



News

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BLM completes Alpine Satellite EIS

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has released the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Alpine Satellites Development Plan, a proposal by ConocoPhillips Alaska, Inc. to develop five satellite oil reservoirs in the northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska and in the Colville River Delta. Details will appear in the September 3, 2004 issue of the *Federal Register*.

The Final EIS contains the agency-preferred alternative, an alternative that modifies the company's original proposal in several areas. Some of the major changes proposed include: relocating portions of proposed gravel access roads and pipelines outside a three-mile setback for Fish Creek, raising pipelines an additional two feet (to seven-feet high) to assist migrating caribou, lengthening the bridge across a channel of the Colville River, moving power lines from separate poles to cable trays mounted on the pipeline supports, and adding environmental enhancements to the access road to pad CD-4.

"We made a number of positive adjustments to reflect considerations raised by the public and cooperating agencies," said BLM's Alaska State Director Henri Bisson. "Several key changes responded specifically to concerns about subsistence issues raised by residents of Nuiqsut which will also help protect the environment," he said. "It is also important to note that what we are proposing is consistent with the 1998 plan for this area. Some production and development facilities will be located within the Fish Creek 3-mile setback. The proposed location of these facilities is environmentally preferable and on that basis is contemplated by the exception clause outlined in the original 1998 plan," continued Bisson.

The development plan represents an important expansion of the estimated 429 million-barrel Alpine field, one of the largest discoveries in the U.S. in decades. By 2006, initial production of over 330 million barrels of additional oil is expected. This amount of oil will produce 6.5 billion gallons of gasoline **and** 3.1 billion gallons of diesel or heating fuel. This equates to at least a year's supply of gas for 15 million private vehicles and of heating fuel for more than half the homes in the Northeastern United States.

Copies of the EIS will be distributed to libraries throughout Alaska. Compact Disks and paper copies will be available at BLM offices in Anchorage and Fairbanks. The document can also be read on-line through the BLM website www.ak.blm.gov.

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