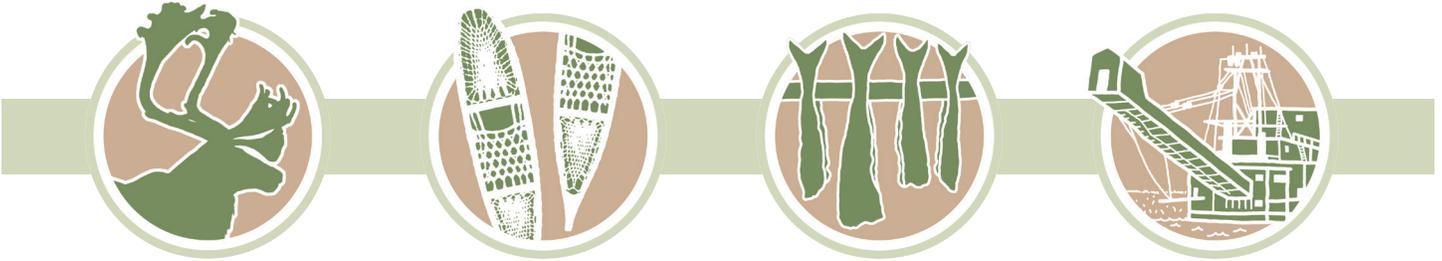




U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Bering Sea - Western Interior

Resource Management Plan



Newsletter #4 - October 2016

Thank you for your continued interest in the Bering Sea-Western Interior Resource Management Plan (BSWI RMP). We hope these newsletters and the project website will continue to keep you informed throughout the planning process.

Since our last newsletter, the BLM was invited to present BSWI updates to numerous organizations and conferences in late 2015 and in 2016. We were happy to share information and field questions at the 2015 Bureau of Indian Affairs Tribal Providers Conference, 2016 Alaska Forum on the Environment, 2016 Alaska Miners Association Convention, and at annual meetings for the Big Game Commercial Services Board, Alaska Professional Hunters Association, and Alaska Board of Game. The State of Alaska Senate Natural Resources Committee also requested a briefing on the BSWI RMP.

In addition, BLM provided an April 2016 Areas of Critical Concern (ACEC) Update noting corrections to the published 2015 report and receipt of new ACEC nominations. We recently completed our analysis of the relevance and importance for new ACEC nominations and considered new information presented for previously-analyzed ACEC nominations. Page 2 of this newsletter highlights these details and more can be learned from the full report posted online. The BSWI RMP Team members and cooperators also spent three weeks in April and May of 2016 refining alternatives and have been drafting what will become Chapter 2, Alternatives, in the Draft RMP.

We invite you to come visit us in Fairbanks at the BLM Resource Management Plan Listening Room at the Alaska Federation of Natives Annual Convention Friday, October 21 from 9 am to 12 pm. We also hope to offer RMP updates at the November Alaska Miners Association Convention, and the February 2017 Alaska Forum on the Environment. We are available to provide updates to groups and organizations upon request.

The project website is another way to connect with us and share your valuable comments. Thank you for remaining involved so that we can continue to build well-informed decisions on your BLM-managed public lands.

Alan Bittner
Anchorage Field Manager

BSWI
Planning
Area



ACECs Update

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) require special management attention to protect important resources. To be eligible for designation as an ACEC, an area must meet the relevance and importance criteria and need special management.

ACEC 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.*

ACEC 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.*

In April 2015, the BLM released a report that documented the evaluation of relevance and importance criteria for existing and nominated ACECs. In October 2016, the BLM published the October 2016 ACEC Report on Relevance and Importance.

1) The April 2015 report highlights:

- 11 existing ACECs
- 16 new ACEC nominations
- 27 ACEC evaluations completed
 - However, 2 ACECs—the Kateel River ACEC and the Gisasa River ACEC— had shared acreages between the existing as well as nominated areas, so the BLM combined the analysis
- 25 ACEC evaluations completed (due to the combination of two ACECs)

CONCLUSION: 16 ACECs met the relevance and importance criteria



The BSWI RMP Team and cooperators review public comments and maps during an Alternatives Workshop, Spring 2016.

2) The October 2016 Report update highlights:

- 7 new evaluations completed (changes in parenthesis)
 - Bonasila River Watershed ACEC reconsidered and not found to meet both relevance and importance (**removed**)
 - Tagagawik River ACEC reconsidered and found to meet both relevance and importance (**added**)
 - Holy Cross ACEC new nomination
 - Ohogamiut ACEC new nomination
 - Whitefish Spawning ACEC new nomination
 - Swift River Whitefish Spawning ACEC new nomination found to meet both relevance and importance (**added**)
 - Huslia ACEC new nomination

CONCLUSION: 2 ACECs met BOTH the relevance and importance criteria, one was removed.

IN SUMMARY, as of October 2016, the BLM considers 17 ACECs to meet both the relevance and importance criteria in the BSWI RMP Planning Area.

The existing and the nominated 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. All ACEC Reports, including the newest October 2016 Report, are available on the project website at www.blm.gov/ak/planning/bswi.



BSWI Planning Process



PROCESS MILESTONES

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Notice of Intent to Prepare RMP	2013	Notice published in Federal Register
Public Scoping	2013-2014	180-day Public Scoping Period Public Scoping Meetings/Online Open House Tribal Consultations
ACEC Nomination Period	2014	120-day Nomination Period
Preliminary Alternatives	2015	
Preliminary Alternatives Outreach	2015	120-day Public Comment Period Public Meetings/Online Open House Tribal Consultations
Refine Alternatives	2015-2016	
Prepare Draft RMP	2016-2017	
<i>We are here now</i> →		
Notice of Availability of Draft RMP/EIS	2017-2018	Notice published in Federal Register 90-day Public Comment Period Public Meetings/Online Open House Tribal Consultations ANILCA 810 Hearings
Revise RMP Notice of Availability of Proposed RMP/Final EIS Protest Period Governor's Consistency Review	2018-2019	Notice published in Federal Register Online Availability 30-day Protest Period 60-day Governor's Consistency Review
Record of Decision and Approved RMP	2019	Online Availability

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BSWI RMP
BLM Anchorage Field Office
4700 BLM Road
Anchorage, AK 99507



BSWI Vision

The Anchorage Field Office vision for the Bering Sea-Western Interior planning area is to sustain the diverse and intact ecosystems that support traditional subsistence lifestyles while recognizing the importance of BLM-managed public lands to rural economies.

Important BSWI dates:

- October 21
Alaska Federation of Natives
BLM Listening Session, 9am-12pm
- November 8, 2016
Alaska Miners Association Biennial Convention
- February 6-10, 2017
Alaska Forum on the Environment

How to contact the BLM

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