



United States Department of the Interior



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Updates to Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils **Winter 2022 Meetings**

The Anchorage Field Office has started planning for Summer 2022 field operations. The summary below is an overview of priority projects by resource. We are hopeful for a continued increase in fieldwork operations, while adhering to any COVID-19 protocols and mitigations.

An overview map of the Anchorage Field Office can be found at:

https://www.blm.gov/sites/blm.gov/files/documents/files/Maps_Alaska_Anchorage-Field-Office.pdf

BLM Alaska publicly available interactive maps are available at: <https://blm-egis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MinimalGallery/index.html?appid=d2da853631fe4b60ac768f19bec4e84b>

Wildlife

- Working with NPS & OSM to clarify how Muskox permits are issued in GMU 22B and 22C (changing from a registration permit to a drawing permit – to reflect how permits have been issued there for years) and changing in-season manager in GMU 23SW from NPS to BLM (based on % of federal land in the area)
- Assisting ADF&G with moose surveys in GMU 22B, 22C, and in the Innoko Bottoms area in GMU 21 in February and March.
- Planning to conduct Breeding Bird Surveys Routes on the Unalakleet and Anvik Rivers by boat from Unalakleet and Holy Cross in June.
- Providing funds to ADF&G for an additional wood bison release in the Innoko Bottoms area in GMU 21E. Wood bison are tentatively planned to be barged down the Yukon River and up the Innoko River in June and released near the existing herd in the area.
- Planning to conduct Peregrine Falcon Nesting Surveys between Aniak and McGrath on the Kuskokwim River by boat this summer in July. Surveys will be done by boat and were last completed on the Kuskokwim in 2011.
- Purchased nine satellite radio collars in 2020 for the Farewell plains bison herd. ADF&G deployed the collars in 2021. Staff is working with ADF&G in McGrath to determine the movements and range of the herd on state and federal lands in GMU 19D.

- Providing funds to FWS Togiak NWR to purchase satellite radio collars for the Mulchatna Caribou Herd (MCH) in 2021. The collars will be deployed in February 2022 to determine the movements of a portion of the MCH that uses habitats in the Carter Spit & Goodnews Bay area of the herd range.

Aquatics

- Planning to conduct two aquatic Assessment, Inventory, & Monitoring (AIM) hitches this summer – based out of Nome or Quartz Creek on the Seward Peninsula.
- Planning to continue a project using e-DNA and various capture methods to identify presence/absence of Kigluaik Arctic Char in the mountain lakes of the Kigluaik Mountains.
- Continued partnership with ADF&G, NSEDC, and NVU to install and operate the Unalakleet River weir identifying salmon escapement.
- Planning to conduct water temperature monitoring and discharge measurements in support of future instream water reservations within the Unalakleet watershed, including the Old Woman and North Rivers.
- Planning to continue collecting instream flow and discharge measurements on the Big River (Kuskokwim watershed) in support of a future instream water reservation application for this important sheefish spawning area.

Ecology

- Planning to conduct two terrestrial AIM hitches this summer – one on the Seward Peninsula and one with the BLM Eastern Interior Field Office. In addition to core terrestrial monitoring indicators, BLM has developed Alaska-specific methods to collect data on lichen cover and disturbance to determine rangeland health in areas that BLM permits reindeer grazing, as well as methods to monitoring permafrost.
- Planning to monitor fuelwood harvest permits in the headwaters of Dry Mystery Creek and Basin Creek in the Council area. BLM will assess the volume of dead and downed biomass from spruce beetle die-off while determining compliance of harvest permit stipulations.
- Planning to continue monitoring data from two recently installed soil temperature monitoring stations along the Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT). The stations are located in a part of the state that previously had poor coverage from the existing permafrost and climate monitoring networks. Data from the new stations will help the BLM understand conditions of the trail and how the trail is affecting underlying permafrost. Data from each station are transmitted hourly via satellite telemetry and will soon be accessible on a public website, making it available to answer the questions of a wide group of researchers across Alaska and the global permafrost research community.

Archaeology

- Planning to conduct cultural resources survey and testing in the Carter Spit Area of Critical Environmental Concern, north of Goodnews Bay.

- Planning to conduct rehabilitation work on the Rohn CCC cabin, located in the Alaska Range along the Iditarod National Historic Trail, including repairing damaged sill logs, flooring in the cabin, and improve drainage around the cabin to preserve it into the future.
- Moving forward on nominations to the National Register of Historic Places for BLM sites associated with the Iditarod National Historic Trail.

Recreation

- Planning to conduct monitoring of Special Recreation Permit activities along the Iditarod National Historic Trail, in the Unalakleet River watershed, Nulato Hills, Squirrel River drainage, and Neacola Mountains.
- Planning to conduct monitoring of recreation use within the Unalakleet Wild River.
- Planning to complete the Campbell Tract Recreation Area Management Plan, in Anchorage.

Campbell Creek Science Center

- The BLM Campbell Creek Science Center is doing a series of professional development webinars tied to place based service learning. The programs are free and available to teachers across the state. We would love it if RAC members wanted to alert teachers in their regions to attend. Last year we had teachers from McGrath, Koyuk, Nikolai, Golovin, and Savoonga attend. (Plus in Fairbanks, North Pole, Anchorage, and the Mat-Su.) The series will continue January through April. Teachers can attend as many as they'd like. They can also earn credit. Finally, all the programs are being recorded and posted online so teachers can watch those they've already missed.

Realty

- Planning to continue to work on a commercial lease for lands at Safety Sound approximately 21 miles east of Nome and for a proposed lease near Russian Mission.
- Received an initial application from the OTZ Telephone Cooperative for a series of telecommunication towers throughout Northwest Alaska and stretching to the east to the Dalton Highway to support the buildout of new and improved telecommunication and network/broadband services. Of the 33 proposed towers, six occur on BLM managed lands.
- Ongoing conversations with Nushagak Cooperative on the Nuyakuk River Hydroelectric Project. The associated transmission line of the proposed project would cross BLM managed lands.
- The BLM Alaska Land Transfer Program continues to prioritize work for Native Allotments, ANCSA entitlements – including ANSCA village closures and 14(h)(1) conveyances, and State entitlements. The BLM has received 138 applications for the Alaska Native Veteran Land Allotment Program of 2019.

Hazmat

- Planning to continue priority work on the Red Devil project, focused on finalizing the Record of Decision. Site work in 2022 will be limited to water sampling in the spring and fall. Site work for cleanup will be scheduled once the Record of Decision is signed and funding is appropriated.
- Planning to continue the Kolmakof Mine site cleanup work on the Kuskokwim River.
- Limited cleanup/removal of non-hazardous solid waste, non-historic structures, and oil and hazardous substances contamination from five remote sites including:
 - Uranium 2 site, approximately 18 miles NW of Buckland, Alaska;
 - Medfra-Almasy mining sites on the Kuskokwim River;
 - Rohn Cabin site along the Iditarod National Historic Trail;
 - Jacksmith Creek in the Carter Spit area on the Goodnews Bay;
 - Goose Bay Airstrip near Wasilla
- Planning to continue working with the Army Corps of Engineers on the Kodiak Island Burma Road Military Munitions Response Program (MMRP) Contractor Site and the Kodiak Island Buskin Beach Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDES) visit and assessment. The MMRP addresses munitions response sites (MRSs) at active installations, Formerly Used Defense Sites, and Base Realignment and Closure locations. MRSs are sites that are known or suspected to contain unexploded ordnance, discarded military munitions, or munitions constituents (MC).

Minerals

- Planning to continue water quality monitoring and regular mine inspections at the Nixon Fork Mine northeast of McGrath.
- Planning to continue water quality monitoring and discharge measurements in the Salmon River adjacent to the Platinum Mine Site. AFO hopes to collaborate with FWS Togiak NWR on the installation and operation of a weir on the Salmon River in 2023 to monitor salmonid escapement.
- Planning to work on an environmental assessment that analyzes the impacts of reopening the Salmon River channel through cobble tailings which currently block passage to the upper watershed, making it inaccessible to salmon spawning.
- Planning to continue inventory/assessment in the Flat area with aerial and on-the-ground reconnaissance of Doyon Limited Corporation selected areas. The project started in May 2021 as a joint venture between the BLM and Doyon. The project consists of locating and inventorying all solid waste and hazardous materials on the ground in preparation for possible cleanup and land conveyance to Doyon.