

BLM lands protected under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) and upcoming opportunity to comment on maintaining protections

Rachel James, SalmonState
Morgan Urquia, Wild Salmon Center
Northwest Arctic RAC Meeting
October 16 17, 2023

1

1

ANCSA AND “D-1 LANDS”



Photo: Landscape of a river through the mountains
Credit: Luc Mehl

When Congress passed ANCSA, it withdrew all unreserved land in Alaska from mineral entry and oil and gas development to give the Secretary of Interior time to determine whether federal lands should remain withdrawn to protect the public interest.

2

2

WHAT ARE “D-1 LANDS”?

- Today, nearly 50 million acres of BLM lands are still withdrawn and protected under ANCSA. These lands are called D-1 lands.

- **The D-1 protections generally prohibit different kinds of industrial mining and also oil and gas development.**

- Once D-1 protections are lifted, they cannot be brought back.

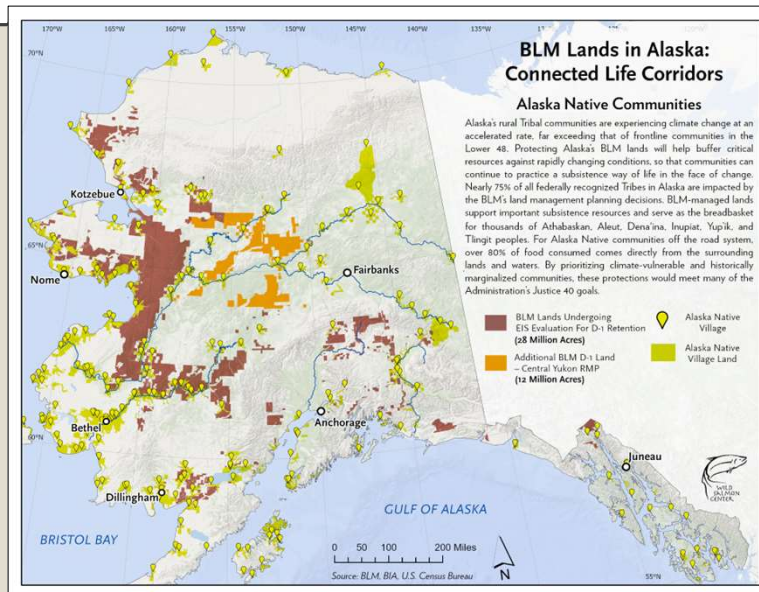


Photo: A lone caribou walking down a hillside
Credit: Fredrik Norrsell

3

3

MAP OF STATEWIDE D-1 LANDS



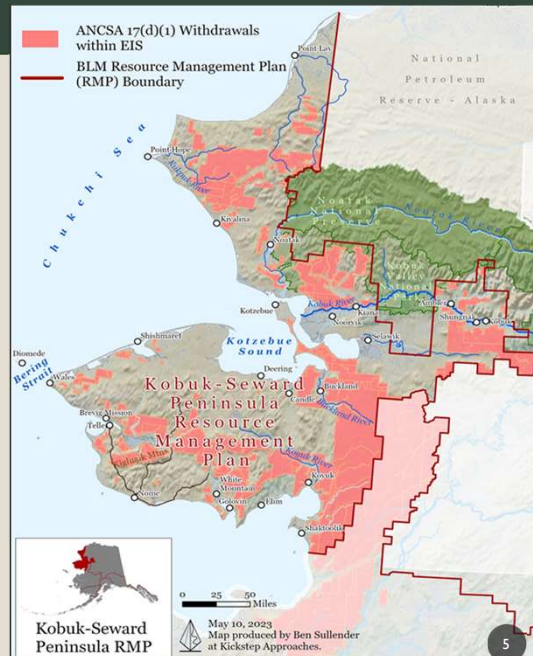
4

4

KOBUK SEWARD PLANNING AREA D-1 LANDS

D-1 Lands in the Region include:

- 9.7 million acres
- Key migratory corridors for the Western Arctic Caribou Herd (WAH)
- Lands bordering and overlapping WAH calving grounds



5

TIMELINE OF DECISIONS

- 2019 – The Trump Administration issued 5 Public Land Orders and attempted to lift the D-1 protection for 28 million acres within Bristol Bay, Bering Sea Western Interior, East Alaska, Kobuk Seward, and the Ring of Fire regions.
- 2022 – The Biden Administration paused the opening of D-1 lands and is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to consider the effects of removing D-1 land protections.
- Mid-November 2023 to Mid-January 2024 – BLM is expected to open the public comment period on the draft EIS.
- August 2024 – A final decision is expected



Photo: A group of red salmon swimming in clear water.

6

6

FOCUS OF THE EIS REVIEW

The EIS will analyze the impacts that opening the D-1 lands to industrial development could have on:

- fish and wildlife habitat;
- subsistence resources and opportunities;
- nearby communities; and
- effects of climate change

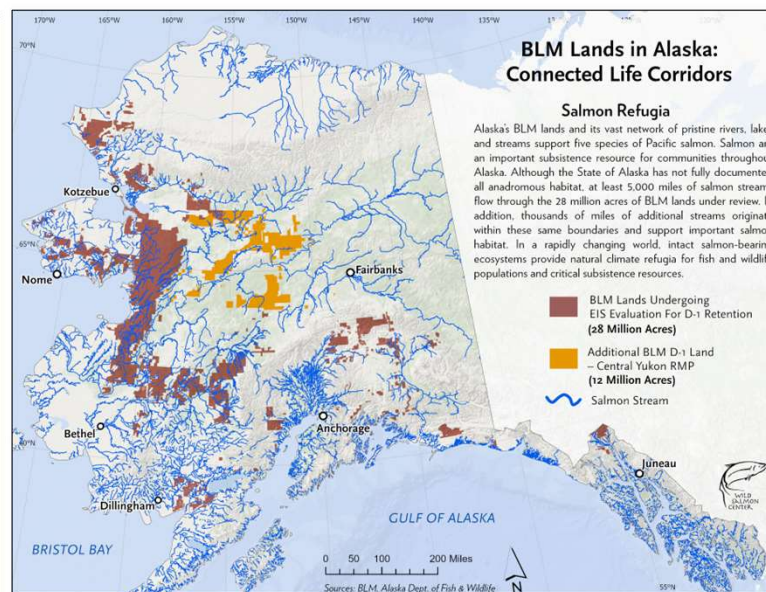


Photo: Two people with snowmachines pulling a sled full of firewood

7

7

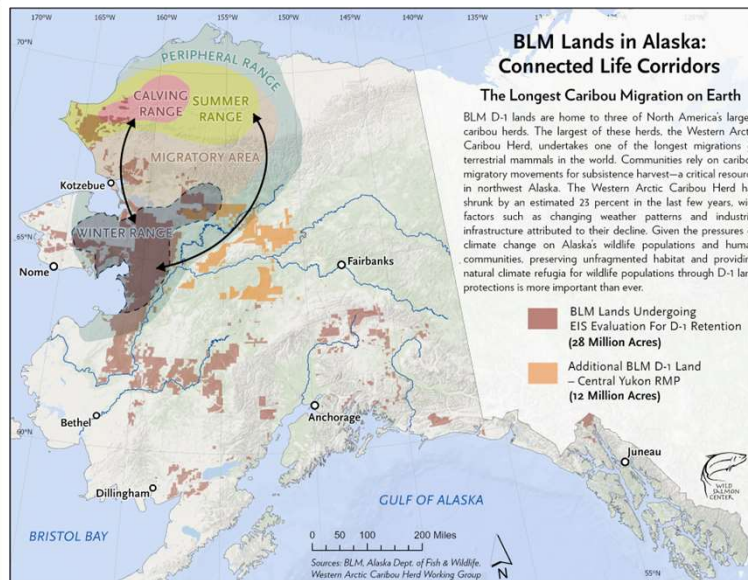
MAP OF SALMON STREAMS AND D-1 LANDS



8

8

MAP OF WESTERN ARCTIC CARIBOU HERD MIGRATORY ROUTE AND D-1 LANDS



9

OPPORTUNITY

A comprehensive review of the value of D-1 lands across Alaska offers a unique and historic opportunity to protect entire regions necessary to support subsistence resources.

- A strong EIS provides the scientific and legal justification to maintain D-1 protections.
- This process offers an opportunity for affected communities to comment on how D-1 lands support communities, subsistence resources and subsistence opportunities.



Photo credit: Dave McCoy
Brown bear eats salmon next to the river

10

10

OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE

- Anticipated release of draft EIS: November 2023
- 60-day comment period
- Voice concerns on the record by submitting a letter during the draft EIS comment period expressing the Council's position

A successful outcome relies on meaningful input from Tribes, communities, organizations, individuals, governments and councils who may be affected.



Photo: An adult ptarmigan with a chick
Credit: Fredrik Norrsell

11

11



Thank You!

Questions? Contact:

Rachel James, SalmonState,
rachel@salmonstate.org

Emily Anderson, Wild Salmon Center,
eanderson@wildsalmoncenter.org

12

12