



MEMORANDUM:
State of Alaska
Dept. of Natural Resources

From: Carrie Hallinan
Natural Resource Specialist 1

**Div. of Mining, Land & Water
Realty Services Section**

Subject: Selawik Hills and Kauk River Area
University Lands Selections

Background

In anticipation of the passage of legislation to enable the University of Alaska to receive title to an additional 360,000 acres of land, the University of Alaska Land Management Office (UA LMO) began selecting lands for consideration. The UA LMO will be submitting land selections in approximately 100,000-acre batches for State agency review, to be completed by the Division of Mining, Land & Water (DMLW) Realty Services Section (Realty). Once agency review has been completed, the lands will be reviewed by UA LMO for inclusion on the final 500,000-acre list to be submitted to the Governor's Office and the Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR) Commissioner. The UA LMO will work with the Governor's Office or their delegate to refine the list of desired lands and concur with the relinquishment of the State's selection. Following their review and approval, Realty will complete public notice for the proposed relinquishment of State selections to facilitate the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) transfer of the lands to the University. The UA LMO and DNR will jointly submit a list of lands to BLM along with letters conditionally relinquishing the State's selection to be enacted upon conveyance of the lands to the University.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act for fiscal Year 2023 was passed and included language from Senator Murkowski's University of Alaska Fiscal Foundation Act which enables the BLM to transfer State Selected lands to the University of Alaska as described above.

Affected Lands

Selawik Hills:

Within the Kateel River Meridian, Alaska
T. 7 N., R. 9 W.,
Secs. 1, 5-7, 18, 19, 30 all.
Containing approximately 4,314 acres

T. 8 N., R. 9 W.,
Secs 1-18, 21-29, 31-36 all.
Containing approximately 20,936 acres

Aggregating approximately 25,250 acres.

Kauk River:

Within the Kateel River Meridian, Alaska
T. 10 N., R. 8 W.
Secs. 1-5, & 7-16 excluding navigable and meanderable waters
Containing approximately 9,537 acres.

T. 11 N., R. 8 W.

Secs. 8, 11-30 & 33-36, excluding USS 11992.
Containing approximately 15,904 acres

Aggregating approximately 25,461 acres.

Background

Selawik Hills:

State records indicate the lands in the townships were selected in 1992 under general land selections GS-5705 and GS-5709 and are available for conveyance.

- Priority conveyance code: 3
- Mining priority: medium to low
- Oil and Gas priority: low
- 2019 priority: 4

Kauk River:

State records indicate the lands in the townships were selected in 1978 and 1992 under general land selections GS-4513 and GS-5712 and are available for conveyance.

- Priority conveyance code: 3 (medium/low)
 - Priority increased in 2025 due to Mineral Property Management increased ranking, Division of Oil and Gas geothermal potential, and Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys input
 - 2019 priority conveyance code: 4 (low)

Discussion

Selections Unit staff reviewed the following resources/records for information on the lands:

- BLM online records, including TWPALL, MLRS, MTP, and LMaR GIS system
- BLM casefiles
- Recorder's Office database, excluding historic books
- State records including LAS, DBRS, and Alaska Mapper

Selawik Hills:

BLM records indicate:

- K007N009W, K008N009W AKF 030593 Reindeer grazing permit
 - Currently expired, but can be renewed under terms of Memo of Understanding
- K008N009W06 AKAA 094060 Abandoned Mine Land Inventory
 - Toxic matter identified in inspection on July 7, 2015
 - Uranium 2, Alaska Resource Data File (ARDF) SE005
 - Kardex 36-17
 - Cx initiated January 30, 2018

State records indicate:

- 12-13-1992 General Grant applications 5705 and 5709

Kauk River:

BLM records indicate:

- AKFF 087313 Alaska Reindeer Grazing case issued under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the DNR, National Park Service (NPS), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and BLM, dated 06-30-2010
 - BLM is lead permitting agency under MOU
 - Case expires 2-28-2026, but will likely be renewed under the MOU

State records indicate:

- LAS 23763 Grazing Permit, issued by BLM, under MOU with NPS, DNR, and NRCS
- ADL 415765, ANILCA Sec. 906(k) concurrence for AKFF 087313

Surrounding Land Ownership Pattern

Selawik Hills:

The University's selection is located approximately 15 miles northeast of Buckland. Lands immediately surrounding the parcel are managed by BLM, and further to the east is Selawik National Wildlife Refuge. Lands immediately south and west of the parcel are top-filed by the State and managed by the BLM. Lands along the Buckland River to the west are owned by NANA Regional Corporation.

Kauk River:

The University's selection is located approximately 32 miles northeast of Buckland. Lands immediately east of the parcel are within the Selawik National Wildlife Refuge and are managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Lands immediately south and west of the parcel are selected by the State and managed by the BLM. Lands along the Buckland River are owned by NANA Regional Corp. as successor in interest to Buckland Nunachiak Corp.

Requested Action

We are seeking your input as to whether DNR should relinquish its land selection, which will allow BLM to convey the parcel to the University. Should DNR relinquish the selection the land will be a direct federal conveyance to the University. Consequently, there are several important factors that differentiate this proposed relinquishment from others, including:

1. The State has no ability to require that BLM reserve or make the University's title subject to easements on these lands. This means that access areas, public easements, or other common tools used to ensure public access across private lands may not be available after conveyance to the University.
2. These lands will pass directly from the Federal government to the University of Alaska and will be treated as private trust lands.
3. It is unclear how existing RS2477 trails will be handled during the conveyance process. BLM has indicated that existing valid rights will be addressed prior to conveyance to the University, however BLM does not consider most RS2477 trails to be valid.
4. It is unclear how BLM will resolve issues involving navigable waters.

Please provide your comments regarding the proposed relinquishment, along with reasoning and evidence supporting your recommendation(s) to Realty Services no later than **4:00 p.m., April 3, 2026**.