



Northeast Alaska Area Plan Planning Update

September 2024



Alaska Department of
**NATURAL
RESOURCES**

Division of Mining, Land & Water

Overview

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has completed the public scoping phase of the planning process for the Northeast Alaska Area Plan (NEAAP). Comments were received via the DNR web portal, email, and during public meetings. The official close of the scoping comment period was September 6, 2024. Some comments were specific to an issue or use within the NEAAP, while others were more general in nature. Comments received by the Department covered a variety of topics and issues in the NEAAP planning area. Significant topics that were repeatedly raised included hunting opportunities and game & habitat preservation in the Coldfoot, Yukon Flats, and Steese Highway areas of the NEAAP. More specifically, areas throughout the Yukon Flats were identified in relation to game and their habitat, such as multiple places for hunting, trapping, important bird habitat, and fish habitat. In the Coldfoot area, wilderness characteristics were highlighted and recommended to be preserved. Other resources identified in the planning area were a wood yard along the Grass River and the importance of travel along the Sucker River. Some concerns were raised about oil exploration south of the Yukon River, motorized vehicle damage to caribou habitat along the Steese Highway, and the degradation of streams near Birch Creek. Commenters were interested in, felt neutral about, or disapproved of the possibility of a wood bison release near Mardow Lake, south of the Grass and Sucker Rivers. The full list of comments can be viewed here: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/planning/areaplans/neaap>

What happens next?

Staff will continue to gather information and begin to develop an agency review draft using the information received during the scoping period, along with information gathered and produced from the agencies and planning staff. After agencies have had an opportunity to provide input on the draft plan, necessary changes will be made, and a public review draft of the plan will be released for review and comment.

How do I become involved in the process?

It is not too late to become involved in the planning process for the NEAAP. **You are encouraged to:**

- Familiarize yourself with the information provided on the state website for the NEAAP web address: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/planning/areaplans/neaap>
- Read the comments submitted during the scoping period, and;
- Attend future meetings and comment during official comment periods.

For information related to the planning process please contact:

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Visit the NEAAP website at: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/planning/areaplans/neaap> to get updated information on this planning process.