

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

NOTICE OF DECISION

**PARTIAL RELEASE OF STATE INTEREST
State Selection Files: GS-2325, GS-4954, and GS-4959**

Relinquishment of Certain State-Selected Lands

*AS 38.05.035(a)(11), AS 38.05.035(e),
Consolidated Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (Pub. L. 117-328)
and the University of Alaska Fiscal Foundation Act*

I. ACTION

Proposed relinquishment of State of Alaska (State) land selections on certain lands. The purpose of relinquishment is to facilitate University of Alaska (UA) land selections under the University of Alaska Fiscal Foundation Act. The University of Alaska Fiscal Foundation Act was included in the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (Pub. L. 117-328) (CAA 2023).

II. AUTHORITY

The CAA 2023 provides that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) may convey up to 360,000 acres of land selected by the State of Alaska (State-selected land) pursuant to Section 6(b) of the Alaska Statehood Act (Pub. L. 85-508) to the University of Alaska. Additional information about the Fiscal Foundation Act can be found at:

<https://www.alaska.edu/ualand/about/land-grant/index.php>.

The ability to relinquish Statehood Act selections in favor of the UA is codified in Sec. 302(c) of the CAA 2023. The provisions of Alaska Statute (AS) 38.05.035(a)(11) allow the Director of the Division of Mining, Land and Water (DMLW) to manage Statehood Entitlement selections. AS 38.05.035(e) provides authority for disposals of lands, resources, property, or interests in them. Article XIII of the Alaska Constitution provides guiding principles for maximum use of state lands and resources and authority for disposals of interests in lands and resources.

III. BACKGROUND AND PROCESS

The CAA 2023 authorizes the BLM to directly convey up to 360,000 acres of land to the UA. The available lands must be federal lands selected by the State pursuant to Sec. 6(b) of the Alaska Statehood Act.

The University of Alaska Land Management Office (UALMO) reviewed available State land selections and identified possible land for conveyance. UALMO submitted land selections to the DMLW Realty Services Section (Realty). Realty worked with UALMO to refine the selection, then completed state-wide agency review and public notice for the specific proposed relinquishment. This decision reflects a consideration of comments received during agency review and public notice. The decision will be forwarded to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Commissioner for review and approval. After approval, this decision will

be published on the State's online public notice board while the reconsideration period runs. Information about how to file a request for reconsideration is appended to this decision. Following the closure of the reconsideration period, provided there are no requests for reconsideration, the State and UALMO will jointly submit to BLM lists of lands to be conditionally relinquished by the State and conveyed to the UA. Any request for reconsideration will be reviewed under the applicable state law and process. Final relinquishment of the State's selections would be affected upon conveyance of the lands to the UA.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD

The selection files for state selections; GS-2325, GS-4954, and GS-4959, constitute the administrative record for this action.

V. LOCATION

The proposed relinquish lands are located within DNR's Northern Region, one township and three ranges in the northern Brooks Range foothills on the southern portion of the Colville River Basin. See legal description for exact locations. Please see Attachment A for a visual depiction of the area.

- *USGS Map Coverage:* Killik River D1 and C1, Chandler Lake C5 and D5
- *Regional Corporation:* Arctic Slope
- *Federally Recognized Tribe:* Village of Anaktuvuk Pass
- *Village Corporations:* Nunamiut Corporation

VI. LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Within the Umiat Meridian, Alaska:

T. 8 S., R. 4 W.,
Secs. 31-33, all.
Containing approximately 1,918.76 acres.

T. 8 S., R. 5 W.,
Secs. 7-9, 16-21, & 25-30, all.
Containing approximately 9,570.24 acres.

T. 8 S., R. 6 W.,
Secs. 10-15, all.
Containing approximately 3,840 acres.

Aggregating approximately 15,329 acres.

VII. SELECTION HISTORY

State records indicate lands in the townships were selected in 1976 and 1981 under general land selections GS-2325, GS-4954, and GS-4959.

- Priority conveyance code: level 1 (one), or high, in the statehood selection prioritization for high Oil and Gas and geothermal potential.

VIII. AGENCY REVIEW

Information and comments received from State agencies have been considered and included in the preparation of this decision. The proposed relinquishment documents were distributed to State agencies for review from December 8, 2025 through December 22, 2025. Public

Notice with a concurrent agency review was conducted from February 19, 2026 to March 26, 2026. Agencies were given the opportunity to evaluate and comment on the relinquishment to determine if it is in the State's best interest to release the land selection.

The following agencies or groups were included in the agency review and provided comments, which are summarized and responded to below:

Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G): Requested an opportunity to meet with DNR before the signing of the final decision, so they can work with appropriate agencies, if needed, to resolve their concerns, noting:

- **Fisheries** – The selected lands are in the headwaters of the Killik River (AWC Code: 330-00-10700-2365), a tributary of the Colville River. The Killik River, approximately 8 km from Sec. 10, 8S, 6W, supports anadromous chum salmon. Within the land selection, several creeks are documented with resident fish species, including Arctic grayling and slimy sculpin. The resident fish species will only be seasonally utilizing these creeks during the summer months.
- **Caribou and ADF&G Research** – The Teshekpuk caribou herd (TCH) is primarily found in northwestern Alaska. The TCH herd is an important subsistence resource for local and Alaska residents, and caribou is the primary terrestrial resource for several communities on the North Slope. The state-selected lands are within the winter range for the TCH. The herd usually concentrates near Teshekpuk Lake during the summer, but occasionally, the caribou will move further south onto or near the selected lands. ADF&G works cooperatively with the North Slope Borough, BLM, and communities to monitor caribou herd populations. ADF&G has a 5-year permit from BLM to perform caribou capture/re-capture work with radio-collared caribou between June and August (ADL 422555). When ADF&G conducts captures, yearling females are targeted, and ADF&G cannot predict or control where the caribou will be located. Teshekpuk caribou are not commonly captured in this area; however, ADF&G also re-captures collared animals to collect blood and tissue samples or to replace GPS collars with limited battery life. Lastly, after animals die, ADF&G staff return to the site to estimate the cause of death and to collect the GPS collar.
- Potential impacts to research if the lands are no longer public or the University does not allow ADF&G to continue its monitoring efforts within these lands:
 - Closing this area has the potential to cause ADF&G to spend more time and to travel greater distances when searching for yearlings to collar.
 - If the targeted animals were in this area and ADF&G could not access them, ADF&G would have to wait for them to leave the area, which would represent a loss of charter pilot money/time or miss the opportunity to resample or recollar specific animals, which would weaken ADF&G's ability to conduct sound research.
 - If animals died in this area and ADF&G were not permitted to return, ADF&G would lose some information about the cause of death, would be forced to leave a lithium battery in the landscape, and ADF&G would not be able to send that collar in to be refurbished, which represents a large monetary savings for the next year's GPS collar costs.
- Conveyance of these lands to the University would negatively impact ongoing caribou research by resulting in a loss of opportunity and increased project costs and staff time.
 - **DMLW Realty response:** Thank you for your comment. Realty, UALMO land managers, and ADF&G biologists met to discuss potential impacts to ongoing ADF&G caribou research should the lands be conveyed to the UA. UALMO supports ADF&G's research and is committed to continuing to issue permits for

caribou research as needed. Realty notes that should DNR relinquish the land, the University's title will be subject to (subservient to) the federal permit held by ADF&G.

Department of Transportation (DOT&PF): Noted concern about RS2477s (and other trails) not being recognized as valid, existing rights if transferred to UA.

- **DMLW Realty response:** Thank you for your comment. There are no RS2477 trails in the area.

Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys (DGGS): Does not object to the proposed relinquishment, noting:

- **Energy Resources:** This selection is in the northern Brooks Range foothills at the southern margin of the Colville Basin and in Nanushuk Formation rocks, which are prospective for oil to the northeast. However, data from a nearby exploration well (East Kurupa #1) shows that the rocks underlying the selected area are overmature and not prospective for oil or gas. This is consistent with other localities along structural trend.
- **DMLW Realty response:** Thank you for your comment.

Division of Oil and Gas Leasing Section (DOG Leasing): Requests DMLW not relinquish, noting:

- The Pediment Creek parcels are lands identified as Priority 1 selections in the multi-agency review of State lands initiated in 2024. The priority is appropriate considering petroleum potential, the State's interest in offering oil and gas leases in the area, and leasing history.
- The lands are in the North Slope Foothills Areawide (Foothills). Petroleum potential within the Foothills is described in Chapter 6 of the 2021 North Slope Foothills Areawide Oil and Gas Lease Sales Final Finding of the Director (Finding). The Finding reads, "...potential for new discoveries of conventionally recoverable petroleum in the Sale Area... is relatively high for gas, and relatively low for oil." The Finding authorizes DOG Leasing to offer oil and gas leases in annual auctions in the Foothills.
- DOG Leasing doesn't have third-party interests on the Pediment Creek parcels. However, the State leased lands abutting the selection for oil and gas exploration under the Areawide sales program in the past. Lands the State already has title to are offered in annual Areawide lease sales. The leasing history on lands abutting the selection is available in a review of LAS and Recorder's Office records. DOG Leasing would like to maintain the opportunity for future leases on the selection.
- **DMLW Realty response:** Thank you for your comment. Additional analysis of these topics follows below.

Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR): Has no issues.

- **DMLW Realty response:** Thank you for your comment.

DMLW Land Conveyance Section (LCS): No concerns with the proposed relinquishment.

- **DMLW Realty response:** Thank you for your comment.

DMLW Northern Region Office (NRO) Lands: Has no objections to the proposed relinquishment, noting:

- NRO Lands reviewed for access related issues but didn't see any State lands that would be made inaccessible by this relinquishment and eventual conveyance to the University.
- NRO Lands has no recommendations for exclusions.

- **DMLW Realty response:** Thank you for your comment.

DMLW Public Access Assertion & Defense Section (PAAD): Does not oppose the relinquishment of these lands, noting that:

- The selected lands are on the North Slope. There are no navigable waters for title purposes on the North Slope of Alaska, per AS 38.04.062. The State did not receive title to the submerged lands under navigable rivers and lakes located on the North Slope (area north of the Brooks Range) pursuant to the equal footing doctrine and the Submerged Lands Act of 1953. PLO 82 withdrew all lands on the north of the Brooks Range Continental Divide for military purposes. This PLO was still in effect on the date of statehood. The State of Alaska lost its three court cases on the North Slope related to PLO 82 and this military withdrawal (A78-069 Civ; 521 US 1; Alaska v US 213 F 3d 1092).
- There are no RS 2477 rights-of-way (ROW) or DOT&PF 1973 trails within the lands reviewed.
 - **DMLW Realty response:** Thank you for your comment.

DMLW Resource Assessment & Development Section (RADS): Does not recommend relinquishing State selection on these lands, based on their review of the applicable management plan, priority of selection, and natural resource values of the land. After reviewing the available data, satellite imagery, and the applicable land use plans, which included the 2021 North Slope Area Plan (NSAP), RADS provided the following comments and requested that these following requirements and management guidelines be included and considered during the adjudication process:

- The selected lands are situated within the Brooks Foothills Region. This region consists of some of the most remote terrain in Alaska with most of the land only being accessible by air or river. ADL 50666, the North Slope Special Use Lands, and ADL 422555, a ROW permit to ADF&G from BLM for caribou studies, affect the entirety of the land selection.
- The majority land sections fall within Management Unit B-06, which is classified as Resource Management Land. This unit supports multiple uses and resource values, with a focus on protecting RS 2477 trails, natural resources in the area and anadromous streams. The landscape features diverse mountainous terrain, bluffs, scenic overlooks, and lower shrublands. The Resource Allocation Table for this unit states the land is available for lease, permitting, or disposal through less-than-fee transactions (NSAP, 3-85). Ayiyak River is an anadromous stream which crosses through Section 33 of Township 8 S, Range 4W.
- Section 15 and the SW ½ of sections 10 & 14 of Township 8 S, Range 6 W are located within management unit B-7, Killik River Drainage, and is classified as Wildlife Habitat Land. This unit is to be managed for wildlife and habitat values, to maintain harvest opportunities, moose wintering habitat and is recommended to be retained in State ownership (NSAP 3-86).
 - **DMLW Realty response:** Thank you for your comment. Additional analysis of these topics follows below.

The following agencies or groups were included in the agency review and did not provide comments:

- DMLW Water Section
- DMLW Mining/Mineral Property Management
- Division of Forestry

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

Public notice of the proposed relinquishment was conducted from February 19, 2026, through March 26, 2026. The notice was posted to the State of Alaska Online Public Notice System. Copies of the notice were sent to the University of Alaska, the US Post Master of Anaktuvuk Pass, Community Council/ Inupiat Community of the Arctic Slope, Alaska Native Regional Non-profit Organization Arctic Slope Native Association, Naqsragnuit Tribe, Nunamiut School and Library, Village of Anaktuvuk, City of Anaktuvuk Pass, Alaska Department of Natural Resources Commissioners Office, Alaska State legislature, adjacent landowners, and interested private parties.

Realty received fourteen separate comments in response to the proposed relinquishment. Many of these letters featured several of the same comment topics, which were analyzed collectively. All comments were opposed to the relinquishment and received via email. Four comments did not specify which particular UA relinquishment they were regarding and have been addressed in all UA relinquishments that were undergoing public notice at the time the email was received. The nine topics common to comments are summarized below, followed by the Department's response and analysis of each topic. Subsequently, each of the individual comments that were deemed to be sufficiently distinct from the topical summarizes has been reproduced and addressed individually.

Comment Topic #1 (11 comments): I oppose this because I personally use this area for hunting and fishing.

- **DMLW Realty response:** Thank you for your comment. UALMO has created a program allowing non-commercial hunting and subsistence activities on UA lands. More information about the program can be found here: <https://www.alaska.edu/ualand/permits/hunting-revised.php>. Realty notes that most lands within the area of discussion are validly selected by the State, therefore the Federal subsistence priority created under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) does not apply. ADF&G would retain management of fish and wildlife resources on the lands should ownership be transferred to the UA.

Comment Topic #2 (8 comments): I oppose this because I personally use this area for hiking.

- **DMLW Realty response:** Thank you for your comment. Public access and use of UA lands for non-commercial uses such as hiking and berry picking are allowed without a permit. Dedicated access to and through UA lands, or for commercial applications, is available by obtaining a permit from the UALMO. More information on the permit process can be found here: <https://www.alaska.edu/ualand/permits/>.

Comment Topic #3 (5 comments): I oppose this because I personally use this area for Snowmachining.

- **DMLW Realty response:** Thank you for your comment. Motorized vehicles are not allowed on UA land without a permit. More information on the permit process can be found here: <https://www.alaska.edu/ualand/permits/>.

Comment Topic #4 (3 comments): I oppose this because these areas have patterns of traditional use Historical/Family Traditional Use and I am concerned about potential closure of traditional use areas.

- **DMLW Realty response:** Thank you for your comment. Public access and use of UA lands for traditional non-commercial uses such as hunting, fishing, hiking, and berry picking are

allowed without a permit. Dedicated access to and through UA lands, or for commercial applications, is available by obtaining a permit from the UALMO. More information on the permit process can be found here: <https://www.alaska.edu/ualand/permits/>.

Comment Topic #5 (14 comments): I oppose this because I have concerns that these areas contain established trail systems, and if relinquishing occurred before routes are documented and protected will permanently disrupt generational access, loss of public access to trails and routes, risk to existing/historic RS 2477 rights-of-way.

- **DMLW Realty response:** Thank you for your comment. There are no RS 2477 rights-of-way on these lands, nor are there trails visible on satellite imagery. Public access and use of UA lands for non-commercial uses such as hiking are allowed without a permit. Motorized vehicles are not allowed on UA land without a permit. Dedicated access to and through UA lands, or for commercial applications, is available by obtaining a permit from the UALMO. More information on the permit process can be found here: <https://www.alaska.edu/ualand/permits/>.

Comment Topic #6 (4 comments): I oppose this because I have concerns regarding losing public land to private mining or private equity firms and destroying the reason we live in Alaska.

- **DMLW Realty response:** Thank you for your comment. The scope of this decision is limited to whether DNR should relinquish its land selection to facilitate conveyance of the lands to the UA. Comments related to possible future development of the lands are beyond the scope of this decision. Realty notes that relinquishment of DNR's land selection does not authorize any development and the UA's potential future actions would be subject to applicable State and Federal environmental regulations and permits.

Comment Topic #7 (10 comments): I oppose this because I think there are better alternatives existing on non-selected federal lands.

- **DMLW Realty response:** Thank you for your comment. The scope of this decision is limited to whether DNR should relinquish its land selection to facilitate conveyance of the lands to the UA. Realty notes the only lands available under the CAA 2023 are lands selected or top-filed by the State under the Alaska Statehood Act. Federal lands not selected or top-filed by the State are unavailable for selection and conveyance to the University.

Comment Topic #8 (9 comments): I oppose this because I think it's bypassing State's land selection process under Statehood Act.

- **DMLW Realty response:**
- Thank you for your comment. The December 2022 CAA for fiscal Year 2023 created a mechanism for BLM to convey lands to the UA in furtherance of what was deemed by Congress to be a public purpose, and for management and use consistent with the University's public mission. The State participating in the program towards those ends, consistent with the Alaska Constitution's Article VII directives for the University. While this land was selected by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act for its natural resources, mineral resources, and fish and game interests, these same interests make the land valuable to the UA and consistent with the program. Additionally, the state continues to work on receiving many other areas regarded as priority level one under the statehood land entitlement, continuing the process that has led to the transfer of nearly 100 million acres to-date. This means there are other lands selected by the State which may be an equal or higher priority to acquire as part of the Statehood Land Entitlement.

The Statehood Act land selection process is further discussed in Section X below.

Comment Topic #9 (2 comments): No to giving away our public lands.

- **DMLW Realty response:** Thank you for your comment.

X. DISCUSSION

The UA has sought additional lands to complete its territorial land grant for several decades but has been challenged by legal restrictions about the disposal of state lands in the Statehood Act and the State Constitution. Previous attempts to rectify the land grant deficit were ultimately overturned in legal challenges. This history resulted in federal Congressional action within the CAA 2023 with the intent of establishing a state and federal cooperative program to remedy the deficit, and further endow the University with land. Congressional intent is for lands to be transferred to the UA to complete the entitlement originally intended for conveyance under the Statehood Act and to provide economic opportunities for the UA. This is consistent with the UA's public interest mission under Title 14 of the Alaska Statutes and Title VII of the Alaska Constitution.

DNR must consider and weigh its own and the public's interests in retaining or relinquishing land selections while supporting the UA's public interests in new land entitlement. Such interests include resource development, conservation, consideration of existing land uses, and public access consistent with the public interest – which the UA also shares and has many of the same tools and processes to advance. In general, there must be an overarching benefit to Alaskans in retaining selected land to defeat the Congressional intent in the CAA 2023 and the public interests of UA in the program. Any decision DNR makes must balance and reflect all of these interests: providing valuable land to the UA without undue harm to the interests of Alaskans.

DNR notes that the CAA 2023 does not require the State to relinquish specific state selected land and is considering UA selections in light of the balanced interests of the State. The UA's proposed selection included lands described in Section VI.

The land described in Sec. VI represents a moderately sized and compact tract of land. Conveyance of medium to large sized blocks of land generally simplifies land and resource management. Large blocks help enable landscape level considerations when land use authorizations are proposed. It helps the public understand land boundaries and acquire any relevant permits prior to land use. Additionally, it may reduce the potential for user confusion and conflict across areas of mixed land ownership.

Lands adjoining the UA Pediment Creek selection are State-owned (Patented or Tentatively Approved), Native Corporation lands, lands selected by the State and managed by BLM, lands selected by a Native Corporation and managed by BLM, and Federal lands managed by the BLM.

The lands are not crossed by any accepted and codified Revised Statute 2477 (RS 2477) Trails. There are no trails permitted by the BLM, State, or known trails crossing the lands. A review of Federal records indicates there are no current applications with BLM for an easement or right-of-way on these lands by any individuals or groups. Westerly, adjacent to these lands, is an Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act Section 17(b) public easement across Arctic Slope

Native Corporation land that runs from north to south through U008S006W Sections 5, 9, 16, 21, 27, 28, and 34. This easement does not intersect the land described in Sec. VI. Please see attached map for more details. No trails were identified by commentators.

AS 38.05.127 requires that before a disposal of an interest in state land, DNR must determine if waterbodies within or adjacent to the proposed area for disposal are navigable or public water; and if they are to reserve access easements. Information provided by PAAD indicates the selected lands are on the North Slope and due to AS 38.04.062 and PLO 82 the State has no navigable waterways in this area.

Additionally, pursuant to 11 AAC 51.045(a)(2), DNR finds that reserving an access easement is not necessary to ensure free access to public water. A statehood entitlement selection does not provide the public with rights of access different from the general right of the public to access navigable or public water bordered by non-State land: that is, the right to use and have access to water below the ordinary high water mark for recreational or other public purposes for which the water is used or capable of being used consistent with the public trust. Because access to navigable or public water will remain the same after the relinquishment of the entitlement selection as before, it is not necessary to reserve an access easement.

Balancing development, access, subsistence use, public recreation, and wildlife habitat are challenges that must be addressed when managing Pediment Creek lands, irrespective of ownership. This balance is achieved through the development of land management plans, clear land use guidelines and regulations, and a robust public notice process. Relinquishment of State selected lands would not allow unrestricted development by the UA. Many projects and developments require State and Federal permits regardless of land ownership. Most development projects also require extensive studies and public consultation before a project is approved. Any proposed development, sale, or disposal of the lands by the UA would have to be approved by the UA Board of Regents (BOR) and would be public noticed under existing UA policies.

Agency review comments provided by DOG advised that there may be opportunity for oil and gas development on these lands in the future, while DGGs comments indicate that the geology of these lands may be “overmature” for energy production. Transfer of these lands to the University would create economic opportunities for UA and allow the State to relinquish acreage in an area where energy resource potential and the State’s ability to generate revenue remain uncertain. Because one of the purposes of the land grant under CAA 2023 is to provide valuable land to UA, the potential mineral value of the lands alone does not constitute a reason to deny the relinquishment. Resource development may also contribute to furthering in-state educational opportunities to those enrolled at the University. UA acquisition of an area of oil and gas potential provides benefits to the State by securing a potential source of long-term revenue to the UA and jobs for Alaskans. There is also the potential of economies of scale benefiting the potential development of resources on adjacent State-owned lands.

Agency review comments provided by ADF&G stated that this relinquishment could negatively impact their research on the Teshekpuk caribou herd (TCH) if they were no longer allowed access to the lands. If these lands were no longer public ADF&G may have to spend more time and money to travel to the caribou for their research, and they could lose data in the transferred area due to possible study restrictions. Realty and ADF&G staff met with UALMO property managers to determine if permits could be issued to continue ADF&G caribou studies.

UALMO committed that should the lands be transferred to the UA, it would continue to support caribou studies by issuing permits as needed. Additionally, agency review comment provided by RADS drew attention to ROW permit ADL 422555 issued by BLM to ADF&G for caribou studies, which is in place over all the selection.

Overall, RADS did not recommend relinquishment of the selection based on review of 2021 North Slope Area Plan (NSAP). They highlighted that the land falls in Resource Management Land and Wildlife Habitat Land. Resource Management Land supports multiple uses and resource values. The purpose of Wildlife Habitat Land is to manage for wildlife, habitat value, maintaining harvest opportunities, and moose wintering. The general NSAP guidance is to retain these kinds of land in State ownership. However, the plan applies directly to land within state ownership, and these lands are only selected, rather than already owned by the State. Additionally, the plan does not contemplate, nor rule out, transfers under federal programs to public entities for public purposes – rather that things like the parcel-by-parcel disposal of the lands for private ownership or long-term exclusive leasing is not appropriate. Overall, the planning-based observations are not, on balance, a reason to remove these selections from participating in the program or potential ownership and management by the University.

Agency comments noted the habitat, hunting, fishing, and subsistence values of the selected lands. While the lands have value as wildlife habitat and for subsistence related activities, these values are not inherently threatened by conveying the lands to the UA. Nor do they require State acquisition to preserve them. If the selection is relinquished and the lands conveyed to the UA, personal use hunting will still be available under the UALMO's hunting program. Personal recreational use of the lands is allowed under existing UA BOR policies. Commercial hunting and guiding can be permitted under UALMO's land use permit system. Whether the lands remain in federal control, transfer to state ownership, or go to the UA under the program, there will be processes in place for these kinds of uses to continue.

All public comments were opposed to the relinquishment of lands in favor of the UA. The main topics of the comments that were within scope were concerns regarding the loss of access, hunting and fishing, and traditional and recreational uses of the land. The public voiced concerns about limited public access to and through the selections. Current UA policies allow for greater public access than many non-public lands around the state. UA policies allow unpermitted non-commercial access and provide a permitting framework for other activities. In addition, UALMO has a permit system to provide for dedicated public and private access easements to reach inholdings or specific areas. While large, the block of land is smaller than many contiguous blocks of ANCSA Native Corporation land, which often have more restrictive public use requirements than those developed by the UA BOR.

Public comments referred to trails in and near the Pediment Creek parcel, but commentators did not provide specific trail location information. Reviewing aerial and satellite imagery failed to find evidence of trails on the lands. Regardless, as described above, there are processes and policies for the use of any such trails to continue. While BLM recognizes some RS2477 trails as prior valid rights, Statehood Act land grant federal regulations do not provide a mechanism for BLM to reserve those interests from UA's land title. Consequently, Realty worked with UALMO to exclude areas with valid RS2477 trails from their selections. Realty also worked with UALMO to exclude areas with known publicly used or developed trails from their selections. That was not the case here.

All public comments were concerned about loss of hunting, fishing, recreation, and traditional uses of the land. If the selection is relinquished and the lands conveyed to the UA, personal use hunting and fishing activities will still be available under UALMO's hunting program. Personal recreational use of the lands is allowed under existing UA BOR policies and commercial hunting and guiding can be permitted under UALMO's land use permit system. ADF&G will continue to retain management of fish and wildlife resources on the lands should ownership be transferred to the UA. The lands are not currently available under ANILCA's federal subsistence priority, which would not change if DNR relinquished its selection in favor of the UA.

Public comments noted the strategic selection by the State under the Statehood Act and circumventing the land selection process. This land was selected by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act for its natural resources, mineral potential, and fish and game interests. The selected lands are ranked 1 (high) in conveyance priority in Realty Section's 2025 evaluation of selected land. This means, the Pediment Creek selected lands are a higher priority to acquire as a part of the Statehood Land Entitlement than most other lands, but it does not obligate the State to receive them. The State has selected more lands than remain available for conveyance under the Statehood Act, therefore DNR is required to relinquish over-selections while actively working to fulfil its remaining Statehood Act land entitlement. This may, in some instances, involve high-priority lands that are not able to be received. The land selection period granted in the CAA 2023 expires in Dec. 2026 and DNR is unlikely to have completed acquisition of the statehood land grant before the CAA 2023 grant sunsets. Therefore, DNR needs to pursue relinquishment of the University selections simultaneously with its efforts to continue land acquisition.

If DNR declines to relinquish its selection on UA's Pediment Creek selection area the lands would remain in federal ownership. This would most likely be temporary, as DNR would seek conveyance and ownership of all available lands within the Pediment Creek selection area at the appropriate time. As summarized above, this does not make use and development of the lands less likely – only that it would be done consistent with the federal program to support the University and in furtherance of the University's public purposes.

The selection could see future oil and gas exploration and leasing opportunities. However, the resource potential has not been fully explored nor have oil or gas deposits been fully defined. The presence of potentially valuable resources is not inherently a sufficient reason for the State to maintain a selection. Nor would the potential value of those resources be harmed by UA ownership. While the State might lose potential income from future development, that same revenue going to the UA would help fund the public interest in higher education in Alaska. Both options would provide benefits to the wider state economy. It is not dispositive that it is in the State's or public's best interests to maintain a selection on these lands solely based on mineral potential, because the University may also utilize any such potential in furtherance of public purposes.

Overall, the lands are suitable for relinquishment in favor of the University, as most agency comments did not provide evidence of an overarching need for DNR ownership of the parcel, or could still be addressed under University ownership and management. Though the area is a high priority ranking for acquisition based on oil and gas potential, DGGS does not object to the relinquishment, and the UA could also foster this development in furtherance of the program's core purpose. ADFG and RADS objections to the relinquishment because of

concerns related to caribou research and land management can still be addressed through the UALMO. The ten public comments were opposed to the land transfer to the University, but as analyzed above can be addressed through the existing policies and procedures in place for the management of UA lands.

The State's interests in retaining these lands must be balanced with providing potentially valuable lands to the UA while protecting the State's interests in potentially valuable land, State owned or selected adjacent lands, access to public lands, and the overall management of an area. Relinquishment of the lands fulfills the purpose of the CAA 2023 in providing lands to the University, which may have alternative revenue streams available for the lands. The State considered the following alternatives in adjudicating the request for relinquishment:

Alternative 1: Conditionally relinquish the State's selection on lands described in Section VI.

Alternative 2: Decline to conditionally relinquish the State's selection on lands described in Section VI.

XI. DECISION

This decision considers all public and agency comments received. After considering the facts and input described above, the Department finds it is in the best interest of the State to choose **Alternative 1**, and conditionally relinquish the lands described in Section VI.

Recommended by:


Aleria Knudson
Natural Resource Specialist 3
Realty Services Section
Division of Mining, Land and Water
Department of Natural Resources

9/10/2026

Date of Signature

Approved by:


Lacy Hamner
Natural Resource Manager 2
Realty Services Section
Division of Mining, Land and Water
Department of Natural Resources

9/10/2026

Date of Signature

Approved by:


Commissioner John Crowther
Department of Natural Resources

9 / 11 / 2026

Date of Signature

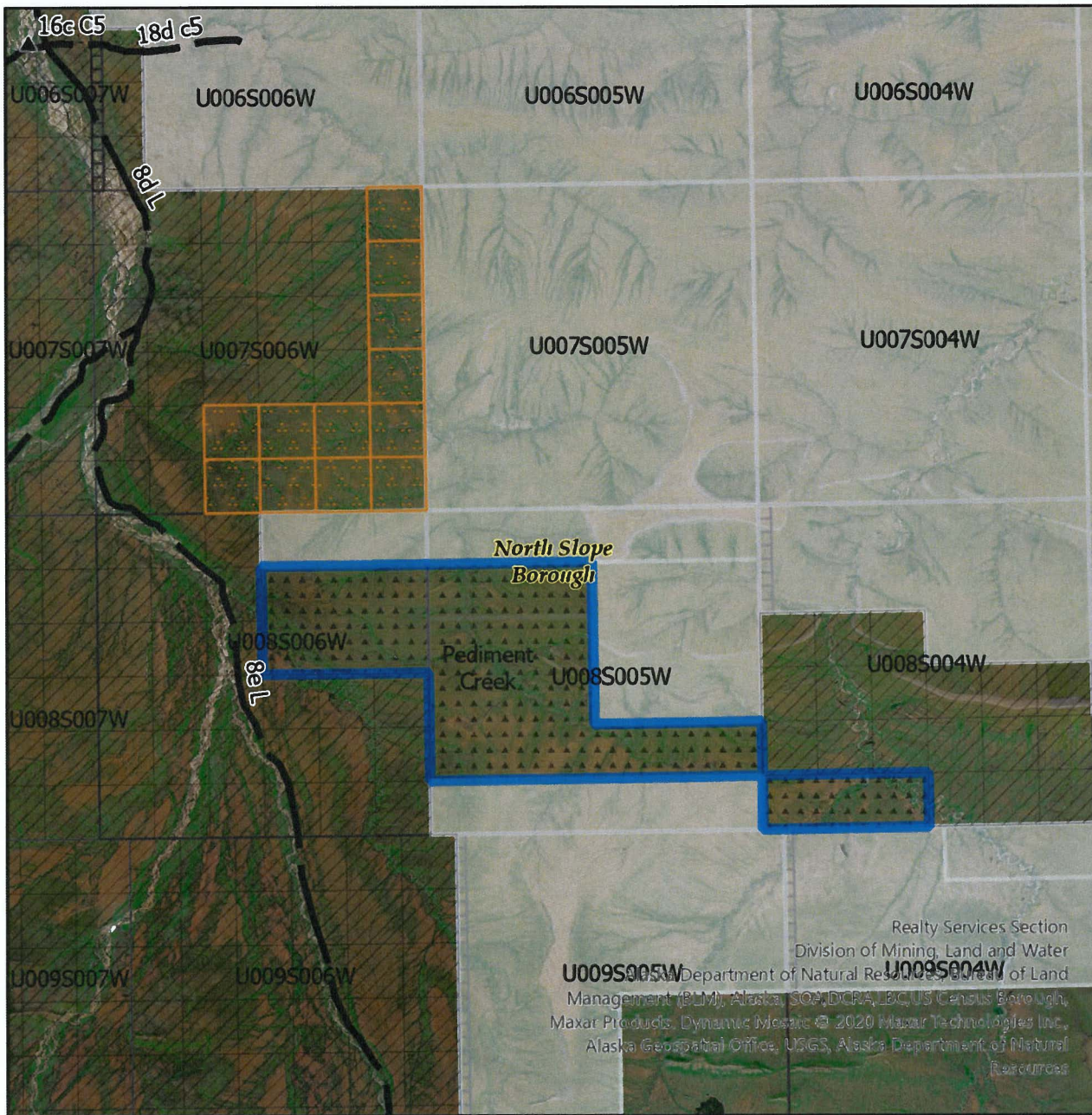
Reconsideration Provision**Reconsideration**

An eligible person affected by this decision, and who provided timely written comment or public hearing testimony to the department, may request reconsideration to the DNR Commissioner per AS 44.37.011 and 11 AAC 02. Any request for reconsideration must be received by the Commissioner's Office within twenty (20) calendar days after issuance of the decision under 11 AAC 02.040. The Commissioner may order or deny a request for reconsideration within thirty (30) calendar days after issuance of the decision. If the Commissioner takes no action on a request for reconsideration within thirty (30) days after issuance of the decision, the request for reconsideration is considered denied. The Commissioner's decision on reconsideration, other than a remand decision, is a final administrative order and decision of the department. An eligible person must first request reconsideration to the Commissioner before seeking relief in superior court. The Alaska Court System establishes its own rules for timely appealing final administrative orders and decisions of the department.

Reconsideration may be mailed or hand-delivered to the DNR Commissioner's Office, 550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1400, Anchorage, Alaska, 99501; or faxed to (907)-269-8918 or sent by electronic mail to dnr.appeals@alaska.gov. Reconsideration must be accompanied by the fee established in 11 AAC 05.1G0(d)(1)(F), which has been set at \$200 under the provisions of 11 AAC 05.1G0(a)-(b). A copy of 11 AAC 02 is available on the department's website at <https://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/pdf/DNR-11-AAC-02.pdf>.

University of Alaska Selection: Pediment Creek

Umat Meridian, T. 8 S., R. 4 W., Secs. 31-33, all.; T. 8 S., R. 5 W., Secs. 7-9, 16-21, & 25-30, all; and T. 8 S., R. 6 W., Secs. 10-15, all; approximately 15,329 acres



Legend

-  BLM AK Native Allotment
 BLM AK ANCSA
 Private



0 0.5 1 2 Miles



- BLM AK ANCSA Selected
- BLM AK Native Allotment Selected

