

From: [Cebrian, Merben R](#)
To: [Boario, Sara D](#)
Cc: [Sanchez, Ronnie](#)
Subject: Re: Re: Coastal Plain SEIS - cooperating agency meeting postponed
Date: Friday, September 1, 2023 1:06:00 PM

Thanks, Sara. And I will loop in with Bobbie Jo about the communications issues with Kaktovik, making sure they get a hard copy delivered when the draft SEIS comes out. -Merben

Merben R. Cebrian
Refuge Manager, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
101 12th Avenue, Rm 236 Fairbanks, AK 99701
+1 907 388 6751
<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/arctic>

From: Boario, Sara D <sara_boario@fws.gov>
Sent: Friday, September 1, 2023 10:41 AM
To: Cebrian, Merben R <merben_cebrian@fws.gov>
Cc: Sanchez, Ronnie <ronnie_sanchez@fws.gov>
Subject: Fw: Re: Coastal Plain SEIS - cooperating agency meeting postponed

Merben - making sure you have this background, as well. - sb

From: Skibo, Bobbie Jo <bobbiejo_skibo@fws.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 7:54 AM
To: Boario, Sara D <sara_boario@fws.gov>
Cc: Leonetti, Crystal <crystal_leonetti@fws.gov>; Sanchez, Ronnie <ronnie_sanchez@fws.gov>
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] Re: Coastal Plain SEIS - cooperating agency meeting postponed

FYI, response to recent NVK email below.

From: Kuhns, Stephanie L <skuhns@blm.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 4:59 PM
To: Matthew Rexford <nvkaktovik@gmail.com>
Cc: teresa-imm@outlook.com; Sweet, Serena E <ssweet@blm.gov>; Skibo, Bobbie Jo <bobbiejo_skibo@fws.gov>
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Re: Coastal Plain SEIS - cooperating agency meeting postponed

Good afternoon, Matthew,

Please see below for responses to each of your questions.

1. When do you expect to have the next Cooperating Agency meeting?
 - a. Can we get the notes of all prior Cooperative Agency meetings for our review and records? It seems we have the notes from the prior ITEK Working Group but only

have notes from one Cooperating Agency meeting.

- We do not have a date yet for the next cooperating agency meeting - we plan to hold a meeting once we know when the Draft SEIS will be published. We are still waiting for direction from our leadership as to when we will publish the Draft SEIS.
- Notes from the May 3, 2023 Cooperating Agency meeting are attached. (Please note these are only Stephanie's notes and they are not comprehensive.)

2. Yes, it would be helpful to provide hard copies of the SEIS to us but we would want to make sure that we received them when the SEIS is made available.

- Please let us know the best address to mail hard copies. They will be sent out when the Draft SEIS is published.

3. When you state you would be happy to schedule an individual Cooperating Agency meeting with Native Village of Kaktovik – what do you anticipate? What would be different about this meeting than a G2G meeting? Can you elaborate more on this idea?

- An individual Cooperating Agency meeting would cover the same SEIS topics as the larger group Cooperating Agency meeting format, but would provide more time and space for the Native Village of Kaktovik to discuss your concerns and ideas directly with the project management team and to dive deeper into the draft SEIS, if desired. Our interest is in ensuring that you have the opportunity to meaningfully participate in this process, and we are open to holding individual Cooperating Agency sessions with you if that format works better for you.
- In comparison, a G2G does not need to be limited to the SEIS and can be held at any time per your request. At a G2G, we can cover topics not specific to the SEIS, and BLM and USFWS Alaska leadership may attend.

4. Due to the delay for additional internal review, what is the new anticipated date for publishing the SEIS? We want to make sure that we are prepared for its release.

- We anticipate that the Draft SEIS will be published this fall. We do not have a set date at this time. The feedback you provided in your last email – such as the detailed information related to maps – was greatly appreciated and will be used to inform the final SEIS.

5. We understand that part of the NEPA process requires the ANILCA 810 consultation, however, we feel that since we have been mired down in meaningless ITEK discussions for the entire time we have been engaged on the SEIS, our community is a bit exhausted and somewhat reluctant of the agencies hosting any public meetings on either the SEIS or ANILCA 810 in Kaktovik. What happens if hearings in Kaktovik cannot be scheduled?

- Based on the preliminary findings in the ANILCA Section 810 subsistence evaluation, the BLM is legally required to hold a subsistence hearing in or near Kaktovik, in conjunction with the Draft SEIS public meetings. We will

plan to work with the community to determine the best location to hold the hearing and public meeting so that the residents of your community can attend and participate. The public meeting and 810 hearing are separate from our regular Cooperating Agency meetings and G2G consultations – they are open to the wider public to attend and we hope that the Native Village of Kaktovik will participate.

Thank you,

Stephanie, Serena, and Bobbie Jo

From: Matthew Rexford <nykaktovik@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, August 22, 2023 2:44 PM

To: Kuhns, Stephanie L <skuhns@blm.gov>

Cc: teresa-imm@outlook.com; Sweet, Serena E <ssweet@blm.gov>; Skibo, Bobbie Jo <bobbiejo_skibo@fws.gov>

Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Coastal Plain SEIS - cooperating agency meeting postponed

Thank you for the clarity you provided below on the “value” of our comments. Based on your note below we have a couple of questions on timing.

1. When do you expect to have the next Cooperating Agency meeting?
 - a. Can we get the notes of all prior Cooperative Agency meetings for our review and records? It seems we have the notes from the prior ITEK Working Group but only have notes from one Cooperating Agency meeting.
2. Yes, it would be helpful to provide hard copies of the SEIS to us but we would want to make sure that we received them when the SEIS is made available.
3. When you state you would be happy to schedule an individual Cooperating Agency meeting with Native Village of Kaktovik – what do you anticipate? What would be different about this meeting than a G2G meeting? Can you elaborate more on this idea?
4. Due to the delay for additional internal review, what is the new anticipated date for publishing the SEIS? We want to make sure that we are prepared for its release.
5. We understand that part of the NEPA process requires the ANILCA 810 consultation, however, we feel that since we have been mired down in meaningless ITEK discussions for the entire time we have been engaged on the SEIS, our community is a bit exhausted and somewhat reluctant of the agencies hosting any public meetings on either the SEIS or ANILCA 810 in Kaktovik. What happens if hearings in Kaktovik cannot be scheduled?

I look forward to the answers to our questions above.

Regards,

Matthew Rexford
Tribal Administrator

NATIVE VILLAGE OF KAKTOVIK
P.O. Box 52
Kaktovik, AK 99747
Phone: (907) 640-2042 or 2043
Fax: (907) 640-2044

On Fri, Aug 18, 2023 at 3:44 PM Kuhns, Stephanie L <skuhns@blm.gov> wrote:

Good afternoon, Matthew,

Thank you for your feedback and for sharing your frustrations. We value your participation and input in this process and want to assure you that the feedback you've provided thus far, along with comments you provide through future forums (e.g., the upcoming public comment period) will be used to inform the development of the Final SEIS.

As we look forward, there will be additional opportunities for you to engage: as a Cooperating Agency, via the public comment period, and through Government-to-Government and/or ANCSA consultation. Through these processes, we want to ensure you have opportunities to engage in ways that work best for you within the broader NEPA context. If it is helpful to have hard copies of the Draft SEIS for your review, we would be happy to send copies to you.

While we had planned to hold the Cooperating Agency meeting that was scheduled for the 16th as a teleconference, we would be happy to schedule an individual Cooperating Agency meeting with the Native Village of Kaktovik. Let us know if that is something you would like, and if there is a date in the coming weeks that would work well for you and your team. Please note that when we hold the next full cooperating agency meeting, you will receive another notice and invitation to that meeting as well.

Once we publish the Draft SEIS, we will begin holding both in-person and virtual public meetings. This will allow more opportunities for the people of Kaktovik to provide testimonial and have their voices heard. Pending your approval, we are planning to hold a combined public meeting and ANILCA 810 hearing in the Native Village of Kaktovik. We would value your input on dates that would work best for the community.

We would also like to offer to hold a Government-to-Government consultation and an ANCSA consultation if that is of interest to the community. Again, please let us know if that is something you would like, and if so, some dates that would work.

Thank you again for your feedback and for your engagement in this process, and we look forward to hearing from you about how we can facilitate opportunities for your engagement and input that meet your needs.

Thank you,

Stephanie, Serena, and Bobbie Jo

From: Matthew Rexford <nvkaktovik@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, August 11, 2023 11:30 AM

To: Kuhns, Stephanie L <skuhns@blm.gov>

Cc: teresa-imm@outlook.com

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Coastal Plain SEIS - cooperating agency meeting postponed

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

Dear SEIS Team,

We can't help but find irony in your need to delay release of the SEIS for more internal review. When the Native Village of Kaktovik requested an extension to review the PDSEIS due to internet issues, including latency problems, that inhibited our ability to download the three volumes of the PDSEIS we were denied, even after we have repeatedly told you of this issue. You have continued to ignore this communication deficiency throughout our engagement and have repeatedly put NVK at a disadvantage throughout this process. That and your continuing focus on the need of incorporating our ITEK, in other words our 'intellectual property' into the SEIS while we have repeatedly stated our reluctance and your lack of definitively stating the reasons why you were focused on it have created a lack of trust with us with your approach. We also note that you now want to have a Cooperating Agency meeting which should have been recurring throughout the process. Our one attempt, back in November 2022, to participate as a Cooperating Agency along with the other Cooperating Agencies was a disaster for us because we could only attend via phone and were not able to effectively hear or participate meaningfully in the meeting, something we made you aware of.

It does appear to us that your continued focus on ITEK is continuing to lead to not only 'cultural trespass' as we stated in our February letter but also to 'cultural genocide' by you placing the Gwich'in phrase 'Sacred Place Where Life Begins' over our homelands on Map 3.44. How dare you take a slogan developed in the 1980's following passage of ANILCA as sincere traditional knowledge when the bulk of the map is covered with our Inupiat place names that reflect our occupancy and homelands. We are outraged by this and in fact we are questioning your ability to maintain neutrality and be objective, which is required by agencies conducting NEPA reviews, in this SEIS due to your continued push to usurp our existence and culture by a group from outside our region. When do animals replace the existence of humans – our people – who occupy these lands and have for centuries. WE ARE PART OF THE ENVIRONMENT TOO! We believe you have

lost sight of this critical difference. Why don't you use your own data that has historical meaning for place names like what is used in your own BLM database [AK_NativePlaceNames - Visualization \(arcgis.com\)](#) which reflects that you are representing place names incorrectly because they are a place which is a location and generally not encompassing an arbitrary area like that of the 1002 Area which was defined under ANILCA. As you can see, in your own system, the Gwich'in place names are limited to two locations within the 1002 Area while there are approximately 100 Iñupiaq place names covering the same area. There is one Gwich'in place name along the Canning River, south of the 1002 Area, this dot in the GIS map does not make the entire Canning River a Gwich'in place. In fact, there are 5 locations along the Canning River that are Iñupiat locations. It also appears that you have not used all of the locations identified as Iñupiaq on your map even if they don't have a specific Iñupiaq name, however they are identified as Iñupiat in the description. Again, these are locations used by my people, both historically and in recent times. It is unconscionable to call the entire Canning River Gwich'in! We think you should show all the Iñupiat places on the map not just the ones that have a name associated with them because this is our traditional knowledge and reflects our locations across the area – by not doing so you are being selective with respect to our traditional knowledge that was provided to researchers in the 1970's and 80's. This again reflects the bias that we have witnessed under this SEIS process.

We are the people most impacted by the Porcupine Caribou Herd (PCH) movements, they are the only herd that we can reliably use as a subsistence resource – Maps 3-35 and 3-36 show the limited movement of the Central Arctic Herd into our area. It is in our best interest to keep the population healthy for our community – does that make our homelands 'sacred'? Our homelands are sacred to us as a people because our ancestors are buried throughout this area, our children are born in this region. Since time immemorial we have had campsites that were reused overtime and were located about a 1-day walk from each other – these were there because our people were migratory and followed the animals. Figure 3-6 reflects what native populations have historically taken animals and Alaska residents represent the second smallest percentage of takes – the story here is that the focus on the PCH is misguided because we have no authority in Canada where the bulk of the caribou are harvested. Map 3-45 reflects significant overlap between the Central Arctic Caribou Herd (CACH) and the PCH both in the 1002 Area and in the Yukon Flats, that the prior maps don't really echo particularly in the 1002 Area but they do match for the Yukon Flats area. Map 3-62 reflects that hunting from Arctic Village only goes as far north as the Continental Divide.

I want to thank you for sending this as it provides NVK a means of expressing our frustrations yet again on the one-sided nature that you continue to portray because one indigenous group has the legal counsel to engage and we do not. We have been disadvantaged since engaging as a Cooperating Agency by having little to no support which basically means to us that your ability to follow the NEPA process is broken.

Best regards,

Matthew Rexford

Tribal Administrator

NATIVE VILLAGE OF KAKTOVIK

P.O. Box 52
Kaktovik, AK 99747
Phone: (907) 640-2042 or 2043
Fax: (907) 640-2044

On Wed, Aug 9, 2023 at 3:38 PM Kuhns, Stephanie L <skuhns@blm.gov> wrote:

Hello,

Since we reached out on Monday, we have been directed to postpone the release of the SEIS so there is additional time for internal review. As such, we will delay our cooperating agency meeting until we have received further direction from our leadership. Additionally, we would still like to schedule a call with you to discuss a public meeting and ANILCA 810 hearing in Kaktovik.

We recognize that the SEIS is a priority for you and that the changes to the schedule may be burdensome. Thank you for your patience and flexibility with the ongoing process and changes.

Best,

Stephanie, Serena, and Bobbie Jo

Stephanie Kuhns ([she/her](#))
Planning and Environmental Coordinator
Alaska State Office
USDOI - Bureau of Land Management
(907)271-4208 (office)
(907)201-8826 (cell)

“A desk is a dangerous place from which to view the world.” – John LeCarré