

North Slope Management Plan What We Heard

The following issues were identified at public scoping meetings for the North Slope Management Plan conducted in the spring of 2015. These meetings were held in the communities of Barrow, Anchorage, Anaktuvuk Pass, Kaktovik, Nuiqsut, Wiseman/Coldfoot, and Fairbanks. The following text is compiled from notes taken by various staff members conducting the public scoping meetings. This document is intended to provide an overview of issues heard or discussed at the public meetings.

Access

- In regards to ATV use, tundra travel is conducted primarily on hunting trails to minimize negative impact to vegetation.
- Community uses the Haul Road to access the Brooks Range (fly to Prudhoe) for hunting. Sometimes they use ice roads and snow for access.
- Participant commented that an access road to the Nuiqsut would prompt timely oil spill response.
- Questions on the restrictions along the Dalton Corridor in regards to rifles and ATV access.
- State lands in Chandalar Shelf used to access adjacent Federal lands
- There are ANCSA Section 17(b) easements across Village Corporation lands to access state lands north of the village and north of the park. These may include:
 - Easement at Shainin Lake to state land
 - Easement from main Park to Castle Mountain unit of the park (the isolated unit of parkland North of the park boundary)
 - Chandler Lake to state land north of (outside) the park and maybe sites along Chandler River
 - There is also an easement along the Killik River from the Park to the Colville River
- Surface access from Point Thomson to Kaktovik, particularly during the winter if there is an ice road to Point Thomson, appeared to be a priority, and is becoming unstable due to climatic variations.
- ANWR has reduced upland access in the summer and thereby increased the importance of coastal resources. There is no problem with winter access to the refuge.
- Should be ROWs that allow 4-wheeleers (ORVs) to cross refuge lands.

Commercial Operations

- Input from tour operators on the Dalton Highway should be sought.
- Community members noted concern about the location of a guide camp north of Anaktuvuk Pass. The community feels that he has had an impact on the caribou herd and is diverting them away from their normal migration route. It was questioned if this guide had the necessary permits for operation.
- Need for management of Happy Valley airport traffic, what is the capacity for growth, lease limits.
- Guides using Chandalar Shelf area for sheep hunting.
- Hunting guide pressure on caribou, sheep - need for some type of “Guide Concession Permitting Plan.”

- Concerns with Air Service providers increasing the amount of hunting pressure in competition with subsistence use.

Climate Change

- Concern with coastal erosion and shoreline erosion especially on barrier islands. One specific concern tied to coastal erosion was the possible loss of the fresh water supply should saltwater intrusion occur.
- Arey Island and Griffen Point identified as having suffered severe coastal erosion problems, traditional use camps are in danger of being washed away.
- With increased ice danger in the spring many hunting and fishing practices are being conducted closer to town due to safety concerns.
- Lagoon access limited in summer and fall by sands/shoals.
- Winds getting stronger, in winter up to 80mph.
- Polar bears are a growing safety issue.
- Loss of subsistence camps and changes in safe boating and shore landings are directly impacting subsistence lifestyle.

Facilities

- DOT/PF would like to develop small maintenance facilities on two ILMA sites on the corridor – Franklin Bluffs and Happy Valley. Gravel pits may be associated with these facilities.
- Constrain development to nodes, and increase regulation within existing nodes – harden nodes and increase facilities available.
- Require emergency preparedness be a part of development nodes – ex. Require helicopter pad for emergency use at all nodes and DOT camps.

Habitat

- Galbraith Lake construction was seen as significantly disturbing to wildlife and transportation.
- DNR wildlife map legend shows “sea lions and seals” but there are no sea lions in the area. Only bearded seals and ringed seals.
- Musk Ox fall and winter areas – close to coast on the lower Colville River north and east of Nuiqsut.
- Salmon have been caught in Kaktovik Lagoon in recent years – king, chum, pink, silvers– seem to be more salmon than in the past.

Infrastructure

- Kaktovik- current airstrip threatened by erosion and permafrost issues.
- Docks were requested on the Canning River.
- A permanent road to Nuiqsut is of great interest. As the bridge is now over the Niglik channel, a permanent road will be an NPRA issue and is being considered as an alternative in GMT, although not developed yet.

Materials

- Gravel removal from Sag River is preferred options because source is thawed. Distance of thawed material from the thalweg of the stream varies along the corridor and is unknown.
- Colville River has gravel potential.
- Analysis of gravel resources along the Dalton Highway and TAPS corridor is occurring in addition to DNR efforts to identify sources.
- Many material sites are poorly chosen, are of poor quality. Need for real site investigations by drilling, looking at material quality with good access and preserve viewshed.
- Require DOT to conduct site analysis before developing material site.
- Consolidate material sites to areas with known resources that can sustain multi-year operations.

Municipal Entitlement

- Reasoning for municipal selections was questioned. Anaktuvuk Pass community members wanted to know the originating thoughts behind the selections. They did see the value in selecting several of the southern selections for subsistence use.
- It was suggested to utilize information through the NSB Planning Commission IHLC to gather information on native allotment uses to gain perspective on current traditional use.
- Barrier islands are vital to whaling and used to support hunting camps and provide safe access to rougher seas. The importance of the barrier islands for both camps and fall whaling was emphasized by the Nuiqsut Whaling group. He outlined areas around the barrier islands on one map for potential deferral. More discussion noted that the fall whaling occurred outside the barrier islands following krill concentrations.
- Do not know the reasons for borough land selections north of Anaktuvuk Pass, other than Gunsight Mountain, a commercial guide camp. Borough offices should have records of village leaders' input to these selections many years ago.

Noticing

- Community members would prefer more detailed notice, as there was confusion about what the meeting was addressing. Request was made by various communities to reschedule meetings during the scoping phase and commit to return to the community in the PRD phase of the planning process.
- Request to keep tribal councils included in the planning process.

Oil and Gas Development

- Itkillik R. to Colville is critical habitat and fracking operations should not occur.
- Fracking practices that have happened in lower 48 will not work here, such as waste ponds as there are too many sensitive bird populations.
- Perception is that sub lessees do not have to follow same rules as lessees.
- Offshore oil and gas development in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas was a concern.
- There needs to be more monitoring and enforcement by the state of oil and gas activities.
- Don't rely on ASRC to represent the people's interests – especially in offshore oil and gas development issues.

- Concern that industry cannot clean up an oil spill in the ocean, especially under the ice.
- Concern over the impact offshore seismic activities have on wildlife – impacts are not well documented.
- Desire to see oil and gas development stopped east of the Canning River.
- Concern about the cumulative impact of oil and gas development.
- Concern that if state develops oil and gas in the three-mile state owned waters that it will impact whales and whaling.
- Should be more development on land, not offshore.
- Because of ANWR, overland access to upland areas is limited and rivers are too shallow to travel inland, hence summer travel must rely on the coast for access to coastal resources – including plants, berries, and birds. Should protect these areas and access by not allowing offshore lease sales.
- Would like to see no development in offshore areas throughout the planning area because it impacts the animals and fish, which would impact hunting and fishing near Kaktovik and impact the community of Kaktovik. Especially concerned about seals, fish, belugas and whales. The fish and marine mammals travel throughout the planning area to get to Kaktovik, and if impacted they may not come back.

Recreation

- Airboat traffic is increasing in volume and concentration throughout the planning area.
- Nonresident hunters and recreational use is increasing the detrimental impacts along the road corridor with trash, human waste, etc.
- Nigu River is a significant point of access for caribou and moose hunting.
- State land north of Anaktuvuk Pass is an important area for subsistence trapping.

Subsistence

- Traditional law says that hunters of Anaktuvuk Pass can't go north to meet the caribou; they must wait for the caribou to come to them. The only time that they have historically moved north is to hunt caribou calves.
- Most prominent access for hunting is immediately south of Prudhoe Bay. Pump station 2 and 3 are occasionally used as an access point as well.
- Community members spent a significant amount of time identifying areas that are important for subsistence harvests and traditional use. These areas are marked on maps displaying Fish and Game data.
- Numerous camp sites have been identified along the coast, although in general the entire coast is important for subsistence practices.
- Primary mode of transportation for summer subsistence activities identified as boat and ATV.
- Polar bears are a growing issue in the community, threatening public safety and inhibiting subsistence practices.
- Salmon berries, blueberries and rhubarb identified as important plant harvests for the community.
- Fishing, including salmon, seals, fall whaling, sea ducks, eiders, mallards and geese are all important to subsistence lifestyle.

- Cross Island whaling is vital to subsistence.
- Concern with the Alpine project inhibiting the movement of caribou preventing them from coming close enough to town for harvest. Traveling up to 30 miles to get caribou was becoming more frequent. Oil and gas development has influenced caribou migrations.
- Moose harvest occurs upstream of Ocean Point, also up the Itkillik River and also near Chandalar Lake.
- Whales migrate on the ocean side of the barrier islands, not the lagoon side due to shallow waters.
- Whaling cabins and camps are located on Flaxman Island, Cross Island, Narwhal Island, and Pingok Island.
- Shainin Lake is an important area for subsistence fishing and trapping.
- There is caribou hunting on state land near Tuluguk Lake.
- Need to have buffers to protect subsistence areas from oil and gas development.
- Nuiqsut residents hunt as far east as West Dock, would like a buffer along the entire coast surrounding subsistence hunting and fishing areas.
- Local residents go as far east as the Canadian border for subsistence.
- Canning River Delta – important for fishing.
- Would like to see the plan identify critical areas for hunting and fishing.

Other

- DNR should seek out additional qualitative and quantitative resource information.
- Southern park boundary issues, attributed to land exchanges between NPS and Native corporations.
- Air boat use for caribou hunting to get around the restricted use area over to the Canning River.
- Was noted that Barrow, Kaktovik and Cape Lisburne still have manned DEW line stations.
- Questions posed on the boundary of ANWR being the Staines River or the Canning.
- New species present, including wolf fish with large teeth, becoming more frequently caught in recent years.
- Discussion about possible road to Umiat.
- Unpermitted docks seem to be increasing on various small ponds and lakes across the planning area.
- State lands should be managed in the interest for all people, it seems like Alaskan do not take priority.
- Increased publicity has pushed people here, coming unprepared, and putting a strain on the community resources.
- No EMS plan or trooper staffing for Dalton highway communities.
- Need to set aside wilderness and habitat areas they are a renewable and sustainable natural resource.
- The relationship with USFWS and Kaktovik are challenging, particularly with access on navigable waters and to the mainland from Kaktovik, and permitting for polar bear watching.
- Frustration with the offshore water boundary of ANWR was not well understood and problematic.
- North Slope has lots of wind power potential; it is a prime place for a wind power project.