

# Non-Responsive

RT

Taylor, Rachael S

In conversation with Daniel-Davis, Laura E

RT

Taylor, Rachael S 1/21 5:24 PM

I think it was great, thank you

RT

**Taylor, Rachael S in chat** 1/22 8:07 AM

[Go to message](#)

I have a very long and technical powerpoint deck from boem in my inbox re **5 year plan** - i understand you are doing leadership review of other materials, are you good w the deck?

[See Less](#)



Daniel-Davis, Laura E 1/22 9:21 AM

I do not think that long deck needs to go to the Secretary. I've discussed with Amanda and she will pare back # of slides and develop a short cover/briefing memo this weekend. Let me know if that sounds right.

RT

Taylor, Rachael S

In conversation with Beaudreau, Tommy P

RT

Taylor, Rachael S 5/16 10:16 AM

Yes. We'll see how the staff level meeting goes but it has a heavy handed feel to it.

RT

**Taylor, Rachael S in chat** 5/16 10:17 AM[Go to message](#)

I told Drew to update the Q&As on existing leases from Friday. But obviously **5-year plan** is the big kahuna.

[See Less](#)

RT

Taylor, Rachael S 5/16 10:17 AM

If you got anything interesting over the weekend LMK.

You, Daniel-Davis, Laura, +3

You, Daniel-Davis, Laura, +3

KK

Kelly, Katherine P 4/10 10:11 AM

ppt guru I am not... but made a few formatting/working tweaks in the deck. Could not figure out how to improve the CO map slide, alas.

KK

**Kelly, Katherine P in chat** 4/28 10:22 AM[Go to message](#)

all your work on the **5-year plan** q's coming in handy

[See Less](#)

KK

Kelly, Katherine P 4/28 10:23 AM

good job

RT

Taylor, Rachael S

In conversation with Daniel-Davis, Laura E



Daniel-Davis, Laura E 5/6 1:39 PM

Every minute!!

RT

Taylor, Rachael S in chat 5/6 3:32 PM

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I cannot lay my hands on the email version **of** the talking points we drafted before House appropriations that had the 5-year plan and **lease cancellation** language in there. Does that ring a bell?

[See Less](#)

RT

Taylor, Rachael S 5/6 3:32 PM

If you have it can you forward?



## Team review

Meeting chat



Schwartz, Melissa A 7/1 5:26 PM



Taylor, Rachael S in chat 7/1 5:27 PM

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[https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/07/01/biden-offshore-drilling-climate/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/07/01/biden-offshore-drilling-climate/ "https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/07/01/biden-offshore-drilling-climate/")

See Less

**From:** [Jen Leahy](#)  
**To:** [Thiele, Raina D](#)  
**Cc:** [Karlin Itchoak](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Agenda and organizational priorities for conservation meeting  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 19, 2022 3:09:17 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[agenda\\_Secretary Haaland meeting\\_FINAL \(1\).pdf](#)  
[conservation priorities\\_Secretary Haaland meeting.pdf](#)

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**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Hi Raina,

Attached are two documents for the conservation meeting:

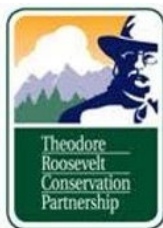
1. Final agenda
2. Packet of organizational priorities

Looking forward to seeing you tomorrow and talking in person!

Best,  
Jen and Karlin

--

Jen Leahy  
*Alaska Field Representative*  
**Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership**  
907.422.7635 (cell)  
[www.trcp.org](http://www.trcp.org)



## **Alaska Conservation & Outdoor Recreation Roundtable with the Honorable Secretary Deb Haaland**

**Tuesday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, 10:30 a.m.**

**BLM Alaska State Office, 222 W. 7th Avenue - Anchorage, Alaska**  
*Aurora Conference Room*

**PURPOSE:** Provide Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, her leadership team, and participating organizations with an opportunity to discuss Alaska's most urgent public land management issues.

### **PARTICIPANTS:**

- Alaska Conservation Foundation: **Michael Barber**, Executive Director
- Alaska Outdoor Alliance: **Lee Hart**, Executive Director
- Audubon Alaska: **David Krause**, Interim Executive Director
- Backcountry Hunters and Anglers: **Jacob Mannix**, Alaska Chapter Coordinator
- Brooks Range Council: **Seth Kantner**, lifelong NW Arctic resident, subsistence gatherer, author
- Defenders of Wildlife: **Nicole Whittington-Evans**, Alaska Program Director
- First Alaskans Institute: **Liz La quen náay Medicine Crow**, President and CEO
- Gwich'in Steering Committee: **Bernadette Demientieff**, Executive Director
- National Parks Conservation Association: **Alex Johnson**, Alaska Senior Program Manager
- Northern Alaska Environmental Center: **Scott Fogarty**, Outgoing Executive Director
- Salmon State: **Tim Bristol**, Executive Director
- Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership: **Jen Leahy**, Alaska Field Representative
- The Nature Conservancy Alaska, **Anne Kelly**, Deputy Director
- The Wilderness Society: **Karlin Itchoak**, Alaska State Director
- Trout Unlimited, **Nelli Williams**, Alaska Program Director
- Wild Salmon Center: **Emily Anderson**, Alaska State Director

### **AGENDA:**

- 1. Welcome:** The Hon. Secretary Deb Haaland (5 mins)
- 2. DOI Introductions (5 mins)**
  - NGO participants will introduce themselves as part of their comments

**3. Opening prayer:** Bernadette Demientieff (2 mins)

**4. AK team welcome:** Karlin Itchoak (3 mins)

**5. Local perspective: Life on the Kobuk:** Seth Kantner (6 mins)

**6. Key questions** (15 mins)

- What values would you like to see guide decisions about the management of Alaska's public lands?
  - *La quen náay* Liz Medicine Crow
  - Anne Kelly
- What opportunities are there for the DOI team to improve communication or consultation with Tribes, rural residents, and conservation and outdoor recreation stakeholders, particularly historically excluded groups?
  - Jacob Mannix
  - Michael Barber

**7. Overview of key issues and opportunities** (32 mins)

- Place-based issues: recent positive actions and urgent opportunities (18 mins)
  - Ambler Road: Alex Johnson
  - Arctic National Wildlife Refuge: Scott Fogarty
  - BLM Resource Management Plans: Jen Leahy
  - D-1 Withdrawals: Emily Anderson and Tim Bristol
  - Izembek National Wildlife Refuge: Nicole Whittington-Evans
  - Western Arctic Reserve: David Krause
- Bridges to the future: paradigm shifts (14 mins)
  - Indigenous-led conservation: Karlin Itchoak
  - Regenerative economies: Lee Hart and Nelli Williams

**8. Local perspective: Sacred Grounds:** Bernadette Demientieff (6 mins)

**9. Q&A** (10 mins)

**10. AK team closing remarks:** Jen Leahy (1 min)

**11. DOI closing remarks:** The Hon. Secretary Deb Haaland (5 mins)

## Alaska Conservation & Outdoor Recreation Roundtable with the Honorable Secretary Deb Haaland

### NGO ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITIES

**PURPOSE:** Provide Alaska conservation and outdoor recreation NGOs with an opportunity to provide additional feedback to Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland regarding Alaska's most urgent public land management issues.

### **DIRECTIONS:**

Each organization may choose up to three questions to answer. **We recommend that everyone respond to the first question and then choose a couple of additional questions to answer.** The combined responses will be delivered to Secretary Haaland ahead of our meeting. The questions will also be used to guide our discussion on Tuesday, April 19.

### **DISCUSSION PROMPTS:**

1. What are your organization's top three Alaska priorities for the Department of the Interior to address before the end of President Biden's first term?
2. Thinking beyond your organization's immediate priorities, what are your organization's long-term visions for sustainable management of Alaska's federal public lands? Are there any key actionable steps toward reaching that goal that you would like to share?
3. Thinking about your conservation priorities, is there anything that the DOI team should know about, but might not? (e.g. political dynamics, cultural considerations, creative administrative solutions, etc.)
4. Thinking about your organization's work with DOI during the Biden administration, what is going well that DOI can build on? (e.g. policy shifts, new approaches to partnerships, etc.)
5. What opportunities are there for the DOI team to improve communication or consultation with Tribes, rural residents and conservation and outdoor recreation stakeholders, particularly historically-excluded groups?
6. What values would you like to see guide decisions about the management of Alaska's public lands?



## **ALASKA CONSERVATION FOUNDATION - Michael Barber**

### **What are your organization's top three Alaska priorities for the Department of the Interior to address before the end of President Biden's first term?**

1. This is a very specific recommendation but is really important for helping to ensure the connectivity of Alaska's habitats and the species and communities that they serve. The Science Applications program that is housed within the US Fish and Wildlife Service, according to their own words in the congressional budget, is the only program within the government tasked with bringing the other government agencies from DOI and USDA together around landscape conservation. This seems completely in line with the Administration's goal around America the Beautiful and yet the funding to that program has been reduced recently in Alaska. The Science Applications program needs more funding and more support from DOI in efforts to bring both DOI and USDA agencies together on the landscape conservation goals associated with America the Beautiful.
2. A great deal of pressure is on Alaska's communities due to industrial mining. Tribes and Alaska Native villages in particular do not have the resources to inform themselves of the full impacts and alternatives available to them when faced with giant mining entities' plans.

Government agencies must support NGO and tribal partnerships so that informed prior consent might be attainable. Large intact landscapes of Alaska will be fragmented in ways that affect ecosystems and traditional food practices far and wide across Alaska.

### **Thinking about your conservation priorities, is there anything that the DOI team should know about, but might not? (e.g. political dynamics, cultural considerations, creative administrative solutions, etc.)**

The USDA has demonstrated new innovations in standing up partnerships with Tribes in Alaska through a new Indigenous Guardians Program in collaboration with the US Forest Service and the Central Council of Tlingit and Hadia Indian Tribes of Alaska on the geography of the Tongass National forest. We would urge the DOI, especially in consideration of the recent joint secretarial order between USDA and DOI on co-stewardship of public lands with Tribes, to seek this same type of opportunities on the lands your agencies manage. Why couldn't there also be Indigenous Guardians groups working in collaboration with the BLM, with Wildlife Refuges and National Parks? Similarly, there is a USDA program called the Tribal Conservation Districts of which there are 23 in Alaska where Tribes, Tribal Consortia, and ANCSA corporations are coming together to design stewardship approaches for their homelands. From our work with TCDs, it's clear there are very important collaboration opportunities that are being missed between Refuges, Parks and BLM lands. I would urge DOI to connect with NRCS leadership in Alaska to learn more.

## **ALASKA OUTDOOR ALLIANCE - Lee Hart**

Thank you for this opportunity to share our views with you today and for all that you've done so far in this administration to advance conservation, equity and environmental justice. My name is Lee Hart and I am the Executive Director of the Alaska Outdoor Alliance, the voice of Alaska's \$3.2 billion outdoor recreation economy.

*What are your organization's top three Alaska priorities for the Department of the Interior to address before the end of President Biden's first term?*

**Equity.** We applaud the Department's Equity Action Plan and recognition of the need to be a partner in increasing grant awareness and grant-writing support for tribal and other underserved communities. During conversations AOA conducted at the beginning of the pandemic we learned about hundreds of millions of dollars of shovel-ready recreation infrastructure in rural and tribal gateway communities that could benefit from Land and Water Conservation Fund grants. We were dismayed to learn that some of Alaska's rural and tribal gateway communities have been left behind because they either didn't know grants from the stateside Land and Water Conservation Fund could be used for outdoor recreation infrastructure or they simply lack the capacity to apply for such grants.

**Climate.** We are thankful to the National Park Service for expediting the planning and construction of the Denali Road over the Pretty Rocks slide area to re-open public road access to Wonder Lake and Kantishna. The closure of the park during the pandemic exacerbated by the road closure due to climate related geologic hazards resulted in dire economic consequences for gateway communities like Healy, Cantwell and Talkeetna. It would be hard to find anywhere in DOI's portfolio of public lands where the effects of climate change are more apparent than Alaska. We ask that Alaska Region Management Guidelines recognize the need to budget for monitoring, planning and management of park infrastructure that takes climate change into account.

**Opportunity.** We need plans to get ahead of change that's coming fast to Alaska. Sea lanes opening in the Arctic will inevitably result in increased visitor demand but Alaska communities' visitor-readiness trails their counterparts in Greenland, Iceland and Scandinavia. Winter is a season of great economic opportunity as entire new sports have arisen since the NPS General Management Plan was written in 1986. We wonder if the popularity of fat biking on snow and even the emerging sport of nordic skating could lead to more winter access to national parks. In a state as vast and diverse as Alaska, one size doesn't fit all. Our national parks, refuges, and recreation areas need more data to develop community-driven needs assessments and feasibility plans. The Denali National Park Winter and Shoulder Season Plan of 2019 is an example of a park taking notice of changes to recreation habits and visitor demand. Such plans can only be brought to life with budgets and staffing unconstrained by hiring regulations.

*Thinking beyond your organization's immediate priorities, what are your organization's long-term visions for sustainable management of Alaska's federal public lands? Are there any key actionable steps toward reaching that goal that you would like to share?*

Sustainable development of Alaska's federal public lands should include the following elements:

**Equity.** Accelerating the increase in Department resources to accelerate implementation of the Equity Action Plan. Movement toward greater collaboration and co-management of public lands with tribal entities is taking place to our South thanks to the One USDA approach that is the foundation of the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy. The SASS is expanding access and economic opportunity to the tribal communities who have been stewarding those lands for 10,000 years. Similar regional collaborations across DOI agencies, in cooperation with gateway communities, would help ensure all Alaskans have equal opportunity and access to Alaska lands and waters.

**Workforce Development.** A commitment in budget and staffing focused on planning, maintaining and managing park, refuge and recreation area infrastructure with a homegrown workforce. Establish a task force to better understand and plan to educate and train future stewards of public lands in all positions from entry-level trail crew workers, to fish and wildlife scientists, to rangers and career managers. One shining example of meeting such a need is Alaska Pacific University's Indigenous Stewardship Course, developed in partnership with the APU Elders Council, US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Alaska Conservation Foundation.

**Recreation Staffing.** The outdoor recreation economy can be key to new economic opportunities for communities that decide to invest in such directions, especially those seeking regenerative economic opportunity. Our agencies need expanded capacity to accelerate planning, permitting, administration and marketing of recreation assets and opportunities to manage visitor demand proactively in consultation with gateway community residents and businesses. Too often, communities feel like they are forced to react to external decisions that directly impact their economies and daily ways of living. The power balance needs to shift from being externally driven to community driven.

## **AUDUBON ALASKA - David Krause**

What are your organization's top three Alaska priorities for the Department of the Interior to address before the end of President Biden's first term?

[Include up to two additional prompts of your choice from the list above]

### **Izembek National Wildlife Refuge**

- Topline Ask: During this visit to Alaska, we ask that Secretary Haaland and the Department of the Interior not make any statements about the recent Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision, or statements in support of the land exchange or the road, to maintain the Department's ability to reconsider the Trump Administration's position.
- Background: A road through Izembek's Wilderness has been rejected for decades by prior Administrations and courts, given that better transportation options (as determined by the Federal Government's Army Corps of Engineers) exist for the community. Bulldozing this road through one of the most important wetlands complexes on the globe would destroy the conservation values that define this Refuge and would harm subsistence resources and practices.

### **National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska**

- Management of the Reserve: We appreciate this administration taking an important first step toward protecting the Reserve by reinstating the 2013 Integrated Activity Plan. However, there are still significant impacts from oil and gas in the Reserve, even under that 2013 management plan. We would like Interior to implement a new management direction in the Reserve focused on meeting climate goals and protecting wildlife habitat and biodiversity, leaving a legacy that lasts by making these protections more durable. Interior can accomplish this through the adoption of new regulations, and we urge the Department to move quickly to begin a rulemaking that ensures management of the Western Arctic protects the incredible conservation values of the area.
- Willow Master Development Plan: ConocoPhillips' Willow project in the Reserve is the single biggest oil and gas project proposed on public lands and is a huge threat to our climate. Allowing Willow to move forward would be a major setback to this administration's commitments to address the climate crisis and environmental justice issues. Willow would negate many of the gains this administration hopes to achieve through renewable energy projects and other measures. We believe a close analysis of this project will indicate it should not be allowed to move forward.

## **BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS AND ANGLERS - Jacob Mannix**

**What are your organization's top three Alaska priorities for the Department of the Interior to address before the end of President Biden's first term?**

1. Backcountry Hunters & Anglers would like to see meaningful protections from oil and gas leasing within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Our country has one Arctic, and we would be remiss to deny future generations the opportunity to experience hunting, fishing, or recreating on such an incredible landscape. Additionally, our arctic ecosystem is undergoing a significant shift due to climate change. Maintaining intact habitat is one of the most important things we can do to help ensure the long-term conservation of our fish and wildlife resources, particularly in such fragile arctic ecosystems. Caribou, which have become the poster child of the political battle over ANWR, are in decline globally and development has been cited as a primary cause. As a hunter and angler, representing an organization of hunters and anglers, it is my responsibility to be a voice of support for these animals and their home.
2. Backcountry Hunters & Anglers would like to see a record of decision for the Central Yukon Resource Management Plan. We hope to see a final management plan that places meaningful emphasis on conservation and protection of fish and wildlife habitat, and supports hunting, angling, and recreational opportunities. Specific areas of importance within this plan are: protections for critical habitat areas for Dall sheep and caribou, protections for water quality and aquatic habitat, and the retention of PLO 5150 in federal ownership along with the creation of the Dalton Corridor Backcountry Conservation Area.
3. Backcountry Hunters & Anglers supports the conservation of (d)(1) lands. Establishing meaningful, long-lasting protections for (d)(1) lands is likely one of the best tools for conserving healthy fish and wildlife habitat and protecting hunting and fishing on federal land in Alaska. This can be first addressed through the Central Yukon Resource Management Plan by selecting a modified alternative, as proposed by both BHA and TRCP, that does not call for the full revocation of (d)(1) lands in the planning area. Outside of the Central Yukon Planning Area, we understand that embarking on a process to conserve the remaining (d)(1) lands is a large undertaking. Our organization supports any efforts from the Department of Interior to undertake this task and we look forward to helping any way we can.

## **BROOKS RANGE COUNCIL - Ron Yarnell**

My name is Ron Yarnell. I am a wilderness guide, business owner and member of BRC. I have been offering wilderness trips into the Arctic Refuge and the Central Brooks Range since the early 1970's.

I have led hundreds of river trips across the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge all the way to the Arctic Ocean and also hundreds of river trips down all the wild rivers that the Ambler Road in the Central Brooks Range would bisect.

My three top priorities are:

- 1) Halting the oil leases on the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge.
- 2) Stopping the Ambler Road from being pushed down the throats of the local people living in the Koyukuk and Kobuk Valleys against their wishes by their leaders.
- 3) Stopping further oil drilling and exploration in the NPRA and on the outer Continental shelf of Arctic Alaska.
- 4) I would like to see less oil development occurring in Arctic Alaska not more. This is the last place we should be exploring for oil.
- 5) I would like to see more restrictions on large-scale mine development on Alaska federal lands. These mines are very detrimental to the local environment and it's inhabitants including people and their way of life.
- 6) I would like to see less offshore oil leasing in Alaska's Arctic and more federal support for renewable energy alternatives.
- 7) The Trump administration's EIS for oil leasing on the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge did a very inadequate job of considering the impacts on wilderness and hunting guides and outfitters already making a living off the coastal plain. Basically they totally ignored the services we provide as if our businesses that we have been operating for decades on the plains are irrelevant. These are sustainable Alaskan businesses that can go on forever and that contribute significantly to the local economy with minimal impacts upon the environment.
- 8) We appreciate that the Biden administration is willing to listen to our concerns and not just blow us off as if our jobs and livelihoods don't count. The Biden administration is listening to the actual people that live off and use the land not just those that exploit the land for profit.
- 9) On all three of my priority items listed at the top of these comments it is important that resource development not proceed forward without the full support of the local people. I am not talking about their leaders. I am talking about the people that actually use the land. If they say no, then the resource should not be developed.
- 10) The most important thing is that the Interior Department needs to respect the existing users of these areas. These users should have the final say if resource development should proceed or not.

## **DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE - Nicole Whittington-Evans**

*What are your organization's top three Alaska priorities for the Department of the Interior to address before the end of President Biden's first term?*

Thank you for this opportunity share our views with you today and for all that you've done so far in this administration to advance conservation and equity and environmental justice. My name is Nicole Whittington-Evans and I am the Alaska Program Director for Defenders of Wildlife.

Defenders of Wildlife seeks to protect wildlife in its natural diversity and our Alaska priorities revolve around addressing the climate and biodiversity crises and the inequities that exist and are caused by these looming threats. We've identified the following priorities as ways for the Department to address these crises that focus on the National Wildlife Refuge System and Alaska's Refuges, Polar Bears, the National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska and Cook Inlet Lease Sale 258.

### **I. National Wildlife Refuge System**

- A. Maintaining the integrity of the National Wildlife Refuge System is critical for biodiversity protection, climate adaptation and for the protection of subsistence resources.
- B. For Alaska's refuges, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) identified a comprehensive conservation frame for refuges (and all CSUs) which ought to be upheld.
- C. The greatest threats to Alaska refuges include:
  - a. Oil and gas development in the Arctic Refuge
    - i. Protecting the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge is a top priority for biodiversity, climate and specifically a multitude of wildlife species and for subsistence resources.
    - ii. Protection of polar bear critical habitat in the refuge from oil and gas development and other development threats, including proposed roads, is a top priority for Defenders.
    - iii. We thank the Interior Department and administration for all that you've done to protect the coastal plain thus far, and we urge the Department to:
      - 1. Continue to develop a strong environmental analysis of the leasing program and cancel the existing, invalid leases so that the new analysis is not constrained by these leases.
      - 2. Work to ensure that repeal of the leasing program and cancellation of the existing leases are included in the Budget reconciliation bill and passed into law.
  - b. Other top threats to Alaska refuges include the proposed road through



Izembek Refuge wilderness and wetlands and a recent Ninth Circuit court decision regarding Interior's 2019 Izembek land exchange to further the road proposal.

- i. Protecting designated wilderness and this conservation system unit as identified in ANILCA, which encompasses one of the most valuable wetlands complexes on the globe, is imperative for biodiversity, climate adaptation and subsistence.
- ii. Izembek provides important subsistence resources that go much beyond its refuge boundaries and are very important to western Alaska and Arctic indigenous communities.
- iii. The Infrastructure bill passed last year provides alternative solutions to a road between King Cove and Cold Bay, such as for a ferry, new dock and breakwater for Cold Bay.
- iv. Interior's 2019 land exchange agreement to allow construction of a road through the heart of Izembek refuge upended decades of agency policy and contravened ANILCA's extensive protections for wilderness areas, including Congressional authorization for roads.
- v. The recent, significant Ninth Circuit court decision regarding the Izembek land exchange and proposed road through the Wilderness has put at threat over 100 million acres of conservation land and subsistence uses and set an incredibly damaging precedent for our nation's conservation history. It paves the way for future administrations to trade away other critical areas of Alaska's National Parks, Refuges, and designated Wilderness. This is a horrible decision for all of Alaska's conservation lands and we must work together to look for ways to undo it.
- vi. In light of these developments, we ask that:
  1. The administration carefully review the recent Ninth Circuit decision, and not take lightly the damaging precedent it sets. Instead, we hope that you will look for ways to undo this dangerous decision.
  2. Interior revisit and rescind the 2019 land exchange agreement, making new findings regarding the propriety of trading away the refuge lands and inviting road proponents to submit an application for approval as required by law.
  3. During your visit in Alaska you not make any statements in support of the land exchange or road to ensure that you maintain the ability to reconsider the exchange.

## **II. Polar bear recovery and critical habitat protection**

- A. Recovering polar bears is essential to maintain biodiversity and healthy Arctic ecosystems.



- B. The Southern Beaufort Sea polar bear population is one of the most imperiled on the globe and has declined by 50 percent in the last three decades, with a 40 percent drop since 2000.
- C. Oil and gas development and other development threats are impacting critical habitat and need to be restricted.
  - a. Defenders has developed a map of the impacts of oil and gas activities in polar bear critical habitat across the Arctic that we are sharing with you.
  - b. We have concerns regarding what at times seems to be a lax approach to oil and gas activities in polar bear critical habitat. We are responding to this now through our involvement in litigation regarding the 5-Year Polar Bear Incidental Take Regulation.
  - c. Also, robust support by the Department is necessary to help reduce human – polar bear conflicts in Arctic communities.
  - d. Defenders also urges the Department to implement the Polar Bear Conservation Management Plan, or Recovery Plan - which hasn't yet meaningfully gotten off the ground.
    - i. A Polar Bear Commissioner needs to be appointed, which is an inherited gap from the Trump administration.

### **III. National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska (Reserve):**

- A. The Reserve needs a new management direction that protects the area's vital wildlife habitat and subsistence resources, significantly reduces climate emissions from federal lands and helps the administration to meet it's commitments to the Paris climate agreement.
- B. The Reserve encompasses extraordinary wildlife habitat, including Polar bear critical habitat, and protection of this habitat and subsistence resources is necessary to help stem the biodiversity and climate crises.
- C. We thank the administration for revisiting the Willow Master Development Plan analysis and pursuing a robust analysis regarding this project. If allowed to move forward as Conoco Phillips has planned, Willow would negate many of the gains this administration hopes to achieve through renewable energy projects and other measures. We urge the Department to chart a new, less impactful course that would result in reduced fossil fuel emissions and increased wildlife habitat and subsistence resource protection.
- D. We also appreciate this administration taking an important first step toward protecting the Reserve by reinstating the 2013 Integrated Activity Plan. However, there are still significant impacts from oil and gas in the Reserve, even under that 2013 management plan.
- E. We would like Interior to implement a new management direction in the Reserve focused on meeting climate goals and protecting wildlife habitat and biodiversity, leaving a legacy that lasts by making these protections more durable. Interior can accomplish this through the adoption of new regulations, and we urge the

Department to move quickly to begin a rulemaking that ensures management of the Western Arctic protects the incredible conservation values of the area.

#### IV. **Cook Inlet Lease Sale 258**

- A. We urge the Department to choose the No Action alternative for Cook Inlet Lease Sale 258 and not allow another lease sale in Cook Inlet because of impacts to climate, biodiversity and the overall health of Cook Inlet.
- B. The Cook Inlet Lease Sale 258 Draft EIS and its analyses are deficient for many reasons, including regarding impacts to climate, oil spills and critically endangered and failing Cook Inlet belugas and other ESA listed species.
- C. This lease sale is opposed by local tribes, fisherman, small business owners, and risks locking in decades of new carbon emissions during a time when a transition toward renewable, carbon-free energy is necessary.

In closing, we want to share that **America the Beautiful** will not be able to succeed without addressing the above threats to Alaska - its climate, biodiversity and subsistence. Thank you again for this opportunity to share Defenders' Alaska priorities with you. We appreciate the time and attention you have already dedicated to Alaska and hope to work with you to make even more progress during the months to come.

#### **Discussion Prompt:**

3. Thinking about your conservation priorities, is there anything that the DOI team should know about, but might not? (e.g. political dynamics, cultural considerations, creative administrative solutions, etc.)

Below is additional information and context regarding Izembek National Wildlife Refuge:

- Izembek's wetlands complex was the first area in the United States to be recognized as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention.
- Nearly all of the Izembek Refuge is congressionally designated Wilderness.
- For many decades, Pacific brant and Emperor goose populations experienced population-level declines due to habitat loss and stressors throughout the Pacific flyway. A road through Izembek's wetlands would compound these issues and further threaten these imperiled populations.
- Migratory birds that rely on Izembek are important subsistence resources for villages across western and northern Alaska, and harm to them or this vital habitat from a road would also impact these subsistence users.
- As you all may be aware, western Alaska villages and the Association of Village Council President's Waterfowl Conservation Committee has been engaged in waterfowl co-management since the early 1980's in order to rebuild important waterfowl subsistence populations, including Emperor and Cackling geese and Pacific black brant, all of which depend on Izembek at critical junctures in their life

cycles.

- Because of their focus on restoring goose populations, the Committee engaged in the Izembek road issue starting in the 1990's, voicing strong concerns about the impacts it would pose to waterfowl populations, and because it would go against the many significant efforts subsistence users in western Alaska had been engaged in to enhance these populations, including curbing subsistence activities.
- Conservationists have supported the co-management and waterfowl conservation efforts by AVCP's Waterfowl Conservation Committee, western Alaska villages and tribes, and we believe there are environmental justice issues that should be considered that involve the broader region.
- Also, as you all well know, the Fish and Wildlife Service is required to manage the Izembek refuge to ensure its purposes are fulfilled. The refuge's purposes pertain to:
  - (i) conserving fish and wildlife populations and habitats. . . ;
  - (ii) fulfilling international treaty obligations . . . ;
  - (iii) providing, . . . opportunity for continued subsistence uses by local residents, and
  - (iv) ensuring, . . . water quality and necessary water quantity in the refuge." (94 Stat. 2391 P.L. 96-487 §303(3)(B))

The road and its impacts would undermine these purposes.

- The road proposal was born out of a desire to transport fish to market for the commercial fishing industry. The city of King Cove passed a resolution to this effect in 1994, and
- In 2011, Senator Murkowski visited King Cove and stated:

*"The decades-old push to get the road built between King Cove and the Cold Bay Airport so that we can have greater access for transportation is going to be a critical ingredient in that thriving economic future going out for the next 100 years."*<sup>[1]</sup>

- There are many other examples that we can provide underscoring this point.
- More recently the road has been advanced as a needed link for health and safety, and in the past year, as necessary for access to "inholdings."
- We believe the commercial and socio-economic benefits are the driving forces behind the road.
- No matter the purpose, the road would irreparably impact globally significant wetlands, wildlife and wilderness. These are not worth risking as we face biodiversity and climate crises, particularly when there are other, completely viable and even more effective transportation options, as others will address after me.<sup>[2]</sup>
- Numerous legislative, administrative and judicial decisions have found that constructing a road through the refuge's sensitive wetlands would be destructive and unnecessary, and two comprehensive agency analyses determined that the

proposed road would result in significant impacts to refuge resources.<sup>[3]</sup>

- These included an Army Corps of Engineers' Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), completed in 2004. It indicated the road, "would not qualify as an environmentally preferable alternative,"<sup>[1]</sup> and,
- The 2013 Fish and Wildlife Service EIS<sup>[2]</sup> concluded that a road would result in significant degradation to irreplaceable ecological resources. It documented that wildlife uses would be irreversibly changed by a road, and concluded that a road would bring increased human traffic, noise, hydrological changes, damage to wetlands, run off, introduction of contaminants and invasive species to Izembek's sensitive wetlands complex.
- With respect to increased human access, new all-terrain vehicle use and habitat damage is already occurring since completion of the 17.2 mile road to the northeast corner of Cold Bay, where enforcement is extremely difficult. Habitat-damaging trails have developed into the refuge from the endpoint of that road,<sup>[3]</sup> and are documented in the EIS.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Senator Murkowski during a public celebration as reported by Aleutians East Borough, In the Loop, 12/2/11.

<sup>[2]</sup> Army Corps of Engineers, King Cove – Cold Bay: Assessment of Non-Road Alternatives, June 18, 2015. The assessment indicated that a marine vessel would be 99.9% dependable. The Alaska district court also found that viable transportation options are available. *Friends of Alaska Wildlife Refuges v. Bernhardt*, 463 F.Supp.3d 1011, 1021 (D. Alaska 2020).

<sup>[3]</sup> U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, King Cove Access Project, Draft Environmental Impact Statement, July, 2003, p. 153 and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Land Exchange/Road Corridor Final Environmental Impact Statement, February 2013. The final EIS referenced and incorporated the analysis and findings of the draft EIS. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, King Cove Access Project, Final Environmental Impact Statement, December, 2003, Executive Summary, p. FES-25.

<sup>[1]</sup> U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, King Cove Access Project, Draft Environmental Impact Statement, July, 2003, p. 153.

<sup>[2]</sup> U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Final Environmental Impact Statement, Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Land Exchange/Road Corridor, 2013

<sup>[3]</sup> Ibid., p. 4-137 and 4-205.

## **NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION - Alex Johnson**

What are your organization's top three Alaska priorities for the Department of the Interior to address before the end of President Biden's first term?

- The proposed Ambler Road and its impacts to Northwest Alaska, including the Western Arctic Caribou Herd, 20 million acres of national parklands, and over 40 communities
- Reversal of the 2020 Wildlife Rule, returning to the 2015 rule, which would reinstate bans on state predator reduction efforts within national preserves
- Denali Road – expedient planning and construction of the Denali Road over the Pretty Rocks slide, returning public road access to Wonder Lake and Kantishna, as well as forward thinking NPS infrastructure planning and management that takes climate change into account

Thinking beyond your organization's immediate priorities, what are your organization's long-term visions for sustainable management of Alaska's federal public lands? Are there any key actionable steps toward reaching that goal that you would like to share?

- Large landscape co-management and indigenous-led management – as outlined in America the Beautiful Initiative – that maintains connectivity in order to foster environmental and community resilience and adaptation in the face of climate change
- Bear Coast – the region of the Western Cook Inlet and eastern Bristol Bay that includes Katmai and Lake Clark National Park and Preserves – burgeoning sustainable wildlife viewing economy on top of existing sustainable subsistence and commercial fisheries – essential for us to manage these lands for connectivity and resilience
- Hardrock mining reform and responsible sourcing of critical minerals – including regenerative and circular economy – that avoids and limits impacts to the nationally and globally significant park landscapes of Alaska
- Addressing the Sturgeon decision and the state's aggressive assertion of jurisdiction over waterways in national parks and wildlife refuges to protect subsistence opportunities and, to the extent legally possible, to limit the establishment of uses in parks and refuges that are not appropriate. In the short-term, we recommend actions to maximize reporting of conflicts and problems with state management, to clearly identify where NPS and USFWS are NOT patrolling so as to identify where incidents may not be reported, and to identify and formally announce federal authority over non-navigable waterways within parks and refuges.

Thinking about your conservation priorities, is there anything that the DOI team should know about, but might not? (e.g. political dynamics, cultural considerations, creative administrative solutions, etc.)

- While suspension of the Ambler Road permits to address the serious tribal consultation and cultural resource assessment gaps is progress, suspension is not sufficient to address the many other failures in the permitting process or mitigate potential impacts to the region through ongoing state activities along the road corridor

## **NORTHERN ALASKA ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER - Scott Fogarty**

What are your organization's top three Alaska priorities for the Department of the Interior to address before the end of President Biden's first term?

[Include up to two additional prompts of your choice from the list above]

Top priorities for the Northern Center are:

1. Permanently reverse lease sales in the Arctic Refuge, and establish permanent protection of 1002 area and all of the Refuge
2. Halt all development of the Ambler Rd. and elevate Indigenous community voices
3. Deny any further lease sales or oil development in the Western Arctic - NPRA, specifically the Master Willow Project

The long-term vision of the Northern Center is to focus on Land Back and Just Transition concepts of large -scale management of DOI lands. This concept directly includes working with Indigenous communities to prioritize sustainable transition including subsistence hunting and gathering concerns. Climate chaos is occurring at an accelerated rate in North Slope communities and Interior Alaska and continues to cause cultural and ecological harm that will be very difficult if not impossible to reverse. Investment in alternative energy sources should be prioritized for all of Alaska.

The Biden administration is taking incredible steps to acknowledge past harms done to Native communities and should continue on that path. However, the political battle over "energy security" has caused slowing of investments into renewable energy and has caused the administration to slow its opposition to domestic and regional exploration of oil as a "safe" and "clean" source of energy. This is a false narrative in the mid-to-long term being led by political and economic entities focused on maximum economic return and not on carbon reduction.

Valuing and uplifting opposition voices in the deeply conservative political world of Alaska should be a priority in guiding the management of public lands in Alaska. Opposition voices are often overshadowed by the political structure that guides Alaska internally and externally.

## **SALMONSTATE - Tim Bristol**

What are your organization's top three Alaska priorities for the Department of the Interior to address before the end of President Biden's first term?

**1. What are your organization's top three Alaska priorities for the Department of the Interior to address before the end of President Biden's first term?**

- **BLM D-1 Lands.** The Department of the Interior has a unique opportunity to chart a new course for 50 million acres of BLM managed Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act 17(d)(1) withdrawn lands in Alaska. By undertaking a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS), BLM can broadly evaluate potential impacts to D-1 lands that climate change and future mineral development may have on critical fish and wildlife habitat, landscape connectivity, subsistence resources, and cultural and traditional uses of those lands. This represents one of the greatest land conservation opportunities in the United States.
- **Bristol Bay Federal Protection.** The 1.1 million acres of unprotected BLM lands in Bristol Bay are an opportunity for the agency to create durable protections for the most productive wild salmon producing basin on Earth. As such, we encourage you to work in partnership with EPA to develop a Final Determination under Clean Water Act § 404(c) to prohibit dredge and fill from hardrock mining development in the headwaters of Bristol Bay
- **Bering Sea Western Interior Resource Management Plan Amendment.** DOI should prioritize a plan amendment to re-establish tribally nominated and previously established Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and prioritize co-management within the planning area consistent with what Alaska Native Tribes in the region have proposed.

**2. Thinking about your conservation priorities, is there anything that the DOI team should know about, but might not?**

BLM should immediately undertake a state-wide PEIS on all BLM D-1 lands. This process will be based on climate science that is expected to further support a precautionary approach and creates durability in future administrations. This broad programmatic review complements and can incorporate by reference any decision-making related to the ongoing processes. It would also allow BLM to establish a new precautionary management policy, recommendations to retain the D-1 withdrawals, new management directives, and a co-stewardship framework for D-1 lands in Alaska. In addition, a PEIS based on climate science that is expected to further support a precautionary approach, creates legal and political hurdles that



make it difficult for future administrations to ignore when revising or amending the underlying resource management plans. The very nature of a PEIS facilitates meaningful and collaborative public engagement. More importantly, due to the high use of D-1 lands by Alaska Native Tribes, the DOI has the opportunity to demonstrate a true commitment to honoring Nation-to-Nation relationships through Tribal consultation and designing a co-stewardship framework. Finally, a PEIS can be completed before the end of the Biden Administration's first term and meet many of the social justice, conservation, and political goals of the Department.

## **THEODORE ROOSEVELT CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP - Jen Leahy**

What are your organization's top three Alaska priorities for the Department of the Interior to address before the end of President Biden's first term?

**1. The timely completion of revisions to the BLM's Central Yukon Resource**

**Management Plan:** The Central Yukon RMP will guide the management of more than 13.3 million acres of BLM-managed land for the next 15-20 years. It is critical that the final plan support the extraordinary wildlife, recreation and subsistence values that fuel local communities in this remote region of northern Alaska.

TRCP requests that the BLM move forward in Spring 2022 with the development of a proposed RMP that is meaningfully modified from the preferred alternative (C2) in the draft. In lieu of the agency's preferred alternative, we support Alternative B with some modifications, such as retaining PLO 5150 and the d-1 lands within the planning area. We also support additional safeguards for important species like caribou and Dall sheep.

**2. Durable conservation safeguards for ANCSA d-1 lands:** One of the nation's most significant conservation opportunities is providing comprehensive and durable safeguards to more than 50 million acres across Alaska. These lands, known collectively as the ANCSA d-1 withdrawals, have been off-limits to land selections and mineral entry since the 1970s due to their unique values. While BLM is currently engaged in a process to transfer Alaska Native Vietnam Veteran allotment selections and evaluate Public Land Orders (PLOs) 7899-7903 (28 million acres at issue), it also has an opportunity to comprehensively address the value of the total 50 million acres of BLM d-1 lands across the state.

One specific tool we'd encourage the administration to explore is a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS), which would allow BLM to broadly evaluate potential impacts to d-1 lands that climate change and future mineral development may have on critical fish and wildlife habitat, subsistence resources, and cultural and traditional uses of those lands.

**3. Increased funding to study wildlife migration corridors for key species in**

**Alaska, particularly caribou:** We thank Secretary Haaland for DOI's recent commitment to continue with S.O. 3362 implementation, and encourage DOI to expand their migration work to additional species and geographies. Changes in caribou migration—likely resulting from climate change—are resulting in increasing conflict between user groups. Additional research on these changes could inform more proactive management decisions, benefitting subsistence and recreational hunters alike.

## THE NATURE CONSERVANCY ALASKA - Anne Kelly

*What are your organization's top three Alaska priorities for the Department of the Interior to address before the end of President Biden's first term?*

1. Lay the groundwork for co-management so that it can be pursued regardless of administration, for example, collaborative dialogue for the future of the NPR-A, focused on the topics of shared governance, climate change resilience, and exchange opportunities for rights holders and stakeholders.
2. Meaningful revision of the mining law of 1872, moving away from using the tool of westward expansion / colonization towards a thoughtful approach to minerals management that incorporates local communities and their priorities.
3. Initiate permanent protection legislation for Bristol Bay.

*Thinking beyond your organization's immediate priorities, what are your organization's long-term visions for sustainable management of Alaska's federal public lands? Are there any key actionable steps toward reaching that goal that you would like to share?*

- Co-management. One way to move in this direction is to not just provide the authority to co-manage, but ensure that co-management authorities include resources (planning, financial, etc.) to be implemented. Consider use of FLPMA tools inspired by Lower 48 experience, such as Recreation and Public Purposes Act leases/patents, cooperative management agreements, and Tribal compacting.
- More robust incorporation of climate change and climate resilience considerations into permitting processes and values around which decisions are made on public lands.
- Leverage National Fish Habitat Partnership to support research and resilience work around dwindling salmon populations - with a focus on revitalizing stocks specifically for subsistence and traditional use purposes, not exclusively commercial/sport fishing. Coordination with USDA/NRCS Tribal Conservation District program and other relevant agencies could be helpful.

*Thinking about your conservation priorities, is there anything that the DOI team should know about, but might not? (e.g. political dynamics, cultural considerations, creative administrative solutions, etc.)*

- There are recent successes in robust community-led co-management projects, including the Sustainable Southeast Partnership, the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy, and the Seacoast Trust. Each of these is an example of community-based cooperation between tribes, government agencies, NGOs, and industry to build durable, sustainable co-management for conservation and community power and resilience.

## **THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY - Karlin Itchoak**

What are your organization's top three Alaska priorities for the Department of the Interior to address before the end of President Biden's first term?

[Include up to two additional prompts of your choice from the list above]

### **TWS Alaska top priorities:**

#### **Protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge & the Coastal Plain**

- o The oil and gas industry's efforts to exploit the crisis in Ukraine to increase their profits is a powerful reminder that an economy tied to fossil fuels is unstable.
- o The Arctic is warming two to four times as fast as the rest of the planet. With villages eroding into the sea; permafrost melt making infrastructure insecure; and Indigenous food sources disappearing, the Interior Department must rapidly reduce fossil-fuel production on Alaska's public lands.
- o This is a pivotal moment: Restoring protections for the Arctic Refuge is a climate imperative and a matter of human rights for the Indigenous communities who depend on a clean Arctic environment and abundant natural food sources to feed families and sustain their culture. We ask that you work to ensure a climate package with protections for the Arctic Refuge gets across the finish line, while also taking action to cancel the leases unlawfully issued by the previous administration and ensuring the ongoing supplemental environmental impact statement fully considers and mitigates climate, subsistence, and other devastating impacts of an oil and gas program.

#### **Address the climate and extinction crisis**

- Making public lands a solution to the climate and extinction crises by securing a resilient, continental network of landscapes and eliminating climate-changing emissions.
- We hope to catalyze the creation of a network of landscapes that will sustain human well-being and ecological integrity using science, traditional Indigenous knowledge and community engagement.
- We are leading a campaign to protect 30 percent of America's lands and waters to position the U.S. as a leader in the global 30X30 initiative.

- We are working to help transform federal land management (more co-management, etc.).
- DOI should impose a net zero GHG emissions mandate on fossil fuel development (with the target of achieving net zero GHG emissions by 2030 and no fossil fuel development by 2050) and should implement the framework in a manner consistent with conserving at least 30 percent of U.S. lands and waters by 2030, minimizing impacts on environmental justice communities, the Administration's Justice40 initiative, and ensuring a just and equitable transition for those dependent on fossil fuel jobs and revenue.

**We are striving for a more inclusive and equitable conservation**

- o Transform conservation policy and practice so all people benefit equitably from public lands. One way we are doing that in Alaska is with the Imago Initiative.

**Imago Initiative: Indigenous-Led Conservation & Healing**

- o Through our Imago Initiative TWS is pursuing a new, Indigenous approach to public land protection in the Arctic Refuge that respects Indigenous people's rights, sovereignty, and self-determination. One that would contribute to a just and sustainable rural economy.
- o We have an opportunity to reimagine conservation, promote reconciliation, address the most serious threats to the public lands by co-creating new landscape protections that recognize Indigenous peoples' conservation contributions and rights, rather than historically exclusionary and uninhabited national parks and wilderness areas.
- o Pursuing this initiative requires TWS acknowledging past mistakes, committing to reconcile disparities, and remaining open to new models of conservation.
- o We invite you to join us for place-based dialogues to re-imagine land protections from an Indigenous lens. Specifically, you and your staff are invited to join conservation, Indigenous and agency partners on our 5th IMAGO trip into the Arctic Refuge this summer from June 25th - July 2nd at Grasser's Airstrip for place-based dialogue, healing ceremony, and centering Indigenous-led conservation.

## **Western Arctic**

### Topline:

- Despite its unfortunate name, the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska is a thriving landscape and traditional homeland for a number of Alaska Native communities that depend on resources like the Western Arctic Caribou Herd.
- It is also the next major front in our country's effort to address the climate crisis on our nation's public lands. The currently proposed massive Willow project alone will set back much of the progress your agency is pursuing to address climate emissions - it must not move forward. More holistically, there should be an effort to update the management of the Reserve to address climate, conservation, and communities through regulatory reform.

### Detailed re: Willow:

- ConocoPhillips' Willow project in the Reserve is the single biggest oil and gas project proposed on public lands and is a huge threat to the climate. Allowing Willow to move forward would be a major setback to this administration's commitments to address the climate crisis and environmental justice issues. Willow would negate many of the gains this administration hopes to achieve through renewable energy projects and other measures.
- We believe a close analysis of this project will indicate it should not be allowed to move forward.

### Detailed re: Management of the Reserve:

- We appreciate this administration taking an important first step toward protecting the Reserve by reinstating the 2013 Integrated Activity Plan.
- There are still significant impacts from oil and gas in the Reserve, even under that 2013 management plan.
- We would like Interior to implement a new management direction in the Reserve focused on meeting climate goals and protecting wildlife habitat and biodiversity, leaving a legacy that lasts by making these protections more durable. Interior can accomplish this through the adoption of new regulations, and we urge the Department to move quickly to begin a rulemaking that ensures management of the Western Arctic protects the incredible conservation values of the area.
- The Biden administration committed to government-to-government consultation with federally recognized tribal governments. In line with that commitment, BLM should adopt new regulations that fully addresses and minimizes the full suite of cultural, historical, ecological, spiritual, and other impacts of an oil and gas leasing program on Indigenous peoples. New regulations should recognize and account for past Indigenous land ownership, past and current Indigenous land stewardship, and historical and present

injustices towards Indigenous peoples. New regs should fully incorporate and create space for traditional knowledge, our Indigenous worldviews, and future shared stewardship by Indigenous peoples.

- o Climate: Similarly, regulations can help make headway on our collective commitment to making progress on combating climate change. You know as well as we do of the latest on this front, with the groundbreaking reports from the IEA and IPCC coming out recently highlighting what must be done to keep warming to under 1.5C... warming that, we might add, is happening even more extreme in this region. The Reserve should be managed in a way that helps, and doesn't hinder, our work to reach this climate imperative. For the people of the region and the globe alike, we need to define a pathway that's credible... and regulations can define a pathway for how Alaska is part of the solution.[AM1]

- o The agency has broad authority to draw on in the Reserve to protect surface resources and areas. FLPMA and the NPRPA both provide the Secretary with the authority to adopt regulations to implement their protective standards, as well as to regulate oil and gas activities. So the Department is on solid legal ground in promulgating regulations that allow management of the Reserve to be a key part of the administration's climate, biodiversity, and environmental justice solutions. Our suggestions could be implemented through the rulemaking process that the administration has already begun, to address leasing throughout the nation's public lands.

### **Izembek**

- o Developing a road through this wild and sensitive wetlands area would irreparably damage the wilderness values of the area and set a dangerous precedent in Alaska and beyond.

- o The road would have major negative effects on a range of species dependent on the Izembek Lagoons complex, which provides critical subsistence resources.

- o We support the sovereignty and self-determination of the Federally recognized Tribal governments; however, we are opposed to the proposed road through a designated Wilderness area and national wildlife refuge.

- o Although, we recognize the important issues of protecting the health and safety of the communities impacted here, we also recognize that there are viable alternatives in this situation that are not contrary to protecting the wilderness and subsistence values.

- o If we are going to build a road for this isolated rural Native community to access health care, what about the hundreds of other rural Native villages that have no road access to adequate health care? Will we provide them with roads also?
- o Permitting this road through Wilderness will set a dangerous precedent contrary to the need to protect the land and subsistence resources for the next seven generations.



## **TROUT UNLIMITED - Nelli Williams**

Trout Unlimited works with local communities, Tribes, agencies, anglers, hunters and businesses throughout Alaska to advance fish habitat conservation and restoration projects and priorities. The Department of Interior is an important partner in this effort and these are the priority issues we would love to work with you on:

### **Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) implementation**

- We were thrilled to see the Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) initial \$38 million investment in priority projects and the recently announced America the Beautiful Challenge. While many people think of Alaska as a pristine landscape with ample and healthy fish and wildlife habitat, which is true in many places, past mining, industrial logging and road building has impacted an alarmingly large amount of Alaska. Alaska is also uniquely vulnerable to impacts from climate change due to our northern latitude and remote communities. While we support and applaud each of the three Alaska projects the FWS has identified so far, we also encourage the Department and its agencies to not automatically rule out projects benefiting resident fish. For example, FWS policy will only support fish passage projects in Alaska that benefit salmon, yet there are numerous barriers in Alaska that block hundreds of miles of habitat for highly migratory fish like rainbow trout, coastal cutthroat trout, char and grayling and would be comparatively inexpensive to address.
- We know the Department and its agencies have significant capacity challenges and understand that its internal systems are stretched thin, but we urge the Department to use all the tools at its disposal. The more quickly the Department can work with partners to get funding to the ground, the more quickly we can demonstrate success, secure a strong return on early investments, contribute to building more regenerative economies in Alaska through local jobs in sustainable industries, and build momentum for a bright, equitable and sustainable future for Alaska's communities.
- Through the unique role the Fish and Wildlife Service plays, we would love to see stronger coordination with other agencies to align investments across various agencies and departments to have even a greater impact on a landscape scale. We are eager to step in to help wherever we can.

### **Restoring the Eklutna River**

- *Idlughet Qayeht'ana*, The Native Village of Eklutna, is the oldest known permanent settlement of the Dena'ina Eklutna people, located near the mouth of the Eklutna River (just 30 miles north of Anchorage). In 1929, a dam was built on the river by the Anchorage Light and Power Company that completely blocked all salmon migration. In 1955, the Eklutna Hydropower Project built a second dam upstream, creating another barrier and completely diverting 100% of the water in the river through a powerplant into an adjacent watershed. The Native Village of Eklutna, Eklutna Inc.,

The Conservation Fund, Trout Unlimited and numerous other groups worked together to remove the lower dam in 2018. We're now working together to get water back into the river and create fish passage past the upstream dam.

- The hydropower project and upstream dam are exempt from FERC and are managed under a 1991 mitigation agreement between the FWS, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the State of Alaska, and the utilities that operate the facility. The Native Village of Eklutna has not been allowed to be a party to the agreement. The 1991 agreement requires the utilities to develop and implement various study plans that lead toward developing a mitigation plan by 2024 and fully implementing the mitigation plan by 2027. The utilities are currently refusing to conduct studies requested by NMFS, the Native Village of Eklutna, and TU, and are signaling an intent to adopt inadequate mitigation measures. As party to the 1991 Agreement, we encourage the FWS to hold the utilities to a higher standard, to ensure the Native Village of Eklutna has an equitable seat at the table, and ultimately require the utilities to provide fish passage and adequate water flow to support fish, wildlife and the Native Village of Eklutna.

## **Mining in Bristol Bay**

- The Bristol Bay region is a world-class fishery that supports vibrant local communities, traditional cultures, a valuable commercial fishery, and attracts anglers from all across the globe. Its many rivers, streams, and lakes are largely in-tact, but remain threatened by large-scale mining development.
- We thank the FWS staff for aggressively engaging in the Army Corps of Engineers' review of the permit application for the proposed Pebble mine, including through the use of 404(q) of the Clean Water Act. We encourage the Department to support future long-term protections for the Bristol Bay region through the EPA's use of 404(c) of the Clean Water Act, Congressional legislation, and mineral withdrawals on BLM lands.

## **Fish Habitat Partnerships**

- TU is proud to be contributing to every Fish Habitat Partnership working in Alaska and is the fiscal sponsor of two Alaska-based partnerships. These partnerships are essential to coordinating across agencies, with Tribes and local communities, and with other NGOs.
- We encourage the Department to continue prioritizing these partnerships to engage local communities and find alignment among the various stakeholders to improve the protection and restoration of important fish habitat across landscapes.

## **WILD SALMON CENTER - Emily Anderson**

### **1. What are your organization's top three Alaska priorities for the Department of the Interior to address before the end of President Biden's first term?**

Wild Salmon Center is dedicated to promoting the conservation and sustainable use of wild salmon stronghold ecosystems across the Pacific Rim. Protecting salmon strongholds not only supports the communities and livelihoods that depend on thriving salmon populations but it also conserves large natural landscapes that sequester carbon to advance strategies that combat climate change. In Alaska, undeveloped federal lands offer some of the greatest carbon-absorbing ecosystems left in the United States. For those reasons, our top priorities in Alaska include:

- **BLM D-1 Lands.** The Department of the Interior has a unique opportunity to comprehensively address the value of the 50 million acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) managed Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act 17(d)(1) withdrawn lands (D-1 lands) in Alaska that maintains critical protections for D-1 lands and increases the durability of those protections over time. By undertaking a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS), BLM can broadly evaluate potential impacts to D-1 lands that climate change and future mineral development may have on critical fish and wildlife habitat, landscape connectivity, subsistence resources, and cultural and traditional uses of those lands. This action would also allow BLM to create a new management policy, management directives and a co-stewardship framework for how D-1 lands are managed in the future. This represents one of the greatest land conservation opportunities in the United States.
- **Bristol Bay Protection.** We encourage the Department of the Interior to support efforts by the Environmental Protection Agency to finalize a Clean Water Act 404(c) determination to prohibit mining and the discharge of dredge and fill materials into the headwaters of Bristol Bay. We also urge BLM to maintain ANCSA D-1 withdrawals in the greater Bristol Bay watershed.
- **Bering Sea Western Interior Resource Management Plan.** We encourage the BLM to prioritize a plan amendment for the BSWI RMP. The amendment should include reestablishing Areas of Critical Environmental Concern consistent with Alaska Native tribal requests.

### **2. Thinking about your conservation priorities, is there anything that the DOI team should know about, but might not?**

#### **Urgency to Change Current BLM D-1 Lands Recommendations**

Without action from this administration to set forth a new policy and justification to maintain protections on BLM D-1 lands, future administrations are likely to lift the D-1 withdrawals based on previous recommendations. In 2006, BLM submitted a report to Congress

required by the Alaska Land Transfer Acceleration Act recommending that all but 6.7 million acres of D-1 withdrawals be lifted. Subsequently, BLM revised or amended six resource management plans (RMPs) and made recommendations to revoke over 46 million acres of D-1 land withdrawals in an effort to open these lands to mineral development.<sup>[1]</sup> In making the recommendations, BLM failed to analyze how mineral development could exacerbate the impacts of climate change, fragment landscapes, and jeopardize the resiliency and sustainability of natural resources and public lands in the future. Undertaking a PEIS can create the legal and scientific justification for reversing the previous recommendations and supporting a new policy to maintain protections.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Revised RMPs include: East Alaska (2007), Bay (2008), Ring of Fire (2008), Kobuk-Seward Peninsula (2008), Eastern Interior (2017) and Bering Sea-Western Interior (2021).

**From:** [Kay Brown](#)  
**To:** [Thiele, Raina D](#)  
**Cc:** [Karlin Itchoak](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] follow up remarks  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 30, 2021 3:37:33 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[Haaland final notes.docx](#)

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Hi Raina. That was an inspiring gathering today. Thanks for including me.

I revised my remarks a bit so wanted to share my final version of notes. Feel free to lift and use any of this if useful.

I appreciated the Secretary's closing remarks and couldn't agree more re: increasing the volume and effectiveness of our voices.

Best,

Kay

Kay Brown

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Thank you, Secretary Haaland, for all you are doing to lead on climate and environmental justice in our country and internationally. It is an honor to speak with you.

I'm Kay Brown, Arctic policy director for Pacific Environment. I'm calling from Denaina lands now known as Anchorage. I'm a former state legislator and former director of oil and gas for the Alaska Department of Natural Resources.

Thank you so much for this opportunity to discuss conservation priorities. I hope you will share with us, not only today but on an ongoing basis, how we can help you move forward your top policy initiatives.

The most urgent environmental priority for Alaska and the Arctic is to slow the warming and transition off fossil fuels as rapidly as possible.

Alaskans are ready, eager and working to end state's reliance on fossil fuels and to accelerate clean energy production, usage, and export.

The Alaska Climate Alliance has commissioned a report by the CADMUS consulting group on renewable energy job potential in Alaska and it's coming out soon.

The state's vast renewable energy resources have the potential to create far more local jobs in the renewable energy sector than we have now in oil and gas. Renewable energy development can also bring down high energy costs which are a problem throughout our state.

Alaska's renewable resource potential, especially wind, is enormous. – development of renewables could help catalyze a green fuels export industry making fuels such as hydrogen and ammonia, which are needed to decarbonize shipping and aviation.

Large-scale green energy export projects are being investigated now in the Aleutian Islands and in Cook Inlet.

New federal resources to prove up and develop geothermal, tidal/wave and on/offshore wind can help jump start the process. We anticipate that money in

the federal infrastructure bill and the Build Back Better Act will spark and encourage this activity.

As you continue developing the federal offshore wind program, we'd like to see offerings in Alaska added to the schedule. We also encourage DOI to support coastal/offshore green hydrogen production and storage for the transpacific ocean shipping trade route.

Renewable energy development is part of an overall positive economic vision for Alaska – we are launching a campaign to help persuade Alaskans that we can have a prosperous economy without o/g.

We encourage DOI focus on implementing the next steps in the TRANSITION off fossil fuels - EMPHASIZING clean renewable energy and STOPPING fossil fuel subsidies (while navigating the treacherous waters of high gasoline prices).

As part of the transition off fossil fuels, DOI should stop issuing new oil and gas leases and cancel Lease Sale 258 (offshore lower Cook Inlet).

As far as existing leases, DOI should use every possible legal mechanism to stop new development such as the Willow project in NPRA. (currently stopped by court action, which Interior did not appeal; will get an environmental do-over)

These actions are urgent because climate is a code red emergency. A majority of the oil/gas and coal already discovered must stay in the ground to have any hope of limiting the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Why is the time right for this? New Indigenous leaders are emerging – in FAI, Native Movement, Native Peoples Action, the Just Transition Collective Alaska, which started the Alaska Climate Alliance - they believe it's time for their communities to change. We are working to empower them, to support them, so they can successfully advocate within their community and external stakeholders and not be overwhelmed by corporate interests. Alaskans are on the front line of the melt, particularly rural and subsistence-dependent communities. It's not enough to keep taking the benefits of oil and ignoring the climate destruction.

I'd like to now turn the floor over to one of those rising leaders, Nauri Toler of native movement.



RE: Open FOIA Requests

Thiele, Raina D <raina\_thiele@ios.doi.gov>

Mon 11/28/2022 2:27 PM  
To: OS, OS FOIA <osfoia@ios.doi.gov>  
Cc: Monson, Lesia <Lesia\_Monson@ios.doi.gov>  
Hi Tracy,

Please see responsive documents attached and below.

MICROSOFT TEAMS CONTENT:

[5/18 4:06 PM] Schwartz, Melissa A

"Due to lack of industry interest in leasing in the area, the Department will not move forward with the proposed Cook Inlet OCS oil and gas lease sale 258."

Here are online resources that track the history of lack of interest in Cook Inlet:

- History on Cook Inlet: <https://www.boem.gov/oil-gas-energy/leasing/sale-258-status-update>
- Lease 258 process: <https://www.boem.gov/oil-gas-energy/leasing/lease-sale-258>

Sale 258 Status Update | Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

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**From:** Jolivette, Tracy L <tracy\_jolivette@ios.doi.gov> **On Behalf Of** OS, OS FOIA  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 17, 2022 4:09 PM  
**To:** Thiele, Raina D <raina\_thiele@ios.doi.gov>  
**Cc:** Monson, Lesia <Lesia\_Monson@ios.doi.gov>  
**Subject:** Open FOIA Requests

Good Afternoon, Raina,

I am touching bases to see how you are doing on your open FOIA request. If there is anything Lesia or I can do to assist you, please let us know.

Request Number	Brief summary	Date	Notes
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		Tasked	
2022-003693	Lease on Gulf of Mexico and Alaska Cook  <a href="#">DOI-OS-2022-003693</a>	5/16/22	

Thank you,

Tracy Jolivet

--

Department of the Interior  
Office of the Secretary, FOIA Office  
1849 C Street, NW, MS-7328  
Washington, D.C. 20240  
[os\\_foia@ios.doi.gov](mailto:os_foia@ios.doi.gov)  
(202) 513-0765 - phone  
(202) 219-2374 - fax

**From:** [Schwartz, Melissa A](#)  
**To:** [Haaland, Secretary](#); [Taylor, Rachael S](#); [Daniel-Davis, Laura E](#); [Beaudreau, Tommy P](#); [Thiele, Raina D](#)  
**Subject:** AK Tribal leader oped re: Lease Sale 258  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 6:31:16 PM

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<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/02/16/waters-around-our-alaskan-village-give-us-life-dont-sell-them-oil-drillers/>

**From:** [Newland, Bryan](#)  
**To:** [Thiele, Raina D](#); [Petoskey, Rose N](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: [EXTERNAL] Washington Post op ed opposing Cook Inlet Lease Sale 258  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 1:28:58 PM

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**Bryan Newland**

Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs  
U.S. Department of the Interior

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**From:** marilynheiman@icloud.com <marilynheiman@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 16, 2022 1:33 PM  
**To:** Newland, Bryan <bryan\_newland@ios.doi.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Washington Post op ed opposing Cook Inlet Lease Sale 258

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Dear Bryan-

On Chief Kvasnikoff's behalf, I am sending you a link to his OpEd about Cook Inlet Lease Sale 258, which was published in the Washington Post today: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/02/16/waters-around-our-alaskan-village-give-us-life-dont-sell-them-oil-drillers/>.

Thank you for all that you are doing to support environmental justice and protection of our tribes. It is so important that you are there at this historic time! Thank you!!

Marilyn

Marilyn Heiman  
[Marilynheiman@icloud.com](mailto:Marilynheiman@icloud.com)  
206-321-1834  
Pronouns: she/her

**From:** [Monson, Lesia](#)  
**To:** [Landa, Mackenzie \(Kenzie\)](#); [Thiele, Raina D](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: [EXTERNAL] Conservation Talking Points  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 14, 2021 9:15:34 PM  
**Attachments:** [Alaska Conservation Roundtable with Deputy Secretary Tommy Beaudreau 12.14.2021.pdf](#)

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Karlin is requesting we all delete the previous version he sent (and I forwarded to you) without opening it.

Use this doc for tomorrow's meeting.

~ Lesia

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**From:** Karlin Itchoak <Karlin\_Itchoak@twos.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 14, 2021 5:55 PM  
**To:** Monson, Lesia  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Conservation Talking Points

**This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.**

Hi Lesia,

Please use the attached copy and kindly delete the prior version without opening.

Thank you!

Karlin

**Karlin Nageak Itchoak**  
Alaska State Director  
**The Wilderness Society**  
ph 907 290-2871 | cell 907 297-9903

I [acknowledge](#) that I live and work on traditional Dena'ina Elnena (Country), home to members of the Eklutna (Eydlughet) and Knik (K'enakatnu) tribes

## Disclaimer

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**Re: Alaska Conservation Roundtable with Deputy Secretary Tommy  
Beaudreau**

**Wednesday, December 15th, 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. (AKT)**

**Location: USFWS, 1011 Tudor Road**

**Presentations (3 mins. Each):**

- **[DOI Opening: Deputy Secretary Tommy Beaudreau]**
- **Presentations (presenters/guest):**
  - Natalie Dawson, Audubon- Alaska State Office
  - Nauri Toler, Native Movement
  - Nicole Whittington-Evans, Defenders of Wildlife
  - Scott Fogarty, Northern Center
  - Ayyu Qassataq, First Alaskans Institute
  - Leanna Heffner, Alaska Conservation Foundation
  - Andy Moderow, Alaska Wilderness League
  - Kay Brown, Pacific Environment
  - Karlin Itchoak, The Wilderness Society
- **Q & A/Dialogue**
- **[Closing: Deputy Secretary Tommy Beaudreau]**

**Opening Remarks (written only)**

Deputy Secretary Beaudreau, thank you for inviting us to meet with you today.

Alaska conservation goals and priorities can be in alignment with DOI's priorities: climate, biodiversity and centering equity and environmental justice from the rainforested coast of Southeast Alaska to the Arctic wetlands and estuaries on the edge of the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas. Many of us applaud the Biden administration's support of increasing renewable energy on public lands; strengthening government-to-government relationships with sovereign Tribal nations; and working to conserve at least 30% each of our lands and waters by the year 2030 as laid out in the America the Beautiful Initiative.

Today we will each spend a few minutes introducing ourselves and our organizations, and look forward to a dialogue with you about how to work together to advance our mutual priorities.

I'll start us off. My name is Natalie Dawson. I live in the traditional lands of the Jilkaat and Jilkoot Kwan, Lingit Ani, in Southeast Alaska and work as the executive director of Audubon Alaska and a vice president for the National Audubon Society. We work across Alaska to prioritize protecting important places for birds and people in the face of climate change. We work in places and with federal policies and look forward to hearing from you about ways we can work together in our priority landscapes like the Arctic, boreal forest, and nearshore estuaries in western and Southeast Alaska.

I'll now hand it over to my friend and colleague, Nauri.

## Nauri Toler, Environmental Justice Organizer, Native Movement

- Native Movement's major environmental concerns
  - Arctic oil and gas opposition
  - Opposed to the Ambler Road
  - Protecting the Tongass National Forest
- Thank you for suspending leases in the Refuge
- AIDEA is an AK public owned corporation who has invested in many publicly opposed extractive projects, including the Ambler road project which had significant local opposition
  - AIDEA has the majority of the tracts that were leased in ANWR
  - AIDEA is one of many entities that claim to have the support of the local indigenous people
- It is important to distinguish the difference between indigenous community members and indigenous owned corporations
- Lateral violence and intimidation
  - It is difficult for community members to speak out publicly against oil and gas development because of local intimidation, job discrimination and even violence
  - Many will speak at local meetings (on record) but are unwilling to speak to outside entities, especially the media
- Nuiqsut and NPRA
  - Nuiqsut (village of less than 500 residents) is surrounded by oil and gas infrastructure
  - Negative impacts include mold in fish, black bone marrow in caribou, changes in subsistence availability and access due to oil and gas development
  - Impacts to residents include increased respiratory illnesses and rare cancers and mental health problems
  - The BLM's own impact report on the Master Willow project includes exacerbating community members mental health and potentially increasing suicide vulnerability
  - The Master Willow project involves more oil and gas development further surrounding the village of Nuiqsut
  - Local comments showed high concern of allowing further damage without correcting current known damages or a plan to prevent repeat practices
- Kaktovik and ANWR
  - Plans to develop in the Arctic Refuge would almost certainly mirror those issues onto Alaskan Inupiaq community
  - With the added sensitivity of the coastal plain and the reliance of the major caribou herd, the Porcupine Caribou Herd on which Inupiaq and Gwich'in communities rely on
- Understanding alternatives
  - Move perceived and actual reliance away from oil and gas in communities
  - Indigenous land management
    - Renewable energies in the arctic
      - Wind and solar energy in Kotzebue
      - Solar project in Canadian village

- o Eco-tourism example from Kaktovik (tour guiding, river rafting etc.)
- o Opportunity for agencies like AIDEA to invest in just transition endeavors and indigenous led solutions

## Nicole Whittington-Evans, Alaska Program Director, Defenders of Wildlife

**Speaking Part:** Thank you for making the time to meet with us today. My name is Nicole Whittington-Evans and I am the Alaska Program Director for Defenders of Wildlife. Defenders seeks to protect wildlife in its natural diversity and our Alaska priorities focus on addressing the climate and biodiversity crises and the inequities that exist and are caused by these looming threats. In the document provided to you prior to this meeting, we've identified Alaskan priorities that provide approaches for the Department to address climate, biodiversity and equity that focus on the National Wildlife Refuge System and Alaska's Refuges, Polar Bears, the National Petroleum Reserve - Alaska and Cook Inlet.

I want to take a moment now to highlight the importance of the National Wildlife Refuge System and the need to maintain the integrity of Alaska's refuges for climate mitigation, biodiversity, subsistence and community and cultural health. ANILCA identified a comprehensive conservation frame for Alaska refuges which ought to be upheld. As you know, the greatest threats to Alaska refuges include: oil and gas development in the Arctic Refuge and the proposed road through Izembek. It is imperative that we protect polar bear critical habitat Arctic-wide, but also particularly in the Arctic Refuge coastal plain in order to avoid the future extinction of the Southern Beaufort Sea population of polar bears and to protect a healthy Arctic and its communities. I have brought two maps to share with you today that highlight the impacts of oil and gas activities to polar bear critical habitat across the Arctic and in the refuge, along with our comments on the Polar Bear 5-Year Status Review.

With respect to Izembek Refuge, if upheld by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, the Trump administration's land exchange would be precedent-setting and a significant threat for legal and policy reasons to the refuge and other Alaska refuges and Conservation System Units.. The recently passed Infrastructure bill provides alternative solutions to a road between King Cove and Cold Bay, such as through a ferry and new dock and breakwater for Cold Bay, and we urge the administration to pursue alternative transportation solutions between King Cove and Cold Bay. We would welcome further discussions with you on these and other priorities.

### **I. National Wildlife Refuge System**

- A. Maintaining the integrity of the National Wildlife Refuge System is critical for biodiversity protection, climate adaptation and for the protection of subsistence resources
- B. For Alaska's refuges, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) identified a comprehensive conservation frame for refuges (and all CSUs) which ought to be upheld - especially given relentless state efforts to develop or transfer ownership or management of lands out of the federal estate
- C. The greatest threats to Alaska refuges include:
  1. Oil and gas development in the Arctic Refuge



- a) Protecting the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge is a top priority for biodiversity, climate and specifically a multitude of wildlife species and for subsistence resources
  - b) Protection of polar bear critical habitat Arctic-wide and in the refuge from oil and gas development and other development threats, including proposed roads, is a top priority for Defenders
- 2. Another top threat to Alaska refuges includes the proposed road through Izembek Refuge wilderness and wetlands
  - a) Protecting designated wilderness and this conservation system unit as identified in ANILCA, which encompasses one of the most valuable wetlands complexes on the globe, is imperative for biodiversity and climate adaptation
  - b) Izembek also provides important subsistence resources that go much beyond its boundaries and are very important to western Alaska and Arctic indigenous communities
  - c) If upheld by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, the Trump administration's land exchange would be a significant threat for legal and policy reasons to the refuge and other Alaska refuges and Conservation System Units (CSU's), and it would be precedent-setting
  - d) The recently passed Infrastructure bill provides alternative solutions to a road between King Cove and Cold Bay, such as through support for a ferry and new dock and breakwater for Cold Bay
  - e) Also, the State's ROW request undercuts the comprehensive conservation frame for Alaska refuges in ANILCA and threatens resources important to indigenous communities, within and outside of refuge boundaries
  - f) The State (and prior administration's) approach to defining "inholdings" is inconsistent with ANILCA and needs to be addressed, such as in a regulation or Solicitor's Opinion

## **II. Polar bear recovery and critical habitat protection**

- A. Recovery of polar bears is critical to maintain biodiversity, healthy Arctic ecosystems, communities and cultural health
- B. The Southern Beaufort Sea polar bear population is one of the most imperiled on the globe
- C. Oil and gas development and other development threats are impacting critical habitat and need to be restricted
  - a. Defenders has developed two maps - one of the impacts of oil and gas development in polar bear critical habitat across the Arctic, and the other regarding oil activity impacts specific to the Arctic Refuge that we are sharing with you today
  - b. We have concerns regarding what at times seems to be a lax approach to approving polar bear takes, for example with the Beaufort Sea Incidental Take Regulation (ITR), which will remain in place for five years.

- i. The Service didn't consider the total impacts of five years of oil and gas activities on polar bears when it finalized the ITR, and also didn't consider alternatives or mitigation to help reduce impacts to bears, undermining protections that are mandated by the MMPA
  - ii. Also, Jade Inc. exploration is another current example of this lax approach, where FLIR surveys were scheduled in a window beginning before the public comment period has even closed on December 6<sup>th</sup> and ending shortly after, undermining the appearance of a meaningful public process
- D. Robust support by the Department is necessary to help reduce human – polar bear conflicts in Arctic communities
- E. Defenders also urges the Department to implement the Polar Bear Conservation Management Plan, or Polar Bear Recovery Plan, which hasn't yet meaningfully gotten off the ground (please see our comments for the Polar Bear 5-year Status Review that we are including today)
  - a. A Polar Bear Commissioner needs to be appointed, which is an inherited gap from the Trump administration

### **III. National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska (Reserve):**

- A. The Reserve needs a new management direction that protects the area's vital wildlife habitat and subsistence resources that would significantly reduce climate emissions from federal lands and help the administration to meet it's commitments to the Paris climate agreement
- B. The Reserve encompasses extraordinary wildlife habitat, including Polar bear critical habitat, and protection of this habitat and subsistence resources is necessary to help stem the biodiversity and climate crises
- C. The administration has an opportunity right now to revisit the Trump administration's Willow permit decision and chart a new, less impactful course that would result in reduced fossil fuel emissions and increased wildlife habitat and subsistence resource protection
- D. As groups have previously highlighted when meeting with you, the administration also should revise the Trump-era Integrated Activity Plan and consider promulgating new regulations for the area to shift the management focus of the Reserve and put in place more durable protections for its resources and the communities in and around the Reserve
- E. We would appreciate any thoughts you could share on where the administration is on their thinking about the ask for new regulations in the Reserve

### **IV. Cook Inlet Lease Sale 258**

- A. We urge the Department to choose the No Action alternative for Cook Inlet Lease Sale 258 and not allow another lease sale in Cook Inlet due to impacts to climate, biodiversity and the overall health of Cook Inlet
- B. The Cook Inlet Lease Sale 258 Draft EIS and its analyses are deficient for many reasons, including regarding impacts to climate, oil spills and critically endangered and failing Cook Inlet belugas and other ESA listed species

V. **Alaska-based Special Assistant to Secretary of Interior**

- A. Given the vast public lands and waters (approximately 60% of National Park Service lands and more than 70% of National Wildlife Refuge lands, etc.), high number of Alaska Native tribes (229 tribes, or 40% of U.S. tribes) and subsistence resources and other responsibilities under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior Department, we urge the Department to name an Alaska-based Special Assistant to the Secretary, similar to the structure that occurred under the Obama administration, which worked very well
- B. For over 45 years, through both Democratic and Republican administrations, there has been a full time DOI Special Assistant in Anchorage that has represented the administration in office and served as the “eyes and ears” for the Secretary’s Office
- C. An Alaska-based Special Assistant would provide increased access for Alaskans to the Department and could provide enhanced support, direction and communication for the Alaska Interior office

Scott Fogarty, Executive Director, Northern Center

- Good afternoon Madam Secretary. We thank you so very much for taking the time to host Alaska Indigenous and environmental organizations in order to understand the primary issues and work we are collectively and individually undertaking.
- My name is SF, he/him/his pronouns. Executive Director with the Northern Alaska Environmental Center.
- The Northern Alaska Environmental Center promotes conservation of the environment and sustainable resource stewardship in Interior and Arctic Alaska through advocacy and education.
- ***We acknowledge that we work throughout the unceded territories of the Indigenous Peoples of Alaska; that our office is located on the traditional territories of the Lower Tanana Dené Athabascan Peoples. We honor the ancestral and ongoing land and water stewardship and place-based knowledge of the peoples of these territories.***
- The Northern Center has been actively opposing oil and gas development in the Arctic and interior AK for the last ½ century.
- The Northern Center is involved in most if not all issues that have been mentioned, but we are also involved in mining issues in AK and want to highlight those here.
- We applaud the Biden Administration's initial efforts to address the climate crisis and move towards a clean energy transition and we would like to remind the Biden administration to focus on the Justice component of climate justice - specifically when it

comes to mining for rare earth metals and critical minerals related to electric vehicles and clean energy.

- · Alaskan's request that the Bureau of Land Management takes steps to strengthen Hardrock mining rules for example: Ensure that mining operations cannot adversely affect Treaty rights, including rights to fish, hunt, gather, or otherwise use public land;
- Regarding potential oil, gas, and mining development on the 50+ million acres of BLM D1 lands in Alaska: We would like to ask the administration to:
  - Consider placing a moratorium on any new public land orders to revoke D-1 withdrawals pending a review, Tribal consultation, and the creation of a policy that reflects Tribal input, updated administrative climate, and biodiversity policies, and Alaska Native subsistence goals, including extending the time by which lands become open to mineral entry for the Kobuk-Seward area.
  - Additionally, we ask that the administration opening the Central Yukon and the Bering Sea Western Interior management plans to approve the nearly 14 million acres of nominated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern particularly the 4 million acres nominated by tribes in the Bering Sea Western Interior area.
- The Northern Alaska Environmental Center stands in solidarity with the Tanana Chiefs Conference (a consortium of 37 federally recognized tribes) in requesting that the Biden administration revoke the Ambler Road right of way permit issued under the Trump Administration.
- The expedited NEPA review process in place under the previous administration led to multiple scientifically inadequate Environmental analyses for hardrock mines and supporting infrastructure, based on little more than conjecture.
- There is ongoing litigation with DOI due to the inadequacies of the environmental review process
- The EIS contains
  - little to no baseline water quality data or analysis, leading to virtually no data on which to base major sections of the potential impacts
  - Inadequate analysis of social and demographic impacts
  - there needs to be a return to the first steps of the permitting process under ANILCA, with a focus on doing the basic level of scientific analysis required of an impact assessment
- Proposed Donlin Mine
  - The EIS specifically states that mercury levels will breach state water quality standards, and yet a federal 404 permit was issued in tandem with the Record of Decision (Both by Army Corps issues but worth stating)

- o Federally recognized tribes have not been adequately consulted during any part of the process
  - o Need for a revocation of the 404 permit and a supplemental EIS
- Local issues and priorities include:
- Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority
- Watchdogging mining exploration in key recreational use areas in the interior
- The links between mining and intact landscapes and loss of biodiversity - impacts on subsistence, water pollution and the social fabric of communities. Also, access to legal, tech, communications and policy help so these communities can achieve free, prior consent. In addition to the "critical minerals" issues.
- Finally, In response to increasing demand for critical metals and rare earth minerals from both the State of Alaska and The Biden Administration, Alaska Conservation Foundation and several partners are hosting the Alaska Conference on Mining Impacts and Prevention on the land of the Dena'ina in Dgheyay Kaq now known as Girdwood, Alaska on March 16 - 18th. We intend to bring together 150-200 tribal leaders, community members, conservation advocates, and technical experts, to engage in and learn about preventing industrial-scale mining and associated activities as well as reforming practices and mitigating impacts in Alaska.
- **Indigenous Peoples: Just Transition to a regenerative economies and co-management**
  - o permanence/long-lasting protections that would come from Indigenous co-management,
  - o i.e.: no more political back-and-forth, but long term, stabilized solutions that support community health and wellness as well as protect the land
  - o Work directly with Indigenous led organizations specifically Sovereign Inupiat for a Living Arctic who is trying to restore balance in traditional ways to the North slope and Arctic.
  - o incorporating Indigenous management is a top priority because it is a path to long-term, stabilized solutions that benefit the people and the land -- across the Arctic and *all* public lands. I think we are all working towards advocating for Indigenous management in our program areas so it can apply to all of our work
- Thank you so very much again for your leadership and for taking time to meet with us all about these critical and very important environmental, social and cultural issues not just facing Alaskans but all peoples. Your inspiration guides us all as we continue to work to defend this special land and its peoples.

## Ayyu Qassataq, Vice President, First Alaskans Institute

### **Protecting Our Ways of Life - Policy Priorities**

One Pager focused on People and Policy Recommendations

Protecting Our Ways of Life (POWOL) Working Group was formed as a collaborative, statewide Alaska Native-led effort to address the enduring inequities and injustices of colonial management systems over ourselves, our homelands, and our Alaska Native ways of life (also currently known as *subsistence* in federal law).

### **People & Positions**

It is imperative that Alaska Native peoples fill high level roles in this and any Administration. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Name an Alaska Native Assistant Secretary, akin to the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs;
- Reinstate the Senior Tribal Advisors at the Secretarial level for every department and agency;
- Name an Alaska Native or Native American to fill the role of Assistant Administrator for Fisheries;
- Create a position that coordinates all Tribal Liaisons across different departments/agencies;
- Create at least two Alaska Tribal seats on the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council; and
- Establish and fund Alaska Native policy fellowships.

### **Short Term Immediate Action**

We ask that you support regulatory changes until legislative fixes can be accomplished, including the following:

- Fully restore, streamline, and expedite land into trust in Alaska;
- The DOI Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) and the State of Alaska MOA must include Tribal Consultation;
- Move the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) to the Secretarial level within DOI;
- Require Tribal input in Federal Subsistence Management Program Regional Advisory Councils (RACs);
- Expand Tribal representation on the FSB;
- FSB personnel and bonus evaluations must be based on ANILCA implementation and Tribal partner relations;
- Equally distributed Fisheries Research and Monitoring Program (FRMP) funding among all sovereigns;
- Create permanent funding for the Alaskan marine mammal and co-management organizations;
- Increase funding through the BIA for continued support of Tribal subsistence programs;
- Prohibit using Land and Water Conservation Funds to buy Native land unless for Tribal Government or ANCSA ownership;
- Ensure Tribes are treated as sovereigns in their application for any/all funding opportunities;
- Change the “Indian Country” definition to be inclusive of Native-owned lands;

- Implement and expand [DOI Secretarial Order 3342](#); and
- Require all senior leadership to take a racial equity and Alaska Native Governance & Protocols training.

#### **Mid-term (1-2 years)**

- Recognize and legally define Tribal Hunting, Fishing, Gathering Rights in federal law;
- Implement Title 4 of ISDEAA and Section 809 of ANILCA;
- Amend Title 8 in ANILCA to clarify Alaska Native peoples ability to hunt, fish and gather;
- Amend ANCSA 43 USC §1603 Section 4 (b) to restore aboriginal hunting and fishing rights;
- Ensure Alaska Native Tribes, and/or ANCs, the right of first refusal with disposal of land or resources;
- Support legislation to allocate and create a Protecting Our Ways of Life Council; and
- Expand Farm Bill language to apply to more subsistence related programs.

#### **Long-Term (2-3 years)**

- Remove P.L. 280 Status in Alaska.
- Compact with Tribes for management of all federal lands in Alaska, public safety and law enforcement.
- Create legislation that forever recognizes and protects Indigenous rights to hunting, fishing, gathering on their ancestral homelands.

[Leanna Heffner](#), Partnership Director with Northern Latitudes Partnerships;  
Network Officer for Alaska Conservation Foundation

Below are our top priority recommendations for the Department of Interior and other government partners:

- **1. Work with Indigenous peoples, local-level groups, and Canadian governments to establish sustained support for US-Canada transboundary conservation that spans across the border**
  - COMMIT Jointly commit through a formal agreement to transboundary conservation within an Ethical Space framework (including strong support for Indigenous-led conservation).
  - EMPOWER ADVISORY ENTITY Empower a high-level standing advisory entity (commission, roundtable, committee), under existing or new bi-national governance structure(s) to guide equitable and durable transboundary implementation of conservation commitments.
  - FUND Commit joint funding for transboundary conservation initiatives, Indigenous-led conservation (including Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas, and Indigenous Guardian programs), and other effective measures for transboundary conservation.

- Immediate term: Meet with an international task force (that includes the Northern Latitudes Partnerships) to follow-up on recommendations compiled in this draft document: <https://y2y.net/work/science/transboundary-dialogues/>
- **2. (Re)Build Support for Landscape-Level Conservation**
  - *Adopt the following recommendations to achieve the overarching goal of: A connected network of healthy and productive lands and waters that sustain natural and cultural resources to meet the challenges of the 21st century, including climate change, environmental justice, the loss of biodiversity, and sustained economic well-being, the nation needs a durable national framework for landscape conservation.*

#### POLICIES

- 1. Identify an entity within the Biden Administration to lead and coordinate federal governmental functions for the landscape conservation framework.
- 2. Issue an executive order, or take other executive action, directing federal agencies to bring together science and people through landscape conservation collaboratives.
- 3. Over the next few years, work with Congress on a strategy to codify a national landscape conservation network.
- 4. Create a national, multi-stakeholder landscape conservation council to maximize coordination, communication, and collaboration on landscape conservation policy and projects.
- 5. Integrate landscape conservation and national climate adaptation science efforts.

#### NECESSARY FUNDING AND RESOURCES

- 6. Work with Congress and the executive branch on joint sustainable funding strategies.
- 7. Provide national funding to support backbone capacity and coordination.
- 8. Seek new funding, and leverage existing funds, for landscape conservation efforts.
- 9. Ensure that funding supports a diverse array of organizations and stakeholders.
- 10. Revitalize investments previously made by the Obama-Biden administration in landscape Conservation.
- Refer to the following document for more information on these recommendations:  
<https://largelandscapes.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Landscape-Conservation-Framework.pdf>
- *Ensure that sufficient funding for the coordination of the former LCC partnerships that remain in Alaska, now Northern Latitudes Partnerships, is provided by the Fish and Wildlife Service.*



- These partnerships have been vital for providing support to Tribes and Native organizations by creating a collaborative table where they can come together with federal agencies--including all DOI agencies which are active participants.
  - They have also been vital at creating new capacity within Tribes and Indigenous Organizations (e.g., supporting new 9 positions just this year in 2021).
  - The LCCs in Alaska used to receive about \$2.5M annually for just the coordination of these partnerships and that congressional funding remains in the FWS budget in 2022.
  - Currently they only receive about 10% of that original number to support coordination and it's simply not enough to truly leverage the power of these partnerships.
  - They could be achieving so much more for Indigenous communities with renewed coordination support including for even more tribal participation in the partnerships.
- **3. BIA funding for Tribal Resilience projects is vital--yet we also need *additional climate science liaison support for the 229 Tribes in Alaska*.**
  - Right now there is one individual in Alaska funded by the Climate Adaptation Science Center (CASC--which is a USGS/UAF partnership).
  - Given the multi-regional nature of adaptation efforts, there should be *several of these positions* serving specific regions of Alaska.
  - Given what is expected to be a doubled budget for the CASCs nationally, we'd like to see some of that funding dedicated to more of these positions.
- **4. Invest in sustained support for Indigenous Guardians programs to grow & expand in Alaska (and beyond)**
  - Indigenous Guardians programs are expanding across Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and other regions of the world.
  - In our view, there is *no reason* that DOI agencies in Alaska like the Park Service, BLM, Fish and Wildlife couldn't be using this same model if they have willing Tribal partners in their regions--and increasingly we are seeing that interest based on the Guardians model from Tribes.
  - The Central Council of Tlingit & Haida is launching a Guardians program with the Forest Service in Southeast via a relatively simple 5 year cooperative agreement. We hope to see implementation of Guardians programs across Alaska and the US, with substantial support from DOI, USDA and other departments.
- **5. There are critical needs for further investments in training programs and other capacity building efforts to help *tribal members to be doing the environmental and adaptation work that serves their communities*.**
  - BIA and EPA's Indian General Assistance Program doing some of this but much more effort is needed,

- By drawing on the University of Alaska System, Alaska Pacific University and Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and support from DOI agencies, this type of programming could be developed.
- The Northern Latitudes Partnerships also works with these university programs, and again your DOI agencies, and would be happy to help map out what such an approach could look like.

### Andy Moderow, Alaska Director, Alaska Wilderness League

Thank you for the time today; with offices in Alaska and Washington DC, we are keenly interested in making certain federal policy is crafted and implemented with the needs of Alaskans and our nation alike in mind. We look forward to discussing the Arctic Refuge, the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, and how the America The Beautiful framework can provide benefits to Alaskans and the country alike.

### Kay Brown, Arctic Policy Director, Pacific Environment

- I'm Kay Brown, Arctic policy director for Pacific Environment. I'm based on Dena'ina lands now known as Anchorage. I'm a former state legislator and former Director of Oil and Gas for the Alaska Department of Natural Resources.
- The most urgent environmental priority for Alaska and the Arctic is to **slow the warming and transition off fossil fuels** as rapidly as possible.
- Alaskans are ready, eager and working to end the state's reliance on fossil fuels and to accelerate clean energy production, usage, and export.
- The state's **vast renewable energy resources** have the potential to **create as many or more local jobs in the renewable energy sector than we have now in oil and gas**. Renewable energy development can also **bring down high energy costs**.
- Development of renewables could help **catalyze a green fuels export industry** making fuels such as hydrogen and ammonia, which are needed to decarbonize shipping and aviation. Large-scale green energy export projects are being investigated now in the Aleutian Islands and in Cook Inlet.
- **New federal resources** to prove up and develop geothermal, tidal/wave and on/offshore wind can help jump start the process. Money in the federal infrastructure bill and BBBA will spark and encourage this activity.
- As you continue developing the federal **offshore wind program**, we'd like to see offerings in Alaska added to the schedule. We also encourage DOI to support **coastal/offshore green hydrogen production and storage for the transpacific ocean shipping trade route**.
- Renewable energy development is part of an overall positive economic vision for Alaska – we are launching a campaign to help persuade Alaskans that **we can have a prosperous economy beyond oil**.

- We encourage DOI to focus on implementing the next steps in the **TRANSITION off fossil fuels. Emphasize clean renewable energy and stop fossil fuel subsidies** (while navigating the treacherous waters of high gasoline prices).
- As part of the transition off fossil fuels, DOI should **stop issuing new oil and gas leases and cancel Lease Sale 258** (offshore lower Cook Inlet).
- As far as existing leases, DOI should use every possible legal mechanism to **stop new development such as the Willow** project in NPRA.
- These actions are urgent because **climate is a code red emergency**. A majority of the oil/gas and coal already discovered must stay in the ground to have any hope of limiting the global temperature rise to well below 2.0 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.
- What can we do to help you move forward your top policy initiatives?

### Karlin Itchoak, Alaska State Director, The Wilderness Society

TWS's priorities include addressing the climate and extinction crisis by making public lands a solution to the climate and extinction crises by securing a resilient, continental network of landscapes and eliminating climate-changing emissions. This means focussing on net zero, 30 x 30, and community-led-conservation.

Also, we are striving for more inclusive and equitable conservation and are working to transform conservation policy and practice so all people benefit equitably from public lands. One way we are doing that in Alaska is with the Imago Initiative. The Imago Initiative is TWS pursuing a new, Indigenous approach to public land protection in the Arctic Refuge through an Indigenous worldview. We are working with Indigenous and conservation partners to potentially create a new suite of alternative public land protections that respect Indigenous people's rights, sovereignty, and self-determination.

#### TWS OVERALL PRIORITY ONE

- Address the climate and extinction crisis
  - Making public lands a solution to the climate and extinction crises by securing a resilient, continental network of landscapes and eliminating climate-changing emissions.
    - We hope to catalyze the creation of a network of landscapes that will sustain human well-being and ecological integrity using science, traditional Indigenous knowledge and community engagement.
    - We are leading a campaign to protect 30 percent of America's lands and waters to position the U.S. as a leader in the global 30X30 initiative.
    - We are working to help transform federal land management (more co-management, etc.)

#### TWS OVERALL PRIORITY TWO:

- WE are striving for a more INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE CONSERVATION

- o Transform conservation policy and practice so all people benefit equitably from public lands. One way we are doing that in Alaska is with the Imago Initiative.
- Imago Initiative
  - o The Imago Initiative is TWS pursuing a new, Indigenous approach to public land protection in the Arctic Refuge through an Indigenous worldview. We are working with Indigenous and conservation partners to potentially create a new suite of alternative public land protections that respect Indigenous people's rights, sovereignty, and self-determination.
  - o We have an opportunity to reimagine conservation that would promote reconciliation and address the most serious threats to the public lands while equitably creating new landscape protections. This transformation embraces a new kind of protected area that recognizes Indigenous peoples' conservation contributions and rights, rather than the historical exclusionary, uninhabited national parks and wilderness areas.
  - o We are calling this the "*Imago Initiative*." In biology, "imaginal cells" exist in caterpillars which allows them to transform into butterflies. This transformative ideology was inspired by well-known Indigenous leader, Winona LaDuke.
  - o Pursuing this initiative will entail TWS acknowledging past mistakes, committing to reconcile disparities, and remaining open to new models of conservation. We invite you to join us for place-based dialogues to re-imagine land protections from an Indigenous lens so that we may protect sacred and special areas for many generations to come.
  - o The Initiative is focused on the Arctic Refuge coastal plain, but it is getting attention much more broadly and we see it as a model for pursuing similar approaches elsewhere.
  - o We invite you and members of your staff to join us with conservation and Indigenous partners on our 5<sup>th</sup> place-based trip into the Arctic Refuge this summer at the end of June.
- TWS Native Lands Partnership (NLP)
  - o The TWS NLP includes working with NCAI and others towards national policy efforts around protecting sacred sites, advancing co-management, creating a system of designated cultural areas, and changing racist/derogatory place names (which we thank you for your recent Secretarial action to address that issue).
- NPR-A:
  - o We are advocating for new Rulemaking/Regulations that shifts management in the Reserve to focus on meeting climate emission reduction goals, has durable protected areas (special areas), and protects subsistence needs/uses, etc.).
  - o DOI should revisit the decision in the 2020 IAP/management plan to restore protections in the Reserve and pivot toward more protective and durable management for the Reserve.
- Willow
  - o The Administration should not rush a new analysis and should take an expansive approach. Willow would drastically industrialize the northeast region of the

Reserve, compromising areas of high ecological and cultural value and harming food access, traditional activities, and sociocultural systems.

Quyanaqpak!

### Closing Remarks (Written Only)

Deputy Secretary Beaudreau, in this meeting we have raised priorities that can be categorized into: addressing the climate and biodiversity crises, human rights and indigenous-led conservation efforts, and we've identified opportunities to build capacity for tribes and indigenous people, to transition away from fossil fuels and work with specific conservation systems, initiatives and public lands where the Department can take action to address these priorities.

With over one-third of our nation's public lands, Alaska is an unmatched landscape of extraordinary value with a rich, indigenous cultural heritage and a greater percentage of Indigenous people per capita than any other state. Alaska Natives continue to rely heavily on traditional resources through hunting, fishing and gathering food from federal public lands and waters. Alaska is uniquely positioned to offer opportunities on a scale unmatched elsewhere in the nation to reduce carbon emissions, use landscape-level protections to reduce our nation's carbon footprint, address biodiversity, environmental justice and safeguard resources critical to Indigenous peoples.

We are incredibly honored to be meeting with you today and look forward to working with you and your staff to stave the climate and biodiversity crises, advance conservation and ensure human rights are addressed and indigenous ways of life continue to flourish and thrive on the landscape. We welcome dialogue and questions and are available to provide any additional information that would be helpful to you. We also would like to know how we can best stay in touch and we invite you to visit some of Alaska's magnificent places with us.

Again, we thank you for your time and interest today. Thank you.

**From:** [Thiele, Raina D](#)  
**To:** [Wallace, Andrew G](#); [Alonso, Shantha R](#); [Lefton, Amanda B](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Request for Surname OEM0004175 Response to Governor Michael Dunleavy regarding Cook Inlet OCS/Lease sale 258/Five-Year OCS Oil and Gas Program  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 2, 2022 9:10:31 PM

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I'm fine with waiting until we have more clarity.

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**From:** Wallace, Andrew G <[andrew\\_wallace@ios.doi.gov](mailto:andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 31, 2022 4:05 PM  
**To:** Alonso, Shantha R <[shantha\\_alonso@ios.doi.gov](mailto:shantha_alonso@ios.doi.gov)>; Lefton, Amanda B <[Amanda.Lefton@boem.gov](mailto:Amanda.Lefton@boem.gov)>; Thiele, Raina D <[raina\\_thiele@ios.doi.gov](mailto:raina_thiele@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: Request for Surname OEM0004175 Response to Governor Michael Dunleavy regarding Cook Inlet OCS/Lease sale 258/Five-Year OCS Oil and Gas Program

Think fine to wait at least until the end of the week - we'll have a good idea by then if this will be a done deal in very soon (which I think is likely)

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**From:** Alonso, Shantha R <[shantha\\_alonso@ios.doi.gov](mailto:shantha_alonso@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 31, 2022 3:33:44 PM  
**To:** Lefton, Amanda B <[Amanda.Lefton@boem.gov](mailto:Amanda.Lefton@boem.gov)>; Wallace, Andrew G <[andrew\\_wallace@ios.doi.gov](mailto:andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov)>; Thiele, Raina D <[raina\\_thiele@ios.doi.gov](mailto:raina_thiele@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: Request for Surname OEM0004175 Response to Governor Michael Dunleavy regarding Cook Inlet OCS/Lease sale 258/Five-Year OCS Oil and Gas Program

I defer to Raina on all things AK.

Shantha Ready Alonso  
Director, Office of Intergovernmental and External Affairs  
US Department of the Interior

*Sent from my mobile device.*

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**From:** Lefton, Amanda B <[Amanda.Lefton@boem.gov](mailto:Amanda.Lefton@boem.gov)>  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 31, 2022 8:18:04 AM  
**To:** Wallace, Andrew G <[andrew\\_wallace@ios.doi.gov](mailto:andrew_wallace@ios.doi.gov)>; Alonso, Shantha R <[shantha\\_alonso@ios.doi.gov](mailto:shantha_alonso@ios.doi.gov)>; Thiele, Raina D <[raina\\_thiele@ios.doi.gov](mailto:raina_thiele@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: Request for Surname OEM0004175 Response to Governor Michael Dunleavy regarding Cook Inlet OCS/Lease sale 258/Five-Year OCS Oil and Gas Program

I am eager to get the door, but also feel that we need to reference the IRA, should it pass, and the direction to hold lease sale 258. Are you all ok waiting a few weeks to see how this shakes out?

A

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**From:** Williams, Ericka A <[Ericka.Williams@boem.gov](mailto:Ericka.Williams@boem.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 27, 2022 6:15 PM  
**To:** Lefton, Amanda B <[Amanda.Lefton@boem.gov](mailto:Amanda.Lefton@boem.gov)>  
**Cc:** DirCorrespondence, BOEM <[DirCorrespondence@boem.gov](mailto:DirCorrespondence@boem.gov)>  
**Subject:** Request for Surname OEM0004175 Response to Governor Michael Dunleavy regarding Cook Inlet OCS/Lease sale 258/Five-Year OCS Oil and Gas Program

Will go to OIEA next to re-surname the update and then ASLM.

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**From:** Knodel, Marissa S <[Marissa.Knodel@boem.gov](mailto:Marissa.Knodel@boem.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 27, 2022 3:37 PM  
**To:** Williams, Ericka A <[Ericka.Williams@boem.gov](mailto:Ericka.Williams@boem.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: Request for Surname OEM0004175 Response to Governor Michael Dunleavy regarding Cook Inlet OCS/Lease sale 258/Five-Year OCS Oil and Gas Program

Thank you Ericka, I surname with no edits.

Peace,

Marissa Knodel  
Senior Advisor, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management  
202.538.2415  
[Marissa.Knodel@boem.gov](mailto:Marissa.Knodel@boem.gov)

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**From:** Williams, Ericka A <[Ericka.Williams@boem.gov](mailto:Ericka.Williams@boem.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 26, 2022 9:23 AM  
**To:** Knodel, Marissa S <[Marissa.Knodel@boem.gov](mailto:Marissa.Knodel@boem.gov)>  
**Subject:** Request for Surname OEM0004175 Response to Governor Michael Dunleavy regarding Cook Inlet OCS/Lease sale 258/Five-Year OCS Oil and Gas Program

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