



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

# Castner Glacier Recreation Area Management Plan



Glennallen Field Office  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The executive summary provides a detailed overview of this document. Similar information is repeated and expanded upon in subsequent sections.

Castner Glacier is located within the Delta Range Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) and managed by the East Alaska Resource Management Plan (East Alaska RMP) implemented in 2007. The planning area is located 286 road miles from Anchorage and 146 road miles from Fairbanks and offers visitors a chance to explore an active glacier and ice cave. The toe of the Castner Glacier is just over a mile from the Richardson Highway, making it easily accessible for commercial, private, and organized group recreational users.

Since the signing of the East Alaska RMP, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Glenallen Field Office (GFO) has been monitoring and documenting impacts to the Castner Glacier site and wider planning area. Due to increasing popularity, with approximately 12,000 visitors accessing the site in 2023, the BLM is developing a Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP) to manage the area for a diversity of recreational opportunities and maintain or enhance the primitive and semi-primitive recreation experience. The RAMP was developed with the BLM GFO in collaboration with the Outdoor Recreation Planner (ORP). The process included an Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) Meeting, Scoping Meeting, and 30-day Scoping Period to review the project's background, identify issues and alternatives, and recommend objectives and management actions.

The following provides a detailed description of each section within the RAMP:

- **Introduction.** This section summarizes the planning area and management issues, the goals, objectives, and land use allocations of the East Alaska RMP, RAMP objectives, and current recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) classes and visual resource management (VRM) classes to guide the development of the Castner Glacier RAMP.
- **Management Actions.** This section describes the seven proposed management actions. Together, these actions provide a framework for the BLM to achieve the desired outcomes of the RAMP and manage the area as a primitive, semi-primitive, and roaded natural recreational experience.
- **Administration.** This section outlines administrative measures BLM will undertake to implement the management actions, including the issuance of recreation permits and lands and realty authorizations, implementation of use restrictions and supplementary rules, partnerships or agreements, business plans and data management protocols, priorities for implementation, and a high-level overview of costs.
- **Information & Education.** This section identifies strategies to inform and educate users within the Castner Glacier planning area on the general hazards of the area, leave no trace (LNT) principles, pack in and pack out guidelines, the winter motorized closure, and commercial use. This will include dispersal of information using maps and brochures, the BLM website, outreach efforts, interpretation and environmental education, and any signs and infrastructure planned for the area.
- **Monitoring.** This section describes tactics the BLM will administer to monitor the Castner Glacier planning area to ensure that the management actions are meeting the intent of the recreation management zones (RMZ) and protect the recreation setting characteristics (RSC). On-site monitoring will consider visitor use patterns, safety and security, and satisfaction and demand.

## OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

The objectives are site-specific, on-the-ground management strategies that provide a framework for the BLM to manage visitor experiences, various user groups, recreation permits, and other land uses within the planning area. The objectives align with the goals and objectives established in the East Alaska RMP for the management of the Delta Range SRMA and aim to address impacts from concentrated use, conflicts with large groups, and unmanaged commercial uses. The RAMP also proposes seven actions that are analyzed in the associated Environmental Assessment (EA). The objectives and actions will promote the benefits and experiences for an area managed for a primitive, semi-primitive, and roaded natural recreation experience; manage the various uses within the Castner Glacier planning area to protect the resources, promote the safety of all public land users, and minimize conflicts; and implement a process to manage recreation permits and other land uses to mitigate damage to resources and conflicts with other users.

### Objective 1 – Visitor Experience

The intent of this objective is to delineate RMZs from the existing ROS classes, further define the desired RSCs, and implement supplementary rules within the Castner Glacier planning area to manage for a diversity of recreational opportunities that will maintain or enhance the primitive, semi-primitive, and roaded natural recreational experience and manage uses to protect and prevent damage to public land resources.

There are three proposed actions to meet visitor experience needs within the Castner Glacier planning area. These actions include delineating RMZs within the Castner Glacier planning area from the existing ROS classes; further defining the desired RSCs to provide the context for the landscape's physical, social, and operational components; and implementing supplementary rules to maintain a diversity of recreational opportunities that will maintain or enhance the primitive, semi-primitive, and roaded natural recreational experience and manage uses to prevent damage to public land resources.

*Table 1: Visitor Experience – List of Actions*

Action	Existing Management Outcome	Desired Management Outcome
<p><b>Delineate RMZs from the existing ROS classes</b> See Section 2.1.1 for more detail.</p>	<p>Existing ROS classes designated by the Delta Range SRMA are Roaded Natural, Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized, and Primitive. These classes were tailored within the East Alaska RMP to fit the physical, social, and operational components and settings of recreation resources and user activities accessible within the boundaries of the GFO.</p>	<p>The existing ROS classes provide a baseline to delineate the proposed RMZs that will further define the activities, experiences, and benefits for each zone and will prescribe positive outcomes gained from engaging in recreational experiences unique to the RMZs.</p>

<p><b>Define desired RSCs</b> See Section 2.1.2 for more detail.</p>	<p>Prescribed RSCs are defined by the ROS classes designated by the Delta Range SRMA.</p>	<p>Desired RSCs for the physical and social qualities and operational conditions will better match the settings and experiences recreationists desire with available opportunities and provide the basis for considering recreational values in the planning process.</p>
<p><b>Implement supplementary rules</b> See Section 2.1.3 for more detail.</p>	<p>There is no enforcement level management for large groups or undesirable uses in the cave or at the cave entrance.</p>	<p><b>Group size limits:</b> maximum of 10 people per group. <b>Limited or Prohibited Uses:</b> No drones; no fires; no fireworks; no carving, writing, or defacing the glacial ice; no artificial lights except for navigational purposes; and no ice climbing, suspension of ropes, anchors, or other implements in the cave or within 100 feet of the cave entrance. <b>Commercial Users Identification:</b> commercial operators must identify their transport vehicle via a BLM provided hang tag or placard.</p>

**Objective 2 – Access**

The intent of this objective is to apply off-highway vehicle (OHV) designations and define motorized limitations within the Castner Glacier planning area in support of Travel Management Area Prescriptions (TMAP) prescribed in the East Alaska RMP. Managing access will help prevent the unmanaged proliferation of OHV trails and damage to resources, provide a diversity of recreational opportunities, and maintain a primitive, semi-primitive, and roaded natural recreation experience.

There are two proposed actions to meet access needs within the Castner Glacier planning area. The proposed actions will manage motorized access to the Castner Glacier planning area by further defining the 'limited' travel designation applied to the Delta Range SRMA in the East Alaska RMP and applying conditions of limitations for designated roads, trails, and routes in the planning area.

Table 2: Access – List of Actions

Action	Existing Management Outcome	Desired Management Outcome
<p><b>Define Limitations on OHVs</b> See Section 2.2.1 for more detail.</p>	<p>The Delta Range SRMA has a seasonal closure to snowmachines from October 15 through May 15 or when there is 12 inches average snowfall or 6 inches of frost.</p>	<p><b>OHVs:</b> Extend the seasonal closure from October 15 through May 15 to include OHVs. OHV use will be permitted on the north primitive road and the Castner Creek primitive route outside of the seasonal closure.</p> <p><b>E-bikes:</b> will be permitted on the north primitive road and the Castner Creek primitive route outside of the seasonal closure.</p> <p><b>Federal Subsistence Access:</b> No limitations will apply to motorized access for Federal subsistence purposes.</p>
<p><b>Designate Trails and Conditions of Limitations</b> See Section 2.2.2 for more detail.</p>	<p>There is no current inventory or designation of roads, trails, and routes within the planning area.</p>	<p><b>South non-motorized trail:</b> non-motorized year-round.</p> <p><b>North primitive road:</b> non-motorized October 15 through May 15 or when there is 12 inches average snowfall or 6 inches of frost.</p> <p><b>North non-motorized primitive route:</b> non-motorized year-round.</p> <p><b>Castner Creek primitive route:</b> non-motorized October 15 through May 15 or when there is 12 inches average snowfall or 6 inches of frost. Subject to a maximum of 3000 lbs. gross vehicle weight (GVW).</p>

### Objective 3 – Permits and Authorizations

The intent of this objective is to manage special recreation permits and lands and realty authorizations to provide a balance between varying resource programs and resource protection to best serve the public, manage congestions at trailheads and the glacial ice cave and decrease user conflicts within the planning area.

There are two proposed actions to meet permit and authorization needs within the Castner Glacier planning area. The proposed actions will implement a permit process at Castner Glacier to balance the demand for commercial recreation opportunities and requests for lands and realty authorizations with potential impacts to the recreational resources, private recreation users, and proposed RSCs.



Table 3: Permits and Authorizations – List of Actions

Action	Existing Management Outcome	Desired Management Outcome
<p><b>Manage Special Recreation Permits (SRP)</b> See Section 2.3.1 for more detail.</p>	<p>There is no cap on the quantity of SRPs that may be issued by the GFO. For permitted commercial operators, there is no limit to the number of tours that may be offered annually or any limitations on groups sizes.</p>	<p><b>Commercial SRPs:</b> One of two options will be considered and selected. 10 commercial SRPs will be issued or active at any one-time. Under this scenario, commercial groups will be limited to a maximum of 10 people. 15 commercial SRPs will be issued or active at any one time. Under this scenario, commercial groups will be limited to a maximum of 7 people. <b>Competitive SRPs:</b> considered on a case-by-case basis. <b>Vending Permits:</b> will only be considered in the Roaded Natural Zone (RNZ). <b>Organized Group:</b> considered on a case-by-case basis.</p>
<p><b>Implement Lands and Realty Authorizations</b> See Section 2.3.2 for more detail.</p>	<p>Current management does not provide a framework to regulate or address military training exercises, science and research projects, commercial filming and photography, or other allowable uses. All actions are subject to subsequent NEPA analysis and handled on an individual basis.</p>	<p><b>Science and Research:</b> three ongoing permits at any one time. <b>Military Training Exercises:</b> one ongoing permit at any one time. <b>Commercial Filming and Photography:</b> one ongoing permit at any one time. <b>Other:</b> BLM will retain the right to grant a right-of-way (ROW) when doing so is in the public interest.</p>

# 1 INTRODUCTION

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Castner Glacier has emerged as an in-state and international tourist destination in the last decade due to exposure on social media and publicity in magazine articles and television features. Located 286 road miles from Anchorage and 146 road miles from Fairbanks, the Castner Glacier planning area offers visitors a chance to explore an active glacier and ice cave in an environment relatively close (1.5 miles) to a state-maintained highway without costs of additional transportation and the need for guides.

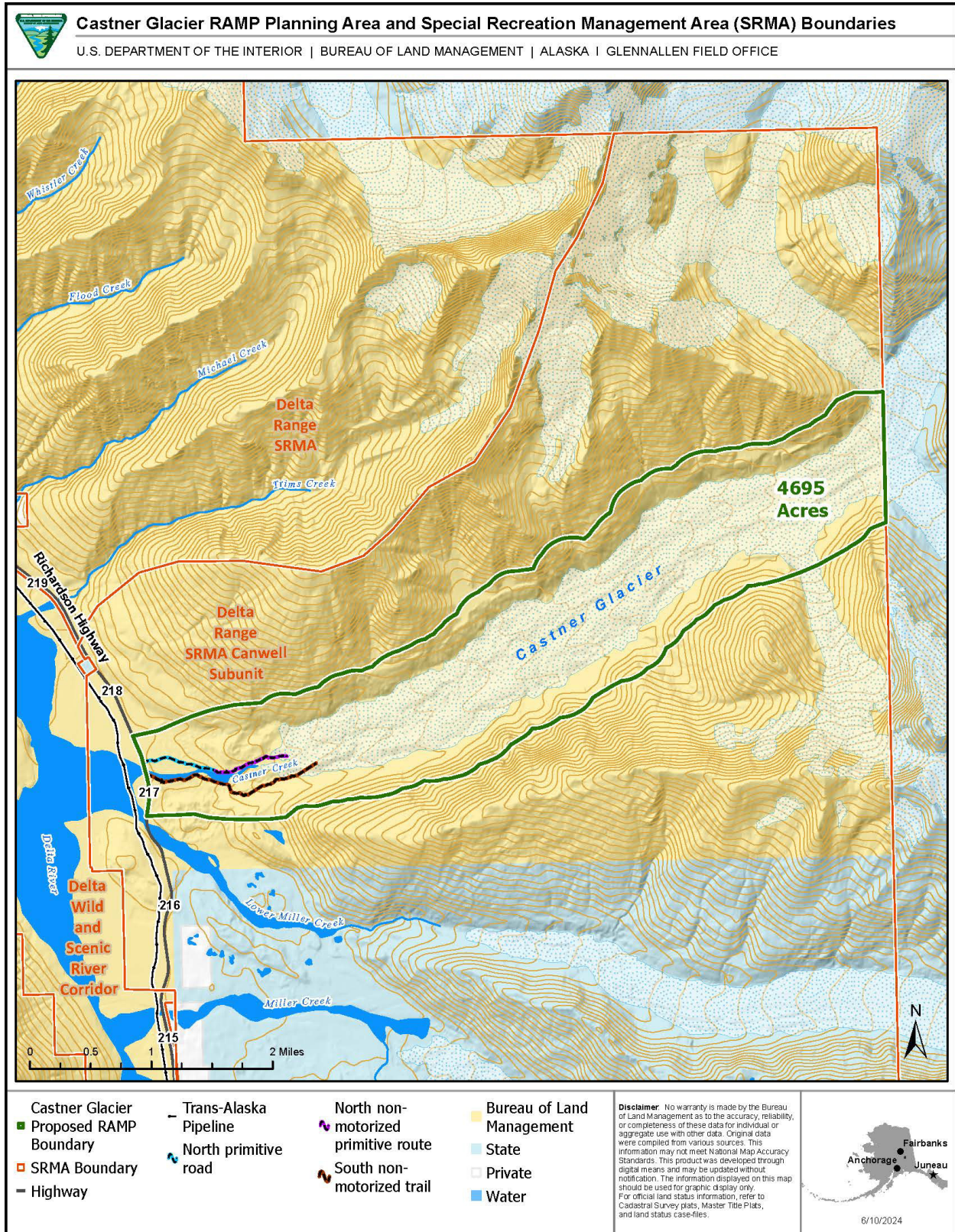
In 2007, the East Alaska RMP was signed and implemented as the base land use plan for public lands administered by the BLM GFO. The Castner Glacier planning area is a 4,695-acre unit located within lands managed by the East Alaska RMP and the Delta Range SRMA (Figure 1). BLM staff have been monitoring and documenting impacts at Castner Glacier since the signing of the East Alaska RMP, although the remote location has made active and consistent management challenging. In 2023, BLM estimates that there were around 12,000 people who recreated at Castner Glacier, with approximately 75% of recreation use happening between November and April and heavy concentrations in March and April.

Goals and objectives of the East Alaska RMP for the Delta Range SRMA that directly relate to the Castner Glacier planning area include managing recreation to maintain a diversity of recreational opportunities; maintaining the existing ROS classes designated for the Delta Range SRMA; designating specific trails and further defining conditions of limitations for motorized use; maintaining the seasonal closure to snowmachines from October 15 through May 15 or when there is 12 inches average snowfall or 6 inches of frost; minimal or no development at trailheads accessing areas managed for a primitive or semi-primitive experience; prohibiting helicopter supported commercial activities in areas managed for a primitive or semi-primitive recreation experience; and mitigating resource impacts and reducing user conflicts.

There is a gravel pullout for parking a quarter mile south of Castner Creek, west of the Richardson Highway, and small gravel areas at the corners of the Castner Creek bridge. An unimproved road north of the bridge travels approximately half a mile east of the Richardson Highway. It then transitions to a footpath with several approaches and routes to the glacier. A non-maintained trail south of Castner Creek leads to the toe of the glacier and ice cave. Visitor activities include hiking, camping, snowshoeing, skiing, mountaineering, wildlife viewing, and exploring a glacial ice cave.

The BLM is developing a RAMP for the Castner Glacier planning area to define RMZs, RSCs, management actions and monitoring protocols, information and education opportunities, and additional rules or regulations regarding visitor use and visitor actions. The RAMP reflects issues raised by the public, engaged stakeholders, and BLM employees over a 16-year monitoring period (2006-2022), focusing on matters brought to the BLM's attention in the past 3-4 years. The degree to which specific management decisions identified in the RAMP are carried out will depend upon national priorities, available personnel, funding opportunities, future monitoring, and ongoing or future concerns voiced by users of the Castner Glacier planning area. The BLM will develop an EA to accompany the RAMP pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to disclose the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts resulting from the proposed action. Management actions not identified within the RAMP or the accompanying EA documents will need to be analyzed in future NEPA documents prior to implementation.

Figure 1. Castner Glacier RAMP Planning Area and SRMA Boundaries



## 1.1 PURPOSE OF THE RAMP

The purpose of the Castner Glacier RAMP is to serve as a step-down planning document tiering from the East Alaska RMP to guide recreation management within the Castner Glacier planning area. The RAMP will identify a long-term vision and establish on-the-ground implementation actions to address changes in use patterns in the area not anticipated during the development of the East Alaska RMP. The RAMP proposes to carry out these implementation actions in the Castner Glacier planning area to meet the goals, objectives, and land use allocation decisions outlined in the East Alaska RMP. The proposed action is necessitated by increased recreational use trends, associated user impacts, and use conflicts. Actions identified within the Castner Glacier RAMP will be consistent with the management framework prescribed in the East Alaska RMP and Delta Range SRMA and will manage the area for roaded natural, primitive, semi-primitive non-motorized, and roaded natural recreation opportunities.

## 1.2 LAND USE PLAN CONFORMANCE

Management actions identified in this plan are consistent with the East Alaska RMP and are designed to conform with the documents, statutes, and planning documents identified in this section. The RAMP has been prepared in accordance with NEPA and its implementing regulations.

### 1.2.1 East Alaska RMP

The proposed action is consistent with the following goals, objectives, and land use allocations described in the East Alaska RMP for management of the Delta Range SRMA:

#### ***II. Management Decisions; D. Cultural Resources; D-1: Goal:***

Protect and preserve important cultural resources. Expand opportunities for scientific and educational uses of these resources.

#### ***II. Management Decisions; D. Cultural Resources; D-2-a: Objective (Inventory):***

Reduce imminent threats from natural or human-caused deterioration, or potential conflict with other resource uses, by identifying priority geographic areas for new field inventory, based upon a probability for unrecorded significant resources.

#### ***II. Management Decisions; D. Cultural Resources; D-2-b: Management Actions (Inventory):***

1. Inventories needed on selected high probability areas that respond to planned management activities, including: ... d) areas identified as "limited" for OHV use, with first priority on unencumbered BLM lands; ...

#### ***II. Management Decisions; D. Cultural Resources; D-3-c: Monitoring (Protection):***

Where inventory has been conducted and baseline information obtained on site condition, a representative number of sites will be monitored on an annual basis to identify any potential adverse impacts that might occur and identify trends in resource condition and/or deterioration, and to determine whether any actions taking place in the area are causing detrimental changes to the cultural values.

#### ***II. Management Decisions; I. Lands and Realty; I-1: Goal:***

- Provide a balance between land use (rights-of-way, land use permits, leases and sales) and resource protection that best serves the public at large.

- Provide support to other BLM programs to protect and enhance resources (BLM 2007, p. 19).

***II. Management Decisions; M. Recreation; M-1. Goal:***

Manage recreation to maintain a diversity of recreational opportunities (BLM 2007, p. 34).

***II. Management Decisions; M. Recreation; M-2. Allocations; 5. Delta Range Area:***

This area would be **designated a SRMA...Objectives** for the area would be to maintain the existing recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) classes, which include primitive, semi-primitive non-motorized, semi-primitive motorized, and roaded natural. The area would be designated as **“limited” to OHVs**, with implementation-level consideration given to designated trails and maintenance of some non-motorized trails. **BLM-managed portions of the Fels, Canwell, Castner, and McCallum Creek glaciers and drainages would be designated as closed to snowmachines... from 10/15 – 5/15.** Snowmachines in these areas would be permitted to access subsistence hunting... Minimal or no development will be considered at trailheads that access areas managed for a primitive or semi-primitive recreation experience. **No helicopter-supported commercial activities** would be permitted in areas managed for a primitive recreation experience (BLM 2007, p. 38).

***II. Management Decisions; M. Recreation; M-3: Management Actions:***

2. Authorize special recreation permits in accordance with Special Recreation Permit Handbook 2930-1 (BLM 2007, p. 39).

3. Manage special recreation permits in accordance with Federal regulations, special stipulations, and established terms and conditions (BLM 2007, p. 39).

***II. Management Decisions; M. Recreation; M-4: Implementation Planning***

2. Implementation plans will include travel management and describe specific trail limitations and designations (BLM 2007, p. 39).

4. Implementation plans, where necessary, will determine general visitor use or commercial limits. These will be based on achievement of SRMA objectives. If necessary, assessment of visitor recreation experiences, tolerance for impacts, and benefits will be conducted through user surveys or benefits-based analysis (BLM 2007, p. 39).

***II. Management Decisions; M. Recreation; M-5: Monitoring:***

Monitoring of recreation resources will continue to occur throughout the planning area with emphasis placed on developed recreation sites and SRMAs. Monitoring will include regular patrols to check on signing, visitor use, recreation use-related impacts, and user conflicts. Monitoring will also emphasize identification of areas where there may be problems with compliance with rules and regulations resulting in user conflicts or resource damage. Actual visitor and/or vehicle counts will be documented at all developed sites as sites are visited or based on campground host reports or campground fee payments. These numbers will then be used to validate recreation use trends...

Monitoring of [SRPs] will be conducted for compliance with terms, conditions, and special stipulations, as well as annual monitoring and evaluation of compliance with administrative requirements. Periodic assessments will be made to ensure that uses in SRMAs are consistent with their prescribed recreation opportunity classes... (BLM 2007, p. 40).

***II. Management Decisions; T. Travel Management and OHV Use; T-1. Goals (OHVs)***

- Manage trails to provide access to public lands, recreation, and subsistence opportunities.

- Manage trails to provide a diversity of recreation experiences and opportunities, including motorized and non-motorized.
- Manage trails to minimize resource impacts and reduce user conflicts.
- Manage trails with an emphasis on education where appropriate.
- Manage OHV use associated with permitted and development activities to provide for access while protecting resources (BLM 2007, P.46).

***II. Management Decisions; T. Travel Management and OHV Use; T-3 Implementation-level Planning (OHVs):***

Each area designated as “limited” or “closed” to OHVs would have an implementation-level plan completed (see schedule, Table 1). This plan would show a complete inventory of trails in the area, describe specific resource concerns or conflicts, and describe specific designated trails and conditions of limitations (seasonal, weight, or vehicle class, etc) ... These plans would describe tools necessary for implementation (method of signing specific trails, trailhead development, education/interpretation, map production, and law enforcement). These plans would identify and prioritize specific maintenance needs, as well as opportunities for trail development or loops, both motorized and non-motorized... (BLM 2007, P.47).

***II. Management Decisions; T. Travel Management and OHV Use; T-4 Travel Management Area Prescriptions (OHVs and Roads); Delta Range Area (including Delta Mountains sub-unit)***

*(a) RMP Decisions (Delta Range)*

This area would be designated as “limited” to OHVs. Limitations will be considered in order to prevent unmanaged proliferation of OHV trails and to maintain existing recreation experiences in the area. In order to maintain an existing non-motorized winter recreation experience in rugged, glaciated terrain, the Delta Mountains Sub-unit (labeled A on Map 13) would be closed to snowmachine use, though access to subsistence resources would be allowed. Seasonal closure would begin on October 15 or when there is 12 inches average snowfall or 6 inches of frost. Seasonal closure would run until May 15... OHV use for resource development will be permitted consistent with Required Operating Procedures... Retention of temporary roads would be considered in areas managed for a roaded natural recreation experience (BLM 2007, p. 49).

*(b) Implementation-level Considerations (Delta Range)*

OHV use would be limited to designated trails, which would be located to minimize resource damage; maintain primitive, semi-primitive, and roaded natural recreation experience; and facilitate maintenance of designated trails. Non-motorized hiking trails may be considered off the Richardson Highway or in the Jarvis Creek area (BLM 2007, p. 49).

***II. Management Decisions; T. Travel Management and OHV Use; T-5: Management Actions (OHVs and Roads):***

1. Trail inventory and assessment work will continue, with an emphasis on BLM public lands (unencumbered) designated as “limited” to OHVs. Inventory and assessment will be necessary in these areas to identify all existing trails and assess trail density and resource impacts. This information will be used in implementation-level designation of specific trails. Inventory and assessment information will also be used to prioritize trail maintenance needs.
2. Through contract and survey, characterize trail users, their perception of resource impacts associated with trails (summer and winter), their tolerance of such impacts, user displacement, and tolerance of trail management actions or regulations. Use this information in site-specific implementation decisions regarding identification,

construction, or closure of trails. Priority for this work would be Delta Wild and Scenic River, followed by proposed Bering Glacier RNA, followed by any proposed SRMAs.

3. Permitted activities and uses that involve OHV use would contain stipulations stating that OHV use would be consistent with management in limited and closed areas. If necessary, permitted cross-country travel would be stipulated in a manner that minimizes impacts (i.e., winter use or low ground pressure tires)...
4. Current BLM policy is to defer any processing of R.S. 2477 assertions except where there is a demonstrated and compelling need to make a determination. Land use planning decisions do not affect valid R.S. 2477 rights or future assertions; however, if a route should be recognized, the BLM would consider it as a designated or existing trail where it crosses BLM-managed lands.
5. All OHV management considered in implementation planning will be consistent with section 811 of [Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act] ANILCA, which allows for "appropriate use for subsistence purposes of snowmobiles, motorboats, and other means of surface transportation traditionally employed for such purposes by local residents, subject to reasonable regulation." The following would be employed in implementation-level planning to ensure consistency with section 811: a) Distinction (by area) between recreational and subsistence uses; and b) Allowances in areas limited to OHVs for subsistence use, which may include travel off existing or designated trails for game retrieval, use of classes of vehicles otherwise restricted, and lifting of seasonal restrictions during subsistence hunting seasons (BLM 2007, pg. 53).

***II. Management Decisions; T. Travel Management and OHV Use; T-6: Monitoring (OHVs and Roads):***

Trail inventory and assessment work will continue, as described above. Currently, approximately 1,000 out of an anticipated 1,200 miles of trail have been GPS'ed. This data will be used as a baseline for future monitoring purposes and to determine future trends in trail proliferation and density.

Travel management and OHV use monitoring within the planning area will focus on compliance with specific route and area designation and restrictions, with primary emphasis on those routes or areas causing the highest levels of user conflicts or adverse impacts to resources. The secondary focus will be to establish trends in trail proliferation and density, as discussed above. Various methods of monitoring may be employed including aerial monitoring, ground patrol, and appropriate methods of remote surveillance such as traffic counters, etc. Route or area closures will be regularly monitored for compliance (BLM 2007, pg. 54).

***II. Management Decisions; V. Visual Resources; V-1: Goal***

Manage scenic values in accordance with the objectives established for VRM classes (BLM 2007, p. 55).

***II. Management Decisions; V. Visual Resources; V-3: Management***

Use the visual resource contrast rating system during project level planning to determine whether or not proposed activities will meet VRM objectives. Identify mitigation measures to reduce visual contrasts and prepare rehabilitation plans to address landscape modifications on a case-by-case basis (BLM 2007, p. 56).

***II. Management Decisions; V. Visual Resources; V-4: Monitoring***

Any project design features or mitigation measures identified to address visual resource management concerns will be monitored to ensure compliance with established VRM classes.

Where appropriate, monitoring will include the use of the visual contrast rating system, described in BLM Manual 8400 during project review and upon project completion to assess the effectiveness of project design features and any mitigating measures (BLM 2007, p. 56).

## **1.2.2 Secretarial Order 3376**

### ***Secretarial Order 3376 on Electronic Bicycles (e-bikes)***

On August 29, 2019, the Secretary of the Interior issued Secretarial Order (S.O. 3376), which states, "This Order is intended to increase recreational opportunities for all Americans, especially those with physical limitations, and to encourage the enjoyment of lands and waters managed by the Department of the Interior (Department). This Orders simplifies and unifies regulation of electric bicycles (e-bikes) on Federal lands managed by the Department and decreases regulatory burden." The S.O. defines the associated policy as "Consistent with governing laws and regulations:

- a) For the purpose of the Order, "e-bikes" shall mean "low-speed electric bicycle" as defined by 15 U.S.C. § 2085 and falling within one of the following classifications:
  - (i) "Class 1 electric bicycle" shall mean an electric bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 20 miles per hour;
  - (ii) "Class 2 electric bicycle" shall mean an electric bicycle equipped with a motor that may be used exclusively to propel the bicycle, and that is not capable of providing assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 20 miles per hour; and,
  - (iii) "Class 3 electric bicycle" shall mean an electric bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling, and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches the speed of 28 miles per hour.
- b) E-Bikes shall be allowed where other types of bicycles are allowed; and
- c) E-bikes shall not be allowed where other types of bicycles are prohibited."

Specifically, SO 3376 sets forth the general policy of the [U.S. Department of the Interior] DOI that e-bikes should be allowed where non-motorized types of bicycles are allowed and not allowed where non-motorized types of bicycles are prohibited.

#### ***BLM's E-bike final policy (BLM 2020):***

43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 8340.0-5 to define E-bikes, which are limited to Class 1, 2, and 3 E-bikes.

The rule provides that authorized officers may authorize, through subsequent land-use planning or implementation-level decisions, the use of Class 1, 2, and 3 E-bikes on non-motorized roads and trails.

The rule provides managers the ability to exclude E-bikes that meet certain criteria from the definition of off-road vehicle (otherwise known as an OHV) at 43 CFR § 8340.0-5(a).

The rule, however, does not result in any immediate on-the-ground changes or site-specific allowances for E-bike usage on BLM-administered public lands. In other words, the rule does not, by itself, open any non-motorized trails to E-bike use. Before any on-the-ground changes can occur, an authorized officer must issue a land use planning or implementation-level decision that complies with NEPA and other applicable legal requirements.

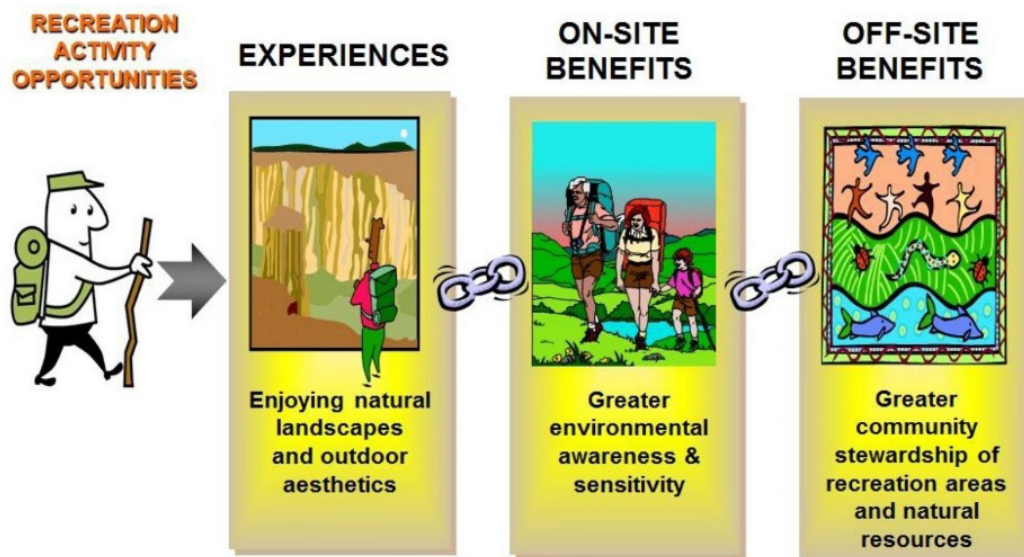


### 1.3 OUTCOME OF THE RAMP

The desired outcome of the RAMP is to manage the resources, objectives, and goals within the Castner Glacier planning area to the level established within the East Alaska RMP for the Delta Range SRMA and further detailed in the Section 1.2.1. The intent is to avoid or minimize the degradation of natural resources from over-use and to manage the area as a primitive, semi-primitive, and roaded natural recreational experience. The objectives and actions identified in the RAMP will provide a framework for BLM to protect recreation opportunities, identify desired recreation settings, and support management goals to achieve the outcomes and enhance opportunities. Outcomes-focused management targets positive outcomes that consist of experiences and benefits defined in the BLM Handbook H-8320-1 Planning for Recreation and Visitor Services (BLM 2014b, pg. I-2) as:

- **Experiences.** Immediate states of mind resulting from participation in recreation activities that result in benefits.
- **Benefits.** The result of a satisfying recreation experience that improve or maintain a desired condition. These accrue from recreation participation, are both short and long term, and are realized onsite and offsite. Benefits are identified in one of four categories and are described as:
  - **Personal/Individual Benefits.** accrued when recreation and leisure activities contribute to personal well-being and human development, such as improved physical fitness and mental health.
  - **Social/Community Benefits.** accrued when recreation activities contribute to the quality of life within communities by encouraging positive lifestyle choices, building social skills, reducing crime, and fostering a sense of community pride and involvement.
  - **Economic Benefits.** accrued when investments in recreation represent an investment to diversify economies by supporting businesses and by generating employment opportunities.
  - **Environmental Benefits.** accrued when participation in recreation and outdoor education programs can help protect the quality of the environment through improved understanding and stewardship of natural, cultural, and historic resources.

Figure 2: Linkage Between Experiences and Onsite and Offsite Benefits



To incorporate outcomes-focused management into recreation planning, it is critical to understand the relationship between outcomes, recreation activities, recreation settings, and implementation actions. Outcomes-focused management provides a framework for the BLM to determine allowable uses and management actions that will manage the area for the desired RSCs and facilitate the attainment of targeted outcomes. This framework will help the BLM understand and meet the public's expectations and provide direction for recreation planning, budgeting, organization, staffing, and training (BLM 2014b, I-3).

## **1.4 CASTNER GLACIER RAMP OBJECTIVES**

The Castner Glacier RAMP objectives are site-specific, on-the-ground management strategies that provide a framework for the BLM to manage visitor experiences, various user groups, recreation permits, and other land uses within the planning area. The objectives align with the goals and objectives established in the East Alaska RMP for the management of the Delta Range SRMA and aim to address impacts from concentrated use, conflicts with large groups, and unmanaged commercial uses. The RAMP also proposes seven actions (Chapter 2) that are analyzed in the associated EA. The objectives and actions will:

- Promote the benefits and experiences for an area managed for a primitive, semi-primitive, and roaded natural recreation experience.
- Manage the various uses within the Castner Glacier planning area to protect the resources, promote the safety of all public land users, and minimize conflicts.
- Implement a process to manage recreation permits and other land uses to mitigate damage to resources and conflicts with other users.

### **1.4.1 Objective – Visitor Experience**

The objective is to delineate RMZs from the existing ROS classes, further define the desired RSCs, and implement supplementary rules within the Castner Glacier planning area to provide a diversity of recreational opportunities that will maintain or enhance the primitive, semi-primitive, and roaded natural recreational experience and manage uses to protect and prevent damage to public land resources – Sections 2.1.1, 2.1.2, and 2.1.3 outline proposals to meet this objective.

### **1.4.2 Objective – Access**

The objective is to apply OHV designations and define motorized access within the Castner Glacier planning area to prevent the unmanaged proliferation of OHV trails and damage to resources, provide a diversity of recreational opportunities, and maintain a primitive, semi-primitive, and roaded natural recreation experience – Sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 outline proposals to meet this objective.

### **1.4.3 Objective – Permits and Authorizations**

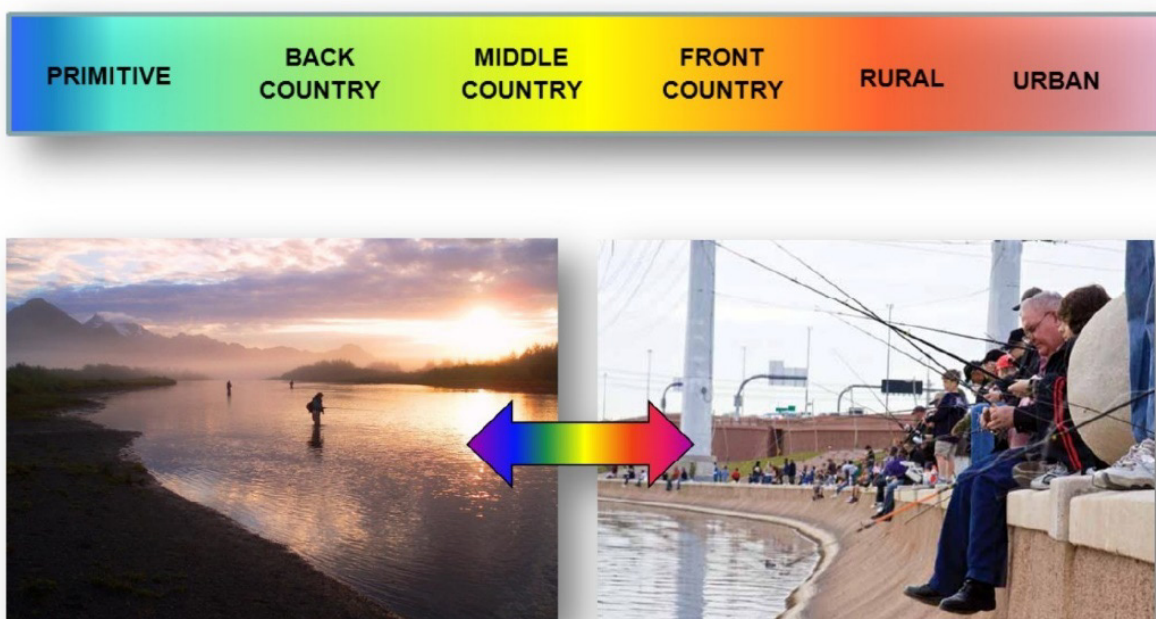
The objective is to manage SRPs and lands and realty authorizations to provide a balance between allowable uses and resource protection to best serve the public, manage congestion at the trailheads and glacial ice cave, and decrease user conflicts within the planning area – Sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2 outline proposals to meet this objective.

## **1.5 RECREATION OPPORTUNITY SPECTRUM**

The ROS is a traditional planning and management framework the BLM uses to guide and direct recreation inventory, evaluation, management, planning, and decision-making on BLM-managed public lands. The ROS classes range from primitive to urban (

Figure 3) and define a recreation area's physical and social qualities and operational conditions (BLM 2014b, p. I-23). As recreation areas move from urban to primitive, the characteristics of the area's recreational components will shift along the spectrum. Typically, if an area falls on the primitive spectrum, the remoteness increases, and the social encounters, level of access, and management controls will decrease. The ROS provides the BLM with "a comprehensive way to describe a geographic location's recreational qualities and conditions" (BLM 2014b, p. I-24).

Figure 3. BLM ROS Class Spectrum



There are three existing ROS classes within the Castner Glacier planning area: roaded natural, semi-primitive non-motorized, and primitive (Figure 4). These classes were tailored within the East Alaska RMP to fit the physical, social, and operational components and settings of recreation resources and user activities accessible within the boundaries of the GFO. The following outlines the recreation opportunity environments for each class:

### 1.5.1 Roaded Natural ROS Area

The Roaded Natural ROS area is characterized by a natural environment with low to moderate concentrations of users and moderate evidence of the sights and sounds of humans. Concentrations of users may be high at trailheads or water access points. The area is accessible to conventional motorized vehicles, and traffic levels may be highly variable. The roads are maintained regularly, and the sights and sounds of the road system are evident. Resource modification and use are evident but harmonize with the environment, and rustic facilities may exist for user convenience and safety. Areas of localized vegetation and soil impacts exist.

### **1.5.2 Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS Area**

The Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized ROS area is characterized by a predominantly unmodified natural environment of moderate to large size that is more accessible than an area classified as primitive and free of motorized trails and roads. The sights and sounds of the road system are more prevalent than in the primitive class but less prevalent than in the roaded natural classes. The concentration of users is low, but there is evidence of other users, and vegetation and soils are predominantly natural, with some impacts evident.

### **1.5.3 Primitive ROS Area**

The Primitive ROS area is characterized by an unmodified natural environment of reasonably large size. The concentration of users is low, and evidence of users is minimal. No summer motorized trails exist, although seasonal motorized use (snowmachines) occurs at a low density for subsistence purposes. The sights and sounds of the road system are nonexistent, and the area is remote. Human-built structures are few or inconspicuous, and the vegetation and soil remain in a natural state.

## **1.6 VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CLASSES**

The visual resource inventory process provides BLM managers with a means for determining visual values. The inventory consists of a scenic quality evaluation, sensitivity level analysis, and a delineation of distance zones. Based on these three factors, BLM-administered lands are placed into one of four visual resource inventory classes. These inventory classes represent the relative value of the visual resources. Classes I and II being the most valued, Class III representing a moderate value, and Class IV being of least value. The inventory classes provide the basis for considering visual values in the resource management planning process. VRM classes are established through the RMP process for all BLM-administered lands (BLM 1986). The VRM classes within the Castner Glacier planning area (Figure 5) include VRM Class I, Class II, and Class IV. The objectives outlined in Section 1.4 pose no anticipated impacts to the VRM classes designated in the East Alaska RMP.

### **1.6.1 VRM Class I:**

Preservation of the landscape is the primary management goal in Class I areas. This class provides for natural ecological changes; however, it does not preclude very limited management activity. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.

### **1.6.2 VRM Class II:**

The objective of this class is to retain the existing character of the landscape. Activities or modifications of the environment should not be evident or attract the attention of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements of form, line, color and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

### **1.6.3 VRM Class IV:**

Class IV VRM objective is to provide for management activities which require major modification of the existing character of the landscape. Changes may attract attention and be dominant landscape features but should reflect the basic elements of the existing landscape. Class IV rating is generally reserved for areas where the visual intrusions dominate the viewshed but are in character with the landscape.

Figure 4. Castner Glacier RAMP ROS Classes

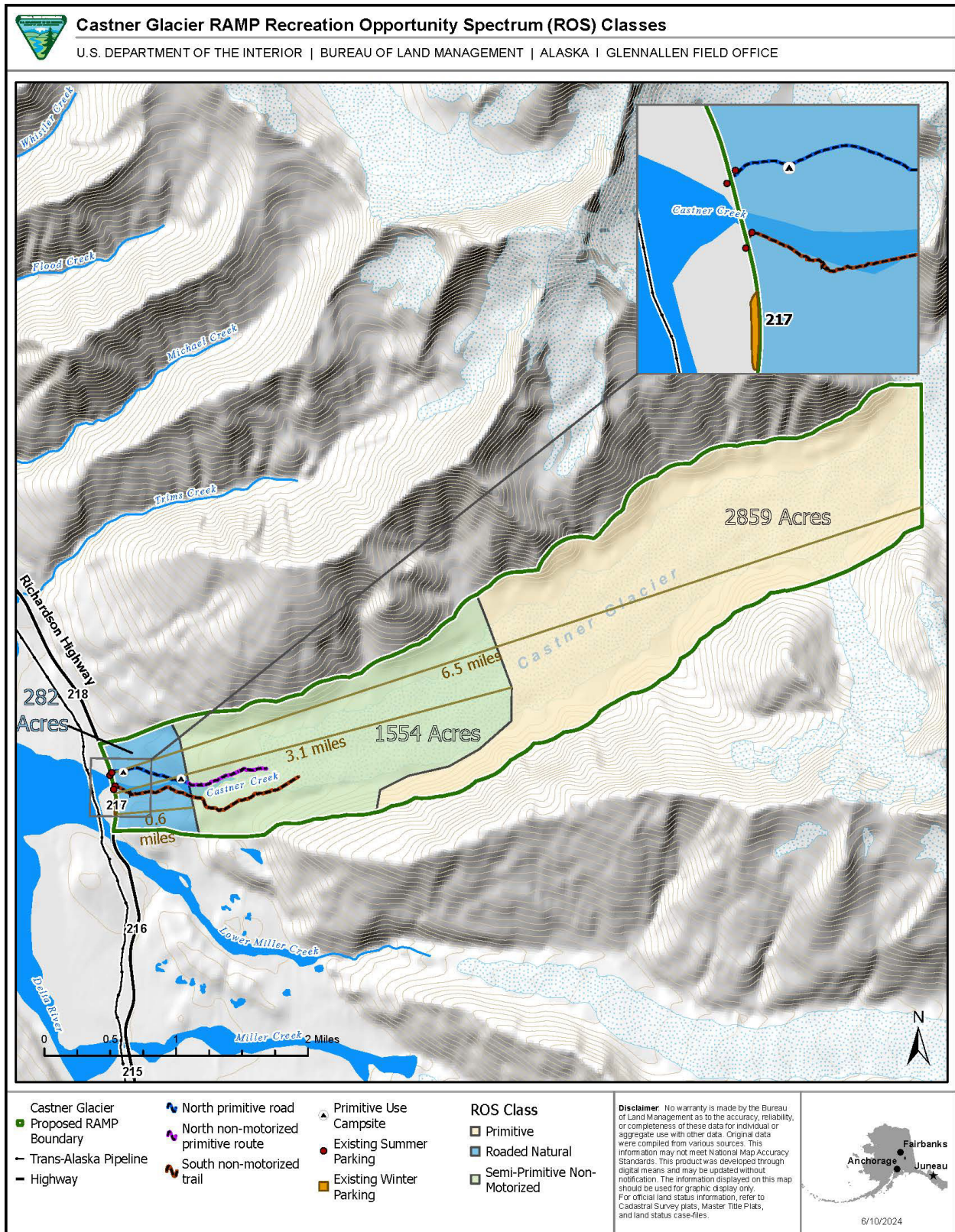
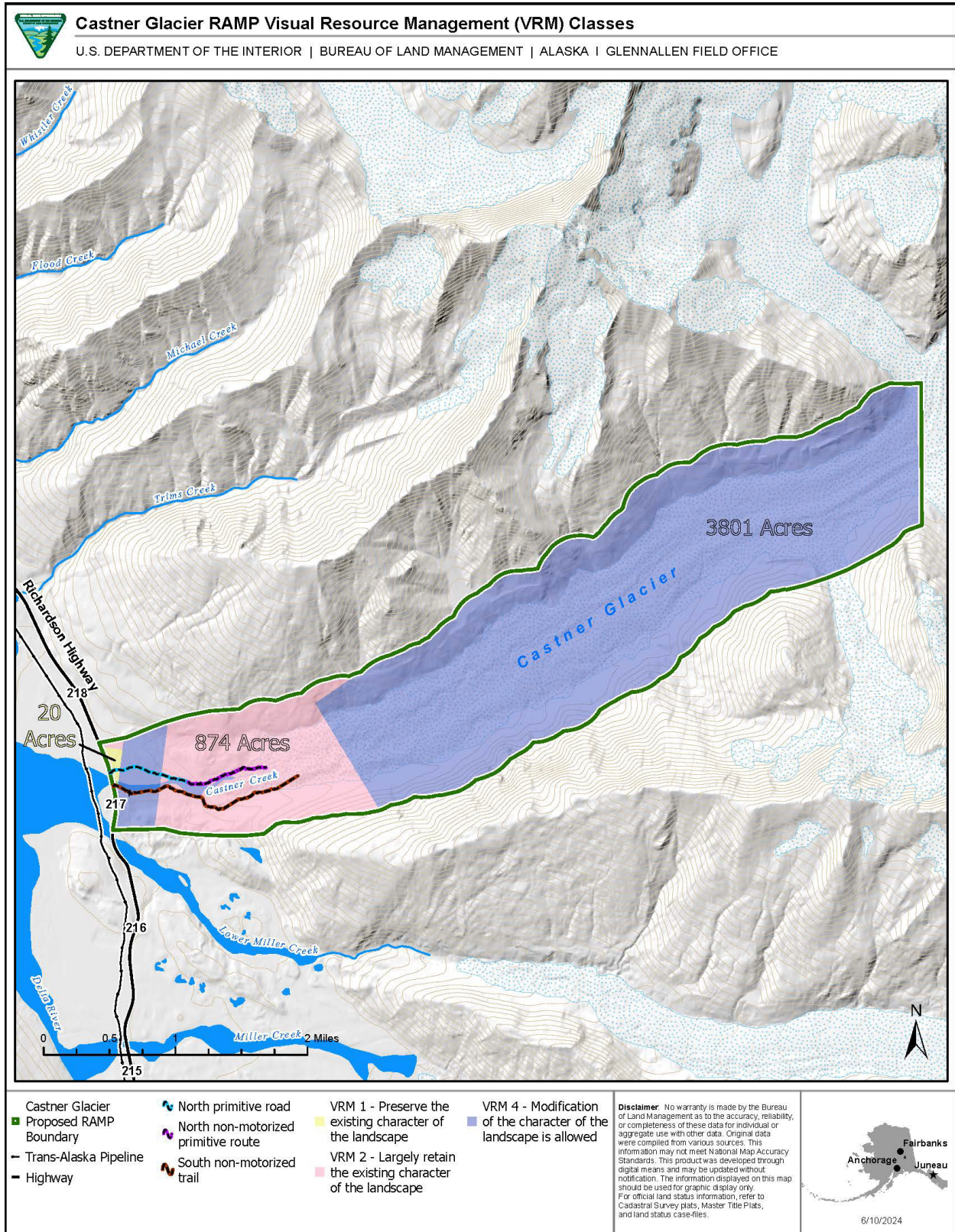


Figure 5. Castner Glacier RAMP VRM Classes



## 2 MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

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The Castner Glacier RAMP and associated EA propose seven new actions to manage recreation within the Castner Glacier planning area. Chapter 2 outlines these actions and Chapters 3, 4, and 5 outline the administrative, information and education, and monitoring processes to implement and manage the proposed recreation strategy. The proposed management actions will provide BLM with a framework to achieve the desired outcome of the RAMP and to mitigate natural resource degradation from over-use and manage the area as a primitive, semi primitive, and roaded natural recreational experience.

### 2.1 VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Three proposed actions will meet Objective□ and manage the recreation experience and maintain a diversity of recreational opportunities. These actions include delineating RMZs within the Castner Glacier planning area from the existing ROS classes, further defining the desired RSCs to provide the context for the landscape's physical, social, and operational components, and implementing supplementary rules to maintain a diversity of recreational opportunities that will protect the primitive, semi-primitive, and roaded natural recreational experience and manage uses to prevent damage to public land resources.

#### 2.1.1 Action – Delineate Recreation Management Zones

The proposed action will delineate RMZs to further characterize specific recreation opportunities that will be supported within the boundaries of the Castner Glacier planning area and will provide the BLM with a tool to manage recreation resources within a diverse recreation area. The existing ROS classes designated for the Delta Range SRMA and outlined in Section 1.5 will provide a baseline to understand the desired recreation opportunities and define the RSCs that each individual RMZ will be managed for.

The BLM uses an outcomes-focused management approach to recreation management that focuses on the positive outcomes gained from engaging in recreational experiences. The concept is that benefits endure beyond the onsite recreation experience and stay with the individual when they leave the recreation area, leading to offsite beneficial outcomes to communities, economies, and the environment. The activities further define recreational opportunities and experiences a visitor can expect within each RMZ and the benefits derived from those experiences (BLM 2014b, pg. 1-2).

Sections 2.1.1.1, 2.1.1.2, and 2.1.1.3 outline the proposed RMZs (Figure 6), the existing conditions, and the outcomes-focused management framework for each RMZ.

##### 2.1.1.1 *Roaded Natural Zone*

The RNZ extends beyond the Richardson Highway ROW by 0.5 to 0.6 miles. It contains the north primitive road on the north side of Castner Creek, the beginning of the south non-motorized trail on the south side of the creek, parking areas adjacent to or within the highway ROW, and user-created dispersed campsites. Any future development in the planning area will be proposed only within this zone. The RNZ serves as a staging and parking area for access to the glacier or points beyond in the Alaska Range. Existing signage is minimal and consists of two sign panels, one at the terminus of the north primitive road and one at the beginning of the south non-motorized trail. Existing signage explains the need for commercial permits, seasonal closure for OHVs, and general hazards of the area. Undeveloped parking, in the form of gravel pullouts or widened shoulders, exists on all four corners of the Castner Creek bridge. These areas are not maintained in the winter and are typically only available for use in snow-free months. There is another small parking area at the beginning of the primitive road and a larger

developed parking area south of the bridge on the west side of the Richardson Highway. The larger developed parking area is the primary winter parking location and is maintained in the winter by the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF). Motorized access is allowed in the RNZ at maintained parking facilities and on the north primitive road outside the seasonal closure to OHVs from October 15 through May 15 or when there is 12 inches average snowfall or 6 inches of frost. Annual visitation is estimated within this zone at 12,000 users.

Table 4 identifies recreation activity opportunities in the RNZ, the experiences those activities offer, and the offsite beneficial outcomes to communities, economies, and the environment from these experiences.

*Table 4. Framework for Outcomes-Focused Management in the RNZ*

Visitor Activities	Visitor Experience	Visitor Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking</li> <li>• Hiking</li> <li>• Driving for pleasure</li> <li>• Group gathering</li> <li>• Dispersed camping</li> <li>• Snowshoeing</li> <li>• Skiing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoy recreation activities with friends and family</li> <li>• Camping in an undeveloped setting</li> <li>• Realizing easy access to public lands</li> <li>• Enjoy participation in group outdoor events</li> <li>• Enjoying easy access to natural landscapes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Personal Benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger ties with family and friends</li> <li>• Challenging oneself physically</li> <li>• Relaxing and reducing stress outdoors</li> <li>• Improved physical fitness and health maintenance</li> </ul> <p><b>Community/Social Benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appreciation for public lands</li> <li>• Enlarged sense of community dependency on public lands</li> <li>• Enhanced lifestyle</li> <li>• More informed citizenry about where to go for different kinds of recreation experiences and benefits</li> </ul> <p><b>Environmental Benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased appreciation for natural environment</li> <li>• Greater retention of distinctive natural landscape features</li> <li>• Increased awareness and protection of natural landscapes</li> </ul> <p><b>Economic Benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More positive contributions to local-regional economy</li> </ul>

#### 2.1.1.2 Castner Cave and Trail Zone

The CCTZ extends from a boundary 0.5 to 0.6 miles east of the Richardson Highway ROW, continuing to the toe of Castner Glacier. The CCTZ includes the glacial ice cave and cave entrance, surrounding uplands below the vegetation line, and all lands between the toe of the glacier and the eastern boundary of the RNZ.

The CCTZ is undeveloped, with user-created routes, user-created rock cairns to direct users, and rocks to facilitate crossings across the Castner Creek tributaries. The routes vary in the winter with snow conditions, wind drifts, water levels, or overflow. The south non-motorized trail is unmaintained and extends south of the creek from the Richardson Highway, through the



RNZ, and into the CCTZ, where it leads to the face of the glacier and ice cave. The north non-motorized primitive route extends from the RNZ and leads to multiple approach routes to the glacier in the summer months. The primary season of use is November to April. The north non-motorized primitive route is subject to glacial flooding, erosion, and heavy precipitation events, which may eliminate evidence of use. The south non-motorized trail receives no maintenance and is not the primary access in the summer months. Motorized access in the CCTZ is allowed on the Castner Creek primitive route outside of the seasonal closure to OHVs from October 15 through May 15 or when there is 12 inches average snowfall or 6 inches of frost.

Table 5 identifies recreation activity opportunities in the CCTZ, the experiences those activities offer, and the offsite beneficial outcomes to communities, economies, and the environment from these experiences.

*Table 5. Framework for Outcomes Focused Management in the CCTZ*

Visitor Activities	Visitor Experience	Visitor Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hiking</li> <li>• Group gathering</li> <li>• Snowshoeing</li> <li>• Skiing</li> <li>• Ice Cave Viewing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoy recreation activities with friends and family</li> <li>• Realizing easy access to public lands</li> <li>• Enjoy participation in group outdoor events</li> <li>• Enjoying easy access to natural landscapes</li> <li>• Recreating in a remote and rugged environment</li> <li>• Participating in more physically challenging recreational activities</li> </ul>	<p><b>Personal Benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stronger ties with family and friends</li> <li>• Improved skills for outdoor enjoyment</li> <li>• Relaxing and reducing stress outdoors</li> <li>• Improved appreciation for nature’s splendor</li> <li>• Testing one’s knowledge, skills, and abilities in a more remote environment</li> </ul> <p><b>Community/Social Benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appreciation for public lands</li> <li>• Enlarged sense of community dependency on public lands</li> <li>• Enhanced lifestyle</li> <li>• More informed citizenry about where to go for different kinds of recreation experiences and benefits</li> </ul> <p><b>Environmental Benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased appreciation for natural environment</li> <li>• Greater retention of distinctive natural landscape features</li> <li>• Increased awareness and protection of natural landscapes</li> </ul> <p><b>Economic Benefits:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More positive contributions to local-regional economy</li> <li>• Increased local tourism revenue</li> </ul>

### 2.1.1.3 Castner Glacial Zone

The CGZ extends from the ice cave entrance easterly up Castner Glacier to the boundary of BLM and State of Alaska lands. It includes all surrounding uplands below the vegetation line within the Castner Glacier drainage. The CGZ contains an intermittent path for approximately 2 miles up the glacier, which can change or vary by year depending on ice conditions and glacial movement. No other signs of development or human intrusion are present. Mountaineering groups primarily use it in late winter and spring, and sheep hunters in August and September.

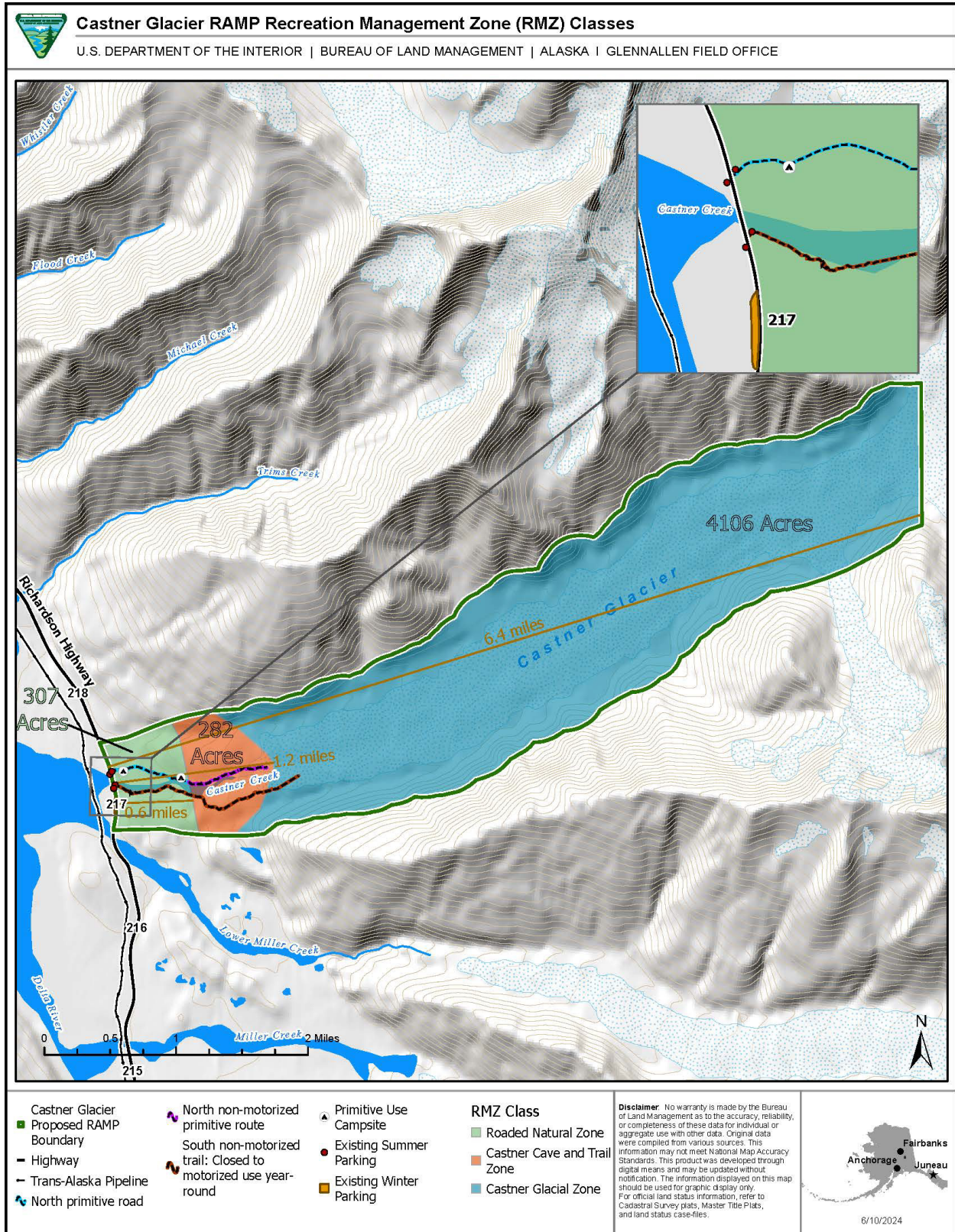
Motorized access is not allowed in the CGZ except for subsistence purposes. Estimated use within this zone is less than 200 users per year.

Table 6 identifies recreation activity opportunities in the CGZ, the experiences those activities offer, and the offsite beneficial outcomes to communities, economies, and the environment from these experiences.

*Table 6. Framework for Outcomes Focused Management in the CGZ*

Visitor Activities	Visitor Experience	Visitor Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mountaineering</li> <li>• Dall Sheep hunting</li> <li>• Glacier exploring</li> <li>• Wildlife viewing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physically Challenging</li> <li>• Technical Mountaineering</li> <li>• Glacier Crossing</li> <li>• Testing Endurance</li> <li>• Enjoy strenuous physical exercise</li> <li>• Recreating in an extremely remote and rugged environment</li> <li>• Participating in highly challenging recreational activities</li> <li>• Fair chase hunting with limited users or hunter encounters</li> </ul>	<p>Personal Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of physical accomplishment and achievement</li> <li>• Improved skills for outdoor enjoyment</li> <li>• Improved appreciation for nature’s splendor</li> <li>• Providing food for friends and family</li> <li>• Testing one’s knowledge, skills, and abilities in an extreme environment</li> </ul> <p>Community/Social Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased appreciation for public lands</li> <li>• Enlarged sense of community dependency on public lands</li> <li>• Enhanced lifestyle</li> <li>• Relying on partner or team to be safe and successful</li> </ul> <p>Environmental Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased appreciation for natural environment</li> <li>• Greater retention of distinctive natural landscape features</li> <li>• Increased awareness and protection of natural landscapes</li> </ul> <p>Economic Benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More positive contributions to local-regional economy</li> <li>• Purchase of highly specialized gear for outdoor recreation</li> <li>• Increased local tourism revenue</li> </ul>

Figure 6. Castner Glacier RAMP RMZ Classes



## 2.1.2 Action – Define the Recreation Setting Characteristics

The proposed action will define the recreational resources and describe the desired RSCs for the intended physical, social, and operational components. The RSCs match the settings and experiences recreationists desire with available opportunities, define future functions and conditions for the individual RMZs, and provide the basis for considering recreational outcomes in the planning process (BLM 2014b, p. I-26). An individual’s ability to obtain specific recreational outcomes is highly dependent on the presence of the physical, social, and operational RSCs that support and ultimately facilitate the attainment of targeted outcomes. Figure 7 defines the physical, social, and operational components and characteristics used to develop the qualities and conditions of the RSCs.

Figure 7: Recreation Setting Components and Characteristics



The desired RSCs are further defined from the prescribed characteristics developed for the ROS classes that make up the Delta Range SRMA. The BLM uses standard classifications, primitive, back country, middle country, front country, rural, and urban, to apply to the physical, social, and operational components for each RMZ. Characteristics may range across the spectrum for each of the components to achieve the desired outcome for each of the RMZs. The BLM established the desired RSCs using the prescribed characteristics as a baseline and further defining them from staff observations, trail counters, commercial use reports, law enforcement contacts, and professional judgement.

Provided below is an example of the table format that will be used to identify the physical, social, and operational components, the prescribed characteristics for the ROS classifications developed for the Delta Range SRMA, and the desired RSCs for each of the RMZs in the Castner Glacier planning area.

Table 7: Example of the Tables Used in Section 2.1.2

Component	Prescribed ROS Characteristics	Desired RSCs
Quality or Condition	<b>Classification Level</b> Description of the ROS characteristic prescribed for the Delta Range SRMA.	<b>Classification Level</b> Description of the RSC desired for the Castner Glacier planning area.

2.1.2.1 Physical, Social, and Operational RSCs for the RNZ

The desired physical and social qualities and operational conditions of the RSCs for the RNZ meet the following goals or implementation level considerations identified in the East Alaska RMP outlined in Section 1.2:

- Manage trails to provide a diversity of recreation experiences and opportunities, including motorized and non-motorized (BLM 2007, p. 46).
- Analyze new road, trail, or facility construction on a case-by-case basis, consistent with the allowable uses and constraints described elsewhere in the East Alaska RMP (BLM 2007, p. 45).
- Minimal or no development will be considered at trailheads that access areas managed for a primitive or semi primitive recreation experience (BLM 2007, p.38).
- Monitoring of recreation resources will occur throughout the planning area with emphasis placed on SRMA's. Monitoring will check on visitor use, recreation use-related impacts, and user conflicts (BLM 2007, p. 39).
- Maintain primitive, semi primitive non-motorized, semi-primitive motorized, and roaded natural recreation experiences (BLM 2007, p 38 & 46).

Table 8: Physical Recreation Setting Component for the RNZ

Physical Qualities	Prescribed ROS Characteristics	Desired RSCs
Remoteness	<b>Rural</b> Parts of this area are within 0.5 miles of paved/primary roads and highways and the rest are within 0.5 miles of motorized routes. <b>Middle Country</b> Parts of this area are within 0.5 miles of motorized routes.	<b>Rural</b> No change. <b>Front Country</b> Parts of this area are within 0.5 miles of low-clearance or passenger vehicle routes (e.g., unpaved country roads, private land routes).
Naturalness	<b>Middle Country</b> No changes to the landscape are present besides the existing north primitive road and a few dispersed campsites. The Richardson Highway is visible from this area.	<b>Middle Country</b> No change.
Visitor facilities	<b>Back Country</b> Existing signs are located on the north and south side of Castner Creek. Developed trails available but are not maintained. No other facilities are present.	<b>Back Country</b> No change.

Table 9: Social Recreation Setting Component for the RNZ

Social Qualities	Prescribed ROS Characteristics	Desired RSCs
<b>Contacts with other groups</b>	<b>Middle Country</b> Visitors could expect 15 to 29 encounters per day on travel routes.	<b>Middle Country</b> No change.
<b>Group sizes</b>	<b>Back Country</b> Average expected group size in the back country is 4 to 6 people per group.	<b>Back Country</b> No change.
<b>Evidence of use</b>	<b>Middle Country</b> There are small areas of alteration with some vegetation showing wear near established trails. Occasional sounds of people are evident.	<b>Middle Country</b> No change.

Table 10: Operational Recreation Setting Component for the RNZ

Operational Conditions	Prescribed ROS Characteristics	Desired RSCs
<b>Public access and types of public travel allowed</b>	<b>Middle Country</b> Motorized use present outside of the seasonal closure to OHVs from October 15 through May 15 or when there is 12 inches average snowfall or 6 inches of frost or for Federal subsistence purposes.	<b>Middle Country</b> No change.
<b>Visitor service and information</b>	<b>Primitive</b> No maps or brochures available onsite. Staff rarely present to provide onsite assistance.	<b>Back Country</b> Staff will be on-site on a bi-weekly basis during the winter and once a month in the summer. Additional signage may be developed and existing signage will remain.
<b>Management controls and regulation</b>	<b>Back Country</b> Basic user regulations exist at key access points; but there are minimum use restrictions.	<b>Front Country</b> Rules, regulations, and ethics will be clearly posted and use restrictions, limitations, and/or closures will be implemented.

2.1.2.2 *Physical, Social, and Operational RSCs for the CCTZ*

The desired physical and social qualities and operational conditions of the RSCs for the CCTZ meet the following goals or implementation level considerations identified in the East Alaska RMP outlined in Section 1.2:

- Manage recreation to maintain a diversity of recreational opportunities (BLM 2007, p. 34).
- Maintain the existing ROS classes, which include primitive, semi-primitive non-motorized, semi-primitive motorized within the Delta Range SRMA (BLM 2007, p. 38).
- Implementation plans, where necessary, will determine general visitor use or commercial limits based on achievement of SRMA objectives (BLM 2007, p. 39)
- Periodic assessments will be made to ensure that uses in SRMA’s are consistent with their prescribed recreation opportunity classes (BLM 2007, p. 40)
- Authorize special recreation permits in accordance with Special Recreation Permit Handbook 2930-1 (BLM 2007, p. 39).
- Manage special recreation permits in accordance with Federal regulations, special stipulations, and established terms and conditions (BLM 2007, p. 39).
- Areas designated as limited for travel management would have an implementation level plan completed. The plan will describe specific resource concerns or conflicts and describe specific designated trails and conditions of limitations including seasonal, weights, vehicle class, etc. (BLM 2007, p. 47).

Table 11: *Physical Recreation Setting Component for the CCTZ*

<b>Physical Qualities</b>	<b>Prescribed ROS Characteristics</b>	<b>Desired RSCs</b>
<b>Remoteness</b>	<b>Primitive</b> This area is more than 0.5 miles from either mechanized or motorized trails and routes. Man-made structures are not present.	<b>Primitive</b> No change.
<b>Naturalness</b>	<b>Back Country</b> Natural landscape with modifications in harmony with surroundings and not visually obvious. User created rock cairns and user placed rocks are present to facilitate stream crossings.	<b>Primitive</b> Undisturbed natural landscape. Remove user-created rock cairns during monitoring. Rocks placed at stream crossings will remain.
<b>Visitor facilities</b>	<b>Primitive</b> No structures. Foot/horse and water trails only. No facilities are present within this zone.	<b>Primitive</b> No change.

Table 12: Social Recreation Setting Component for the CCTZ

Social Qualities	Prescribed ROS Characteristics	Desired RSCs
<b>Contacts with other groups</b>	<b>Back Country</b> Visitors could expect 7 to 15 encounters per day on travel routes.	<b>Back Country</b> No change.
<b>Group sizes</b>	<b>Back Country</b> Average expected group size in the back country is 4 to 6 people per group.	<b>Back Country</b> No change. Group sizes will be limited with supplementary rules and commercial use limits will be implemented.
<b>Evidence of use</b>	<b>Back Country</b> Areas of alteration uncommon. Little surface vegetation wear observed. Sounds of people infrequent.	<b>Back Country</b> No change. Supplementary rules will restrict ice graffiti or vandalism.

Table 13: Operational Recreation Setting Component for the CCTZ

Operational Conditions	Prescribed ROS Characteristics	Desired RSCs
<b>Public access and types of public travel allowed</b>	<b>Middle Country</b> Four-wheel drive vehicles, ATVs, dirt bikes, or snowmobiles, in addition to non-motorized mechanized use present outside of the seasonal closure to OHVs from October 15 through May 15 or when there is 12 inches average snowfall or 6 inches of frost or for Federal subsistence. <b>Primitive</b> Foot, horse, and non-motorized boat travel may be present.	<b>Middle Country</b> No change. <b>Primitive</b> No change.
<b>Visitor service and information</b>	<b>Primitive</b> No maps or brochures available onsite. Staff rarely present to provide onsite assistance.	<b>Primitive</b> No change. Staff may be present during high-use periods.
<b>Management controls and regulation</b>	<b>Back Country</b> Basic user regulations exist at key access points; but there are minimum use restrictions.	<b>Primitive</b> No onsite posts/signs of visitor regulations, interpretive info, or ethics. Limited designation for travel management further defined. SRP limits implemented.



2.1.2.3 *Physical, Social, and Operational RSCs for the CGZ*

The desired physical and social qualities and operational conditions of the RSCs for the CGZ meet the following goals or implementation level considerations identified in the East Alaska RMP outlined in Section 1.2:

- Maintain primitive, semi primitive non-motorized, semi-primitive motorized, and roaded natural recreation experiences (BLM 2007, p 38 & 46).
- Manage recreation to maintain a diversity of recreational opportunities (BLM 2007, p. 34).
- Maintain the existing ROS classes, which include primitive, semi-primitive non-motorized, semi-primitive motorized within the Delta Range SRMA (BLM 2007, p. 38).
- Implementation plans, where necessary, will determine general visitor use or commercial limits based on achievement of SRMA objectives (BLM 2007, p. 39).
- Periodic assessments will be made to ensure that uses in SRMA’s are consistent with their prescribed recreation opportunity classes (BLM 2007, p. 40)
- Authorize special recreation permits in accordance with Special Recreation Permit Handbook 2930-1 (BLM 2007, p. 39).
- Manage special recreation permits in accordance with Federal regulations, special stipulations, and established terms and conditions (BLM 2007, p. 39).
- Areas designated as limited for travel management would have an implementation level plan completed. The plan will describe specific resource concerns or conflicts and describe specific designated trails and conditions of limitations including seasonal, weights, vehicle class, etc. (BLM 2007, p. 47).

Table 14: *Physical Recreation Setting Component for the CGZ*

<b>Physical Qualities</b>	<b>Prescribed ROS Characteristics</b>	<b>Desired RSCs</b>
<b>Remoteness</b>	<b>Primitive</b> This area is more than 0.5 miles from either mechanized or motorized trails and routes. Man-made structures are not present.	<b>Primitive</b> No change.
<b>Naturalness</b>	<b>Primitive</b> Undisturbed natural landscape.	<b>Primitive</b> No change.
<b>Visitor facilities</b>	<b>Primitive</b> No structures are present. A sporadic foot path is present on the first two miles of the glacier.	<b>Primitive</b> No change.

Table 15: Social Recreation Setting Component for the CGZ

Social Qualities	Prescribed ROS Characteristics	Desired RSCs
<b>Contacts with other groups</b>	<b>Primitive</b> Visitors could expect fewer than 3 encounters per day at the glacier and fewer than 6 encounters per day on travel routes.	<b>Primitive</b> No change.
<b>Group sizes</b>	<b>Back Country</b> Average expected group size in the back country is 4 to 6 people per group.	<b>Primitive</b> Fewer than or equal to 3 people/group and limits to military training exercises will be implemented.
<b>Evidence of use</b>	<b>Primitive</b> No alteration of the natural terrain. Footprints observed. Sounds of people rare.	<b>Primitive</b> No change.

Table 16: Operational Recreation Setting Component for the CGZ

Operational Conditions	Prescribed ROS Characteristics	Desired RSCs
<b>Public access and types of public travel allowed</b>	<b>Primitive</b> Foot travel only with some occurrences of motorized use for Federal subsistence purposes.	<b>Primitive</b> No change.
<b>Visitor service and information</b>	<b>Primitive</b> No maps or brochures available onsite. Staff rarely present to provide onsite assistance.	<b>Primitive</b> No change.
<b>Management controls and regulation</b>	<b>Primitive</b> No onsite posts or signs of visitor regulations, interpretive information, or ethics. Few use restrictions in place.	<b>Primitive</b> No change. SRP and military training limits will be implemented.

### 2.1.3 Action – Implement Supplementary Rules

The proposed action will implement supplementary rules that will protect recreation resources, support or enhance the RSCs, and limit or reduce user conflicts and impacts on recreational resources within the Castner Glacier planning area. The supplementary rules will identify implementation actions to establish group size limits and designate limitations or prohibitions on specific uses in the ice cave or within 100 feet of the ice cave entrance.

#### 2.1.3.1 Establish Group Size Limits

To meet the social RSCs for each zone, group sizes will be limited to a maximum of 10 people per group. Groups in excess of 10 individuals must obtain prior written approval from the Authorized Officer (AO) and may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- **Roaded Natural Zone.** Encounters can range between 15 and 29 people per day with peak visitation times reaching encounters with groups of up to 50 people. Parking issues occur with large buses or multiple vans transporting large groups to the site to view the ice cave with litter often present. The intent is to manage the RNZ for middle country and back country social qualities with an average expected maximum of six people per group (back country) and understanding that the proximity to the highway and parking areas will naturally allow more contacts with other groups to a maximum of up to 29 encounters per day on travel routes (middle country). The area will be managed to mitigate the evidence of users and keep the sights and sounds of other people to a minimum (middle country). Group size limits will provide the BLM with the authority to manage group sizes for individual travelers and commercial tours and to decrease the evidence of use within the RNZ.
- **Castner Cave and Trail Zone.** During peak visitation times, recreation users can expect 7 to 15 daily encounters with an average of around 3 to 4 users per group; however, larger groups of up to 50 people have been reported and groups up to 20 people occasionally observed and reported. The intent is to manage the CCTZ for back country social qualities of a maximum of 15 contacts with other groups and group sizes of up to six people per group. The CCTZ will be managed for minimal evidence of other users with uncommon areas of alteration and surface vegetation wear and the infrequent observation of the sights and sounds of other users. Groups size limits will provide the BLM with the authority to manage group sizes for individual travelers and commercial tours and mitigate congestion at the ice cave, trailheads, and along travel routes; minimizing ground surface alteration due to concentrated uses and decreasing the occurrences of the sounds of other people and groups. to keep the social qualities of the area within the back country setting.
- **Castner Glacial Zone.** It is uncommon to encounter more than six people while accessing the CGZ; however, related military training or climbing expeditions can range from 13 to 25 people or more per group. The intent is to manage the CGZ for primitive social qualities with an expectation of no more than six encounters with other people and group sizes of fewer than or equal to three people. Footprints may be observed, but there will be no other alteration to the natural terrain and sounds of people will be rare. Group size limits will maintain the desired social qualities for a primitive setting and the BLM will manage the issuance of further land use authorizations to mitigate any impacts on a user's experiences.

#### 2.1.3.2 *Limited or Prohibited Uses*

The following designated uses will be limited or prohibited in the Castner Glacier ice cave or within 100 feet of the ice cave entrance:

- No drones
- No fires
- No fireworks
- No carving, writing, or defacing of the glacial ice
- No artificial lights except for navigational purposes
- No ice climbing, suspension of ropes, anchors, or other implements

Limiting or prohibiting uses will mitigate natural resource degradation by minimizing the presence of litter on the trail and at the ice cave, decreasing the instances of graffiti and evidence of fires and fireworks at the ice cave, and managing the occurrences of ice climbing and suspension of climbing apparatus at the cave entrance.

### 2.1.3.3 *Identification of Commercial Users*

Commercial operators conducting business on BLM-managed lands must possess a valid and current SRP and identify their transport vehicle via a BLM-provided hang tag or placard. Requiring commercial operators to provide identification will assist BLM law enforcement or other staff with identifying people conducting commercial operations at Castner Glacier without an approved SRP.

## **2.2 ACCESS**

Two proposed actions will meet Objective 1.4.2 by defining the "limited" travel designation applied to the Delta Range SRMA in the East Alaska RMP, conducting an inventory of existing travel routes, designating travel routes, and applying conditions of limitations for all routes within the Castner Glacier planning area.

The implementation-level decisions for travel management in the Castner Glacier planning area is based on the protection of resources of public lands, the promotion of safety of all users of public lands, the minimization of conflicts among various uses of public lands, and in accordance with 43 CFR § 8342.1. Defining limitations on OHV use will minimize OHV impacts on resources and maintain the area for a primitive, semi-primitive, and roaded natural recreation experience by managing the over proliferation of OHV trails and providing users with a diversity of motorized and non-motorized recreational experiences. Designating a balance of motorized and non-motorized areas will mitigate resource impacts from erosion, sedimentary displacement, vegetation stripping, and VRM class deterioration and meet the following goals and objectives of the East Alaska RMP:

- Manage trails to provide access to public lands, recreation, and subsistence opportunities.
- Manage trails to provide a diversity of recreation opportunities, including motorized and non-motorized.
- Manage trails to minimize resource impacts and reduce user conflicts.
- Manage trails with an emphasis on education where appropriate.
- Manage OHV use associated with permitted and development activities to provide for access while protecting resources (BLM 2007, pg. 46).

The review, analysis, and decision-making process for the individual transportation linear features and the limitations applied in lands allocated as OHV Limited areas is based on the evaluation criteria developed in the East Alaska RMP and outlined in Section 1.2.1.

### **2.2.1 Action – Define Limitations on OHV Use**

The proposed action will further define the seasonal closure for the Delta Range SRMA within the Castner Glacier planning area and clarify the limitations to OHVs in support of the goals, allocations, and TMAPs contained in the East Alaska RMP. The BLM intends to maintain or enhance the desired physical, social, and operational RSCs and meet the goals of the East Alaska RMP by managing OHV access to the Castner Glacier planning area.

Sections 2.2.1.1, 2.2.1.2, and 2.2.1.3 will outline limitations to OHV use within the Castner Glacier planning area.

#### *2.2.1.1 OHV Limitations and Closures*

The East Alaska RMP designated the Delta Range SRMA as "limited" to OHVs and the Castner Glacier planning area as closed to snowmachines from October 15 through May 15 or when there is 12 inches average snowfall or 6 inches of frost. The Castner Glacier TMP further designates that the Castner Glacier planning area be closed to OHVs from October 15 through

May 15 or when there is 12 inches average snowfall or 6 inches of frost. The term “OHV” is broad and encompasses any motorized vehicle capable of or designed for travel on or immediately over land, water, or other natural terrain.

Section 2.2.2 designates routes and further defines implementation-level considerations specific to the travel network within the Castner Glacier planning area.

#### *2.2.1.2 E-bikes*

The GFO has considered the use of E-bikes on routes identified as non-motorized within this RAMP and accompanying EA. E-bikes will be permitted on routes designated as open to OHVs including the north primitive road and the Castner Creek primitive route outside of the seasonal closure from October 15 through May 15 or when there is 12 inches average snowfall or 6 inches of frost. E-bikes will not be allowed in any other areas within the Castner Glacier planning area.

#### *2.2.1.3 Federal Subsistence Access*

No limitations will apply to OHV access for Federal subsistence purposes as consistent with section 811 of ANILCA, which allows for “appropriate use for subsistence purposes of snowmobiles, motorboats, and other means of surface transportation traditionally employed for such purposes by local residents, subject to reasonable regulation” (BLM 2007, pg. 54).

### **2.2.2 Action – Designate Routes and Define Conditions of Limitations**

The proposed action will inventory and designate travel routes in the Castner Glacier planning area (Figure 8). The designated routes will be classified as a road, primitive road, trail, primitive route, temporary route, or transportation linear disturbance. Each route will be given a designation and will set limitations, restrictions, or allowable uses and will outline the conditions of limitations, concerns or conflicts to the area’s resources, and any implementation or maintenance needs that will be required. All implementation level decisions for route designation and applying conditions of limitations to the routes within the Castner Glacier planning area will comply with 43 CFR § 8342.1. As an implementation level decision, any limitation applied in an OHV limited area may change through a subsequent implementation level decision allowing management to adapt based on resource concerns, changes in resource use, and new information.

A cultural resource inventory will be conducted prior to signing the RAMP in accordance to the goals and objectives of the East Alaska RMP to reduce imminent threats from natural or human-caused deterioration, or potential conflict with other resources, by identifying priority geographic areas. Areas identified as “limited” for OHV use are listed as a high probability area in the East Alaska RMP, with unencumbered BLM lands being a first priority. Currently, no Alaska Native religious concerns or places of religious or cultural importance have been identified and are not anticipated in the area due to a lack of historic aged non-riverine sediments as well as uneven and unstable terrain of recently deglaciated and recently deposited riverine sediments.

Sections 2.2.2.1, 2.2.2.2, 2.2.2.3, and 2.2.2.4 outline the designated routes, classifications, and conditions of limitations.

#### *2.2.2.1 South non-motorized trail*

The south non-motorized trail is an existing route that begins at the Richardson Highway south of the Castner Creek bridge, follows the dike and uplands south of Castner Creek, and is located within the Roaded Natural Zone (RNZ) and Castner Cave and Trail Zone (CCTZ). One existing sign is located at the beginning of the trail, explaining the need for commercial permits, outlining general regulations for the seasonal closure to snowmachines, and providing

information on the area's hazards. The trail is subject to seasonal water flows and glacial outwash, which can occasionally shift its location.

**Designation:** Closed to OHVs year-round.

The south non-motorized trail is designated as closed to OHVs to help prevent resource impacts caused by erosion, trail braiding or widening, vegetation stripping, and to reduce user conflicts. The primary objective of the south non-motorized trail is to be managed as a non-motorized winter access route to the toe of the Castner Glacier and ice cave. This trail provides for a specific non-motorized winter recreation experience. Authorizations are not required to designate this as a route.

This transportation linear feature will be incorporated into the BLM Facility Asset Management System (FAMS) as a management tool to implement route-related maintenance, repairs, or improvements. The south non-motorized trail is an existing travel route and will not require implementation and the BLM is not expecting to conduct routine maintenance.

#### 2.2.2.2 *North primitive road*

The north primitive road falls entirely within the RNZ and begins at the Richardson Highway north of the Castner Creek bridge. It runs east into the planning area, reaching the boundary of the CCTZ. The road provides access to the planning area and to the north non-motorized route and the Castner Creek primitive route.

**Designation:** Limited to OHVs – closed to OHVs from October 15 through May 15 or when there is 12 inches average snowfall or 6 inches of frost.

The north primitive road will be designated as limited to OHVs to maintain the seasonal closure. Outside of the seasonal closure, OHV or street vehicle access will be unrestricted on the north primitive road. There are no known resource conflicts from OHV access and the seasonal restriction will be maintained to align with the goals and objectives of the East Alaska RMP. No authorizations are needed to designate this route as the north primitive road. This transportation linear feature will be incorporated into the BLM FAMS as a management tool to aid in the implementation of route-related maintenance, repairs, or improvements.

The primary objective of the north primitive road is to offer OHV use, parking, and offloading of OHVs during the summer. Additionally, this road provides OHV access to the Castner Creek primitive route when OHV use is permitted. This travel route is an existing road, and implementation will not be required. There is one existing sign at the terminus of the north primitive road at the boundary of the CCTZ displaying regulatory information on the seasonal closure to snowmachines. There may be a need for periodic brushing and occasional grading or drainage work to maintain a defined route.

#### 2.2.2.3 *North non-motorized primitive route*

The north non-motorized primitive route starts where the north primitive road terminates at the boundary between the RNZ and CCTZ and travels east toward Castner Glacier. The route exists as a small footpath that varies year to year due to glacial outflow and creek levels. As the route approaches Castner Glacier, it opens up to multiple approaches that lead to the existing ice cave and toe of the glacier.

**Designation:** Closed to OHVs year-round.

The north non-motorized primitive route is designated as closed to OHVs year-round to manage the route for a specific non-motorized summer recreation experience. Restricting OHV access will meet the goals and objectives of the East Alaska RMP by minimizing user conflicts and managing the area for a primitive and semi-primitive recreation experience. Furthermore, the

route traverses areas with extensive vegetation relative to the surrounding terrain and crosses a handful of steep inclines and low-lying wet areas not conducive to motorized use.

The primary objective of the north non-motorized primitive route is to provide a summer access route to Castner Glacier and the ice cave. No authorizations are required to designate this route as the north non-motorized primitive route. It is an existing route with no implementation required, and the BLM does not plan to maintain it as a designated route.

#### *2.2.2.4 Castner Creek primitive route*

This route designation includes all lands from the terminus of the north primitive road extending upstream within 100 feet of all flowing waters of Castner Creek.

**Designation:** Limited to OHVs – closed to OHVs from October 15 through May 15 or when there is 12 inches average snowfall or 6 inches of frost. A 3000 lb. GVW limit is set for all OHVs accessing this route.

The Castner Creek primitive route will be designated as limited to OHVs to maintain the seasonal closure. A GVW restriction will minimize impacts to the lands and resources within the creek corridor. The primary objective of this route is to provide OHV access within the Castner Glacier planning area when OHV use is permitted. This designation supports the East Alaska RMP goals to provide a diversity of recreation experiences and opportunities that include both motorized and non-motorized. OHV use is suitable in this area and timeframes as no damage to resources will occur. The area is generally devoid of wildlife or wildlife habitat, alternative non-motorized access is provided, and the use of OHVs in this location will not adversely affect the area's natural aesthetic or scenic values in the snow-free months. The area is located in a glacial outwash and river plain. High-water events and seasonal runoff eliminate visual evidence of motorized use annually. The area's land comprises compacted soils, rock, and glacial sediments that are highly durable to OHV use. No implementation or maintenance is required for this travel route.

#### *2.2.2.5 Transportation linear disturbance*

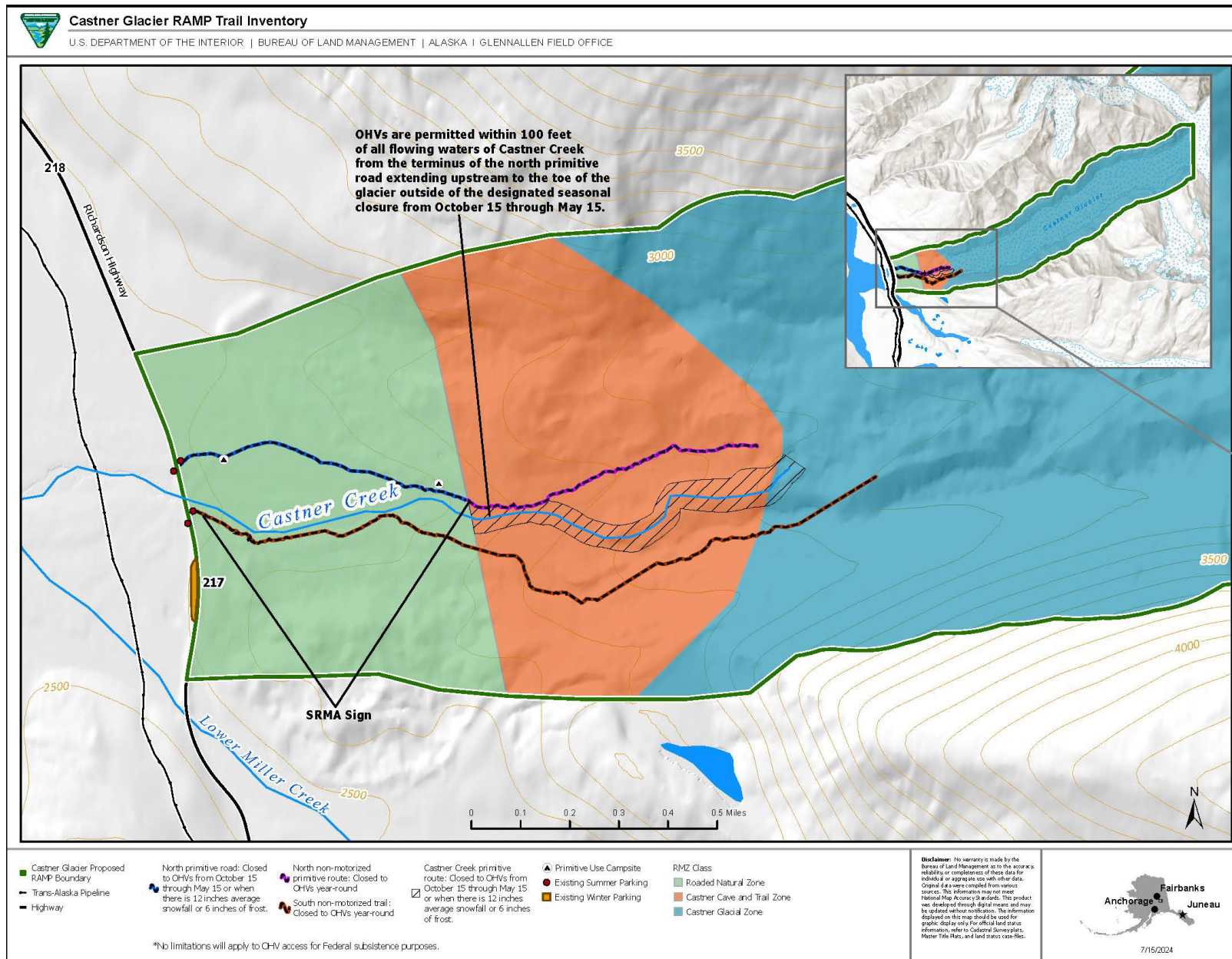
A transportation linear disturbance is an unauthorized route, route for which the authorization has expired, or route that is no longer needed and are features that are not part of the defined travel network. Currently, there are no documented unauthorized routes or routes that are no longer needed within the Castner Glacier planning area.

If, through further monitoring, transportation linear disturbance features are located or created within the planning area, the BLM would first utilize passive regeneration techniques to include natural revegetation, brush screening, use of dead fall trees, or placement of locally sourced rock in the disturbance area. If the BLM determines the disturbance cannot be reclaimed in two successive summer seasons, other options will be considered such as application of native seed, ripping and scarification of the disturbed area, construction of physical barriers, and placement of route closed signs.

#### *2.2.2.6 Future Transportation Decisions*

Future route designation to include ROW grants or other transportation linear features may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Designations will not detract from the RSCs of a particular RMZ and may not contradict the prescribed limitations identified in this plan or the seasonal closure to OHVs from October 15 through May 15 or when there is 12 inches of average snowfall or 6 inches of frost.

Figure 8: Castner Glacier RAMP Trail Inventory Map





## 2.3 PERMITS AND AUTHORIZATIONS

Two proposed actions will meet Section 1.4.3 by balancing the demand for commercial recreation opportunities and requests for lands and realty authorizations with potential impacts on recreational resources, private recreation users, and proposed RSCs. The actions will cap SRPs and manage lands and realty authorizations within the Castner Glacier planning area.

### 2.3.1 Action – Manage Special Recreation Permits

The proposed action will place management restrictions on SRPs within the Castner Glacier planning area to minimize user conflicts at the parking area, trail system, and the glacier and ice cave. Currently, four SRPs are issued with all permittees in good standing. Sections 2.3.1.1, 2.3.1.2, 2.3.1.3, and 2.3.1.4 outline the SRPs considered by the BLM within the Castner Glacier planning area.

#### 2.3.1.1 Commercial SRP.

Commercial use is the recreational use of public lands and related waters for business or financial gain. The activity, service, or use is commercial if any of these conditions are present:

- Any person, group, or organization makes or attempts to make a profit, receives money, amortizes equipment, or obtains goods or services as compensation from participants in recreation activities occurring on public lands led, sponsored by, or organized by that person, group, or organization. Compensation for recreation services may come from participants or other sources.
- Anyone collects a fee or receives other compensation that is not strictly a sharing of actual expenses, or exceeds actual expenses, incurred for the purposes of the activity, service, or use.
- There is paid, public advertising to seek participants.
- Participants pay for a duty of care, i.e., an expectation of safety (BLM 2014a, p. 1).

The Castner Glacier RAMP supports management actions contained within the East Alaska RMP relating to SRPs by maintaining a diversity of recreational opportunities, authorizing SRPs in accordance with Manual 2930 Recreation Permits and Fees and Handbook H-2930-1 Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook, and, when necessary, establishing commercial use limits through implementation-level planning (BLM 2007, pg. 39).

One of two options will be considered and selected for managing commercial SRPs at Castner Glacier.

- 10 commercial SRPs will be issued or active at any one-time. Under this scenario, commercial groups will be limited to a maximum of 10 people.
- 15 commercial SRPs will be issued or active at any one time. Under this scenario, commercial groups will be limited to a maximum of 7 people.

Commercial SRPs will be allocated as follows:

- Operators in good standing will be given preference in permit retention or reauthorization.
- Applications will be processed on a first come first serve basis upon signing of a Decision Record (DR).
- Applications should clearly demonstrate how a prospective permit holder will support or enhance the RSCs.
- If application demand exceeds the number of available permits applications will be processed via a random draw with preference given to applications that demonstrate support or enhancement of RSCs.

Unlimited issuance of SRPs, lack of caps on group sizes, and non-existent management controls and regulations would limit the BLM's ability to meet the desired physical qualities and operational conditions throughout the planning area. Additionally, the social qualities of the area could not be achieved due to contacts with groups, size of groups, and evidence of use.

#### *2.3.1.2 Competitive SRP.*

Competitive use is any organized, sanctioned, or structured use, event, or activity on public lands or related waters in which two or more contestants compete and either or both of the following elements apply:

- Participants register, enter, or complete an application for the event.
- A predetermined course or area is designated (BLM 2014a, p. 2).

Competitive events will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will be allocated as follows:

- Applications should clearly demonstrate how a prospective event would support or enhance the RSCs.
- Additional standard or specialized permit stipulations would apply upon permit issuance.

Competitive SRPs would primarily affect the social qualities of the area due to exceeding the desired maximum group sizes and contacts with other groups and the potential impacts to the natural terrain due to overuse.

#### *2.3.1.3 Vending Permits.*

Vendor permits are a type of commercial use permit defined as temporary, short-term, nonexclusive, revocable authorizations to sell goods or services on public lands or related waters in conjunction with a recreation activity. Vending permits are nonexclusive in that the permittee has no expectation of exclusive use; the BLM, nevertheless, retains the ability to limit the number of vendors. Vendor permits do not authorize permanent structures and do not grant preferential rights for renewal or any possessory interests in real property the public lands or related waters. The AO must place stipulations on the SRP to provide for the health and safety of visitors and the protection of natural resources (BLM 2014a, p. 2).

Vending permits will only be considered in the RNZ. Outside this zone, any vending operations would not conform with existing or proposed RSCs relating to physical setting characteristics and naturalness.

#### *2.3.1.4 Organized Group.*

Organized group or event permits are for group outdoor recreation activities or events that are neither commercial nor competitive. The AO determines when a permit is required based on planning decisions, resource concerns, potential user conflicts, or public health and safety issues. A group is defined as more than one person participating in a recreation activity or event (BLM 2014a, p. 4). A group of 10 or more people will be required to apply for an organized group SRP.

The AO retains discretion to issue organized group permits on a case-by-case basis. Approved group permits will be allocated as follows:

- Applications should clearly demonstrate how a prospective event would support or enhance the RSCs.
- Additional standard or specialized permit stipulations would apply upon permit issuance

### **2.3.2 Action – Implement Lands and Realty Authorizations**

The proposed action will designate lands and realty authorizations, conditions of limitations, and allocation procedures. Land use authorizations include various authorizations and agreements to use BLM lands such as ROW grants, road, temporary use permits under several different authorities; leases, permits, and easements under section 302 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA); airport leases under the Act of May 24, 1928; and Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) leases. For the purpose of the RAMP, permitted land uses will be covered which cover occupancy, use, or development of a site (East Alaska RMP, pg. 19).

The BLM has considered, authorized, and denied over the past decade requests for motorized overland military training exercises, commercial photoshoots, and glacial receding studies. Typically, these projects are classified as casual use and allowed to take place with stipulations or required operating procedures (ROP) in place or are further analyzed in subsequent NEPA analysis. Sections 2.3.2.1, 2.3.2.2, 2.3.2.3, and 2.3.2.4 outline the lands and realty authorization categories being considered for the Castner Glacier planning area, determined by past use.

#### **2.3.2.1 Science and Research Authorizations**

BLM-managed lands provide a natural scientific laboratory that is attractive to scientists worldwide. These lands are valuable for research topics ranging from geology, paleontology, archaeology, and history to biology, botany, and ecosystem studies. The BLM may authorize using BLM-managed lands for science and research (S&R) activities as long as the activities do not affect the recreation resources and management strategies for those lands.

S&R authorizations will be limited to three ongoing projects at any one time within the planning area. Unlimited issuance of lands and realty authorizations for S&R activities may hinder the BLM's ability to meet the desired social or physical RSCs within each RMZ. Installation of monitors, communications towers, or cameras will be subject to additional stipulations or guidelines and may not detract from the physical qualities and the desired natural RSCs in all RMZs. Proposals that adhere to all proposed RSCs in respective zones will be determined casual use with additional stipulations on a case-by-case basis. Applications would be processed on a first come first serve basis, upon signing of a DR.

#### **2.3.2.2 Military Training Exercise Authorizations**

The BLM has previously approved military training exercises within the Castner Glacier planning area, typically within the CGZ RMZ. Military training exercises have previously requested use of motorized vehicles and consist of groups varying from 10 to 25 individuals.

Based on previous authorizations for military training exercises at Castner Glacier, the desired social qualities will not be realized for all RMZs due to the size of groups partaking in the exercises and the visual impacts of use to the natural environment. Military training exercises may also detract from the desired physical qualities of the area, namely for the CGZ.

Military training exercise authorizations will be limited to one ongoing exercise at any one time within the planning area. Military training exercise proposals that adhere to all proposed RSCs in respective zones will be determined casual use with additional stipulations on a case-by-case basis. The AO retains the right to consider and authorize lands and realty authorizations on a case-by-case basis

#### **2.3.2.3 Commercial Filming and Photography Authorizations**

The BLM requires permits for filming or still photography that involves actors, models, sets, or props or would require onsite management and oversight for resource protection or to minimize

conflict with other users. Filming or still photography is not permitted if there is a likelihood of resource damage or public health and safety risks that cannot be mitigated or if there would be an unreasonable disruption to the public's use and enjoyment of the site.

Based on previous authorizations for commercial filming and photography at Castner Glacier, these uses typically occur in the CCTZ. Future authorizations for commercial filming and photography may impact the desired physical and social qualities of the CCTZ for the size of groups that may be needed, facilities or props required, and the visual impacts and evidence of use on the natural environment.

Commercial filming and photography authorizations will be limited to one ongoing permit at any one time within the planning area. Commercial filming proposals that adhere to all proposed RSCs in respective zones will be determined casual use with additional stipulations on a case-by-case basis.

#### 2.3.2.4 *Other*

A ROW authorizes the specific use of parcels of public land for a specified period appropriate for the life of the project. Individuals or businesses may apply for a ROW to use specific lands for projects such as electric power or fiber optic lines, wind or solar energy generation, communications tower sites, roads or trails, canals, pipelines, or reservoirs.

The BLM has the discretion to grant a ROW when doing so is in the public interest. The AO retains the right to consider and authorize all other permits on a case-by-case basis.

## **3 ADMINISTRATION**

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Minor administrative actions, primarily in the form of monitoring and public education, began at Castner Glacier after the signing of the East Alaska RMP in 2007. Monitoring trips occurred throughout the winter at approximately one-month intervals between December and March. Between approximately 2008 and 2015, the BLM placed temporary signs near the start of the south non-motorized trail near the bridge and the terminus of the north primitive road between the months of October to May. The BLM installed permanent signs at the south non-motorized trail and north primitive road portals in 2021 and 2022. In 2019, the BLM issued the first SRP for commercial tours at Castner Glacier. In the Federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, 21 commercial operators conducted unpermitted commercial tours or advertised for commercial tours at the glacier. Public use at Castner Glacier has continued to increase in the past ten years, becoming a popular winter destination for residents of Alaska, United States (U.S.) tourists, and, recently, international visitors. In recent years, summer recreation use at Castner Glacier has been increasing; however, commercial use reporting and BLM observations demonstrate that 70% of overall use occurs between October and March (BLM SRP reports 2020-2023). User conflicts regarding the frequency of commercial tours, size of tours, and experience or safety protocols of unpermitted operators are commonplace. Private recreation users have complained about increasing litter, ice graffiti or vandalism at the glacial ice cave, and overcrowding, leading to a diminished recreation experience. Inadequate parking at the trailhead has led to illegal parking, causing public health and safety issues on the Richardson Highway.

Activities reported at Castner Glacier that conflict with recreational uses include the use of drones and fireworks, fires in the cave, graffiti or ice art, concerts, raves, laser shows, and snowmachines. The BLM is concerned that lack of action will continue to degrade the visitor experience and recreation resources, diminish the desired RSCs, and impact the BLM's ability to manage the Castner Glacier planning area for the current ROS characteristics and expected activities, experiences, and benefits identified for the RMZs.

### **3.1 RECREATION PERMITS**

The BLM's recreation permit policy is outlined in Manual 2930 Recreation Permits and Fees and Handbook H-2930-1 Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook. The BLM will continue to manage permits at Castner Glacier to provide needed public services and satisfy recreation demand within allowable use levels while minimizing conflicts and protecting and enhancing public lands, recreation opportunities, and sustainable, healthy ecosystems. Permits will be issued in an equitable manner and implemented with the issuance of this RAMP.

The issuance of SRPs is and will remain discretionary in nature. All SRP holders will promote LNT principles and pack in and pack out all refuse, human waste, and animal waste. SRP holders will be required to supply portable toilet facilities for their clients. Applications for an SRP may be denied based on many factors including nonconformance with land use plans or designations; a moratorium on permits issued as part of a planning process; state licensing requirements; the results of an environmental analysis; other resource values, including the environment and endangered species or antiquities; public health and safety concerns; the applicant's past performance, including previous convictions for violating federal or state laws or regulations concerning the conservation or protection of natural resources; or the inability of the managing office to issue, manage, and monitor the proposed use. If the field office is unable to fulfill or complete all the necessary steps of issuing and managing an SRP authorization, the SRP may not be issued (BLM 2014a, p. 7).

If onsite monitoring or survey results from the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) demonstrate a declining user experience or diminishment of the desired RSCs in any RMZ, the BLM may consider further limitations and actions regarding commercial SRP holders. As outlined in 43 CFR § 2932.56(a), the BLM may amend, suspend, or cancel an SRP if necessary to protect public health, public safety, or the environment.

Unless specifically analyzed in a land use or implementation level plan subsequent NEPA is usually required for issuance of an SRP. Implementation action 2.3.1 describes the types of SRPs considered for recreational use at Castner Glacier, potential conflicts with the desired RSCs, the conditions of limitation for each permit, and the proposed allocation system for consideration and authorization by the BLM. SRPs are discretionary in nature and will not be authorized if they detract or diminish from the desired RSCs.

### **3.2 LANDS & REALTY AUTHORIZATIONS**

The regulations outlined in 43 CFR Part 2920 establishes procedures for the orderly and timely processing of proposals for non-Federal use of public lands. Authority is granted by Sections 302, 303, and 310 of the FLPMA of 1976 and authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to issue regulations providing for the use, occupancy, and development of the public lands through leases, permits, and easements. The East Alaska RMP designates that lands and realty authorizations must provide a balance between land use and resource protection that best serves the public at large and provides support to other BLM programs to protect and enhance resources (BLM 2007, p. 19). Section 2.3.2 describes lands and realty authorizations considered within the Castner Glacier planning area, potential conflicts with the desired RSCs, the conditions of limitation for each authorization type, and the proposed allocation system for consideration and authorization by the BLM.

### **3.3 USE RESTRICTIONS & SUPPLEMENTARY RULES**

The state director may establish supplementary rules to provide for the protection of persons, property, and public lands and resources. Supplementary rules are used to support objectives of 43 CFR Subpart 8365 for the protection of public lands and resources, and the protection, comfort, and well-being of the public in its use of recreation areas, sites, and facilities on public lands. Supplementary rules should not duplicate or conflict with these or other Federal regulations. The BLM may propose supplementary rules in circumstances where existing regulations are insufficient to manage resource use conflicts or protect resources and may also be needed to implement decisions in resource management plans or other planning documents (BLM IM 2013-161). Within 12 months of signing a DR for the Castner Glacier RAMP the BLM will initiate the supplementary rule process.

#### **3.3.1 Implementation Process**

##### *3.3.1.1 National Environmental Policy Act Compliance*

The establishment of supplementary rules is considered a federal action which must be supported by appropriate NEPA analysis. In many instances, supplementary rules are needed to enforce decisions made in RMPs or implementation level plans (e.g., travel management plans). Supplementary rules proposed in the Castner Glacier RAMP would be analyzed in the Castner Glacier RAMP EA.

##### *3.3.1.2 Federal Register Publication*

Compliance with Section 553 of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) (5 U.S.C. 553) is necessary to establish supplementary rules. Section 553 requires Federal agencies to comply with the following rulemaking procedures:

- Publication of a general notice of proposed rulemaking in the Federal Register, which includes an opportunity for public comment of at least 60 days.
- A concise general statement of the rules' basis and purpose.
- Publication of final rules at least 30 days before their effective date.

Departmental Policy (Part 318 DM, Chapter 4), with respect to the first step (the notice of proposed rulemaking) provides that if the public comment period is less than 60 calendar days, the notice must explain the reasons for the shorter comment period.

In most circumstances supplementary rules are first published as "proposed." Final rules are then published after a 60-day review period. In limited circumstances, supplementary rules may be published initially as interim final supplementary rules that take effect without the prior notice-and-comment procedures that are normally required. Interim final supplementary rules are rare and require an explanation of "good cause" where "notice and public procedure ... are impracticable, unnecessary or contrary to the public interest" (5 U.S.C. 553(b)(3)(B)). For example, there may be "good cause" to omit prior notice-and-comment procedures because of immediate public safety and resource protection needs within a management area. Interim final supplementary rules generally go into effect 30 days after publication, but may go into effect immediately upon a separate finding of "good cause" under 5 U.S.C. 553(d)(3).

Even in the case of interim final supplementary rules, the BLM offers the public an opportunity to comment after publication. If the BLM receives substantive public comment on interim final supplementary rules, the BLM is required to publish a final supplementary rule responding to substantive public comment. Field officials should contact the field or regional solicitors' office to verify the need and/or justification for interim final supplementary rules prior to submitting the rules to the Headquarters (HQ) for review.

Proposed, final, and interim final supplementary rules must comply with the Federal Register Document Drafting Handbook ([www.archives.gov/federal-register/write/handbook](http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/write/handbook)) and must follow the guidance provided in Washington Office Instruction Memorandum (IM) No. 2012-094, Guidance on Preparing Federal Register Notices. Supplementary rules must address background, discussion (of each of the supplementary rules), procedural matters, exemptions and penalties. BLM's Proposed Supplementary Rule Outline and Final Supplementary Rule Outline, provide examples of how proposed and final supplementary rules should be formatted.

### **3.4 PARTNERSHIPS AND AGREEMENTS**

Partnerships are driving factors of success for many BLM recreation projects nationwide. Partnerships can effectively lead to innovative management techniques, reduce the overall workload for bureau employees, help leverage resources and expertise unavailable to local BLM offices, and establish a passion and foster public land ethics among the next generation of public land managers and users. The GFO has relied on many partners in the past to achieve management goals and missions, including the Student Conservation Association, Copper River Watershed Project, Tread Lightly, American Conservation Experience, American Hiking Society, Ducks Unlimited, Alaska Trails, Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment, Wounded Warriors, State of Alaska agencies, Native corporations, numerous academic institutions, and other entities. Partnership guidance and philosophy are found in the BLM's Blueprint for 21st Century Outdoor Recreation, published in August 2023.

Barriers to utilizing partnerships at Castner Glacier include the remote location, harsh weather, and predominant use season (winter). While these barriers do not prevent the pursuit of partnership opportunities, they limit the scope and breadth of what is realistic, efficient, and safe. Due to these factors the most likely candidates for partnership work and informal or formal agreements are the State of Alaska and academic institutions or research entities. The State of Alaska, which maintains the Richardson Highway ROW and owns adjoining land parcels, is the most likely candidate for partner actions. Academic or research entities studying glaciology, arctic environments, and climate change would also be suited for partnership work as they would likely have experience or expertise with similar activities.

To a lesser degree permitted commercial operators may be relied upon to relay management challenges, provide the BLM with current site conditions, and relay any ongoing user conflicts or resource issues. Also, given the historical use of the Delta Range SRMA, the Castner Glacier planning area, and proximity to the Northern Warfare Training Center, the U.S. military and its representatives may be candidates for partnership work moving forward.

#### **3.4.1 Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities**

ADOT&PF is currently working on upgrades to the Richardson Highway Mile Post (MP) 206 – 233, including road widening and realignment, bridge and culvert replacements, improved drainage, and rockfall mitigation. Within the Richardson Highway Improvements project boundary is a recreation access point to Castner Glacier, where ADOT&PF is proposing improvements at MP 217 that would address safety concerns related to illegal, unsafe vehicle parking along the highway and resolve maintenance and operations (M&O) related issues near the bridge crossing and recreation access point. The Richardson Highway Milepost 206 – 233 Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study summarizes proposed considerations for the Castner Glacier recreation access to be two parking lots near MP 217 located to the south and north of the Castner Creek bridge (ADOT&PF 2022).

The BLM has held previous meetings with ADOT&PF regarding the design, location, and features of a new Castner Glacier parking area. The BLM is open to a partnership agreement with ADOT&PF to manage signage within the parking areas that would inform users of the Castner Glacier planning area.

### **3.4.2 Academic or Research Entities**

In the past few years, the BLM has approved one water sampling project within the Castner Glacier planning area and received two other inquiries regarding glacial recession, climate change, and photo point data monitoring. Within the broader Delta Range SRMA, four permits have been issued for S&R activities over the past eight years. These studies range from water quality studies to seismic studies to glacial core sampling. Academic and research entities have demonstrated a historical interest in S&R projects in the area. The BLM would consider formal and informal partnerships from these groups on a case-by-case basis. Projects may be subject to subsequent NEPA and should consider BLM management expectations for each RMZ and sustain or enhance the desired RSCs.

### **3.4.3 Commercial Operators and US Military**

Informal partnerships with existing or future commercial operators within the Castner Glacier planning area benefit the BLM. SRP holders are often the eyes on the ground and can provide reliable information on site conditions, trends, or emerging issues. The BLM relies on operators to promote responsible user ethics and convey interpretive or educational information specific to the area where permitted operations occur. Formal partnerships with SRP holders may be considered; however, they would likely face higher scrutiny due to the permitter/permittee relationship between the BLM and operators.

The U.S. military and its representatives may offer unique opportunities for partnership projects. The military runs and maintains a training center near the Castner Glacier planning area and has used Castner Glacier and other regions in the Delta Range SRMA for various training and research activities. Based on past demonstrated use, any partnership with the U.S. military would likely require a high degree of communication and subsequent NEPA analysis.

## **3.5 BUSINESS PLANS FOR FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS**

A business plan is unnecessary at this time as BLM will not be implementing a visitor fee or requiring visitors to obtain an individual SRP to visit Castner Glacier. The only fees charged will be for commercial SRPs. The BLM's authority to issue SRPs, collect fees for SRPs, and the use of collected fees is described in the FLPMA of 1976, the Federal Land Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA), 16 U.S. Code 6801 et seq and 43 CFR Part 2930. Standard fees for permitted recreation activities are set by the BLM Director and published in the National Recreation Fee Schedule every three years. Local managers and State Directors do not have the authority to adjust fees. The issuance and administration of permits must adhere to the BLM policy contained in Manual 2930 Recreation Permits and Fees and Handbook H-2930-1 Recreation Permit and Fee Administration Handbook (BLM 2014a).

## **3.6 DATA MANAGEMENT PROTOCOLS**

Collecting visitor use data at Castner Glacier is achieved in various ways. Commercial use reports are required annually from SRP holders. These reports indicate the number of trips, number of clients, date of trips, and other information that the BLM can use to demonstrate trends or user demand. Trail counters are used in summer to capture the quantity of use along the north non-motorized primitive route. While this counter does not capture all of the summer use, it is the primary means of access in the summer months and can be used to project the



overall annual use of the site. When BLM staff visit the Castner Glacier planning area, they record observations regarding the number of vehicles in the parking areas and the encounters with people on trails. The BLM may use these numbers to infer high-use periods, user trends, and, to a lesser degree, emerging issues. All use data is compiled and tabulated annually into the Recreation Management Information System (RMIS), the official repository of recreational use of BLM lands, and is used to generate annual public lands statistics.

### **3.7 PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND TIMELINES**

- Issuance of additional SRPs within 12 months of signing the DR.
- Enhanced signage at portals installed in the summer following the signing of the DR.
- Enhanced signage at newly constructed parking areas within 12 months of the completion of the ADOT&PF upgrades to MP 217 and parking areas (scheduled 2025).
- Implementation of monitoring program winter 2025.

### **3.8 COST ESTIMATES OF IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS**

#### **3.8.1 Issuance of Additional SRPs**

Many SRPs are processed without additional cost recovery fees by the BLM. However, 43 CFR § 2932.31(e(1)) allows for fee recovery of costs to the agency of analysis and permit processing. The threshold limit for no-fee processing of an SRP is 50 hours. If more than 50 hours of staff time are required for processing, administering, and monitoring a permit, the BLM charges cost recovery of direct expenses related to the permit (BLM 2014a, p. I-22). Prior to the 50-hour threshold, the BLM would incur all processing costs.

#### **3.8.2 Enhanced Signage at Portals**

Updated signage for portal stations is estimated at \$2,000. Portal bases and sign frames are already onsite and suitable for future use. The BLM will produce signs via the BLM National Sign Center.

#### **3.8.3 Implementation of Monitoring Program**

Monitoring costs include labor and vehicle costs to travel to and from the Castner Glacier planning area. Base labor is provided for BLM employees on a per-month basis. The BLM can build most monitoring trips into base labor and bare no direct cost solely from implementing the Castner Glacier RAMP. Additionally, employees can frequently combine various work tasks and duties into one trip, thus reducing a per-cost basis. Expected vehicle costs from the GFO to the Castner Glacier planning area are estimated at \$60.00-\$80.00 per trip, depending on current fuel costs.

## **4 INFORMATION AND EDUCATION**

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The BLM uses various forms of media to help inform and educate the public about recreation opportunities on public lands. These include traditional print media, web-based sites, social media sites, visual media, and audio media. Specifically relating to the Castner Glacier planning area information can be found on the BLM website at: <https://www.blm.gov/visit/castner-glacier-trail>. Information can also be found on [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov). Specific route access information is in the BLM Ground Transportation Linear Features database. Additionally, the BLM may use Facebook, Twitter, or other social media sites to educate or inform users on current conditions within the Castner Glacier planning area.

Signs are located on the northern and southern routes that access the Castner Glacier. The north board, at the terminus of the north primitive road, and the south board, at the access point to the south non-motorized trail, offer information regarding general hazards, the winter motorized closure, and requirements for commercial operations. The BLM may partner with ADOT&PF to develop additional signage upon completing the Castner Glacier RAMP and the ADOT&PF trailhead parking reconstruction.

#### **4.1 MAP AND BROCHURE DEVELOPMENT**

The BLM will not provide onsite maps or brochures. The access and approach to Castner Glacier and the glacial ice cave vary considerably from month to month. Defined routes other than the south non-motorized trail and north primitive road do not exist. The area is remote and subject to extreme wind and weather events, making it unsuitable for onsite publications or products.

#### **4.2 WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT**

The BLM website for Castner Glacier will include information on parking, access, environmental hazards, commercial use requirements, and the winter motorized closure. Upon signing the Castner Glacier RAMP, the BLM may consider developing a georeferenced portable document format (PDF) map for public distribution. A georeferenced PDF map for the Denali Highway includes the Castner Glacier planning area; however, the scale extent may not be useful for site navigation. The information provided may be useful for general navigation to the trailhead and can be downloaded from the Avenza store or directly from the BLM website: <https://www.blm.gov/maps/georeferenced-PDFs/alaska>.

#### **4.3 OUTREACH EFFORTS AND EVENTS**

The Castner Glacier RAMP does not include general outreach efforts and events. The BLM may consider participation or content development for outreach and events on a case-by-case basis commensurate with reasonable labor and staff resources. Specialized outreach may occur from time to time to message extreme events such as ice cave collapse, high water events, or other emerging environmental hazards.

#### **4.4 INTERPRETATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

Due to the remote location of Castner Glacier, little to no onsite interpretation and environmental education is planned. BLM websites and onsite signage provide information regarding general hazards of the area, LNT principles, pack in and pack out guidelines, the seasonal closure to OHVs, and commercial use. The BLM may provide dog waste bags at trailheads located on the Richardson Highway. Per the East Alaska RMP, minimal or no development will be considered at trailheads that access areas managed for a primitive or semi-primitive recreation experience. Outside the RNZ, the Castner Glacier planning area will be managed for primitive and semi-primitive experiences. Therefore, the construction of facilities, interpretive panels, or trail markers will not occur.

The Castner Glacier planning area is visited by a diverse group of people, many of whom originate from China, Korea, and Japan, to visit Castner Glacier in the winter. Future information and signage should target various audiences and consider incorporating appropriate languages to disseminate information to non-English speaking and reading visitors.

## 4.5 SIGNS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PLACEMENT

Signs are located at the terminus of the north primitive road and the beginning of the south non-motorized trail. They provide information about the area's general hazards, seasonal closures, and requirements for commercial operations. Further signage may be developed in partnership with ADOT&PF upon completion of the Richardson Highway MP 206 – 233 project. In alignment with the goals and objectives of the East Alaska RMP, minimal or no development will be considered at trailheads that access areas managed for a primitive or semi-primitive recreation experience.

## 5 MONITORING

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Effective monitoring is a critical component of recreation resource management. Onsite monitoring can help land managers be more informed of current trends and uses, emerging issues, and increasing or decreasing visitor use levels. Offsite monitoring (websites, social media, etc.) can help identify unlicensed commercial operators, become aware of misinformation or misrepresentation, and develop future contacts with stakeholders and public land users. Informal monitoring has occurred at the Castner Glacier since 2008 in the form of monthly site visits in the winter and occasional site visits in the summer months. Over the past two years, monitoring trips, including the presence of law enforcement, have increased substantially.

Historical monitoring focused on the violation of the winter snowmachine closure. Depending on the year, violations were noted to occur 10 to 15 times throughout the winter season. More recently monitoring has focused on unlicensed commercial operations. In 2022-2023, nearly two dozen businesses were conducting unlicensed commercial operations or advertising for commercial operations at the Castner Glacier planning area. The BLM documented past monitoring trips in internal trip logs at the GFO; typically recording the date, weather, number of cars in parking areas, number of users encountered, and other pertinent information.

The Castner Glacier RAMP proposes more frequent monitoring trips, a formal monitoring form, and ideal frequencies and timeframes for monitoring trips to occur. The BLM will monitor to ensure the desired RSCs are being met and that appropriate activities, experiences, and benefits are achieved. A recommended monitoring plan for the Castner Glacier planning area will include:

- Bi-weekly monitoring trips to occur from November 15 through April 15.
- Monthly monitoring trips to occur from April 15 through November 15.
- Website and social media monitoring to occur on an ongoing basis with a specific focus during the winter use season from November 15 through April 15.
- Installing a summer trail counter beyond the end of the north primitive road and within the north non-motorized primitive route.
- Installing a summer trail counter along the south non-motorized trail.
- Consideration of winter counters upon the completion of the planned ADOT&PF parking area, where it connects to the south non-motorized trail.
- When the GFO is selected for rotation of GPRA surveys the Castner Glacier planning area shall be a priority survey location.
- A standard form (Table 17) shall be used when performing monitoring trips within the Castner Glacier planning area.

The proposed monitoring plan may be implemented to lessen impacts to recreational users and address use conflicts as they arise with commercial SRP holders and independent (general)

public users. Onsite monitoring or GPRA surveys may be used to identify management shortfalls, lack of visitor satisfaction, and any visitor services desired by users. These requests may be considered by GFO if commensurate with the goals and objectives as identified in the RAMP and East Alaska RMP. If information collected through the monitoring process indicates diminishing RSCs in any RMZ the BLM may consider further limitations and actions regarding commercial SRP holders or may initiate subsequent NEPA analysis to regulate use from independent (general) public users.

## **5.1 VISITOR USE PATTERNS**

The Castner Glacier planning area served over 12,000 visitors in Federal FY 2023. Due to its proximity to the Richardson Highway and ease of access, Castner Glacier has become a must-see for many winter visitors to the state and is becoming increasingly popular with residents for a unique glacier experience. User conflict has become an increasing problem within the area, as well as issues concerning parking, commercial operations, and overall visitor experience. Use has increased substantially in the area in the last 15 years increasing from 750 visits in 2008 to 12,445 visits in 2023 (BLM RMIS).

Use patterns in the future are expected to level out or decrease. The Castner Glacier is retreating on an annual basis, and due to climate factors, recent ice cave collapses have occurred. The primary attraction for visitors to the site is the glacial ice cave, and after collapse events, it can take months or years for a cave to reemerge. Regardless of the levels of use the area may receive in the future unique recreational resources will be present. These resources are in high demand and will require more intensive on-the-ground management over the next decade. Barring large-scale events such as extreme retreats or long periods of the cave being nonexistent, the BLM must continue actively managing the Castner Glacier planning area and carry out objectives, actions, and monitoring protocols in this plan.

## **5.2 VISITOR SAFETY AND SECURITY**

Situated in the heart of the Alaska Range the Castner Glacier planning area is in a remote and rugged environment. Many complex environmental and topographical challenges are present. Extreme winds, fast-changing water levels, active glaciers, and rockfalls can all present hazards. Users should be prepared for fast changing weather conditions and experienced in backcountry travel if leaving the Richardson Highway Corridor. The remote area is 48 miles from the nearest town (Delta Junction) and 104 miles from the BLM GFO. The only commercial business within one hour of the site is Black Rapids Lodge, seven miles away. Cell phone service is nonexistent or intermittent at the parking area (carrier dependent) and nonexistent once you leave the highway. Users should be prepared for arctic travel (winter months) and have experience or familiarity with backcountry navigation.

The BLM does not provide onsite communication, staff, or resources. While some BLM staff may possess advanced medical training the BLM is not responsible for medical services, search and rescue, or other emergency services within the Castner Glacier planning area. The Alaska State Troopers are statutorily required to lead search and rescue (SAR) efforts within the State of Alaska. The troopers should be a user's first call when seeking emergency help or SAR resources. The troopers can be reached via 911, (907) 895-4800 Delta Junction trooper post, or (907) 822-3263 Glennallen trooper post. All safety and emergency situations should attempt first to call 911.

Table 17. Castner Glacier Management Area Monitoring Form

BLM Staff:	Non-BLM Staff:
Date:	Day of Week:

Zone of Patrol	RNZ Roaded Natural	CCTZ Cave and Trail	CGZ Glacial
# of vehicles counted			
# of people encountered			
# of groups encountered			
# of commercial operators encountered			
Evidence of use with description			
Snowmachines encountered/ snowmachines tracks observed			
OHVs encountered/OHV tracks observed			
Trail Assessment/ Condition of Trail			

<b>Trip Notes:</b>

Emergency medical services are limited but may be found in the below locations:

- Delta Jct. Family Medical Center 2360 Service Street, (907) 895-5100
- Delta Jct. Interior Alaska Medical Clinic 2730 Alaska Highway, (907) 895-6233
- Delta Jct. Medical Transport 1325 Delta Avenue, (907) 895-4356
- Glennallen Copper River Native Association Medical Center mile 111.5 Richardson (907) 822-5241
- Glennallen Cross Roads Medical Center mile 187 Glenn Hwy. (907) 822-3203
- All safety and emergency situations should attempt first to call 911

The emergency contact information provided in this document is current as of the publication of the Castner Glacier RAMP and are subject to change. It is the responsibility of users entering the Castner Glacier planning area to prepare themselves in the event of an emergency and have the most recent contact information prior to entering the planning area.

### **5.3 VISITOR SATISFACTION AND DEMAND**

GPRA surveys will be the most common formal tool to analyze visitor satisfaction. The Castner Glacier planning area will utilize GPRA surveys within the parking areas and portals. Typically, GPRA surveys are conducted on a rolling basis across BLM offices throughout Alaska with GFO completing GPRA surveys every three to four years. The BLM will use stakeholder feedback, communication with SRP holders, informal contacts on the ground, and monitoring forms to analyze visitor satisfaction and demand. Taken collectively these tools will better inform land managers at GFO if the objectives and actions within the Castner RAMP have been properly executed and carried out.

## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

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Appendix A: List of Preparers

Appendix B: Acronyms and Abbreviations

Appendix C: List of References

Appendix D: RSC Matrix Tables

Appendix E: Required Operating Procedures

## APPENDIX A: LIST OF PREPARERS

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Resource Area</b>
Cory Larson	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation GFO
Leah Komp	GIS Specialist	GFO
Rhonda Williams	Realty Specialist	Lands and Realty GFO
John Jangala	Archaeologist	Archaeology GFO
Jorjena Barringer	Planning and Environmental Coordinator	NEPA Resources ADO
Alysia Hancock	Assistant Field Manager	Field Manager GFO
Zach Million	Alaska State Office Recreation Lead	Recreation Alaska State Office



## APPENDIX B: ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADOT&PF	Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
ADO	Anchorage District Office
ANILCA	Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act
APA	Administrative Procedure Act
ARPA	Archaeological Resources Protection Act
AO	Authorized Officer
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CCTZ	Castner Cave and Trail Zone
CGZ	Castner Glacial Zone
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
East Alaska RMP	2007 East Alaska Resource Management Plan
DOI	U.S. Department of the Interior
DR	Decision Record
EA	Environmental assessment
EO	Executive order
ESA	Endangered Species Act
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
FAMS	Facility Asset Management System
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy Management Act
FLREA	Federal Land Recreation Enhancement Act
FY	Fiscal Year
GPRA	Government Performance and Results Act
GFO	Glenallen Field Office
GVW	Gross vehicle weight
IM	Instruction Memorandum
IDT	Interdisciplinary Team
LNT	Leave no trace
M&O	Maintenance and Operations
MP	Mile Post
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NNIS	Non-native invasive species

OHV	Off-highway vehicle
ORP	Outdoor Recreation Planner
PEL	Planning and Environmental Linkages Study
PDF	Portable document format
RAMP	Recreation Area Management Plan
R&PP	Recreation and Public Purposes
ROP	Required operating procedures
RMP	Resource Management Plan
RMZ	Recreation Management Zones
RNZ	Roaded Natural Zone
ROS	Recreation Opportunity Spectrum
ROW	Right-of-way
RMIS	Recreation Management Information System
RSC	Recreation Setting Characteristics
S&R	Science and research
SAR	Search and rescue
SRMA	Special Recreation Management Area
SRP	Special recreation permit
TMAP	Travel Management Area Prescriptions
U.S.	United States
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
VRM	Visual Resource Management
HQ	Headquarters

## APPENDIX C: LIST OF REFERENCES

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Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 2920, 2930, 8340 and Subpart 8365.

## APPENDIX D: RSC MATRIX TABLES

 Outlines the prescribed characteristics that define the recreation opportunities a user might experience within the Delta Range SRMA. These will be used as a baseline for further defining RSCs within the Castner Glacier planning area boundary.


 Outlines the desired recreation setting characteristics that define the physical and social qualities and operational conditions a user might experience when recreating within the Castner Glacier planning area.

Table 18: Roaded Natural Zone Prescribed ROS Characteristics and Desired RSCs Matrix

### Physical Setting Characteristics

Qualities of the Landscape	Primitive Classification	Back Country Classification	Middle Country Classification	Front Country Classification	Rural Classification	Urban Classification
<b>Remoteness (approx. distance from routes or man-made structures)</b>	More than ½ mile from either mechanized or motorized trails and routes	Within ½ mile of mechanized trails/ routes.	Within ½ mile of four-wheel-drive, ATV, and motorcycle routes.	Within ½ mile of low-clearance or passenger vehicle routes (e.g., unpaved country roads, private land routes).	Within ½ mile of paved/primary roads and highways. Accurately recognize north primitive road.	Within ½ mile of streets and roads within municipalities and along highways.
<b>Naturalness (changes to the landscape from non-natural process)</b>	Undisturbed natural landscape.	Natural landscape with modifications in harmony with surroundings and not visually obvious (e.g., stock ponds, historic structures).	Character of the natural landscape retained. A few modifications contrast with character of the landscape (e.g., fences, ditches).	Character of the natural landscape partially modified but none overpower natural landscape (e.g., structures, utilities).	Character of the natural landscape considerably modified (e.g., agriculture, airstrips, industrial alterations).	Urbanized developments dominate landscape.
<b>Visitor Facilities</b>	No structures. Foot/ horse and water trails only.	Developed trails made mostly of native materials such as log bridges. Structures are rare and isolated.	Maintained and marked trails, simple trailhead developments, and basic toilets.	Rustic facilities such as campsites, restrooms, trailheads, and interpretive displays.	Modern facilities such as campgrounds, group shelters, boat launches, and occasional exhibits.	Elaborate full-service facilities such as laundry, restaurants, and groceries.

## Social Setting Characteristics

<i>Qualities of the Landscape</i>	<i>Primitive Classification</i>	<i>Back Country Classification</i>	<i>Middle Country Classification</i>	<i>Front Country Classification</i>	<i>Rural Classification</i>	<i>Urban Classification</i>
<b>Contacts with other groups</b>	Fewer than 3 encounters/day at campsites and fewer than 6 encounters/ day on travel routes.	7-15 encounters/day on travel routes.	15-29 encounters/day on travel routes.	30 or more encounters/day on travel routes.	People seem to be generally everywhere.	Busy place with other people constantly in view.
<b>Group Sizes</b>	Fewer than or equal to 3 people/group.	4-6 people per group.	7-12 people/group.	13-25 people/group.	26-50 people/group.	Greater than 50 people/group.
<b>Evidence of Use</b>	No alteration of the natural terrain. Footprints only observed. Sounds of people rare.	Areas of alteration uncommon. Little surface vegetation wear observed. Sounds of people infrequent.	Small areas of alteration. Surface vegetation showing wear with some bare soils. Occasional sounds of people.	Small areas of alteration prevalent. Surface vegetation gone with compacted soils observed. Sounds of people regularly heard.	A few large areas of alteration. Surface vegetation absent with hardened soils. Sounds of people frequently heard.	Large areas of alteration prevalent. Some erosion. Constantly hear people.

## Operational Setting Characteristics

<i>Qualities of the Landscape</i>	<i>Primitive Classification</i>	<i>Back Country Classification</i>	<i>Middle Country Classification</i>	<i>Front Country Classification</i>	<i>Rural Classification</i>	<i>Urban Classification</i>
<b>Public Access and Types of Public Travel Allowed</b>	Foot, horse, and non-motorized float boat travel.	Mountain bikes and perhaps other mechanized use, but all is non-motorized.	Four-wheel-drive vehicles, ATVs, dirt bikes, or snowmobiles, in addition to non-motorized, mechanized use.	Two-wheel-drive vehicles predominant, but also four-wheel drives and non-motorized, mechanized use.	Ordinary highway auto and truck traffic is characteristic.	Wide variety of street vehicles and highway traffic is ever present.
<b>Visitor Services and Information</b>	No maps or brochures available onsite. Staff rarely present to provide onsite assistance.	Basic maps, staff infrequently present (e.g., seasonally, high-use periods) to provide onsite assistance. Additional signage may be developed in partnership with ADOT&PF.	Area brochures and maps, staff occasionally (e.g., most weekends) present to provide onsite assistance.	Information materials describe recreation areas and activities, staff periodically present (e.g., weekdays and weekends).	Information materials, plus experience and benefit descriptions. Staff regularly present (e.g., almost daily).	Information materials, plus regularly scheduled onsite outdoor demonstrations and clinics.
<b>Management Controls and Regulations</b>	No onsite posts/signs of visitor regulations, interpretive info, or ethics. Few use restrictions.	Basic user regulations at key access points. Minimum use restrictions.	Some regulatory and ethics signs. Moderate use restrictions (e.g., camping, human waste).	Rules, regulations, and ethics clearly posted. Use restrictions, limitations, and/or closures.	Regulations strict and ethics prominent. Use may be limited by permit, reservation, etc.	Enforcement in addition to rules to reduce conflicts, hazards, and resource damage.

Table 19: Castner Cave and Trail Zone Recreation Setting Characteristics Matrix

Physical Setting Characteristics

<i>Qualities of the Landscape</i>	<i>Primitive Classification</i>	<i>Back Country Classification</i>	<i>Middle Country Classification</i>	<i>Front Country Classification</i>	<i>Rural Classification</i>	<i>Urban Classification</i>
<b>Remoteness (approx. distance from routes or man-made structures)</b>	More than ½ mile from either mechanized or motorized trails and routes. Man-made structures are not present.	Within ½ mile of mechanized trails/ routes.	Within ½ mile of four-wheel-drive, ATV, and motorcycle routes.	Within ½ mile of low-clearance or passenger vehicle routes (e.g., unpaved country roads, private land routes).	Within ½ mile of paved/ primary roads and highways.	Within ½ mile of streets and roads within municipalities and along highways.
<b>Naturalness (changes to the landscape from non-natural process)</b>	Undisturbed natural landscape. Remove user created rock cairns during monitoring. Rocks placed at stream crossings would remain.	Natural landscape with modifications in harmony with surroundings and not visually obvious.	Character of the natural landscape retained. A few modifications contrast with character of the landscape (e.g., fences, ditches).	Character of the natural landscape partially modified but none overpower natural landscape (e.g., structures, utilities).	Character of the natural landscape considerably modified (e.g., agriculture, airstrips, industrial alterations).	Urbanized developments dominate landscape.
<b>Visitor Facilities</b>	No structures. Foot/ horse and water trails only. No facilities are present within this zone.	Developed trails made mostly of native materials such as log bridges. Structures are rare and isolated.	Maintained and marked trails, simple trailhead developments, and basic toilets.	Rustic facilities such as campsites, restrooms, trailheads, and interpretive displays.	Modern facilities such as campgrounds, group shelters, boat launches, and occasional exhibits.	Elaborate full-service facilities such as laundry, restaurants, and groceries.

## Social Setting Characteristics

<i>Qualities of the Landscape</i>	<i>Primitive Classification</i>	<i>Back Country Classification</i>	<i>Middle Country Classification</i>	<i>Front Country Classification</i>	<i>Rural Classification</i>	<i>Urban Classification</i>
<b>Contacts with other groups</b>	Fewer than 3 encounters/ day at campsites and fewer than 6 encounters/ day on travel routes.	7-15 encounters/ day on travel routes when accessing the cave during peak times.	15-29 encounters/ day on travel routes.	30 or more encounters/ day on travel routes.	People seem to be generally everywhere.	Busy place with other people constantly in view.
<b>Group Sizes</b>	Fewer than or equal to 3 people/ group.	4-6 people per group. Group sizes limited with supplementary rules. Commercial use limits would be implemented.	7-12 people/ group.	13-25 people/ group.	26-50 people/ group.	Greater than 50 people/ group.
<b>Evidence of Use</b>	No alteration of the natural terrain. Footprints only observed. Sounds of people rare.	Areas of alteration uncommon. Little surface vegetation wear observed. Sounds of people infrequent. Supplemental rules would restrict ice graffiti or vandalism.	Small areas of alteration. Surface vegetation showing wear with some bare soils. Occasional sounds of people.	Small areas of alteration prevalent. Surface vegetation gone with compacted soils observed. Sounds of people regularly heard.	A few large areas of alteration. Surface vegetation absent with hardened soils. Sounds of people frequently heard.	Large areas of alteration prevalent. Some erosion. Constantly hear people.



## Operational Setting Characteristics

<i>Qualities of the Landscape</i>	<i>Primitive Classification</i>	<i>Back Country Classification</i>	<i>Middle Country Classification</i>	<i>Front Country Classification</i>	<i>Rural Classification</i>	<i>Urban Classification</i>
<b>Public Access and Types of Public Travel Allowed</b>	Foot, horse, and non-motorized boat travel. Seasonal OHV closure 10/15 – 5/15 annually.	Mountain bikes and perhaps other mechanized use, but all is non-motorized.	Four-wheel drive vehicles, ATVs, dirt bikes, or snowmobiles. Seasonal OHV closure 10/15 – 5/15 annually.	Two-wheel-drive vehicles predominant, but also four-wheel drives and non-motorized, mechanized use.	Ordinary highway auto and truck traffic is characteristic.	Wide variety of street vehicles and highway traffic is ever present.
<b>Visitor Services and Information</b>	No maps or brochures available onsite. Staff rarely present to provide onsite assistance. Staff to be present during high-use periods.	Basic maps, staff infrequently present (e.g., seasonally, high-use periods) to provide onsite assistance.	Area brochures and maps, staff occasionally (e.g., most weekends) present to provide onsite assistance.	Information materials describe recreation areas and activities, staff periodically present (e.g., weekdays and weekends).	Information materials, plus experience and benefit descriptions. Staff regularly present (e.g., almost daily).	Information materials, plus regularly scheduled onsite outdoor demonstrations and clinics.
<b>Management Controls and Regulations</b>	No onsite posts/signs of visitor regulations, interpretive info, or ethics. Limited designation for travel further defined. SRP limits implemented.	Basic user regulations at key access points. Minimum use restrictions.	Some regulatory and ethics signs. Moderate use restrictions (e.g., camping, human waste).	Rules, regulations, and ethics clearly posted. Use restrictions, limitations, and/or closures.	Regulations strict and ethics prominent. Use may be limited by permit, reservation, etc.	Enforcement in addition to rules to reduce conflicts, hazards, and resource damage.

Table 20: Castner Glacial Zone Recreation Setting Characteristics Matrix

Physical Setting Characteristics

<i>Qualities of the Landscape</i>	<i>Primitive Classification</i>	<i>Back Country Classification</i>	<i>Middle Country Classification</i>	<i>Front Country Classification</i>	<i>Rural Classification</i>	<i>Urban Classification</i>
<b>Remoteness (approx. distance from routes or man-made structures)</b>	More than ½ mile from either mechanized or motorized trails and routes	Within ½ mile of mechanized trails/ routes.	Within ½ mile of four-wheel-drive, ATV, and motorcycle routes.	Within ½ mile of low-clearance or passenger vehicle routes (e.g., unpaved country roads, private land routes).	Within ½ mile of paved/ primary roads and highways.	Within ½ mile of streets and roads within municipalities and along highways.
<b>Naturalness (changes to the landscape from non-natural process)</b>	Undisturbed natural landscape.	Natural landscape with modifications in harmony with surroundings and not visually obvious (e.g., stock ponds, historic structures).	Character of the natural landscape retained. A few modifications contrast with character of the landscape (e.g., fences, ditches).	Character of the natural landscape partially modified but none overpower natural landscape (e.g., structures, utilities).	Character of the natural landscape considerably modified (e.g., agriculture, airstrips, industrial alterations).	Urbanized developments dominate landscape.
<b>Visitor Facilities</b>	No structures. Foot/ horse and water trails only.	Developed trails made mostly of native materials such as log bridges. Structures are rare and isolated.	Maintained and marked trails, simple trailhead developments, and basic toilets.	Rustic facilities such as campsites, restrooms, trailheads, and interpretive displays.	Modern facilities such as campgrounds, group shelters, boat launches, and occasional exhibits.	Elaborate full-service facilities such as laundry, restaurants, and groceries.

## Social Setting Characteristics

<i>Qualities of the Landscape</i>	<i>Primitive Classification</i>	<i>Back Country Classification</i>	<i>Middle Country Classification</i>	<i>Front Country Classification</i>	<i>Rural Classification</i>	<i>Urban Classification</i>
<b>Contacts with other groups</b>	Fewer than 3 encounters/ day at campsites and fewer than 6 encounters/ day on travel routes.	7-15 encounters/ day on travel routes.	15-29 encounters/ day on travel routes.	30 or more encounters/ day on travel routes.	People seem to be generally everywhere.	Busy place with other people constantly in view.
<b>Group Sizes</b>	Fewer than or equal to 3 people/group.	4-6 people per group.	7-12 people/ group.	13-25 people/ group.	26-50 people/ group.	Greater than 50 people/ group.
<b>Evidence of Use</b>	No alteration of the natural terrain. Footprints only observed. Sounds of people rare.	Areas of alteration uncommon. Little surface vegetation wear observed. Sounds of people infrequent.	Small areas of alteration. Surface vegetation showing wear with some bare soils. Occasional sounds of people.	Small areas of alteration prevalent. Surface vegetation gone with compacted soils observed. Sounds of people regularly heard.	A few large areas of alteration. Surface vegetation absent with hardened soils. Sounds of people frequently heard.	Large areas of alteration prevalent. Some erosion. Constantly hear people.

## Operational Setting Characteristics

<i>Qualities of the Landscape</i>	<i>Primitive Classification</i>	<i>Back Country Classification</i>	<i>Middle Country Classification</i>	<i>Front Country Classification</i>	<i>Rural Classification</i>	<i>Urban Classification</i>
<b>Public Access and Types of Public Travel Allowed</b>	Foot, horse, and non-motorized float boat travel. Non-motorized closure 10/15 – 5/15 annually.	Mountain bikes and perhaps other mechanized use, but all is non-motorized.	Four-wheel-drive vehicles, ATVs, dirt bikes, or snowmobiles, in addition to non-motorized, mechanized use.	Two-wheel-drive vehicles predominant, but also four-wheel drives and non-motorized, mechanized use.	Ordinary highway auto and truck traffic is characteristic.	Wide variety of street vehicles and highway traffic is ever present.
<b>Visitor Services and Information</b>	No maps or brochures available onsite. Staff rarely present to provide onsite assistance.	Basic maps, staff infrequently present (e.g., seasonally, high-use periods) to provide onsite assistance.	Area brochures and maps, staff occasionally (e.g., most weekends) present to provide onsite assistance.	Information materials describe recreation areas and activities, staff periodically present (e.g., weekdays and weekends).	Information materials, plus experience and benefit descriptions. Staff regularly present (e.g., almost daily).	Information materials, plus regularly scheduled onsite outdoor demonstrations and clinics.
<b>Management Controls and Regulations</b>	No onsite posts/signs of visitor regulations, interpretive info, or ethics. Few use restrictions. SRP and military training limits would be implemented.	Basic user regulations at key access points. Minimum use restrictions.	Some regulatory and ethics signs. Moderate use restrictions (e.g., camping, human waste).	Rules, regulations, and ethics clearly posted. Use restrictions, limitations, and/or closures.	Regulations strict and ethics prominent. Use may be limited by permit, reservation, etc.	Enforcement in addition to rules to reduce conflicts, hazards, and resource damage.

## APPENDIX E: REQUIRED OPERATING PROCEDURES

Appendix A of the East Alaska RMP includes several ROPs designed to maximize beneficial results and minimize negative impacts of management actions. Each of the following ROPs were developed through the EIS process when developing the East Alaska RMP in 2007 and are based on knowledge of the resources of the planning area and current industry practices, and are consistent with existing policies and laws.

ROPs are requirements, procedures, management practices, or design features that the BLM adopts as operational requirements. ROPs would apply to all permitted activities, including FLPMA leases and permits, special recreation permits, and ROW authorizations. All vegetation management practices would be conducted consistent with these guidelines. ROPs have been developed to ensure that objectives identified within the Alaska Land Health Standards are met in carrying out permitted activities and management practices.

*Table 21: Required Operating Procedures and Design Features*

Resource	Required Operating Procedures/Design Features
<b>Climate Change</b>	The BLM GFO will be mindful of impacts from thinning ice, melting permafrost, or other conditions accompanying climate change that may affect the safety and environmental integrity of commercial permitted operations as well as recreational activities in the planning area. When the BLM is made aware of major events due to ice collapse or glacial flooding events the BLM will notify public lands users and commercial permit holders of changing conditions in the planning area.
<b>Cultural Resources</b>	There will be no disturbance of any archaeological or historical sites, including graves and remains of cabins, and no collection of artifacts whatsoever. Also, collection of vertebrate fossils, including mammoths and mastodon bones, tusks, etc. is strictly prohibited. If historic resources are encountered then all artifacts will be respectfully left in place and the GFO's cultural resources staff will be notified immediately.  Issued SRPs will contain stipulations that if a previously unidentified archaeological or historic site(s) is encountered, the SRP holder will notify the BLM GFO. The GFO will consult with a BLM archeologist to determine further action.

<p><b>Recreation</b></p>	<p>When new SRPs or short-term authorizations for events not covered under an existing SRP are requested, follow RSCs to identify optimum parameters for permitted activities and events to minimize potential for conflicts with other users and impacts to other resources.</p> <p>Monitoring of the site will be performed to ensure that desired recreation conditions (RSCs) are being met in the planning area. Monitoring will occur in the form of monitoring trips, website and social media monitoring, summer trail counters, winter parking lot counters, and visitor surveys. The RAMP contains a monitoring plan/protocol (Section 5) that would document the degree to which the RSCs are being met.</p> <p>All SRP's will promote leave no trace (LNT) principles and pack in and pack out all refuse, human waste, and animal waste. SRP holders will be required to supply portable toilet facilities for their clients.</p> <p>Updated signs and education information will be provided at portals and on BLM websites to educate the public on LNT and pack in and pack out principles for refuse, human waste, and animal waste.</p> <p>The AO or designee will be responsible for ensuring commercial operators comply with stipulations of the permit. Observed or documented non-compliance will initiate prompt direct communications with the operator and may result in permit modification, suspension, or revocation.</p>
<p><b>Riparian Areas and Water Quality</b></p>	<p><b>East Alaska RMP ROP-Water-c:</b> Human use will be managed to meet and maintain water quality standards and avoid management problems and water quality impacts. Issued SRPs holders will be required to provide portable toilet systems as needed (e.g., wag bags).</p>
<p><b>Socioeconomics</b></p>	<p>Public outreach, consisting of notification to prospective operators, will occur within 14 business days of the signing of a decision record by the AO. Public outreach will also occur prior to open application periods for available SRPs.</p>

<p><b>Soils</b></p>	<p>Where permitted operations result in surface disturbance, land will be returned as closely as possible to its pre-disturbed condition.</p> <p><b>East Alaska RMP ROP-Soils-a-9:</b> Recontour and revegetated roads, well pads, and other disturbed areas as per an approved reclamation plan or Plan of Operations. Revegetation will occur through seeding of native seed or by providing for soil conditions that allow the site to revegetate naturally, whichever provides the most effective means of reestablishing ground cover and minimizing erosion. Scarify the final land surface to provide seed traps and erosion control.</p> <p><b>East Alaska RMP ROP-Soils-a-10:</b> Seed and plant with native species. Where native species are not available in sufficient quantities or where they are incapable of maintaining or achieving the objective, or where non-native species are essential to the functional integrity of the site, non-native vegetation may be used with specific approval from the AO.</p>
<p><b>Vegetation and Non-Native Invasive Species (NNIS)</b></p>	<p><b>East Alaska RMP ROP-Veg-b:</b> Issued SRPs will contain stipulations that guided groups should minimize vegetation disturbance from permitted activities and manage permitted groups to prevent the introduction or spread of NNIS.</p>
<p><b>Visual Resources</b></p>	<p><b>East Alaska RMP ROP-VRM-a:</b> Permits, leases, and easements will be managed to meet the Visual Resource Management class objectives described below and shown on Figure 5.</p> <p>Class I: Natural ecological changes and very limited management activity are allowed. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.</p> <p>Class II: The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.</p> <p>Class IV: The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. These management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer attention. However, every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance, and repeating the basic elements.</p>

<b>Wildlife and Migratory Birds</b>	<p>Issued SRPs holders will be required to provide portable toilet systems (e.g., wag bags) and dog waste bags as needed to protect wildlife from exposure to feces.</p> <p>Informational signage will include language about the risk of zoonotic disease to wild canids from domestic dogs. Dog waste bags may also be provided on site.</p> <p>All operations will be conducted in such a manner as not to cause damage or disturbance to any fish or wildlife, or to impede rural residents from pursuing their traditional subsistence activities (ANILCA, P.L. 96-487).</p> <p>Permittees will not intentionally harass or harm migratory birds or interfere with their nesting and brood rearing activities.</p> <p>If a bald eagle nest is discovered, the BLM will follow the Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Bald Eagle Management Plan, and require SRP holders avoid disturbance (including repeated human activity) within 330 to 660 feet (depending on activity) of all bald eagle nests (USFWS 2007).</p> <p>The planning area may now or hereafter contain animals (or their habitats) identified as threatened, endangered, or sensitive status species. The BLM may recommend modifications to existing or pending SRPs to further its conservation and management objective to avoid any BLM-approved activity that will contribute to a need to list such a species or their habitat. The BLM may require modifications to or disapprove proposed activities that are likely to result in jeopardy to the continued existence of a proposed or listed threatened or endangered species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of a designated or proposed critical habitat.</p>
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