrine Falcon Nesting Habitat ACEC Evaluation Table			
Original Intent:			
In 1981, the BLM was mandated by the Endangered Species Act to protect peregrine falcons and their habitat. Therefore, the peregrine falcon nesting habitats (4 locations) are recommended for ACEC status.			
Current Application of Original Intent:			
While peregrine falcon populations have increased and the species was delisted from the ESA in 2000, cliff nesting habitats important to the species exist along the Yukon River and are important for providing undisturbed nesting sites to sustaining population levels. These existing ACEC sites were peregrine nest sites that were surveyed prior to the 1981 SWMFP, when the peregrine falcon was listed as threatened under the ESA.			
General Location	General Description	Acreage	Values Considered
<i>See Figure 1 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>4 nest sites along the Yukon river.</i>	8,096 acres	<i>Peregrine falcons</i>
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?			
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination	
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: No	This ACEC was designated for nesting habitat and not for cultural resources. There are no known cultural resources within this ACEC.	
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Wildlife: Yes Fisheries: No	The peregrine falcon nesting habitat ACEC was nominated to protect cliff nesting habitats and active nest sites along the Yukon River. While peregrine falcon populations have increased and stabilized since the species was delisted from a threatened status in 1999, these areas remain important cliff nesting habitats along the Yukon River. No relevant value to fisheries.	
3. A natural process or system		n/a	
4. Natural Hazards		n/a	
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?			
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination	
More than locally significant	Cultural: No	Cultural: There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC.	

Peregrine Falcon Nesting Habitat ACEC Evaluation Table		
	<p>Fisheries: No</p> <p>Wildlife: No</p>	<p>Fisheries: No important fish habitat in falcon nesting habitat.</p> <p>Cliff nesting habitats along the Yukon River provide nesting areas for the North American population of peregrine falcons and other raptors. These species tend to move their nest sites over time. The location accuracy of the past nest sites is not certain. In addition, the land they were on may have been conveyed out of BLM ownership. The location of possible nest sites that exist today would be located farther from the river. Since the delisting of the peregrine falcon, populations are stable or increasing and therefore, the species is not considered important for purposes of ACEC designation.</p>
<p>Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change</p>	<p>Cultural: No</p> <p>Wildlife: No</p>	<p>There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC.</p> <p>Peregrine falcon was delisted from the ESA in 1999, and North American populations have recovered. Cliff nesting habitats are found in other areas of the planning area and the state. Adverse changes are not anticipated in the planning area that would make peregrines vulnerable to population declines.</p>
<p>Has been recognized as warranting protection</p>	<p>Cultural: No</p> <p>Wildlife: No</p>	<p>There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC.</p> <p>Although cliff nesting habitats are important to peregrines, the population has recovered and has been delisted under ESA. No significant threats to peregrines currently exist or are anticipated within the ACECs.</p>
<p>Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare</p>		<p>n/a</p>
<p>Significant threat to human life/safety or property</p>		<p>n/a</p>

Peregrine Falcon Nesting Habitat ACEC Evaluation Table	
<i>Summary of Important Values:</i>	
Rationale:	Cultural: The AHRS and BLM files were consulted for known cultural resources within the ACEC.
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?	
<p>No, raptor nest sites can be protected under the migratory bird treaty act, as well as through land use authorization permit terms and conditions that provide buffers around active nests.</p> <p>Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important.</p> <p>Fisheries resources were not found to be relevant or important.</p> <p>Cultural resources were not found to be relevant or important.</p>	

3.3.4 Drainages of the Unalakleet River ACEC

BACKGROUND

Existing or New Nomination: Existing

Size: 415,184 Acres

Current Management of the Area:

Fisheries: BLM submitted an application for reservation of water to DNR State of Alaska on March 19, 2001 (DNR file application LAS 27140) for the main stem of the Unalakleet River from its headwaters to the confluence with the Chirosky River where the river departs public land. The reservation is for 100 percent of the natural flow from November through April. The flow request for May has been split to correspond to the immigration of the Chinook salmon and the out-migration of the salmonids. The flow request for June through October are based on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Instream Flow Incremental Methodology and associated Physical Habitat Simulation Model and mimic the natural hydrograph (Bovee 1982, 1986). The requested flows will provide adequate spawning habitat for the target species and their other life phases as well as life phases of other fish species indigenous to the Unalakleet River drainage.

In 2010, the USFWS Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) funded the project# FIS 10-102 Unalakleet River Chinook Salmon Assessment project (FIS-10-102) to fund the construction and operation of a 320 foot resistance board weir on the Unalakleet River for 4 years-. This multi-year project utilized a resistance board weir to obtain reliable estimates of salmon escapement abundance and age, sex, and length composition (Kent et al.2010). This project remains a high priority in the region. In 2013, it was funded again through 2017. This is a cooperative project operated with support from ADFG, BLM, Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC), and The Native Village of Unalakleet (NVU). The chief purpose of the project is to obtain reliable estimates of the escapement's abundance and age, sex, and length composition (Kent et al.2010).

Wildlife: Breeding bird surveys have been conducted on the Unalakleet River annually since 1997. These surveys have recorded the presence of 45 species of song birds, waterfowl, shorebirds and raptors, including grey-cheeked thrush, blackpoll warbler, BLM sensitive species.

Lands and Realty: The existing Drainages of the Unalakleet River ACEC occur within lands withdrawn by PLO 5180, PLO 5179, and PLO 5173. PLO 5180 withdrew lands identified by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws (except locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study to determine the proper classification of the lands under section 17(d) (1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

PLO 5179 withdrew identified lands by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws (which includes locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. PLO 5179 also withdrew the lands from selections by regional corporations under section 12 of ANCSA. The lands were reserved for study and possible recommendations to the Congress as additions or creation as a unit of the National Park, Forest, Wildlife Refuge, and Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

PLO 5173 withdrew lands identified by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for selection by village corporations. Upon conclusion of village selections, the regional corporations could select the lands under Section 12 of ANCSA. Prior to conveyances, the Secretary could administer the lands and make contracts, and to grant leases, permits, rights-of-way, or easements. Applications for mineral leasing would be rejected until the PLO is modified or the lands appropriately classified to permit mineral leasing.

Portions of this nominated ACEC are not covered by the above withdrawals. Areas not covered by withdrawals are open to the full spectrum of the public land laws including mining and leasing.

The lands are currently managed under the 1981 Southwest Management Framework Plan, the 1986 Central Yukon Resource Management Plan and the Unalakleet Wild and Scenic River Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to permits, leases, rights of way, and easements although FLPMA sales and leases are not allowed within that portion of the Central Yukon RMP in the Unalakleet W/S River Corridor and 300 feet set back zones on the North Fork of the Unalakleet.

Nominator(s): existing ACEC, not new nomination.

Rationale provided by nominator: N/a

Drainages of the Unalakleet River ACEC Evaluation Table

Original Intent:

In 1981, the drainages of the Unalakleet River system are important for the Unalakleet Wild River, the Kaltag Portage of the Iditarod National Historic Trail, sport and subsistence fisheries, winter moose range, and grizzly/brown bear concentrations (SWMFP 1981).

In 1986, the watershed of the Unalakleet River was designated an ACEC, within the Central Yukon RMP planning boundary, in order to provide a higher level of protection to salmon and sheefish spawning and rearing habitat than would otherwise exist without the ACEC designation. These areas contain that portion of the watershed (including all lands within the linear river withdrawals) to minimize potential impacts of land usage on important fish production rivers. These fisheries have been identified as having high commercial, sport and subsistence economic values.

Current Application of Original Intent:

Fisheries: The original intent as identified for sport, commercial, and subsistence fisheries is still applicable.

The Unalakleet River has the largest runs of salmon in the Norton Sound-Port Clarence Area (Menard et al. 2010). Unalakleet River Pacific salmon (*Oncorhynchus* spp.) stocks contribute heavily to Norton Sound subdistricts 5 (Shaktoolik) and 6 (Unalakleet) subsistence and commercial salmon fisheries (Menard et al. 2012). There are two private lodges on the Unalakleet River that provide guided fishing trips for salmon, Dolly Varden, and Arctic grayling (Scanlon, B., 2014). During the years 2007-2011, there was an average of 4,320 angler days for sport fishing (Scanlon, B., 2014). In 2012, the harvest of all salmon species was 8,816 fish and the average annual sport harvest of all salmon species from the Unalakleet River for the years 2007-2011 was 5,323 fish (Scanlon, B., 2014).

The 1986 Central Yukon RMP identified sheefish spawning and rearing habitat for the Unalakleet River ACEC. The Anadromous Waters Catalog does not list sheefish as present in the Unalakleet River therefore, this reasoning does not apply.

Wildlife: the Unalakleet River watershed provides habitat for moose, caribou, brown bear, wolf, wolverine, all species that are important to local subsistence users.

General Location	General Description	Acreage	Values Considered
See Figure 1 (Appendix A)	Upper portion of the Unalakleet and the upper watershed of the Unalakleet, portion of South Fork Unalakleet, portion of the Chirosky River, portion of Old Woman River.	415,184 Acres	Salmon, sheefish

Drainages of the Unalakleet River ACEC Evaluation Table		
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?		
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: Yes	The drainages of the Unalakleet River contain several significant cultural resources. The Kaltag Portage has been an important travel and trade route for Native Alaskans for thousands of years. In the historic period, this was an important segment of the Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT), and from the air, one can still see evidence of the Washington-Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System. Several structures associated with the INHT remain, along with the historic trail itself. The Kaltag Portage, as a part of the INHT, is of national significance, as is indicated by its designation by Congress as a National Historic Trail. Note that most known cultural resources are located on the main Unalakleet River and the INHT corridor, and that no known cultural resources have been documented along the rest of the rivers that make up the rest of this ACEC.
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Fisheries: Yes	The Unalakleet contains crucial anadromous spawning areas. Chinook salmon escapement is relatively equal between the North and Unalakleet Rivers (40:60% respectively) (Joy and Reed 2014; Wuttig 1998, 1999), over 80% of the coho, chum and pink salmon escapements migrate into the main stem of the Unalakleet River and its upper tributaries (Joy and Reed 2006, 2007; Estensen and Hamazaki 2007; Kent <i>pers. comm.</i>) Chinook and coho salmon returning to the Unalakleet River constitute the bulk of the Unalakleet subsistence harvest and ADFG has quantified Chinook and coho salmon subsistence harvests in the area since 1961 (Soong et al. 2008). The Unalakleet River salmon stocks have a positive customary and traditional designation and the Chinook salmon stock has been listed as a stock of yield concern since 2004 (Estensen and

Drainages of the Unalakleet River ACEC Evaluation Table		
	Wildlife: Yes	<p>Evenson 2006). From 1998 to 2007 the annual Chinook and coho salmon subsistence harvests have averaged 3,599 and 8,556 salmon, respectively (Soong et al. 2008). Escapement in the Unalakleet River has been monitored by aerial surveys, in-season subsistence and commercial catches, and a counting tower located on the North River since 1996, which previous studies have shown to be a reasonable index for drainage-wide escapement for Chinook (Joy and Reed 2007; Wuttig 1997, 1998), coho (Joy and Reed 2007, 2006; Joy et al. 2005) and chum salmon (Estensen and Balland in prep; Estensen and Hamazaki 2007; Estensen et al. 2005).</p> <p>The Unalakleet River Chinook salmon stock is currently listed as a <i>stock of yield concern</i> and low returns and harvests in recent years has caused concern among local subsistence users. Traditional stock-recruit models will likely be developed from the new and ongoing escapement monitoring projects on the Unalakleet River drainage (the North River counting tower and Unalakleet River weir) (Joy and Jones 2010).</p> <p>The Unalakleet River watershed provides habitat for moose, caribou, brown bear, wolf, and wolverine. These species are important to local subsistence users, as well as local guides and outfitters that provide services to resident and non-resident sport hunters, providing benefit to the local economy as well as providing opportunity for qualified subsistence users from Unalakleet and Shaktoolik. The watershed is also a natural, complete ecosystem with an intact ecological food web.</p>
3. A natural process or system		n/a
4. Natural Hazards		n/a

Drainages of the Unalakleet River ACEC Evaluation Table		
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	<p>Cultural: Yes</p> <p>Fisheries: Yes</p> <p>Wildlife: No</p>	<p>The cultural resources located along the INHT and Unalakleet River, particularly the INHT, WSR are of national significance, as is indicated by their designation by Congress as a National Historic Trail and a Wild and Scenic River.</p> <p>The Unalakleet River provides fishery resources for the village of Unalakleet for subsistence and commercial fishing. In the Unalakleet Subdistrict, the 2012 commercial harvest including personal use by 55 permit holders was 157 Chinook salmon, 74 sockeye salmon, 52,445 pink salmon, 28,161 chum salmon, and 22,274 coho salmon (Menard, J. et al. 2013). This fishery resource is more than locally significant by providing jobs and food to people throughout the State of Alaska. Fish from the Unalakleet River caught in the commercial fishery in Norton Sound are processed and shipped from Unalakleet to markets in Anchorage and the entire United States.</p> <p>The wildlife species in the Unalakleet watershed are locally important to subsistence and sport hunters, but exist in other portions of the planning area and the state.</p>
Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	Cultural: Yes	<p>The Kaltag Portage is a rare, irreplaceable, and exemplary cultural resource. It has been an important travel and trade route for Native Alaskans for thousands of years. In the historic period, this was an important segment of the Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT), and from the air, it is one of the few places one can still see evidence of the Washington-Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System (WAMCATS). Several structures associated with the INHT remain, along with the historic trail itself. The Kaltag Portage, as a part of the INHT, is of national significance, as is indicated by its</p>

Drainages of the Unalakleet River ACEC Evaluation Table		
	<p>Fisheries: Yes</p> <p>Wildlife: No</p>	<p>designation by Congress as a National Historic Trail. The cultural landscape is exceptional and needs to be protected.</p> <p>The Unalakleet River was designated a Wild River by congress in 1980 (Klein et al. 2000). The outstanding remarkable characteristics of the Unalakleet River include fish, wildlife, and scenic values (USDI Bureau of Outdoor Recreation 1972). This designation identifies the Unalakleet River as a unique, rare, and irreplaceable habitat that should be protected.</p> <p>The wildlife species in the Unalakleet watershed are locally important to subsistence and sport hunters, but exist in other portions of the planning area and the state. There are no threatened and endangered species found within the Unalakleet watershed.</p>
Has been recognized as warranting protection	<p>Cultural: Yes</p> <p>Fisheries: Yes</p> <p>Wildlife: No</p>	<p>The Kaltag Portage, as a part of the INHT, is of national significance, as is indicated by its designation by Congress as a National Historic Trail, and cultural resources were recognized as a contributing value when the WSR was designated.</p> <p>Fisheries: The designation of the Unalakleet River as a National Wild River by congress in 1980 recognized the value of designating the area for protection.</p> <p>There are no threatened and endangered species within the watershed, and wildlife populations are managed for sustainable population levels by ADFG and for subsistence users under ANILCA on Federal lands.</p>
Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare		n/a
Significant threat to human life/safety or property		n/a

Drainages of the Unalakleet River ACEC Evaluation Table	
<i>Summary of Important Values:</i>	
Rationale:	<p>Cultural: The BLM’s INHT Comprehensive Management Plan summarizes the known cultural resources along the Unalakleet River and the Kaltag Portage. The AHRS database was searched for known cultural resources throughout the ACEC. The state and national significance of the WAMCATS communication system has been well established (M. Blanchard 2010). While the entire existing ACEC has not been inventoried for cultural resources, any anadromous stream has some potential for cultural resources; however, based upon research to date, the significance of cultural resources in this ACEC is concentrated along the main Unalakleet River and the INHT corridor. The Unalakleet River does require additional special management to protect important and relevant cultural resources. Significant cultural resources are already protected, primarily through their location in the Iditarod National Historic Trail corridor, but also through their location within the Unalakleet National Wild River corridor. As units of the National Landscape Conservation System, these designations provide some protection for the cultural resources in this area. However, these do not in themselves protect the resources from adverse effects; an ACEC with strong land-use restrictions would help to protect these important cultural resources.</p>
Rationale:	<p>Wildlife: Moose populations within the Unalakleet watershed are at historically low levels, however slowly increasing with intensive population management coordinated by state and federal agencies, including BLM. Moose are an important subsistence species for the residents of local villages, particularly the Village of Unalakleet, and are managed under ANILCA on federal lands, and for sustained yields by ADFG.</p>
Rationale:	<p>Fisheries: The ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog was consulted which, lists all five species of Pacific Salmon present in the Unalakleet River and also identifies this as Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) through the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The Unalakleet River Chinook Salmon Escapement Monitoring and Assessment, 2011-2012 was consulted identifying the escapement numbers for Chinook salmon into the Unalakleet River watershed. The Norton Sound Subdistrict 5 (Shaktoolik) and Subdistrict 6 (Unalakleet) King Salmon Stock Status and Action Plan, 2013 and the Report to the Alaska Board of Fisheries were consulted for commercial and subsistence fisheries relevant to the Unalakleet River.</p>
Rationale:	<p>Other:</p> <p>Subsistence: The Unalakleet River watershed is actively fished and hunted for subsistence uses and needs by federally-qualified rural residents. The decline of chinook salmon population in recent years has elevated the significance of other salmon species for subsistence uses and needs. Special management schemes that allow for subsistence uses and needs, especially in the Unalakleet Wild and Scenic River, are needed in order to provide continued access to the important fish resource.</p>

Drainages of the Unalakleet River ACEC Evaluation Table

Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?

Fisheries: Yes. The original intent is still relevant for the ACEC. The relevance and importance criteria are both met.

Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important.

Fisheries resources were found to be relevant and important.

Cultural resources were found to be relevant and important.

3.3.5 North River ACEC

BACKGROUND

Existing or New Nomination: Existing

Size: 137,349 Acres

Current Management of the Area:

Lands and Realty: The existing Drainages of the North Fork River ACEC occur within lands withdrawn by PLO 5180. PLO 5180 withdrew lands identified by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws (except locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study to determine the proper classification of the lands under section 17(d) (1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

The lands are currently managed under the 1981 Southwest Management Framework Plan and the 1986 Central Yukon Resource Management Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to permits, leases, rights of way, and easements although FLPMA sales and leases are not allowed within a 300 foot North River corridor set back identified in the Central Yukon RMP.

Nominator(s): existing ACEC, not new nomination.

Rationale provided by nominator: N/a

North River ACEC Evaluation Table

Original Intent:

In 1986, the watershed of the North River was designated an ACEC within the Central Yukon RMP planning boundary in order to provide a higher level of protection to salmon and sheefish spawning and rearing habitat than would otherwise exist without the ACEC designation. These areas contain that portion of the watershed (including all lands within the linear river withdrawals) to minimize potential impacts of land usage on important fish production rivers. These fisheries have been identified as having high commercial, sport and subsistence economic values.

Current Application of Original Intent:

The North River flows into the Unalakleet River and contributes an average of 41% of the king salmon production but may range from 34 to 53 percent of the fishery (Kent and Bergstrom 2012). The North River contributes to the fish production of the Unalakleet River, which:

- Combined has the largest runs of salmon in the Norton Sound-Port Clarence Area (Menard et al. 2010);
- Has two private lodges on the Unalakleet River that provide guided fishing trips for salmon, Dolly Varden, and Arctic grayling (Scanlon 2014); that utilize both rivers;
- During the years 2007-2011, experienced an average of 4,320 angler days for sport fishing (Scanlon 2014); and
- Experienced an average annual sport harvest of all salmon species, from 2007-2011 of 5,323 fish (Scanlon 2014).

The North River is used as an index for drainage-wide king salmon escapement of the Unalakleet River management. There is a counting tower on the North River approximately 2 miles above the confluence of the Unalakleet and the North Rivers. The North River Counting tower has been operated continually since 1996 by various agencies and entities including Kawerak Inc., (1996-2001), Native Village of Unalakleet (NVU) (2000-2006), NVU and ADFG (2007-2008), and most recently, NSEDC (2009-2012) (Kent and Bergstrom 2012). The North River escapement indexing drainage wide for king salmon average is 41% evaluated from radio telemetry work conducted by Wuttig (1999), (Joy and Reed 2014) 37% (1997), 40% (1998), 34% (1998), and 53% (2009) (Kent and Bergstrom 2012).

The intent of the original North River ACEC is still relevant as identified in the 1986 Central Yukon RMP. Fish species in the North River still have high commercial, sport, and subsistence value. ACEC designation may provide a higher level of protection for salmon spawning and rearing habitat that contribute to the salmon population utilized by the subsistence, commercial, and sport fishing that occurs from fish produced in the North River.

The 1986 Central Yukon RMP identified sheefish spawning and rearing habitat. The Anadromous Waters Catalog does not list sheefish as present in the North River therefore, this reasoning does not apply.

North River ACEC Evaluation Table			
General Location	General Description	Acreage	Values Considered
<i>See Figure 1 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>Upper portion of the North River</i>	<i>137,349 acres</i>	<i>Salmon, sheefish</i>
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?			
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination	
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: No	There are no known documented cultural resources within the ACEC; however, the whole area has not been subjected to an intensive pedestrian survey, and it is known anecdotally that there are some historic resources present along the river. And as with any anadromous river, there is medium potential for cultural resources.	
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Fish: Yes Wildlife: Yes	<p>The North River supports all five species of Pacific Salmon species (ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog) and is identified to have spawning habitat for all five of these species (Anadromous Waters Catalog AWC Code 333-60-10100-2041, 333-60-10100-2040). This river supports important subsistence and sport fishing for non-residents and residents of the village of Unalakleet. Resident fish are also present including Dolly Varden, Arctic char, and whitefish. High quality salmon spawning beds have been identified in the North River.</p> <p>The North River watershed provides habitat for moose, caribou, brown bear, wolf, and wolverine. These species are important to local subsistence users, as well as local guides and outfitters that provide services to resident and non-resident sport hunters, providing benefit to the local economy as well as providing opportunity for qualified subsistence users from Unalakleet and Shaktoolik. The watershed is also a natural, complete ecosystem with an intact ecological food web. The North River flows into the Unalakleet River and the fishery from these rivers is the most important resource value associated with the river or the region (River Management Plan Unalakleet River 1983).</p>	

North River ACEC Evaluation Table		
3. A natural process or system		n/a
4. Natural Hazards		n/a
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	Cultural: No Wildlife: No Fish: Yes	<p>There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC.</p> <p>The wildlife species in the Unalakleet watershed are locally important to subsistence and sport hunters, but exist in other portions of the planning area and the state.</p> <p>The North River is a highly productive aquatic environment that provides significant critical spawning and rearing habitat for salmon species. Escapement numbers for king salmon in the North River is sustainable escapement goal (SEG) range of 1,200 to 2,600 fish. The total exploitation rate for king salmon to the Unalakleet River has ranged significantly depending on the run strength from 57.9 % from (1984-2006 excluding 1999 and 2001) to an average of 34.1 % from (2007-2012). This identifies the significant contribution to the subsistence, commercial, and sport fishery that the North River provides.</p>
Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	Cultural: No Wildlife: No	<p>There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC.</p> <p>The wildlife species in the North River watershed are locally important to subsistence and sport hunters, but exist in other portions of the planning area and the state. There are no threatened and endangered species found within the North River watershed.</p>

North River ACEC Evaluation Table		
	Fisheries: Yes	The North River has sensitive, rare, and irreplaceable habitat for all five species of salmon. It is rare for a river system to provide habitat for all five Pacific Salmon species that are productive within a watershed.
Has been recognized as warranting protection	Cultural: No Wildlife: No	Cultural: There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC. There are no threatened and endangered species within the North River watershed, and wildlife populations are managed for sustainable population levels by ADFG and for Federal subsistence users under ANILCA on Federal lands.
Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare		n/a
Significant threat to human life/safety or property		n/a
<i>Summary of Important Values:</i>		
Rationale:	Cultural: The AHRS and BLM files were consulted for known cultural resources within the ACEC.	
Rationale:	Fish: The North River is used as an escapement index river with a counting tower located on it. The counting tower is used to identify the escapement of Chinook, chum, pink, and coho salmon into the North River. The North River counting tower serves as an important index of drainage-wide king salmon escapement. If escapement numbers are not met the fishery for subsistence, commercial, and sport fishing maybe closed or restricted until it is. Chinook salmon escapement is relatively equal between the North and Unalakleet Rivers at 40% - 60% respectively (Joy and Reed, 2014.; Wuttig 1998, 1999).	
Rationale:	Wildlife: The moose populations on the North River contribute to the total population within the watershed and are an important subsistence species. These populations however, are not unique to this area and occur throughout the planning area and the state.	

North River ACEC Evaluation Table

Fisheries: Yes, the relevance and importance criteria are both met and the ACEC should be carried forward.

Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important.

Fisheries resources were found to be relevant and important.

Cultural resources were not found to be relevant or important.

3.3.6 Sheefish Spawning Area ACEC

BACKGROUND

Existing or New Nomination: New

Size: 698,260 Acres

Current Management of the Area:

Lands and Realty: The nominated Sheefish Spawning ACEC occurs within lands withdrawn by PLO 5180. PLO 5180 withdrew lands identified by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws (except locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study to determine the proper classification of the lands under section 17(d) (1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

The lands are currently managed under the 1981 Southwest Management Framework Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to permits, leases, rights of way, and easements.

Nominator(s): BLM Fisheries Biologist via suggestions from Georgetown Tribal Council, a McGrath resident, and expressed support from the Western Interior Resource Advisory Council.

Rationale provided by nominators:

External Rationale provided:

Sheefish are a culturally significant fish species along the Kuskokwim River; they are harvested for subsistence use by many, especially in the middle and upper river. Sheefish are often caught before salmon in the spring, and offer an opportunity for fresh fish early in the season. In recent years, king salmon have been in decline and there has been an even greater shift in harvest patterns away from king salmon and more toward whitefish and other salmon species. Sheefish spawning grounds have very specific needs and occur in small numbers on the Kuskokwim River, as has been documented over the last five years by ADFG. Because of this, the habitat in and around the existing spawning grounds needs to be protected, to allow for future productivity of the species.

A November of 2012 ADFG report on sheefish spawning grounds on the Kuskokwim River ((FDS12-65) is (Stuby 2012)) provides detailed information about spawning areas documented on the Kuskokwim River. The report shows three spawning locations on the Kuskokwim River for

sheefish, located on the Tonzona, Middle Fork and Big River, all located in the upper Kuskokwim River area. It is our hope that special protection will still be given to these areas.

Of these locations, there are BLM-managed lands near the Big River.

Local residents depend on the fish and wildlife resources of this drainage, which includes sheefish. The local Athabascan name for the river is “Zidlaghe Zighashno” which translates as “Sheefish Spearing (Harvest) River” and the river is very important to local people.

Any disturbance of this area could impact the sheefish population on the entire Kuskokwim River. Sheefish spawn in relatively small and specific locations, and a 20 KM section of the Big River located south of McGrath has been identified as a well-known spawning area for sheefish. The sheefish spawning area of the Big River is the only identified spawning area on the Kuskokwim although sheefish can be found up and down the River. Disturbance of this spawning area will affect the entire river.

Internal BLM Fish Biologist Rationale provided in table below.

Sheefish ACEC Evaluation Table			
General Location	General Description	Acreage	Values Considered
<i>See Figure 4 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>Big River watershed at the 4th level Hydrologic Unit</i>	<i>698,260 acres</i>	<i>Sheefish Spawning</i>
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?			
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination	
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: Yes	There are 14 documented sites within the nominated ACEC. Six of these are associated with the Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT), and include one connecting trail and five former INHT roadhouse locations. The INHT is of national significance.	
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Fish: Yes	<p>Local dependency and importance.</p> <p>The greatest use of sheefish in the Kuskokwim River drainage has been for subsistence (Stuby 2012).</p> <p>80 percent of the sheefish spawning in the Kuskokwim River spawn in a 15.5 mile section of the Big River (Stuby, 2012).</p> <p>Disturbance to this watershed could impact the entire Kuskokwim population.</p> <p>Sheefish are an important species targeted by sport fishers in streams and tributaries within the Kuskokwim River drainage with the</p>	

Sheefish ACEC Evaluation Table		
	Wildlife: Yes	<p>largest fishery occurring in the Holitna River (Chythlook 2011). During one day in July 1968, seven plane loads of fishermen were fishing at the mouth of the Holitna River. Most sport fishermen fly to Sleetmute or Melkisk's Trading Post, then rent a boat and fish the lower reaches of the Holitna (Alt 1969).</p> <p>The area is a natural intact ecosystem that provides habitat for black bear, brown bear, plains bison, caribou, moose Dall sheep, wolf and wolverine. These species are important to rural subsistence users from the villages of McGrath, Takotna and Nikolai.</p>
3. A natural process or system		n/a
4. Natural Hazards		n/a
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	<p>Cultural: Yes</p> <p>Wildlife: No</p> <p>Fisheries: Yes</p>	<p>While none of the known sites within the nominated ACEC have had a formal determination of eligibility for listing on the NRHP, six of them are associated with the INHT, which is of national significance, as illustrated by its listing as a NHT. The former roadhouses are vital components of the INHT.</p> <p>The wildlife species found in this area are also found throughout the planning area and statewide.</p> <p>Between 2002 and 2004 an average of 678 sheefish were harvested in the lower Kuskokwim River near Bethel (Fall et al. 2003; Brown et al. 2005; Fall et al. 2007) and approximately 661 in the major villages below Bethel (Ray et al. 2010). In the middle river near Aniak, sheefish are harvested throughout the year and annually harvests averaged 995 in 2001-2002, 573 in 2002-200, and 667 in 2009 (Krauthoefer et al. 2007; Brown et al. 2012). The harvest of sheefish by many Kuskokwim villages</p>

Sheefish ACEC Evaluation Table		
		through the Kuskokwim River identifies a local and regional significance.
Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	<p>Cultural: Yes</p> <p>Wildlife: No</p> <p>Fish: Yes</p>	<p>The INHT is unique, fragile, and vulnerable to adverse change. It is the only NHT in Alaska and the only winter trail in the NHT system. It is also largely intact in terms of integrity of setting, feeling, and association.</p> <p>There are no unique or threatened and endangered species found in this area.</p> <p>The only identified sheefish spawning area on entire Kuskokwim.</p> <p>This area of the Big River is rare and irreplaceable for Kuskokwim River sheefish spawning. From 2007 to 2011 ADFG radio tagged 63 sheefish to three spawning areas in the Kuskokwim River Watershed and tracked 80% of them to a 25km (15.5 miles) section within the Big River (Stuby 2012). Two additional probable spawning areas were identified in the Middle Fork a (7km (4.34 miles) spawning area) and East Forks a (2km (1.24 miles) spawning area) of the Kuskokwim River (Stuby 2012).</p> <p>The Kuskokwim River is the second largest drainage in Alaska draining approximately 130,000 km squared km2 along its 1,130 km course to the Bering Sea (Stuby 2012). The Kuskokwim River compiles 11,327.3 miles of anadromous streams 21.12 miles of documented spawning area 0.186% is spawning. Of this small 0.186% area there is 20 km (15.5 miles) in the Big River that is identified documented as sheefish have been documented spawning. Making it a rare and unique resource for spawning habitat.</p>
Has been recognized as warranting protection	Cultural: Yes	By listing the Iditarod as a NHT, it has been recognized by the Department of Interior and by Congress as warranting protection.

Sheefish ACEC Evaluation Table		
	Wildlife: No	Wildlife species are managed by ADFG on a sustained yield basis and subsistence resources on Federal lands are managed under ANILCA for qualified rural subsistence users that live in the area.
Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare		n/a
Significant threat to human life/safety or property		n/a
<i>Summary of Important Values:</i>		
Rationale:	Cultural: The AHRS was consulted for a list of known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC. See the 1986 INHT Comprehensive Management Plan for the list of associated sites, which includes the roadhouses referenced above (Peluk Roadhouse, Bear Creek Roadhouse, Salmon River Roadhouse, Sullivan Roadhouse, Pitka Fork Roadhouse, Sheep Creek Cabin). The nominated ACEC also includes the primary route of the INHT, and the Pitka Fork Connecting Trail. According to the AHRS, none of the sites within the ACEC have been formally evaluated for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, but because several of them are associated with the INHT, it is assumed that a formal DOE would find them eligible.	
Rationale:	<p>Fish: Of the identified ADFG Anadromous Waters 11,327.3 miles in the Kuskokwim River watershed there is 12.4215.5 miles of documented spawning area in the Big River where 80% of the sheefish are documented spawning (Stuby 2012). This equals 0.136 percentage of the known 80 % spawning where sheefish spawn in the Big River throughout the entire Kuskokwim River watershed. This fact alone is very amazing. Why sheefish only spawn in such a limited location is still unknown. Since the projects inception 2007 (Report dates 2007 – 2011) smaller numbers of sheefish were observed in the Middle Fork Kuskokwim River, just above the confluence with Windy Fork and another small aggregation was located at the confluence of the East Fork of the Kuskokwim River with the Tonzona River (Stuby 2012). This Sheefish ACEC would be a 4th level watershed boundary no. 19030406 that would encompass two of the three identified areas.</p> <p>80 % of the sheefish spawn in the Big River 15.5 miles documented spawning area and another small percentage spawn in the East Fork of the Kuskokwim River this is almost the entire know spawning location for sheefish, would be in the identified ACEC watershed. An impact to this spawning habitat could severely affect sheefish spawning leading to a decline in sheefish spawning success and survival throughout the Kuskokwim River. Sheefish are an</p>	

Sheefish ACEC Evaluation Table	
	important subsistence and sport fishery to the entire Kuskokwim River. An ACEC designation would provide protection for this important natural resource. ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog was consulted identifying sheefish locations and the primary consultation was from Spawning Locations, Seasonal Distribution, and Migratory Timing of Kuskokwim River Sheefish using Radiotelemetry, 2007 – 20011. By Lisa Stuby 2012.
Rationale:	Wildlife: Wildlife species are managed by ADFG on a sustained yield basis and subsistence resources on Federal lands are managed under ANILCA for qualified rural subsistence users that live in the area.
Rationale:	Other: Cultural/Paleolithic: Note that the AHRS also lists two paleontological localities within the ACEC, but neither is considered “significant” under BLM’s classification system.
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?	
Fisheries: Yes, the relevance and importance criteria are both met and the ACEC should be carried forward. Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important. Fisheries resources were found to be relevant and important. Cultural resources were found to be relevant and important.	

3.3.7 Grayling Area Habitat ACEC

BACKGROUND

Existing or New Nomination: New

Size: 98,682Acres

Lands and Realty: The nominated Grayling Area Habitat ACEC occurs within lands withdrawn by PLO 5184. PLO 5184 withdrew lands (subject to valid existing rights) withdrawn by section 11 of the Alaska Native Claims Act from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws and from location and entry under the mining laws (which includes locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. PLO 5184 also withdrew the lands from selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act until 1975. The lands were reserved for study and review by the Secretary of the Interior for the purpose of the classification or reclassification of any lands not conveyed pursuant to section 14 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. PLO 5184 also withdrew lands by section 11 of ANCSA lying between 58 degrees north and 64 degrees north latitude and 161 degrees west longitude not withdrawn as any part of the National Wildlife Refuge and made these lands, subject to valid existing rights from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Statehood Act and entry under the mining laws and from leasing under the Mineral

Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study and review by the Secretary of the Interior for the purpose of the classification or reclassification of any lands not conveyed pursuant to section 14 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. PLO 5184 also allowed the Secretary to administer the lands under applicable laws and regulations and granted the authority to enter contracts and to grant leases, permits, rights-of-way, or easements.

Portions of this nominated ACEC are not covered by the above withdrawal. Areas not covered by withdrawals are open to the full spectrum of the public land laws including mining and leasing.

The lands are currently managed under the 1981 Southwest Management Framework Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to leases, permits, rights of way, and easements.

Nominator(s): Grayling IRA Tribal Council

Rationale provided by nominator:

The Grayling Area Habitat ACEC:

- Is essential for maintaining species diversity for subsistence resources;
- Land provides important habitat supporting subsistence resources critical to the people of the Grayling community;
- Habitat supports moose habitat, river watersheds that support habitat for all species of white fish and cisco that spawn in nearby streams, habitat supporting major sheefish spawning, and spawning and rearing habitat for all species of salmon;
- The traditional trapping area near Grayling and its surrounding land provides important caribou and moose habitat as well as furbearing animal habitat that supports trapping many people rely upon in the region; and
- The habitat-supported resources provide food security and public welfare to the Grayling community.

Grayling Area ACEC Evaluation Table			
General Location	General Description	Acreage	Values Considered
<i>Refer to Figure 2 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>Not provided by nominator</i>	<i>98,682 acres</i>	<i>See rationale above</i>
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?			
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination	
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: No	Cultural: There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC	

Grayling Area ACEC Evaluation Table		
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Wildlife: Yes Fisheries: Yes	High density of moose calving and potential future range of wood bison. The area provides habitat for black bear, brown bear, Caribou, wolf, wolverine and moose. Wood bison. Important subsistence species include coho, Chinook, pink, and chum salmon. These populations are relevant to the local subsistence users from the villages of Grayling Anvik, Shageluk, and Holy Cross.
3. A natural process or system		n/a
4. Natural Hazards		n/a
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	Cultural: No Wildlife: No Fisheries: No	There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC. The wildlife species found in this area are common throughout the planning area and the state. There are no significant local importance values for fisheries in the identified maps. The identified ACEC areas have very small portions that intersect anadromous waters and a very small portion of the Yellow River which is identified to have anadromous chum salmon a species that could be identified to be more than local significant. But due to only about 0.5 mile intersecting this area it would not meet the importance criteria.
Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	Cultural: No Wildlife: No	There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC. There are no threatened and endangered species in the area.

Grayling Area ACEC Evaluation Table		
	Fisheries: No	There is very limited area where any fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change would be in this ACEC. The identified ACEC areas have very small portions that intersect anadromous waters and a very small portion of the Yellow River which is identified to have anadromous chum salmon a species that could be identified to be more than local significant. But due to only about 0.5 mile intersecting this area it would not meet these criteria.
Has been recognized as warranting protection	Cultural: No Wildlife: No	There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC. The wildlife species found in this area are common throughout the planning area and the state
Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare		n/a
Significant threat to human life/safety or property		n/a
<i>Summary of Important Values:</i>		
Rationale:	Cultural: The AHRS and BLM files were consulted for known cultural resources within the ACEC.	
Rationale:	Fish: The ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog was consulted identifying locations of chum salmon.	
Rationale:	Wildlife: The wildlife species found in the area are managed by ADFG on a sustained yield basis. ANILCA provides for a rural subsistence priority to the residents of the area, including the village of Grayling. In addition, when game populations are low or in decline, ANILCA closes federal lands to non-qualified subsistence users, under the recommendations of the western Interior RAC, with harvest limits set by the Federal Subsistence Board.	

Grayling Area ACEC Evaluation Table
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?
No, some resources were found to meet relevance, but not importance criteria. Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important. Fisheries resources were found to be relevant but not important. Cultural resources were not found to be relevant or important.

3.3.8 Anvik River Watershed Area ACEC

BACKGROUND

Existing or New Nomination: New

Size: 249,607 Acres

Current Management of the Area:

Lands and Realty: The nominated Anvik River Watershed Area ACEC occurs within lands withdrawn by PLO 5180. Portions of the nominated ACEC are not covered by this PLO. PLO 5180 withdrew lands (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws (except locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study to determine the proper classification of the lands under section 17(d)(1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

Portions of this nominated ACEC are not covered by the above withdrawal. Areas not covered by withdrawals are open to the full spectrum of the public land laws including mining and leasing.

The lands are currently managed under the 1981 Southwest Management Framework Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to leases, permits, rights of way, and easements.

Nominator(s): Anvik Tribal Council

Rationale provided by nominator:

The Anvik River Watershed ACEC:

- Is essential for maintaining species diversity for subsistence resources;
- The watershed supports moose habitat; habitat for all species of whitefish and cisco that spawn in the river; major sheefish spawning; and spawning and rearing habitat for all species of salmon.
- These food resources provide food security and public welfare to the Anvik community.

Anvik River Watershed ACEC Evaluation Table			
General Location	General Description	Acreage	Values Considered
<i>See Figure 3 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>None provided by nominator</i>	<i>249,607 acres</i>	<i>See rationale list above</i>
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?			
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination	
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: Yes	The Anvik contains <i>may</i> contain relevant values. While most known cultural resources are concentrated on the lower Anvik River (on non-BLM land), most of the upper Anvik has not been subjected to intensive pedestrian survey. Known sites on BLM-managed land (UKT-063, XHC-026, XHC-070) have not been formally evaluated for eligibility for the NRHP, meaning it is unknown whether they are “significant.” Previous surveys by the BLM Archaeologist and by BIA archaeologists have found a low to medium potential for significant cultural resources along the Anvik River. Because of the known fisheries resources on the Anvik, there is some also the potential for archaeological sites and TCPs within this area. It is likely that if additional surveys and tribal consultation were conducted, and if sites or TCPs were evaluated for NRHP eligibility, that some would be found eligible.	
	Fisheries: Yes	The Anvik River contains relevant values for maintaining species diversity for subsistence resources and for spawning and rearing habitat for all species of salmon. As identified in the Anvik River Watershed ACEC nomination.	
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Wildlife: Yes	The Anvik watershed provides habitat for black bear, brown bear, Caribou, wolf, wolverine and moose. Wood bison are planned to be introduced into the nearby Innoko Bottoms in march 2015. These species are important to subsistence users from the villages of Grayling Anvik, Shageluk and Holy Cross, and are found	

Anvik River Watershed ACEC Evaluation Table		
		throughout the region. .
3. A natural process or system		n/a
4. Natural Hazards		n/a
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	<p>Cultural: No</p> <p>Wildlife: No</p> <p>Fisheries: Yes</p>	<p>There are no known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC that have been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. If the resources were found to be eligible, it would most likely be for local significance.</p> <p>There are no threatened and endangered species in the area, with the exception of wood bison, which has been declared a non-essential experimental population by FWS. Approximately 100 animals will be introduced into the Innoko Bottoms area by ADFG in March 2015. This population will be hunted and managed on a sustained yield basis, and no critical habitat will be designated.</p> <p>There are locally and regional significant summer chum salmon that spawn in this area of the identified ACEC.</p> <p>The Anvik River is considered the largest single wild stock producer of summer chum salmon in the Yukon River drainage. (Bergstrom et al. 1999).</p> <p>Whitefish and cisco that spawn in the river although locally important would not be regionally important as they are distributed through a broad geographic area are common throughout the planning area and the state.</p> <p>Major sheefish spawning would not be locally significant as sheefish are not identified in the anadromous waters catalog to spawn in the Anvik River watershed.</p>

Anvik River Watershed ACEC Evaluation Table		
<p>Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change</p>	<p>Cultural: No</p> <p>Wildlife: No</p> <p>Fisheries Yes</p>	<p>Cultural: No. There are no known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC that have been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.</p> <p>There are no threatened and endangered species in the area, with the exception of wood bison, which has been declared a nonessential experimental population by FWS. Approximately 100 animals will be introduced into the Innoko Bottoms area by ADFG in March 2015. This population will be hunted and managed on a sustained yield basis, and no critical habitat will be designated.</p> <p>The summer chum salmon that spawn in the Anvik River is considered the largest single wild stock producer of summer chum salmon in the Yukon River drainage. (Bergstrom et al. 1999) identifying a unique population.</p>
<p>Has been recognized as warranting protection</p>	<p>Cultural: No</p> <p>Wildlife: No</p>	<p>There are no known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC that have been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.</p> <p>The wildlife species found in this area are common throughout the planning area and the state.</p>
<p>Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare</p>		<p>n/a</p>
<p>Significant threat to human life/safety or property</p>		<p>n/a</p>
<p><i>Summary of Important Values:</i></p>		
<p>Rationale:</p>	<p>Cultural: The AHRS and BLM files were consulted for known cultural resources within the ACEC. Ken Pratt, a BIA archaeologist with extensive knowledge of the Anvik River, was also consulted.</p>	

Anvik River Watershed ACEC Evaluation Table	
Rationale:	Fish: This ACEC meets both the relevance and importance criteria for one of the species identified in the ACEC nomination. Specifically summer chum salmon and the habitat that this ACEC would provide special management protection is summer chum spawning habitat.
Rationale:	<p>Wildlife: The wildlife species found in the area are managed by ADFG on a sustained yield basis. ANILCA provides for a rural subsistence priority to the residents of the area. In addition, when game populations are low or in decline, ANILCA closes federal lands to non-qualified subsistence users, under the recommendations of the western Interior RAC, with harvest limits set by the Federal Subsistence Board.</p> <p>The wildlife species found in the Anvik watershed are common throughout the planning area, and are of only local importance. There are no threatened and endangered species within the Anvik watershed, with the exception of wood bison, which has been declared a non-essential experimental population by FWS. Approximately 100 animals will be introduced into the nearby Innoko Bottoms area by ADFG in March 2015. This population will be hunted and managed on a sustained yield basis, and no critical habitat will be designated.</p>
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?	
<p>Fisheries: Yes, investigate a combination of this nomination with the existing Anvik River ACEC.</p> <p>Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important.</p> <p>Fisheries resources were found to be relevant and important.</p> <p>Cultural resources were found to be relevant but not important.</p>	

3.3.9 Bonasila River Watershed ACEC

BACKGROUND

Existing or New Nomination: New

Size: 291,136 Acres

Current Management of the Area:

Lands and Realty: The nominated Bonasila River Watershed ACEC occurs within lands withdrawn by PLO 5184 and PLO 5180. PLO 5184 withdrew lands (subject to valid existing rights) withdrawn by section 11 of the Alaska Native Claims Act from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws and from location and entry under the mining laws (which includes locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. PLO 5184 also withdrew the lands from selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act until 1975. The lands were reserved for study and review by the Secretary of the Interior for the purpose of the classification or reclassification of any lands not conveyed pursuant to section 14

of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). PLO 5184 also withdrew lands by section 11 of ANCSA lying between 58 degrees north and 64 degrees north latitude and 161 degrees west longitude not withdrawn as any part of the National Wildlife Refuge and made these lands, subject to valid existing rights from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Statehood Act and entry under the mining laws and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study and review by the Secretary of the Interior for the purpose of the classification or reclassification of any lands not conveyed pursuant to section 14 of the ANCSA. PLO 5184 also allowed the Secretary to administer the lands under applicable laws and regulations and granted the authority to enter contracts and to grant leases, permits, rights-of-way, or easements.

PLO 5180 withdrew lands (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws (except locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study to determine the proper classification of the lands under section 17(d)(1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

Portions of this nominated ACEC are not covered by the above withdrawals. Areas not covered by withdrawals are open to the full spectrum of the public land laws including mining and leasing.

The lands are currently managed under the 1981 Southwest Management Framework Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to leases, permits, rights of way, and easements. Areas not covered by withdrawals are open to the full spectrum of the public land laws including mining.

Nominator(s): Anvik Tribal Council

Rationale provided by nominator:

The Bonasila River Watershed ACEC:

- Is essential for maintaining species diversity for subsistence resources;
- The watershed supports moose habitat; habitat for all species of whitefish and cisco that spawn in the river; major sheefish spawning; and spawning and rearing habitat for all species of salmon.
- These food resources provide food security and public welfare to the Anvik community.

Bonasila River Watershed ACEC Evaluation Table			
General Location	General Description	Acreage	Values Considered
<i>See Figure 3 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>None provided by nominator</i>	<i>291,136 acres</i>	<i>See rationale above</i>

Bonasila River Watershed ACEC Evaluation Table		
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?		
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: Yes	There are two known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC: Bonasila Dome (XHC-091), a possible traditional cultural property (TCP); and Bonasila winter village (XHC-090). While neither site has been formally evaluated for inclusion on the NRHP, based on what is known of the sites it is likely that both would be found eligible.
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Wildlife: Yes Fisheries: Yes	The Bonasila River watershed provides habitat for black bear, brown bear, Caribou, wolf, wolverine, lynx and moose. Wood bison are planned to be introduced into the nearby Innoko Bottoms in march 2015. These species are important to subsistence users from the villages of Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk and Holy Cross, and are found throughout the region. The Bonasila River Watershed ACEC does meet the relevant criteria for subsistence fish. ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog identifies pink, chum, and Chinook salmon along with humpback whitefish and least cisco present in the Bonasila River.
3. A natural process or system		n/a
4. Natural Hazards		n/a
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	Cultural: Yes Wildlife: No	Cultural: Bonasila Dome is a potential TCP, which means it may have regional significance to the Central Yupik and/or Deg Xinag Athabaskan people. The wildlife species found in the Bonasila watershed are common throughout the River Watershed and do not meet the planning area and the state importance criteria beyond a local level.

Bonasila River Watershed ACEC Evaluation Table		
	Fisheries: No	The Bonasila River Watershed ACEC does not meet the importance criteria. The fish habitats and species present in the watershed are common to areas throughout the planning area.
Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	Cultural: Yes Wildlife: No	Both sites mentioned above are irreplaceable, and the village site is vulnerable to erosion of the river bank. There are no threatened and endangered species in the area. There are no species that are unique to the area, with the exception of wood bison, which has been declared a non-essential experimental population by FWS. Approximately 100 animals will be introduced into the Innoko Bottoms area by ADFG in March 2015. This population will be hunted and managed on a sustained yield basis, and no critical habitat will be designated.
Has been recognized as warranting protection	Cultural: No Wildlife: No	Neither site has been formally evaluated for inclusion on the NRHP. The wildlife species found in this area are common throughout the planning area and the state. Wildlife populations are managed for sustainability by ADFG, and on Federal lands, qualified subsistence users are provided a harvest priority when populations are low or in decline.
Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare		n/a
Significant threat to human life/safety or property		n/a
<i>Summary of Important Values:</i>		
Rationale:	Cultural: The AHRS and BLM files were consulted for known cultural resources within the ACEC.	

Bonasila River Watershed ACEC Evaluation Table	
Rationale:	Fish: The ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog was consulted for fish resources in the ACEC.
Rationale:	Wildlife: The wildlife species found in the area are managed by ADFG on a sustained yield basis. ANILCA provides for a rural subsistence priority to the residents of the area, including the village of Anvik. In addition, when game populations are low or in decline, ANILCA authorizes BLM to close federal lands to non-qualified subsistence users, under the recommendations of the western Interior RAC, with harvest limits set by the Federal Subsistence Board.
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?	
No, the area does not meet both the relevance and importance criteria for any resource. Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important. Fisheries resources were found to be relevant but not important. Cultural resources were found to be relevant and important.	

3.3.10 Anvik Traditional Trapping Area ACEC

BACKGROUND

Existing or New Nomination: New

Size: 21,699 Acres

Current Management of the Area:

Lands and Realty: The nominated Anvik Traditional Trapping Area ACEC occurs within lands withdrawn by PLO 5184. PLO 5184 withdrew lands (subject to valid existing rights) withdrawn by section 11 of the Alaska Native Claims Act from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws and from location and entry under the mining laws (which includes locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. PLO 5184 also withdrew the lands from selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act until 1975. The lands were reserved for study and review by the Secretary of the Interior for the purpose of the classification or reclassification of any lands not conveyed pursuant to section 14 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. PLO 5184 also withdrew lands by section 11 of ANCSA lying between 58 degrees north and 64 degrees north latitude and 161 degrees west longitude not withdrawn as any part of the National Wildlife Refuge and made these lands, subject to valid existing rights from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Statehood Act and entry under the mining laws and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study and review by the Secretary of the Interior for the purpose of the classification or reclassification of any lands not conveyed pursuant to section 14 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. PLO 5184 also allowed the Secretary to administer the lands under applicable laws and regulations and granted the authority to enter contracts and to grant leases, permits, rights-of-way, or easements.

The lands are currently managed under the 1981 Southwest Management Framework Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to leases, permits, rights of way, and easements.

Nominator(s): Anvik Tribal Council

Rationale provided by nominator:

The Anvik Traditional Trapping Area ACEC:

- Provides important caribou, moose, and furbearing animal habitat that supports trapping that many people rely upon in the region.
- Essential for maintaining species diversity.

Anvik Traditional Trapping Area ACEC Evaluation Table			
General Location	General Description	Acreage	Values Considered
<i>See Figure 3 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>None provided by the nominator</i>	<i>21,699 acres</i>	<i>See rationale listed above</i>
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?			
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination	
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: Yes	This ACEC contains XHC-0085, the Iditarod-Anvik Connecting Trail, a component of the Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT). No other cultural resources are known within the nominated ACEC, and because of the low, marshy nature of the area, there is low potential for the presence of other intact cultural resources.	
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Wildlife: Yes	The area provides habitat for black bear, brown bear, Caribou, wolf, wolverine lynx and moose. Wood bison, which has been declared a nonessential experimental population by FWS. Approximately 100 animals will be introduced into the Innoko Bottoms area by ADFG in March 2015. This population will be hunted and managed on a sustained yield basis, and no critical habitat will be designated. These species are important to subsistence users from the villages of Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk and Holy Cross, and are found throughout the region.	

Anvik Traditional Trapping Area ACEC Evaluation Table		
	Fisheries: No	This ACEC nomination does not pertain to fish.
3. A natural process or system		n/a
4. Natural Hazards		n/a
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	Cultural: Yes Wildlife: No Fisheries: No	The INHT and its associated sites, are of national significance, as is indicated by its designation by Congress as a National Historic Trail and a Wild and Scenic River. The wildlife species found in the area are common throughout the planning area and the state. This ACEC nomination does not pertain to fish.
Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	Cultural: Yes Wildlife: No Fisheries: No	The INHT is a rare, irreplaceable, and exemplary cultural resource. The INHT is of national significance, as is indicated by its designation by Congress as a National Historic Trail. There are no threatened and endangered species in the area. There are no species that are unique to the area. This ACEC nomination does not pertain to fish.
Has been recognized as warranting protection	Cultural: Yes Wildlife: No	Cultural: The INHT is of national significance, as is indicated by its designation by Congress as a National Historic Trail. The wildlife species found in this area are common throughout the planning area and the state. Wildlife populations are managed for sustainability by ADFG, and on Federal lands, qualified subsistence users are provided a harvest priority on Federal lands when wildlife populations are low or in decline.

Anvik Traditional Trapping Area ACEC Evaluation Table		
	Fisheries: No	This ACEC nomination does not pertain to fish.
Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare		n/a
Significant threat to human life/safety or property		n/a
<i>Summary of Important Values:</i>		
Rationale:	Cultural: The BLM’s INHT Comprehensive Management Plan summarizes the known segments of the INHT. The AHRS database was searched for all known cultural resources throughout the ACEC. While the entire existing ACEC has not been fully inventoried for cultural resources, the low, marshy nature of the nominated ACEC means that it has low potential to contain additional archaeological resources.	
Rationale:	Fisheries: This ACEC nomination does not pertain to Fish.	
Rationale:	Wildlife: The wildlife species found in the area are managed by ADFG on a sustained yield basis. ANILCA provides for a rural subsistence priority to the residents of the area, including the village of Anvik. In addition, when game populations are low or in decline, ANILCA authorizes BLM to close federal lands to non-qualified subsistence users, under the recommendations of the western Interior RAC, with harvest limits set by the Federal Subsistence Board.	
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?		
<p>Yes, this area meets both the relevance and importance criteria for cultural resources.</p> <p>Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important.</p> <p>Fisheries resources not were found to be relevant or important.</p> <p>Cultural resources were found to be relevant and important.</p>		

3.3.11 Old Anvik Village Area ACEC

BACKGROUND

Existing or New Nomination: New

Size: 60,259 Acres

Current Management of the Area:

Lands and Realty: The nominated Old Anvik Village Area ACEC occurs within lands withdrawn by PLO 5184. PLO 5184 withdrew lands (subject to valid existing rights) withdrawn by section 11 of the Alaska Native Claims Act from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws and from location and entry under the mining laws (which includes locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. PLO 5184 also withdrew the lands from selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act until 1975. The lands were reserved for study and review by the Secretary of the Interior for the purpose of the classification or reclassification of any lands not conveyed pursuant to section 14 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. PLO 5184 also withdrew lands by section 11 of ANCSA lying between 58 degrees north and 64 degrees north latitude and 161 degrees west longitude not withdrawn as any part of the National Wildlife Refuge and made these lands, subject to valid existing rights from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Statehood Act and entry under the mining laws and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study and review by the Secretary of the Interior for the purpose of the classification or reclassification of any lands not conveyed pursuant to section 14 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. PLO 5184 also allowed the Secretary to administer the lands under applicable laws and regulations and granted the authority to enter contracts and to grant leases, permits, rights-of-way, or easements.

The lands are currently managed under the 1981 Southwest Management Framework Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to leases, permits, rights of way, and easements.

Nominator(s): Anvik Tribal Council

Rationale provided by nominator:

The Old Anvik Village Area ACEC:

- Is of cultural importance to the community of Anvik and deserves to be preserved for generations to come.

Old Anvik Village Area ACEC Evaluation Table			
General Location	General Description	Acreage	Values Considered
<i>See Figure 3 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>None provided by the nominator</i>	<i>60,259 acres</i>	<i>See rationale provided above</i>

Old Anvik Village Area ACEC Evaluation Table		
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?		
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: Yes	There are no documented cultural resources within the nominated ACEC listed in the AHRS. Based on its nomination as an ACEC, the Anvik Old Village would likely be found eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, either as an archaeological site, or as a Traditional Cultural Property.
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Wildlife: Yes	The area provides habitat for black bear, brown bear, Caribou, wolf, wolverine lynx and moose. Wood bison are planned to be introduced in the nearby Innoko bottoms in March 2015. Wood bison have been declared a nonessential experimental population by FWS. Approximately 100 animals will be introduced into the Innoko Bottoms area by ADFG in March 2015. This population will be hunted and managed on a sustained yield basis, and no critical habitat will be designated. These species are important to subsistence users from the villages of Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk and Holy Cross, and are found throughout the region.
	Fisheries: No	The ACEC nomination pertains to cultural importance, not fisheries.
3. A natural process or system		n/a
4. Natural Hazards		n/a
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	Cultural: No	If any historical or archaeological remains, or TCPs, were found to be significant within the nominated ACEC, it would likely be at the local level.
	Wildlife: No	The wildlife species found in the area are common throughout the planning area and the state.

Old Anvik Village Area ACEC Evaluation Table		
	Fisheries: No	The ACEC nomination pertains to cultural importance to the community of Anvik which is addressed in the cultural section.
Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	Cultural: No	While all cultural resources are fragile and irreplaceable, a winter village site, whether prehistoric, protohistoric, or historic, is not rare or exemplary in western Alaska.
	Wildlife: No	There are no threatened and endangered species in the area. There are no species that are unique to the area.
	Fisheries: No	None of the ACEC nomination pertains to fisheries.
Has been recognized as warranting protection	Cultural: No	At this time, nothing within the nominated ACEC has been determined eligible for listing on the NRHP.
	Wildlife: No	The wildlife species found in this area are common throughout the planning area and the state. Wildlife populations are managed for sustainability by ADFG, and on Federal lands, qualified subsistence users are provided a harvest priority on Federal lands when wildlife populations are low or in decline.
	Fisheries: No	No the ACEC nomination pertains to cultural importance to the community of Anvik which is addressed in the cultural section.
Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare		n/a
Significant threat to human life/safety or property		n/a
<i>Summary of Important Values:</i>		
Rationale:	Cultural: The AHRS and the Anvik Tribal Council's nomination were consulted regarding cultural resources within the nominated ACEC.	

Old Anvik Village Area ACEC Evaluation Table	
Rationale:	The ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog was consulted and identified presence of Chinook and chum salmon present in Goblet Creek a very small portion of the nominated ACEC.
Rationale:	Wildlife: The wildlife species found in the area are managed by ADFG on a sustained yield basis. ANILCA provides for a rural subsistence priority to the residents of the area, including the village of Anvik.. In addition, when game populations are low or in decline, ANILCA authorizes BLM to close federal lands to non-qualified subsistence users, under the recommendations of the western Interior RAC, with harvest limits set by the Federal Subsistence Board
Rationale:	Other:
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?	
<p>No resources were found to be both relevant and important.</p> <p>Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important.</p> <p>Fisheries resources were not found to be relevant or important.</p> <p>Cultural resources were found to be relevant but not important.</p>	

3.3.12 Unalakleet River Watershed ACEC

BACKGROUND

Existing or New Nomination: New

Size: 251,978 Acres

Current Management of the Area:

Fisheries: BLM submitted an application for reservation of water to DNR State of Alaska on March 19, 2001 (DNR file application LAS 27140) for the main stem of the Unalakleet River from its headwaters to the confluence with the Chirosky River where the river departs public land. The reservation is for 100 percent of the natural flow from November through April. The flow request for May has been split to correspond to the immigration of the Chinook salmon and the out-migration of the salmonids. The flow request for June through October are based on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Instream Flow Incremental Methodology and associated Physical Habitat Simulation Model and mimic the natural hydrograph (Bovee 1982,1986). The requested flows will provide adequate spawning habitat for the target species and their other life phases as well as life phases of other fish species indigenous to the Unalakleet River drainage.

In 2010, the USFWS Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) funded the Unalakleet River Chinook Salmon Assessment project (FIS-10-102) to fund the construction and operation of a 320-foot resistance board weir on the Unalakleet River for 4 years-. This multi-year project utilized a resistance board weir to obtain reliable estimates of salmon escapement abundance and

age, sex, and length composition (Kent et al. 2010). This project remains a high priority in the region. In 2013, it was funded again through 2017. This is a cooperative project operated with support from ADFG, BLM, Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDCC), and The Native Village of Unalakleet (NVU). The chief purpose of the project is to obtain reliable estimates of the escapement's abundance and age, sex, and length composition (Kent et al. 2010).

Wildlife: Breeding bird surveys have been conducted on the Unalakleet River annually since 1997. These surveys have recorded the presence of 45 species of song birds, waterfowl, shorebirds and raptors, including grey-cheeked thrush, blackpoll warbler, BLM sensitive species.

Lands and Realty: The nominated Unalakleet River ACEC occurs within lands withdrawn by PLO 5180 and 5184. PLO 5180 withdrew lands identified by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws (except locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study to determine the proper classification of the lands under section 17(d)(1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

PLO 5184 withdrew lands (subject to valid existing rights) withdrawn by section 11 of the Alaska Native Claims Act from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws and from location and entry under the mining laws (which includes locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. PLO 5184 also withdrew these lands from selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act until 1975. The lands were reserved for study and review by the Secretary of the Interior for the purpose of the classification or reclassification of any lands not conveyed pursuant to section 14 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. PLO 5184 also withdrew lands lying between 58 degrees north and 64 degrees north latitude and 161 degrees west longitude not withdrawn as any part of the National Wildlife Refuge and made these lands, subject to valid existing rights from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Statehood Act and entry under the mining laws and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study and review by the Secretary of the Interior for the purpose of the classification or reclassification of any lands not conveyed pursuant to section 14 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. PLO 5184 also allowed the Secretary to administer the lands under applicable laws and regulations and granted the authority to enter contracts and to grant leases, permits, rights-of-way, or easements.

The lands are currently managed under the 1981 Southwest Management Framework Plan and the 1986 Central Yukon Resource Management Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to permits, leases, rights of way, and easements with a 300 foot setback on the Unalakleet River portion of the 1986 Central Yukon Resource Management Plan from FLPMA leases.

Nominator(s): Native Village of Unalakleet

Rationale provided by nominator:

The Unalakleet River Watershed ACEC:

- Provides important caribou and moose habitat; all species of whitefish and cisco spawn in this river; the river is also a major spawning area for whitefish; and an important spawning area for all species of salmon. Extend the existing ACEC to include all areas of the Unalakleet River watershed.

- This is an area where the people of Unalakleet have traditionally fished and hunted; it has cultural significance.
- The nominated river and creek watersheds are major spawning areas for salmon and whitefish, both having important subsistence value to the people of Unalakleet.
- This watershed is essential habitat for maintenance of the species diversity for fish and wildlife upon which the people of the region depend. The surrounding land is important for subsistence access, hunting, and calving/wintering grounds for moose and caribou.
- This watershed has locally significant qualities which give them special worth and meaning especially in this time where resources are vulnerable to adverse change due to climate change.
- Projected climate change in the Unalakleet Arctic renders all watersheds, fish and wildlife resources vulnerable to adverse change.

Unalakleet River Watershed ACEC Evaluation Table			
General Location	General Description	Acreage	Values Considered
<i>See Figure 3 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>None provided by the nominator</i>	<i>251,978 acres</i>	<i>See rationale listed above</i>
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?			
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination	
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: Yes	The Unalakleet River ACEC contains several significant cultural resources. The Kaltag Portage has been an important travel and trade route for Native Alaskans for thousands of years. In the historic period, this was an important segment of the Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT), and from the air, one can still see evidence of the Washington-Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System (WAMCATS). Several structures associated with the INHT remain, along with the historic trail itself. The Kaltag Portage, as a part of the INHT, is of national significance, as is indicated by its designation by Congress as a National Historic Trail. Note that known cultural resources are located on the main Unalakleet River and INHT corridor, and that no known cultural resources have been documented throughout the rest of this ACEC.	

Unalakleet River Watershed ACEC Evaluation Table		
		salmon (Estensen and Hamazaki 2007; Estensen et al. 2005). The Unalakleet River Chinook salmon stock is currently listed as a <i>stock of yield concern</i> and low returns and harvests in recent years has caused concern among local subsistence users. Traditional stock-recruit models will likely be developed from the new and ongoing escapement monitoring projects on the Unalakleet River drainage, the North River counting tower, and Unalakleet River weir (Joy and Jones 2010).
3. A natural process or system		n/a
4. Natural Hazards		n/a
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	Cultural: Yes Wildlife: No Fisheries: Yes	The cultural resources located along the Unalakleet River, particularly the INHT and its associated sites, are of national significance, as is indicated by its designation by Congress as a National Historic Trail and a Wild and Scenic River. The wildlife species found in the area are common throughout the planning area and the state. The Unalakleet River provides fishery resources for the village of Unalakleet for subsistence and commercial fishing. In the Unalakleet Subdistrict, the 2012 commercial harvest including personal use by 55 permit holders was 157 Chinook salmon, 74 sockeye salmon, 52,445 pink salmon, 28,161 chum salmon, and 22,274 coho salmon (Menard et al. 2013). This fishery resource is more than locally significant by providing jobs and food to people throughout the State of Alaska. Fish from the Unalakleet River caught in the commercial fishery in Norton Sound are processed and shipped from Unalakleet to markets in Anchorage and the entire United States.

Unalakleet River Watershed ACEC Evaluation Table		
		The ACEC nomination has locally and regionally significant populations of all five Pacific Salmon Species. The ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog identifies the presence and spawning for all five species of Pacific Salmon in the Unalakleet River.
Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	Cultural: Yes	The Kaltag Portage is a rare, irreplaceable, and exemplary cultural resource. It has been an important travel and trade route for Native Alaskans for thousands of years. In the historic period, this was an important segment of the Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT), and from the air, it is one of the few places one can still see evidence of the Washington-Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System (WAMCATS). Several structures associated with the INHT remain, along with the historic trail itself. The Kaltag Portage, as a part of the INHT, is of national significance, as is indicated by its designation by Congress as a National Historic Trail. The intact cultural landscape is exceptional and needs to be protected.
	Wildlife: No	There are no threatened and endangered species within the Unalakleet watershed. The wildlife species found in this area are common throughout the planning area and the state. Wildlife populations are managed for sustainability by ADFG, and on Federal lands, qualified subsistence users are provided a harvest priority on Federal lands when wildlife populations are low or in decline.
	Fisheries: Yes	The Unalakleet River provides fishery resources for the village of Unalakleet for subsistence and commercial fishing. In the Unalakleet Subdistrict, the 2012 commercial harvest including personal use by 55 permit holders was 157 Chinook salmon, 74 sockeye salmon, 52,445 pink salmon, 28,161 chum salmon, and 22,274 coho salmon (Menard et al. 2013). This fishery resource is more than locally significant by providing jobs and food to people throughout the State of Alaska. Fish from the Unalakleet River

Unalakleet River Watershed ACEC Evaluation Table		
		caught in the commercial fishery in Norton Sound are processed and shipped from Unalakleet to markets in Anchorage and the entire United States.
Has been recognized as warranting protection	Cultural: Yes	The Kaltag Portage, as a part of the INHT, is of national significance, as is indicated by its designation by Congress as a National Historic Trail, and cultural resources were recognized as a contributing value when the WSR was designated.
	Wildlife: No	The wildlife species found in the Unalakleet watershed are common throughout the planning area and the state. Wildlife populations are managed for sustainability by ADFG, and on Federal lands, qualified subsistence users are provided a harvest priority on Federal lands when wildlife populations are low or in decline. The upper portion of the watershed is a congressionally designated wild and scenic river.
	Fisheries: Yes	The Unalakleet River was designated a Wild River by congress in 1980 (Klein et al. 2000). The outstanding remarkable characteristics of the Unalakleet River include fish, wildlife, and scenic values (USDI Bureau of Outdoor Recreation 1972). This designation identifies the Unalakleet River as a unique, rare, and irreplaceable habitat that should be protected.
Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare		n/a
Significant threat to human life/safety or property		n/a

Unalakleet River Watershed ACEC Evaluation Table	
<i>Summary of Important Values:</i>	
Rationale:	Cultural: The BLM's INHT Comprehensive Management Plan summarizes the known cultural resources along the Unalakleet River and the Kaltag Portage. The AHRS database was searched for all known cultural resources throughout the ACEC. The state and national significance of the WAMCATS communication system has been well established (M. Blanchard 2010). While the entire existing ACEC has not been inventoried for cultural resources, any anadromous stream has some potential for cultural resources; however, based upon research to date, the significance of cultural resources in this ACEC is concentrated along the main Unalakleet River and the INHT corridor.
Rationale:	Fish: The ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog was consulted which list all five species of Pacific Salmon present in the Unalakleet River and which identifies this as Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) through the Magnuson-Stevens Act. The Unalakleet River Chinook Salmon Escapement Monitoring and Assessment, 2011-2012 was consulted identifying the escapement numbers for Chinook salmon into the Unalakleet River watershed. The Norton Sound Subdistrict 5 (Shaktoolik) and Subdistrict 6 (Unalakleet) King Salmon Stock Status and Action Plan, 2013; Report to the Alaska Board of Fisheries was consulted for commercial and subsistence fisheries occurring relevant to the Unalakleet River.
Rationale:	Wildlife: The wildlife species found in the area are managed by ADFG on a sustained yield basis. ANILCA provides for a rural subsistence priority to the residents of the area, including the villages of Unalakleet and Shaktoolik. In addition, when game populations are low or in decline, ANILCA authorizes BLM to close federal lands to non-qualified subsistence users, under the recommendations of the western Interior RAC, with harvest limits set by the Federal Subsistence Board. There is currently a limited moose hunt in the Unalakleet watershed that is open to only qualified subsistence users from the village of Unalakleet.
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?	
Yes, both cultural and fisheries resources found both relevant and important values. Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important. Fisheries resources were found to be relevant and important. Cultural resources were found to be relevant and important.	

3.3.13 Egavik Creek Watershed ACEC

BACKGROUND

Existing or New Nomination: New

Size: 60,052 Acres

Current Management of the Area:

Lands and Realty: The nominated Egavik Creek Watershed ACEC is within PLO 5180 and PLO 5184. PLO 5180 withdrew lands identified by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws (except locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study to determine the proper classification of the lands under section 17(d)(1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). PLO 5184 withdrew lands (subject to valid existing rights) withdrawn by section 11 of the Alaska Native Claims Act from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws and from location and entry under the mining laws (which includes locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. PLO 5184 also withdrew the lands from selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act until 1975. The lands were reserved for study and review by the Secretary of the Interior for the purpose of the classification or reclassification of any lands not conveyed pursuant to section 14 of the ANCSA. PLO 5184 also withdrew lands by section 11 of ANCSA lying between 58 degrees north and 64 degrees north latitude and 161 degrees west longitude not withdrawn as any part of the National Wildlife Refuge and made these lands, subject to valid existing rights from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Statehood Act and entry under the mining laws and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study and review by the Secretary of the Interior for the purpose of the classification or reclassification of any lands not conveyed pursuant to section 14 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. PLO 5184 also allowed the Secretary to administer the lands under applicable laws and regulations and granted the authority to enter contracts and to grant leases, permits, rights-of-way, or easements.

The lands are currently managed under the 1981 Southwest Management Framework Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to permits, leases, rights of way, and easements.

Nominator(s): Native Village of Unalakleet

Rationale provided by nominator:

The Egavik Creek Watershed ACEC:

- Provides important caribou and moose habitat; all species of whitefish and cisco spawn in this river; the river is also a major spawning area for whitefish; and an important spawning area for all species of salmon. Extend the existing ACEC to include all areas of the Unalakleet River watershed.
- This is an area where the people of Unalakleet have traditionally fished and hunted; it has cultural significance.
- The nominated river and creek watersheds are major spawning areas for salmon and whitefish, both having important subsistence value to the people of Unalakleet.

- These watersheds are essential habitat for maintenance of the species diversity for fish and wildlife upon which the people of the region depend. The surrounding land is important for subsistence access, hunting, and calving/wintering grounds for moose and caribou.
- These watersheds have locally significant qualities which give them special worth and meaning especially in this time where resources are vulnerable to adverse change due to climate change.
- Significant climate change in the Unalakleet arctic renders all watersheds, fish and wildlife resources vulnerable to adverse change.

Egavik Creek Watershed ACEC Evaluation Table			
General Location	General Description	Acreage	Values Considered
<i>See Figure 3 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>None provided by nominator</i>	<i>60,052 acres</i>	<i>See rationale above</i>
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?			
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination	
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: Yes	The nominated ACEC may contain significant cultural resources. While there are no known cultural resources within the ACEC, portions of it may qualify as a TCP, based upon the nomination information. In addition, based upon historical use of the area, there is the potential for the presence of undocumented resources.	
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Wildlife: Yes	This watershed provides habitat for black bear, brown bear, Caribou, wolf, wolverine lynx and moose important to users from the villages of Unalakleet and Shaktoolik and are found throughout the region.	
	Fisheries: Yes	The Egavik Creek Watershed ACEC has relevant values for an important spawning area for four species of Pacific Salmon and whitefish. These species have important subsistence value to the people of Unalakleet identifying them as a relevant value.	
3. A natural process or system		n/a	
4. Natural Hazards		n/a	

Egavik Creek Watershed ACEC Evaluation Table		
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	<p>Cultural: No</p> <p>Wildlife: No</p> <p>Fisheries: No</p>	<p>There are no documented cultural resources within the ACEC, and any potential TCP would likely be locally significant.</p> <p>The wildlife species found in the area are common throughout the planning area and the state.</p> <p>The subsistence use of salmon and whitefish is locally significant it is not regionally significant as these species may be harvested from other local rivers.</p>
Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	<p>Cultural: No</p> <p>Wildlife: No</p> <p>Fisheries: No</p>	<p>There are no documented cultural resources within the ACEC.</p> <p>There are no threatened and endangered species within the Egavik Creek watershed. There are no species that are unique to the area.</p> <p>There are no fisheries resources that meet these criteria.</p>
Has been recognized as warranting protection	<p>Cultural: No</p> <p>Wildlife: No</p> <p>Fisheries: No</p>	<p>There are no documented cultural resources within the ACEC.</p> <p>The wildlife species found in the Egavik Creek watershed are common throughout the planning area and the state. Wildlife populations are managed for sustainability by ADFG, and on Federal lands, qualified subsistence users are provided a harvest priority on Federal lands when wildlife populations are low or in decline under ANILCA.</p> <p>There are no fisheries resources that meet these criteria.</p>

Egavik Creek Watershed ACEC Evaluation Table		
Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare		n/a
Significant threat to human life/safety or property		n/a
<i>Summary of Important Values:</i>		
Rationale:	Cultural: The AHRS and BLM files were consulted for known cultural resources within the ACEC.	
Rationale:	Fish: The ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog was consulted for anadromous fish in the nominated ACEC.	
Rationale:	Wildlife: The wildlife species found in the area are managed by ADFG on a sustained yield basis. ANILCA provides for a rural subsistence priority to the residents of the area, including the villages of Unalakleet and Shaktoolik. In addition, when game populations are low or in decline, ANILCA authorizes BLM to close federal lands to non-qualified subsistence users, under the recommendations of the western Interior RAC, with harvest limits set by the Federal Subsistence Board.	
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?		
No, the area does not meet relevance and importance criteria for any of the resources. Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important. Fisheries resources were found to be relevant but not important. Cultural resources were found to be relevant but not important.		

3.3.14 Golsovia River Watershed ACEC

BACKGROUND

Existing or New Nomination: New

Size: 21,771 Acres

Current Management of the Area:

Lands and Realty: The nominated Golsovia River Watershed ACEC occurs within lands withdrawn by PLO 5180. Portions of the ACEC are not covered by this PLO and are open to the public land laws. PLO 5180 withdrew lands (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws (except locations for

metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study to determine the proper classification of the lands under section 17(d)(1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Portions of the nominated ACEC are not within PLO 5180. These lands are open to the public lands laws including mining and leasing.

The lands are currently managed under the 1981 Southwest Management Framework Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to leases, permits, rights of way, and easements.

Nominator(s): Native Village of Unalakleet

Rationale provided by nominator:

The Golsovia River Watershed ACEC:

- Provides important caribou and moose habitat; all species of whitefish and cisco spawn in this river; the river is also a major spawning area for whitefish; and an important spawning area for all species of salmon. Extend the existing ACEC to include all areas of the Unalakleet River watershed.
- This is an area where the people of Unalakleet have traditionally fished and hunted; it has cultural significance.
- The nominated river and creek watersheds are major spawning areas for salmon and whitefish, both having important subsistence value to the people of Unalakleet.
- This watershed are essential habitat for maintenance of the species diversity for fish and wildlife upon which the people of the region depend. The surrounding land is important for subsistence access, hunting, and calving/wintering grounds for moose and caribou.
- These watersheds have locally significant qualities which give them special worth and meaning especially in this time where resources are vulnerable to adverse change due to climate change.
- Significant climate change in the Unalakleet Arctic renders all watersheds, fish and wildlife resources vulnerable to adverse change.

Golsovia River Watershed ACEC Evaluation Table			
General Location	General Description	Acreage	Values Considered
<i>See Figure 3 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>None provided by nominator</i>	<i>21,771 acres</i>	<i>See rationale above</i>
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?			
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination	
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Yes	The nominated ACEC may contain significant cultural resources. While there is only one known cultural resource within the ACEC (UKT-33, a site associated with reindeer herding), portions of it may also qualify as a TCP, based upon the nomination information. In addition, based upon	

Golsovia River Watershed ACEC Evaluation Table		
		<p>historical use of the area, there is the potential for the presence of undocumented resources.</p> <p>The single known site within the nominated ACEC has been nominated for listing in the NRHP, for its association with early Reindeer herding in Alaska. It is unknown what the status of the nomination is, but based upon the topic, it is of regional or statewide significance.</p>
2. A fish or wildlife resource	<p>Wildlife: Yes</p> <p>Fisheries: Yes</p>	<p>This watershed provides habitat for black bear, brown bear, Caribou, wolf, wolverine lynx and moose important to users from the villages of Unalakleet and Shaktoolik and are found throughout the region</p> <p>The Golsovia Creek Watershed ACEC has relevant values for an important spawning area for four species of Pacific Salmon and whitefish. These species have important subsistence value to the people of Unalakleet identifying them as a relevant value.</p> <p>The subsistence use of salmon and whitefish is locally significant but does not rise to the level of regionally significant as these species may be harvested from other local rivers in the region.</p>
3. A natural process or system		n/a
4. Natural Hazards		n/a
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	Cultural: No	<p>The single known site within the nominated ACEC has been nominated for listing in the NRHP, for its association with early Reindeer herding in Alaska. It is unknown what the status of the nomination is, but based upon the topic, it is of regional or statewide significance.</p> <p>Listing the site on the NRHP and using the section 106 process is sufficient to protect the site, and any potential TCPs that may be identified in the area.</p>

Golsovia River Watershed ACEC Evaluation Table		
	Wildlife: No Fisheries: No	The wildlife species found in the Golsovia River are common throughout the planning area and the state. The subsistence use of salmon and whitefish is locally significant but does not rise to the level of regionally significant as these species may be harvested from other local rivers. The subsistence use of salmon and whitefish is locally significant but does not rise to the level of regionally significant as these species may be harvested from other local rivers in the region.
Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	Cultural: Yes Wildlife: No	Standing cabins from the turn of the century are rare, and there are few sites that remain that are associated with reindeer herding. There are no threatened and endangered species within the Golsovia River watershed. There are no species that are unique to the area.
Has been recognized as warranting protection	Cultural: Yes Wildlife: No	The site UKT-033 was nominated for the NRHP, which recognizes that it warrants protection. The wildlife species found in the Golsovia River watershed are common throughout the planning area and the state. Wildlife populations are managed for sustainability by ADFG, and on Federal lands, qualified subsistence users are provided a harvest priority on Federal lands when wildlife populations are low or in decline under ANILCA.
Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare		n/a
Significant threat to human life/safety or property		n/a

Golsovia River Watershed ACEC Evaluation Table	
<i>Summary of Important Values:</i>	
Rationale:	Cultural: The AHRs database was consulted regarding cultural resources in the ACEC.
Rationale:	Wildlife: The wildlife species found in the Golsovia River watershed are managed by ADFG on a sustained yield basis. ANILCA provides for a rural subsistence priority to the residents of the area, including the village of Unalakleet. In addition, when game populations are low or in decline, ANILCA authorizes BLM to close federal lands to non-qualified subsistence users, under the recommendations of the western Interior RAC, with harvest limits set by the Federal Subsistence Board.
Rationale:	The ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog was consulted for anadromous fish in the nominated ACEC.
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?	
<p>Although the area met relevance and importance values for cultural resources, the listing eligibility of the site for the NRHP and using the section 106 process is sufficient to protect the site, and any potential TCPs that may be identified in the area.</p> <p>Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important.</p> <p>Fisheries resources were found to be relevant but not important.</p> <p>Cultural resources were found to be relevant but not important.</p>	

3.3.15 Tenmile River Watershed ACEC

BACKGROUND

Existing or New Nomination: New

Size: 36,278 Acres

Current Management of the Area:

Lands and Realty: The nominated Tenmile River Watershed ACEC occurs within lands withdrawn by PLO 5173 and 5180. PLO 5173 withdrew lands identified by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for selection by a regional corporation under section 12 of ANCSA and for study and review by the Secretary for the purpose of classification or reclassification of any lands not conveyed pursuant to section 14 of ANCSA.

PLO 5180 withdrew lands identified by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska

under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws (except locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study to determine the proper classification of the lands under section 17(d)(1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

The lands are currently managed under the 1981 Southwest Management Framework and are open on a case-by-case basis to permits, leases, rights of way, and easements.

Nominator(s): Native Village of Unalakleet

Rationale provided by nominator:

The Tenmile River Watershed ACEC:

- Provides important caribou and moose habitat; all species of whitefish and cisco spawn in this river; the river is also a major spawning area for whitefish; and an important spawning area for all species of salmon. Extend the existing ACEC to include all areas of the Unalakleet River watershed.
- This is an area where the people of Unalakleet have traditionally fished and hunted; it has cultural significance.
- The nominated river and creek watersheds are major spawning areas for salmon and whitefish, both having important subsistence value to the people of Unalakleet.
- This watershed are essential habitat for maintenance of the species diversity for fish and wildlife upon which the people of the region depend. The surrounding land is important for subsistence access, hunting, and calving/wintering grounds for moose and caribou.
- These watersheds have locally significant qualities which give them special worth and meaning especially in this time where resources are vulnerable to adverse change due to climate change.
- Significant climate change in the Unalakleet arctic renders all watersheds, fish and wildlife resources vulnerable to adverse change.

Tenmile River Watershed ACEC Evaluation Table			
General Location	General Description	Acreage	Values Considered
<i>See Figure 3 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>None provided by nominator</i>	<i>36,278 acres</i>	<i>See rationale above</i>
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?			
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination	
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Yes	There are two known archaeological resources documented within the nominated ACEC, NOB-57, which is the INHT itself, and NOB-33, the Ten Mile Roadhouse. While the ACEC nomination states that the area is of “cultural significance,” there is not	

Tenmile River Watershed ACEC Evaluation Table		
		enough information to evaluate how this area might be distinguished as a potential TCP, apart from other areas where subsistence has traditionally occurred.
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Fisheries: Yes Wildlife: Yes	The ACEC has relevant values for important spawning area for Chinook and coho salmon and whitefish. These species have important subsistence value to the people of Unalakleet. Tenmile River watershed provides habitat for black bear, brown bear, caribou, wolf, wolverine, lynx, and moose. These species are found throughout the region.
3. A natural process or system		n/a
4. Natural Hazards		n/a
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	Cultural: Yes Wildlife: No Fisheries: Yes	If the area were found to be NRHP eligible as a TCP, it would likely be found locally significant. The Ten Mile Roadhouse, and the INHT itself, are of national significance. The wildlife species found in the Golsovia River are common throughout the planning area and the state. The Tenmile watershed is an important Chinook and coho salmon spawning area identified in the ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog. Chinook and coho salmon are a locally and regionally significant population that spawn and rear in this watershed. Fish spawned and reared in this watershed contribute to the subsistence and commercial fishing in the village of Unalakleet. Commercial harvested fish are sold throughout Alaska and are of region importance to Norton Sound.

Tenmile River Watershed ACEC Evaluation Table

Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?

Yes, Fisheries resources were found to meet both relevance and importance criteria.

Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important.

Fisheries resources were found to be relevant and important.

Cultural resources were found to be relevant but not important.

3.3.16 Unalakleet ACEC

BACKGROUND

Existing or New Nomination: New

Size: 1,520,015 Acres

Current Management of the Area:

Lands and Realty: The nominated Unalakleet ACEC is within PLO 5173, PLO5180, and 5184. PLO 5173 withdrew lands identified by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for selection by village corporations. Upon conclusion of village selections, the regional corporations could select the lands under Section 12 of ANCSA. Prior to conveyances, the Secretary could administer the lands and make contracts, and to grant leases, permits, rights-of-way, or easements. Applications for mineral leasing would be rejected until the PLO is modified or the lands appropriately classified to permit mineral leasing.

PLO 5180 withdrew lands identified by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws (except locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study to determine the proper classification of the lands under section 17(d)(1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

PLO 5184 withdrew lands (subject to valid existing rights) withdrawn by section 11 of the Alaska Native Claims Act from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws and from location and entry under the mining laws (which includes locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. PLO 5184 also withdrew the lands from selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act until 1975. The lands were reserved for study and review by the Secretary of the Interior for the purpose of the classification or reclassification of any lands not conveyed pursuant to section 14 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. PLO 5184 also withdrew lands by section 11 of ANCSA lying between 58 degrees north and 64 degrees north latitude and 161 degrees west longitude not withdrawn as any part of the National Wildlife Refuge and made these lands, subject to valid existing rights from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the

Statehood Act and entry under the mining laws and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study and review by the Secretary of the Interior for the purpose of the classification or reclassification of any lands not conveyed pursuant to section 14 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. PLO 5184 also allowed the Secretary to administer the lands under applicable laws and regulations and granted the authority to enter contracts and to grant leases, permits, rights-of-way, or easements.

Portions of this nominated ACEC are not covered by the above withdrawals. Areas not covered by withdrawals are open to the full spectrum of the public land laws including mining and leasing.

The lands are currently managed under the 1981 Southwest Management Framework Plan, the 1986 Central Yukon Resource Management Plan and the Unalakleet Wild and Scenic River Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to permits, leases, rights of way, and easements although FLPMA sales and leases are not allowed within that portion of the Central Yukon RMP in the Unalakleet W/S River Corridor

Nominator(s): The Pew Charitable Trusts

Rationale provided by nominator:

The Unalakleet ACEC:

Fish and Wildlife relevance:

The Unalakleet River and its watershed is a quintessential component supporting ecosystem services for the region's water, fish, birds and fur-bearing animals, including rare and sensitive species which all rely on the intact nature of this special land. Not only do critical fish species depend upon this healthy watershed, but distribution ranges for the following rare and/or listed vertebrates occur in the nominated area:

- ◆ Alaskan hare,
- ◆ Aleutian Tern,
- ◆ Black-backed Woodpecker,
- ◆ Gray-cheeked Thrush,
- ◆ McKay's Bunting,
- ◆ Nearctic collared lemming,
- ◆ Olive-sided Flycatcher,
- ◆ Rusty Blackbird,
- ◆ Snowy Owl,
- ◆ Solitary Sandpiper, Surfbird,
- ◆ Wandering Tattler, and
- ◆ Wood frog.

Natural process or system relevance:

The Unalakleet watershed and surrounding landforms contained within this nominated ACEC host intact biological structures that support this critical ecosystem. The area has been systemically identified, through a peer review process as containing one of highest levels of

resilience to climate change, high biodiversity, and landscape connectivity found across 31 million acres of public land in active BLM Resource Management Plans in Alaska.

More than locally significant importance:

The nominated area has more than locally significant qualities, since the dominant drivers of high conservation values were shown to have significant standing within this Conservation Priority Area, revealing:

- ◆ High vertebrate species richness;
- ◆ Moderate rare plant species richness;
- ◆ Moderate surface water availability;
- ◆ Low levels of ecoregional protection;
- ◆ Moderate vegetation community diversity;
- ◆ Moderate topographic complexity;
- ◆ High climate³ resilience; and,
- ◆ High landscape naturalness.

The Conservation Science Partners study quantifies the conservation value of the nominated lands, and highlights the Conservation Priority Area analysis that affirms high biodiversity, resiliency and connectivity values of the nominated lands.

Qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change:

The boundaries of the nominated ACECs reflect the extent of the identified Conservation Priority Areas derived from the study's results. In short, the nominated ACECs fall within the top 20% of all intact, unprotected, roadless lands across Alaska's BLM domain for the combined values listed above. As such, the ecological and landscape-level significance of the areas warrant special management consideration as ACECs, combined with the fact that the areas also provide habitat for at least thirteen rare species as defined by the Alaska Natural Heritage Program. The following sensitive species their habitat and those habitat requirements are found in the nominated area:

- ◆ Alaskan hare,
- ◆ Aleutian Tern,
- ◆ Black-backed Woodpecker,
- ◆ Gray-cheeked Thrush,
- ◆ McKay's Bunting,
- ◆ Nearctic collared lemming,
- ◆ Olive-sided Flycatcher,
- ◆ Rusty Blackbird,
- ◆ Snowy Owl,

³ Cliomes" are broadly defined regions of temperature and precipitation patterns that reflect assemblies of species and vegetation communities (biomes) that occur or might be expected to occur based on links with climate conditions.

- ◆ Solitary Sandpiper, Surfbird,
- ◆ Wandering Tattler, and
- ◆ Wood frog.

Additional Information:

The nominated Unalakleet ACEC is derived from a peer reviewed scientific analysis with the principal objective of systematically identifying and mapping contiguous, unprotected, roadless BLM lands that possess important ecologically-based indicators of conservation value. The study, conducted by Conservation Science Partners (CSP), implemented a statistically robust analysis using eight indicators of biodiversity, resilience to climate change, and landscape connectivity to quantify areas of high conservation value. The work was conducted at multiple spatial scales and was designed to evaluate the relative importance of ecological indicators using a modeling approach employing a linear weighted model for each variable.

The extent of this analysis included unprotected roadless BLM lands encompassed by the three active Resource Management Planning areas in Alaska: the Bering Sea-Western Interior, the Central Yukon, and the Eastern Interior. CSP found that of the BLM land in these active planning areas, just under 94 percent was “roadless” and encompassed 30.6 million acres that are not protected by statutory designations including wilderness, wilderness study areas or national monuments. The roadless areas were derived using national-scale U.S. Census data and additional agency datasets to eliminate infrastructure such as roads, railroads, powerlines, and pipelines.

CSP identified eight variables to serve as indicators of biodiversity, resilience and connectivity. CSP chose variables that were “off-the-shelf,” peer-reviewed, readily available, and spatially contiguous. CSP analyzed the study area for the eight indicators (see Table 2 below) at three spatial output scales (20, 80, and 260 km²) to ensure that their results were robust to the choice of scale. Because several of the indicators tend to be correlated (for instance, topographic complexity may indicate a variety of microclimates which can increase vegetation diversity), CSP conducted a principal components analysis to reduce indicator dimensionality. Weighted linear combination models were then used on a broad sequence of weighting schemes for each variable, resulting in a mean conservation score and standard deviation (i.e., sensitivity) value for each 270-m pixel. Resultant outputs were derived at each scale then threshold to identify discrete areas by choosing the highest 20% of conservation scores that also had the lowest 20% of sensitivity to different weighting schemes at each scale. Although any number of threshold values could be applied, we chose combinations of the upper 80th percentile of mean and lower 20th percentile of sensitivity values, respectively, as a reasonable and data-driven application of our results. We refer to these areas as “Conservation Priority Areas.”

The dominant drivers of high conservation values in the Conservation Priority Areas in the Unalakleet Nominated ACEC include:

- ◆ High vertebrate and moderate rare plant species richness;
- ◆ High climate resilience;
- ◆ High landscape naturalness;
- ◆ Low levels of Ecoregional protection; as well as
- ◆ Moderate surface water availability;
- ◆ Moderate vegetation community diversity;
- ◆ Moderate topographic complexity.

Table 2. Indicator variables used by CSP to determine biodiversity, resilience and connectivity

Indicator variable ¹	Statistic calculated ²	Data source
Vertebrate species richness	Count of species number by HUC8	Alaska Natural Heritage Program (Gotthardt et al. 2012; Carlson, unpub.)
Rare plant species richness	Count of species number by HUC8	Alaska Natural Heritage Program (Gotthardt et al. 2012; Carlson, unpub.)
Vegetation community diversity	Count of terrestrial ecological system (TES) types	USGS Gap Analysis Program (USGS 2011)
Surface water availability	Mean (index)	USGS National Hydrography Dataset (NHD 2008)
Topographic complexity	Standard deviation of slope	USGS National Elevation Dataset (Gesch 2007)
Landscape naturalness	Mean (index)	Modified from Theobald (2010)
Cliome resilience	Number of cliome shifts (A1B)	Scenarios Network for AK and Arctic Planning (SNAP, 2012)
Ecoregional protection	Proportion of ecoregion with protective designation (IUCN categories I-IV)	USGS Protected Areas Database (2011) and Nowacki's ecoregional provinces (2001)

1. All variables were "readily available" and derived at a 270-m resolution.

2. All statistics calculated for each scale of analysis using a moving window operation.

For additional information regarding the analysis, please see the attached slides recently presented to the Alaska BLM executives and key BLM leadership. Detailed discussion of the methodological steps and the potential application of results can be found in a similar study conducted for the lower 48 states and recently published in the journal *Biological Conservation* (Dickson et al. 2014, 178:111-127).⁴

Given the robust analysis and statistically-significant results of this study, we believe this area deserves special management consideration as an ACEC. We are happy to provide additional information or clarification upon request and look forward to continuing our engagement in the BSWI RMP planning process. The boundary of the nominated ACEC reflects the extent of the identified Conservation Priority Areas derived from the study's results. In short, the nominated ACEC falls within the top 20 percent of all intact, unprotected, roadless lands across Alaska's BLM domain for the combined values listed above. As such, the ecological and landscape-level significance of the areas warrant special management.

⁴ The paper can be accessed for free (through October) here: <http://authors.elsevier.com/a/1PapT1R~dwr72>.

Unalakleet ACEC Evaluation Table			
General Location	General Description	Acreeage	Values Considered
<i>See Figure 3 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>The Unalakleet watershed and surrounding landforms</i>	<i>1,520,015 acres</i>	<i>See rationale above</i>
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?			
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination	
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Yes	The drainage of the Unalakleet River ACEC contains several significant cultural resources. The Kaltag Portage along the main Unalakleet River has been an important travel and trade route for Native Alaskans for thousands of years. In the historic period, this was an important segment of the Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT), and from the air, one can still see evidence of the Washington-Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System (WAMCATS). Several structures associated with the INHT remain, along with the historic trail itself. The Kaltag Portage, as a part of the INHT, is of national significance, as is indicated by its designation by Congress as a National Historic Trail. Note that known cultural resources are located on the main Unalakleet River and INHT corridor, and that very few cultural resources have been documented throughout the rest of this nominated ACEC.	
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Wildlife: Yes Fisheries: Yes	The nominated Unalakleet ACEC provides habitat for black bear, brown bear, Caribou, wolf, wolverine lynx and moose. These species are important to subsistence users from the village of Unalakleet and are found throughout the region. In addition, 9 species of rare birds, 2 species of rare mammals and 1 rare amphibian, as defined by the Alaska Natural Heritage Program, are found within the nominated area. The Unalakleet River and its watershed is relevant to the identified quintessential component supporting ecosystem services for the region's fish, which rely on the intact	

Unalakleet ACEC Evaluation Table		
		nature of this special land. Numerous species of fish are present in the Unalakleet River watershed that contribute to the ecosystem services that rely on the intact nature of this watershed.
3. A natural process or system	Natural System: No	This nominated watershed does not contain markedly higher biodiversity or greater landscape connectivity than other watersheds within the planning area. Conflicting information provided by the Scenarios Network of Alaska and Arctic planning show this watershed is likely to experience large changes due to climate change. Therefore, this watershed is likely less resilient to climate changes than other watersheds.
4. Natural Hazards		n/a
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	Cultural: Yes	The cultural resources located along the INHT and Unalakleet River, particularly the INHT and its associated sites. WSR are of national significance, as is indicated by its designation by Congress as a National Historic Trail and a Wild and Scenic River.
	Wildlife: No	Thirteen species of wildlife found in the nominated Unalakleet ACEC are rare as defined by the Alaska Natural Heritage Program, but they are also found in other areas of the region, and are not unique to the nominated area or depend only on the nominated ACEC area. Other wildlife species found in the area (black bear, brown bear, Caribou, wolf, wolverine lynx and moose) are common throughout the planning area and the region.
	Fisheries: No	Fisheries: No significant local qualities have been identified in this nomination for fish.
	Natural System: No	Rationale given by the nominator is not sufficient to describe this watershed as having more than local significance. Vertebrate species richness is not markedly higher in this watershed than adjacent ones.

Unalakleet ACEC Evaluation Table		
		<p>Not enough is known about rare plant occurrences in the area to conclude that this watershed has higher richness (AKNHP 2013). Surface water availability is not consistently an important attribute for conservation prioritization in the planning area. Additionally, the best available information shows that this ecoregion has more protection measures than other ecoregions in the planning area (BEACONS 2014). Vegetation diversity and topographic complexity of the watershed is fairly similar and provides similar habitats to other watersheds. This watershed is expected to experience significant changes due to climate change but this is a prediction common in much of the planning area. And finally, although this watershed does have a mostly intact ecosystem, most of the BLM-managed land in this planning area has a high level of intactness and naturalness (Trammell et al. 2014).</p>
<p>Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change</p>	<p>Cultural: Yes</p>	<p>The Kaltag Portage is a rare, irreplaceable, and exemplary cultural resource. It has been an important travel and trade route for Native Alaskans for thousands of years. In the historic period, this was an important segment of the Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT), and from the air, it is one of the few places one can still see evidence of the Washington-Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System. Several structures associated with the INHT remain, along with the historic trail itself. The Kaltag Portage, as a part of the INHT, is of national significance, as is indicated by its designation by Congress as a National Historic Trail. The intact cultural landscape is exceptional and needs to be protected. There are no species within the nominated area that are threatened or endangered species or other species that are unique to the area. The Alaskan Hare (BLM-sensitive species) has been found at one occurrence in the area; however, it is common in surrounding areas.</p>

Unalakleet ACEC Evaluation Table		
	<p>Wildlife: No</p> <p>Rare Plants: No</p> <p>Fisheries: No</p>	<p>The wildlife species found in the proposed area are common throughout the planning area and the state. Wildlife populations are managed for sustainability by ADFG, and on Federal lands, qualified subsistence users are provided a harvest priority on Federal lands when wildlife populations are low or in decline under ANILCA.</p> <p>There are two BLM-sensitive plant species (<i>Douglasia beringensis</i> and <i>Koeleria asiatica</i>) that occur in this watershed (BIOTICS 2013). There are also three other rare species (<i>Minuartia dawsonensis</i>, <i>Ranunculous ponojensis</i>, <i>Cardamine blaisdellii</i>), as defined by the Alaska Natural Heritage Program (AKNHP) rare plants database. However, information on these species populations, their range and distribution, as well as habitat requirements are largely unknown. Due to the lack of knowledge on rare species in Alaska, it is premature to say that this watershed contains more rare, sensitive, or unique plant species and communities than other watersheds in the planning area (Nawrocki et al. 2013).</p> <p>There are no significant, fragile, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, or threatened fish species vulnerable to adverse change identified in this nomination.</p>
Has been recognized as warranting protection	<p>Cultural: Yes</p> <p>Wildlife- No</p>	<p>The Kaltag Portage, as a part of the INHT, is of national significance, as is indicated by its designation by Congress as a National Historic Trail, and cultural resources were recognized as a contributing value when the WSR was designated.</p> <p>The species defined as rare as defined by the AKNHP are found in other areas of the region within the planning area and throughout the state. In addition, the upper portions of the Unalakleet River are currently under Congressional designation as a Wild and Scenic River, and provide more comprehensive conservation for all wildlife species than an ACEC designation.</p>

Unalakleet ACEC Evaluation Table		
	Natural System: No	This watershed is expected to experience large changes due to climate change. However; approximately half of the BLM-managed land within the planning area is expected to experience an equal level of change, therefore, this watershed cannot be recognized as warranting more protection than other watersheds in the planning area.
Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare		n/a
Significant threat to human life/safety or property		n/a
<i>Summary of Important Values:</i>		
Rationale:	<p>Cultural: The Unalakleet River does require additional special management to protect important and relevant cultural resources. Significant cultural resources are already protected, primarily through their location in the Iditarod National Historic Trail corridor, but also through their location within the Unalakleet National Wild River corridor.</p> <p>The BLM's INHT Comprehensive Management Plan summarizes the known cultural resources along the Unalakleet River and the Kaltag Portage. The AHRS database was searched for all known cultural resources throughout the ACEC. The state and national significance of the WAMCATS communication system has been well established (M. Blanchard). However, these do not in themselves protect the resources from adverse effects; an ACEC with strong land-use restrictions would help to protect these important cultural resources. While the entire existing ACEC has not been inventoried for cultural resources, any anadromous stream has some potential for cultural resources; however, based upon research to date, the significance of cultural resources in this ACEC is concentrated along the main Unalakleet River and the INHT corridor.</p>	
Rationale:	<p>Fish: The ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog was consulted for fish species present in the Unalakleet River.</p>	
Rationale:	<p>Wildlife: The wildlife game species found in the nominated Unalakleet ACEC are managed by ADFG on a sustained yield basis. ANILCA provides for a rural subsistence priority to the residents of the area, including the village of Unalakleet. In addition, when game populations are low or in decline, ANILCA authorizes BLM to close federal lands to non-qualified subsistence users, under the recommendations of the western Interior RAC, with harvest limits set by the Federal Subsistence Board.</p>	

Unalakleet ACEC Evaluation Table	
	Although thirteen wildlife species defined as rare by AKNHP are found in this watershed, these species are not unique to the nominated ACEC area and can be found in other regions of the planning area and the state.
Rationale:	<p>Other:</p> <p>Fish: The rationale provided by the nominator is not sufficient to justify the need for an ACEC. However, their analysis left out the important fish species that occur in the watershed.</p> <p>Rare Plants: Through the BSWI RMP process, we are proposing management actions for BLM-sensitive plants based upon their likely location and when found during permitting for ground-disturbing projects. At the present time, information to determine a precise range for rare plant species is not available. Therefore, using rare plant locations to determine an ACEC boundary is not possible.</p>
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?	
<p>Cultural resources were found to be both relevant and important for this area and boundaries of existing and other nominated ACECs that occur in the same area (overlapping) will be considered together to determine the best protections.</p> <p>Cultural resources were found to be relevant and important.</p> <p>Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important.</p> <p>Fisheries resources were found to be relevant and important.</p> <p>Natural Systems were not found to be relevant or important.</p>	

3.3.17 Existing Box River Treeline Research Natural Area ACEC

BACKGROUND

The Box River Treeline Research Natural Area (RNA) was designated in 1986 through the Record of Decision for the Central Yukon Resource Management Plan. As part of the process for revisiting the Central Yukon RMP, this RNA will be reevaluated. The current Box River RNA is located on unencumbered BLM lands. The Box River is a tributary to the Kateel River.

Existing Nomination: Existing BLM Nomination

Size: 13,592 Acres

Lands and Realty: The existing Box River Treeline RNA occur within lands withdrawn by PLO 5180. PLO 5180 withdrew lands identified by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws (except locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study to determine the proper classification of the lands under section 17(d)(1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

The lands are currently managed under the 1986 Central Yukon Resource Management Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to permits, leases, rights of way, and easements.

Nominator(s): existing ACEC, not new nomination.

Rationale provided by nominator:

As stated in the *Management Situation Analysis Central Yukon Planning Area 1983*, the Box River Treeline RNA was designated because of its unique and complex vegetation representing the western treeline limit in Alaska, and also for its permafrost features. This RNA will be reevaluated against ACEC criteria and the following information provided in the original RNA proposal.

There are three themes in the natural feature type needs being sought at the nominated Box River Treeline RNA. The first is principally a group of plant community types characteristic of the northwest portion of the western treeline in central interior Alaska. The western Alaska treeline occurs in a complex pattern on the landscape, is responsive to many different controlling factors of the environment, and involves several plant community types.

The second theme is the occurrence of caribou in lichen-rich grazing grounds. The occurrence of lichen-rich plant communities in northwest Alaska and their utilization by caribou is one of the more significant features of natural resource management in that region of the state. The network of RNAs in Alaska needs a typical example, only lightly influenced by direct human management, of this interacting system.

The third theme, unstable geological features caused by permafrost degradation and ground subsidence, could have been represented in many different parts of the Central Yukon Planning Area. Good examples of the desired features are available in the Box River area; landscape features of the area suggest that stream action will periodically reform these ephemeral features. Geologic land formation type needs important in the area are: (1) Massive ground ice exposures (2) Slump surfaces.

The principal animal species occurrence type need is: (1) Caribou on lichen-rich northwest Alaska grazing grounds-lichen woodland. Plant Community type needs for which representation is needed are: (1) open white spruce forest (*cladonia* and dwarf birch types) (2) paper birch-alder-willow type on western treeline (3) balsam poplar (in mixture with willow-alder-*calamagrostis*) (4) dwarf birch closed low shrub type (5) sagebrush -juniper open low shrub type (steep rocky sites).

The secondary type need applicable to the Box River Treeline is the shrub species *Ribes hudsonianum*. This shrub's distribution ends along with the major tree species in western Alaska, making it a good "marker" of the western treeline.

Animal browsing and other forms of damage (e.g. moose antler rubbing) are affecting the dynamics of the treeline. There is evidence of extremely heavy browsing pressure by snowshoe hares, moose, and small mammals. At the treeline in the center of the RNA, there was a heavily browsed shrub and seedling/sapling tree cover. The most common shrubs included *Alnus sinuata*, a hybrid *Betula glandulosa x papyrifera*, *Spirea beauverdiana*, *Rubus chamaemorus*, *Vaccinium uliginosum*, and *Rosa acicularis*. Seedling trees include *Picea glauca*, *Picea mariana* (lower portion), and hybrid birch with predominant tree form characteristics. Prominent herbaceous species included *Rumex arcticus*, *Pedicularis labradorica*, *Epilobium angustifolium*, *Loiseleuria procumbens*, and *Moneses uniflora*. The understory included *Empetrum nigrum*, *Betula*

glandulosa, *Arnica alpina*, *Saxifraga oppositifolia*, *Hierochloe alpina*, and *Minuartia arctica*. The lush lichen flora in tundra on the summit just above the unburned forest remnant included; *Thamnolia vernriculata*, *Cetraria cuculata*, *Alectoria ochroleuca* and *A. nigricans*, *Cladina rangiferina*, *Cetraria islandi*, *C. nivalis*, *C. richardsonii*, *Cladonia gracilis*, and *Cladina steleris*.

There are indications of a moderate amount of caribou grazing on the lichen-rich tundra summit. There are numerous shed antlers, trials, droppings, rubbing posts, and clipped plants of preferred forage species. The caribou resources of the area are of some significance to subsistence users, as was noted previously. However, the RNA is very far removed from the demand centers. The difficulties with access are a further factor that accounts for the relatively light hunting pressure that the animals of the area experience.

Box River Treeline Research Natural Area ACEC Evaluation Table		
General Location	Acreage	Values Considered
<i>See Figure 1 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>13,592 acres</i>	<i>List</i>
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?		
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: No	A regional sample survey conducted in 2009 by the BLM Central Yukon Field Office (CYFO) Archaeologist did not reveal the presence of a significant type or number of cultural resources on lands managed in the Box River drainage. This indicates a low potential for the presence of cultural resources that may be eligible for the NRHP.
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Wildlife: Yes Fish: Yes	The Box River treeline RNA is important winter habitat for the Western Arctic Caribou Herd. The Box River is documented as having chum salmon and whitefish present (ADFG anadromous maps and catalog, 2014). The Alaska Department of Fish and Game does not list any fish inventory reports in the Alaska Freshwater Fish Inventory for this stream. Other species that have been documented in the drainage include slimy sculpin (BLM unpublished data). Status of riparian resources is unknown, however, due to the area’s remote location, it is expected that riparian resources would be pristine and fully functional.

Box River Treeline Research Natural Area ACEC Evaluation Table		
3. A natural process or system	Soil: No Water: No Vegetation: No Geology: Yes	<p>The Box River RNA contains a system of permafrost features common within and outside of the region. No natural hazards exist.</p> <p>While water quality in the nominated Box River RNA is excellent, and would be considered unique on a national scale, it is not unique to the Planning Area or regionally within Alaska. Similar sites and values can be found in other sites within the Planning Area and Alaska. No unique natural process or system exists. No natural hazards exist.</p> <p>There is no known data that directly indicates that a given species is present (more than any other area beyond the region) but the habitat of special status species is present.</p> <p>Yes for surficial geological features, in that the permafrost features are unstable and might not still be there from the time of the 1983 report.</p>
4. Natural Hazards		n/a
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	Fish: No Wildlife: No Cultural: No	<p>Species of fish present and the riparian community that is integral to the function of this aquatic habitat are typical of the area with only locally significant qualities.</p> <p>The wildlife species in the Box river RNA are locally important to subsistence and sport hunters, but exist in other portions of the planning area and the state.</p> <p>At this time, nothing within the nominated ACEC has been determined eligible for listing on the NRHP.</p>

Box River Treeline Research Natural Area ACEC Evaluation Table		
Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	Soil: No Geology: No	While soil resources in the Box River RNA are generally in a pristine and undisturbed condition, and would be considered unique on a national scale, they are not unique to the Planning Area or regionally within Alaska. Similar sites and values can be found in other sites within the Planning Area and Alaska. No, it is of local importance only. If the permafrost features still exist, these features are not exclusively in this location. There are additional locations where permafrost features are exposed within the landscape of the planning area.
Has been recognized as warranting protection		n/a
Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare		n/a
Significant threat to human life/safety or property		n/a
<p>RNA-specific questions:</p> <p>1) Does the nominated area have one or more of the following characteristics (43 CFR 8223) that is of ecological or other natural history values of scientific interest? If so what and why is it of scientific interest?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A typical representation of a common plant or animal association; • An unusual plant or animal association; • A threatened or endangered plant or animal species; • A typical representation of common geologic, soil, or water features; or • Outstanding or unusual geologic, soil, or water features. <p>2) If it meets the above criteria, is the area of sufficient size to adequately provide for scientific study, research, and demonstration purposes?</p>		
Ecology	<p>1) Yes - A typical representation of a common plant or animal association</p> <p>2) No - Not of sufficient size to represent western treeline in a larger sense based on current approaches to landscape ecology, but may be used as an indicator study site in larger study if implemented in the future.</p>	

Box River Treeline Research Natural Area ACEC Evaluation Table	
Geology	<p>1) No - For the landscape of the planning area, the geologic features (“permafrost degradation” features) are common. For the area, the surficial geologic features were outstanding and/or unusual, however if they do not still exist, then no.</p> <p>2) No - Permafrost degradation features by definition are always changing. That will include areas of exposure, size of the feature, type of feature and timing of the study. This area is large enough for the geologic features that the RNA was suggested for. Draft USGS Mineral Potential report, 2014, OFR 2014-XXXX, reports low potential for: placer gold, REE’s, uranium in sandstone, tin, copper and platinum group elements.</p>
Wildlife	<p>1) Yes - A typical representation of a common plant or animal association</p> <p>2) No - According to Juday (1983), the area is representative of the caribou-lichen woodland habitat association. Although a large scale study of this interaction would ideally include many sites located within a much larger area (i.e., the total winter range of the WACH), it is potentially useful as a representation of this association, and for localized, small scale study of interactions.</p>
Fish	<p>1) Yes - A typical representation of a common plant or animal association</p> <p>2) No - Fish species present are typical for the area.</p>
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?	
<p>Cultural resources were not found to be relevant or important.</p> <p>Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important.</p> <p>Fisheries resources were found to be relevant but not important.</p> <p>Ecological (soil, vegetation, water) resources were found to be relevant but not important.</p> <p>Geology resources were found to be relevant but not important.</p>	

3.3.18 Existing Inglutalik ACEC

BACKGROUND

The Inglutalik ACEC was designated in 1986 through the Record of Decision for the Central Yukon Resource Management Plan. As part of the process for revisiting the Central Yukon RMP, this ACEC will be reevaluated. The Inglutalik ACEC is located on unencumbered BLM lands and extends into the Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Planning Area. The portion of the ACEC within Central Yukon Planning Area consists of the headwaters.

Existing Nomination: Existing BLM Nomination

Size: 71,716 Acres

Current Management of the Area:

Lands and Realty: Closed to mineral leasing and non-metalliferous mineral entry by PLO 5180.

Open to mining for metalliferous minerals, leases, permits, and rights-of-way.

The existing Inglutalik River ACEC occur within lands withdrawn by PLO 5180. PLO 5180 withdrew lands identified by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws (except locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study to determine the proper classification of the lands under section 17(d)(1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

The lands are currently managed under the 1986 Central Yukon Resource Management Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to permits, leases, rights of way, and easements.

Nominator(s): existing ACEC, not new nomination.

Rationale provided by nominator:

The Inglutalik ACEC will be reevaluated against the criteria for ACEC designation. The original ACEC was designated for watershed and fish values, primarily salmon habitat.

Inglutalik ACEC Evaluation Table			
General Location	General Description	Acreage	Values Considered
<i>See Figure 1 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>None Provided</i>	71,716 acres	<i>See rationale above</i>
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?			
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination	
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: No	A regional sample survey conducted in 2009 by the BLM CYFO Archaeologist did not reveal the presence of a significant type or number of cultural resources on lands managed in the Inglutalik River drainage. This indicates a low potential for the presence of cultural resources that may be eligible for the NRHP.	
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Wildlife: No	The Inglutalik ACEC provides habitat for moose, caribou, brown bear, wolf, and wolverine. These species are important to local subsistence users, as well as local guides and outfitters that provide services to resident and non-resident sport hunters, providing benefit to the local economy as well as providing opportunity for qualified	

Inglutalik ACEC Evaluation Table		
	Fisheries: Yes	<p>subsistence users from Unalakleet and Shaktoolik. The watershed is also a natural, complete ecosystem with an intact ecological food web.</p> <p>The Inglutalik River supports four species of Pacific salmon including Chinook, coho, chum, and pink, as well as Dolly Varden and a variety of resident species. Riparian resources, which dictate the quality, connectivity, and maintenance of the aquatic habitat in the area, are present and in proper functioning condition.</p>
3. A natural process or system		n/a
4. Natural Hazards		n/a
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	Wildlife: No	The wildlife species in the area are locally important to subsistence and sport hunters, but exist in other portions of the planning area and throughout the state.
Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	Fish: Yes	<p>The combination of hydrologic and geologic formative processes in the area have created a highly productive aquatic environment that provides critical spawning and rearing habitat to a variety of salmon and other species of fish. Of the four species of salmon that inhabit the area, pink salmon are the most numerous, followed by chum, Chinook, and coho. Salmon escapement counts conducted on the Inglutalik River for 2011 and 2012 (Menard et al. 2013) are as follows: Pink salmon (90,349 and 494,099); chum (64,892 and 32,832); Chinook (1,467 and 1,134); and coho (870 and 1,431;). Salmon produced in this nominated ACEC contribute to the availability and abundance of subsistence fish resources harvested in the Norton Sound area. In addition, these fish play an important role in the overall genetic diversity of salmon produced within the Norton Sound region.</p>

Inglutalik ACEC Evaluation Table		
	Cultural: No Wildlife: No	At this time, nothing within the nominated ACEC has been determined eligible for listing on the NRHP. The wildlife species in the area are locally important to subsistence and sport hunters, but exist in other portions of the planning area and the state. There are no threatened and endangered species found within the North River watershed
Has been recognized as warranting protection		n/a
Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare		n/a
Significant threat to human life/safety or property		n/a
<i>Summary of Important Values:</i>		
Rationale:	Cultural: The AHRS and BLM files were consulted for known cultural resources within the ACEC.	
Rationale:	Fish: The 2008 Kobuk-Seward RMP identified the portion of the Inglutalik River Watershed that is in that planning area as an ACEC for protection of anadromous fish habitat and winter range for the Western Arctic caribou herd. To be consistent with adjacent RMP and land scape management approach, it is recommended that the portion located in BSWI planning area be carried forward to determine whether similar same management recommendations as developed in the downstream ACEC via the 2008 Kobuk-Seward RMP would apply to the entire watershed.	
Rationale:	Wildlife:	
Rationale:	Other:	
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?		
Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important. Fisheries resources were found to be relevant and important. Cultural resources were found to be relevant but not important.		

3.3.19 Existing Kateel River ACEC

BACKGROUND

The Kateel River ACEC was designated in 1986 through the Record of Decision for the Central Yukon Resource Management Plan. As part of the process for revisiting the Central Yukon RMP, this ACEC will be reevaluated. In 2014, through the scoping process for the RMP, the BLM nominated expanding the Kateel River ACEC to include an additional 323,000 acres of land. Additionally portions of this area were nominated by USFWS, and Koyukuk Tribal Council. The BLM proposed expansion encompasses the other nominations. This evaluation combines all three nominations for the reevaluation and expansion of the Kateel River ACEC.

Current management: Upper portion of river closed to mineral leasing and non-metalliferous mineral entry by PLO 5180. Open to mining for metalliferous minerals, leases, permits, and rights-of-way. Lower portion of the river is under PLOs 5173/5184 which close lands to mineral leasing and mining. Open to leases, permits, and rights-of-way, except possibly for lands within 300 feet of the river which the Central Yukon ROD specified as closed to sales and leases.

Existing and New Nomination: Existing BLM Nomination, New USFWS, New Koyukuk Tribal Council, New BLM Nomination.

Size: Currently the Kateel River ACEC is **568,081** acres in size.

The ACEC nomination received from the USFWS proposes designating an area of **675,630 acres** total. This acreage is inclusive of some existing Kateel River ACEC acres.

Finally, the Koyukuk Tribal Council's nomination proposes an ACEC including **311,663 acres** total. This acreage is inclusive of some existing Kateel River ACEC acres.

The BLM's proposed nomination adds an **additional 307,919 acres** of land to the existing ACEC for a total of approximately **876,600 acres**. This acreage is inclusive of the existing ACEC, USFWS nominated acres, Koyukuk Tribal Council nominated acres; as well as additional lands that were not within the existing ACEC or nominated acres.

Current Management of the Area:

Lands and Realty: The existing Kateel River ACEC occur within lands withdrawn by PLO 5173, 5179, 5180, and 5184.

PLO 5173 withdrew lands identified by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for selection by village corporations. Upon conclusion of village selections, the regional corporations could select the lands under Section 12 of ANCSA. Prior to conveyances, the Secretary could administer the lands and make contracts, and to grant leases, permits, rights-of-way, or easements. Applications for mineral leasing would be rejected until the PLO is modified or the lands appropriately classified to permit mineral leasing.

PLO 5179 withdrew identified lands by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws (which

includes locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. PLO 5179 also withdrew the lands from selections by regional corporations under section 12 of ANCSA. The lands were reserved for study and possible recommendations to the Congress as additions or creation as a unit of the National Park, Forest, Wildlife Refuge, and Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

PLO 5180 withdrew lands identified by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws (except locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study to determine the proper classification of the lands under section 17(d)(1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

PLO 5184 withdrew lands (subject to valid existing rights) withdrawn by section 11 of the Alaska Native Claims Act from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws and from location and entry under the mining laws (which includes locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. PLO 5184 also withdrew the lands from selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act until 1975. The lands were reserved for study and review by the Secretary of the Interior for the purpose of the classification or reclassification of any lands not conveyed pursuant to section 14 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. PLO 5184 also withdrew lands by section 11 of ANCSA lying between 58 degrees north and 64 degrees north latitude and 161 degrees west longitude not withdrawn as any part of the National Wildlife Refuge and made these lands, subject to valid existing rights from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Statehood Act and entry under the mining laws and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study and review by the Secretary of the Interior for the purpose of the classification or reclassification of any lands not conveyed pursuant to section 14 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. PLO 5184 also allowed the Secretary to administer the lands under applicable laws and regulations and granted the authority to enter contracts and to grant leases, permits, rights-of-way, or easements.

The lands are currently managed under the 1986 Central Yukon Resource Management Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to permits, leases, rights of way, and easements although FLPMA sales and leases are not allowed within a 300 foot set back zones on the Kateel River.

Nominator(s): existing ACEC, not new nomination.

Rationale provided by nominator:

The existing Kateel River ACEC will be reevaluated against the criteria for ACEC designation and the following unique characteristics.

BLM provided the following rationale for nomination:

Yukon Resource Management Plan (CYRMP 1986) designated the upper portion of the Kateel River watershed as an ACEC in order to protect Chinook (*O. tshawytscha*) and summer chum salmon (*O. keta*) spawning habitat. When established, this ACEC was 551,297 acres in size. The ACEC included the upper watershed, including the linear river withdrawals, down to the downstream limit of the river withdrawal. Management of the ACEC was to include closure to mineral entry within the streambed and for 300 feet on both sides of the stream from its high water line. However, this withdrawal was never implemented by the BLM.

Additional salmon escapement research has been undertaken in the Kateel River drainage since establishment of the ACEC. The USFWS installed a weir in 2002 (VanHatten 2005). A total of 73 Chinook salmon and 2,853 summer chum were counted. It should be noted that salmon numbers were depressed in the Yukon River drainage in the years surrounding this count. Aerial surveys conducted in 2012 by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) counted 122 Chinook and 5,646 summer chum. The lower portion of the river downstream of the current ACEC now has reaches listed in the Catalog of Waters Important for the Spawning, Rearing or Migration of Anadromous Fishes as chum salmon spawning habitat and Chinook spawning and rearing habitat (ADFG 2014). The intent of the original ACEC designation was to protect spawning habitat in the Kateel River drainage. Given new data that shows the area downstream of the original ACEC is being used by salmon for spawning, the ACEC should be expanded to include that portion of the river and watershed. The BLM managed portion of the ACEC extension would be approximately 323,021 acres. The downstream edge of this nominated ACEC extension would border the Koyukuk National Wildlife Refuge.

The USFWS included the following rationale for nomination:

The Kateel River watershed provides important spawning and rearing habitat for adult chinook and chum salmon, and as such, can have large numbers of returning adults. In 2002, weir operators on the Kateel River counted 73 chinook and 2,853 chum salmon (VanHatten 2005). Aerial survey data can be found here:

<http://sf.adfg.state.ak.us/CommFishR3/Website/AYKDBMSWebsite/DataSelection.aspx>.

The primary reason for the designation habitat surrounding the Kateel River as an ACEC is for the protection of critical spawning and rearing habitat for chinook and chum salmon. Salmon are used throughout Alaska for subsistence and commercial activities. Specifically, Kateel River salmon are used in villages from Koyukuk to the mouth of the Yukon River. This fish resource is used extensively in over 16 villages that extend from the mouth of the Yukon River. Salmon are an important subsistence species throughout the Yukon River watershed. This resource is used by many people in villages along the river system and negative impacts to spawning and rearing habitats will affect populations beyond a local level. Protection of chum and Chinook salmon spawning and rearing habitat along the Kateel River is critical for longevity of this species. Given current state wide Chinook salmon returns, all known spawning location are critical for the persistence of this species.

Congress recognized the importance of salmon by naming the species specifically for conservation in ANILCA and mandated that salmon be maintained in their natural diversity and that opportunities for subsistence use be maintained. Further, section 302(5) (B) of ANILCA includes the assurance of water quality and necessary water quantity within Refuges as one of four major purposes for which the Refuges were established. Additionally, the 1997 National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act identified the ‘maintenance of adequate water quantity and water quality’ as one of 10 major principles set forth to conserve and protect refuge resources. The USFWS would like to stress the importance of upholding our purpose as Refuges to maintain water quality and quantity and highlight our concern for any activities or actions that occur on BLM lands adjacent to refuges that may compromise our abilities to meet these mandates.

Management guidelines should be provided to prevent actions that would degrade habitat as well as the water quality and quantity of the Kateel River. Mining activity should be limited and monitored. Mining has high potential to negatively impact aquatic habitat and communities for long periods of time, with poorly documented restoration success in Interior and northern Alaska (Carlson et al. 2000, Karle et al. 1998, USKH 2005a, USKH 2005b, and Weber 1986.). Resources

in these watersheds are sensitive to contamination and turbidity, and provide essential subsistence requirements for the residents of many rural communities.

The Koyukuk Tribal Council included the following rationale for nomination:

Traditional use of animals, fish, plants and wood from accessible lands and waters has been practiced by the indigenous Koyukuk people for thousands of years. The historical and cultural significance of this use should not be lost considering the brief history of the U.S. government and the BLM. For us this lifeway is much more than utilitarian and practical, it is our history, culture and identity as a sovereign people, which we wish to continue into the future. The abundance, health and accessibility of fish and wildlife species that we have traditionally depended upon are a necessity that must be protected. It’s relevance to our lives and culture cannot be overstated. Due to our ancient and religious ties to the traditional foods accessible to us, all ecological processes that support the life of the land and waters is sacred and necessary, now and into the future. Anything that harms or degrades the supporting natural processes for maintaining our traditional harvest practices on the land and waters is harmful to us and cannot be allowed.

Our concerns about mining and climate change go beyond our local needs and extend in all directions. This is because we see the natural world is an interconnected whole. It is all connected; air-water-land-animals-fish-plants-people. And we have responsibilities for how we use the land, one of which is to do so respectfully so as not to affect things negatively, downstream or for the future. The importance of the health of the land and waters for supporting healthy moose, fish etc. cannot be overstated. Our traditional way of life is of more than local significance and special worth, or at least potentially so in the face of mineral development and the unknown effects of climate change. Our village is remote, with few employment opportunities, making our traditional use of land and waters critically important for survival and continuing our culture. The lands and waters we depend on for traditional harvest are necessary for practicing what the federal government refers to as our “subsistence priority”. We call it life. The welfare and safety of our tribe is dependent upon the health of the lands and waters and we wish to insure that management decisions protect our lifeways, now and into the future.

Kateel River ACEC Evaluation Table		
General Location	Acreage	Values Considered
<i>See Figures 1 and 3 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>The existing Kateel River ACEC is 568,081 acres in size. The ACEC nomination received from the USFWS proposes designating an area of 675,630 acres for the Kateel River ACEC. The Koyukuk Tribal Council’s nomination proposes an ACEC including 311,663 acres of land. The BLM’s proposed expansion will add an additional 308,483 acres of land to the existing ACEC for a total of approximately 876,600 acres and the USFWS and Koyukuk nominations are both encompassed by the BLM proposal.</i>	<i>See rationale above</i>

Kateel River ACEC Evaluation Table		
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?		
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: No	A regional sample survey conducted in 2009 by the BLM CYFO Archaeologist did not reveal the presence of a significant type or number of cultural resources on lands managed in the Kateel River drainage. This indicates a low potential for the presence of cultural resources that may be eligible for the NRHP.
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Wildlife: Yes Fish: Yes	The Kateel River watershed provides habitat for moose, caribou, brown bear, wolf, wolverine. These species are important to local subsistence users, as well as local guides and outfitters that provide services to resident and non-resident sport hunters, providing benefit to the local economy as well as providing opportunity for qualified subsistence users. The watershed is also a natural, complete ecosystem with an intact ecological food web. Chinook (spawning and rearing) and chum salmon (present) are known to occur in the Kateel River, as well as, a variety of resident species including sheefish and whitefish. Riparian resources, which dictate the quality, connectivity, and maintenance of the aquatic habitat in the area, are present and in proper functioning condition.
3. A natural process or system		n/a
4. Natural Hazards		n/a
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	Cultural: No	Cultural: At this time, nothing within the nominated ACEC has been determined eligible for listing on the NRHP.

Kateel River ACEC Evaluation Table
<i>Summary of Important Values:</i>
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?
Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important. Fisheries resources were found to be relevant and important. Cultural resources were not found to be relevant or important.

3.3.20 Existing Ungalik River ACEC

BACKGROUND

The Ungalik ACEC was designated in 1986 through the Record of Decision for the Central Yukon Resource Management Plan. As part of the process for revisiting the Central Yukon RMP, this ACEC will be reevaluated. The Ungalik River ACEC is on unencumbered BLM lands and extends into the Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Planning Area. The ACEC within the Central Yukon Planning Area consists of the headwaters.

Existing Nomination: Existing BLM Nomination

Size: 112,719 acres

Current Management of the Area:

Lands and Realty: Current management: Closed to mineral leasing and non-metalliferous mineral entry by PLO 5180. Open to mining for metalliferous minerals, leases, permits, and rights-of-way.

The existing Ungalik River ACEC occur within lands withdrawn by PLO 5180. PLO 5180 withdrew lands identified by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws (except locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study to determine the proper classification of the lands under section 17(d)(1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

The lands are currently managed under the 1986 Central Yukon Resource Management Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to permits, leases, rights of way, and easements.

Nominator(s): existing ACEC, not new nomination.

Rationale provided by nominator:

The Ungalik ACEC will be reevaluated against the criteria for ACEC designation. The original ACEC was designated for watershed and fish values, primarily salmon habitat.

Ungalik River ACEC Evaluation Table		
General Location	Acreage	Values Considered
<i>See Figure 1 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>112,719 acres</i>	<i>See rationale above</i>
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?		
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: No	A regional sample survey conducted in 2009 by the BLM CYFO Archaeologist did not reveal the presence of a significant type or number of cultural resources on lands managed in the Ungalik River drainage. This indicates a low potential for the presence of cultural resources that may be eligible for the NRHP.
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Fish: Yes Wildlife: Yes	The Ungalik River supports four species of Pacific salmon including Chinook, coho, chum, and pink, as well as Dolly Varden and a variety of resident species. Riparian resources, which dictate the quality, connectivity, and maintenance of the aquatic habitat in the area, are present and in proper functioning condition. The Ungalik River watershed provides habitat for moose, caribou, brown bear, wolf, and wolverine. These species are important to local subsistence users, as well as local guides and outfitters that provide services to resident and non-resident sport hunters, providing benefit to the local economy as well as providing opportunity for qualified subsistence users from Unalakleet and Shaktoolik. The watershed is also a natural, complete ecosystem with an intact ecological food web.
3. A natural process or system		n/a
4. Natural Hazards		n/a

Ungalik River ACEC Evaluation Table		
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	Cultural: No Wildlife : No	At this time, nothing within the nominated ACEC has been determined eligible for listing on the NRHP. The wildlife species in the Ungalik watershed are locally important to subsistence and sport hunters, but exist in other portions of the planning area and the state.
Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	Fish: Yes Wildlife: No	The combination of hydrologic and geologic formative processes in the area have created a highly productive aquatic environment that provides critical spawning and rearing habitat to a variety of salmon and other species of fish. Aerial escapement counts conducted on the Ungalik River in 2013 estimated 28,283 chum salmon and 49,890 pink salmon spawning in the river (Menard et al. 2013). Salmon produced in this nominated ACEC contribute to the availability and abundance of subsistence fish resources harvested in the Norton Sound area. In addition, these fish play an important role in the overall genetic diversity of salmon produced within the Norton Sound region. The wildlife species in the Ungalik watershed are locally important to subsistence and sport hunters, but exist in other portions of the planning area and the state. There are no threatened and endangered species found within the Ungalik watershed.
Has been recognized as warranting protection		n/a
Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare		n/a

Ungalik River ACEC Evaluation Table	
Significant threat to human life/safety or property	n/a
<i>Summary of Important Values:</i>	
Rationale:	Fish: The 2008 Kobuk-Seward RMP identified the portion of the Ungalik River Watershed in that planning area as an ACEC for protection of anadromous fish habitat and winter range for the Western Arctic caribou herd. To be consistent with adjacent RMP and land scape management approach, it is recommended that the portion located in BSWI planning area be carried forward to determine whether similar management recommendations as developed in the downstream ACEC via the 2008 Kobuk-Seward RMP would apply to the entire watershed.
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?	
Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important. Fisheries resources were found to be relevant and important. Cultural resources were not found to be relevant or important.	

3.3.21 Existing Gisasa River ACEC

BACKGROUND

The Gisasa River ACEC was designated in 1986 through the Record of Decision for the Central Yukon Resource Management Plan. As part of the process for revisiting the Central Yukon RMP, this ACEC will be reevaluated. In 2014, through the scoping process for the RMP, the BLM, USFWS and the Koyukuk Tribal Council proposed reevaluating this ACEC and nominated several locations within the current ACEC boundaries. This ACEC is located on unencumbered BLM lands. There is currently no habitat management plan in place. The scoping comments acquired from the refuge staff suggest the importance of this current ACEC for refuge management. The weir on this river serves as an index for documenting Yukon River Salmon escapement.

Existing and New Nomination: Existing BLM, FWS, Koyukuk Tribal Council

Size: The USFWS and Koyukuk nominations are encompassed by the existing ACEC boundary. Currently the Gisasa River ACEC encompasses **278,057 acres** of land.

Current Management of the Area:

Upper portion of river closed to mineral leasing and non-metalliferous mineral entry by PLO 5180. Lower portion of the river is under PLOs 5173/5184 which close lands to mineral leasing and mining. Open to mining for metalliferous minerals. Open to leases, permits, and rights-of-

way, except possibly for lands within 300 feet of the river which the Central Yukon ROD specified as closed to sales and leases.

The existing Gisasa River ACEC occurs within lands withdrawn by PLO 5173 and PLO 5180.

PLO 5173 withdrew lands identified by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for selection by village corporations. Upon conclusion of village selections, the regional corporations could select the lands under Section 12 of ANCSA. Prior to conveyances, the Secretary could administer the lands and make contracts, and to grant leases, permits, rights-of-way, or easements. Applications for mineral leasing would be rejected until the PLO is modified or the lands appropriately classified to permit mineral leasing.

PLO 5180 withdrew lands identified by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws (except locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study to determine the proper classification of the lands under section 17(d)(1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

The lands are currently managed under the 1986 Central Yukon Resource Management Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to permits, leases, rights of way, and easements although FLPMA sales and leases are not allowed a 300 foot set back zones on the Gisasa River.

Nominator(s): existing ACEC, not new nomination.

Rationale provided by nominator:

The USFWS provided the following rationale:

The Gisasa River provides important spawning and rearing habitat for chinook and chum salmon. Further, this river contains significant numbers of spawning adults for both species. Based on the Gisasa River weir and aerial survey data,⁵ the river is one of the main producers of chinook and chum salmon in the Koyukuk River drainage. Mean chinook escapements were 2,340 and median chum escapements were 36,398 as counted from the weir from 1995-2011 (Carlson 2012).

The primary reason for the designation of the Gisasa River as an ACEC is for the protection of critical spawning and rearing habitat for chinook and chum salmon. Salmon are used throughout Alaska for subsistence and commercial activities. Specifically, Gisasa River salmon are used in villages from Koyukuk to the mouth of the Yukon River. This fish resource is used extensively in over 16 villages that extend from the mouth of the Yukon River.

Salmon are an important subsistence species throughout the Yukon River watershed. This resource is used by many people in villages along the river system and negative impacts to spawning and rearing habitats will affect populations beyond a local level. Protection of chum and Chinook salmon spawning and rearing habitat along the Gisasa River is critical for longevity of this species. Given current state wide Chinook salmon returns, all known spawning locations are critical for the persistence of this species.

⁵ <http://sf.adfg.state.ak.us/CommFishR3/Website/AYKDBMSWebsite/DataSelection.aspx>

Congress recognized the importance of salmon by naming the species specifically for conservation in ANILCA and mandated that salmon be maintained in their natural diversity and that opportunities for subsistence use be maintained. Further, section 302(5)(B) of ANILCA includes the assurance of water quality and necessary water quantity within Refuges as one of four major purposes for which the Refuges were established. Additionally, the 1997 National Wildlife Refuge Improvement Act identified the ‘maintenance of adequate water quantity and water quality’ as one of 10 major principles set forth to conserve and protect refuge resources. The USFWS would like to stress the importance of upholding our purpose as Refuges to maintain water quality and quantity and highlight our concern for any activities or actions that occur on BLM lands adjacent to refuges that may compromise our abilities to meet these mandates.

Management guidelines should be provided to prevent actions that would degrade habitat as well as the water quality and quantity of the Giasa River. We request that mining activity is limited and monitored. Mining has high potential to negatively impact aquatic habitat and communities for long periods of time, with poorly documented restoration success in Interior and northern Alaska (Carlson et al. 2000, Karle et al. 1998, USKH 2005a, USKH 2005b, and Weber 1986.). Resources in these watersheds are sensitive to contamination and turbidity, and provide essential subsistence requirements for the residents of many rural communities.

The Koyukuk Tribal Council provided the following rationale:

Traditional use of animals, fish, plants and wood from accessible lands and waters has been practiced by the indigenous Koyukuk people for thousands of years. The historical and cultural significance of this use should not be lost considering the brief history of the U.S. government and the BLM. For us this lifeway is much more than utilitarian and practical, it is our history, culture and identity as a sovereign people, which we wish to continue into the future. The abundance, health and accessibility of fish and wildlife species that we have traditionally depended upon are a necessity that must be protected. It’s relevance to our lives and culture cannot be overstated. Due to our ancient and religious ties to the traditional foods accessible to us, all ecological processes that support the life of the land and waters is sacred and necessary, now and into the future. Anything that harms or degrades the supporting natural processes for maintaining our traditional harvest practices on the land and waters is harmful to us and cannot be allowed.

Our concerns about mining and climate change go beyond our local needs and extend in all directions. This is because we see the natural world is an interconnected whole. It is all connected; air-water-land-animals-fish-plants-people. And we have responsibilities for how we use the land, one of which is to do so respectfully so as not to affect things negatively, downstream or for the future. The importance of the health of the land and waters for supporting healthy moose, fish etc. cannot be overstated. Our traditional way of life is of more than local significance and special worth, or at least potentially so in the face of mineral development and the unknown effects of climate change. Our village is remote, with few employment opportunities, making our traditional use of land and waters critically important for survival and continuing our culture. The lands and waters we depend on for traditional harvest are necessary for practicing what the federal government refers to as our “subsistence priority”. We call it life. The welfare and safety of our tribe is dependent upon the health of the lands and waters and we wish to insure that management decisions protect our lifeways, now and into the future.

Gisasa ACEC Evaluation Table			
General Location	General Description	Acreage	Values Considered
<i>See Figure 1 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>See Background above</i>	278,057 acres	<i>See rationale above</i>
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?			
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination	
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: No	A regional sample survey conducted in 2009 by the BLM CYFO Archaeologist did not reveal the presence of a significant type or number of cultural resources on lands managed in the Gisasa River drainage. This indicates a low potential for the presence of cultural resources that may be eligible for the NRHP.	
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Fish: Yes Wildlife: Yes	The Gisasa River is documented as having chum and sockeye salmon and whitefish present with known Chinook salmon rearing habitat (ADFG Anadromous Maps and Catalog 2014). Other species that have been documented in the drainage include slimy sculpin, Arctic grayling, Dolly Varden (BLM unpublished data) and pink salmon, and northern pike (Carlson 2014). Riparian resources, which dictate the quality, connectivity, and maintenance of the aquatic habitat in the area, are present and in proper functioning condition. The Gisasa River watershed provides habitat for moose, caribou, brown bear, wolf, and wolverine. These species are important to local subsistence users, as well as local guides and outfitters that provide services to resident and non-resident sport hunters, providing benefit to the local economy as well as providing opportunity for qualified subsistence users.	
3. A natural process or system		n/a	
4. Natural Hazards		n/a	

Gisasa ACEC Evaluation Table		
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	Cultural: No	At this time, nothing within the nominated ACEC has been determined eligible for listing on the NRHP.
Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	Fish: Yes	<p>The combination of hydrologic and geologic formative processes in the area have created a highly productive aquatic environment that provides critical spawning and rearing habitat to a variety of salmon and other species of fish. Chinook and chum salmon are the predominant salmon species and escapement has been monitored by the USFWS since 1994 (Melegari and Wiswar 1995). The recent 5-year average escapement (2008-2012) for Chinook and chum salmon was 1,844 and 57,946 fish (JCT, 2013). The Gisasa River weir is vital for managing the complex mixed-stock subsistence and commercial salmon fisheries in the lower Yukon River (Carlson 2014). Chinook and chum salmon production from the Gisasa River ACEC contribute to the management of the Yukon River and are an important significant local, regional, and international resource.</p> <p>Salmon produced in this ACEC contribute to the availability and abundance of subsistence fish resources harvested throughout the lower Yukon and Koyukuk rivers. In addition, these fish play an important role in the overall genetic health of salmon that spawn in the Yukon Basin.</p>
	Wildlife: No	The wildlife species in the Gisasa watershed are locally important to subsistence and sport hunters, but exist in other portions of the planning area and the state. There are no threatened and endangered species found within the Gisasa watershed.

Gisasa ACEC Evaluation Table		
Has been recognized as warranting protection	Wildlife: No	There are no threatened and endangered species within the watershed, and wildlife populations are managed for sustainable population levels by ADFG and for subsistence users under ANILCA on Federal lands.
Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare		n/a
Significant threat to human life/safety or property		n/a
<i>Summary of Important Values:</i>		
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?		
Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important. Fisheries resources were found to be relevant and important. Cultural resources were not found to be relevant or important.		

3.3.22 Existing Shaktoolik River ACEC

BACKGROUND

The Shaktoolik River ACEC was designated in 1986 through the Record of Decision for the Central Yukon Resource Management Plan. As part of the process for revisiting the Central Yukon RMP, this ACEC will be reevaluated. The Shaktoolik ACEC is on unencumbered BLM lands and extends into the Kobuk Seward Peninsula Planning Area. The ACEC within the Central Yukon Planning Area consists of the headwaters.

Existing Nomination: Existing BLM Nomination

Size: 192,591 Acres

Current Management of the Area:

Lands and Realty: The existing Shaktoolik River ACEC occurs within lands withdrawn by PLO 5180.

PLO 5180 withdrew lands identified by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws (except locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands

were reserved for study to determine the proper classification of the lands under section 17(d)(1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

The lands are currently managed under the 1986 Central Yukon Resource Management Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to permits, leases, rights of way, and easements.

Nominator(s): existing ACEC, not new nomination.

Rationale provided by nominator:

The Shaktoolik ACEC will be reevaluated against the criteria for ACEC designation. The original ACEC was designated for watershed and fish values, primarily salmon habitat.

Shaktoolik River ACEC Evaluation Table		
General Location	Acreage	Values Considered
<i>See Figure 1 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>192,591 acres</i>	<i>See rationale above</i>
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?		
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: No	A regional sample survey conducted in 2009 by the BLM CYFO Archaeologist did not reveal presence of a significant type or number of cultural resources on lands managed in the Shaktoolik River drainage. This indicates a low potential for the presence of cultural resources that may be eligible for the NRHP.
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Fish: Yes Wildlife: Yes	The Shaktoolik River supports four species of Pacific salmon including Chinook, coho, chum, and pink, as well as Dolly Varden and a variety of resident species. Riparian resources, which dictate the quality, connectivity, and maintenance of the aquatic habitat in the area, are present and in proper functioning condition. The Shaktoolik River watershed provides habitat for moose, caribou, brown bear, wolf, and wolverine. These species are important to local subsistence users, as well as local guides and outfitters that provide services to resident and non-resident sport hunters, providing benefit to the local economy as well as providing opportunity for qualified subsistence users from Unalakleet and Shaktoolik.

Shaktoolik River ACEC Evaluation Table		
3. A natural process or system		n/a
4. Natural Hazards		n/a
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	Cultural: No	At this time, nothing within the nominated ACEC has been determined eligible for listing on the NRHP.
Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	Fish: Yes Wildlife: No	In 2013 ADFG estimated salmon escapement in the Shaktoolik River using sonar. The results were as follows: 67,272 chum salmon, 160,953 pink salmon, and 27,207 coho salmon (Menard et al. 2013) ADFG 2013: “2013 Norton Sound Salmon Season Summary”). Salmon produced in this nominated ACEC contribute to the availability and abundance of subsistence fish resources harvested in the Norton Sound region. In addition, these fish play an important role in the overall genetic health of salmon stocks that spawn in tributaries to Norton Sound. The wildlife species in the Shaktoolik watershed are locally important to subsistence and sport hunters, but exist in other portions of the planning area and the state. There are no threatened and endangered species found within the Unalakleet watershed.
Has been recognized as warranting protection	Wildlife: No	There are no threatened and endangered species within the watershed, and wildlife populations are managed for sustainable population levels by ADFG and for subsistence users under ANILCA on Federal lands.
Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare		n/a

Shaktoolik River ACEC Evaluation Table		
Significant threat to human life/safety or property		n/a
<i>Summary of Important Values:</i>		
Rationale: Fish	Fish: Yes	The 2008 Kobuk– Seward Resource Management Plan (RMP) identified the portion of the Shaktoolik River Watershed that is in that planning area as an ACEC for protection of anadromous fish habitat and winter range for the Western Arctic caribou herd. To be consistent with the adjacent RMP and land scape management approach, it is recommended that the portion located in BSWI planning area be carried forward to determine whether similar same management recommendations as developed in the downstream ACEC via the 2008 Kobuk-Seward RMP would apply to the entire watershed Ungalik River watershed.
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?		
Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important. Fisheries resources were found to be relevant and important. Cultural resources were not found to be relevant or important.		

3.3.23 Tagagawik River ACEC

BACKGROUND

During the 2104 scoping process for the Central Yukon RMP the BLM received an ACEC nomination from the Pew Trust for the Tagagawik River area. This newly nominated ACEC location and the nomination information provided will be evaluated against the criteria for an ACEC.

New Nomination: Pew Trust

Size: 301,044 acres.

Current Management of the Area:

Lands and Realty: Closed to mineral leasing and non-metalliferous mineral entry by PLO 5180. Open to mining for metalliferous minerals, leases, permits, and rights-of-way.

The nominated Tagagawik River ACEC occurs within lands withdrawn by PLO 5180.

PLO 5180 withdrew lands identified by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws (except locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study to determine the proper classification of the lands under section 17(d)(1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

The lands are currently managed under the 1986 Central Yukon Resource Management Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to permits, leases, rights of way, and easements although a 300 foot setback zone on the Tagagawik are closed to FLPMA sales and leases.

Rationale provided by nominator:

This area was nominated as an ACEC by the Pew Trust for its climate resilience; biodiversity; landscape connectivity; vertebrate species richness; rare plant species richness; vegetation community diversity; surface water availability; topographic complexity; landscape naturalness; climate resilience; and, ecoregional protection.

The Tagagawik River and its watershed is a quintessential component supporting ecosystem services for the area's water, fish, birds and fur-bearing animals, including rare and sensitive species which all rely on the intact nature of this special land. Not only do critical fish species depend upon this healthy watershed, but distribution ranges for at least thirteen rare species as defined by the Alaska Natural Heritage Program occur in the nominated area. The following sensitive species, their habitat and those habitat requirements are found in the nominated area:

- ◆ Alaskan hare,
- ◆ Aleutian Tern,
- ◆ Black-backed Woodpecker,
- ◆ Gray-cheeked Thrush,
- ◆ McKay's Bunting,
- ◆ Nearctic collared lemming,
- ◆ Olive-sided Flycatcher,
- ◆ Rusty Blackbird,
- ◆ Snowy Owl,
- ◆ Solitary Sandpiper, Surfbird,
- ◆ Wandering Tattler, and
- ◆ Wood frog.

The Tagagawik watershed and surrounding landforms contained within this nominated ACEC host intact biological structures that support this critical ecosystem. The area has been systemically identified, through a peer review process as containing one of highest levels of resilience to climate change, high biodiversity, and landscape connectivity found across 31 million acres of public land in active BLM Resource Management Plans in Alaska.

The nominated area has more than locally significant qualities, since all eight studied values were shown to have significant standing within the Conservation Priority Areas, revealing:

- ◆ High vertebrate species richness;
- ◆ Moderate rare plant species richness;

- ◆ Moderate surface water availability;
- ◆ Low levels of ecoregional protection;
- ◆ Moderate vegetation community diversity;
- ◆ Moderate topographic complexity;
- ◆ High climate resilience; and,
- ◆ High landscape naturalness.

The rationale and scientific basis for this nomination stems from an analysis of Alaska BLM lands conducted by Conservation Science Partners (CSP). The Conservation Science Partners study (Dickson et al. 2014, *Biological Conservation* 178:111-127) quantifies the conservation value of the nominated lands, and highlights the Conservation Priority Area analysis that affirms high biodiversity, resiliency and connectivity values of the nominated lands.

The boundary of the nominated ACEC reflects the extent of the identified Conservation Priority Areas derived from the study’s results. In short, the nominated ACEC falls within the top 20 percent of all intact, unprotected, roadless lands across Alaska’s BLM domain for the combined values listed above. As such, the ecological and landscape-level significance of the areas warrant special management.

Tagagawik River ACEC Evaluation Table			
General Location	General Description	Acreage	Values Considered
<i>See Figure 3 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>The nominated Tagagawik ACEC is bounded on the north by BLM land tenure and the northern boundary of the Central Yukon RMP planning boundary, on the east by the continental divide and the headwaters of Derby Creek, on the south by the headwaters of Tagagawik River, and on the west by tributary headwaters and wetlands of the Tagagawik River watershed.</i>	<i>301,044 acres.</i>	<i>See rationale above</i>

Tagagawik River ACEC Evaluation Table		
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?		
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: No	A regional sample survey conducted in 2009 by the BLM CYFO Archaeologist did not reveal the presence of a significant type or number of cultural resources on lands managed in the Tagagawik River drainage. This indicates a low potential for the presence of cultural resources that may be eligible for the NRHP.
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Wildlife: Yes Fish: No	The Tagagawik River watershed provides habitat for moose, caribou, brown bear, wolf, wolverine. These species are important to local subsistence users, providing benefit to the local economy as well as providing food for subsistence users. The watershed is also a natural, complete ecosystem with an intact ecological food web. Data to support presence of fish species is lacking. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game does not list the Tagagawik River as anadromous and there are not any fish inventory reports in the Alaska Freshwater Fish Inventory for this river. BLM has not conducted fish inventories in the ACEC. Status of riparian resources is unknown, however, due to the area's remote location, it is expected that riparian resources would be pristine and fully functional.
3. A natural process or system	Vegetation: No	The ACEC reviews conducted by BLM relied as much as possible on known datasets to determine whether criteria were met for a given biological resource. It appears that a very different approach was taken by the Pew Trust analysis; more credence appears to have been given to habitat maps to deduce whether species were present or absent than has been a focal point for other ACECs. There is no known plant or animal location data that directly indicates that a given species is present although habitat is likely to be present.
4. Natural Hazards		n/a

Tagagawik River ACEC Evaluation Table		
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	Cultural: No Wildlife: No	At this time, nothing within the nominated ACEC has been determined eligible for listing on the NRHP. The wildlife species in the Tagagawik watershed are locally important to subsistence and sport hunters, but exist in other portions of the planning area and the state.
Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	Wildlife: No	The wildlife species found in this area are common throughout the planning area and the state. Wildlife populations are managed for sustainability by ADFG, and on Federal lands, qualified subsistence users are provided a harvest priority on Federal lands when wildlife populations are low or in decline. Sensitive species are found in other areas of the planning area and the state.
Has been recognized as warranting protection		n/a
Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare		n/a
Significant threat to human life/safety or property		n/a
<i>Summary of Important Values:</i>		
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?		
Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important. Fisheries resources were not found to be relevant or important. Cultural resources were not found to be relevant or important.		

3.3.24 Nulato River ACEC

BACKGROUND

During the 2014 scoping process for the Central Yukon RMP the BLM received an ACEC nomination from the Nulato Tribal Council for the Nulato River. This newly nominated ACEC location and the nomination information provided will be evaluated against the criteria for an ACEC.

New Nomination: New Nomination

Size: 342,824 acres

Current Management of the Area:

Lands and Realty: The nominated Nulato ACEC occurs within lands withdrawn by PLO 5173, PLO 5180 and PLO 5184.

PLO 5173 withdrew lands identified by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for selection by village corporations. Upon conclusion of village selections, the regional corporations could select the lands under Section 12 of ANCSA. Prior to conveyances, the Secretary could administer the lands and make contracts, and to grant leases, permits, rights-of-way, or easements. Applications for mineral leasing would be rejected until the PLO is modified or the lands appropriately classified to permit mineral leasing.

PLO 5180 withdrew lands identified by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws (except locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study to determine the proper classification of the lands under section 17(d)(1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

PLO 5184 withdrew lands (subject to valid existing rights) withdrawn by section 11 of the Alaska Native Claims Act from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws and from location and entry under the mining laws (which includes locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. PLO 5184 also withdrew the lands from selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act until 1975. The lands were reserved for study and review by the Secretary of the Interior for the purpose of the classification or reclassification of any lands not conveyed pursuant to section 14 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. PLO 5184 also withdrew lands by section 11 of ANCSA lying between 58 degrees north and 64 degrees north latitude and 161 degrees west longitude not withdrawn as any part of the National Wildlife Refuge and made these lands, subject to valid existing rights from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Statehood Act and entry under the mining laws and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study and review by the Secretary of the Interior for the purpose of the classification or reclassification of any lands not conveyed pursuant to section 14 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. PLO 5184 also allowed the Secretary to administer the

lands under applicable laws and regulations and granted the authority to enter contracts and to grant leases, permits, rights-of-way, or easements.

The lands are currently managed under the 1986 Central Yukon Resource Management Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to permits, leases, rights of way, and easements although FLPMA sales and leases are not allowed within a 300 foot setback zone on the Nulato River.

Nominator(s): Nulato Tribal Council

Rationale provided by nominator:

The Nulato Tribal Council provided the following rationale for their nomination:

The Nulato River watershed provides clean water to the community and is a major spawning area for salmon and sheefish, grayling and trout, all of which have important subsistence value to the people of Nulato. Additionally, these watersheds are essential habitat for maintenance of species diversity for fish and wildlife upon which the people of the community depend. The surrounding land is important for water quality, subsistence access, hunting and calving/wintering ground for moose and caribou. These watersheds have locally significant qualities which give them special worth and meaning especially in this time where resources are vulnerable to adverse change due to climate change. Significant climate change in the Nulato arctic renders all watersheds, fish and wildlife resources vulnerable to adverse change.

Nulato River ACEC Evaluation Table			
General Location	General Description	Acreage	Values Considered
<i>See Figure 3 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>The Nulato River and the far reaches of its watershed</i>	<i>342,824 acres</i>	<i>See rationale above</i>
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?			
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination	
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: No	A regional sample survey conducted in 2009 by the BLM CYFO Archaeologist did not reveal the presence of a significant type or number of cultural resources on lands managed in the Nulato River drainage. This indicates a low potential for the presence of cultural resources that may be eligible for the NRHP.	
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Wildlife: Yes	The nominated area meets the relevance criteria for wildlife since muskox are known to inhabit the area. The Unalakleet River watershed provides habitat for moose, caribou, brown bear, wolf, wolverine. These species are important to local subsistence users, as well as local guides and outfitters that provide services to resident and non-	

Nulato River ACEC Evaluation Table		
	Fish: Yes	resident sport hunters, providing benefit to the local economy as well as providing opportunity for qualified subsistence users from Unalakleet and Shaktoolik. Chinook and chum salmon and whitefish are known to occur in the Nulato River, as well as, a variety of resident species. Riparian resources, which dictate the quality, connectivity, and maintenance of the aquatic habitat in the area, are present and in proper functioning condition.
3. A natural process or system		n/a
4. Natural Hazards		n/a
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	Cultural: No Wildlife: No	At this time, nothing within the nominated ACEC has been determined eligible for listing on the NRHP. The wildlife species in the Nulato watershed are locally important to subsistence and sport hunters, but exist in other portions of the planning area and the state.
Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	Wildlife: No Fish: Yes	The nominated area does not meet the importance criteria for wildlife (muskox) since only a few small groups and single bulls have been sighted in the area. However, the small groups are thought to have originated from the Seward Peninsula. If these groups have permanently migrated and an increasing number of groups is sited this resource should be considered special management for muskox habitat. There are no threatened and endangered species in the area. The combination of hydrologic and geologic formative processes in the area have created a highly productive aquatic environment that provides critical spawning and rearing habitat to a variety of salmon and other species of fish. Chinook and chum salmon

Nulato River ACEC Evaluation Table		
		are the predominant salmon species and escapement has been monitored by various methods dating back as early as 1958 (Barten 1984). The recent 10-year average escapement (2003-2012) for Chinook and chum salmon was 1,716 and 19,776 (chum salmon estimate is the combined aerial counts from both river forks (JCT 2014). Salmon produced in this ACEC contribute to the availability and abundance of subsistence fish resources harvested throughout the lower Yukon River. In addition, these fish play an important role in the overall genetic health of salmon that spawn in the Yukon Basin.
Has been recognized as warranting protection		n/a
Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare		n/a
Significant threat to human life/safety or property		n/a
<i>Summary of Important Values:</i>		
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?		
Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important. Fisheries resources were found to be relevant and important. Cultural resources were not found to be relevant or important.		

3.3.25 Honhosa River ACEC

BACKGROUND

During the 2104 scoping process for the Central Yukon RMP, an ACEC nomination was received from the Koyukuk Tribal Council for the Honhosa River. This newly nominated ACEC will be evaluated against the criteria for an ACEC and all other information provided with the nomination.

New Nomination: New Nomination

Size: 93,492 acres

Current Management of the Area:

Lands and Realty: The nominated Honhosa River ACEC occurs within lands withdrawn by PLO 5173 and PLO 5180.

PLO 5173 withdrew lands identified by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for selection by village corporations. Upon conclusion of village selections, the regional corporations could select the lands under Section 12 of ANCSA. Prior to conveyances, the Secretary could administer the lands and make contracts, and to grant leases, permits, rights-of-way, or easements. Applications for mineral leasing would be rejected until the PLO is modified or the lands appropriately classified to permit mineral leasing.

PLO 5180 withdrew lands identified by legal description (subject to valid existing rights) from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws, including selections by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act and from location and entry under the mining laws (except locations for metalliferous minerals) and from leasing under the Mineral Leasing Act. The lands were reserved for study to determine the proper classification of the lands under section 17(d)(1) of the ANCSA.

A small portion of this nominated ACEC is not within an existing PLO and there the lands are open to all applicable public land laws.

The lands are currently managed under the 1986 Central Yukon Resource Management Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to permits, leases, rights of way, and easements.

Nominator(s): Koyukuk Tribal Council

Rationale provided by nominator:**The following rationale was provided by the Koyukuk Tribal Council:**

Traditional use of animals, fish, plants and wood from accessible lands and waters has been practiced by the indigenous Koyukuk people for thousands of years. The historical and cultural significance of this use should not be lost considering the brief history of the U.S. government and the BLM. For us this lifeway is much more than utilitarian and practical, it is our history, culture and identity as a sovereign people, which we wish to continue into the future. The abundance, health and accessibility of fish and wildlife species that we have traditionally depended upon are a necessity that must be protected. It's relevance to our lives and culture cannot be overstated. Due to our ancient and religious ties to the traditional foods accessible to us, all ecological processes that support the life of the land and waters is sacred and necessary, now and into the future. Anything that harms or degrades the supporting natural processes for maintaining our traditional harvest practices on the land and waters is harmful to us and cannot be allowed.

Our concerns about mining and climate change go beyond our local needs and extend in all directions. This is because we see the natural world is an interconnected whole. It is all connected; air-water-land-animals-fish-plants-people. And we have responsibilities for how we use the land, one of which is to do so respectfully so as not to affect things negatively, downstream or for the future. The importance of the health of the land and waters for supporting

healthy moose, fish etc. cannot be overstated. Our traditional way of life is of more than local significance and special worth, or at least potentially so in the face of mineral development and the unknown effects of climate change. Our village is remote, with few employment opportunities, making our traditional use of land and waters critically important for survival and continuing our culture. The lands and waters we depend on for traditional harvest are necessary for practicing what the federal government refers to as our “subsistence priority”. We call it life. The welfare and safety of our tribe is dependent upon the health of the lands and waters and we wish to insure that management decisions protect our lifeways, now and into the future.

Honhosa ACEC Evaluation Table		
General Location	Acreage	Values Considered
<i>See Figure 3 (Appendix A)</i>	<i>93,412 acres</i>	<i>See rationale above</i>
Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?		
Relevant Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: No	A regional sample survey conducted in 2009 by the BLM CYFO Archaeologist did not reveal the presence of a significant type or number of cultural resources on lands managed in the Honhosa River drainage. This indicates a low potential for the presence of cultural resources that may be eligible for the NRHP.
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Wildlife: Yes Fish: Yes	The area provides habitat for moose, caribou, muskox, brown bear, wolf, and wolverine. These species are important to local subsistence users, as well as local guides and outfitters that provide services to resident and non-resident sport hunters, providing benefit to the local economy as well as providing opportunity for qualified subsistence users. The watershed is also a natural, complete ecosystem with an intact ecological food web. Chum salmon (spawning) and whitefish (present) are documented in the Honhosa River (State of Alaska Anadromous Waters Catalog 2014). Arctic grayling, burbot, longnose sucker, slimy sculpin, and round whitefish have also been documented in the drainage (Wiswar 1994). An aerial survey flown by ADFG in 2011 under good conditions did not detect any adult salmon in the Honhosa River. Riparian resources,

Honhosa ACEC Evaluation Table		
		which dictate the quality, connectivity, and maintenance of the aquatic habitat in the area, are present and in proper functioning condition.
3. A natural process or system		n/a
4. Natural Hazards		n/a
Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?		
Important Values	Yes/No	Rationale for Determination
More than locally significant	Cultural: No	If more research led to the documentation of a TCP in the area, it would likely be found to be locally significant.
Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	Wildlife: No Fish: No	The nominated area does not meet the importance criteria for wildlife (muskox) since only a few small groups and single bulls have been sighted in the area. However, the small groups are thought to have originated from the Seward Peninsula. If these groups have permanently migrated and an increasing number of groups is sited this resource should be considered special management for muskox habitat. Species of fish present and the riparian community that is integral to the function of this aquatic habitat are typical of the area with only locally significant qualities.
Has been recognized as warranting protection		n/a
Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare		n/a
Significant threat to human life/safety or property		n/a

Honhosa ACEC Evaluation Table
<i>Summary of Important Values:</i>
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?
Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important. Fisheries resources were found to be relevant but not important. Cultural resources were not found to be relevant or important.

Chapter 4. Summary of Findings, Evaluation Process, and Next Steps

4.1 Summary of Findings

Chapter 4 contains a table that summarizes the findings of the ACEC evaluations from Chapter 3; the ACECs found TO MEET the relevance and importance criteria (Table 3). This table summarizes the existing and nominated ACECs that were evaluated, the values assessed, and whether the criteria were met (including supporting information). The following 16 ACECs were found TO MEET both the relevance and importance criteria and are also displayed in a map, Figure 7, “ACECs found TO MEET the relevance and importance criteria” (Appendix A).

1. Anvik River ACEC
2. Drainages of the Unalakleet River ACEC
3. North River ACEC
4. Sheefish ACEC
5. Anvik River Watershed ACEC
6. Bonasila River Watershed ACEC
7. Anvik Traditional Trapping Area ACEC
8. Unalakleet River Watershed ACEC
9. Tenmile River Watershed ACEC
10. Unalakleet ACEC
11. Inglutalik River ACEC
12. Kateel River ACEC
13. Ungalik River ACEC
14. Gisasa River ACEC
15. Shaktoolik River ACEC
16. Nulato River ACEC

Table 3. Summary of the existing and nominated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) in the planning area determined TO MEET the relevance and importance criteria*

Area/ACEC	Existing / Nominated (nominator)	Value	Meets Relevance?	Meets Importance?	Meets RNA criteria	Carried forward to Alternatives Development
Anvik River ACEC	Existing	Fish	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
		Wildlife	Yes	No		
		Cultural	Yes	No		
Kuskokwim Raptor Nesting Habitat ACEC	Existing	Wildlife	Yes	No	N/A	No
		Fish	No	No		
		Cultural	No	No		
Peregrine Falcon Nesting Habitat ACEC	Existing	Wildlife	Yes	Yes	N/A	No
		Fish	No	No		
		Cultural	No	No		
Drainages of the Unalakleet River ACEC	Existing	Wildlife	Yes	No	N/A	Yes
		Fish	Yes	Yes		
		Cultural	Yes	Yes		
Drainages of the North River ACEC	Existing	Wildlife	Yes	No	N/A	Yes
		Fish	Yes	Yes		
		Cultural	No	No		
Sheefish ACEC	Nominated (BLM via Georgetown Tribal Council, McGrath resident)	Fish	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
		Wildlife	Yes	No		
		Cultural	Yes	Yes		
Grayling Area Habitat ACEC	Nominated (Grayling IRA Tribal Council)	Fish	Yes	No	N/A	No
		Wildlife	Yes	No		
		Cultural	No	No		
Anvik River Watershed ACEC	Nominated (Anvik Tribal Council)	Fish	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
		Wildlife	Yes	No		
		Cultural	Yes	No		
Bonasila River ACEC	Nominated (Anvik Tribal Council)	Fish	Yes	No	N/A	Yes
		Wildlife	Yes	No		
		Cultural	Yes	Yes		
Anvik Traditional Trapping Area ACEC	Nominated (Anvik Tribal Council)	Fish	No	No	N/A	Yes
		Wildlife	Yes	No		
		Cultural	Yes	Yes		
Old Anvik Village Area ACEC	Nominated (Anvik Tribal Council)	Fish	No	No	N/A	No
		Wildlife	Yes	No		
		Cultural	Yes	No		
Unalakleet River Watershed ACEC	Nominated (Native Village of Unalakleet)	Fish	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
		Wildlife	Yes	No		
		Cultural	Yes	Yes		

Area/ACEC	Existing / Nominated (nominator)	Value	Meets Relevance?	Meets Importance?	Meets RNA criteria	Carried forward to Alternatives Development
Egavik Creek Watershed ACEC	Nominated (Native Village of Unalakleet)	Fish	Yes	No	N/A	No
		Wildlife	Yes	No		
		Cultural	Yes	No		
Golsovia River Watershed ACEC	Nominated (Native Village of Unalakleet)	Fish	Yes	No	N/A	No
		Wildlife	Yes	No		
		Cultural	Yes	No		
Tenmile River Watershed ACEC	Nominated (Native Village of Unalakleet)	Fish	Yes	Yes	N/A	Yes
		Wildlife	Yes	No		
		Cultural	Yes	No		
Unalakleet ACEC	Nominated (Pew Charitable Trusts)	Fish	Yes	No	N/A	Yes
		Wildlife	Yes	No		
		Cultural	Yes	Yes		
		Natural System	No	No		
Box River Treeline RNA	Existing	Cultural/Historic	No	No	No	No
		Fish	Yes	No	No	
		Geology	Yes	No	No	
		Soil (natural system)	Yes	No	No	
		Water (natural system)	No	No	No	
		Special status species/Vegetation	Yes	No	No	
		Wildlife	Yes	No	No	
Inglutalik River ACEC	Existing	Cultural/Historic	No	No	N/A	Yes
		Fish	Yes	Yes		
		Wildlife	No	No		
Kateel River ACEC	Nominated	Cultural/Historic	No	No	N/A	Yes
		Fish	Yes	Yes		
		Wildlife	Yes	No		
Ungalik River ACEC	Existing	Cultural/Historic	No	No	N/A	Yes
		Fish	Yes	Yes		
		Wildlife	Yes	No		

Area/ACEC	Existing / Nominated (nominator)	Value	Meets Relevance?	Meets Importance?	Meets RNA criteria	Carried forward to Alternatives Development
Gisasa River ACEC	Existing (boundary encompasses Koyukuk Tribal Council and the USFWS new Nominations)	Cultural/ Historic	No	No	N/A	Yes
		Fish	Yes	Yes		
		Wildlife	Yes	No		
Shaktoolik River ACEC	Existing	Cultural/ Historic	No	No	N/A	Yes
		Fish	Yes	Yes		
		Wildlife	Yes	No		
Tagagawik River ACEC	Nominated (Pew Charitable Trust)	Cultural/ Historic	No	No	N/A	No
		Fish	No	No		
		Wildlife	Yes	No		
		Natural System (Vegetation)	No	No		
Nulato River ACEC	Nominated (Nulato Tribal Council)	Cultural/ Historic	No	No	N/A	Yes
		Fish	Yes	Yes		
		Wildlife	Yes	No		
Honhosa River ACEC	Nominated (Koyukuk Tribal Council)	Cultural/ Historic	No	No	N/A	No
		Fish	Yes	No		
		Wildlife	Yes	No		

These 16 ACECs will be carried forward into the alternatives for the DRMP. Their Chapter 3 evaluations demonstrated that they met the relevance and importance criteria for at least one resource and the third requirement for ACEC designation, special management attention, will be addressed during the future formulation of alternatives (refer to Section 2.3). Additionally, during the formulation of alternatives, the acreages of the ACECs will decrease or increase in size as determined by the special management attention required for the particular ACEC resource. The size and management prescriptions for each ACEC may vary by alternative to reflect a balance between the goals and objectives of the alternative and values being protected (BLM Manual 1613.22.B.1-2). Table 4, “Acreages for ACEC s Determined TO MEET the Relevance and Importance Criteria,” summarizes the current ACEC acreages that will likely to change, moving forward into development of the Draft RMP.

Table 4. Acreages for ACECs determined TO MEET the relevance and importance criteria in BSWI Planning Area

ACEC Name (highlights indicate overlapping acreage with like color)	Existing Acres	Nominated Acres	ACECs recommended for analysis in the Draft RMP
1. Anvik River ACEC (existing)	115,106		
2. Kuskokwim River Raptor Nesting Habitat ACEC (existing)	6,072		
3. Peregrine Falcon Nesting Habitat ACEC (existing)	8,096		
4. Drainages of the Unalakleet River ACEC (existing)	415,184		
5. North River ACEC (existing)	137,349		137,349
6. Sheefish Spawning Area ACEC (internally and externally nominated)		698,260	698,260
7. Grayling Area Habitat ACEC (externally nominated)		98,682	
8. Anvik River Watershed ACEC (Anvik Tribal Council nominated: 249,607 acres which is inclusive of some acreage from No. 1)		249,607	249,607
9. Bonasila River Watershed ACEC (externally nominated)		291,136	291,136
10. Anvik Traditional Trapping Area ACEC (externally nominated)		21,699	21,699
11. Old Anvik Village Area ACEC (externally nominated)		60,259	
12. Unalakleet River Watershed ACEC (Native Village of Unalakleet nominated: 251,978 acres which is inclusive of some acreage from No. 4)		251,978	
13. Egavik Creek Watershed ACEC (externally nominated)		60,052	
14. Golsovia River Watershed ACEC (externally nominated)		21,771	
15. Tenmile River Watershed ACEC (externally nominated)		36,278	36,278
16. Unalakleet ACEC (Pew Trust nominated: 1,520,015 acres, which is inclusive of some acreages from No. 4 and 12)		1,520,015	1,520,015
17. Box River Treeline RNA ACEC (existing)	13,592		
18. Inglutalik ACEC (existing)	71,716		71,716
19. Kateel River ACEC (existing: 568,681 acres) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (USFWS nominated: 675,630 acres total – inclusive of some existing Kateel River ACEC acres) • (Koyukuk Tribal Council nominated: 311,663 acres total – inclusive of some existing Kateel River ACEC acres) • (BLM nominated: 876,600 acres total – inclusive of existing ACEC, FWS nominated, and Koyukuk Tribal Council nominated acres; as well as additional lands that were not within the existing ACEC or nominated) 	568,681	307,919*	876,600
20. Ungalik River ACEC (existing)	112,719		112,719

ACEC Name (highlights indicate overlapping acreage with like color)		Existing Acres	Nominated Acres	ACECs recommended for analysis in the Draft RMP
21.	Gisasa River ACEC (existing and externally nominated)		278,057	278,057
22.	Shaktoolik River ACEC (existing)	192,591		192,591
23.	Tagagawik River ACEC (externally nominated)		301,044	
24.	Nulato River ACEC (externally nominated)		342,824	342,824
25.	Honhosa River ACEC (externally nominated)		93,412	
Total Acreages		1,641,106	4,325,074	
Total Acreage Existing and Nominated ACECs		5,966,180		
Total Acreage Relevant and Important ACECs				4,828,851

* Additional nominated Kateel River ACEC acres encompassed in BLM nominated

4.2 Evaluation Process

In compiling a list of areas to be analyzed in this report, the BLM considered the public comments received on ACEC modifications, removals, and nominations (Sections 3.1 and 3.2). The BLM followed the guidance set forth in BLM Manual 1613 and considered:

1. Existing ACECs
2. Areas recommended for ACEC consideration (internal and external nominations)
3. Areas identified through inventory and monitoring
4. Adjacent designations of other federal and state agencies

ACECs may be nominated by BLM staff, other agencies, or members of the public at any time. During the RMP revision scoping process, the BLM solicited nominations and comments from the public and other agencies. A map of special designation areas was distributed at the scoping meetings and was made available on the RMP website: <http://www.blm.gov/ak/planning/bswi>.

The BLM staff also reviewed information on areas with out-of-date designations to ensure that all potentially relevant and important values within the planning areas were considered.

4.3 Next Steps

Areas found to meet both the relevance and importance criteria will be carried forward to consider whether any special management would be required (Section 2.3) and considered under alternatives for potential designation and management in the RMP (BLM Manual 1613.21). The BLM will use public comments obtained through future public comment submissions, and BLM specialist knowledge to make future ACEC determinations. As such, the BLM will rely on public comments obtained during two additional planning phases that may help to inform BLM decisions about designating the future ACECs within the planning area. These two planning phases are:

1. The Preliminary alternatives outreach period, with public comment accepted through April 19, 2015.
2. The future public comment period for the Bering Sea-Western Interior Draft Resource Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement (DRMP/EIS).

Chapter 5. List of Preparers and References Cited

List of Preparers

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Appendix A: ACEC Maps

Note: The following maps are 11 inches by 17 inches with blank back sides. Please make appropriate adjustments during paper copy printing.

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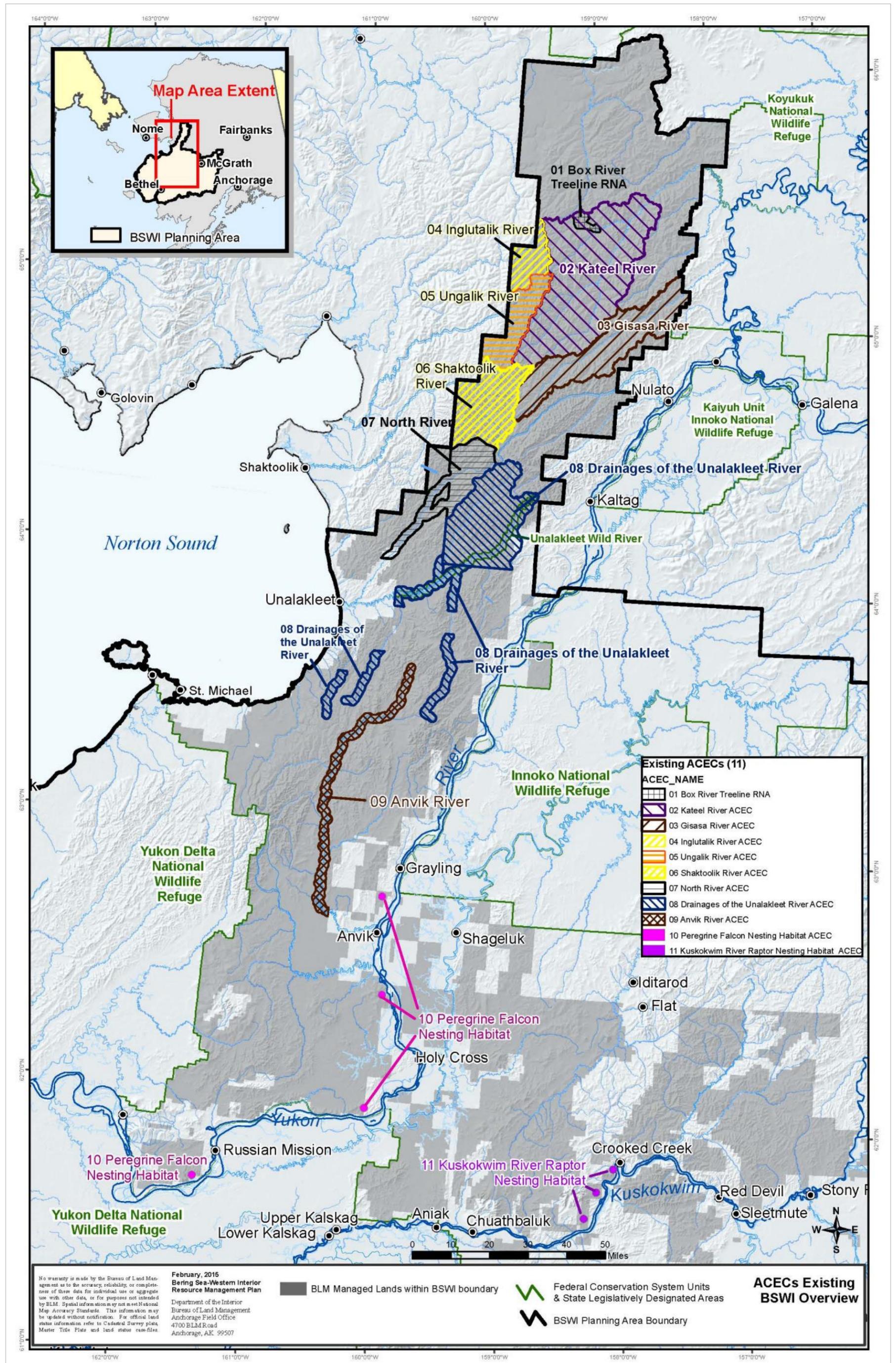


Figure 1. Overview Map of Existing Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) in BSWI Planning Area

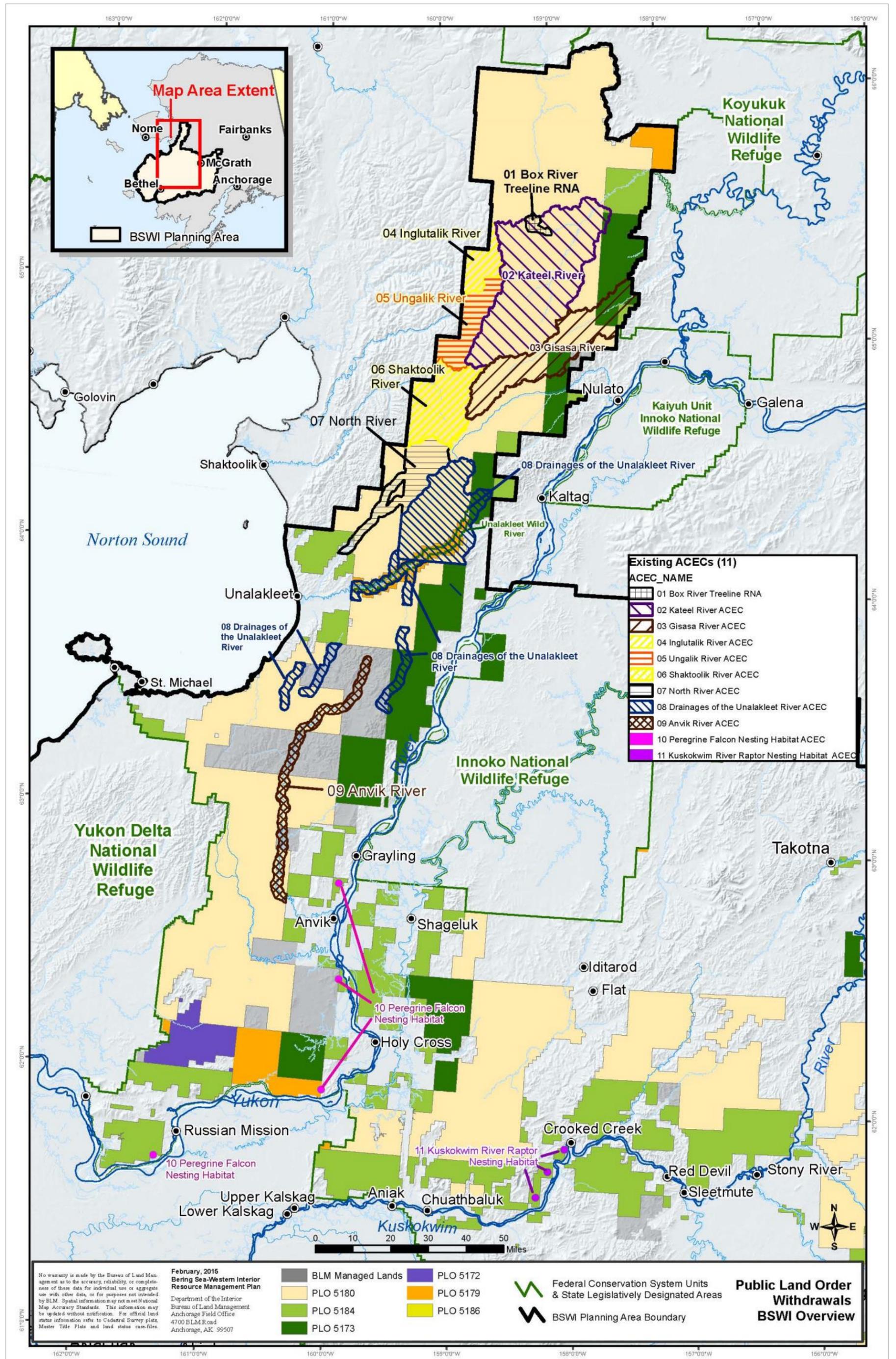


Figure 2. BSWI RMP Public Land Order (PLO) Withdrawals for Existing Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs)

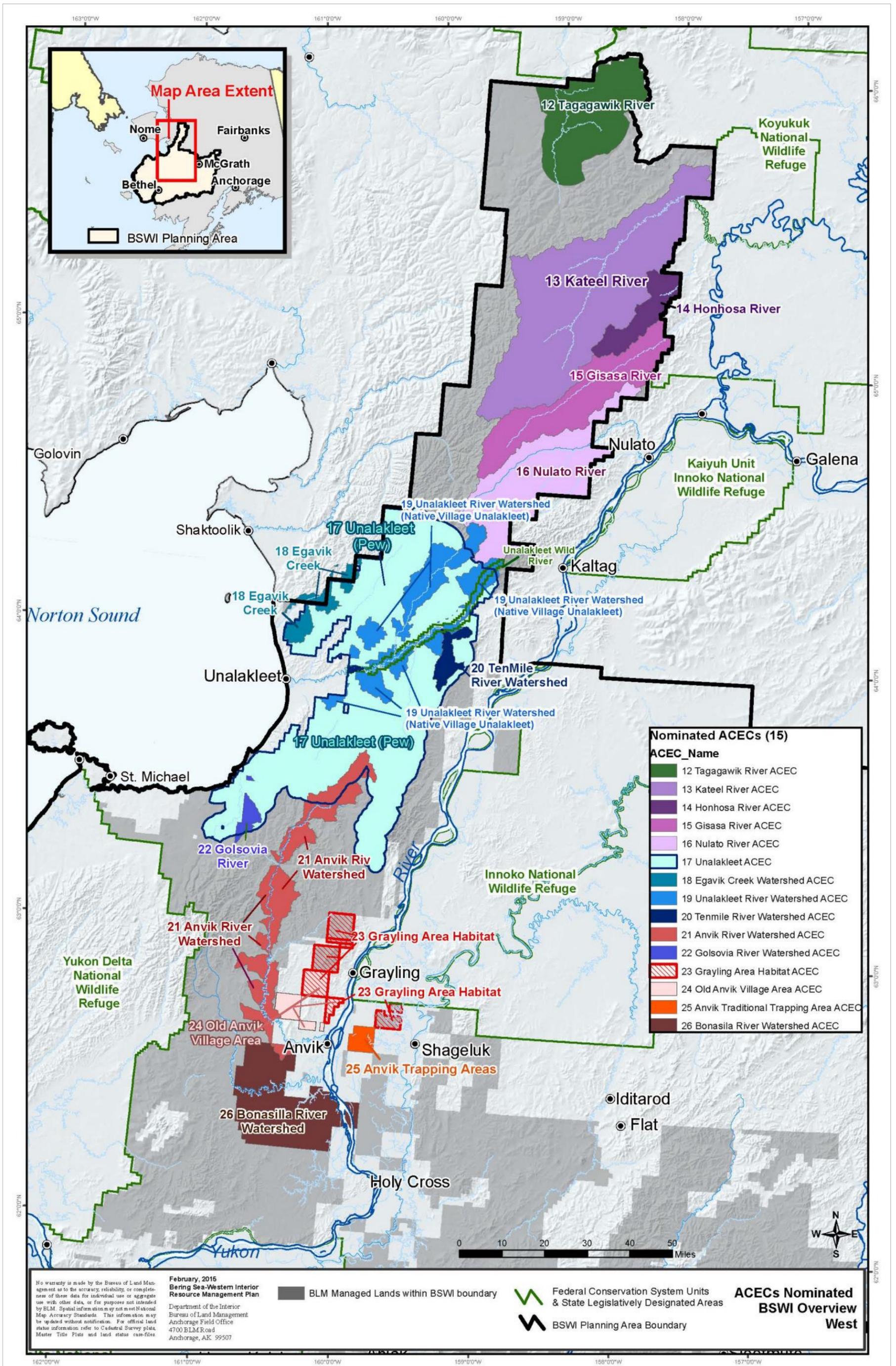


Figure 3. Nominated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) in BSWI Planning Area (West Map)

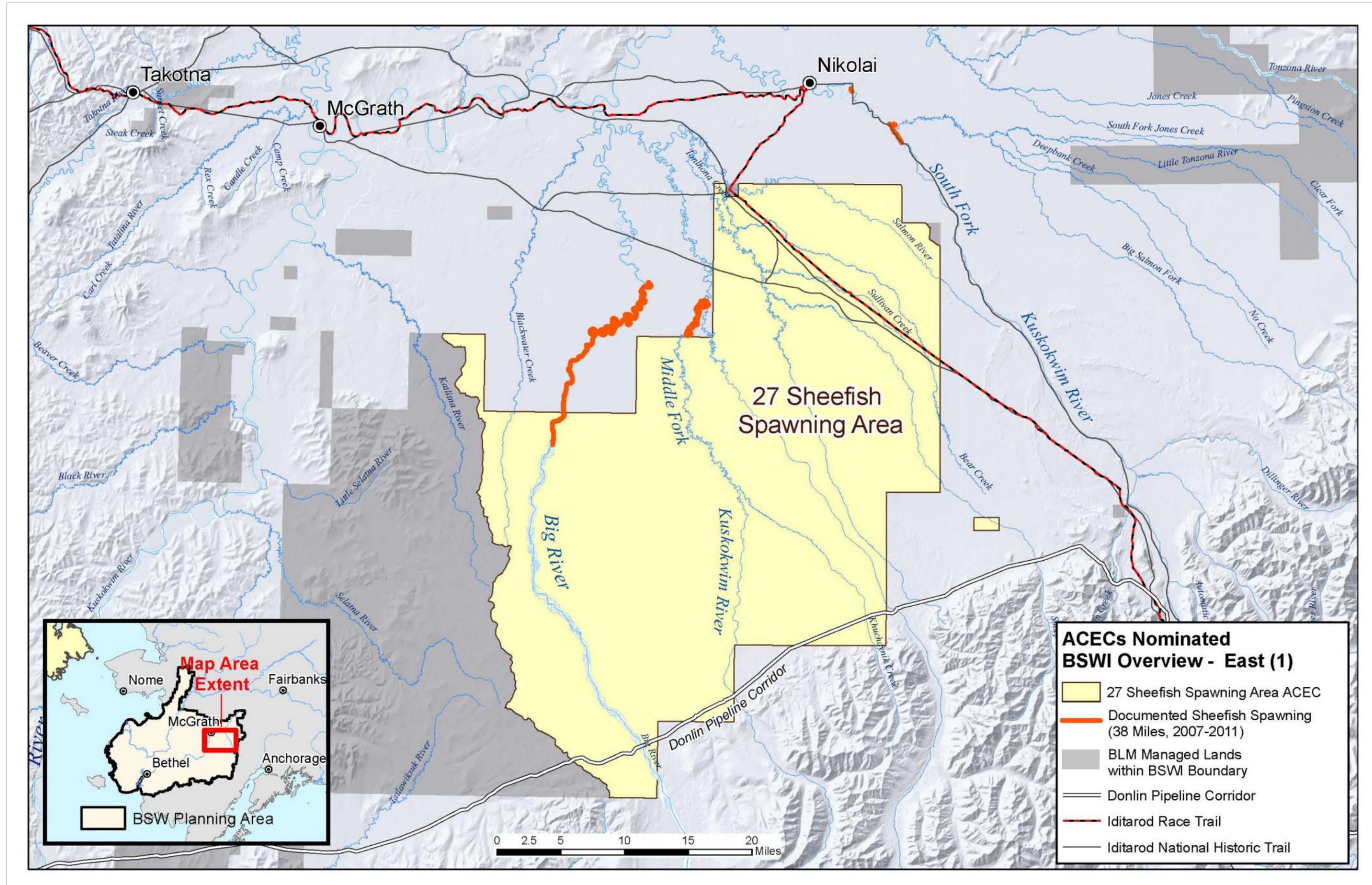


Figure 4. Nominated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) in BSWI Planning Area (East Map)

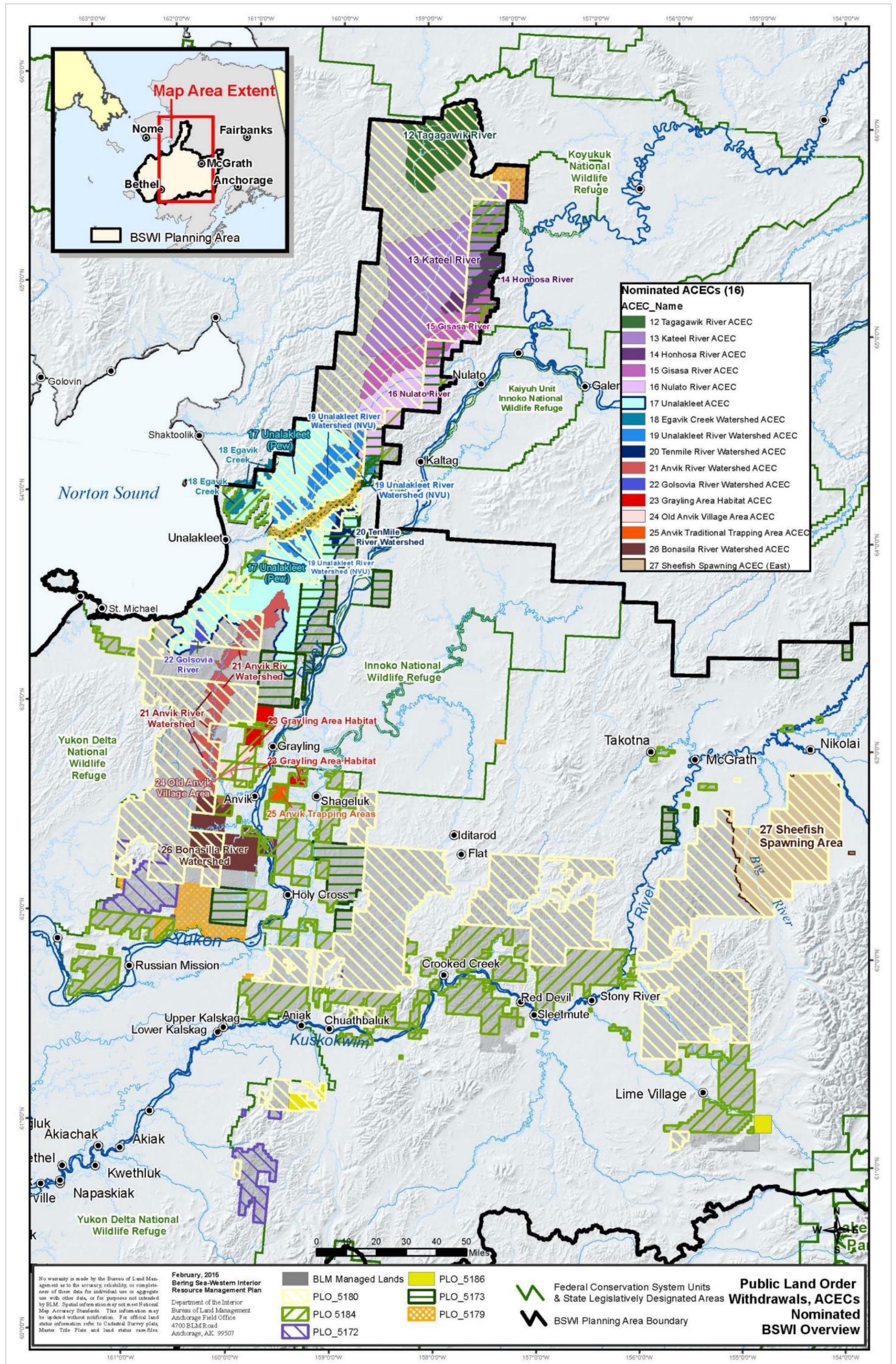


Figure 5. BSWI RMP Public Land Order (PLO) Withdrawals for Nominated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs)

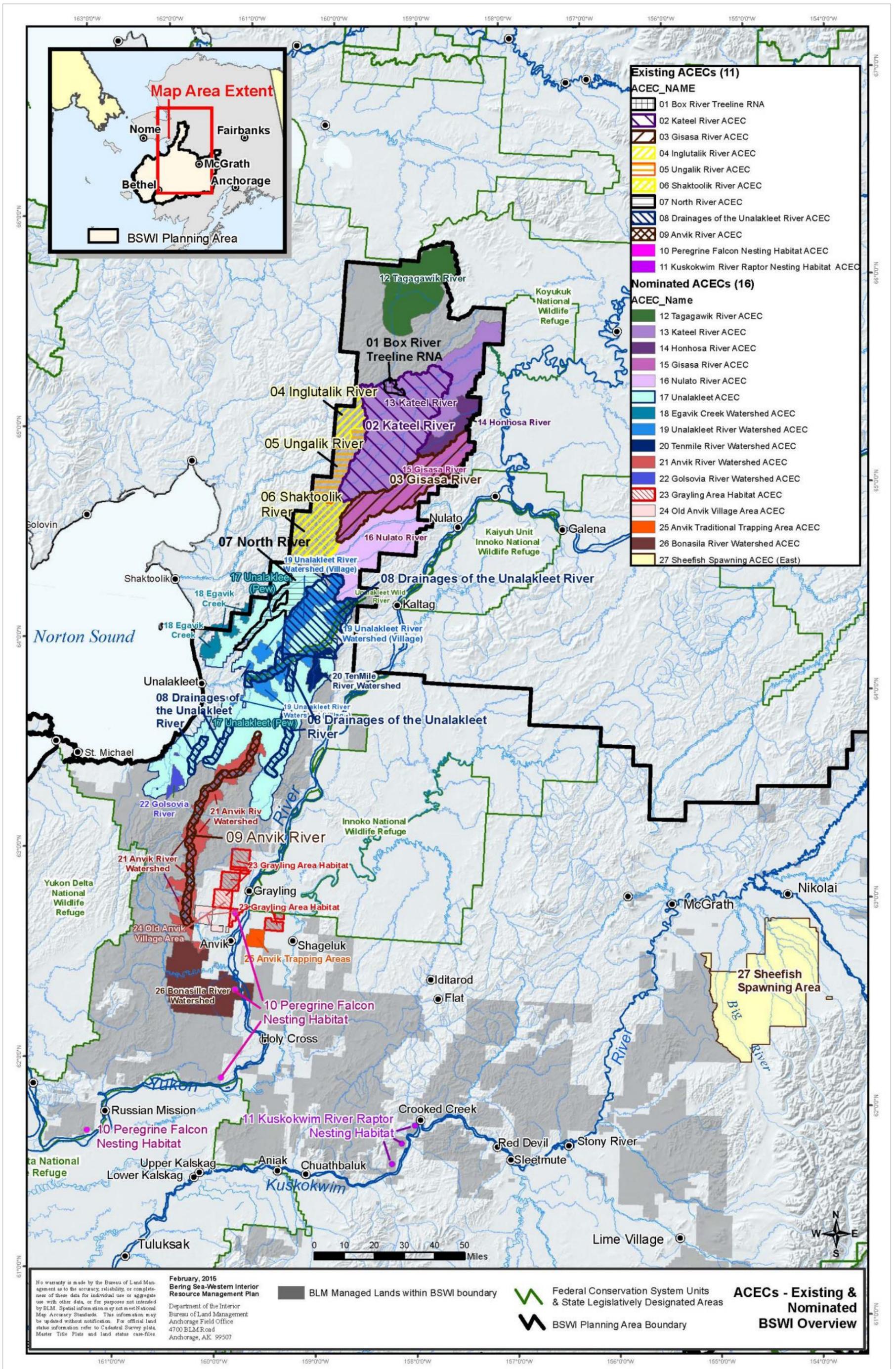


Figure 6. Nominated and Existing Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) in the BSWI Planning Area

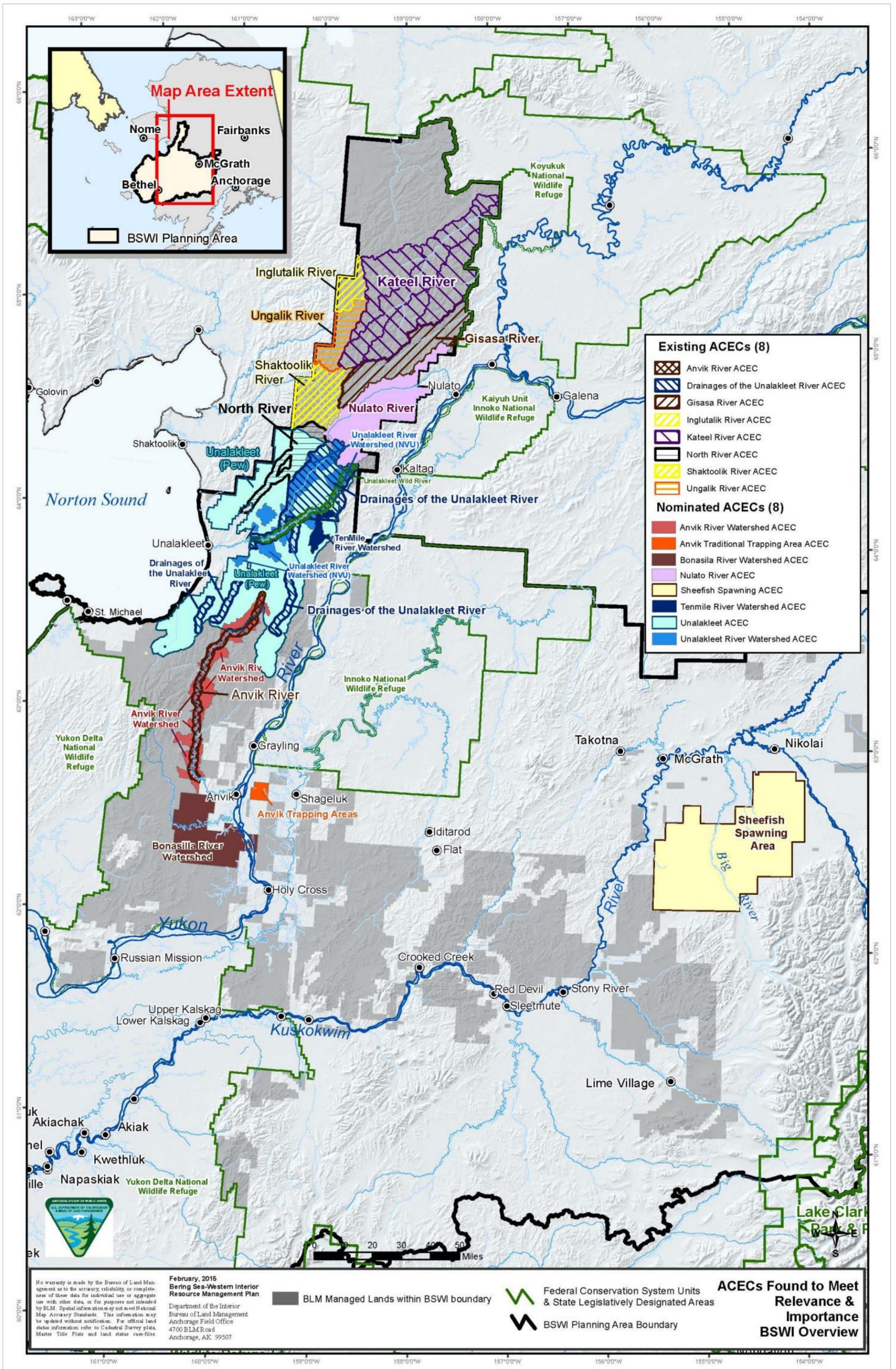


Figure 7. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) Found to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria