

Bureau of Land Management  
Alaska Resource Advisory Council Meeting  
Anchorage, Alaska  
April 18-20, 2012

**Day 1: Wednesday, April 18, 2012**

**Council members present:** Michael Wald, David Brown, Sharon McClintock, Gary Morrison, Suzanne McCarthy, Michael McDougall, Amalie Couvillion, Scott Hala, Theresa Fiorino, Verne Rupright, Teresa Imm, Roy Ashenfelter, Peter Fix

**Council members not present:** Stanley Foo, Rachael Klein

**BLM Representatives Present:** Bud Cribley, Ruth McCoard, Wayne Svejnoha, Matt Vos, Lon Kelly, Stacie McIntosh, Steve Hartmann, Mark Fullmer, Vanessa Rathbun, Thom Jennings, Michael Schoder, Karen Kelleher, Ramona Chinn, Kelsey McQuigg

**Members of the Public Present:** None

**Call to Order: 9:15 AM**

Chairman **Scott Hala** called the meeting to order. RAC members and BLM-Alaska staff introduced themselves.

**Hala** asked for comments on the agenda. No comments were made. The minutes from the last RAC meeting were approved without change. The agenda was also approved.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Bud Cribley, BLM-Alaska State Director**, gave a recap on what we have accomplished since our November 2011 meeting in Fairbanks. Cribley gave updates on the cabin policy, hunting guide capacity, 2016 initiative, and conveyance program noting there will be more information presented on these projects April 20.

RAC member **Teresa Imm**:

- Stressed the importance of having working groups to work on the large land management plans.

RAC member **Sharon McClintock** asked:

- If it was possible BLM could create a SharePoint site.

BLM employee **Vanessa Rathbun** later confirmed that this was possible.

## **BLM Staff presentations to the RAC:**

**Stacie McIntosh, BLM-Alaska Arctic Field Office** gave a presentation on BLM Socioeconomic Strategy. Her presentation provided background on how to obtain and convey information on the human context and consequences of BLM actions. McIntosh presented the following questions to the RAC

- Do the goals and strategies make sense?
- Does the narrative provide needed background and justification for the goals and strategies?
- For non-BLM audiences, is the document useful and readable?
- What are your suggestions for prioritizing the proposed strategies and actions?

McIntosh asked for answers to the above questions by the end of the month.

RAC Member **Gary Morrison** asked how the BLM is going to do the socioeconomic strategy on its own in Alaska. Is the intent to bring in other agencies to develop a statewide strategy to manage public lands?

**McIntosh** explained the purpose of this document was to bring the socioeconomic staff and the BLM on the same page.

RAC member **McClintock** stated it is important to put in perspective how much each state has in terms of federal lands so we can inform congress the extent of the responsibilities we have here in Alaska.

**Jim Ducker, Environmental Program Analyst** gave the Draft National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska Integrated Activity Plan (NPR-A IAP) presentation.

The plan consists of Alternatives A, B, C, and D. The RAC's mission is to provide input on criteria for a preferred alternative. Comments on the plan can be made electronically, by mail, fax, hand delivered, or via public meetings. The comment period ends June 1<sup>st</sup>. The BLM is aiming for early July to determine the preferred alternative and is expecting to have a final plan released by Mid-November. Ducker displayed a variety of maps that showed mosquito relief, Western Arctic Herd (WAH) calving, WAH summer movement, and bird habitat. Ducker listed some samples that reflect elements of alternatives that we have made in this and previous plans.

- No leasing/no new permanent non-subsistence infrastructure
- Deferring leasing for stated period and reevaluation criteria
- Allowing pipelines but not pads and/or roads (lease/no lease)
- Allow leasing, but require studies to address site-specific concerns before development
- Allow leasing, but require consultation with specified parties

RAC member **David Brown** asked what “no new permanent non subsistence infrastructure” means.

Response: **Ducker** explained it essentially means if you want to put in a road you can't.

RAC member **McClintock** asked what the difference was between Wild River and Wild and Scenic River.

Response: **Lon Kelly, Arctic Field Manager** explained that congress will generally designate rivers based on the existing status on the river when it comes into the system. Recreational river areas are generally pretty developed. Scenic river areas may have short stretches of road along them. Wild river areas are usually accessible only by trail. Wild River is a more protective status than scenic.

RAC member **Brown** asked for clarification on whether or not you could put a bridge/structure over a wild river.

Response: **Kelly** advised section 7 of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act tells how to make a determination whether a particular action is consistent with the act.

RAC member **Michael Wald** asked what energy was expended projecting forward bird abundance and what was the planning process looking at climate change.

Response: **Ducker** advised every specialist in chapter three of the NPR-A plan gave us their perspective on how climate change would affect their species. See volume four in the appendix. Our analyst used that data and other studies to give their best estimates about what the trends would be for their species/resource and then concluded what the impacts were going to be for each Alternative A, B, C, and D.

RAC member **Roy Ashenfelter** asked if there could be a mix of alternatives.

Response: **Ducker** advised comments may include anything; even a mix of all alternatives.

The RAC requested **Thom Jennings** for relinquished lease maps.

RAC member **Amalie Couvillion** asked what would be the most valuable input the RAC could give to the BLM in terms of the plan.

Response: **Ducker** suggested the RAC figure out how much they can do and provide any sort of input even if there is no possibility of an agreement.

RAC member **Verne Rupright** asked what the economic benefit of the state is based on what the impact will be on our wildlife.

Response: **Ducker** read a few excerpts from page 18 which explained what the effects would be on our economy.

RAC member **Rupright** asked if we put an economic analysis on the life of a caribou or birds.

Response: **Ducker** advised in the subsistence section they would talk about the relative difficulty of getting subsistence but it is relatively hard to give it a dollar value. Additionally, the biologist concluded that none of the options would have an impact on caribou population.

RAC member **Ashenfelter** stated that caribou have long had this area for insect relief and calving.

Response: **Ducker** explained that volume 2 describes the direct and indirect impacts. In table 2.4 there is a summary on terrestrial mammals.

RAC member **Ashenfelter** requested a timeframe for when we could do industry production. He stressed that June and July are very important for calving and insect relief.

RAC member **Teresa Imm** stated she works very closely with communities on the North Slope. With respect to caribou, subsistence hunters generally don't want to be shooting around infrastructure but when it comes to birds they are usually okay with it.

RAC member **Theresa Fiorino** asked **Jim Ducker** for the section that was specific to terrestrial mammals and wondered if there were bird species that would be negatively affected.

Response: **Ducker** referred to what our bird biologist wrote. On page 107 it states population level effects would be unlikely under Alternative B, C, or D. There is no question that there could be impacts, but the population would not be affected. Page 111 of the plan has information regarding polar bears and walrus.

RAC member **Ashenfelter** asked if we could offer better drilling ideas.

Response: **Ducker** said yes.

RAC member **Michael Wald** asked what a realistic task for this body would be.

Response: BLM employee **Ruth McCoard** suggested the RAC pick which plan they thought was the best or gives a suggestion of a certain combination.

RAC Chairman **Hala** discussed the next day's work plan.

RAC member **Imm** stated she would be more comfortable if the RAC had more time to read through the material.

**Ducker** suggested each RAC member consider which resources would be drivers for each of them.

RAC member **Mike McDougall** thought it would be a good idea to take all the information that was absorbed and figure out what each person's criteria and drivers are. He suggested they each go around and identify which one of those drivers is the most important to them and which one

of these alternatives would be the best fit. He believes BLM would benefit from that discussion. Even if we couldn't come to a consensus, the value would be in the discussion.

**Steve Hartmann, Fairbanks District Manager**, stated it would be nice to just to hear the dialog and listen to the discussions even if we can't come to a consensus. Advised the RAC we don't have to walk away choosing one of the alternatives but there would be benefits in identifying certain criteria that were important to the group.

**Ron Dunton, BLM Acting Associate State Director**, reiterated that we did not anticipate a unanimous decision by the RAC recommending a certain action; we simply wanted to hear the discussions and areas of concern.

RAC chairman **Hala** concluded that we would wrap up and continue with dialogue tomorrow.

**Thom Jennings, RAC Coordinator** stated that nominations for RAC reappointments are going to reopen tomorrow. The nomination period will last 45 days and close on June 4, 2012.

#### **Public Comment Period:**

**Eric Myers, Policy Director, Audubon Alaska** stated the wetlands area is one of the largest wetlands in the circumpolar artic. It hosts a large population of birds that migrate all the way across the world. He stated that during the fall, 95% of the caribou that are harvested in the North Slope come from a certain area of NPR-A. Since 1982 there have been 11 lease sales held in the Northeast and Northwest. Almost 26 million acres have been offered since 1982. 1.5 million acres are under active lease so there has been a lot of leasing going on. He indicated within the national energy context the amount of oil that we are talking about here is not very much. 19 million barrels of oil are what the American people consume. The amount of oil we are talking about is about a month's worth of oil for the U.S. When you look at the larger context of what this effort is all about, those are some of things he would like us to consider.

Meeting was recessed at 4:05 p.m. and will resume tomorrow at 8:30 a.m. at the Crown Plaza Hotel.

## **Day 2: Tuesday, April 19, 2012**

**Council members present:** Michael Wald, David Brown, Sharon McClintock, Gary Morrison, Suzanne McCarthy, Michael McDougall, Amalie Couvillion, Scott Hala, Theresa Fiorino, Roy Ashenfelter, Peter Fix, Teresa Imm

**Council members not present:** Stanley Foo, Verne Rupright, Rachel Klein

**BLM representatives present:** Bridget Psarianos, Steve Hartmann, Jim Ducker, Lon Kelly, Stacie McIntosh, Bud Cribley, K.J. Mushovic, Thom Jennings, Matt Voss, Michael Schoder, Wayne Svejnoha, Kelsey McQuigg

**Members of the public present:** N/A

**Chairman Hala called the meeting to order at 8:39 a.m.**

**Stacie McIntosh, Arctic Field Office,** suggested sending socioeconomic feedback to Thom Jennings via email.

RAC member **Wald** made a motion to take the socioeconomic work period off the day's agenda. The group concluded with leaving the item on the agenda.

BLM State Director **Cribley**, asked if anyone else had any questions on the development of the NPR-A plan.

RAC member **Ashenfelter** asked how much weight was going to be put on the socioeconomic portion of development.

RAC member **Brown** commented he was concerned with why the socioeconomic study took so long.

BLM State Director **Cribley** advised trying to move policy through the Washington office takes time. Mike Pool is trying to resurrect that and balance things out but it is still a work in process.

RAC member **Fiorino** asked if we could draft a resolution about the importance of socioeconomics but asked if we could take comments back to Stacie at a later time.

RAC member **McClintock** stressed that the socioeconomic strategy is important and needs to be addressed.

RAC member **Fix** suggested we put together a prioritization.

RAC member **Wald** stated that it would be good to give Stacie some substantive comments on the socioeconomic strategy and to give Bud some overarching support with the general idea that the Alaska RAC thinks that socioeconomic strategies are important to BLM Alaska.

Chairman **Hala** asked the RAC if they would like to work through the socioeconomic work period and the RAC agreed.

The consensus of the group was that the Alaska BLM RAC thinks that socioeconomic factors are important in BLM decision making and that the completion and implementation of the document's recommendations move forward.

**The RAC developed resolution 2012-01 stating:**

*Whereas, the BLM Alaska RAC recognizes the importance of a socioeconomic strategy; and*

*Whereas, the aim of the BLM Socioeconomic Strategy is to obtain and convey information on the human context and consequences of BLM's actions that is valid, cost-effective, and relevant to management challenges;*

*Therefore, be it resolved that the BLM Alaska RAC supports the intent of BLM's draft Socioeconomic Strategy, its use in land management decisions; and*

*Therefore be it further resolved that the completion and implementation of the Strategy take place in an expeditious manner.*

**Note:** RAC would like to know when the strategy is finalized and desires to interact with BLM socioeconomic staff on socioeconomic issues in the future.

**10:00 Started work period on NPR-A**

BLM State Director **Cribley** asked the RAC to make some recommendations on what the RAC feels we should be looking at as part of our preferred alternative. Are there areas we need to highlight? What are the significant resources we should be considering in our alternative?

BLM employee **Ducker** opened the floor up for questions.

RAC member **Wald** asked what the likely duration was that this plan would be valid

Response: **Ducker** advised this plan reflects impacts through 2100.

RAC member **Fix** asked if the revenue projections were for the life of the plan.

BLM employee **Ducker** Indicated the figures were based on the life of the plan assuming that all the recoverable oil and gas gets recovered.

RAC member **McClintock** asked if the RAC was able to see all of the public's comments

BLM Employee **Ducker** advised we are going to get hundreds of thousands of comments. They will be able to see a representative sample of all of those comments. Reiterated everyone has the same five options for how to comment.

RAC member **Fiorino** asked if the North Slope Bureau had promoted the expansion of the special areas. Were those comments discussing lease vs. no lease?

BLM employee **Ducker** advised he would be surprised if they didn't say something like that. He would have to look at the letter to be sure.

RAC Chairman **Hala** asked for some explanation on what being a cooperating agency means.

**Ducker:** A cooperating agency is a group or organization that is also making a decision and has a stake in the project. The BLM invited six potential agencies because of their expertise. Four of them accepted. In the course of the plan the BLM has kept open communications with them and asked them for their ideas.

BLM employee **Kelly** made a statement that In the Southwest part of the area there is little oil and gas; therefore it might be easier to make decisions in that area. We should look at what criteria we should use to ensure we were protecting resources while providing development opportunities.

BLM State Director **Cribley** put alternative A into context. He explained Alternative A was the existing situation. BLM has already committed, based on the direction of the president, that we are going to conduct annual lease sales in NPR-A. Question is how much of our land base is going to be available for leasing in future land use programs. This is an opportunity to provide input into the Bureau of Land Management as to what degree do we do that or not do that. Are there areas that we don't want to be developed? What levels of protection do we need or are we confident that we can feel reasonably comfortable that we have enough in place. Any insight that the RAC could provide would be helpful.

BLM Employee **Hartmann** commented the biggest dilemma is balance between development and protection of surface resources. In terms of what the RAC could provide, it would be nice for the RAC to come up with key issues of concern for us to use as guiding principles in selecting a preferred alternative.

RAC member **McDougall** had three drivers that came to the surface for him;

- 1) Subsistence resources and access to those resources
  - a. Climate change/receding sea ice impact to villages around Teshekpuk Lake could result in increased reliance on caribou
  - b. Subsistence relationship to cultural practices
- 2) Critical development
  - a. Supports healthy populations of the resources
  - b. Importance of intact and functioning areas
  - c. Unintended consequences
- 3) Visual and landscape resources. From his background those are the biggest drivers in considering any alternative
  - a. Intangible value but important



RAC member **Fiorino** agrees with McDougall's considerations. Her main concerns are the caribou, walrus, polar bears and water fowl.

RAC member **Imm** indicated there are four communities that have been established in the NPR-A. Barrow is a community with a population of 7,000 people which is a relatively large imprint and it has critical habitat that impacts how the community can develop. We need to be careful to not exclude the local communities.

RAC Member **Fiorino** believes that in balancing economic development with resource protection none of the alternatives would preclude a pipeline.

RAC Member **Wald** stressed his views that the NPR-A is a unique place in the world. Wilderness is part of our national values and stressed the value of the resources for health and culture. He has been watching the movements of the caribou and porcupine and has seen dramatic change in where these animals move. Believes given that we do not know where caribou are going to calf, the more we can defer leasing, the better.

RAC Member **Imm** stated there has to be a balance in protection of subsistence, birds, fish, berries, and caribou.

RAC Member **Fiorino** wanted to come back to the fact that none of these plans say there will be no leasing. She asked if there was anyone that doesn't agree that there are one or two places where development would not be appropriate and leasing should be deferred?

RAC member **McDougal** answered her question and said with all the information that he has seen he has identified the Teshekpuk Lake as somewhere that should not be developed.

BLM Employee **Ducker** advised a number of environmental groups pointed out the calving and insect relief is important in the Teshekpuk Lake area.

1:10 P.M. Chairman **Hala** called the meeting back to order. He brought up one pending RAC resolution from the November meeting and turned it over to Sharon.

RAC member **McClintock** conveyed Rachel Klein's concerns that under ANCSA 13a there is a federal mandate for the BLM to survey all lands under ANCSA. Alaska is unique in that we have vast amounts of land with no monumentation. She discussed the importance of knowing where the land ownership boundaries were. The intent of the petition is to remind BLM the cadastral survey program is one of the oldest functions of the US Government. By this resolution, Rachel Klein wanted the RAC to remind the BLM that the cadastral survey is a federal mandate.

**State Director Cribley** stated as far as the fact that BLM and others were looking at ways to save money, one of the things they were looking at was reducing the cost in the conveyance program. One of the issues was shifting the cost of survey to the corporations and the state.

RAC member **Imm** believes the purpose with this resolution is to make a reaffirming statement that the RAC wants BLM to comply with ANCSA 13a.

RAC Member **Fiorino** asked the question does BLM have any affirmation that they should not be compliant with ANCSA.

State Director **Cribley** reconfirmed that it is very easy for Alaska issues to get lost in the matrix so the reaffirmation of the importance of the program is always a good thing.

RAC Member **Ashenfelter** asked if 16 million acres of ANCSA land and 44 million of State lands is a fairly accurate estimate.

**Cribley** advised this was fairly accurate.

RAC Chairman **Hala** believes that we could come to a resolution on this. He asked if the DOI recognizes that ANCSA 13a requires us to do this.

**Cribley:** What we do in our budget proposals is have a suggestion for a legislative change which we could recommend.

RAC Member **Imm** agrees in the past we have made recommendations to keep budgets in place.

RAC Member **Wald** made a motion to put this forward as is.

RAC Member **Morrison** recommended a few edits to Resolution 2012-02. It was unanimously approved and reads:

*WHEREAS, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Cadastral Survey Program is one of the oldest and fundamental functions of the US Government; and*

*WHEREAS, Cadastral Surveys provide the foundation of our national land tenure system, creating, reestablishing, marking, and defining land ownership boundaries; and*

*WHEREAS, the BLM has mandates pursuant to The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) and the Alaska Statehood Act, which require that the BLM perform a Cadastral Survey of all lands conveyed to Alaska Native Corporations, as well as to the State of Alaska; and*

*WHEREAS, there are approximately 16 million acres of ANCSA lands and 44.5 million acres of State lands remaining to be surveyed before BLM can grant patent; and*

*WHEREAS, the RAC understands that Cadastral Survey of ANCSA lands is a Federal mandate and that BLM must complete the land conveyances to ANCSA Corporations and to the State of Alaska, and to finalize the surveys as quickly as possible so that all lands are patented; and*

*NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the RAC recommends that BLM continue to comply with ANCSA and the Alaska Statehood Act and expeditiously complete the Cadastral Survey to all Native and State lands so that it can grant final patent as intended by Congress.*

### **The RAC passed Resolution 2012-02 unanimously**

**RAC coordinator Jennings** discussed a tentative date of November 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> for our next meeting.

Advised the two resolutions that we passed will be on the website tonight. Jennings reminded the group that everything we discuss should be on the agenda so that members of the public can attend.

Communications Chief **Artealia Gilliard** advised the RAC training is available if they would like to better understand the rules and regulations of a RAC.

RAC Member **Imm** asked if we wanted the public to comment on the whole agenda, did it make sense to invite them on the first day?

**Jennings** advised the information we give on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> day is usually informational regarding on the horizon subjects and not ready for a resolution. He also advised we could have RAC meetings on a Saturday making it easier for some members of the public to attend.

Chairman **Hala** brought up the issue of subcommittees and asked what is allowed. He would like to make it an agenda item for the next RAC meeting to remind everyone what the rules are.

State Director **Cribley** stated he believed the small technical committees met and then came back to advise the whole RAC and the public of their findings. Clarified the purpose of the technical sub-group is not to advise the federal official that is working with them. The advisory time is when they bring the findings back to the RAC.

RAC Member **Imm** proposed a working group subcommittee for the NPR-A plan.

Fairbanks District Manager **Hartmann** stated the goal of the RAC should be to make recommendations to the BLM.

State Director **Cribley** reiterated that we can put a subcommittee together but without coming back to the RAC first the subcommittee can't advise the BLM on their decision making.

RAC Member **Fiorino** asked if there was any reason we have to meet in person. Is there a possibility to meet via teleconference?

**Cribley** replied the meetings are open to the public and include the opportunity to attend.

**Jennings** advised we could give a minimum of 15 days' notice to the public.

**Ducker** stated he is aiming to have a preferred alternative selected in early July. He urges feedback should be presented earlier in June.

The group discussed an upcoming field trip. The consensus was to get with RAC Coordinator **Jennings** and look at doing a field trip to Barrow.

**Chairman Hala** opened up nominations for 2012/2013 Elections.

**Chairperson** – Michael McDougall was nominated and seconded. All RAC members present voted unanimously in favor.

**Vice Chair** – Peter Fix was nominated and seconded. All RAC members present voted unanimously in favor.

15<sup>th</sup> of August was proposed for a field trip.

RAC Coordinator **Jennings** ended the meeting with some closing comments.

**4:00 Adjourned**

### **Day 3: Friday, April 20, 2012**

**Council members present:** David Brown, Teresa Imm, Sharon McClintock, Suzanne McCarthy Gary Morrison, Mike McDougal, Scott Hala, Theresa Fiorino, Roy Ashenfelter, Peter Fix, Amalie Couvillion

**Council members not present:** Michael Wald, Stanley Foo, Verne Rupright, Rachel Klein

**BLM Representatives Present:** Bud Cribley, Karen Kelleher, Vanessa Rathbun, Steve Fusilier, Wayne Svejnoha, Mark Fullmer, Steve Hartmann, Kelsey McQuigg, Thom Jennings

**Members of the Public Present:** None

#### **8:35 AM Chairman Scott Hala called the meeting to order**

Anchorage District Manager **Karen Kelleher** was introduced and gave updates on the Anchorage Field Office.

Fairbanks District Manager **Steve Hartmann** gave updates on the Fairbanks District Office, Central Yukon Field Office, Eastern Interior Field Office, Artic Field Office and updates on the 2016 projects. He is hoping to build the target TO and hoping to get more people in the Fairbanks office to get the core work done. Hartman gave an update on the Cabin Policy. He wanted to thank Mike, Verne and Gary for their work on the sub group.

**BLM Staff member Mark Fullmer** discussed the annual fee schedule for the Cabin Policy.

RAC member **David Brown** asked if everyone would know the fee schedule upfront.

**Fullmer:** Yes

RAC member **Suzanne McCarthy** asked if this was a new fee structure.

**Fullmer** explained this is our current fee structure. Right now we have no regulations for federal subsistence cabins. They are also on the same fee schedule as commercial cabins.

RAC member **McDougall** asked to estimate on how long the process would take if a trapper walked into an office and filed for a permit.

**Hartmann** said this would be on a case by case basis.

RAC Member **McDougall** asked if the BLM did an EA for the Eastern Interior Plan.

State Director, **Bud Cribley** commented on McDougall's idea of addressing this under the Eastern Interior Plan and suggested we talk to Eastern Interior Field Manager, Lenore Hepler about it.

RAC Member **Gary Morrison** made a comment that the BLM had done a good job addressing all the RACS comments and was very pleased with the work the BLM had done.

**Hartmann** thanked Bud Cribley for putting this on his plate so we could address it.

**Cribley** thanked the RAC for their recommendations on this subject.

RAC Member **Verne Rupright** asked what the next step for the RAC was.

RAC Chairman **McDougall** explained that the BLM had presented the RAC the draft and at this point the RAC can give them the okay to go ahead if they wish.

RAC Members **Morrison, McDougall, and Rupright** concurred they were happy to move forward and asked for a quick update at the next RAC meeting.

**Michael Schoder**, Deputy State Director for Cadastral Survey, gave a presentation on the Land Conveyance Program.

RAC Member **McClintock** said that not only the ANCSA exterior boundaries but a lot of the plans that are coming in have to sit on their desk for one year until the statute of limitations runs out.

**Schoder** stated ANCSA 14C is the only authority that we have to survey.

RAC Member **McClintock** advised when doing BLM annual reports to congress, the BLM needs to convey the municipal and community needs. The banks often decline home loans to people because the land isn't surveyed.

**Fullmer** gave a presentation on the updates for Alaska Lands division.

BLM-Alaska Gas Pipeline Project Manager, **Earle Williams** gave updates on the Pipeline Process.

BLM-Alaska Minerals and Energy Specialist, **Wayne Svejnoha** gave a presentation that addressed the history and overview of BLM's Legacy Wells. Svejnoha summarized the timeline for each of the wells. Legacy Wells discussed were Uniat, Atigaru, East Teshekpuk, J.W Dalton, Drew Point and Simpson Peninsula.

RAC member **David Brown** asked if the AOGCC consider these wells temporarily abandoned and what was the status of the well prior to our activity.

**Svejnoha** said these were not considered temporarily abandoned at that time.

RAC member **Theresa Fiorino** asked what AOGCC stands for and if they were making the claims to the press.

Response: **Svejnoha** stated AOGCC stands for Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission and they are the organization making claims to the press.

RAC member **Fiorino** asked if the BLM had heard anything from the conservation community.

**Svejnoha** said most of the feedback we have received has been from the conservation community. They have applauded our efforts and what we have done to take into account additional precautions.

RAC member **Rupright** asked who our crews were.

**Svejnoha** said these are full and open contracts that have been open for competition.

RAC member **Rupright** asked if these wells were flagged.

**Svejnoha** said, “N

o, but there is little vertical accumulation of snow making it easy for us to see these.”

RAC member **Ashenfelter** suggested we flag these in the future.

**Beth McLean Glennallen Field Manger** gave a presentation on the Susitna-Watana Dam Project. The desire for this project has been around since the 1950’s. This is the Upper Susitna River Drainage. Expectations for this dam are for it to be 700-800 feet high with a 39 mile reservoir.

RAC member: **Fiorino** asked if there was going to be a road here for the public.

**Maclean** advised it would be hard for them to close the road to the public. Therefore, we are expecting a lot more recreation in this area.

RAC member **McCarthy** asked if there was a way to relinquish the suitability for the Wild and Scenic Rivers.

**Maclean** advised the suitability study is what really needs to be done next.

RAC chairman **Hala** asked if the State is obligated to do a suitability study.

**Maclean** advised only Federal Agencies are obligated.

**Mike McCrum, Red Devil Project Manager**, presented Red Devil Mine Remedial Investigation and Community Outreach information.

- Briefed regarding community meetings,
- agencies involved,

- Time line in the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) process
- Remedial action
- BLM Examined the area
- Three areas in site-Surface mine, Main Process area, and alluvial area
- Examined Groundwater, surface and subsurface samples and plotted on aerial photo for display
- Sampled Kuskokwim River up and downstream of the creek
- Covered the human risk assessment from cumulative arsenic risk
- Examined the relationship between toxic and cancer risk materials
- Made assumptions using 3 scenarios.
- Cumulative risk is significantly higher than normal
- These studies are used to determine clean-up.
- Two prime opportunities to ingest metals.
  - ground water
  - fish (subsistence)
- Eight criteria are determined and a ninth criteria is the public
  - After criteria are examined a preferred alternative is determined.

**Matt Varner**, Fisheries Biologist briefed on the Kuskokwim Basin Fish Contaminant Project

Highly mineralized and contains cinnabar which is the principle ore mineral containing mercury. Methyl mercury does not get excreted from a living animal. It primarily affects a developing nervous system.

The study area was expanded in 2011 from Aniak to upriver of McGrath. Used radio telemetry to examine where the fish traveled to and from. No clear patterns, telemetry was important to conduct. Burbot cover a large distance moving from McGrath to Bethel

Samples upstream were lower than samples downstream.

The State of Alaska issued a fish consumption guide in June 2011

Future studies will report:

- Arsenic/antimony/mercury
- Comprehensive report
- Tracking data.

Chairman **Hala** asked about drivers that turned this into a larger study area

Response: The area studied was enlarged deliberately to collect more data and make decisions on what foods are safe to eat. **McCrum** added information that U.S. Fish & Wildlife had done a previous study but on a smaller scale and it showed a high mineral content. This was hard to ignore.



RAC Member **Stan Foo** complimented the science of the study

**Varner** commented on the State doing hair samples for interested residents to see if they have a health danger. The three dangerous minerals involved are mercury, arsenic, and antimony. Arsenic is the most worrisome of all three.

**Foo** commented on the advisory conveying proper information to the public. So far the message has been interpreted “Don’t eat fish.” This is not the message being conveyed.

RAC Member **McCarthy**; How many villages are impacted by this study or have concerns this study is examining

**McCrum** stated villages near Bethel are more concerned at this time.

**Lenore Heppler, Eastern Interior Field Manager** presented an update on the Eastern Interior Resource Management Plan.

This is an update since last presented in November at the Fairbanks RAC meeting.

Background: There are 4 subunits. (White Mountains, Steese, Upper Black River, and Fortymile.) The plan was released for public comment on February 24, 2012 and allows for public comment through July 23, 2012.

The plan is available as a paper copy, on CD, or via online download. An executive summary for each section exists. The goal of the plan is to include a mix of allowable uses and protective measures. There are four alternatives, Alternative A is a “no action alternative”, B emphasizes protection of resource values, and C provides a moderate level of resource protection and development. C is the agency preferred alternative. Alternative D emphasizes resource development.

**Heppler** explained the criteria for identifying an Area of Environmental Concern (ACEC) could include caribou habitat, Dall sheep habitat, and rare plants.

Comments the public should consider making about ACEC:

- Are there important resources not addressed?
- Does the size of the propose ACEC provide sufficient protection?
- Do the restrictions put in place in each ACEC provide sufficient protection?

Under ANILCA, the entire White Mountain planning area is closed to new mining claims and the Secretary of the Interior has authority to lift the closure in the Steese during the planning process. Under alternatives C and D some areas in the Fortymile and Upper Black River would be open to mineral entry.

Heppler outlined the travel management options in each subunit. Vehicle type and weights, seasonal trail usage, making BLM policies consistent with State of Alaska definitions were presented.

Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) have been determined for Birch Creek, Beaver Creek and Fortymile National Wild & Scenic Rivers in the plan. This will direct management of these rivers, especially where ANILCA was silent, for these waters.

**Jolie Pollet**, Renewable Resources Branch Chief, provided an update on the hunting guide concession program.

Developing a hunting guide analysis capacity will accomplish two things: eliminate conflicts and be more in line with the State of Alaska process. We are developing a BLM process and coordinating with the state. We are moving forward without a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) but it could transition at a later date. An environmental analysis (EA) is being conducted to address the capacity issue

Identified preliminary issues. No external scoping done at this point.

- Social issues are anticipated to drive scope.
- A preliminary range of alternatives have been identified
- Permits will likely be a Special Recreation Permit (SRP)

Projected completion date: September 2013

RAC Member **McClintock** – Do subsistence hunters need a permit?

Answer: This permit will primarily address the guides. More discussion is needed regarding the businesses that transporter hunters and harvests. This will be a sensitive topic and needs discussion to identify issues and possible resolutions.

RAC Member **McCarthy** – Are SRPs specific to hunting?

Answer: yes

RAC Member **Ashenfelter** – Commercial hunting guides footprint are nominal compared to transporters. That's where the hotspots are and may need to be addressed first. Guides can only handle so many hunters. A lot has been done by another state advisory group to already manage the capacity and conflicts issues. Unit 23 User Conflict Group. Check with them for information.

**Motion to adjourn:** – RAC Member Rupright. Seconded

Meeting adjourned at 4:30