



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 12, 2026

SUBJECT: UA Watana Creek Selection Agency Review, File Numbers: GS-2844, GS-2845, GS-2853, GS-5266

Summary

The Statehood Entitlement Unit ("Selections Unit") received a request to relinquish a Statehood Act land selections in T. 32 N., R. 8 E., T. 32 N., R. 9 E., T. 33 N., R. 8 E., and T. 33 N., R. 9 E., S.M. to provide for additional land entitlement for the University of Alaska. These lands have a high conveyance priority.

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:

Seward Meridian, Alaska

T. 32 N., R. 8 E.,

Secs. 1-18, inclusive, ALL;

Containing approximately 11,394 acres

T. 32 N., R. 9 E.,

Secs. 1-18, inclusive, ALL;

Containing approximately 11,394 acres

T 33 N., R. 8 E.,
Secs. 13-15, inclusive, ALL;
Secs. 22-24, inclusive, ALL;
Containing approximately 3,957 acres

T. 33 N., R. 9 E.,
Sec. 13;
Sec. 18;
Secs. 22-29, inclusive, ALL;
Secs. 31-36, inclusive, ALL;
Containing approximately 10,310

Aggregating approximately 37,055 acres

Discussion

Selections Unit staff review of BLM online records, Historic Indices, TWPALL, MTP, and LMaR GIS system produced the following:

- 09/29/1972 PLO 5180
- 11/16/1978 PLO 5653
- 11/17/1978 PLO 5654
- 01/25/1979 PLO 5657
- 08/30/1982 PLO 6329
- 11/18/2009 AKFF 016304, 231120 Wdl-Alaska D1 Withdrawal
- 02/28/2015 AKAA 09310801, 234400 Wdl-Fed Energy Commission
- 01/29/2016 AKAA 092885, 281001 Row-Roads
- 02/22/2023 AKAA 096301, 292006 Permits Section 302 FLPMA

Review of State records including the Recorder's Office database, LAS records, DBRS, and Mapper produced the following:

- 11/14/1978 General Grant Selection application GS-2844
- 11/14/1978 General Grant Selection application GS-2845
- 11/14/1978 General Grant Selection application GS-2853
- 11/10/1986 General Grant Selection application GS-5266
- At-risk State of Alaska mining claims: ADL numbers 700433 through 700438, 700444 through 700449, 712367 through 712374, and 712377 through 712384

Surrounding Land Pattern

The selected lands are located approximately 40 miles Southeast of Cantwell and approximately 2 miles north of the Susitna River. The surrounding areas to the North, East, and South have been conveyed to the State of Alaska or is owned by BLM and has been top-filed by the State of Alaska under ANILCA. Lastly, certain sections of land to the west are owned by Cook Inlet Native Corporation.

Request

We are seeking your agency's input as to whether DNR should relinquish its land selection, which would 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 P.M. on **March 19, 2026**

Enclosures:

1. Attachment A, Vicinity Map
2. Attachment B, Surrounding Land Status Map