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Bureau of Land Management

Bering Sea - Western Interior

Resource Management Plan

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Report on the Application of the Relevance and Importance Criteria

BLM Alaska
Anchorage Field Office

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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
RAC	Resource Advisory Council
RMP	Resource Management Plan
SWMFP	Southwest Management Framework Plan
TCP	Traditional Cultural Property
U.S.C.	United States Code
USGS	United States 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.

In the BLM's original April 2015 report, the interdisciplinary team analyzed both existing and nominated ACECs for the BLM's Bering Sea-Western Interior RMP. The 2015 report included:

- 11 existing ACECs
- 16 new ACEC nominations
- These 27 ACECs were evaluated, but because two of these ACECs, the Kateel River ACEC and the Gisasa River ACEC, had shared acreages between the existing and the nominated areas, the BLM combined the analysis for these rivers. This combination of these two ACECs resulted in a total of **25 ACEC evaluations completed**.
- **16 ACECs met BOTH the relevance and importance criteria**

This 2016 report update includes:

- **7 new or reconsidered evaluations, as follows:**
  - Bonasila River Watershed ACEC is reconsidered and found NOT to meet both relevance and importance (removed)
  - Tagagawik River ACEC is reconsidered and found to MEET both relevance and importance (added)
  - Holy Cross ACEC is a new nomination since the April 2015 report and found NOT to meet both relevance and importance
  - Ohogamiut ACEC is a new nomination since the April 2015 report and found NOT to meet both relevance and importance
  - Whitefish Spawning ACEC is a new nomination since the April 2015 report and found NOT to meet both relevance and importance
  - Swift River Whitefish Spawning ACEC is new nomination since the April 2015 report found to MEET both relevance and importance (added)
  - Huslia ACEC is a new nomination since the April 2015 report and found NOT to meet both relevance and importance
- **In summary, 2 additional ACECs meet BOTH the relevance and importance criteria:**
  - Tagagawik River ACEC reconsideration
  - Swift River Whitefish Spawning new nomination

In summary, as of October 2016, 17 ACECs in the BSWI RMP Planning Area meet both the relevance and importance criteria.

The interdisciplinary team analyzed a **total of ~~25~~ 30 ACECs (see Appendix A for maps listed by figure number below)**:

> **11 ACECs are existing**, as shown in Figure 1, "Overview Map of Existing ACECs in BSWI Planning Area." Figure 2, "Public Land Order (PLO) Withdrawals for Existing ACECs in BSWI Planning Area," 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. PLO withdrawals are covered in more detail under the "Current Management" subheadings found in Chapter 3, Sections 3.3.1 through 3.3.~~25~~30.

~~Sixteen~~ 19 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, "PLO Withdrawals for Nominated ACECs in BSWI Planning Area" 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. PLO withdrawals are covered in more detail under the "Current Management" subheadings found in Chapter 3, Sections 3.3.1 through 3.3.~~25~~30.

All ~~25~~ 30 existing and nominated ACECs are shown together in Figure 6, "Overview of Existing and Nominated ACECs in BSWI Planning Area."

Through BLM's evaluation, 17 existing and nominated areas were found to meet both the relevance and importance criteria (Figure 7, "ACECs Found to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria in BSWI Planning Area"). These 17 areas total approximately 5.8 million acres, or 9 percent of the 62.5 million acres comprising 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, if so, will be considered potential ACECs and will be 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.

In April 2015, the BLM released a report evaluating the relevance and importance criteria for existing and newly nominated ACECs. In April 2016, the BLM posted an update to this report on the project website to describe two new ACEC nominations. In October 2016, the BLM completed the third update of the report, which is contained herein and reflects analysis of existing and nominated ACECs in the BSWI planning area.

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 and 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 BLM accepts ACEC nominations at any time during the planning process.

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 FLPMA[1] 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. Existing and Nominated ACECs in 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)~~ ~~• (**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**~~ ~~**Total Existing and Nominated ACECs Acres: 5,966,180**~~	~~**1,641,106**~~	~~**4,325,074**~~

ACEC Name	Existing Acres	Nominated Acres
Anvik River ACEC (existing)	115,106	0
Kuskokwim River Raptor Nesting Habitat ACEC (existing)	6,072	0
Peregrine Falcon Nesting Habitat ACEC (existing)	8,096	0
Drainages of the Unalakleet River ACEC (existing)	415,184	0
North River ACEC (existing)	137,349	0
Sheefish ACEC (internally and externally nominated)	0	698,260
Grayling Area Habitat ACEC (externally nominated)	0	98,682
Anvik River Watershed ACEC (externally nominated) (nominated area includes some of the existing Anvik River ACEC)	0	249,607
Bonasila River Watershed ACEC (externally nominated)	0	291,136
Anvik Traditional Trapping Area ACEC (externally nominated)	0	21,699
Old Anvik Village Area ACEC (externally nominated)	0	60,259
Unalakleet River Watershed ACEC (externally nominated (nominated area includes some of the existing Drainages of the Unalakleet River ACEC)	0	251,978
Egavik Creek Watershed ACEC (externally nominated)	0	60,052
Golsovia River Watershed ACEC (externally nominated)	0	21,771
Tenmile River Watershed ACEC (externally nominated)	0	36,278
Unalakleet ACEC (externally nominated) (nominated area includes some of the existing Drainages of the Unalakleet River ACEC and some of the nominated Unalakleet River Watershed ACEC)	0	1,520,015
Box River Treeline RNA ACEC (existing)	13,592	0
Inglutalik ACEC (existing)	71,716	0
Kateel River ACEC (existing: 568,083 acres)	568,083	0
• **Externally [USFWS] nominated:** 675,627 acres that include some of the existing Kateel River ACEC	0	675,627
• **Externally [Koyukuk Tribal Council] nominated:** 311,658 acres that include some of the existing Kateel River ACEC	0	311,658
• **Internally nominated:** 308,361 acres of lands not included in the existing Kateel River ACEC; nominated area includes the two externally nominated areas, as well as additional lands that are not within the existing ACEC or externally nominated areas	0	308,361
Ungalik River ACEC (existing)	112,719	0
Gisasa River ACEC (existing and externally nominated)	0	278,057
Shaktoolik River ACEC (existing)	192,591	0
Tagagawik River ACEC (externally nominated)	0	301,044
Nulato River ACEC (externally nominated)	0	342,824
Honhosa River ACEC (externally nominated)	0	93,412
Holy Cross ACEC (externally nominated)	0	1,702,030
Ohogamiut ACEC (externally nominated)	0	1,634,358
Whitefish Spawning ACEC (externally nominated)	0	290,958

ACEC Name	Existing Acres	Nominated Acres
Swift River Whitefish Spawning ACEC (internally nominated)	0	220,032
Huslia ACEC	0	170,763
Total Existing and Nominated ACECs Acres: 11,279,369	**1,640,508**	**9,638,861[a]**

[a] Total acres may not be the sum of each separate ACEC due to overlapping acres

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 ACECs

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 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 ACECs

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 3.3.30, 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 Fisheries[2] directs ADFG to access salmon stocks in areas addressed during

[2] (SSFP 5 AAC 39.22)

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

ACEC Evaluation Table	**Anvik River**
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.
General	*See Figure 1 (Appendix A)*

ACEC Evaluation Table	Anvik River
Location:	
General Description:	*Anvik River*
Acreage:	*115,106 acres*
Values Considered:	*Fish, Grizzly, Brown Bear, Moose*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: The Anvik *may* 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.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination (Fisheries): 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). Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination (Wildlife): 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,

ACEC Evaluation Table	Anvik River
	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.
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC that have been determined eligible for the NRHP. If the resources were found to be eligible, it would most likely be for local significance. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: It is a natural intact ecosystem, but is not unique from other portions of the planning area or other areas of the state. Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: The Anvik River produces many of the fish that escape into the Yukon River, contributing to an internationally significant fisheries resource. 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 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

ACEC Evaluation Table	Anvik River
	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). 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.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC that have been determined eligible for the NRHP. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: Wildlife species found within the Anvik watershed are common throughout the state. Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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).
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC that have been determined eligible for the NRHP. Wildlife: No
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a

ACEC Evaluation Table	Anvik River
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Summary of Important Values:	**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). 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. 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 salmon commercial harvest for Districts 1 and 2 (Districts 1 and 2 compromise fishing districts on the lower Yukon River) combined was 207,849 fish, with a 2013 total of 2,421 Chinook salmon

ACEC Evaluation Table	Anvik River
	reported incidental harvest in Districts 1 and 2 during the summer season (JCT 2013). 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.
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?	Fisheries: Yes, this ACEC meets both the relevance and importance criteria. 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. 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.

3.3.2 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

ACEC Evaluation Table	**Kuskokwim River Raptor Nesting Habitat**
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:	*See Figure 1 (Appendix A)*
General Description:	*3 sites along the Kuskokwim River downstream of Crooked Creek*
Acreage:	*6,072 acres*
Values Considered:	*Bald eagles, golden eagles, osprey, gyrfalcons*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?** Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: No important fish habitat in raptor nesting habitat. Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: The nominated ACEC is for raptor nesting

ACEC Evaluation Table	Kuskokwim River Raptor Nesting Habitat
	habitat and not for cultural resources. There are no known cultural resources located within this ACEC.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?** Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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).
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?** n/a
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one of more relevant values?** n/a
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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,

ACEC Evaluation Table	Kuskokwim River Raptor Nesting Habitat
	populations are stable or increasing and therefore, the species is not considered important for purposes of ACEC designation. Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: There is no important fish habitat in raptor nesting habitat. Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a

ACEC Evaluation Table	Kuskokwim River Raptor Nesting Habitat
highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Summary of Important Values:	**Rationale:** Cultural: None. The AHRS and BLM files were consulted for known cultural resources within the ACEC. 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

ACEC Evaluation Table	**Peregrine Falcon Nesting Habitat**
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 where surveyed prior to the 1981 SWMFP, when the peregrine falcon was listed as threatened under the ESA.
General Location:	*See Figure 1 (Appendix A)*

ACEC Evaluation Table	Peregrine Falcon Nesting Habitat
General Description:	*4 nest sites along the Yukon river.*
Acreage:	8,096 acres
Values Considered:	*Peregrine falcons*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: This ACEC was designated for nesting habitat and not for cultural resources. There are no known cultural resources within this ACEC.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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. Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: No relevant value to fisheries.
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Peregrine Falcon Nesting Habitat
	Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: No important fish habitat in peregrine falcon nesting habitat. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value:	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?**

ACEC Evaluation Table	Peregrine Falcon Nesting Habitat
Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	n/a
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Summary of Important Values:	**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?	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.

3.3.4 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

ACEC Evaluation Table	**Drainages of the Unalakleet River**
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

ACEC Evaluation Table	Drainages of the Unalakleet River
	subsistence users.
General Location:	*See Figure 1 (Appendix A)*
General Description:	*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.*
Acreage:	415,184 Acres
Values Considered:	*Salmon, sheefish*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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 *pers. comm.*)

ACEC Evaluation Table	Drainages of the Unalakleet River
	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 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). Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: The Unalakleet River Chinook salmon stock is currently listed as a *stock of yield concern* 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). 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.
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a

ACEC Evaluation Table	Drainages of the Unalakleet River
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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. Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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 cultural landscape is exceptional and needs to be protected. Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: The Unalakleet River was designated a Wild River by congress in 1980 (Klein et al. 2000). The outstanding remarkable

ACEC Evaluation Table	Drainages of the Unalakleet River
	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. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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. Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: Unalakleet River as a National Wild River by congress in 1980 recognized the value of designating the area for protection. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a

ACEC Evaluation Table	Drainages of the Unalakleet River
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Summary of Important Values:	**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 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. 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. 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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Drainages of the Unalakleet River
	Other, 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.
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 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

ACEC Evaluation Table	North River
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 2007-2011of 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

ACEC Evaluation Table	North River
	the North River therefore, this reasoning does not apply.
General Location:	*See Figure 1 (Appendix A)*
General Description:	*Upper portion of the North River*
Acreage:	*137,349 acres*
Values Considered:	*Salmon, sheefish*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Fish: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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. Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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

ACEC Evaluation Table	North River
	Management Plan Unalakleet River 1983).
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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. Fish: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	North River
	Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Summary of Important Values:	**Rationale:** Cultural: The AHRS and BLM files were consulted for known cultural resources within the ACEC. 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

ACEC Evaluation Table	North River
	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). 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.
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 not found to be relevant or important.

3.3.6 Sheefish ACEC

BACKGROUND

Existing or New Nomination: New

Size: 698,260 Acres

Current Management of the Area:

Lands and Realty: The nominated Sheefish 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 are will affect the entire river.

Internal BLM Fish Biologist Rationale provided in table below.

ACEC Evaluation Table	**Sheefish**
General Location:	*See Figure 4 (Appendix A)*
General Description:	*Big River watershed at the 4th level Hydrologic Unit*
Acreage:	*698,260 acres*
Values Considered:	*Sheefish Spawning*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic,	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: Yes

ACEC Evaluation Table	Sheefish
cultural, or scenic value	Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Fish: Yes Rationale for Determination: Local dependency and importance. The greatest use of sheefish in the Kuskokwim River drainage has been for subsistence (Stuby 2012). 80 percent of the sheefish spawning in the Kuskokwim River spawn in a 15.5-mile section of the Big River (Stuby, 2012). Disturbance to this watershed could impact the entire Kuskokwim population. Sheefish are an important species targeted by sport fishers in streams and tributaries within the Kuskokwim River drainage with the 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). Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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

ACEC Evaluation Table	Sheefish
	significance, as illustrated by its listing as a NHT. The former roadhouses are vital components of the INHT. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: The wildlife species found in this area are also found throughout the planning area and statewide. Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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 through the Kuskokwim River identifies a local and regional significance.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: There are no unique or threatened and endangered species found in this area. Fish: Yes Rationale for Determination: The only identified sheefish spawning area on entire Kuskokwim. 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). 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

ACEC Evaluation Table	Sheefish
	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.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: By listing the Iditarod as a NHT, it has been recognized by the Department of Interior and by Congress as warranting protection. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Summary of Important Values:	**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

ACEC Evaluation Table	Sheefish
	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 NRHP, but because several of them are associated with the INHT, it is assumed that a formal DOE would find them eligible. 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. 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 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. 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. Cultural/Paleolithic: Note that the AHRS also lists two paleontological localities within the ACEC, but neither is considered “significant” under BLM’s classification system.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Sheefish
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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	**Grayling Area Habitat**
General Location:	*See Figure 3 (Appendix A)*
General Description:	*Not provided by nominator*
Acreage:	*98,682 acres*
Values Considered:	*See rationale above*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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. Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Grayling Area Habitat
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: The wildlife species found in this area are common throughout the planning area and the state. Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: 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 then local significant. But due to only about 0.5 mile intersecting this area it would not meet the importance criteria.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: There are no threatened and endangered species in the area. Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: There is very limited area where any fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or

ACEC Evaluation Table	Grayling Area Habitat
	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 then local significant. But due to only about 0.5 mile intersecting this area it would not meet these criteria.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no known cultural resources within the ACEC. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: The wildlife species found in this area are common throughout the planning area and the state
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Summary of Important Values:	**Rationale:** Cultural: The AHRS and BLM files were consulted for known cultural resources within the ACEC. Fish: The ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog was consulted identifying locations of chum salmon. Wildlife: The wildlife species found in the area are managed by ADFG on a

ACEC Evaluation Table	Grayling Area Habitat
	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 Resource Advisory Council (RAC), with harvest limits set by the Federal Subsistence Board.
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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	**Anvik River Watershed**
General Location:	*See Figure 3 (Appendix A)*
General Description:	*None provided by nominator*
Acreage:	*249,607 acres*
Values Considered:	*See rationale list above*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: The Anvik contains *may* 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.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: The Anvik watershed provides habitat for black bear, brown bear, caribou, wolf, wolverine and moose. Wood bison ~~are~~

ACEC Evaluation Table	Anvik River Watershed
	~~planned to be~~ were 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. .
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC that have been determined eligible for the NRHP. If the resources were found to be eligible, it would most likely be for local significance. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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~~ were 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. Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: There are locally and regional significant summer chum salmon that spawn in this area of the identified ACEC. The Anvik River is considered the largest single wild stock producer of summer chum salmon in the Yukon River drainage. (Bergstrom et al. 1999). 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. 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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Anvik River Watershed
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC that have been determined eligible for the NRHP. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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~~ were 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. Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC that have been determined eligible for the NRHP. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: The wildlife species found in this area are common throughout the planning area and the state.
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?**

ACEC Evaluation Table	Anvik River Watershed
Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	n/a
Summary of Important Values:	**Rationale:** 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. 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. 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. 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~~ were 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.
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?	Fisheries: Yes, investigate a combination of this nomination with the existing Anvik River ACEC. 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.

3.3.9 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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Bonasila River Watershed
General Location:	*See Figure 3 (Appendix A)*
General Description:	*None provided by nominator*
Acreage:	*291,136 acres*
Values Considered:	*See rationale above*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: There are two known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC: Bonasila Dome (XHC-091), a possible 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.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: The Bonasila River watershed provides habitat for black bear, brown bear, caribou, wolf, wolverine, lynx and moose. Wood bison were 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. Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a

ACEC Evaluation Table	Bonasila River Watershed
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: ~~Yes~~ No Rationale for Determination: Bonasila Dome is a potential TCP, which means it may have local or regional significance to the Central Yupik and/or Deg Xinag Athabaskan people. However, these resources were not identified by the Anvik Tribe as a reason for the ACEC, so at this time, the BLM does not have enough information to make this determination. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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. Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: Both sites mentioned above are irreplaceable, and the village site is vulnerable to erosion of the river bank. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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 nonessential experimental population by FWS. Approximately 100 animals ~~will be~~ were 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.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: Neither site has been formally evaluated for inclusion on the NRHP. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: The wildlife species found in this area are common throughout the planning area and the state. Wildlife populations are

ACEC Evaluation Table	Bonasila River Watershed
	managed for sustainability by ADFG, and on Federal lands, qualified subsistence users are provided a harvest priority when populations are low or in decline.
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Summary of Important Values:	**Rationale:** Cultural: The AHRS and BLM files were consulted for known cultural resources within the ACEC. While in the future local tribes may identify TCPs in the area, the known cultural resources in the area were not identified by the Anvik Tribe in their nomination of this ACEC. If TCPs are later identified by the Anvik Tribe or other tribes, they can be adequately managed through the Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act process. Fish: The ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog was consulted for fish resources in the ACEC. 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	No, the area does not meet both the relevance and importance criteria for any resource.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Bonasila River Watershed
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 found to be relevant but not ~~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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Anvik Traditional Trapping Area
General Location:	*See Figure 3 (Appendix A)*
General Description:	*None provided by the nominator*
Acreage:	*21,699 acres*
Values Considered:	*See rationale listed above*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: The area provides habitat for black bear, brown bear, caribou, wolf, wolverine lynx and moose. Wood bison has been declared a nonessential experimental population by FWS. Approximately 100 animals ~~will be~~ were 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 Rationale for Determination: This ACEC nomination does not pertain to fish.
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a

ACEC Evaluation Table	Anvik Traditional Trapping Area
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: The wildlife species found in the area are common throughout the planning area and the state. Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: This ACEC nomination does not pertain to fish.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: There are no threatened and endangered species in the area. There are no species that are unique to the area. Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: This ACEC nomination does not pertain to fish.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: The INHT is of national significance, as is indicated by its designation by Congress as a National Historic Trail. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Anvik Traditional Trapping Area
	Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: This ACEC nomination does not pertain to fish.
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Summary of Important Values:	**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. Fisheries: This ACEC nomination does not pertain to Fish. 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	Yes, this area meets both the relevance and importance criteria for cultural resources. Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Anvik Traditional Trapping Area
Management Plan?	Fisheries resources not were found to be relevant or important. Cultural resources were found to be relevant and important.

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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Old Anvik Village Area
General Location:	*See Figure 3 (Appendix A)*
General Description:	*None provided by the nominator*
Acreage:	*60,259 acres*
Values Considered:	*See rationale provided above*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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 NRHP, either as an archaeological site, or as a TCP.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: The area provides habitat for black bear, brown bear, caribou, wolf, wolverine lynx and moose. Wood bison have been declared a nonessential experimental population by FWS. Approximately 100 animals ~~will be~~ were 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 Rationale for Determination: The ACEC nomination pertains to cultural importance, not fisheries.
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a

ACEC Evaluation Table	Old Anvik Village Area
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: 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 Rationale for Determination: The wildlife species found in the area are common throughout the planning area and the state. Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: The ACEC nomination pertains to cultural importance to the community of Anvik which is addressed in the cultural section.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: 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 Rationale for Determination: There are no threatened and endangered species in the area. There are no species that are unique to the area. Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: None of the ACEC nomination pertains to fisheries.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: At this time, nothing within the nominated ACEC has been determined eligible for listing on the NRHP. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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

ACEC Evaluation Table	Old Anvik Village Area
	subsistence users are provided a harvest priority on Federal lands when wildlife populations are low or in decline. Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: No the ACEC nomination pertains to cultural importance to the community of Anvik which is addressed in the cultural section.
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Summary of Important Values:	**Rationale:** Cultural: The AHRS and the Anvik Tribal Council's nomination were consulted regarding cultural resources within the nominated ACEC. 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. 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. Other:

ACEC Evaluation Table	Old Anvik Village Area
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?	No resources were found to be both relevant and important. Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important. Fisheries resources were not found to be relevant or important. Cultural resources were found to be relevant but not important.

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 (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 nominated Unalakleet River Watershed 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 the1986 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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	**Unalakleet River Watershed**
General Location:	*See Figure 3 (Appendix A)*
General Description:	*None provided by the nominator*
Acreage:	*251,978 acres*
Values Considered:	*See rationale listed above*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: The Unalakleet River Watershed 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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Unalakleet River Watershed
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: The Unalakleet watershed provides habitat for black bear, brown bear, caribou, wolf, wolverine lynx and moose. These species are important to subsistence users from the villages of Unalakleet and Shaktoolik and are found throughout the region. Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: Yes, the nominated ACEC does have relevant values for spawning of all five species of Pacific Salmon, cisco, and whitefishes as identified in the nomination. The ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog identifies the presence and spawning for all five species of Pacific Salmon in the Unalakleet River. 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 *pers. comm.*) Chinook and coho salmon returning to the Unalakleet River constitute the bulk of the Unalakleet subsistence harvest and ADFG have 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 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 Hamazaki 2007; Estensen et al. 2005). The Unalakleet River Chinook salmon stock is currently listed as a *stock of yield concern* 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).
Relevant Value: 3. A natural	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?**

ACEC Evaluation Table	Unalakleet River Watershed
process or system	n/a
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: The wildlife species found in the area are common throughout the planning area and the state. Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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. 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.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique,	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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

ACEC Evaluation Table	Unalakleet River Watershed
endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	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 Rationale for Determination: 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 Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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 Rationale for Determination: 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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Unalakleet River Watershed
	Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a

ACEC Evaluation Table	Unalakleet River Watershed
Summary of Important Values:	**Rationale** Cultural: The BLM's INHT Comprehensive Management Plan summaries 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. 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. 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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	**Egavik Creek Watershed**
General Location:	*See Figure 3 (Appendix A)*
General Description:	*None provided by nominator*
Acreage:	*60,052 acres*
Values Considered:	*See rationale above*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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 Rationale for Determination: 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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Egavik Creek Watershed
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no documented cultural resources within the ACEC, and any potential TCP would likely be locally significant. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: The wildlife species found in the area are common throughout the planning area and the state. Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no documented cultural resources within the ACEC. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: There are no threatened and endangered species within the Egavik Creek watershed. There are no species that are unique to the area. Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: There are no fisheries resources that meet these criteria.
Important Value:	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?**

ACEC Evaluation Table	Egavik Creek Watershed
Has been recognized as warranting protection	Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no documented cultural resources within the ACEC. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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. Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: There are no fisheries resources that meet these criteria.
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Summary of Important Values:	**Rationale:** Cultural: The AHRS and BLM files were consulted for known cultural resources within the ACEC. Fish: The ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog was consulted for anadromous fish in the nominated ACEC. 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

ACEC Evaluation Table	Egavik Creek Watershed
	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 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.
- 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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	**Golsovia River Watershed**
General Location:	*See Figure 3 (Appendix A)*
General Description:	*None provided by nominator*
Acreage:	*21,771 acres*
Values Considered:	*See rationale above*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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 historical use of the area, there is the potential for the presence of undocumented resources. 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.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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

ACEC Evaluation Table	Golsovia River Watershed
	region. Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: The Golsovia River 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. 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.
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: 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. Listing the site on the NRHP and using the Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act process is sufficient to protect the site, and any potential TCPs that may be identified in the area. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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. Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: The subsistence use of salmon and whitefish is locally significant but does not rise to the level of regionally significant as

ACEC Evaluation Table	Golsovia River Watershed
	these species may be harvested from other local rivers in the region.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: Standing cabins from the turn of the century are rare, and there are few sites that remain that are associated with reindeer herding. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: There are no threatened and endangered species within the Golsovia River watershed. There are no species that are unique to the area.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: The site UKT-033 was nominated for the NRHP, which recognizes that it warrants protection. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Significant threat to human	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a

ACEC Evaluation Table	Golsovia River Watershed
life/safety or property	
Summary of Important Values:	**Rationale:** Cultural: The AHRS database was consulted regarding cultural resources in the ACEC. 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. The ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog was consulted for anadromous fish in the nominated ACEC.
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?	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 of the National Historic Preservation Act process is sufficient to protect the site, and any potential TCPs that may be identified in the area. 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.

3.3.15 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 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.
- 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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	**Tenmile River Watershed**
General Location:	*See Figure 3 (Appendix A)*
General Description:	*None provided by nominator*
Acreage:	*36,278 acres*
Values Considered:	*See rationale above*

ACEC Evaluation Table	Tenmile River Watershed
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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 enough information to evaluate how this area might be distinguished as a potential TCP, apart from other areas where subsistence has traditionally occurred.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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. Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: Tenmile River watershed provides habitat for black bear, brown bear, caribou, wolf, wolverine, lynx, and moose. These species are found throughout the region.
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: The wildlife species found in the Golsovia River are common throughout the planning area and the state.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Tenmile River Watershed
	Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: The Ten Mile Roadhouse is identified as a "level 2 site" in the INHT CMP, which means that it is a significant contributing site to the INHT. 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. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: There are no threatened and endangered species within the Tenmile River watershed. There are no species that are unique to the area. Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: The Tenmile has spawning populations of Chinook salmon that contribute to the Unalakleet River and are currently a fragile population due to continued declines since 2000. The watershed has fragile, sensitive, rare, and irreplaceable habitat for Chinook salmon. A portion of the watershed is within the Unalakleet WSR corridor and contributes to the ecological diversity and health of the WSR. 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 of which part of this ACEC would be included in.
Important Value: Has been recognized as	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: The INHT's designation as a National Historic

ACEC Evaluation Table	Tenmile River Watershed
warranting protection	Trail indicates that it warrants protection. Except for the two INHT-related sites, there are no other known significant cultural resources within the nominated ACEC. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: The wildlife species found in the Tenmile 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. Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: A portion of the Tenmile Watershed is within the congressionally designated Unalakleet National Wild River. A portion of the Tenmile Watershed lies within the existing Unalakleet River ACEC.
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Summary of Important Values:	**Rationale:** Cultural: The AHRS was searched for known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC, and the INHT CMP was consulted for information on the Ten Mile cabin. Fish: The ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog was consulted for presence of anadromous fish. Norton Sound Subdistrict 5 (Shaktoolik) and Subdistrict 6

ACEC Evaluation Table	Tenmile River Watershed
	(Unalakleet) King Salmon Stock Status and Action Plan, 2013; a Report to the Alaska Board of Fisheries was consulted for escapement of salmon for the Unalakleet River. Wildlife: The wildlife species found in the Tenmile 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.
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 cliome[3] 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

[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.

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.

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 km^2) 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 nominated Unalakleet ACEC include:

- High vertebrate and moderate rare plant species richness;
- High cliome 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).

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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	**Unalakleet**
General Location:	*See Figure 3 (Appendix A)*
General Description:	*The Unalakleet watershed and surrounding landforms*
Acreage:	*1,520,015 acres*
Values Considered:	*See rationale above*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?**

ACEC Evaluation Table	Unalakleet
wildlife resource	Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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. Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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 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.
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Natural System: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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 Rationale for Determination: 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

ACEC Evaluation Table	Unalakleet
	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 Rationale for Determination: No significant local qualities have been identified in this nomination for fish. Natural System: No Rationale for Determination: 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. 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).
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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-

ACEC Evaluation Table	Unalakleet
	sensitive species) has been found at one occurrence in the area; however, it is common in surrounding areas. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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. Rare Plants: No Rationale for Determination: There are two BLM-sensitive plant species (*Douglasia beringensis* and *Koeleria asiatica)* that occur in this watershed (BIOTICS 2013). There are also three other rare species (*Minuartia dawsonensis, Ranunculous ponojensis, Cardamine blaisdellii*), 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). Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: There are no significant, fragile, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, or threatened fish species vulnerable to adverse change identified in this nomination.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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 Rationale for Determination: 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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Unalakleet
	Natural System: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Summary of Important Values:	**Rationale:** 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. 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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Unalakleet
	Fish: The ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog was consulted for fish species present in the Unalakleet River. 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. 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. Other: 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. 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.
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?	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. Cultural resources were found to be relevant and important. Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important. Fisheries resources were found to be relevant and important. Natural Systems were not found to be relevant or important.

3.3.17 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 Treeline RNA in 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*, *Loiseleuri 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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	**Box River Treeline Research Natural Area**
General Location:	*See Figure 1 (Appendix A)*
Acreage:	*13,592 acres*
Values Considered:	*List*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Wildlife: Yes

ACEC Evaluation Table	Box River Treeline Research Natural Area
wildlife resource	Rationale for Determination: The Box River Treeline RNA is important winter habitat for the Western Arctic Caribou Herd. Fish: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Soil: No Rationale for Determination: The Box River Treeline RNA contains a system of permafrost features common within and outside of the region. No natural hazards exist. Water: No Rationale for Determination: While water quality in the nominated Box River Treeline 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. Vegetation: No Rationale for Determination: 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. Geology: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a

ACEC Evaluation Table	Box River Treeline Research Natural Area
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Fish: No Rationale for Determination: 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. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: The wildlife species in the Box River Treeline RNA are locally important to subsistence and sport hunters, but exist in other portions of the planning area and the state. Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: At this time, nothing within the nominated ACEC has been determined eligible for listing on the NRHP.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Soil: No Rationale for Determination: While soil resources in the Box River Treeline 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. Geology: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a

ACEC Evaluation Table	Box River Treeline Research Natural Area
highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
RNA-specific questions:	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?** • 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. 2) **If it meets the above criteria, is the area of sufficient size to adequately provide for scientific study, research, and demonstration purposes?**
Ecology	1) Yes - A typical representation of a common plant or animal association 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.
Geology	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. 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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Box River Treeline Research Natural Area
Wildlife	1) Yes - A typical representation of a common plant or animal association 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.
Fish	1) Yes - A typical representation of a common plant or animal association 2) No - Fish species present are typical for the area.
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?	Cultural resources were not found to be relevant or important. Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important. Fisheries resources were found to be relevant but not important. Ecological (soil, vegetation, water) resources were found to be relevant but not important. Geology resources were found to be relevant but not important.

3.3.18 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 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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	**Inglutalik**
General Location:	*See Figure 1 (Appendix A)*
General Description:	*None Provided*
Acreage:	71,716 acres
Values:	*See rationale above*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Wildlife: ~~No~~ Yes Rationale for Determination: 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 subsistence users from Unalakleet and Shaktoolik. The watershed is also a natural, complete ecosystem with an intact ecological food web. Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: The Inglutalik River supports four species of

ACEC Evaluation Table	Inglutalik
	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.
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Fish: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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. Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: At this time, nothing within the nominated ACEC has been determined eligible for listing on the NRHP.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Inglutalik
	Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Summary of Important Values:	**Rationale** Cultural: The AHRS and BLM files were consulted for known cultural resources within the ACEC. 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

ACEC Evaluation Table	Inglutalik
	Kobuk-Seward RMP would apply to the entire watershed. Wildlife: 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 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 **568,083** acres in size.

The ACEC nomination received from the USFWS proposes designating an area of **675,627 acres** total. This acreage is inclusive of some existing Kateel River ACEC acres.

Finally, the Koyukuk Tribal Council's nomination proposes an ACEC including **311,658 acres** total. This acreage is inclusive of some existing Kateel River ACEC acres.

The BLM's nomination adds an **additional ~~307,919~~ 308,361 acres** of land to the existing ACEC for a total of approximately **~~876,000~~ 876,444 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 feet 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 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 online at the ADF&G website (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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	**Kateel River**
General Location:	*See Figures 1 and 3 (Appendix A)*
Acreage:	*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.*
Values Considered:	*See rationale above*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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. Fish: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a

ACEC Evaluation Table	Kateel River
system	
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: At this time, nothing within the nominated ACEC has been determined eligible for listing on the NRHP.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: The wildlife species in the Kateel 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. Fish: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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 sporadically as far back as 1959 (Barten 1984) and as recently 2012. These escapement surveys indicate that the Kateel River provides critical spawning habitat to Chinook salmon (hundreds) and chum salmon (multiple thousands). The upper reaches of the Kateel River, as well as other tributaries of the Koyukuk River, provide spawning and rearing habitat for Chinook and chum Salmon (USFWS 1993). 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.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a

ACEC Evaluation Table	Kateel River
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Summary of Important Values:	
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 Ungalik River ACEC

BACKGROUND

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

ACEC Evaluation Table	**Ungalik River**
General Location:	*See Figure 1 (Appendix A)*
Acreage:	*112,719 acres*
Values Considered:	*See rationale above*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Fish: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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,

ACEC Evaluation Table	Ungalik River
	are present and in proper functioning condition. Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: At this time, nothing within the nominated ACEC has been determined eligible for listing on the NRHP. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Fish: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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

ACEC Evaluation Table	Ungalik River
adverse change	play an important role in the overall genetic diversity of salmon produced within the Norton Sound region. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Summary of Important Values:	**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

ACEC Evaluation Table	Ungalik River
	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 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, USFWS, 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 feet 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.

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.

[5] Aerial fish survey data (http://sf.adfg.state.ak.us/CommFishR3/Website/AYKDBMSWebsite/DataSelection.aspx)

Management guidelines should be provided to prevent actions that would degrade habitat as well as the water quality and quantity of the Gisasa 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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Gisasa River
General Location:	*See Figure 1 (Appendix A)*
General Description:	*See Background above*
Acreage:	*278,057 acres*
Values Considered:	*See rationale above*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Fish: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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. Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a

ACEC Evaluation Table	Gisasa River
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a

ACEC Evaluation Table	Gisasa River
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: At this time, nothing within the nominated ACEC has been determined eligible for listing on the NRHP.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Fish: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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. 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. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Gisasa River
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	n/a
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	n/a
Summary of Important Values:	
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 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 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: 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 River ACEC will be reevaluated against the criteria for ACEC designation. The original ACEC was designated for watershed and fish values, primarily salmon habitat.

ACEC Evaluation Table	**Shaktoolik River**
General Location:	*See Figure 1 (Appendix A)*
Acreage:	*192,591 acres*
Values Considered:	*See rationale above*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value:	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?**

ACEC Evaluation Table	Shaktoolik River
2. A fish or wildlife resource	Fish: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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. Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: At this time, nothing within the nominated ACEC has been determined eligible for listing on the NRHP.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Fish: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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. Wildlife: No

ACEC Evaluation Table	Shaktoolik River
	Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Summary of Important Values:	Fish: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Shaktoolik River
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

2016 Review Request from USFWS: In April 2016, the BLM received a request from the Selawik National Wildlife Refuge to reconsider its decision on relevance and importance of the Tagagawik River nomination, and USFWS provided additional cultural, subsistence, recreational, and biological information to be considered. The new information for cultural, subsistence, and biological resources is provided under the heading "2016 Review." The new information for recreation was not included, as BLM Manual 1613 does not include criterion for recreation (see Chapter2, Requirements for ACEC Designation).

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; cliome 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 cliome 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.

2016 Review Request from USFWS: Cultural and Subsistence Resources

The *Siilviim Kaŋianiímiut* is the Inupiaq nation that traditionally inhabited the upper Selawik and entire Tagagawik River watershed at the time of Euro-American contact (Burch 1998:247). The highest settlement of the *Siilviim Kaŋianiímiut* was located at the mouth of Derby Creek, a creek within the Tagagawik River ACEC. This settlement—called *Qaíliik*—was located at the head of skin-boat navigation on the Tagagawik River. For most of the 19th century, residents of the upper Tagagwik were specialists in the trade between the Inupiat of the Selawik and the Athabascans of the Koyukuk (Burch 1998:252). According to Burch (1998:252), "*Qaíliik* may have been the mysterious village [explorer William] Dall called 'Attenmut;' he variously placed it at the head of the Selawik and the Buckland Rivers."

Selawik Refuge staff have interviewed Selawik village elders about traditional place names and activities on the upper Tagagwik River as part of a community oral history program. The Inupiaq name for Tagagwik River is *Tagraívik*, meaning "place where people go in summer." One Selawik elder, Ralph Ramoth, Sr., trapped extensively with a partner in the Tagagawik River ACEC in the 1970s-1980s, and reported finding many old camps in this area. The headwaters of the Tagagawik were especially rich in wolves and lynx, and well-known for caribou. Mr. Ramoth said, "We got lot of traps hanging up there. Especially close to Derby Creek. From *Tiŋmiaqpalik* [upstream from Derby Creek] and all the way up, almost to the end [of the Tagagawik River]. Not too far from the end" (Ramoth 2014).

Mr. Ramoth also described that his community's oral history holds an account of early white men in the Selawik area overwintering near Derby Creek in the late 19th century. According to Mr. Ramoth (Ramoth 2014):

> There was people that come around with a white whale boat long time ago, and then they go all the way up and they build a log cabin there [near the mouth of Derby Creek]. And they make a chimney with rocks. They spent the winter there. Long time ago. I don't know how they get up there, but they get there. They build a log cabin. There were seven of them. From there, they follow this creek all the way over to that pass…behind those hills. They go on the other side and that creek that flows out to Hog River. They go out to there and go all the way out to the Yukon.

The Inupiaq name for Derby Creek is *Sulukpaugaqtuuq*, meaning "place of grayling." Of this area, Mr. Ramoth said (Ramoth 2014):

> Thousands and thousands of grayling right there [at the mouth of Derby Creek]. You land there with a helicopter in summer, they're right there in front of you.

> In the mouth of the creek…there's thousands and thousands of grayling. Every cast, grayling.

Clearly the upper Tagagawik River within the nominated ACEC is rich in cultural, historical, and subsistence resources described in both academic publications and traditional knowledge among the Selawik Inupiat.

2016 Review Request from USFWS: Fisheries Resources

The following critical data on fisheries resources were not included in the original ACEC nomination. A fisheries study on the occurrence of sheefish (*Stenodus leucichthys*) in the Tagagawik River was conducted in fall 2007 after the Refuge received reports that hunters had caught sheefish while floating the Tagagawik River on a moose hunt. The study indicated that the Tagagawik River was being used as a sheefish spawning area and refugia from highly turbid conditions found in the Selawik River, one of only two sheefish spawning areas in the Northwest Arctic region. This turbidity had been caused by the influx of sediment from a retrogressive thaw slump that began in 2004 and continues to add large amounts of sediment seasonally. Radio tags were surgically implanted into 30 sheefish to track these fish to possible spawning sites. These tags where digitally programmed to maintain battery life for 5.5 years. Surveys in later years for these fish in the Tagagawik River did not find them there, but on the Selawik River in the known spawning area. However, there could have been as many as four years of successful spawning on the Tagagawik River between the beginning of the slump and the discovery of the sheefish, and a new spawning area might have been established. The most precocious of sheefish offspring would return to spawn at age ten, so a new survey of the Tagagawik River should be undertaken in the next year or two.

The Tagagawik River is one of two main tributaries of the Selawik River, and the only major north-flowing tributary. Two of the four legal purposes for Selawik National Wildlife Refuge under ANILCA are:

> (i) to conserve fish and wildlife populations and habitats in their natural diversity including, but not limited to, the Western Arctic caribou herd, waterfowl, shorebirds and other migratory birds, and salmon and sheefish; and
> (iv) to ensure, to the maximum extent practicable and in a manner consistent with the purposes set forth in paragraph (i), water quality and necessary water quantity within the refuge.

Any upstream reductions in water quantity or quality of the Tagagawik River would have negative implications for the Refuge's trust species. Without adequate protection of the main tributary watersheds of the Selawik River, this national wildlife refuge will not be able to meet its legal mandates. Protective measures for upstream watersheds are of paramount important to Selawik Refuge and the USFWS in order to fulfill our purposes and goals.

2016 Review Request from USFWS: Wildlife Resources

Although the original ACEC evaluation identifies a number of wildlife species dependent on the Tagagawik watershed, we would request reconsideration of the important value of this area on a couple species. The Tagagawik River serves as a migratory corridor within the winter range of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd (WACH). This caribou herd is currently in decline and is of concern to State and Federal managers. Any development which would disrupt this migratory corridor would be detrimental.

Muskoxen are also a species which frequents the northern Nulato Hills and should be included in the species list and considered for their important values to the Tagagawik River ACEC.

The Tagagawik River is one of two main tributaries of the Selawik River, and the only major north-flowing tributary. Two of the four legal purposes for Selawik National Wildlife Refuge under ANILCA are:

> (i) to conserve fish and wildlife populations and habitats in their natural diversity including, but not limited to, the Western Arctic Caribou Herd, waterfowl, shorebirds and other migratory birds, and salmon and sheefish; and
> (iv) to ensure, to the maximum extent practicable and in a manner consistent with the purposes set forth in paragraph (i), water quality and necessary water quantity within the refuge.

Any upstream reductions in water quantity or quality of the Tagagawik River would have negative implications for the Refuge's trust species. Without adequate protection of the main tributary watersheds of the Selawik River, this national wildlife refuge will not be able to meet its legal mandates. Protective measures for upstream watersheds are of paramount important to Selawik Refuge and the USFWS in order to fulfill our purposes and goals.

ACEC Evaluation Table	**Tagagawik River**
General Location:	*See Figure 3 (Appendix A)*
General Description:	*The nominated Tagagawik River 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.*
Acreage:	*301,044 acres*
Values Considered:	*See rationale above*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: 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 (Hedman 2015). This indicates a low potential for the presence of cultural resources that may be eligible for the NRHP. 2016 Cultural Review: Yes Rationale for Determination, 2016 Cultural Review: The above still holds true that, based on current information, the nominated ACEC has a low

ACEC Evaluation Table	Tagagawik River
	potential for significant archaeological sites. However, based on the 2016 information provided by the nominator, it is clear that the tribe of Selawik considers this an important traditional use area, so it is likely that, with further research and consultation, it would be found to be eligible for the NRHP as a TCP.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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. 2016 Wildlife Review (including subsistence): Yes 2016 Wildlife Review: The Tagagawik River watershed provides habitat for muskox, moose, caribou, brown bear, wolf, and wolverine, as well as sheefish and grayling. 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. These species are, however, not unique to the watershed and are found throughout the region. Fish: No Rationale for Determination: 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. 2016 Fish Review: No 2016 Fish Review: Fisheries review does indicate that sheefish likely spawned in the river for three to four years, as indicated by the nomination from Selawik National Wildlife Refuge (Brown and Zimmerman 2016). Further research is needed to indicate if this is still a current sheefish spawning location. Without specific confirmation of continued sheefish spawning in the Tagagawik River, this nomination does not meet the relevance criteria.
Relevant Value:	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?**

ACEC Evaluation Table	Tagagawik River
3. A natural process or system	Vegetation: No Rationale for Determination: 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. 2016 Vegetation Review: n/a Rationale for Determination, 2016 Vegetation Review: No new information was provided.
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: At this time, nothing within the nominated ACEC has been determined eligible for listing on the NRHP. 2016 Cultural Review: Yes Rationale for Determination, 2016 Cultural Review: While there are currently no NRHP eligible sites within the nominated ACEC, as noted above, the area would likely be found eligible as a TCP. Based on new (2016) information from the tribe, the TCP would be of regional importance because of the importance of the region for trade between the Athabascan (Koyukuk) and Inupiat (Selawik). This regional significance would, therefore, increase the ACEC values to important. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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. 2016 Wildlife Review: No Rationale for Determination, 2016 Wildlife Review: As discussed in the earlier evaluation, wildlife species in the Tagagawik watershed are locally

ACEC Evaluation Table	Tagagawik River
	important to subsistence and sport hunters, but exist in areas surrounding the watershed and other portions of the planning area. 2016 Fisheries Review: No Rationale for Determination, 2016 Fisheries Review: Fisheries species identified in the Tagagawik watershed are locally important to subsistence and sport fishers, but exist in other portions of the planning area and the state. Without confirmation of sheefish spawning in the Tagagawik, it does not rise above more than locally significant.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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 are and the state. 2016 Wildlife Review: No Rationale for Determination, 2016 Wildlife Review: While some sensitive wildlife species are found in the Tagagawik watershed, as outlined in the Pew Trust nomination, they are not unique to the watershed and can be found in other watersheds within the region. Wildlife species important to subsistence can also be found throughout the region. 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. 2016 Cultural Review: Yes Rationale for Determination, 2016 Cultural Review: If determined to be an eligible TCP, the nominated ACEC would meet these criteria. 2016 Fisheries Review: No Rationale for Determination, 2016 Fisheries Review: Fisheries species found in this area are common throughout the planning area and the state. Due to lack of confirmation of continued sheefish spawning, the area does not meet this criterion.
Important	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?**

ACEC Evaluation Table	Tagagawik River
Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	2016 Cultural Review: Yes Rationale for Determination: If determined to be an eligible TCP, the nominated ACEC would meet this criterion.
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Summary of Important Values:	
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?	2015 Wildlife Finding: Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important. 2016 Wildlife Finding: Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important, because species found there are also found in the surrounding region and are not unique to the Tagagawik watershed. 2015 Wildlife Finding: Fisheries resources were not found to be relevant or important. 2016 Fisheries Finding: Fisheries resources were not found to be relevant or important without further research and confirmation of sheefish spawning. Further research should be conducted to confirm sheefish spawning locations and times. If sheefish spawning were confirmed, a review of the ACEC nomination would then be conducted for reevaluation. 2015 Wildlife Finding: Cultural resources were not found to be relevant or

ACEC Evaluation Table	Tagagawik River
	important. 2016 Cultural Finding: Cultural resources were found to be both relevant and important. The BLM could choose to manage a TCP through the Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act process rather than through an ACEC.

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 River 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:

<u>The Nulato Tribal Council provided the following rationale for their nomination:</u>

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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	**Nulato River**
General Location:	*See Figure 3 (Appendix A)*
General Description:	*The Nulato River and the far reaches of its watershed*
Acreage:	*342,824 acres*
Values Considered:	*See rationale above*
Relevant Value:	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?**

ACEC Evaluation Table	Nulato River
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: The nominated area meets the relevance criteria for wildlife since muskox are known to inhabit the area. The Nulato 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 from Unalakleet and Shaktoolik. Fish: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: At this time, nothing within the nominated ACEC has been determined eligible for listing on the NRHP. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: The wildlife species in the Nulato watershed are locally important to subsistence and sport hunters, but exist in other

ACEC Evaluation Table	Nulato River
	portions of the planning area and the state.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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. Fish: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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 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.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a

ACEC Evaluation Table	Nulato River
welfare	
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Summary of Important Values:	
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.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Honhosa River
General: Location:	*See Figure 3 (Appendix A)*
Acreage:	*93,412 acres*
Values Considered:	*See rationale above*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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. Fish: Yes Rationale for Determination: 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, which dictate the quality, connectivity, and maintenance of the aquatic habitat in the area, are present and in proper functioning condition.
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Relevant Value:	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?**

ACEC Evaluation Table	Honhosa River
4. Natural Hazards	n/a
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: If more research led to the documentation of a TCP in the area, it would likely be found to be locally significant.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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 and 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. Fish: No Rationale for Determination: 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.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a

ACEC Evaluation Table	Honhosa River
Important Value:` Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Summary of Important Values:	
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.

3.3.26 Holy Cross ACEC

BACKGROUND

This new nomination was submitted in July 2015 after the April 2015 ACEC Report on Relevance and Importance was published. No map was submitted, so the BLM created a map and sent it to Holy Cross Village to verify the ACEC extent.

New Nomination: New Nomination

Size: 1,702,030 acres

Current Management of the Area:

Lands and Realty: The nominated Holy Cross ACEC occurs within lands withdrawn by five different PLO: 5172, 5173, 5179, 5180, and 5184. Portions of the ACEC are not covered by these PLOs and 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 permits, leases, rights-of-way, and easements.

PLO 5172 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 11 identified village corporations. Upon conclusion of village selections (both 12a and 12b selections), the regional corporations could select the lands withdrawn. 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. Lands not selected were reserved for further classification under Section 14 of ANCSA.

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. Lands not selected were reserved for further classification under Section 14 of ANCSA.

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 (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 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.

Wildlife: The area is within Game Management Unit 21E and includes important habitats of willow shrubs, open bluejoint grass meadows and boreal forest that are important to moose, as well as breeding waterfowl. Shrub belts along the Yukon and Innoko Rivers are important to wintering moose populations, and spring and fall flooding in the main rivers and connected

sloughs provide summer duck and geese habitats while birds are molting and while broods are flightless. Current geospatial moose population estimates in Game Management Unit 21E includes an average moose density of 2.0 moose per square mile, and increase from 1.3 moose per square mile in 2012 (ADFG 2016).

Wood bison were introduced into the area in March 2015 by ADFG, and the herd of approximately 120 animals of all age classes can be found in the areas grass, woodland, and riverine habitats.

Fisheries: The ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog was consulted for fisheries species presence and distribution in the proposed Holy Cross ACEC. The Escarpment Goal Recommendations for Select Arctic- Yukon-Kuskokwim Region Salmon Stocks, 2016 was used to reference escapement goal recommendations for the Yukon River and any specific locations that may pertain to the nominated ACEC.

Cultural: Current management of cultural resources is mainly on a case–by-case basis. Proactive surveys are limited, and other surveys and site evaluations are done under the terms of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Nominator(s): Holy Cross Village

Rationale provided by nominator:

The following rationale was provided by Holy Cross Village:

Cultural and Historic Relevance Rationale: Traditional use of animals, fish, plants and wood from accessible lands and waters has been practiced by the indigenous community of this region for thousands of years. The historical and cultural significance of this use should not be lost considering the brief history of the United States government and its present responsible management agency, the Bureau of Land Management. 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. Albert's lake is an especially important summer gathering place for our community. Old Man Trail to Flat & McGrath are also very important.

Fish and Wildlife Relevance Rationale: The abundance, health, and accessibility of fish, wildlife, and plant species that we have traditionally harvested and rely upon is a necessity that must be protected. It's relevance to our lives and culture cannot be overstated. Harvest watersheds: Pike Lake-fishing, Ranger Lake to Reindeer Lake, Paimiut Slough hunting, fishing, trapping. Innoko River-moose and ducks.

Natural Process or system Relevance Rationale: 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. The system level needing protection is the full watersheds lying on or connected to BLM managed lands. Peregrine Falcon habitat exists near Holy Cross.

Natural Hazards Relevance Rationale: It is possible that if some of the mining potential on BLM lands becomes active it could threaten the health of the land and waters we depend upon. These activities should not take place in watersheds we are dependent on for traditional harvest. We cannot risk our way of life. Also, climate changes on the landscape are revealing their affects and

these must be taken into consideration as potential hazards that may affect the traditional harvest species we use. As climate change is a global occurrence we cannot stop it, but we must work with land managers to try and understand the changes and potential threats and plan for them as best we can with an eye to preparing for and adapting while maintaining our traditional way of life.

More than local significance Importance Rationale: 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 as an interconnected whole, not as separate parts. It is all connected; air-water-land-animals-fish-plants-people. 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.

Qualities that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, … etc. Rationale: Our traditional way of life is all of the above descriptions, 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. If the fragile, sensitive and unique landscape we depend upon is not protected, one can consider our unique and rare culture as vulnerable, endangered and threatened by adverse change.

Qualities that warrant highlighting to satisfy public safety concern, etc. Rationale: 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.

The Holy Cross ACEC:

- The protection of the watersheds of the Yukon River and its tributaries through designation as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern on Bureau of Land Management lands in the Bering Sea-Western Interior Planning Region; and
- All the areas within the watersheds of these rivers and their tributaries, regardless of the status of land ownership; and
- The continuance of the existing ACECs within the Holy Cross' Tribe's traditional hunting, fishing and harvesting areas and the habitat associated with these.

ACEC Evaluation Table	**Holy Cross**
General Location:	*See Figure 3(Appendix A)*
General Description:	*None provided by nominator*
Acreage:	*1,702,030 acres*
Values Considered:	*See rationale list above*
Relevant Value:	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?**

ACEC Evaluation Table	Holy Cross
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: The Holy Cross ACEC *may* contain significant cultural resources. While the entire area has not been subject to a cultural resource survey, there are eight known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC. None of these have been formally evaluated for inclusion on the NRHP. One of these, Bonasila Dome, would likely be found eligible for the NRHP as a TCP.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: The Holy Cross ACEC meets the relevant criteria for fish. The ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog identifies pink, chum, coho, and Chinook salmon, along with whitefish species, present in watersheds identified in the Holy Cross ACEC. Subsistence fish and fisheries habit for maintaining species diversity is a relevant value for this ACEC. Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: The area provides habitat for black bear, brown bear, caribou, wolf, wolverine, lynx and moose. Approximately 100 wood bison, which has been declared a nonessential experimental population by USFWS, were 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.
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a Rationale for Determination: All ecological processes were suggested as the natural process that supports ancient ties to the land for traditional harvest practices. The associated BSWI RMP draft decisions will provide a range of alternatives for public input regarding many ecological processes related to fisheries, wildlife, water, forest, and other resources.
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a Rationale for Determination: Climate change was suggested as a natural hazard that may affect traditional harvest species, and the BLM agrees with the statement that the Tribe "…must work with land managers to try and understand the changes and potential threats and plan for them as best we can with an eye to preparing for and adapting, while maintaining our traditional

ACEC Evaluation Table	Holy Cross
	way of life.”
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: None of the cultural resources within the nominated ACEC have been formally nominated to the NRHP. While most of them, if found eligible, would likely be found to have local significance, some might be found to have regional significance, such as XHC-91 Bonasila Dome/Viq’idz Gigholyodd’h, and IDT-201, the Riley/Otter/Miscovich Historic District. Listing these sites on the NRHP and using the Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act process is sufficient to protect them, including potential TCPs. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: The wildlife species found in the area are common throughout the planning area and the state. Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: The Holy Cross ACEC does not meet the importance criteria for more than locally significant. The fish habitats and species present in the watersheds are common to areas throughout the planning area.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: While none of the cultural resources have been formally evaluated for inclusion in the NRHP, several of the sites are considered fragile and vulnerable to change. Site XHC-91 needs to be evaluated for eligibility for the NRHP as a TCP in order to answer this question. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: There are no threatened and endangered species in the area. There are no species that are unique to the area. Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: The fish habitats and species present in the watersheds are common to areas throughout the planning area.
Important	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?**

ACEC Evaluation Table	Holy Cross
Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: None of the known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC have been formally evaluated for inclusion in the NRHP. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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 Rationale for Determination: There are no endangered or threatened fish species listed in this nominated ACEC.
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Summary of Important Values:	**Rationale:** Cultural: The AHRS and BLM files were consulted for known cultural resources within the ACEC. While the nomination indicates that the area contains multiple areas that might qualify as eligible for the NRHP as TCPs, there is currently not enough information to indicate that they meet both relevant and important criteria.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Holy Cross
	Fish: The nominated ACEC does meet the relevance criteria for fisheries but does not meet the more then locally significant criteria. 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. The wildlife species found in the Holy Cross watersheds are common throughout the planning area and are of only local importance. There are no threatened and endangered species within the Holy Cross watersheds, with the exception of wood bison, which has been declared a non-essential experimental population by USFWS. Approximately 100 animals were 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.
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 found to be relevant but not important.

3.3.27 Ohogamiut ACEC

BACKGROUND

This new nomination was submitted in March 2016 after the April 2015 ACEC Report on Relevance and Importance was published.

New Nomination: New Nomination

Size: 1,634,358 acres

Current Management of the Area:

Lands and Realty: The nominated Ohogamiut ACEC occurs within lands withdrawn by five different PLOs: 5172, 5173, 5179, 5180, and 5184. Portions of the ACEC are not covered by these PLOs and 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 permits, leases, rights-of-way, and easements.

PLO 5172 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 11 identified village corporations. Upon conclusion of village selections (both 12a and 12b selections), the regional corporations could select the lands withdrawn. 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. Lands not selected were reserved for further classification under Section 14 of ANCSA.

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. Lands not selected were reserved for further classification under Section 14 of ANCSA.

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 (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 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.

Wildlife: The area is within Game Management Units 21E and 18 and includes important riverine habitats of willow shrubs, open bluejoint grass meadows, and boreal forest that are important to moose, as well as breeding waterfowl. Shrub belts along the Yukon and Innoko Rivers are important to wintering moose populations, and spring and fall flooding in the main rivers and connected sloughs provide summer duck and geese habitats while birds are molting and while broods are flightless. Current geospatial moose population estimates in Game Management Unit 21E includes an average moose density of 2.0 moose per square mile, and increase from 1.3 moose per square mile in 2012 (ADFG 2016).

Moose populations in some portions of Game Management Unit 18 have been increasing over the past decade, with 2.3 moose per square mile in 2006 in the Paimut area of Game Management Unit 18 (ADFG 2012).

Wood bison were introduced into the area near the village of Shageluk in March 2015 by ADFG, and the herd of approximately 120 animals. This herd has dispersed in the nominated ACEC area, and all age classes of the animals can be found in the areas grass, woodland, and riverine habitats.

Fisheries: The ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog was consulted for fisheries species presence and distribution in the nominated ACEC. The Escarpment Goal Recommendations for Select Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Region Salmon Stocks 2016 was used to reference escapement goal recommendations for the Yukon River and any specific locations that may pertain to the nominated ACEC.

Cultural: Current management of cultural resources is mainly on a case-by-case basis. Proactive surveys are limited, and other surveys and site evaluations are done under the terms of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Nominator(s): Ohogamiut Traditional Council (Marshall, Alaska)

Rationale provided by nominator:

The following rationale was provided by the Ohogamiut Traditional Council:

Cultural and Historic Relevance Rationale: Traditional use of animals, fish, plants and wood from accessible lands and waters has been practiced by the indigenous people of Marshall in this region for thousands of years. The historical and cultural significance of this use should not be lost considering the brief history of the United States government and its present responsible management agency, the Bureau of Land Management. For us this life-way 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 and in trust with the federal government. Sacred cultural and burial sites may also exist in the nominated watershed areas.

Fish and Wildlife Relevance Rationale: The abundance, health and accessibility of fish, wildlife species and their habitat, that we have traditionally depended upon is a necessity that must be protected. Its relevance to our lives, culture and future cannot be overstated.

Natural Process or system Relevance Rationale: 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. The US Government's trust relationship with our tribe and our status as a sovereign and distinct nation.

Natural Hazards Relevance Rationale: It is possible that if some of the mining potential on BLM lands becomes active that it could threaten the health of the land and waters we depend upon. These activities should not take place in watersheds we are dependent on for traditional harvest. We cannot risk our way of life. Changes on the landscape, such as increased wild-fire, flooding and droughts, related to climate change are revealing their affects and these must be taken into consideration as potential hazards that may affect the traditional harvest areas and species we use. As climate change is a global occurrence we cannot stop it, but we must work with land managers to try and understand the changes and potential threats and plan for them as best we can with an eye to preparing for and adapting while maintaining our traditional way of life.

More than local significance Importance Rationale: 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 as an interconnected whole, not as separate parts. We see maintaining our lifeways as increasingly challenging and rare as indigenous peoples around the world adapt to a dominant modern world. The opportunity to continue living from those productive areas of land and waters for continuation of our culture is unique, special and distinctive and impacts affecting these special habitats and wildlife would be of deep concern to our community. We have no other acceptable alternative.

Qualities that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, … etc. Rationale: Our traditional way of life is all of the above descriptions, 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. A high percentage of our food comes directly from the watersheds around us and expensive, low nutrition foods from the store are not good for us.

Qualities that warrant highlighting to satisfy public safety concern, etc. Rationale: 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.

The Ohogamiut ACEC:

- The protection of the watersheds of the Yukon River and their tributaries through designation as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern on Bureau of Land Management lands in the Bering Sea-Western Interior Planning Region; and
- All the areas within the watersheds of these rivers and their tributaries, regardless of the status of land ownership; and
- The continuance of the existing ACECs within the Village of Ohogamiut's traditional hunting and fishing and gathering areas.

ACEC Evaluation Table	**Ohogamiut**
General Location:	*See Figure 3 (Appendix A)*
General Description:	Numerous watersheds used for traditional harvest in the vicinity of the native village of Marshall Alaska and the Yukon River. Some of the major watersheds are Hawk River, Stuyahok River, Koserefski River, and Kako Creek.
Acreage:	*1,634,387*
Values Considered:	*See rationale list above*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: The Ohogamiut ACEC *may* contain significant cultural resources. While the entire area has not been subject to a cultural resource survey, there are three known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC. None of these have been formally evaluated for inclusion on the NRHP. One of these, Bonasila Dome, would likely be found eligible for the NRHP as a TCP.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: The Ohogamiut ACEC does meet the relevant criteria for subsistence fish. ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog identifies five species of salmon present and numerous whitefish species, all having subsistence importance. Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: The area provides habitat for black bear, brown bear, caribou, wolf, wolverine, lynx, and moose. Approximately 100 wood bison, which has been declared a nonessential experimental population by USFWS, were 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.
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a Rationale for Determination: All ecological processes were suggested as the natural process that supports ancient ties to the land for traditional harvest practices. The associated BSWI RMP draft decisions will provide a range of alternatives for public input regarding many ecological processes related to

ACEC Evaluation Table	Ohogamiut
	fisheries, wildlife, water, forest, and other resources.
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a Rationale for Determination: Climate change was suggested as a natural hazard that may affect traditional harvest species, and the BLM agrees with the statement that the Tribe "…must work with land managers to try and understand the changes and potential threats and plan for them as best we can with an eye to preparing for and adapting, while maintaining our traditional way of life."
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: None of the cultural resources within the nominated ACEC have been formally nominated to the NRHP. While two of them, if found eligible, would likely be found to have local significance, some may be found to have regional significance, such as XHC-91 Bonasila Dome/Viq'idz Gigholyodd'h. Listing these sites on the NRHP and using the Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act process is sufficient to protect them, including as potential TCPs. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: The wildlife species found in the area that are important to subsistence are common throughout the planning area and the state. Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: The fish species and habitats found in the Ohogamiut ACEC do not meet the importance criteria. The fish species and habitats are common throughout the Yukon River watershed and planning area, with no specific fisheries population or habitat identified that would rise to the level of meeting the importance criteria beyond a local level.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: Yes Rationale for Determination: While none of the cultural resources have been formally evaluated for inclusion in the NRHP, cultural sites are considered fragile and vulnerable to change. Site XHC-91 needs to be evaluated for eligibility for the NRHP as a TCP in order to more fully answer this question.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Ohogamiut
vulnerable to adverse change	Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: There are no threatened and endangered species in the area. There are no species that are unique to the area. Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: There are no threatened and endangered fish species present in the nominated Ohogamiut ACEC.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: None of the known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC have been formally evaluated for inclusion in the NRHP. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: 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 Rationale for Determination: Fish species found in the nominated ACEC are common throughout the Yukon River Watershed and planning area.
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a

ACEC Evaluation Table	Ohogamiut
Summary of Important Values:	**Rationale:** Cultural: The AHRS and BLM files were consulted for known cultural resources within the ACEC. While the nomination indicates that the nominated area contains multiple areas that might qualify as eligible for the NRHP as TCPs, there is currently not enough information to indicate that they meet both relevant and important criteria. Fish: The ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog was consulted for fisheries species presence and distribution in the nominated ACEC. The Ohogamiut ACEC does meet the relevant criteria for subsistence fish but does not meet the criteria for more than locally significant. 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. The wildlife species found in the Ohogamiut watershed are common throughout the planning area and are of only local importance. There are no threatened and endangered species within the Ohogamiut watershed, with the exception of wood bison, which has been declared a nonessential experimental population by USFWS. Approximately 100 animals were 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.
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?	Fisheries resources were found to be relevant but not important. Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important. Cultural resources were found to be relevant but not important.

3.3.28 Whitefish Spawning ACEC

BACKGROUND

This new nomination was submitted in May 2016 after the April 2015 ACEC Report on Relevance and Importance was published.

New Nomination: New Nomination

Size: 290,958 acres

Current Management of the Area:

Lands and Realty: The nominated Whitefish Spawning ACEC occurs within lands withdrawn by PLOs 5180 and 5184. 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 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 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): USFWS

Rationale provided by nominator:

The following rationale was provided by USFWS:

The Whitefish Spawning ACEC nomination includes all High and Very High Resource Value Hydrologic Unit Code-6s within the spawning areas identified in Harper et al. (2012, Figure 1), plus the HRV Hydrologic Unit Code-6 surrounding the mouth of the Gagaryah River just upstream of the known spawning area. In addition, any Hydrologic Unit Code-6s either on the rivers (1 on the Swift) or reaching the rivers' floodplains within those stretches (1 on the Kuskokwim, 3 on the Swift) were also included.

Three significant tributaries were also included (justification in table below). To determine the distance upriver that made sense to include in the nomination in order to protect the water quality and habitat values of the spawning areas, USFWS consulted with BLM Fisheries Biologist Merlyn Schelske and Alaska Department of Fish and Game Natural Resource Specialist Dan Coleman (ADFG). Both indicated that it was appropriate to include those tributaries as far upstream as the BLM lands continued. USFWS, however, concluded that it was inappropriate to include in the nomination the entire watersheds of those tributary streams. Therefore, in order to limit the nomination to those areas most important to protect via ACEC designation, USFWS defined the widths of those tributary corridors by including High Resource Value Hydrologic Unit

Code-6s as far upstream as they reached. Then, upstream of the upper border of those HRV-Hydrologic Unit Codes, USFWS simply proposed a 300-foot buffer on each side of the streams.

The Whitefish Spawning ACEC provides significant spawning habitat for humpback and broad whitefish along the Swift River and a reach of the adjacent Kuskokwim River, respectively (Harper et al. 2012). Humpback whitefish spawn primarily on a few Kuskokwim tributaries (including the Swift River) in early October before river ice forms, while broad whitefish spawn in the main channel of the Kuskokwim later in the fall after freeze-up. Both species are designated BLM priority fish species for the Bering Sea/Western Interior RMP area. In fact, eight additional BLM priority fish species occur within the Whitefish Spawning ACEC, including Chinook, chum, and coho salmon, arctic grayling, round whitefish, sheefish, northern pike, and burbot (Alaska Freshwater Fish Inventory). Not only does the nominated area provide important whitefish spawning habitat, but it also provides spawning and/or rearing habitat for all three BLM priority salmon species (Alaska Anadromous Waters Catalog).

Broad and humpback whitefish are culturally significant species along the Kuskokwim River; they are harvested for subsistence use by residents of many communities up and down the entire river and throughout the whitefish annual cycle. Whitefish are harvested on their wintering areas in the lower estuarine portion of the Kuskokwim, in spring and summer in both pre-migration foraging areas and as migrants in the main river, during fall spawning along the middle and upper river, and during their late fall downriver migration. Whitefish are often caught before salmon in the spring, and offer an opportunity for fresh fish early in the season. In recent years, Chinook salmon have been in decline and there has been a resulting increase in harvest of whitefish and other salmon species. This trend has been particularly significant in the last couple of years during which early season subsistence fishing on the Kuskokwim River was restricted to the use of small-mesh “whitefish” nets. Even prior to the recent decline of Chinook salmon, however, whitefish were a consistently important component of the Kuskokwim River subsistence harvest, comprising between a quarter to nearly 60% of the annual non-salmon subsistence harvest (Harper et al. 2012).

Despite the extensive distribution of whitefish in the Kuskokwim River drainage, spawning grounds are limited in number and size. To date, only four and two spawning areas have been identified for humpback and broad whitefish, respectively. Based on radio telemetry data, the Whitefish Spawning ACEC includes the most important humpback whitefish spawning area in the Kuskokwim drainage, providing habitat for about half of the watershed’s entire population. The nominated ACEC also includes one of only two broad whitefish spawning areas along the Kuskokwim. In addition, the telemetry work confirmed that fish spawning within the nominated ACEC did indeed migrate downstream into the lower river to overwinter. Because these populations occur along hundreds of kilometers of the river over the course of their annual cycles, from the upper river to the tidally-influenced lower river, their spawning habitats within the ACEC are clearly of regional, and not just local, importance.

Whitefish spawning areas are very rare in the Kuskokwim watershed. The proposed Whitefish Spawning ACEC includes the most important of only four known humpback whitefish spawning areas, and one of only two broad whitefish spawning areas (Harper et al. 2012, Figure 1). In addition, there have been concerns for decades about the status of the Kuskokwim’s whitefish populations. Traditional ecological knowledge has indicated that whitefish abundance and size has declined in recent decades, while recent research had determined that age at maturity, mean age, and overall size have declined. When 1) the overall scarcity of spawning grounds, 2) changes in size and age structure, and 3) increased harvest in recent years are all considered

together, it is clear that these species are of particular conservation concern. In this context, it is clear that the spawning areas identified within the Whitefish Spawning ACEC are not only rare, but irreplaceable insofar as they play a critical role in sustaining those vulnerable populations.

Additional resource rationale is included in the table below.

ACEC Evaluation Table	**Whitefish Spawning**
General Location:	*See Figure 4 (Appendix A)*
General Description:	*The nominated area includes BLM lands along or adjacent to the lower Swift River for spawning humpback whitefish, the Kuskokwim River adjacent to its confluence with the Swift River for spawning broad whitefish, plus three tributaries (including the Tatlawiksuk, Cheeneetnuk, and Gagaryah Rivers), which flow into the Swift or Kuskokwim River within or just upstream of the whitefish spawning areas. Including both the spawning areas and rivers directly upstream provides protection to the limited spawning habitat identified to date and to the waters flowing immediately into those spawning areas. In addition, including areas immediately upstream of the spawning areas provides small reaches of additional habitat in case: a) research to date failed to comprehensively identify the extent of these spawning habitats within the system, and/or b) climate change impacts on the watershed result in a local increase or shift in the habitats and stream reaches used for spawning by these two important whitefish species.*
Values Considered:	*See rationale above*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Decision: Nominator included no reasoning for cultural evaluation
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Wildlife: n/a Rationale for Decision: Nominator included no reasoning for wildlife evaluation Fisheries: No Rationale for Decision: This nominated ACEC includes portions adjacent to the mainstem of the Kuskokwim River where BLM lands are very limited or there is no BLM land ownership or management in the riparian area (flood prone as defined by twice bankfull depth).

ACEC Evaluation Table	Whitefish Spawning
	Harper et al. (2012) identified this area on the Kuskokwim River as a Broad Whitefish Spawning location, but due to weather and reduced aerial coverage (to track transmitters), the location was not confirmed. Harper et al. (2012) also identified that the spawning may occur over an extended area. Due to these factors, the relevance criterion for an ACEC, as nominated, is not met.
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: n/a Rationale for Determination: Nominator included no reasoning for cultural evaluation. Wildlife: n/a Rationale for Determination: Nominator included no reasoning for wildlife evaluation. Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: This nominated ACEC includes portions adjacent to the mainstem of the Kuskokwim River where BLM lands are very limited or there is no BLM land ownership or management in the riparian area (flood prone as defined by twice bankfull depth). Harper et al. (2012) identified this area on the Kuskokwim River as a Broad Whitefish Spawning location, but due to weather and reduced aerial coverage (to track transmitters), the location was not confirmed. Harper et al. (2012) also identified that the spawning may occur over an extended area. Due to these factors the significance criterion for an ACEC, *as nominated*, is not met.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Whitefish Spawning
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: n/a Rationale for Determination: Nominator included no reasoning for cultural evaluation Wildlife: n/a Rationale for Determination: Nominator included no reasoning for wildlife evaluation Fish: No Rationale for Determination: The BLM recognizes that the spawning areas, *as nominated by USFWS*, are rare throughout the Kuskokwim River. The BLM has limited land ownership and management along the mainstem of the Kuskokwim River and will work with USFWS to identify protections and possible memorandum of understanding with adjacent landowners to protect these unique spawning areas on non-BLM-administered public lands. The USFWS-nominated ACEC includes areas beyond BLM's jurisdiction. Although rare, the BLM does not find this a potential ACEC, as currently identified by the USFWS. The BLM will, however, nominate an ACEC for similar Whitefish Spawning area protections over an area with BLM jurisdiction. The BLM's area will primarily follow the Swift River and areas where spawning has been documented for Humpback whitefish from river mile 29 to 36 and an area sampled to mile 42 (Harper et al. 2012).
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: n/a Rationale for Determination: Nominator included no reasoning for cultural evaluation Wildlife: n/a Rationale for Determination: Nominator included no reasoning for wildlife evaluation Fish: No Rationale for Determination: For reasons previously mentioned, the area nominated by USFWS does not warrant protections offered by an ACEC designation. The BLM will, however, nominate an ACEC with different a different boundary and acreage amount that would warrant ACEC designation for similar reasons identified by USFWS.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Whitefish Spawning
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Summary of Important Values:	
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?	Fisheries resources, as nominated, were found not relevant or important.

3.3.29 Swift River Whitefish Spawning ACEC

BACKGROUND

This new nomination was developed internally by the BLM in May 2015 after the April 2015 ACEC Report on Relevance and Importance was published.

New Nomination: New Nomination

Size: 220,032 acres

Current Management of the Area:

Lands and Realty: The nominated Swift River Whitefish Spawning ACEC occurs within lands withdrawn by PLOs 5180 and 5184. 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 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 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): BLM

Rationale provided by nominator:

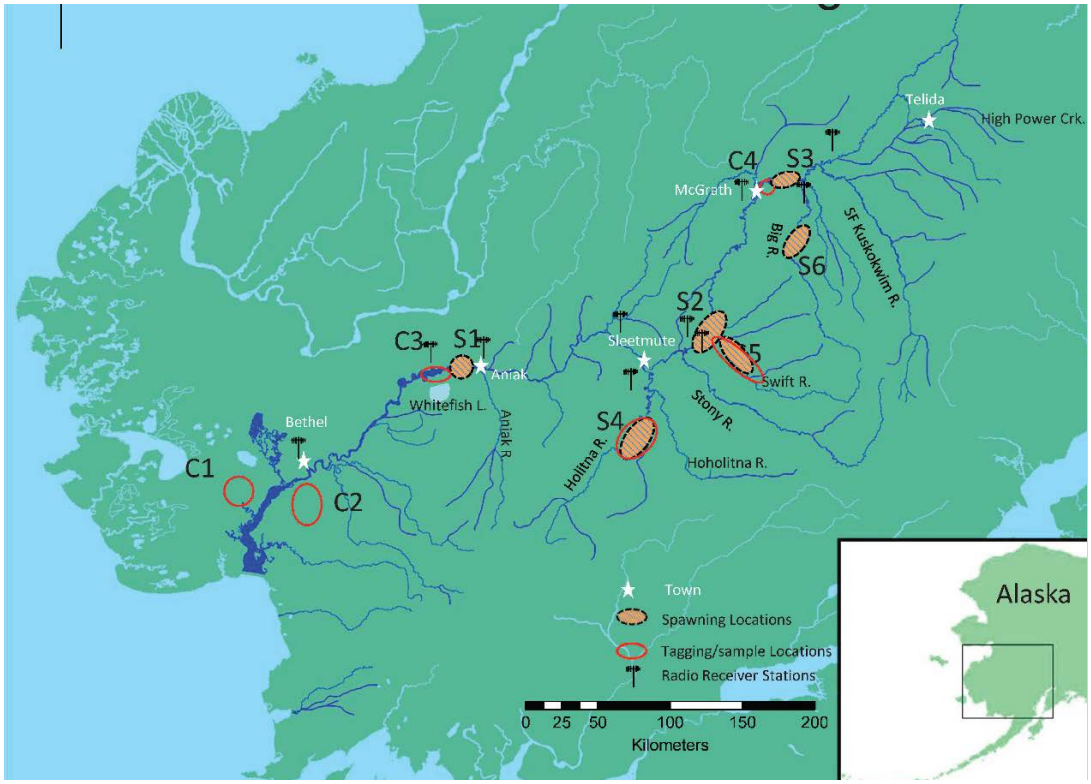
Rationale provided by nominator:
Broad and humpback whitefish are culturally significant species along the Kuskokwim River; they are harvested for subsistence use by residents of many communities up and down the entire river and throughout the whitefish annual cycle. Whitefish are a consistently important component of the Kuskokwim River subsistence harvest, comprising between 25 to nearly 60 percent of the annual non-salmon subsistence harvest (Harper et al. 2012).

Because spawning areas for Kuskokwim River broad whitefish and humpback whitefish are restricted, they should be considered as candidates for protections from directed harvest and perturbations from resource extraction (Harper et al.2012). The Swift River Whitefish Spawning ACEC would provide spawning habitat protection for whitefish spawning in the Swift River and small associated tributaries.

Additional rationale is found in table below.

Rationale for Nomination:
Despite the extensive distribution of whitefish in the Kuskokwim River drainage, spawning grounds are limited in number and size. To date, only four spawning areas for humpback whitefish and two spawning areas for broad whitefish have been identified in the entire Kuskokwim River (Harper et al. 2012). “The Swift River spawning area is probably the most important area thus far identified for humpback whitefish in the Kuskokwim River drainage based upon the spawning destination of radio-tagged fish” (Harper et al. 2012, p. 70). The Swift River provides spawning habitat for about half of the watershed’s entire humpback whitefish

population. The whitefish species that spawn in the Swift River have been documented to overwinter and feed in the lower reaches of the Kuskokwim River, indicating they move over 500 miles from the lower Kuskokwim River to the Swift River to spawn. There are approximately 18 subsistence communities between the Swift River and the lower reach of the Kuskokwim River that utilized these fish.



Map 1. Locations of fixed receiver stations, capture (C), and spawning areas (S) of broad whitefish (*Coregonus nasus)* and humpback whitefish *(C. pidschian*) from 2006 to 2008 (Harper et al. 2012).

Rationale for the extent of the specific area nominated:
The area nominated includes BLM-administered lands within the Swift River Hydrologic Unit Code 6th level and the Gararyah River Hydrologic Unit Code 6th level.

ACEC Evaluation Table	**Swift River Whitefish Spawning**
General Location:	*See Figure 4 (Appendix A)*
General Description:	BLM- administered lands within the Swift River Hydrologic Unit Code 6th level and the Gararyah River Hydrologic Unit Code 6th level.
Values Considered:	*See rationale above*
Relevant Value:	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?**

ACEC Evaluation Table	Swift River Whitefish Spawning
1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	Cultural: n/a Rationale for Determination: Nominator included no reasoning for cultural evaluation
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Wildlife: n/a Rationale for Determination: Nominator included no reasoning for wildlife evaluation Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: Humpback whitefish spawn primarily on a few Kuskokwim River tributaries (including the Swift River) in early October before river ice forms. Humpback whitefish species are designated BLM priority fish species for the Bering Sea-Western Interior RMP planning area. In addition to Humpback whitefish, eight additional BLM priority fish species occur within the nominated ACEC: Chinook; chum, coho salmon, arctic grayling, round whitefish, sheefish, northern pike, and burbot (ADFG 2014a.) This area provides spawning and/or rearing habitat for all three BLM priority salmon species: Chinook, chum, and coho (ADFG 2014b).
Relevant Value: 3. A natural process or system	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: n/a Rationale for Determination: Nominator included no reasoning for cultural evaluation Wildlife: n/a Rationale for Determination: Nominator included no reasoning for wildlife evaluation

ACEC Evaluation Table	Swift River Whitefish Spawning
	Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: Broad and humpback whitefish are harvested for subsistence use by residents of many communities up and down the entire river. Whitefish are harvested on their wintering areas in the lower estuarine portion of the Kuskokwim River, in spring and summer in both pre-migration foraging areas and as migrants in the main Kuskokwim River, during fall spawning along the middle and upper river, and during their late fall downriver migration. Whitefish are often caught before salmon in the spring and offer an opportunity for fresh fish early in the season. In recent years, Chinook salmon have been in decline and there has been a resulting increase in harvest of whitefish and other salmon species. This trend has been particularly significant in the last couple of years, during which early season subsistence fishing on the Kuskokwim River was restricted to the use of small-mesh “whitefish” nets. Even prior to the recent decline of Chinook salmon, however, whitefish were a consistently important component of the Kuskokwim River subsistence harvest, comprising between 25 to nearly 60 percent of the annual non-salmon subsistence harvest (Harper et al. 2012). The Swift River provides habitat for about half of the watershed’s entire population. In addition, the telemetry work confirmed that fish spawning within the nominated ACEC did indeed migrate downstream into the lower Kuskokwim River to overwinter and are harvested throughout the river as an important subsistence. Because these populations occur along hundreds of miles of the Kuskokwim River over the course of their annual cycles, from the upper river to the tidally-influenced lower river, their spawning habitats within the nominated ACEC are of regional importance.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: n/a Rationale for Determination: Nominator included no reasoning for cultural evaluation Wildlife: n/a Rationale for Determination: Nominator included no reasoning for wildlife evaluation Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: Whitefish spawning areas are very rare in the Kuskokwim watershed. The nominated Swift River Whitefish Spawning ACEC includes one of the most important of only four known humpback whitefish spawning areas (Harper et al. 2012, Figure 1). The following three

ACEC Evaluation Table	Swift River Whitefish Spawning
	reasons provide considerable support for further warranted protection of the species: 1) overall scarcity of spawning grounds; 2) changes in size and age structure; and 3) increased harvest in recent years. In this context, the spawning areas identified within the Swift River Whitefish Spawning ACEC are not only rare, but are also irreplaceable insofar as they play a critical role in sustaining vulnerable populations.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: n/a Rationale for Determination: Nominator included no reasoning for cultural evaluation Wildlife: n/a Rationale for Determination: Nominator included no reasoning for wildlife evaluation Fisheries: Yes Rationale for Determination: The area has been identified warranting protection “because spawning areas for Kuskokwim River broad whitefish and Humpback whitefish are restricted; they should be considered as candidates for protections from directed harvest and perturbations from resource extraction” (Harper et al. 2012).
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or property	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a

ACEC Evaluation Table	Swift River Whitefish Spawning
Summary of Important Values:	
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?	Fisheries resources were found to be relevant and important.

3.3.30 Huslia ACEC

BACKGROUND

This new nomination was submitted in August 2016 after the April 2015 ACEC Report on Relevance and Importance was published.

New Nomination: New Nomination

Size: 170,763 acres

Current Management of the Area:

Lands and Realty: The nominated Huslia ACEC is on lands withdrawn by three different PLOs: 5179, 5180, and 5184.

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 (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 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 1986 Central Yukon Resource Management Plan and are open on a case-by-case basis to permits, leases, rights-of-way, and easements. Lands within the existing Nulato Hills Subunit ACEC Tagagawik/Buckland River are closed to FLPMA sales and leases.

Nominator(s): Huslia Tribal Council

Rationale provided by nominator:

The following rationale was provided by the Huslia Tribal Council:

Cultural and Historic Relevance Rationale: Traditional harvest and use of animals, fish, plants and wood from accessible lands and waters has been practiced by the indigenous people, now residing in the village of Huslia AK, for thousands of years. The historical and cultural significance of this use should not be lost considering the brief history of the United States government and its present responsible management agency, the Bureau of Land Management. 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.

Fish and Wildlife Relevance Rationale: The abundance, health and accessibility of fish and wildlife species that we have traditionally depended upon is a necessity that must be protected. It’s relevance to our lives and culture cannot be overstated.

Natural Process or system Relevance Rationale: Due to our ancient, religious and nutritional 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.

Natural Hazards Relevance Rationale: It is possible that if some of the mining/development potential on BLM lands becomes active that it could threaten the health of the land and waters we depend upon. These activities should not take place in watersheds we are dependent on for our necessary traditional harvest. We cannot risk our way of life. Climate changes on the landscape are revealing their affects and these must be taken into consideration as potential hazards that may affect the traditional harvest species we use. As climate change is a global occurrence we cannot stop it, but we must work with land managers to try and understand the changes and potential

threats and plan for them as best we can with an eye to preparing for and adapting while maintaining our traditional way of life.

More than local significance Importance Rationale: 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, not separate parts. 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. Being a distinct and federally recognized tribe we have a special and unique history, federal recognition and culture to protect.

Our traditional way of life is all of these descriptions, 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. Being a distinct and federally recognized tribe, our way of life and culture is vulnerable, threatened and endangered if our access and the habitat which supports our way of life is negatively impacted.

Qualities that warrant highlighting to satisfy public safety concern, etc. Rationale: 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.

Additionally: Special protection is required for maintaining all natural processes that support our traditional harvest lifeway. Management for protecting ecosystem integrity, functionality and quality are vitally important to supporting and insuring our culture, community health and way of life.

We believe that mining within the watersheds which we have used for centuries for traditional harvest, and its associated roads, development, waste storage facilities and other factors pose grave threats to our traditional harvest lifeway. We are not sure what BLM can do, management wise, in the face of climate change affects that may pose natural hazards and/or safety concerns, but we certainly see the potential for changes and disruptions to weather patterns and climatic change that may require careful planning and action for protecting traditional harvest practices and our community. Some of the potential changes, some already underway are, warming trends with dryer weather and increased wildfire, permafrost thaw and groundwater flow changes, increased flood events, lakes, stream and river warming, changes in breeding and migration patterns of moose, caribou and other harvest species, water quality changes that affect fish migration and spawning habitat etc.

The Huslia ACEC:

- The protection of critical watersheds of the Koyukuk River and their tributaries through designation as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern on Bureau Of Land Management lands in the Central Yukon Region; and All the areas within the watersheds of these rivers and their tributaries, regardless of the status of land ownership and management; and
- The continuance of the existing ACECs within the Village of Huslia's traditional hunting and fishing and gathering areas.

ACEC Evaluation Table	Huslia
General Location:	*See Figure 3 (Appendix A)*
General Description:	Traditional harvest lands and waters used by the Huslia Tribe; some of the major watersheds are Dulbi River, Pah River, Hogatza River, Pick River, Dakli River, Billy Hawk Creek, Klikhtentotzna Creek, and other streams and sloughs mostly in the Koyukuk River drainage.
Values Considered:	*See rationale above*
Relevant Value: 1. A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: The nominated ACEC contains no known cultural resources. Based upon terrain and previous surveys in the Nulato Hills, the area has a low potential for archaeological sites. There is one known paleontological resource within the nominated ACEC.
Relevant Value: 2. A fish or wildlife resource	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** Wildlife: Yes Rationale for Determination: The proposed area is within Game Management Unit 24D and also borders Game Management Units 23 and 21D. The area includes shrub and boreal forest and open tundra habitats for moose, caribou, brown and black bear, wolf, and wolverine. These species are important to subsistence users from the villages of Huslia, Buckland, Koyukuk, Nulato, and Galena, and are found throughout the region. Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: The nominated Huslia ACEC does not meet the relevant criteria for fish. No confirmation of species presence can be confirmed. The Anadromous Waters Catalog does not identify the South Fork of the Huslia River as being anadromous waters. The ADFG Fresh Inventory does not list any inventory information for the South Fork of the Huslia River. It is likely that the river has Dolly Varden, Arctic grayling, and whitefish species present, but few or possibly no surveys have been conducted to verify fish species present. An internal memorandum to the file from (Webb 1995) recommended that this area not receive any special management designation, such as an ACEC, and also identified that the BLM managed portion (i.e., the South Fork Huslia River) likely has no aquatic subsistence values.
Relevant Value: 3. A natural	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?**

ACEC Evaluation Table	Huslia
process or system	n/a Rationale for Determination: All ecological processes were suggested as the natural process that supports ancient ties to the land for traditional harvest practices. The associated BSWI RMP draft decisions will provide a range of alternatives for public input regarding many ecological processes related to fisheries, wildlife, water, forest, and other resources.
Relevant Value: 4. Natural Hazards	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more relevant values?** n/a Rationale for Determination: Climate change was suggested as a natural hazard that may affect traditional harvest species, and the BLM agrees with the statement that the Tribe "…must work with land managers to try and understand the changes and potential threats and plan for them as best we can with an eye to preparing for and adapting, while maintaining our traditional way of life."
Important Value: More than locally significant	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: The wildlife species found in the area are common throughout the planning area and the state. Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: The nominated Huslia ACEC does not meet the importance criteria for more than locally significant. The ADFG Anadromous Waters Catalog does not list any anadromous fish present in the South Fork of the Huslia River. Fish species and habitat are likely present for Dolly Varden, Arctic grayling, and whitefish, but are not confirmed. These species are common throughout the planning area.
Important Value: Is fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique,	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC. Wildlife: No

ACEC Evaluation Table	Huslia
endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change	Rationale for Determination: There are no threatened or endangered species in the nominated area. There are no species that are unique to the area. Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: Fish species that are likely present but not confirmed in the watershed would be common to areas throughout the planning area.
Important Value: Has been recognized as warranting protection	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** Cultural: No Rationale for Determination: There are no known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC. Wildlife: No Rationale for Determination: The wildlife species found in this nominated 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. Fisheries: No Rationale for Determination: There are no known endangered or threatened fish species identified in the nominated ACEC.
Important Value: Has qualities which warrant highlighting to satisfy management concerns about safety and public welfare	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a
Important Value: Significant threat to human life/safety or	**Does the nominated ACEC contain one or more of the important values?** n/a

ACEC Evaluation Table	Huslia
property	
Summary of Important Values:	**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. In addition, when wildlife populations important to subsistence are low or in decline, federal lands can be closed to non-qualified subsistence users under the recommendations of the Western Interior or Northwest Arctic RACs, with harvest limits set by the Federal Subsistence Board. Cultural: The AHRS and BLM files were consulted for known cultural resources within the nominated ACEC. Because the nomination indicates that the area may qualify as eligible for the NRHP as a TCP, the BLM can use Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act to protect cultural resources of importance to tribes. If the Huslia Tribal Council believes that this area qualifies as a TCP, then the BLM can continue to work with them to see if it can be defined and recommended eligible for listing on the NRHP.
Carry forward for consideration in Draft Resource Management Plan?	Cultural resources were found to be neither relevant nor important. Fisheries resources were found to be neither relevant nor important. Wildlife resources were found to be relevant but not important.

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

4.1 Summary of Findings

Table 3 summarizes the findings of the ACEC evaluations from Chapter 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~~ 17 nominated ACECs were found TO MEET both the relevance and importance criteria and are considered potential ACECs; they also are displayed in Figure 7, “ACECs Found to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria in BSWI Planning Area” (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

~~Bonasila River Watershed ACEC~~

6. Anvik Traditional Trapping Area ACEC
7. Unalakleet River Watershed ACEC
8. Tenmile River Watershed ACEC
9. Unalakleet ACEC
10. Inglutalik ACEC
11. Kateel River ACEC
12. Ungalik River ACEC
13. Gisasa River ACEC
14. Shaktoolik River ACEC
15. Tagagawik River ACEC
16. Nulato River ACEC
17. Swift River Whitefish Spawning ACEC

Table 3. Summary of the Existing and Nominated ACECs in BSWI Planning Area and If They Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria

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

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

Area/ Nominated ACEC	Existing / Nominated (Nominator)	Value	Meets Relevance?	Meets Importance?	Meets RNA criteria	Potential ACEC to be Carried Forward to Alternatives Development?
Gisasa River ACEC	Existing (boundary encompasses Koyukuk Tribal Council and the USFWS new Nominations)	Cultural/ Historic **Fish** Wildlife	No **Yes** No	No **Yes** No	N/A	**Yes**
Shaktoolik River ACEC	Existing	Cultural/ Historic **Fish** Wildlife	No **Yes** No	No **Yes** No	N/A	**Yes**
Tagagawik River ACEC	Nominated (Pew Charitable Trust)	**Cultural/ Historic** Fish Wildlife Natural System (Vegetation)	**~~No~~ Yes** No Yes No	**~~No~~ Yes** No No No	N/A	**~~No~~ Yes**
Nulato River ACEC	Nominated (Nulato Tribal Council)	Cultural/ Historic **Fish** Wildlife	No **Yes** Yes	No **Yes** No	N/A	**Yes**
Honhosa River ACEC	Nominated (Koyukuk Tribal Council)	Cultural/ Historic Fish Wildlife	No Yes Yes	No No No	N/A	No
Holy Cross ACEC	Nominated (Holy Cross Village)	Cultural Fish Wildlife	Yes Yes Yes	No No No	N/A	No
Ohogamiut ACEC	Nominated (Ohogamiut Traditional Council)	Cultural Fish Wildlife	Yes Yes Yes	No No No	N/A	No
Whitefish Spawning ACEC	Nominated (USFWS)	Cultural Fish Wildlife	No No No	No No No	N/A	No
Swift River Whitefish Spawning ACEC	Nominated (BLM)	Cultural **Fish** Wildlife	No **Yes** No	No **Yes** No	N/A	**Yes**
Huslia ACEC	Nominated (Huslia Tribal Council)	Cultural Fish Wildlife	No No Yes	No No No	N/A	No

These ~~16~~ 17 potential 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. 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 potential ACECs will decrease or increase as determined by the special management attention required for the particular ACEC resource. The size and management prescriptions for each potential 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 of ACECs Determined TO MEET the Relevance and Importance Criteria in BSWI Planning Area," summarizes the potential ACEC acreages that will likely to change during Draft RMP development.

Table 4. Acres of Existing, Nominated, and Potential ACECs in BSWI Planning Area

ACEC Name	Existing Acres	Nominated Acres	Potential ACEC Acres for Analysis in Draft RMP[a]
Anvik River ACEC (existing)	115,106	0	115,106
Kuskokwim River Raptor Nesting Habitat ACEC (existing)	6,072	0	0
Peregrine Falcon Nesting Habitat ACEC (existing)	8,096	0	0
Drainages of the Unalakleet River ACEC (existing)	415,184	0	415,184
North River ACEC (existing)	137,349	0	137,349
Sheefish ACEC (internally and externally nominated)	0	698,260	698,260
Grayling Area Habitat ACEC (externally nominated)	0	98,682	0
Anvik River Watershed ACEC (externally nominated) (nominated area includes some of the existing Anvik River ACEC)	0	249,607	249,607
Bonasila River Watershed ACEC (externally nominated)	0	291,136	0
Anvik Traditional Trapping Area ACEC (externally nominated)	0	21,699	21,699
Old Anvik Village Area ACEC (externally nominated)	0	60,259	0
Unalakleet River Watershed ACEC (externally nominated (nominated area includes some of the existing Drainages of the Unalakleet River ACEC)	0	251,978	251,978
Egavik Creek Watershed ACEC (externally nominated)	0	60,052	0
Golsovia River Watershed ACEC (externally nominated)	0	21,771	0
Tenmile River Watershed ACEC (externally nominated)	0	36,278	36,278
Unalakleet ACEC (externally nominated) (nominated area includes some of the existing Drainages of the Unalakleet River ACEC and some of the nominated Unalakleet River Watershed ACEC)	0	1,520,015	1,520,015
Box River Treeline RNA ACEC (existing)	13,592	0	0
Inglutalik ACEC (existing)	71,716	0	71,716
Kateel River ACEC (existing: 568,083 acres)	568,083	0	568,083[b]
• **Externally [USFWS] nominated:** 675,627 acres that include some of the existing Kateel River ACEC	0	675,627	675,627[b]
• **Externally [Koyukuk Tribal Council] nominated:**	0	311,658	311,658[b]

ACEC Name	Existing Acres	Nominated Acres	Potential ACEC Acres for Analysis in Draft RMP[a]
311,658 acres that include some of the existing Kateel River ACEC • **Internally nominated:** 308,361 acres of lands not included in the existing Kateel River ACEC; nominated area includes the two externally nominated areas, as well as additional lands that are not within the existing ACEC or externally nominated areas	0	308,361	876,444
Ungalik River ACEC (existing)	112,719	0	112,719
Gisasa River ACEC (existing and externally nominated)	0	278,057	278,057
Shaktoolik River ACEC (existing)	192,591	0	192,591
Tagagawik River ACEC (externally nominated)	0	301,044	301,044
Nulato River ACEC (externally nominated)	0	342,824	342,824
Honhosa River ACEC (externally nominated)	0	93,412	0
Holy Cross ACEC (externally nominated)	0	1,702,030	0
Ohogamiut ACEC (externally nominated)	0	1,634,358	0
Whitefish Spawning ACEC (externally nominated)	0	290,958	0
Swift River Whitefish Spawning ACEC (internally nominated)	0	220,032	220,032
Huslia ACEC (externally nominated)	0	170,763	0
~~5,966,180~~ Total Existing and Nominated ACECs[c] : 11, 279,369	**~~1,641,106~~ 1,640,508**	**~~4,325,074~~ 9,638,861[c]**	
Total Potential ACECs (Determined to Meet Relevance and Importance Criteria)[c]			**~~4,828,851~~ 5,840,903**

[a] Potential ACECs are those that meet the relevance and importance criteria and will be analyzed under one or more alternatives, which may be limited to the current management alternative, in the Draft RMP

[b] These acres are not included in the total potential ACECs because they overlap with and are encompassed by another potential ACEC

[c] Total acres may not be the sum of each separate ACEC due to overlapping acres

~~* 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 BSWI 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.

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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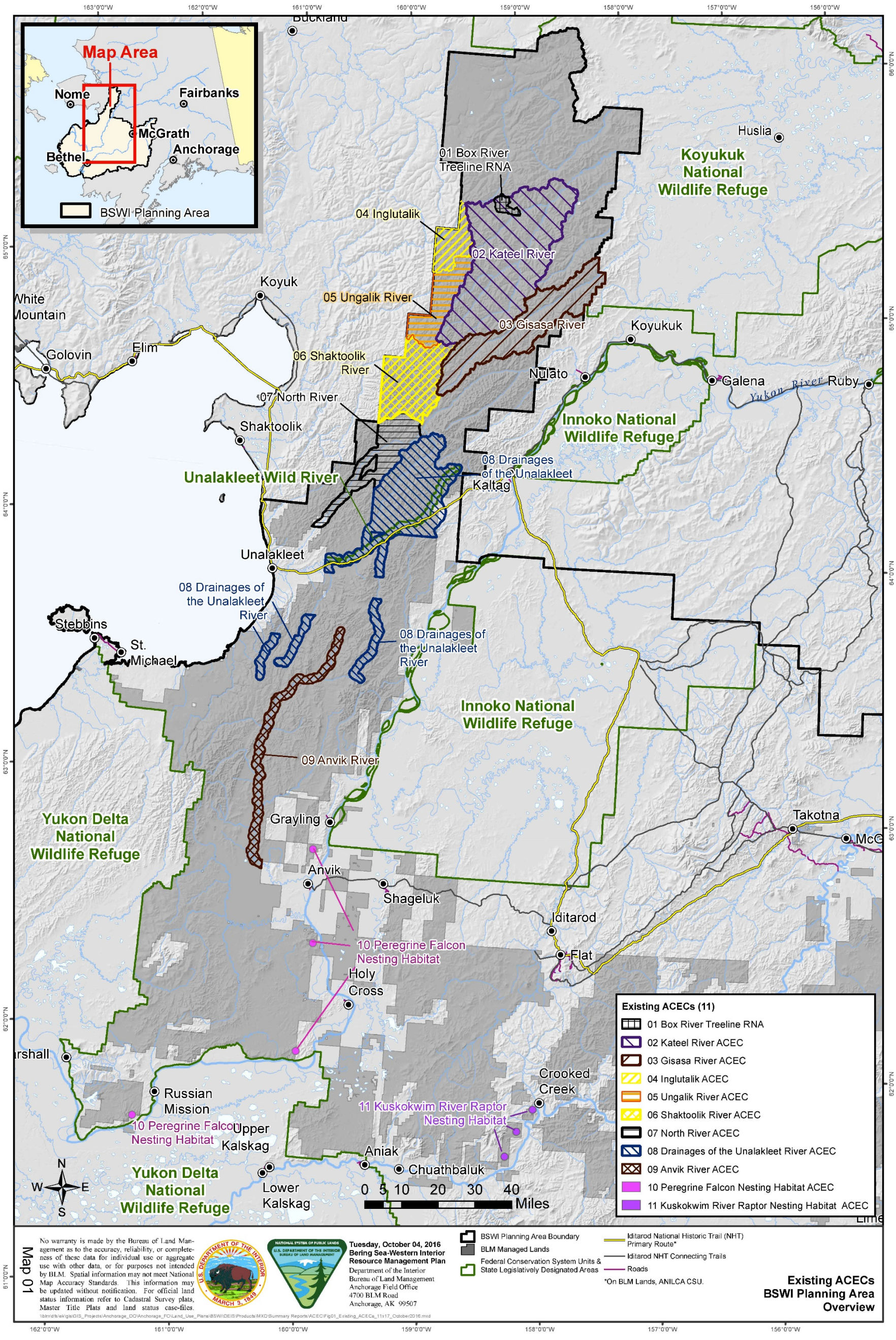

Figure 1. Overview Map of Existing Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) in BSWI Planning Area

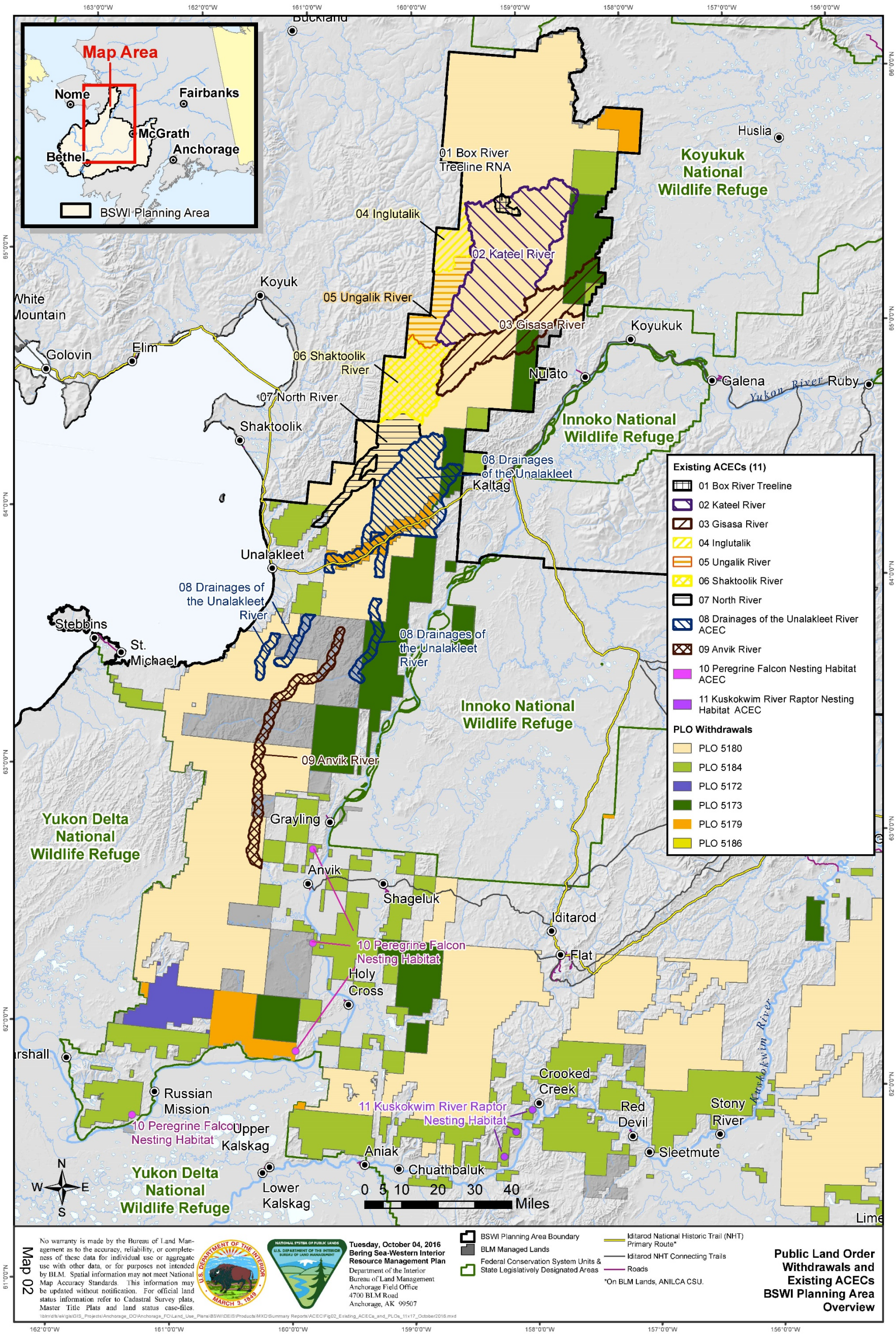

Figure 2. Public Land Order (PLO) Withdrawals for Existing Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) in BSWI Planning Area

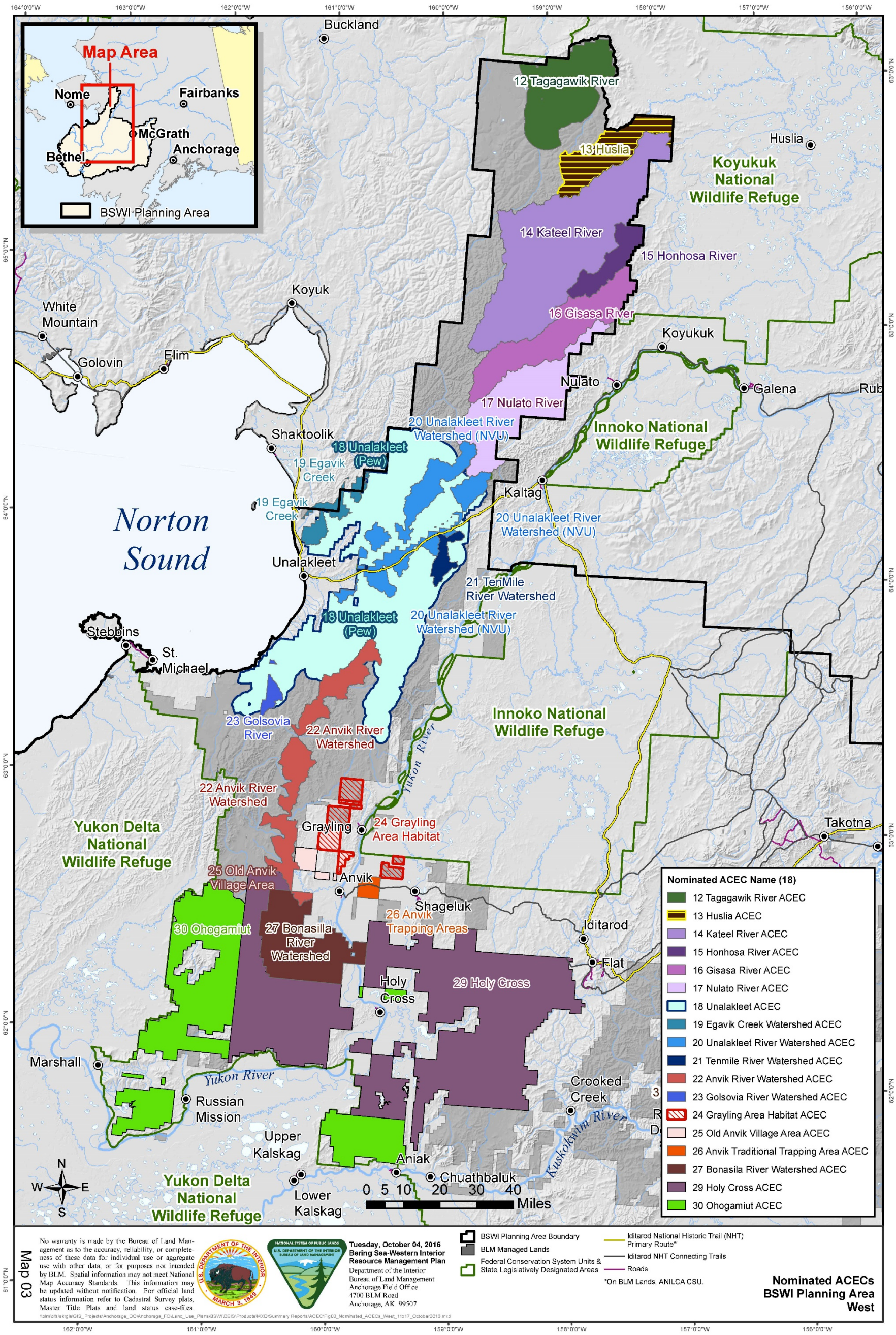

Figure 3. Nominated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) in BSWI Planning Area (West Map)

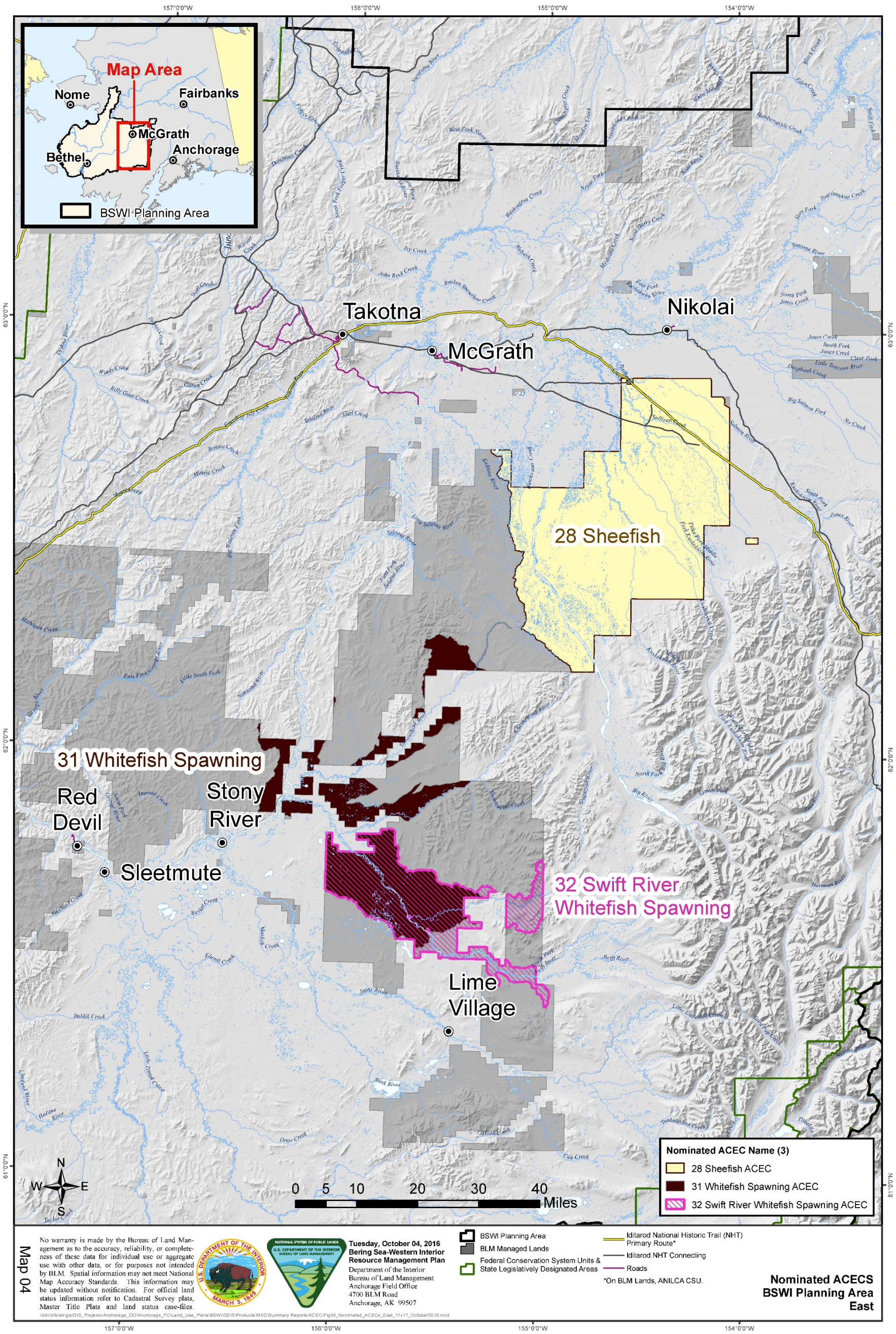

Figure 4. Nominated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) in BSWI Planning Area (East Map)

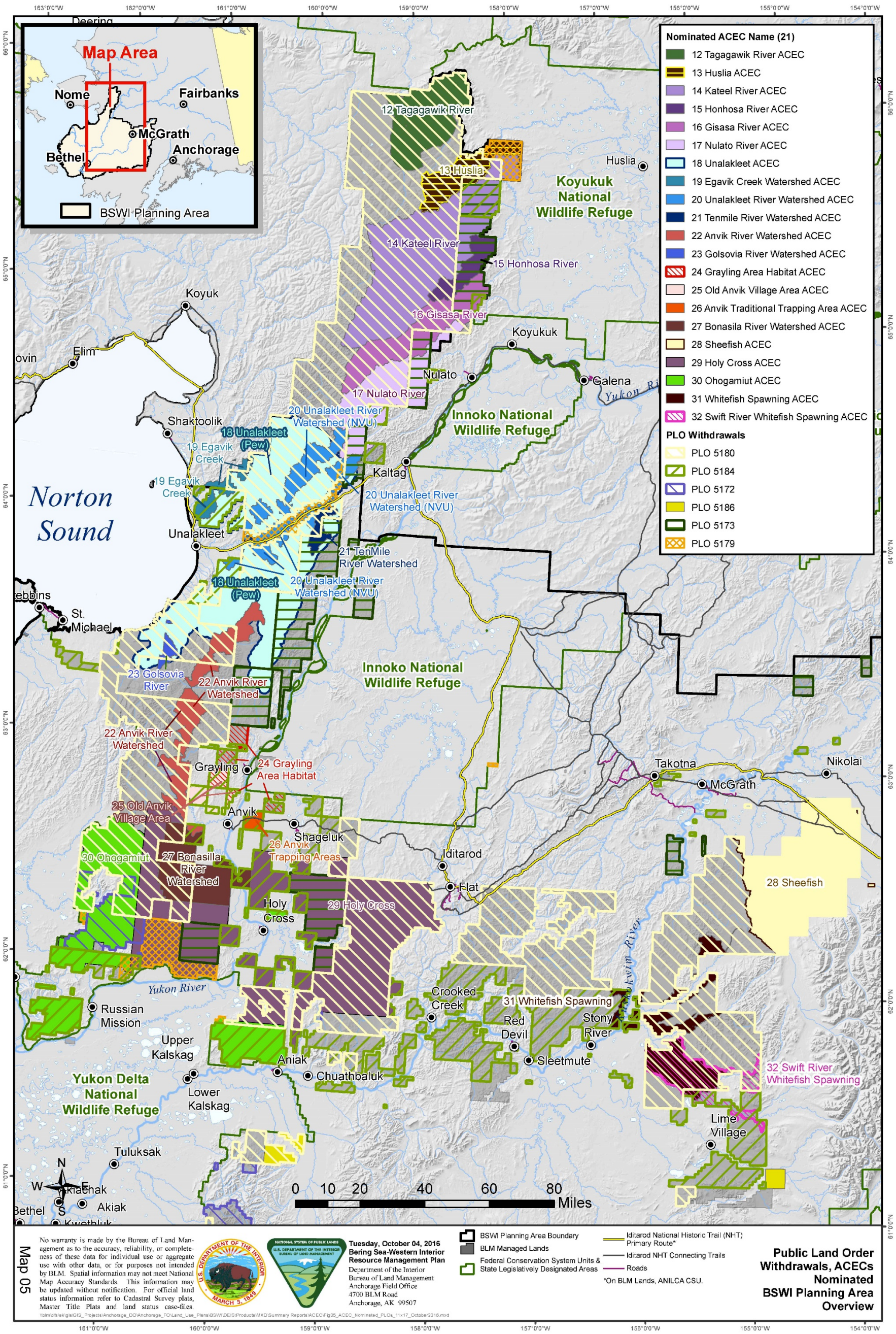

Figure 5. Public Land Order (PLO) Withdrawals for Nominated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) in BSWI Planning Area

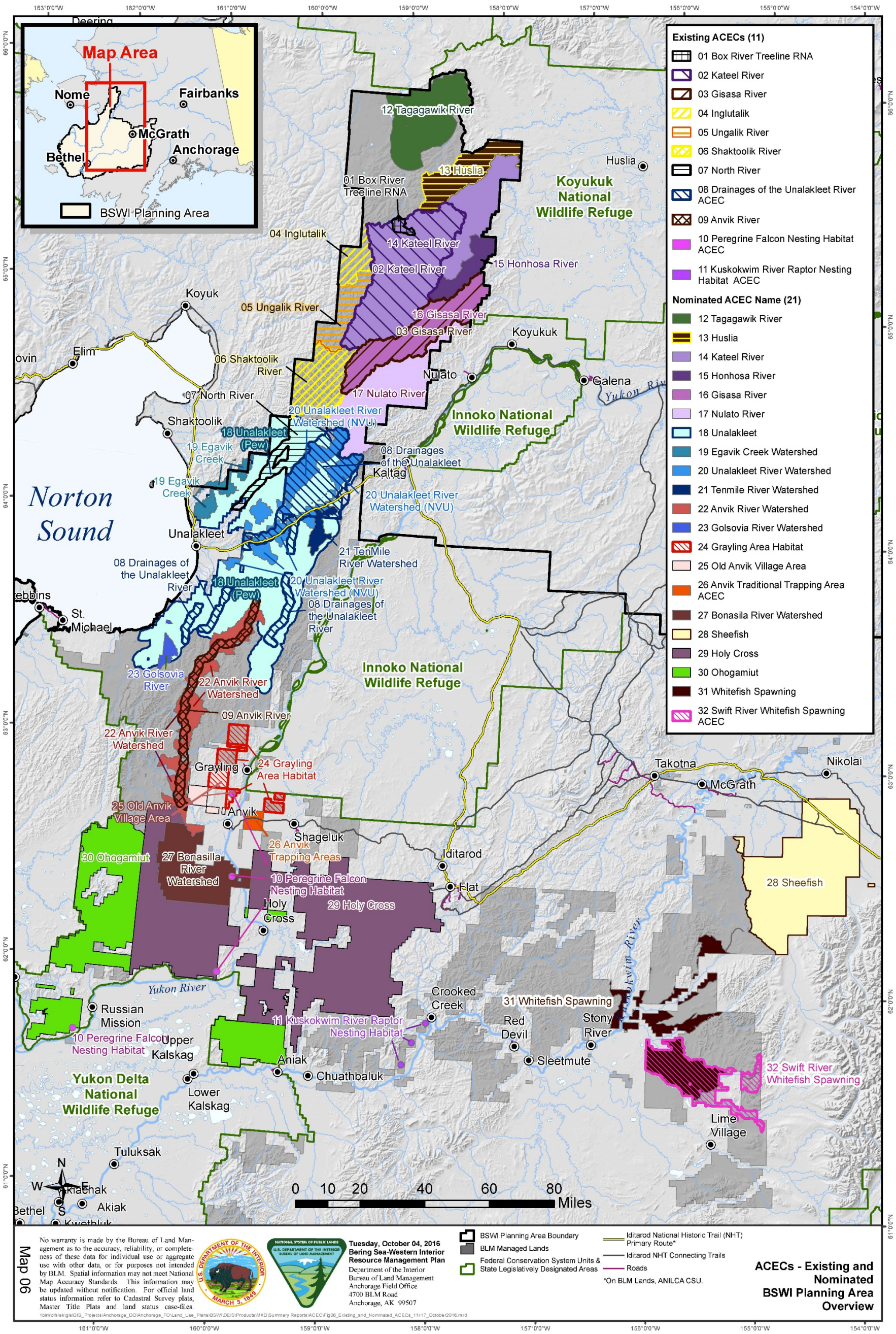

Figure 6. Overview of Existing and Nominated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) in BSWI Planning Area

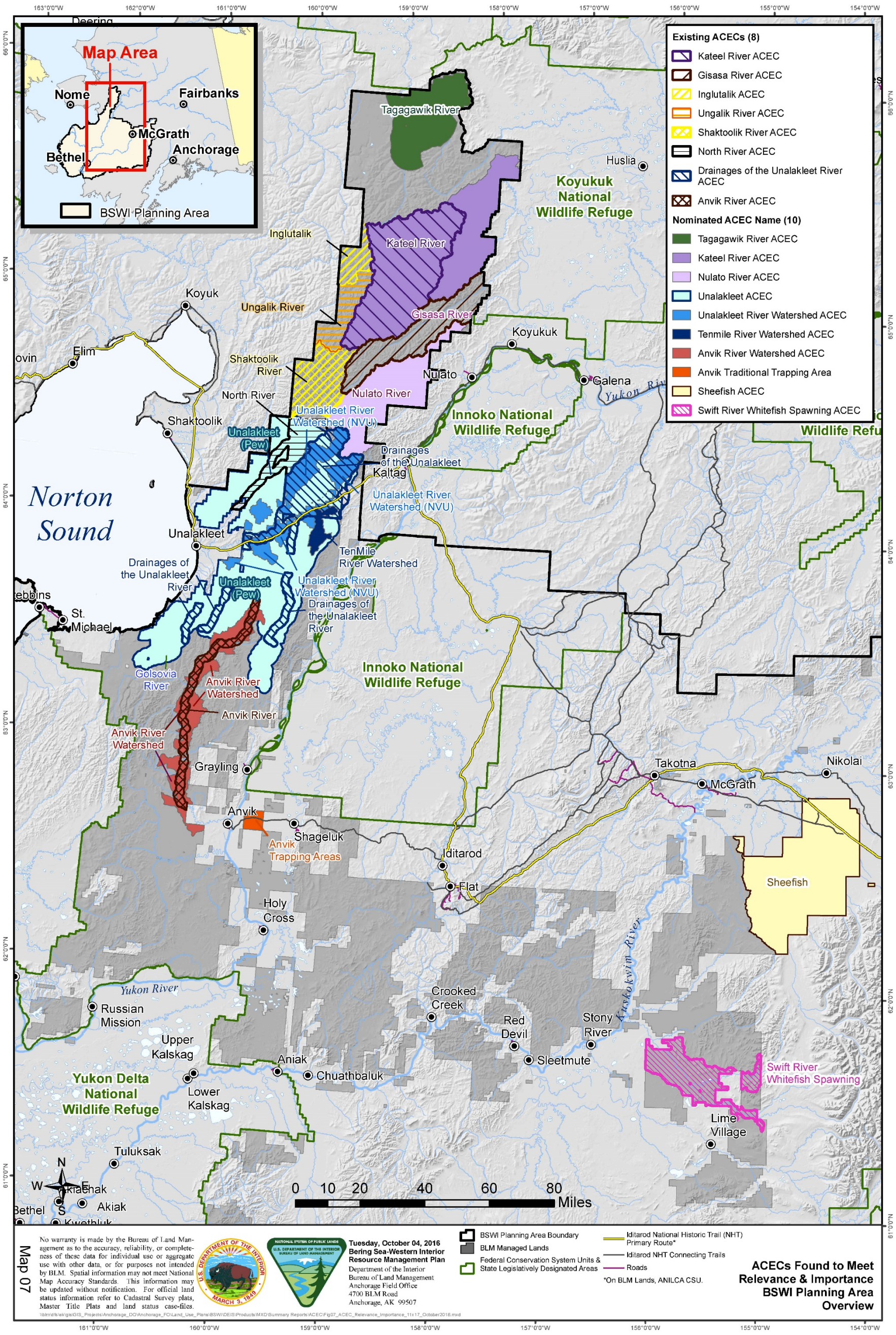

Figure 7. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) Found to Meet the Relevance and Importance Criteria in BSWI Planning Area