



STATE OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Division of Mining, Land and Water

“Putting Alaska’s resources to work - now and in the future!”

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 25, 2026
SUBJECT: UA Atigun River Selection Background File Number: GS-5106

Summary

The Statehood Entitlement Unit (“Selections Unit”) received a request to relinquish a Statehood Act land selections in T. 14 S., R. 10 E., U.M. to provide for additional land entitlement for the University of Alaska.

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

The land consists of parcels of Federal lands located within:

In Umiat Meridian, Alaska

T. 14 S., R. 10 E.

Sections 12, 13, 23-26, 34-36

Excluding Gates of the Arctic National Preserve

Containing approximately 3,968 acres

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

BLM records indicate:

- No active permits or authorizations, but one pending recreation use permit

State LAS records indicate:

- Located in ADL 50666 North Slope Area Special Use Lands

Mapper/imagery indicates:

- No visible trails or signs of activity

Surrounding Land Pattern

The selected land is located approximately 50 miles east of Anaktuvuk, Alaska and 55 miles north-northeast of Wiseman, Alaska. Lands immediately surrounding the parcels are State selected and Federal lands.

Request

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 lands 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 **3:00 p.m., April 13, 2026.**