



1991 Annual Report on Alaska's Mineral Resources



Frontispiece. R/V *Karluk* in Growler Bay, Glacier Island, Prince William Sound. To study hydrocarbon contamination following the 1989 *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, the USGS conducted a 7-day cruise aboard this vessel in 1990 to sample sediments on and adjacent to selected heavily oiled beaches. Photograph by P. Carlson.

1991 Annual Report on Alaska's Mineral Resources

JILL L. SCHNEIDER, Editor

Prepared in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management,
the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Minerals Management Service,
the National Park Service, the U.S. Bureau of Mines,
the U.S. Forest Service, and the Department of Energy,
as mandated by Section 1011 of the Alaska National Interest
Lands Conservation Act, Public Law 96-487, of December 2, 1980

A summary of mineral resource activities in Alaska for the year 1990

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY CIRCULAR 1072

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|---|
| ACE | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers |
| ADEC | Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation |
| ADGGS | Alaska Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys |
| AFOC | Alaska Field Operations Center |
| AMHL | Alaska Mental Health lands |
| AML | Abandoned Mineral Lands |
| AMRAP | Alaska Mineral Resource Assessment Program |
| ANILCA | Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act |
| ANWR | Arctic National Wildlife Refuge |
| bbl/d | barrels of oil per day |
| BLM | Bureau of Land Management |
| BPX | BP Exploration |
| BTU/LB | British thermal units per pound |
| CAMA | Central Arctic Management Area |
| CFR | Code of Federal Regulations |
| CRREL | Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory |
| CWA | Clean Water Act of 1977, as amended |
| DOE | Department of Energy |
| DOI | Department of the Interior |
| DST | Deep stratigraphic test |
| EIS | Environmental Impact Statement |
| EPA | Environmental Protection Agency |
| FEIS | Final Environmental Impact Statement |
| FWS | Fish and Wildlife Service |
| MAS | Minerals Availability System |
| mcf/d | Million cubic feet of natural gas per day |
| MCIS | Mineral Claim Information System |
| MILS | Minerals Industry Location System |
| MMS | Minerals Management Service |
| MRDS | Mineral Resources Data System |
| NEPA | National Environmental Policy Act |
| NOAA | National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration |
| NPDES | National Pollution Discharge Elimination System |
| NPRA | National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska |
| NPS | National Park Service |
| NTIS | National Technical Information Service |
| OCS | Outer Continental Shelf |
| PCB | Polychlorinated biphenyls |
| PGM | Platinum-group metal |
| REE | Rare-earth element |
| SCLDF | Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund |
| TACT | Trans-Alaska Crustal Transect |
| TAPS | Trans-Alaska Pipeline System |
| TLMP | Tongass Land Management Plan |
| TTRA | Tongass Timber Reform Act |
| UAF | University of Alaska at Fairbanks |
| USBM | U.S. Bureau of Mines |
| USCG | U.S. Coast Guard |
| USFS | U.S. Forest Service |
| USGS | U.S. Geological Survey |
| VNIU-1 | Soviet All Union Institute of Gold and Rare Metals Research |

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1991 Annual Report on Alaska's Mineral Resources

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SUMMARY

Section 1011 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) of 1980 requires that "On or before October 1, 1982, and annually thereafter, the President shall transmit to Congress all pertinent public information relating to minerals in Alaska gathered by the United States Geological Survey, Bureau of Mines, and any other Federal agency." This report has been prepared in response to that requirement.

This circular is the tenth in a series of annual ANILCA reports. The report provides information about current Alaskan mineral projects and events during 1990; the emphasis is on Federal activity. The report addresses both onshore and offshore areas of Alaska.

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), U.S. Bureau of Mines (USBM), and Minerals Management Service (MMS) are the principal Federal agencies that publish information about energy and mineral resources in Alaska. Their reports and data form the basis for decisions by other Federal agencies regarding land use, access, environmental impacts, and mining claim evaluation. The time required for sample analysis, data synthesis, and publication is lengthy; as a result, scientific reports are generally issued a year or more after initial sample and data collection. Other sources of information for this report include additional Federal and State publications, trade and professional journals, newspaper articles, presentations at public meetings and hearings, and press releases.

Information is provided for two broad categories of minerals: energy resources and nonfuel-mineral resources.

Energy Resources

Oil and Gas

Alaskan oil and gas production in 1990 totaled 665.5 million barrels of oil and natural gas liquids, a 5.2-percent decrease from 1989 levels, plus 205 billion cubic feet of dry

natural gas, a 5-percent increase. This was the second straight year of decreased oil production. Daily oil production averaged 1.82 million barrels, and oil prices for the year averaged \$21.50 per barrel. The eight-billionth barrel of crude oil flowed through the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) in late December 1990. The North Slope produces 98 percent of the State's oil, and Cook Inlet produces 99 percent of the State's gas.

The Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission approved 173 drilling permits in 1990; this was a 31-percent increase over the 132 wells permitted in 1989. Thirteen exploratory wells and 114 development and service wells were drilled. Shell Western continued its wildcat drilling in the Chukchi Sea; four of eight proposed wells have been completed. Exploratory drilling also resumed in Cook Inlet. Seismic surveys were conducted on the North Slope and in the Cook Inlet region, as well as in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas. Neither the Federal Government nor the State held oil and gas lease sales in 1990.

On the North Slope, the increased application of well-stimulation strategies, such as water flooding, high-pressure reservoir fracturing, and gas reinjection, elevated Prudhoe Bay production in the second half of the year. Conoco defined the Schrader Bluff pool in the Milne Point field. Agreement over causeway construction and breaching was reached between ARCO Alaska, BP Exploration, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACE), paving the way for development of the Point McIntyre offshore oil field. In the Cook Inlet area, a new drilling unit was established on the Kenai Peninsula for the production of natural gas, and a new gas pipeline will bring McArthur River gas from Granite Point to the Beluga power station. Oil production and shipping were disrupted early in the year by eruptive activity at Redoubt Volcano but returned to normal by June.

The MMS prepared for 1991 oil and gas lease sales in the Beaufort Sea, Navarin Basin, and Chukchi Sea, and continued its cooperative studies with the Alaska Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys (ADGGS) on the thermal evolution of the Beaufort Sea continental margin. Preliminary results of the national resource assessment for the Alaska Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) were released in May. Long-term monitoring programs of the MMS evaluate the possible environmental effects of offshore oil and gas exploration and production.

The USGS identified seven petroleum systems in Alaska: three on the North Slope, two in Cook Inlet, and two in the Gulf of Alaska. North Slope petroleum plays and assessment results were published. The USGS also continued its evaluation of oil potential in the Brooks Range's northern foothills and in the Kandik basin of east-central Alaska, as well as the petroleum source potential of coals in the Middle Tanana basin. Researchers are investigating the potential production of gas from hydrate complexes, and the thermal maturity map of Alaska is being updated.

In 1990, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) completed resource assessments in the south-central Alaska planning area and continued an assessment in the Western Arctic planning area. In addition, the BLM continued to pursue interest in a lease sale in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPRA). BLM geologists continued their ongoing minerals studies, with special emphasis on the North Slope and nearshore Beaufort Sea. The TAPS oil spill contingency plan has been revised.

In keeping with its mission to protect fish, wildlife, and habitat, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) conducted environmental monitoring, contaminant analysis, and remedial cleanup programs with respect to petroleum-related activities in various parts of Alaska. The FWS issued 11 special-use permits for geologic work in seven refuges and reviewed 25 permit applications related to oil and gas activities for the ACE in order to recommend measures to minimize habitat losses. Two Federal OCS environmental impact statements and 14 State oil and gas lease sales were reviewed.

The Department of Energy (DOE) continued to sponsor seminars presenting new technological petroleum research findings, to coordinate interagency petroleum research, and to study the applicability of recovery techniques to gas-hydrate reservoirs in the Arctic.

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

During 1990, the FWS completed the third year of its 5-year continuing studies program for the 1002 area on the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). The program focuses on a better understanding of the area's ecosystems so that there can be effective mitigation of possible development activities. Review of the study program and mitigation analysis is ongoing.

In response to two lawsuits, the FWS compiled a list of the documents that made up the administrative record for preparation of the 1987 report to Congress on ANWR. The FWS and BLM continued to respond to public and Congressional inquiries regarding oil and gas potential of the 1002 area and the potential impacts of development activities on fish and wildlife. To better address these questions, BLM scientists continue to supplement their ANWR studies by reviewing all pertinent geologic and geophysical information.

Exxon Valdez Oil Spill

The oil tanker T/V *Exxon Valdez* ran aground on Bligh Reef on March 24, 1989, spilling more than 11 million gallons (262,000 barrels) of Prudhoe Bay crude oil into eastern Prince William Sound; the oil eventually spread south and west as far as the Alaska Peninsula. In two years, Exxon has spent \$2 billion on cleanup operations. Bioremediation of oiled beaches has proved to be the most effective technique employed.

The FWS has remained active in oil-spill response operations. The FWS cooperated with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Federal on-scene coordinator in assessing the status of national wildlife refuge shorelines and in monitoring cleanup activities. Other programs undertaken to protect Department of the Interior (DOI) trust resources included the protection of nesting bald eagles from disturbance by cleanup activities. The FWS also continued natural resource damage assessment and restoration planning for the spill area. The MMS provided both staff for cleanup activities and funds for damage assessment studies. The Office of Oil Spill Coordination of the National Park Service (NPS) permitted myriad phases of the cleanup operations, and NPS staff surveyed, prioritized, and monitored beach cleanup within park units. The NPS Katmai Field Office was reopened to provide logistical coordination for aircraft, ships, and personnel. For comparison with their 1989 work, the USGS resampled bottom sediments in Prince William Sound to identify oil contamination. Personnel from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) studied the spill's environmental impacts on national forest lands in order to recommend remedial actions.

Coal and Peat

Alaskan coal production hit a record high in 1990 at 1.58 million short tons, valued at \$45 million. About 50 percent of the coal was used for in-state power generation, and the rest exported to South Korea for the same purpose. The production of peat, used primarily as an agricultural soil conditioner, expanded 27 percent over 1989 levels to 65,000 cubic yards, valued at \$400,000.

All of Alaska's commercial coal is produced from a single mine in central Alaska by the Usibelli Coal Company, which received the DOI's 1989 "Excellence in Surface Coal Mining and Reclamation" award for its mine-water treatment operation. Coal developments planned for Wishbone Hill in the Matanuska Valley and Beluga on the west side of Cook Inlet have been suspended pending the resolution of the Mental Health Lands issue. Coal resources on the western North Slope might be developed for local use.

The USGS completed its resource studies of Tertiary coals on the eastern North Slope and continues its geo-

chemical research on samples from the Healy coal fields. The USBM evaluated coal deposits that might utilize port sites proposed by the ACE, and the BLM managed a coal lease in the Jarvis Creek field near Delta Junction. The FWS reviewed proposals for both the Diamond Chuina and Wishbone Hill coal mines in south-central Alaska. A grant from the DOE is financing the construction of a new power plant at the Usibelli coal mine at Healy.

Uranium

Alaska's uranium resources remain undeveloped due to low market value coupled with high exploration and development costs. USGS uranium research continued at a low level; most of the activity relates to previously collected data.

Geothermal Resources

Geothermal resources in Alaska are associated with widespread young volcanic activity in the south-central part of the State. No Federal research was funded for geothermal studies in 1990.

Nonfuel-Mineral Resources

Metallic Minerals

During 1990, Alaska's mineral industry experienced positive growth in the production and exploration sectors for the fourth consecutive year. Total mineral production values nearly doubled to \$534 million, mainly due to metals production at the Greens Creek and Red Dog mines. Exploration costs rose to \$56.7 million, the highest since 1981, but development expenditures fell to \$11.4 million. Zinc replaced gold as the second most valuable mineral commodity in the State, after oil and gas; zinc production of 181,200 tons was valued at \$253.7 million. Silver production doubled, and lead production increased fivefold. The closure of three mining operations dropped gold production to 89,204 troy ounces and tin production to 57,000 pounds.

Much precious-metals activity again focused on gold. In southeastern Alaska, the Alaska-Juneau, Jualin, and Kensington mines are in various stages of advanced exploration. The Valdez Creek mine in central Alaska reopened under new owners after extensive development work. Exploration drilling continued in the Valdez Creek area, at the Fort Knox deposit near Fairbanks, at Illinois Creek in southwestern Alaska, and at the Big Hurrah property on the Seward Peninsula. Offshore from Nome, the megadredge *Bima* was closed down after several unprofitable years. Canadian minerals exploration in British Columbia is begin-

ning to have an economic impact on the southeastern Alaska towns of Haines, Juneau, and Wrangell.

The mining industry celebrated the successful production of base and precious metals at both the Red Dog zinc-lead-silver deposit in northwestern Alaska and the Greens Creek silver-zinc-gold-lead mine on Admiralty Island. A major setback occurred when the operators of the Quartz Hill molybdenum mine in southeastern Alaska were denied a permit to discharge mine tailings into the Wilson Arm/Smeaton Bay fjord; as a result, mine development has been indefinitely suspended.

The Alaska Mineral Resource Assessment Program (AMRAP) continues to be the focus of USGS mapping and mineral assessment in Alaska. In 1990, USGS scientists released numerous reports on geologic mapping, mineral resource assessment, and specialized geologic studies of Alaska lands; initiated and continued research, field studies, and report-writing for mineral assessments of 30 1:250,000-scale quadrangles; and performed specialized geologic studies on a detailed scale for 41 projects around the State.

Site-specific studies were conducted on precious-metal deposits and strategic and critical mineral deposits. The USGS published its findings on mineral resources of the Tongass National Forest. Two teams of Soviet geologists visited Alaska as part of the comparative study of lode mineral deposits in the USSR Far East, Alaska, and western Canada, and a team of USGS geologists visited the USSR Far East to study ophiolites and their related mineral deposits. Work on the USGS Trans-Alaska Crustal Transect program in 1990 included (1) detailed geologic mapping, (2) magnetotelluric, seismic-refraction, and seismic-reflection surveys, and (3) interpretation, publication, and presentations of project findings.

The USBM examined the potential for mineral development near ACE-proposed port sites. Other studies considered the feasibility of cyanide use in precious-metal extraction under Arctic conditions, the hazards associated with abandoned mine sites in the Chugach National Forest, and the impacts of permitting and environmental costs on mining. Mineral assessment programs were carried out in the Ketchikan and Valdez Creek mining districts. Deposits that contain strategic and critical metals, minerals, and materials were also investigated. The USBM's research activities included the characterization and beneficiation of strategic and critical mineral deposits, evaluation of Soviet placer mining technology, evaluation of mining deep placer deposits, mine closure studies in arctic and subarctic climates, and sampling offshore mineral deposits. The USBM Mineral Institute program provides funding for both the University of Alaska at Fairbanks and the University of Mississippi Marine Minerals Technology Center. The USBM also co-funds the Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory's permafrost tunnel research facility. The Alaska Technology Transfer Office in Anchorage was closed in 1990.

A 4-year mineral resources inventory was initiated for the Colville mining district in the southern portion of the NPRA. The BLM, USBM, and USGS will collaborate on this interagency project.

Seven mineral patents were issued by the BLM, and 244 mining operations were active on BLM-administered lands. The FWS reviewed applications for permits or permit modifications for placer mining, mineral assessment, gold dredging, and other mineral activities both on and off national wildlife refuges. The FWS also monitored mining activities and initiated or continued several studies of contaminants associated with mining operations. The MMS is planning a competitive OCS minerals lease sale of gold-bearing placers in Norton Sound south of Nome.

The NPS published the final environmental impact statements on the cumulative effects of mining in Denali, Wrangell-St. Elias, and Yukon-Charley Rivers National Parks and Preserves; this action led to the dissolution by the U.S. District Court of the injunction against mining in these three parks. Congress approved \$6 million to initiate purchase of mining claims in the Kantishna District of Denali National Park and Preserve. The NPS also drafted regulations for the implementation of ANILCA Section 1010, which will govern Federal mineral activities on national park lands; continued validity determinations on unpatented mining claims; approved one plan of operations for proposed mining; and conducted revegetation studies on previously mined land in Denali National Park and Preserve.

The USFS continued its revision of the Tongass National Forest land management plan and confirmed Kennecott Mining's extralateral rights at Greens Creek. The USFS also conducted mineral validity examinations and inventories of environmental and safety hazards on mining claims in national forests.

Industrial Minerals

The use of nonmetallic nonfuel resources in Alaska rose only slightly in 1990 due to the lack of major construction projects in the State. Combined sand and gravel output totaled \$41.8 million; building stone production totaled \$22.1 million. The export of glacial ice to Japan and Hawaii continues to escalate, forcing the State to issue permits and enact regulations regarding ice harvest.

Two USBM reports summarized the industrial minerals of the Juneau and Valdez Creek mining districts. The BLM made a number of mineral materials sales. The FWS continued permitting and monitoring small sand and gravel operations in support of local transportation and industry in various areas of Alaska. The USFS sold sand, gravel, and quarried stone for use in the construction of timber sale roads, breakwaters, and airports.

INTRODUCTION

Section 1011 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) of 1980 requires that "On or before October 1, 1982, and annually thereafter, the President shall transmit to Congress all pertinent public information relating to minerals in Alaska gathered by the United States Geological Survey, Bureau of Mines, and any other Federal agency." The USGS subsequently was delegated as the lead agency in responding to this requirement. This circular, the tenth in its series, synthesizes information made public in 1990.

The USGS and the USBM are the principal Federal agencies that generate information about onshore mineral resources in Alaska; the MMS is the prime agency reporting on resource activities in Alaska's coastal waters. Their data, analyses, and reports are used by other agencies for resolving questions on land use, access, environmental impacts, and mining claim evaluation.

As used herein, the term "public information" includes results of Federal projects as published in Government reports and professional and trade journals; oral presentations by representatives of Federal and State agencies and industry at symposia, conferences, and other public forums; and proceedings volumes, press releases, and newspaper articles. Unless otherwise indicated, references cited are listed at the end of this report; appendix 1 lists additional mineral reports published or released in 1990. Data from the ADGGS annual report on Alaska's mineral industry are cited in parts of this circular.

This report focuses on energy resources (oil, gas, coal, peat, uranium, and geothermal) and nonfuel-mineral resources (metallic and industrial minerals).

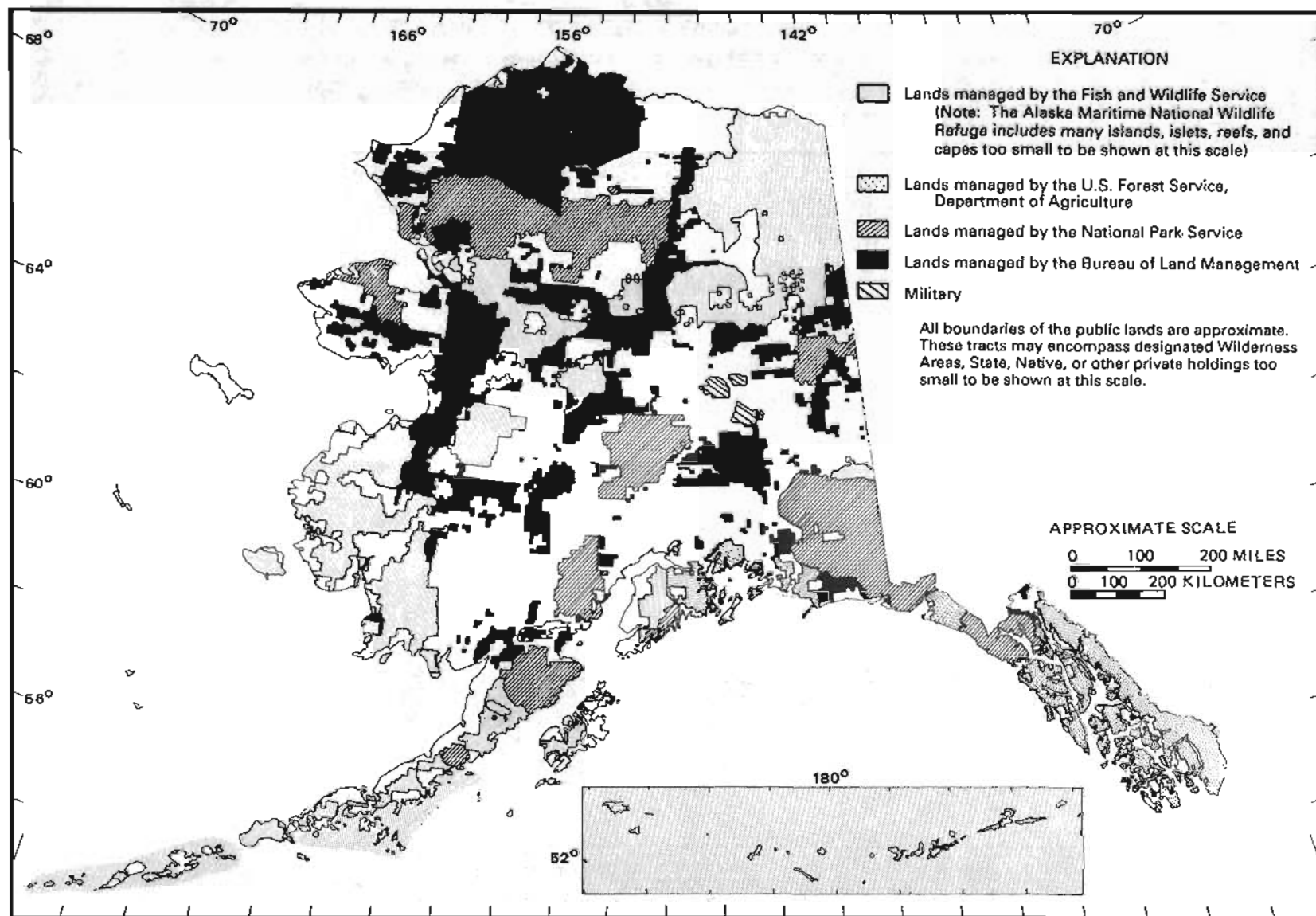
The next section describes the current mineral programs of land-management and other Federal agencies in Alaska. The roles of these agencies as they relate to minerals are discussed in appendix 2. The distribution of lands under Federal management is shown in figure 1.

MINERAL PROGRAMS

Department of the Interior

U.S. Geological Survey

As directed by Section 1010 of ANILCA, the Secretary of the Interior requires an assessment of "the oil, gas, and other mineral potential on all public lands in the State of Alaska in order to expand the data base with respect to the mineral potential of such lands." AMRAP is one of the major responses of the USGS to this legislation. The goal of this program is a systematic investigation of the State's mineral resources through four progressively more detailed levels of



Base from maps prepared by the Bureau of Land Management in 1987.

Figure 1. Federal land ownership in Alaska (boundaries as of June 1987).

study. Geologic studies at levels I and II are general and cover large areas. Studies at level III draw on many geologic disciplines to produce resource assessments at scales of 1:250,000 and 1:125,000. Level IV research focuses on detailed studies of specific mining districts, mineral deposits, or topics relating to the genesis of mineral deposits. In 1990, level III studies were under way in 30 quadrangles, and a total of 41 level IV studies were in progress.

USGS AMRAP publications are a key source of information about Alaska's geology and resource potential. AMRAP studies are essential for the determination of the distribution and potential of national mineral and energy endowments, for the formulation of public policy affecting resource and land management, and for the improvement of resource assessment technology in minimizing potential impacts from development. These studies, which develop the concepts, models, and techniques needed to identify new mineral deposits, are vital to the minerals exploration industry.

The USGS performs its work in Alaska through several programs in addition to AMRAP. Among the programs active in 1990 were (1) studies of mineral resources on

public lands, (2) the Development of Assessment Techniques Program, whose goal is to improve the ability to identify and evaluate mineral resources, (3) the Strategic and Critical Minerals Program, for identifying the potential of these resources to meet national military and economic needs, (4) the Oil and Gas Investigations Program, which focuses on studies of petroleum-forming processes and potential source regions in order to produce reliable estimates of undiscovered petroleum resources (fig. 2), and (5) the Geothermal Investigations Program, which focuses on studies of the nature, distribution, and energy potential the Nation's geothermal resources. The mineral-related aspects of many of these programs are more fully described in later sections of this report.

Other USGS programs that are not mineral-specific include (1) the Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program, which seeks to mitigate earthquake losses through providing data and evaluations for land-use planning, engineering, and emergency preparations, (2) the Volcano Hazards Program, which includes studies on the assessment, reduction, and prediction of volcanic hazards, and (3) the Geologic Framework Program, involving both general and special-

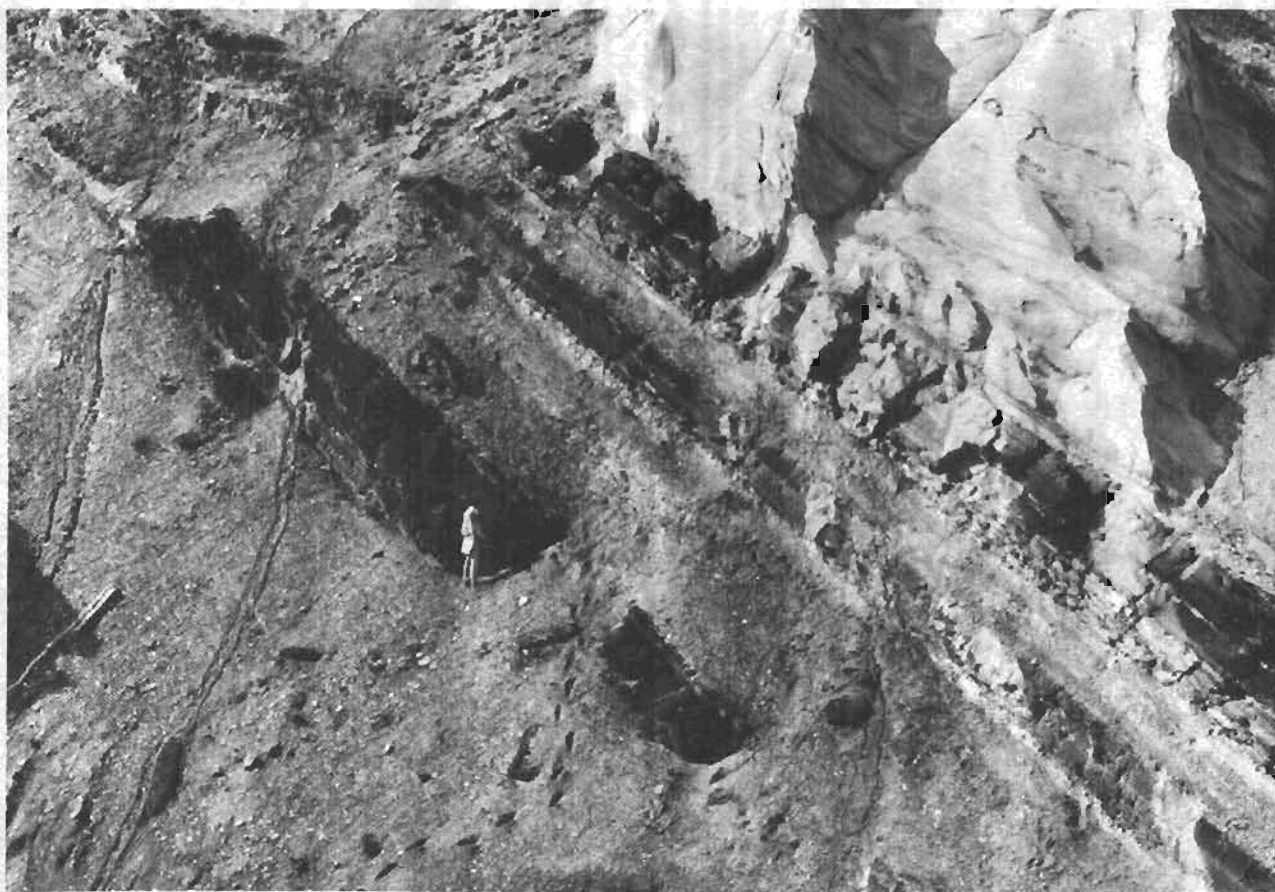


Figure 2. Outcrop of Usibelli Group in Nenana coal field, central Alaska, showing interlayered coals (dark) and sandstones (light). Under the USGS Oil and Gas Investigations Program, vitrinite reflectance determinations were made from these coals for use in compiling the thermal maturity map of Alaska. Photograph by R. Stanley.

ized research on the regional geology of Alaska. In addition, the Trans-Alaska Crustal Transect (TACT) program is a multidisciplinary approach to study the Earth's crust along a corridor from the Pacific Ocean to the Arctic Ocean. This program is coordinated with the Trans-Alaska Lithosphere Investigation, which utilizes earth scientists from the ADGGS, University of Alaska, other universities, and private industry.

Economic-geologic information for mineral occurrences in the United States and worldwide is available through computerized files of the USGS Mineral Resources Data System (MRDS). In Alaska, records on metallic minerals contain 2,051 entries for forty 1:250,000-scale quadrangles in the south-central and southeastern areas of the State. Data in these files include mineral-deposit size, type, description, location, reserves, and pertinent literature references for known or potentially locatable mineral resources (Leonard and Huber, 1987). Geologic information from the Alaska MRDS files can be used to complement economically oriented data from the Mineral Availability and Mineral Industry Location Systems computerized files of the USBM, discussed in the next section. Further MRDS information can be obtained from Donald F. Huber, Central and Western Regional Representative, U.S. Geological Survey, MS 984, 345 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

U.S. Bureau of Mines

During 1990, the Alaska Field Operations Center (AFOC) and various research centers of the USBM were active in the programs listed below; further information on the scope and nature of these programs can be found in appendix 2.

Mineral land assessment.—The USBM's major emphasis in Alaska is the development of areal and commodity-oriented mineral assessments. An integral part of this program focuses on evaluations of mining districts in the State, including assessments of the type, quantity, distribution, reserves, and beneficiation potential of specific mineral deposits. The program also emphasizes site-specific investigations of deposits that contain strategic and critical minerals and advanced materials. USBM scientists locate, map, and estimate the size and grade of mineral deposits; they also collect samples for ore characterization and beneficiation research.

Minerals availability.—The two computerized components of the minerals availability program are the Minerals Availability System (MAS) and the Minerals Industry Location System (MILS) data bases. MAS contains information on reserve estimates, mineral extraction and beneficiation methodologies, environmental constraints on mining, and cost analyses for selected major mineral deposits. MILS lists basic information on the identification and location of known mineral deposits.

Policy analysis.—The policy analysis program compiles analyses of mineral data with respect to local and national needs. Technical, institutional, political, social, and economic parameters are used to identify mineral issues.

State mineral activities.—A USBM Alaskan State Mineral Officer compiles and analyzes mineral data to report on activities and trends within Alaska's mining industry.

Minerals research.—Minerals research in Alaska includes efforts to improve mining technology, mineral extraction, and environmental aspects of the mineral industry, while considering Alaska's distinctive climate and geologic conditions. Research is administered by one or more of nine USBM research centers in the lower 48 States, or by Washington headquarters, as is the case with university cooperative programs such as the Mineral Institutes. Although funded by the USBM, Mineral Institutes utilize university staff and facilities to conduct their work. Researchers from the University of Alaska at Fairbanks and University of Mississippi Mineral Institutes were active in Alaska in 1990.

Much of the USBM's work involves highly speculative, long-range research that promises major technological improvements. Corporate industry often cannot afford to conduct such research; the Nation, however, cannot afford to do without it. A primary goal of this research mission is the communication of USBM research results to industry, government, and the general public.

Minerals Management Service

The primary mission of the MMS in Alaska is the management of mineral resource exploration and development on Federal OCS lands. Management efforts are primarily focused on the leasing of offshore areas for oil and gas exploration and development. However, the MMS also has the authority to lease OCS lands for ocean mining of hard minerals.

Prior to an OCS lease offering, the MMS appraises the economic worth of leasable offshore territory and assesses the environmental risks associated with development of resources on or beneath these lands. Following a thorough process of public review and comment, the MMS selectively makes these lands available to interested parties through competitive OCS lease sales. The MMS then regulates post-lease exploration, development, and production activities to ensure that operations are conducted in a safe and environmentally acceptable manner. The MMS inspects operations to ensure compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and lease terms. Finally, the MMS is responsible for the collection and accounting of royalty and rental revenues generated by the leased properties. At present, no minerals are being developed or produced on the Alaska OCS.

The MMS does not oversee the onshore exploration and development of Federal mineral commodities in Alas-

ka. It is responsible, however, for the collection of royalties, bonus payments, and lease rentals generated from onshore Federal and certain Native lands. Productive leases in the Beaver Creek and Swanson River oil and gas fields as well as the Beluga, Cannery Loop, and Kenai gas fields provide the bulk of this kind of revenue. Specific data on production and revenues from these fields may be obtained from the Minerals Management Service, Royalty Management, Lakewood, CO 80225.

The MMS also conducts regional studies of the geological history and petroleum potential of Alaska's offshore basins for the National Resource Assessment, the MMS-USGS inventory of America's oil and gas resources. Results of these studies have been published as part of the MMS OCS report series. A list of titles is provided elsewhere in this circular. Copies of these reports may be obtained from the MMS regional office library in Anchorage.

Bureau of Land Management

Principal activities of the BLM that are related to Alaska's onshore mineral and energy resources are (1) assessment of the mineral potential of BLM planning areas and, through the planning process, identification of how the minerals can best be managed under the multiple-use concept, (2) development of the terms and conditions, through the planning process and environmental review in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for mineral exploration and development on BLM lands, (3) providing mineral resource and economic evaluations to determine mineral values for lease sales, land exchanges, and Federal land disposal, (4) issuance and management of Federal leases in coordination with the responsible surface-managing agency, (5) administrative maintenance and adjudication of federally recorded mining claims, determination of the validity of claims, critical review of Federal mineral validity reports, and issuance of mineral patents, and (6) regulation of mining activities on BLM lands to protect the environment.

The BLM is responsible for enforcing the environmental and technical stipulations of the Agreement and Grant of Right-of-Way for TAPS, the overall goal of which is to maintain a continuous supply of energy with minimal environmental impact. In addition, the BLM issues land-use authorizations and conducts mineral and materials sales to support preconstruction activities for the planned natural-gas pipeline and other projects. The BLM has also provided assessments of mineral-potential studies for other land-managing agencies, such as the FWS and NPS, and for input to Congressional initiatives, such as the opening of ANWR to leasing.

Administrative responsibilities for minerals require close coordination with other surface-management agen-

cies. Generally, in the case of onshore leases, the BLM issues leases and integrates leasing with other land uses in cooperation with the surface-management agency. To assure proper surface and subsurface protections after a lease is issued, the BLM enforces the regulations of 43 CFR 3160 with respect to the lease stipulations and permit conditions for exploration and development activities.

Fish and Wildlife Service

The two primary missions of the FWS in Alaska are to protect and conserve fish and wildlife and their habitats, and to administer 77 million acres of national wildlife refuge land. Adjunct activities include fish and wildlife research; biological and habitat monitoring; law enforcement; and agency review of, and comments on, permit requests, environmental impact statements (EIS's), and other items. The FWS also cooperates with other Federal and State agencies in similar efforts on behalf of wildlife throughout Alaska.

Mineral activities on FWS lands in Alaska must conform to the agency's mission of protection and conservation. Exploration and resource development in national wildlife refuges is subject to FWS restrictions and protective stipulations. For this purpose, the FWS conducts an environmental contaminants program that includes the sampling and reporting of contaminants in waters, sediments, and organisms affected by oil and gas exploration and development, placer mining, and other mineral activities.

Section 1008 of ANILCA calls for establishing a program for oil and gas leasing on Federal lands south of latitude 68° N., pursuant to the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 as amended. All leasing, exploration, and production would be subject to permits and stipulations designed to protect fish, wildlife, and subsistence activities. This program does not apply to those refuge lands where the Secretary of the Interior determines, after consideration of the national interest, that oil and gas exploration or development would be incompatible with the purposes of the refuge. Section 304(g) of ANILCA cites a comprehensive conservation planning process as the means for identifying parts of refuges where leasing or related activities may be compatible. Comprehensive Conservation Plans for all 16 national wildlife refuges in Alaska were completed by late 1988.

The FWS makes recommendations to other Federal agencies for mitigating adverse environmental impacts. The FWS reviews ACE and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) permit applications under Section 402 of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), Section 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1977 (CWA), as amended, and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, as amended; these applications may involve public or private lands. The review includes recommendations for

Table 2. Alaska exploratory oil wells drilled in 1990

[See figure 5 for locations. Locations for onshore and State offshore wells given in section-township-range; SM, Seward Meridian; UM, Umiat Meridian. Locations for Federal offshore wells given by latitude and longitude. P&A, plugged and abandoned]

| Well No. | Company | Well name | API No. | Location | Total depth (feet) | Date completed (1990) | Remarks |
|--|---------|-----------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Onshore and State offshore waters | | | | | | | |
| 1 | BPX | Pawn Lake | 50-029-22007 | 25-12N-13E,UM | 8,360 | 3/10 | P&A |
| 2 | BPX | Pt. McIntyre No.6 | 50-029-22000 | 14-12N-14E,UM | 11,920 | 3/28 | Suspended |
| 3 | ARCO | Pt. McIntyre No.8 | 50-029-21996 | 16-12N-14E,UM | 11,100 | 3/29 | Delineation, oil |
| 4 | Conoco | Badami No.1 | 50-029-22017 | 9-9N-20E,UM | 13,595 | 4/27 | P&A |
| 5 | ARCO | Pt. McIntyre No.7 | 50-029-22018 | 16-12N-14E,UM | 14,130 | 4/29 | Delineation, oil |
| 6 | ARCO | GYR No.1 | 50-223-20018 | 32-4N-20E,UM | 8,020 | 4/30 | P&A |
| 7 | ARCO | Stinson No.1 | 50-689-20022 | 2-9N-25E,UM | 16,156 | 8/20 | P&A |
| 8 | ARCO | Sturgeon No.1 | 50-733-20418 | 25-5N-17W,SM | 7,206 | 10/23 | P&A |
| 9 | BPX | Pt. McIntyre No.9 | 50-029-22096 | 14-12N-14E,UM | 14,375 | 12/22 | Suspended |
| Federal offshore waters | | | | | | | |
| 10 | ARCO | OCS-Y-0267 (Fireweed) | 55-232-00003 | 71°05'17"N 152°36'12"W | | 12/90 | P&A |
| 11 | Shell | OCS-Y-1320 (Crackerjack) | 55-382-00003 | 71°25'08"N 165°32'29"W | | Suspended | |
| 12 | Shell | OCS-Y-1413 (Burger) | 55-352-00001 | 71°15'05"N 163°11'40"W | | 8/90 | P&A |
| 13 | Shell | OCS-Y-1275 (Popcorn) | 55-038-00002 | 71°51'16"N 165°48'25"W | | 9/90 | P&A |

Permitting.—The Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission approved 173 drilling permits through December 31, 1990, for 148 development wells (134 on the North Slope, 14 in Cook Inlet), 8 exploratory wells (6 on the North Slope, 2 in Cook Inlet), and 17 service wells (16 on the North Slope, 1 in Cook Inlet)(Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission, May 1991). This was a 31-percent increase over the 132 drilling permits issued in 1989.

Seismic.—To date, over 1 million line-miles of geophysical data have been acquired by private and public concerns in Alaskan Federal OCS planning areas. In 1990, seismic data were gathered in the Beaufort Sea (2,700 line-miles) and in the Chukchi Sea (600 line-miles). Seismic surveys were also conducted onshore in the Cook Inlet region and on the North Slope.

Bonding.—The MMS has proposed increased two-tier bonding levels for offshore operators in order to assure proper cleanup of drill sites (Alaska Report, January 31, 1990). Exploration activities would require a \$200,000 bond for individual leases and \$1 million for area-wide coverage; development and production operations would require bonds of \$500,000 (individual) and \$3 million (area-wide). The present single-tier levels are set at \$50,000

(individual) and \$300,000 (area-wide), regardless of activity.

Beaufort Sea.—The MMS and Alaska agreed on regulations for Northstar, the first OCS drilling unit to be jointly managed by Federal and State agencies (fig. 5). Within the unit's seven leases, the MMS holds 7,495 acres, and the State owns 23,343 acres. Discovered in 1983, this field contains an estimated 150 million barrels of recoverable oil. Elsewhere, Exxon dropped its plans to drill a delineation well in the 1977 Point Thompson gas discovery, relinquishing three State-owned leases covering 16,989 acres.

Camden Bay.—Controversy over Alaska's 1987 Lease Sale 50 off the coast of ANWR was settled in April 1990, when the State Senate passed legislation ratifying the sale and amending coastal zone management laws (Alaska Report, April 25, 1990). Environmental groups had tried to stop the sale on the grounds that development of offshore resources would require onshore facilities in ANWR that are currently prohibited. ARCO Alaska completed drilling the Stinson 1 exploratory well on a Camden Bay lease in 1990.

Chukchi Sea.—Shell Western continues its wildcat drilling program in the Chukchi Sea. One well has been

drilled in each of the Burger, Crackerjack, Klondike, and Popcorn prospects; four additional wells are planned. Shell Western was awarded the "Conservation Award for Respecting the Environment" by the MMS in recognition of its 1989 Chukchi Sea drilling program (Alaska Report, June 6, 1990). Texaco's plans for drilling in the Chukchi Sea, approved by the MMS, have been impeded by the North Slope Borough's legal challenge to the company's oil-spill contingency plan; Texaco has appealed to the U.S. Department of Commerce to overturn the State's ruling (Alaska Report, November 14, 1990). The Soviet Union has also expressed an interest in collaborating with an American company for oil exploration in the Soviet Chukchi Sea (Anchorage Daily News, May 15, 1990).

Cook Inlet.—Exploration activities in Cook Inlet showed a resurgence after six- and four-year hiatuses for offshore and onshore efforts, respectively. ARCO Alaska drilled the Sturgeon 1 wildcat in the Big River prospect in Redoubt Bay, on a State-owned lease near Kalgin Island (no. 8, fig. 5). The well was plugged and abandoned as a dry hole in late October (Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission Bulletin, December 1990). Stewart Petroleum spudded their wildcat in the West McArthur River Unit in mid-December. In addition, ARCO Alaska and Conoco have obtained permits for exploration drilling in the Cook Inlet area.

Effects of oil spills.—Disagreement over oil-spill contingency plans caused the postponement of Texaco's drilling efforts in the Chukchi Sea and delayed Stewart Petroleum's wildcat in the Cook Inlet. In Bristol Bay, oil and gas leases are under their second one-year moratorium on drilling, which is due to expire September 30, 1991. The ban was imposed after the 1989 *Exxon Valdez* oil spill to allow time to evaluate environmental consequences of oil development on area fisheries. Federal studies are under way to determine the potential effects of an oil spill here, and also to determine whether the Federal Government should buy back these leases, valued at approximately \$95 million, and impose a permanent ban on drilling in the area (Anchorage Times, July 25, 1990).

Production Activity

During 1990, there were 1,498 producing oil wells, 111 gas wells, and 539 service wells active in Alaska. Of these, 114 development and service wells were drilled in 1990: 14 in Cook Inlet, one in the East Barrow gas field, 13 in the Endicott oil field, 24 at Kuparuk River, four at Milne Point, two at Pt. McIntyre, and 56 at Prudhoe Bay. Little information on these wells has been released to the public, but some data are made available through the Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission's monthly bulletins and the Petroleum Information Corporation's weekly Alaska Report.

North Slope

In December, the eight-billionth barrel of North Slope crude oil was produced. Overall production from the North Slope averaged 1.79 million bbl/d, 90,000 bbl/d less than in 1989. Part of this loss was due to extensive maintenance and repair work by ARCO Alaska and BPX at their Prudhoe Bay facilities, dropping production from 1.4 million bbl/d to 1.2 million bbl/d from June through mid-September (Alaska Report, April 4, 1990). As a counterbalance, well-stimulation strategies accelerated production from the Prudhoe Bay field during the last half of the year. High-pressure fluid injection was used to fracture the reservoir, and the resultant cracks were held open by the injection of sand (up to 75 tons per well). These fractures allowed the oil to flow more freely into the wellbore, producing improvements as great as 400 percent. Cost per well for this procedure is between \$250,000 and \$400,000, and the enhanced recovery is currently forecasted to last for two years (Alaska Journal of Commerce, September 17, 1990). Also, as North Slope fields age, the amount of natural gas produced along with the oil increases. By separating out this "casinghead gas" and injecting it back into the reservoir in a highly compressed state, future oil recovery is enhanced. Additional large gas-handling compressors (GHX-2) are currently under construction. The original estimate for recovery of in place oil from the 24-billion-barrel Prudhoe Bay field was 9.4 billion barrels, but with water flooding, high-pressure fracturing, and gas reinjection, estimates for total recovery are currently 11 billion barrels (Rintoul, 1991).

Most development drilling on the North Slope occurred in the Prudhoe Bay and Kuparuk River oil fields, the two largest producers in the United States. Conoco drilled and defined the Schrader Bluff pool in the Milne Point field; production from Schrader Bluff could add as many as 6,000 bbl/d to the current 20,000 bbl/d produced from the Kuparuk River pool (Alaska Journal of Commerce, July 23, 1990). Due to better-than-expected reservoir performance, BPX has revised upward its estimate of recoverable oil in the Endicott field from 350 million barrels to 390 million barrels (Alaska Journal of Commerce, July 9, 1990). Development by ARCO Alaska and BPX of the Point McIntyre field, located beneath the waters of Prudhoe Bay, was delayed as a result of the assessed environmental impacts of causeways linking proposed production facilities on artificial offshore islands to shore-based facilities. A settlement was reached with the ACE in late 1990 requiring additional breaching in both the West Dock and Endicott causeways, at a cost of \$50 million (Anchorage Daily News, December 1, 1990). By 1992, anticipated production from the Point McIntyre and nearby Lisburne fields will exceed 60,000 bbl/d. BPX also received State approval for its proposed 1.25-mile-long Niakuk causeway, needed to harvest the 58 million barrels of recoverable oil in the Niakuk field; addi-

tional permits from the ACE are being sought (Anchorage Daily News, December 1, 1990).

Cook Inlet

Development drilling was conducted in Cook Inlet's oil and gas fields by ARCO Alaska, Marathon Oil, Shell Western, and Unocal. A new 640-acre drilling unit was established around the site of the Mike Pelch 1 well on the Kenai Peninsula for the production of natural gas. Cook Inlet Region Inc., an Anchorage-based Native corporation, began drilling a development well in the West Fork field, abandoned by Seagull Energy in 1986 after producing 1.5 billion cubic feet of gas (Alaska Report, November 28, 1990). A 23-mile pipeline currently transports McArthur River gas from Trading Bay to Granite Point; in August, Marathon Oil began construction of an additional 16-mile pipeline to transport the gas from Granite Point to Chugach Electric's Beluga power station.

There are two producing oil fields on the Kenai Peninsula. At the Swanson River field, 27 producing wells totaled 5,642 bbl/d during 1990, an 11-percent increase over 1989. Workovers were conducted at three wells, and four wells were plugged and abandoned. Field production to date represents recovery of 46 percent of the estimated original in-place oil reserves. The Swanson River field also produces daily 300,000 cubic feet of natural gas, which is reinjected on site to help maintain downhole formation pressure. The Beaver Creek oil field produced a maximum output of 34 million cubic feet per day (mcf/d) from three gas wells, and 540 bbl/d from two oil wells. Operations in these fields are regulated by the BLM and FWS.

Unocal purchased Amoco's interest in 4 Cook Inlet oil platforms in July and now controls 7 of the Inlet's 15 platforms. Production from the four platforms is about 5,100 bbl/d, and Unocal estimates that 11 million barrels of developed reserves remain in the fields (Alaska Report, July 18, 1990). Unocal may spend as much as \$300 million over the next 5 years to enhance this recovery (Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, October 19, 1990).

In early 1990, mudflows generated by eruptive activity at Redoubt Volcano disrupted operations at the 1.9-million-barrel-capacity Drift River oil terminal on the west side of Cook Inlet. Fearing the environmental consequences of an oil spill there, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) shut down production at 10 Cook Inlet platforms, reducing production 65 percent to 16,000 bbl/d. The ADEC also reduced the amount of oil stored at Drift River to 150,000 barrels and limited oil-storage time to 12 hours from tanker arrival. Under these conditions, 12 days would be required to load a 400,000-barrel tanker; as a result, Unocal suspended its shipping operations in March. Operations were fully restored in June when the facility

began to receive 18,000 bbl/d, and allowed capacity was expanded to 380,000 barrels. The terminal operators have also raised 54-foot dikes around the tanks, at a cost of \$17 million.

Leasing Activity

Neither the State of Alaska nor the Federal Government held oil and gas lease sales in 1990, but the Alaska Senate did vote to ratify the 1987 Camden Bay lease sale. The State's Division of Oil and Gas has planned 13 sales for the period 1991-1995 covering offshore regions of Cook Inlet and the Beaufort Sea, and onshore areas of the Kenai Peninsula, North Slope foothills, and Kuparuk uplands (fig. 6). Federal OCS lease sales planned for 1991 are Beaufort Sea 124, 21 million acres; Navarin Basin 107, 28 million acres; and Chukchi Sea 126, 23 million acres.

Transportation

Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline.—The eight-billionth barrel of crude oil flowed through TAPS in late December 1990; throughput reached a maximum of 2 million bbl/d, but averaged 1.8 million bbl/d. The TAPS operator planned to spend \$450 million in 1990 on maintenance and repairs to the pipeline, three pumping stations, and the marine terminal in Valdez (Alaska Report, May 30, 1990). As many as 947 anomalies in the pipe had been detected as of November 1990, but only 27 of these were in critical areas that require lowering internal pressures and reducing the flow rate of oil in the pipe. Reinspection of 19 sites revealed no corrosion, and further testing indicated that the integrity of the pipe is not in jeopardy and that full pumping pressures can be maintained. The State of Alaska derives a revenue of about \$2,000 per minute from the pipeline when flowing at full capacity.

Gas Pipelines.—Proposals for two gas pipelines are competing to transport North Slope gas to markets. The Yukon Pacific Corporation has obtained a permit to ship a total of 16.5 trillion cubic feet of gas to Pacific Rim countries from a proposed liquid-natural-gas plant in the Valdez area. Their Trans-Alaska Gas System would run 800 miles along the route of the existing TAPS. Korea Gas has promised to purchase 2 million tons annually, but Yukon Pacific needs an additional 5 million tons in initial purchase agreements before starting pipeline construction and needs 14 million tons in total sales to make the project profitable (Alaska Report, March 21, 1990). The U.S.-Canadian consortium of Northwest Alaska Pipeline-Foothills Pipeline have proposed to build the Alaska Natural Gas Transportation System, a 4,800-mile pipeline through Canada to the lower 48 States. Recoverable reserve estimates for North Slope gas may be large enough to support both pipelines

Table 4. Proceeds from lease sales on Alaska OCS planning areas

| Planning area | Sale | Year | Proceeds (\$) |
|-----------------------|-----------------|------|---------------|
| Beaufort----- | BF ¹ | 1979 | 488,691,138 |
| | 71 | 1982 | 2,055,632,336 |
| | 87 | 1984 | 866,860,327 |
| | 97 | 1988 | 114,631,636 |
| Chukchi----- | 109 | 1988 | 478,032,631 |
| Gulf of Alaska----- | 39 | 1976 | 559,836,587 |
| | 55 | 1980 | 109,751,073 |
| | RS-1 | 1981 | 170,496 |
| Lower Cook Inlet----- | CI | 1977 | 398,471,313 |
| | 60 | 1981 | 4,405,899 |
| | RS-2 | 1982 | 0 |
| Navarin----- | 83 | 1984 | 516,317,331 |
| No. Aleutian----- | 92 | 1988 | 95,439,500 |
| Norton----- | 57 | 1983 | 317,873,372 |
| St. George----- | 70 | 1983 | 426,458,830 |

¹Held jointly with State of Alaska: total sale revenues \$1,056,082,635.

held in 1977, 1981, and 1982. All have been relinquished or have expired.

Thirteen exploratory wells and one DST well were drilled in the lower Cook Inlet and Shelikof Strait. All have been permanently plugged and abandoned.

Gulf of Alaska planning area.—A total of 112 leases in the Gulf of Alaska planning area were awarded in three OCS sales held in 1976, 1980, and 1981. All of these leases have been relinquished or have expired. A lease sale planned for the lower Cook Inlet/Gulf of Alaska area (OCS Sale 114) has been postponed pending results of studies of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill.

Twelve exploratory wells and one DST well were drilled in the Gulf of Alaska. All have been permanently plugged and abandoned.

Kodiak Shelf planning area.—Six DST wells were drilled in 1976 and 1977. No lease sales are currently scheduled for the Kodiak planning area.

Navarin Basin planning area.—In the Navarin Basin planning area, 163 leases were awarded in a single sale in 1984. Seventeen blocks located within an area of disputed U.S.-Soviet jurisdiction also received bids, but the bid deposits were refunded with interest in December 1988.

Table 5. Producing leases, Beaufort Sea planning area

[As defined by MMS regulations at CFR 250.11, producing lease is one from which oil, gas, or both, can be produced in quantities sufficient to yield, after completion of well, return in excess of cost of producing hydrocarbons at wellhead]

| Lease number | Prospect name | Number of wells drilled |
|------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| OCS-Y-0181----- | Seal | 1 |
| ¹ OCS-Y-0191----- | Salmon | 2 |
| ² OCS-Y-0195----- | Tem | 1 |
| ² OCS-Y-0196----- | Tem | 1 |
| ³ OCS-Y-0197----- | Tem | 1 |
| OCS-Y-0370----- | Sandpiper | 1 |
| OCS-Y-0371----- | Sandpiper | 1 |
| OCS-Y-0849----- | Hammerhead | 2 |

¹Relinquished 12/88.

²Relinquished 7/90.

³Relinquished 6/90.

Twenty-two leases, due to expire in 1995, are held at present; the remainder have been relinquished. A second lease sale is scheduled for 1991.

Eight exploratory wells and one DST well were drilled in the Navarin Basin. All of these wells have been permanently plugged and abandoned.

North Aleutian Basin planning area (Bristol Bay).—One sale was initiated in the North Aleutian Basin planning area in January 1986. A preliminary injunction postponed completion of the sale until October 1988. The 23 leases awarded were placed under a one-year moratorium and concurrent one-year suspension of operations from October 1, 1989, to September 30, 1990, to allow time to study information gathered from the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill and to evaluate environmental consequences of oil development on Bristol Bay fisheries. A second moratorium and suspension of operations was imposed for the period from October 1, 1990 to September 30, 1991. Pending completion of the moratorium and suspension, the expiration date of the leases will be extended to the year 2000. One DST well has been drilled in the North Aleutian Basin.

Norton Basin planning area.—Fifty-nine leases were awarded in a single lease sale held in the Norton Basin planning area in 1983; all leases have been relinquished. Six exploratory wells and two DST wells were drilled; all have been permanently plugged and abandoned.

St. George Basin planning area.—In the St. George Basin planning area, 96 leases were awarded in a single sale held in 1983. Thirty leases are held at present and are due to expire in 1994. Ten exploratory wells and two DST wells, all now permanently plugged and abandoned, were drilled in the St. George Basin.

Future Sales

The draft MMS 5-year comprehensive natural gas and oil resource management program, drawn up in April 1988, has been modified. No lease sales were scheduled for 1990. In 1991, sales are scheduled for the Navarin Basin (Sale 107), Beaufort Sea (Sale 124), and Chukchi Sea (Sale 126) planning areas (fig. 6). A sale in St. George Basin (Sale 101) is scheduled for 1992, and sales in Norton Basin (Sale 120) and Hope Basin (Sale 133) are scheduled for 1993. Three sales have been postponed: Cook Inlet (Sale 114) pending outcome of studies on the consequences of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill; North Aleutian Basin (Sale 117) through congressional moratorium; and Shumagin planning area (Sale 129) for lack of industry interest.

National Resource Assessment

In the autumn of 1986, the MMS and USGS jointly launched a national inventory of oil and gas resources. The USGS evaluated the resource potential of onshore areas and Alaska State waters extending 3 miles from shore. The MMS assessed the offshore areas extending from the 3-mile limit to approximately 200 nautical miles seaward, including the OCS Exclusive Economic Zone. Personnel from both agencies met in 1986 and 1987 to review and coordinate the geologic interpretations supporting the assessment. The MMS again reviewed and updated its assessment in January 1990. Data and methodologies were presented to the Association of State Geologists and to the National Academy of Sciences; comments by these organizations will be used to refine future assessment procedures.

The MMS assessment estimated the amount of undiscovered oil and gas resources on the Alaskan OCS. Several OCS planning areas extend far seaward of the continental margins and include areas of deep oceanic basins. The areas seaward of the continental shelves were considered to offer only negligible resources, based on logistical, economic, and geologic considerations. Some planning areas were redrawn in order to obtain geologically rational province boundaries. The outlines of the assessment provinces are shown in figure 7.

The results of the 1987 joint assessment were published in 1989 by the DOI (Mast and others, 1989). This publication updates similar inventories published by the USGS (Dolton and others, 1981) and MMS (Cooke, 1985). The 1990 assessment has not yet been published, but some preliminary results are available from the MMS office in Anchorage (Minerals Management Service, 1990).

Joint Federal-State Studies

In 1975, the MMS (then Conservation Division, USGS) and the State of Alaska initiated joint geologic studies along certain coastal areas of Alaska where geologic

data were of mutual interest and where such data promised insights into the petroleum potential of adjacent onshore and offshore areas (fig. 7). Prior collaborations had investigated such areas as the Gulf of Alaska, Cook Inlet, Kodiak Islands (Kodiak shelf), Seward Peninsula-Kuskokwim drainage (Norton Basin), Pribilof Islands (St. George Basin), Alaska Peninsula (North Aleutian Basin), Waring Mountains (Hope/Selawik Basins), and the northeastern Brooks Range (Kaktovik Basin). Since 1984, the cooperative work has been funded by grants from the Studies Related to Continental Margins Program, sponsored by the MMS and administered by the Bureau of Economic Geology, University of Texas at Austin. In recent years, the focus of these studies has shifted to the Arctic Slope and ANWR, where fission track studies are being used as a tool for measuring the thermal evolution of the Beaufort continental margin, particularly as it bears on the maturation history, or key source rock sequences (O'Sullivan, 1988, 1989).

Monitoring Programs

The MMS conducts long-term periodic programs to monitor possible environmental effects of offshore oil and gas exploration and production. These programs include inventories of seabirds and ringed seals, studies of whale populations and migrations, collection and analysis of marine mammal tissues for hydrocarbon compounds and heavy metals, and chemical analysis of bottom sediments and biota from the Beaufort Sea. Recently, the MMS sponsored collection of heavy-metal data from Norton Sound in preparation for the OCS Mining Program, Norton Sound lease sale.

U.S. Geological Survey

The North Slope, interior basins, gas hydrates, and thermal history studies are the principal efforts directed toward onshore oil and gas resources. These research projects are funded under the Onshore Oil and Gas Investigations and Alaska Mineral Resources Assessment Programs. Highlights from these programs were presented during 1990 at various technical meetings, including the USGS McKelvey Forum in Houston (Carter, 1990), the American Association of Petroleum Geologists conference in San Francisco (American Association of Petroleum Geologists, 1990) and the Geological Association of Canada meeting in Vancouver (Geological Association of Canada, 1990).

Alaska's Petroleum Systems

The following discussion summarizes a basic study by the USGS of petroleum systems in Alaska (Magoon, 1990a, 1990b).

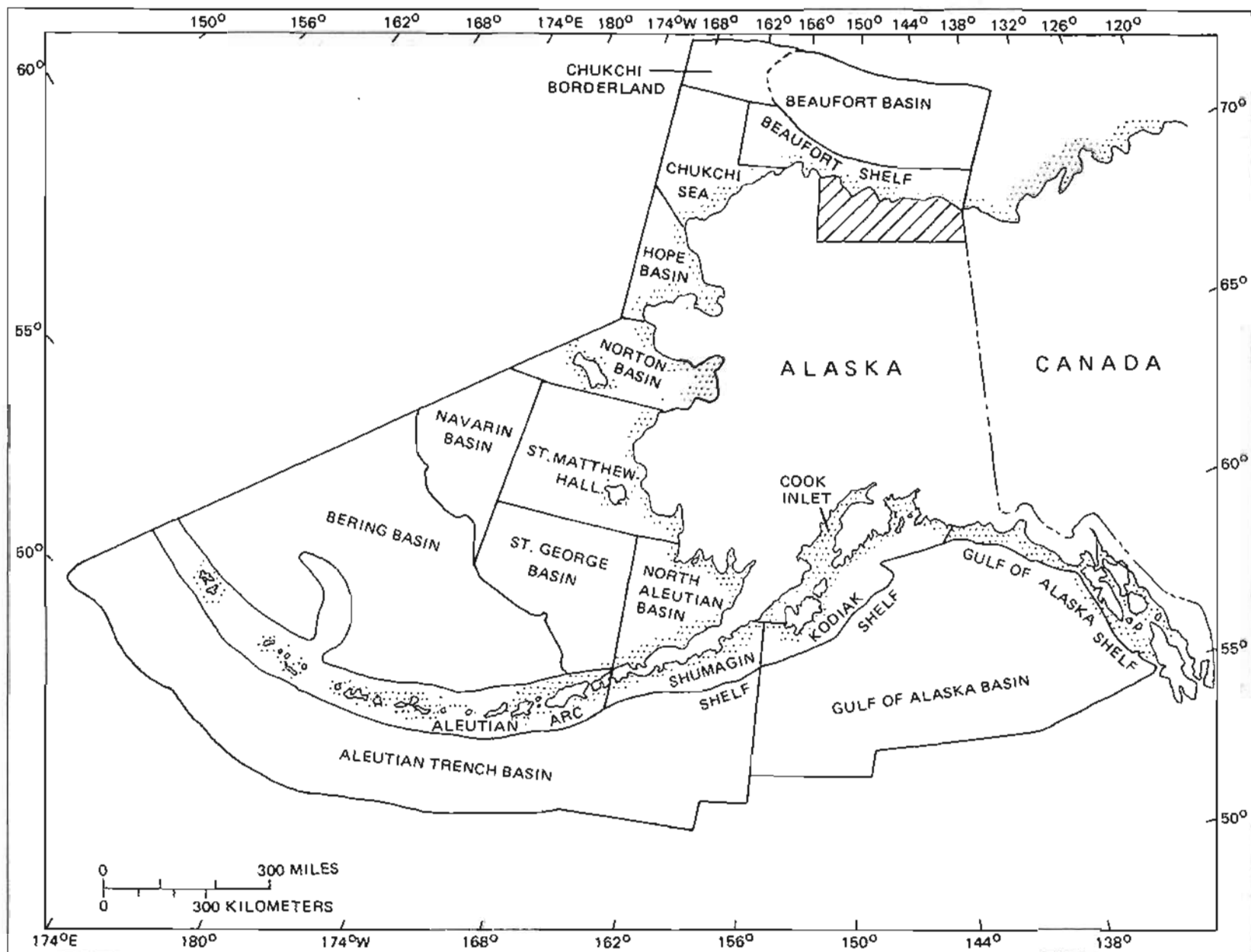


Figure 7. Offshore geologic province boundaries (bold lines; dashed where approximately located) defined by MMS and USGS for national assessment; also shows location of 1990 joint MMS-State studies (lined area).

A petroleum system encompasses all those elements that are essential for an oil and gas deposit to exist: petroleum source rock, migration path, reservoir rock, oil and gas accumulations, trap, and seal; the system's name is a combination of the source and reservoir rocks. To date, seven petroleum systems have been identified in Alaska: three on the North Slope, two in the Cook Inlet area, and two in the Gulf of Alaska.

Volumetrically, the Ellesmerian petroleum system on the North Slope is the largest of the seven. Based on oil-to-source-rock comparisons, the Shublik Formation and Kin-gak Shale are the primary source rocks for the 12 billion barrels of recoverable oil in the Endicott, Kuparuk River, Lisburne, Prudhoe Bay, and other North Slope oil fields. The other two petroleum systems on the North Slope are the Hue-Sagavanirktok and Torok-Nanushuk. In and adjacent to ANWR, extracts of the Hue Shale compare favorably to surface oil-seeps and oil-stains from the Sagavanirktok Formation. More tenuous are the geochemical correlations of rock extracts from the Torok Formation with the shallow Nanushuk oil accumulations such as those found in the Umiat oil field (70 million barrels of recoverable oil) and as seeps in the Simpson area of NPRA. The light, low-sulfur oils expelled from the source rocks of these two systems differ significantly from the heavier, high-sulfur oils of the Ellesmerian system.

The Cook Inlet area contains two petroleum systems: the Tuxedni-Hemlock and the Beluga-Sterling. Based on organic geochemical parameters, Tuxedni Group extract is similar to the 600 million barrels of recoverable oil in the Granite Point, McArthur River, Middle Ground Shoal, Swanson River, and Trading Bay fields; 80 percent of this commercial oil is produced from the Hemlock Conglomerate. The Beluga-Sterling system involves the shallow microbial gas being produced from the Kenai, North Cook Inlet, and other fields that originated from coal measures or associated sedimentary rocks of the Beluga Formation; the reservoir for most of the 8 trillion cubic feet of gas in these fields is the Sterling Formation.

Two petroleum systems have been identified in the Yakutat terrane in the Gulf of Alaska: the Poul Creek and the Stillwater-Kulthieth. The Poul Creek Formation is both source rock and reservoir rock for the abandoned Katalla oil field. Based on rock extracts and sedimentary facies relations between the Kulthieth, Tokun, and Stillwater Formations, the Stillwater Formation is judged to be the main source for oil in the Yakataga and Malaspina districts. Organic geochemical information indicates that the Poul Creek and Stillwater-Kulthieth are two separate and distinct petroleum systems.

North Slope

Details from the North Slope segment of the 1987 MMS-USGS national assessment of undiscovered oil and

gas resources continue to be released. North Slope petroleum plays and individual play assessment results were described and reported (Bird, 1991). Another paper describes the methodology of the North Slope assessment, including procedures followed in the economic analysis of oil and gas resources in this region (Attanasi and others, 1991). These reports are listed in appendix 1, USGS section.

Other USGS studies focus on the tectonic development and petroleum potential of the Brooks Range fold-and-thrust belt. Of the 10,000 billion barrels of oil estimated to have been generated in the Arctic Alaska microplate (Hubbard and others, 1987), only about 70 billion barrels (less than 1 percent) of in-place oil has been discovered in the North Slope petroleum province. It is anticipated that the Brooks Range foothills may contain some of the "missing" oil. The presence of fracture-filling solid bitumen has already been reported in numerous areas (Howell and others, 1991a, 1991b; Molenaar and others, 1988; Patton and Tailleux, 1964). Using as a model the giant oil fields of the Zagros fold-and-thrust belt in central Iraq and Iran, thermal history studies of minerals and organic particles in northern Alaska should provide insight into the complex interplay of oil and gas formation and rock deformation. Results of this work should delineate areas or trends where the chances for discovering oil and gas are optimal.

Interior Basins

USGS scientists continue their work on the geology and petroleum potential of the interior basins of Alaska (those south of the North Slope as shown on fig. 5). Studies in the Kandik basin of east-central Alaska focus on the tectonic history of this fold-and-thrust belt and its comparison to similar basins in the Brooks Range and the Rocky Mountain Cordillera. Preliminary results suggest that the region experienced tectonic contraction in Cretaceous time, producing thrust sheets that advanced from west to east. Much of the strata was buried to depths where temperatures were far in excess of the oil preservation window (Howell and others, 1991c). In the eastern part of the basin, however, shallower strata display a thermal history below the upper threshold of the oil preservation window (fig. 2, fig. 8). Further research into the basin's tectonic history will help clarify the petroleum potential of this frontier area.

The petroleum source potential of Mesozoic and Tertiary coals and mudrocks in the Middle Tanana basin is currently being evaluated. Analytical results show an abundance of gas-prone kerogen and a wide range of thermal maturity related to burial depth and proximity to igneous intrusions (Stanley and others, 1990). A new map of the simple Bouguer gravity of the Nenana/Middle Tanana basin was completed (Valin and others, 1991), and a preliminary compilation of gravity and geology was prepared (Frost and

Stanley, 1991). The facies architecture, depositional environments, sedimentary petrology, and energy resource potential of Tertiary rocks in the Nenana basin area are discussed in new reports by McLean and Stanley (1991) and Stanley and others (1991). These five reports are listed in appendix 1, USGS section.

Continued studies for source-rock and reservoir potential are directed at the sedimentology of Tertiary fluvial and lacustrine deposits in the northern foothills of the Alaska Range; a one-week field program in 1990 resulted in 1,000 new paleocurrent measurements from the Tertiary Usibelli Group in the Nenana coal field.

Gas Hydrates

Gas hydrates are naturally occurring solids composed of rigid cages of water molecules that entrap mainly methane. They may occur in onshore areas where permafrost thickness is greater than 800 feet. Studies by the USGS, funded in part by the DOE, suggest that the zone in which methane hydrates are stable is areally extensive beneath most of the North Slope coastal plain province. Thus far, all

gas hydrates found in the area are geographically restricted to the region overlying the eastern part of the Kuparuk River oil field and western part of the Prudhoe Bay oil field. They occur in six laterally continuous Upper Cretaceous and lower Tertiary sandstone and conglomerate units. Calculations suggest that 8-10 trillion cubic feet of gas is trapped within these hydrates (Collett and others, 1989).

Recent drilling and geologic analysis in the Prudhoe Bay and Kuparuk River fields revealed the presence of a gas-hydrate/free-gas contact at the predicted base of the methane-hydrate stability zone. This relationship is important because gas production from the free-gas zone would also lower pressures in the overlying gas-hydrate reservoir; the ensuing decomposition of the hydrates would free additional gas for production. Future work will focus on the relation between the gas hydrates and associated free-gas accumulations. A similar gas-hydrate/free-gas relationship might also exist in the Walakpa gas field, discovered by the USGS's NPRA program in 1980. The Walakpa field, 20 miles southwest of Barrow, is currently undergoing development drilling. The USGS conducts these hydrate studies in cooperation with the North Slope Borough.

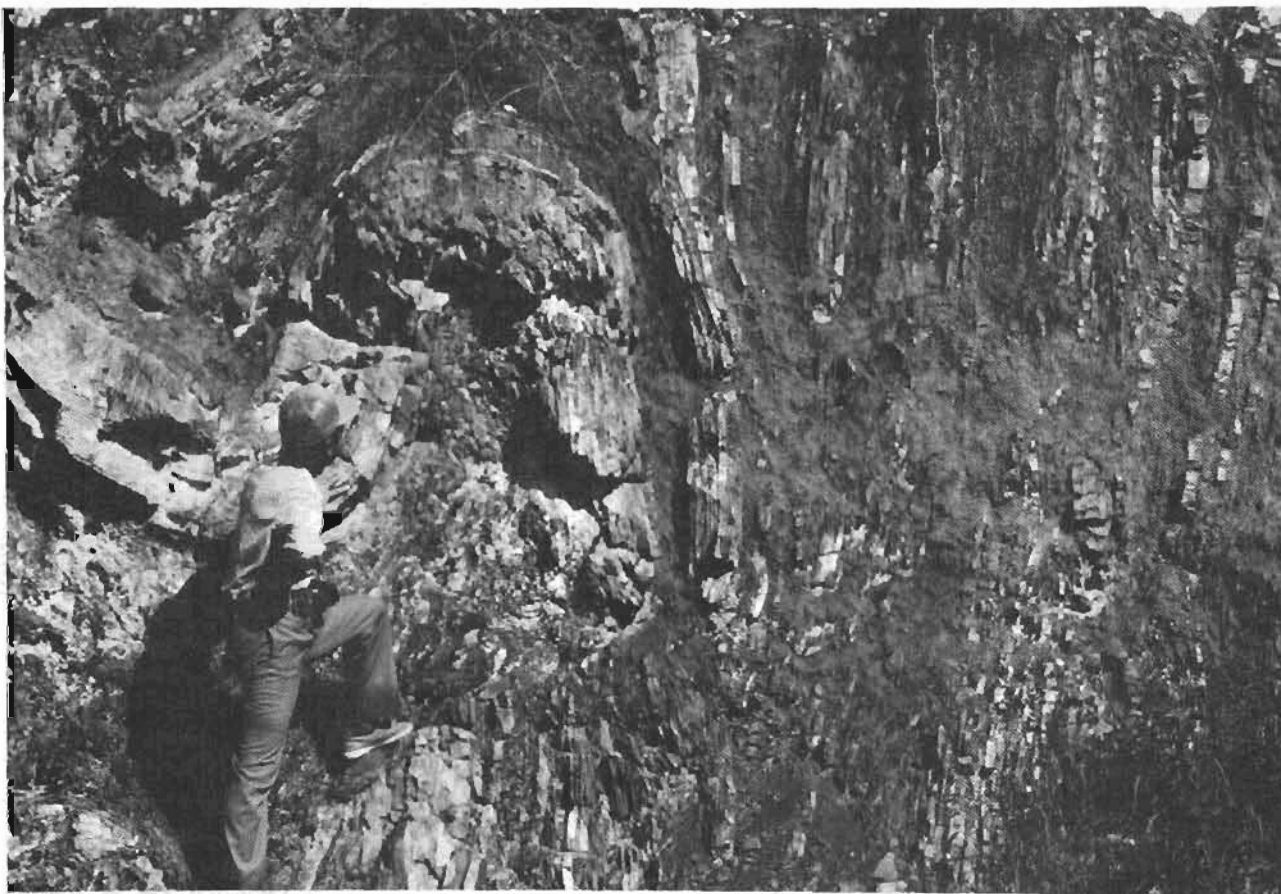


Figure 8. Tightly folded, organic-rich limestones are exposed along the Tatonduk River, Kandik Basin, east-central Alaska. These limestones contain hydrocarbons in sufficient quantities that the rocks have a fetid odor and can be made to burn. Photograph by M. Johnsson.

The thermal maturity map of Alaska portrays a continuum in thermal alteration from unaltered and unconsolidated sediments, through thermally altered sedimentary and metamorphic rocks, to volcanic and plutonic rocks. A critical aspect of the map is the identification of those areas with the low-temperature thermal history appropriate for the generation and preservation of oil and gas. Data for the lower temperatures come from measurements of vitrinite reflectance (fig. 2), illite crystallinity spacings, and conodont alteration indices. By the end of 1990, thermal information on low-temperature sediments reflected 2,808 localities and 6,450 measurements (fig. 9). Data for the plutonic and higher grade metamorphic rocks are derived from an upcoming publication (Dusel-Bacon, 1991a). A preliminary version of the thermal maturity map was presented at the Fall 1990 meeting of the American Geophysical Union (Johnsson and others, 1990); an updated version should be published by early 1992. The Dusel-Bacon and Johnsson papers are listed in appendix 1, USGS section.

Bureau of Land Management

Mineral resource assessments were completed for the 33-million-acre South-central Alaska planning area. An energy and mineral resource assessment is continuing in the Western Arctic area (including NPRA). This study will include a detailed oil and gas study of the Utukok Special Management Area and an analysis of the metallic mineral potential of southern NPRA.

The Branch of Mineral Assessment completed and published its synthesis of bedrock geology of the northern Rocky Mountain Cordillera at the Alaska-Yukon border (Banet, 1990b). At least ten areally extensive units of pre-Ellesmerian clastic carbonates were identified in outcrop. Drill-stem tests from wells immediately west of ANWR have produced oil and condensate from these units. Seismic data indicate that some of these same rocks are present in ANWR. In addition, three technical papers dealing with the oil and gas resources of northern Alaska were presented at the Fifth Circum-Pacific Energy and Mineral Resources Conference in Honolulu (Banet, 1990c; Mowatt and others, 1990b; Mowatt and Mowatt, 1990a). These four reports are listed in appendix 1, BLM section.

The Branch of Pipeline Monitoring is part of the BLM Division of Minerals. The Branch's principal function is to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the Right-of-Way Grant issued to the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company for TAPS. Following the *Exxon Valdez* incident, the TAPS Oil Spill Contingency Plan has been revised through the cooperative efforts of Alyeska and State and Federal agencies; the revised 14-volume plan received final approval on April 3, 1991. On November 16, 1989, the

DOE's Office of Fossil Fuels issued an export license to the Yukon Pacific Corporation for export of North Slope natural gas to Pacific Rim countries from the company's Trans-Alaska Gas System. The Branch of Pipeline Monitoring is in the process of issuing temporary use permits for preliminary activities related to this project. Activity regarding Northwest Alaska Pipeline Company's proposed Alaska Natural Gas Transportation System has continued at a low level. To better coordinate the above actions with corresponding State agencies, the Branch of Pipeline Monitoring has co-located with the State Pipeline Coordinator's Office. For a copy of the Annual Report of the Branch of Pipeline Monitoring, contact the BLM Public Affairs Office in the Federal Building in Anchorage.

In establishing and implementing an oil and gas leasing program as required by Section 1008 of ANILCA, the BLM has made land available for noncompetitive oil and gas leasing in three areas south of latitude 68° N. Both the Minchumina and the Denali-Tiekel-Slana areas were opened in 1982 and the Seward Peninsula in 1983 (fig. 10). As of September 30, 1990, the BLM had 4,021 leases on 735,028 acres in these areas. On the Seward Peninsula, five leases on 12,640 acres were issued during 1990. These leases are the last of the offers that had been suspended by the preliminary injunction during the lawsuit *National Wildlife Federation v. Burford et al.* in 1985; this injunction was vacated on November 4, 1988. Except for NPRA and potentially ANWR, all BLM-administered oil and gas estates in Alaska are now handled under the leasing system established by the Federal Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Reform Act of 1987. Drilling and production operations on BLM leases are administered through the BLM's Branch of Lease Operations.

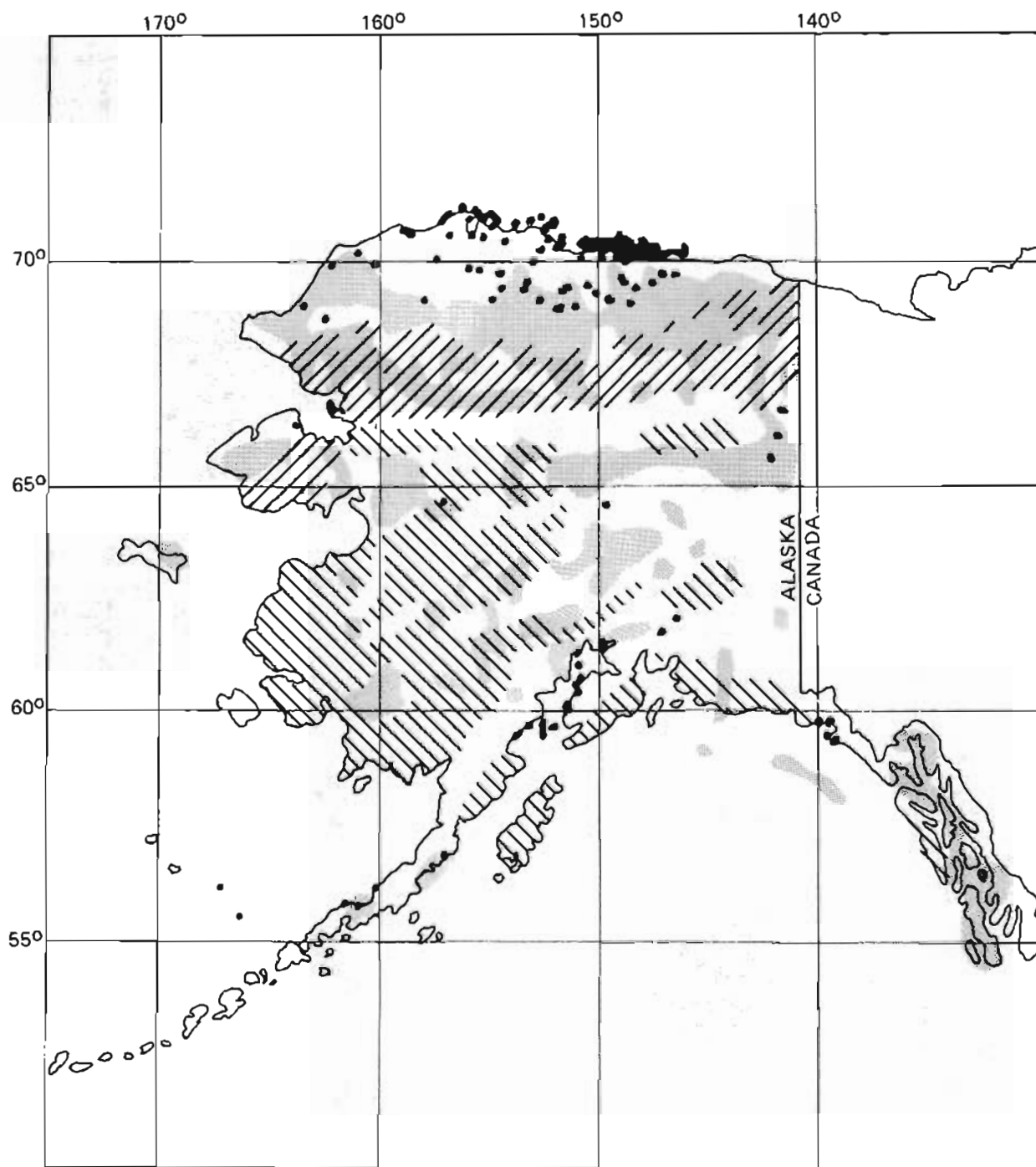
Fish and Wildlife Service

Kenai National Wildlife Refuge

The Kenai National Wildlife Refuge is the only refuge in Alaska from which oil and gas have been produced. Production statistics for the Swanson River and Beaver Creek oil fields in 1990 are discussed in the section "Production Activity - Cook Inlet." Operations in both fields are overseen by the FWS and BLM.

Cleanup of soils contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's) at the Swanson River field was completed in September 1990. The on-site Circulating Bed Combustor unit, designed to destroy PCB's through an incineration system, processed 33,480 tons of PCB-contaminated soils. Final processing of stockpiled contaminated materials should be attained by the end of 1991.

Cleanup work began on an aromatic hydrocarbon spill at the pipe and supply yard for the Swanson River field. ARCO Alaska proposes to use an airstripping unit to



NOT AN EQUAL-AREA PROJECTION

EXPLANATION

Areas for which vitrinite reflectance or
pyrolysis data exist



Surface data (onshore and offshore)



Subsurface data



Area of dense conodont color alteration index data
(Harris and others, 1987)



Area of poor sample coverage (January 1991)



Crystalline rocks or Holocene overburden

Figure 9. Thermal maturity data coverage for Alaska.

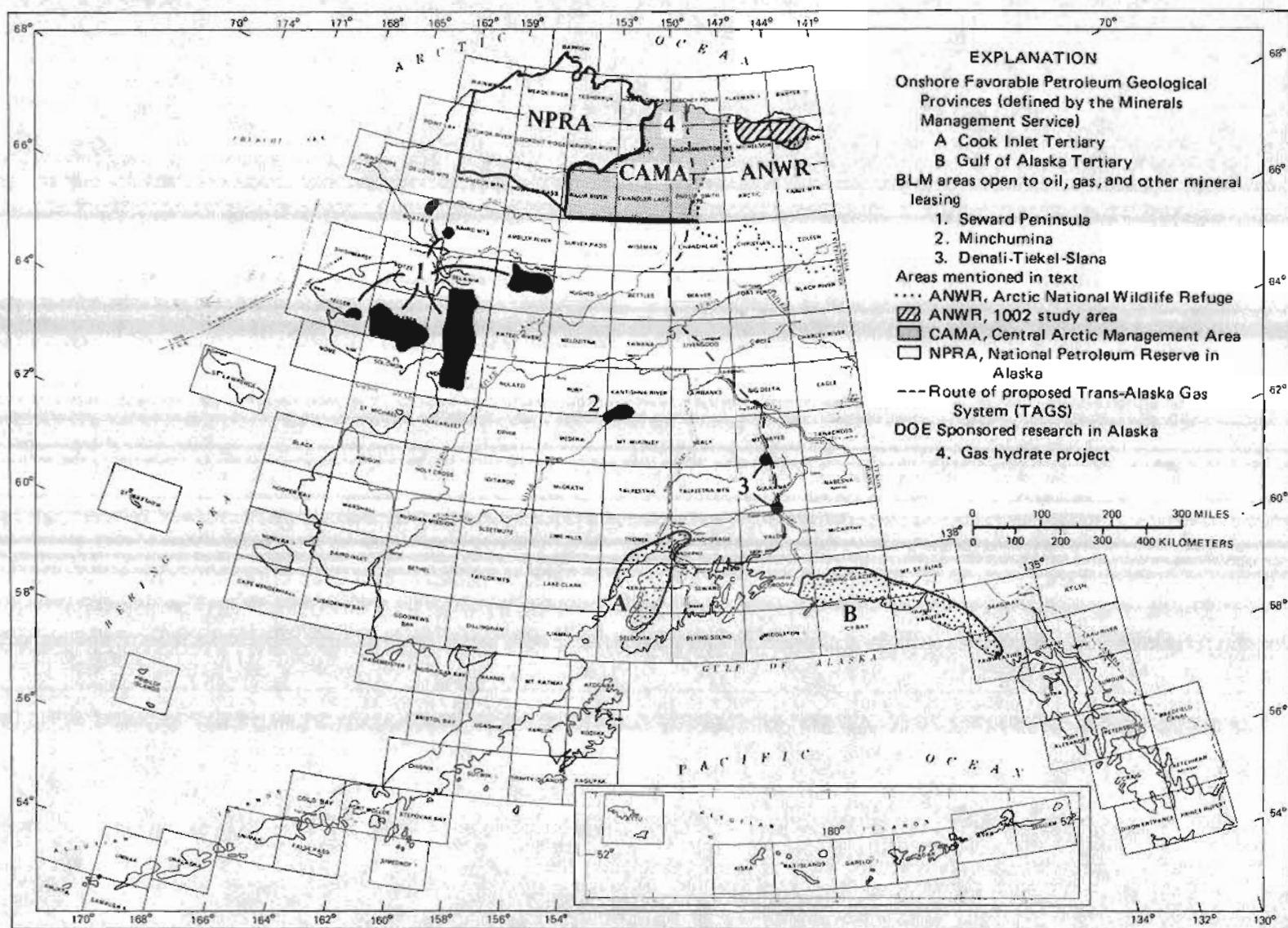


Figure 10. Onshore favorable petroleum provinces (land units referred to in text) and locations of DOE-funded research in 1990.

remove the contaminants from water and soil at the site. ARCO Alaska also completed work on delineating several crude oil spills at operating facilities in the Swanson River field. These spills are apparently chronic, resulting from actual spills, as well as leaks from tanks and flare pits throughout the field. The FWS, BLM, ADEC, and ARCO Alaska will work together to develop a remediation plan for the sites.

Remediation of a crude oil spill at Marathon Oil's Beaver Creek facility continued. Contaminated soils are being excavated and incinerated *in situ*. Remediation of this site is expected to be completed by January 1992. Marathon also contoured and seeded an abandoned gravel pit at the production facility.

Activities under Section 1008 of ANILCA

Section 1008 of ANILCA provides for oil and gas studies on refuges in Alaska to gather information for use in future land-management decisions. In 1990, special-use permits were issued for surface geologic work in the following national wildlife refuges (number of permits in parentheses): Alaska Maritime (three), Alaska Peninsula (one), Arctic (three, all outside the 1002 area), and Kodiak (one). In addition, the Becharof Refuge issued one permit for a study of natural petroleum seeps, Izembek issued one permit for seismic station maintenance, and Kenai issued one permit for a winter seismic study. These special-use permits include numerous stipulations for ensuring that permitted activities are environmentally sound, compatible with refuge purposes, and designed for the specific locale and activities of the proposal. Regional policy requires posted bonds of at least \$10,000 for surface geologic studies and \$100,000 for seismic studies in Alaska refuges. Copies of resultant data must be submitted to the FWS, after which the data remain confidential in storage with the BLM.

Resource Activity Impact Assessment

Permitting.—In 1990, the FWS commented on four Section 404 CWA permits dealing with oil pipelines and wells in south-central Alaska. Reviews under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act were undertaken for Cook Inlet and Knik Arm pipeline plans. The FWS also is reviewing the Section 404 CWA permit application and environmental assessment for the Birch Hill natural gas well proposal, access to which would include Kenai Refuge lands. Under a Memorandum of Agreement with the BLM, the FWS is providing a biologist to coordinate FWS concerns with the proposed Trans-Alaska Gas System pipeline.

For the northern part of the State, FWS reviews were completed on 19 Section 404 CWA permits and permit

modifications. These involved oil spill contingency projects, mine site rehabilitation projects, and TAPS. Inter-agency work on North Slope oil and gas developments included comments on NPDES permits, review of ADEC solid waste permits, and comments on the EPA proposal to limit offshore disposal of drilling wastes. Technical assistance was provided to the EPA and ACE regarding impact monitoring studies in the Lisburne and Endicott oil fields, identification of resource values and potential conflicts in the Colville River Delta, the Abbreviated Permitting Procedure for oil and gas development permits on the North Slope, projected impact of the proposed Niakuk causeway in the Beaufort Sea, and resources of the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas.

Lease Sales.—The FWS reviewed and commented on three State oil and gas lease sales in Cook Inlet, and on 11 proposed sales in northern Alaska. For MMS, the FWS reviewed draft EIS's for Navarin Basin Lease Sale 107 and for Beaufort Sea Lease Sale 124. The FWS also provided technical comments on the OCS 5-year leasing plan and for three exploration/oil spill contingency plans for OCS lease sales in the Beaufort and Chukchi seas.

Monitoring.—The FWS conducts environmental monitoring on North Slope oil and gas activities. These include analyses of caribou tissues for contaminants and water quality monitoring of ponds, lakes, reserve pits and other features of the oil development area. Peregrine falcon feathers and eggs collected from the Colville River Delta were analyzed for mercury and organochlorine contaminant residues for comparison with similar data from the Nome offshore mining area. Baseline data were collected on nesting bird use of proposed development sites in the Kuparuk oil field. Avian migratory patterns were studied for use in the evaluation of site enhancement. The FWS worked to finalize reports on previous studies of trace metals in shallow Arctic marine sediments contaminated by drilling effluents and on waterfowl contamination at Prudhoe Bay.

The FWS works with various government agencies and the oil industry on appropriate rehabilitation/restoration of oil development facilities. A report was completed on abandoned oil exploration wells on the Becharof Refuge (Jackson, 1991). Exxon USA granted \$150,000 to the "Take Pride in America" program for the cleanup of one such site and access road that had been abandoned since 1959. The FWS rewrote a contingency plan for responding to oil spills in Alaska and reviewed Alyeska's oil spill contingency plans for their pipeline and marine operations.

Land Acquisition.—As lead agency, the FWS, in conjunction with the BLM, NPS and USFS, published the final report in response to the Alaska Submerged Lands Act of 1988 (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and others, 1990). This report, "Analysis of Inholdings, Acquisition Priorities, and Recommendations to Reduce Impacts on Conservation System Units in Alaska," includes priorities for acquiring lands within conservation system units such as national

wildlife refuges that are currently patented to, or selected by, Natives, Native corporations, or the State of Alaska. Prioritization was based on multiple factors, including threats to fish, wildlife, and their habitats from activities such as oil, gas, and minerals development.

Department of Energy

Petroleum Research

A primary petroleum target is the gas-hydrate reservoir, which contains gas in a solid, icelike form. Occurrences of such hydrates have been identified on Alaska's North Slope (fig. 10), and the technology for characterizing and developing this resource is under study as part of the DOE's Environmental and Advanced Research subprogram. Using both in-house and contractors' facilities, subprogram efforts have recently been concentrating on laboratory testing of natural and synthetic gas hydrates to define the pressure and temperature conditions necessary for their formation and dissociation, as well as the geophysical and mechanical properties of the hydrates and their reservoirs (Morgantown Energy Technology Center, 1987). Arctic research studies to determine in-place conditions of gas-hydrate deposits have been initiated by DOE in cooperation with the USGS and with ARCO Alaska, BPX, Exxon, and Conoco. As part of the research on gas hydrates, geologic basin reports have been published for a number of offshore areas in a series titled "Geological evolution and analysis of confirmed or suspected gas hydrate localities." Volume 12 is "Basin analysis, formation, and stability of gas hydrates in the Beaufort Sea" (Krason and Finley, 1989). This series of studies is being conducted by Geoprospector International.

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

During development and passage of ANILCA, the coastal plain of the ANWR in northeastern Alaska was the subject of conflicting interests; these ranged from designating the area as wilderness to leaving the area open for oil and gas development. As a result, Section 1002 of ANILCA sets out specific management constraints on a 1.5-million-acre strip along the coastal plain of the current 19.5-million-acre ANWR. This portion of ANWR's coastal plain is known as the 1002 area (fig. 10). Section 1002 requires that the Secretary of the Interior (1) conduct a comprehensive, continuing baseline study of the fish and wildlife resources of the 1002 area, (2) develop guidelines to initiate and monitor an oil and gas exploration program, and (3) prepare a report to Congress describing the fish, wildlife, and hydrocarbon resources; the potential impacts and development scenario for petroleum exploration and production; and rec-

ommendations regarding possible oil and gas exploration, development, and production, should those activities be allowed in the 1002 area.

The FWS was designated as principal coordinator for the Section 1002 resource assessment and conducted a baseline study of the area's fish, wildlife, and habitats. The Report to Congress (Clough and others, 1987) was prepared under the provisions of a 1983 interagency memorandum of understanding among the FWS, BLM, and USGS. Specific agency roles and research are described in that report. The Secretary recommended that the 1002 area should be opened to an orderly oil and gas leasing program in a manner that would avoid unnecessary adverse effects on the environment. During 1990, Federal agency activities regarding the 1002 area focused on responding to political and public inquiries regarding the final report findings and on continuing a research and study program.

Fish and Wildlife Service

During 1990, the FWS continued to respond to congressional inquiries concerning the potential for, and impacts from, oil and gas leasing and development on ANWR's coastal plain. Although measures to open ANWR had been introduced in previous sessions of Congress, it was widely recognized that there would be no further legislative action regarding the 1002 area until Congress had dealt with the issue of oil spill legislation.

Recognizing that a variety of regulatory and planning processes would immediately be initiated if legislation is passed that opens the coastal plain to oil and gas activities, the FWS continues to pursue a biological study program in the area. The goal of the study program is directed at achieving a better understanding of the area's natural dynamics, the altered ecosystem dynamics that might result from oil and gas activities, any associated adverse impacts, and the means to avoid, minimize, or rectify those adverse impacts. In 1990, the FWS completed the third year in its 5-year study program. Baseline water quality and contaminant data from 1988-89 studies of pond water and sediment, lagoon sediment and fish, birds and bird eggs, invertebrates, and emergent vegetation were readied for analysis. In addition, one red fox and five arctic foxes were collected from the Prudhoe Bay area for contaminant residue analysis to compare with future ANWR fox analyses as part of baseline studies.

Four contaminant studies in the 1002 area continued. Data based on 1987-88 water, soil, and sediment samples were summarized for the contaminant study of the Kaktovik Inupiat Corporation's exploratory well. Data on hydrocarbon concentrations in soil and vegetation resulting from three fuel spills during 1984 seismic explorations were also summarized.

The "1002 Work Group," composed of FWS and BLM representatives, continued to occasionally coordinate

on management issues and processes relative to the 1002 area.

The FWS compiled a list of the documents that made up the administrative record for preparation of the 1987 congressional report on ANWR. This action was in response to lawsuits filed against the Department of the Interior: *Natural Resources Defense Council et al. v. Manuel Lujan et al.* (Civil number 89-2345, filed August 22, 1989), and *Gwich'in Steering Committee v. Manuel Lujan et al.* (Civil number 89-2393, filed August 28, 1989).

Exxon Valdez Oil Spill

The oil tanker T/V *Exxon Valdez* ran aground on Bligh Reef on March 24, 1989, spilling more than 11 million gallons (262,000 barrels) of Prudhoe Bay crude oil into eastern Prince William Sound. Containment efforts by the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, Exxon USA, and the USCG could not halt the spread of oil and ensuing pollution of beach and marine habitat. Oil from the tanker moved southwest and eventually washed up on approximately 1,500 of the 3,500 miles of coastline in Prince William Sound, as well as impacting additional coastlines in the Gulf of Alaska, the Kodiak Archipelago, and the Alaska Peninsula.

Exxon has spent over \$2 billion on cleanup operations. Beach cleanup techniques have displayed varying degrees of success. Mechanical rock washers and the kerosene solvent Corexit 9580 are now believed to create or exacerbate environmental problems and have been banned from further use (Anchorage Daily News, July 20, 1990). The most successful cleaning method, known as bioremediation, has employed the dual application of fertilizers and oil-eating bacteria (Anchorage Times, July 11, 1990). Bioremediation also proved successful in a spill at the Kuparuk field where oil penetrated several inches into the tundra (Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, November 9, 1990).

Interagency monitoring crews were composed of personnel from the ADEC, FWS, NPS, USCG, and USFS, and included oil spill specialists, marine biologists, and geologists. These crews surveyed coastlines, observed oil spill impacts, selected sites for cleanup, and monitored cleanup operations. The Natural Resources Trustees Council was formed of State and Federal agency heads for damage assessment and restoration planning.

A large part of the 262,000 barrels (11 million gallons) of oil spilled from the T/V *Exxon Valdez* has either sunk to the bottom, been consumed by bacteria, washed ashore, or floated out to sea. The long-term effects of the spill will continue to be a topic of study and controversy. The USCG and Exxon believe that the cleanup operations were a success, whereas components of the State and environmental groups are less satisfied. As a final footnote, the ill-fated tanker has been repaired, renamed the T/V *Exxon*

Mediterranean, and reassigned to operate in the Persian Gulf.

Fish and Wildlife Service

During the second year following the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, the FWS remained active in response operations. The FWS cooperated with the USCG Federal on-scene coordinator in assessing the status of national wildlife refuge shorelines and in monitoring cleanup activities. Other programs were undertaken to protect DOI trust resources. Additionally, the FWS continued natural resource damage assessment and restoration planning.

The FWS participated with the multi-agency Spring Shoreline Assessment Team in surveying 144 miles of refuge shoreline. Status of oiling was documented, and specific treatments recommended. Cleanup activities were monitored on all refuge shorelines. Since only a small percentage of refuge shorelines was surveyed by the USCG and Exxon, the FWS independently surveyed an additional 950 miles of refuge shoreline, documenting oil on 115 miles of shoreline and recoverable oil on 15 segments. After the FWS reported to the USCG, these 15 segments were cleaned.

The FWS worked closely with the USCG and Exxon to protect nesting bald eagles from disturbance by cleanup activities. Locations and status of eagle nests were mapped, and protective measures implemented. Buffer zones were established around active nests to exclude human activity, including aircraft movement. Cleanup crews were to be removed temporarily if the eagles became agitated. As the fledglings aged and became less sensitive to disturbances, or as nests became inactive, these measures were relaxed. The program was very successful.

Spring planning ensured that procedures and facilities were in place to respond to any additional wildlife oiling in 1990. Fortunately, this proved unnecessary, and wildlife rehabilitation centers were closed in August (fig. 11). Procedures were also established for the retrieval of dead wildlife and for their submittal to the FWS.

The FWS continued as DOI representative in assessing injuries to natural resources resulting from the oil spill. Sea otters and migratory birds were studied. The FWS cooperated with the other trustee agencies in providing important hydrocarbon analyses and mapping services. Study data were reviewed and synthesized, and future assessment activities were planned. The FWS also implemented several restoration feasibility projects.

In 1991, the FWS expects to cooperate with the USCG in assessing select FWS shorelines and monitoring any required cleanup activities. Where needed, the bald eagle protection program will be reestablished. The FWS will continue to be actively involved in the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Planning program.

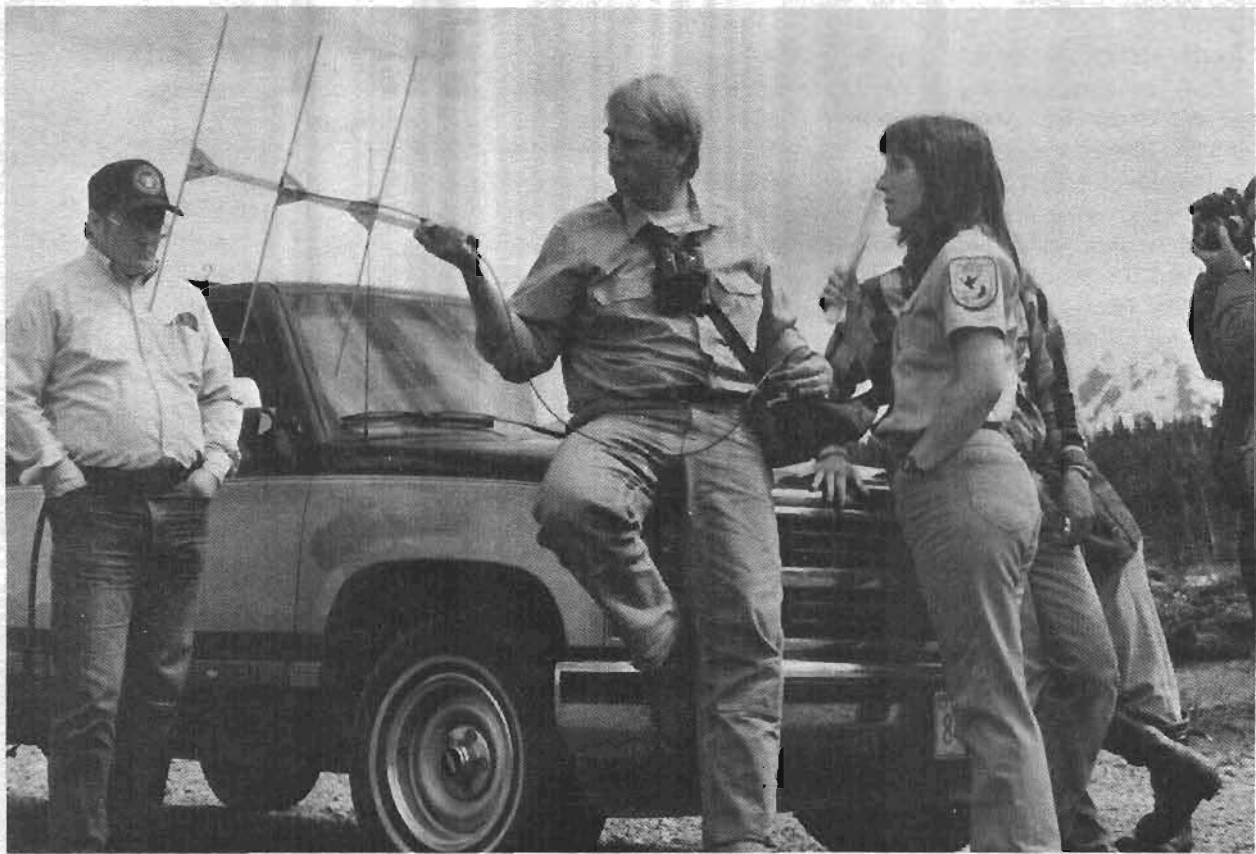


Figure 11. FWS personnel release eagles (top) back into the wild in 1990 after their rehabilitation following the 1989 *Exxon Valdez* oil spill. The eagles wear radio transmitters so their progress can be followed with tracking devices (bottom). Photographs by B. Batten.

While the MMS had no direct responsibility for response or damage assessment, the agency provided staff to assist the cleanup and monitoring efforts; an additional \$300,000 was directed to fund studies to assess the effects of the spill. MMS staff helped develop damage assessment programs, assisted in surveys and rehabilitation of seabirds and marine mammals, participated as members of a Resource Advisory Team, and provided technical expertise and assistance to the FWS and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Funding also was provided for a study on weathering of crude oil in sea water, for studies on the effects of oil on different species of fish and crustaceans, for surveys of sea otters and seabirds, and for collection of sediment samples for chemical analysis. In addition, support was provided for monitoring the performance of satellite-tracked surface oil drifters, for overflights of the spill, and for studies to determine the social impact of the spill on communities adjacent to the spill's path. The MMS/NOAA research vessel #1273 was provided for use as a field sampling station. Funding from the MMS National Studies Program enabled the USGS to deploy the Gloria Project survey ship *M/V Farnella* in 1989 and the smaller USGS-owned *R/V Karluk* in 1990 to collect bottom-sediment samples.

National Park Service

The *Exxon Valdez* oil spill impacted three National Park System units: Kenai Fjords National Park, Katmai National Park and Preserve, and Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve. In these park units, several hundreds of miles of shoreline and the resources supported thereon were affected by the oil and cleanup operations.

In 1990, the NPS continued to be involved in the full range of cleanup activities through its Office of Oil Spill Coordination in the Alaska Regional Office in Anchorage. Although the pace of response activities was lower than in 1989, a significant amount of work was accomplished. In Katmai National Park and Preserve, 57 work orders were approved through the Federal on-scene coordinator; the cleanup operations were conducted by Exxon. Kenai Fjords National Park had three such work orders and operations. Oil monitoring and damage assessment were carried out in all three affected park units. To support this level of operations, the NPS issued Special Use Permits for fuel caches, helicopter landings, cleanup techniques, research methodologies, and placement of remote weather stations. The NPS also ensured the protection of archaeological resources from potentially disruptive activities by on-site surveys and evaluations prior to each shoreline cleanup.

To provide logistical coordination of aircraft, ships, and personnel, the NPS reestablished its Katmai Field Office in Kodiak for the cleanup season. Park rangers and resource managers from the NPS accompanied the various

cleanup and monitoring crews working along park shorelines. These personnel conducted shoreline and wildlife surveys, documented locations of contaminated zones, prioritized shorelines requiring treatment, suggested reasonable and appropriate treatment methods, monitored shoreline treatment, and provided wildlife protection to cleanup crews. Personnel and logistical support were also provided to the FWS, USCG, State agencies, and Exxon.

The NPS continued to assist State and Federal natural resource trustees in developing and executing damage assessment activities. The NPS also continued as the DOI representative to the Restoration Planning Work Group. In addition, the NPS continued to participate in the development of the criminal case against the potentially responsible parties, and its investigative unit in the Office of Oil Spill Coordination continued to assemble case materials in support of the criminal case and potential damage assessment litigation.

U.S. Geological Survey

In 1990, the USGS continued its oil-spill research by undertaking two sediment-sampling cruises in Prince William Sound. The study will attempt to determine the fate of the spilled oil as a part of the sedimentologic processes in this fjord environment. Funding for these cruises was provided by the MMS and USGS; NOAA provided a ship of opportunity for the June cruise.

All sample stations were located along the oil slick's trajectory. In June, a USGS scientist aboard the NOAA ship *Davidson* resampled 11 stations in deep basins first sampled in 1989 (Carlson and Reimnitz, 1990). In August, the USGS conducted a 7-day cruise on the *R/V Karluk* to investigate areas adjacent to six heavily oiled beaches (frontispiece; fig. 12). For this study, nearshore bottom morphology and sediment distribution were surveyed using acoustic-profiling techniques, and both beach and offshore shallow-water sediments were sampled.

Samples from the two cruises were analyzed for hydrocarbons, microfossils, and sediment characteristics. These analyses will permit comparisons of samples collected 50 days after the oil spill to deep-water samples collected 430 days after the spill and beach and shallow-water samples collected 505 days after the spill. Results show that, although no oil had entered the sediment substrate within 50 days after the spill (Rapp and others, 1990), spilled oil is contained in sediment samples collected 1½ years later. The amount and consequence of this oil are not yet known. Further results of these cruises will be reported as they become available.

U.S. Forest Service

The Chugach National Forest encircles Prince William Sound and includes Bligh Reef, where the *T/V Exxon*

Valdez ran aground. During the spring and summer of 1990, the USFS assigned personnel to six interagency monitoring crews working in Prince William Sound. The crews spent 8 weeks studying the changes that had occurred over the winter. Their role was to observe national forest lands, identify areas still covered with oil, observe primary and secondary environmental impacts of the oil, and recommend remedial actions to be implemented during 1990.

Survey crews will again be sent into the Sound in April 1991 to document any changes that occurred during the winter of 1990-91. The crews will visit about 400 beaches and determine appropriate cleanup options. Cleanup is expected to begin on June 1, 1991.

Proposals for restoration projects have been submitted to the Trustees Council for consideration and public review. It is anticipated that some restoration projects will be funded in 1991.

Coal and Peat Resources

Alaskan coal production hit a record high in 1990 at 1.58 million short tons, a 9-percent increase over 1989 and 2 percent over 1988's previous record of 1.55 million short tons (Swainbank and others, 1991). All production is from the Usibelli coal mine at Healy in central Alaska (fig. 13).

Approximately half of the coal produced is used for in-state power generation, and the rest exported to South Korea.

Alaska stands poised to become an important coal mining and export center in the years to come (Alaska Department of Natural Resources, 1990). Estimates of high-rank coal resources in Alaska total 3.0-3.3 trillion tons, the energy equivalent of 10 trillion barrels of oil. Low concentrations of sulfur, nitrogen, and metallic trace elements make Alaska's coals among the most environmentally safe in the world, and the lower moisture content yields higher energy output per ton. These factors, plus increased demand in the Asian Far East for coal-generated power, high in-state development potential, and Alaska's position in the center of expanding Pacific Rim trade routes, are all important elements supporting Alaska's budding prominence in the world coal market.

Domestically, the market for Alaskan coal is uncertain and may be already saturated. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and concurrent loss of oil production there, did not increase domestic requirements for coal (Anchorage Daily News, September 28, 1990). The oil embargo in the early 1970's had already forced utility companies to wean themselves from oil-generated power. Today, oil provides only 4 percent of the Nation's electrical power, and utilities are not expected to convert the few existing oil-fired plants to coal. While oil prices nearly doubled during the Kuwaiti conflict,



Figure 12. USGS geologist examines oiled beach gravels on Smith Island, Prince William Sound, 16 months after 1989 *Exxon Valdez* oil spill. Analysis of beach and offshore sediment samples reveals the presence of oil in sediment substrate in many locations along the oil slick's trajectory. Photograph by P. Carlson.

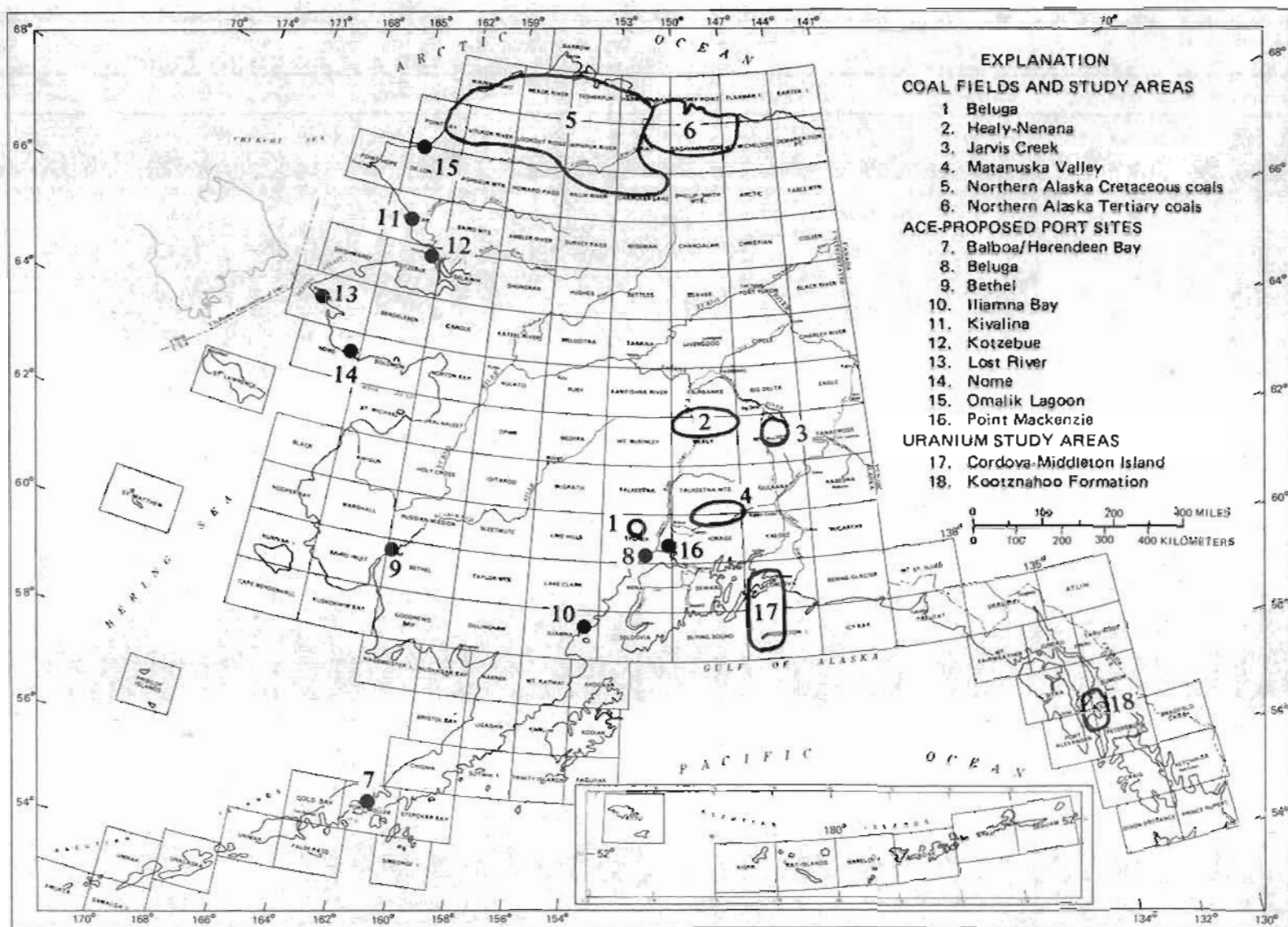


Figure 13. Areas of potential coal and uranium resources and ACE-proposed port sites. 1:250,000-scale quadrangles are outlined and labeled.

coal prices remained steady. In addition, warm winter weather decreased the demand for coal, and stockpiles rose 14.4 percent nationally (Anchorage Times, March 20, 1991).

Construction at the Wishbone Hill coal mine in the Matanuska Valley (fig. 13) was slated to begin in September 1990 (Alaska Journal of Commerce, February 19, 1990). Core samples are routinely taken for analysis. Coal from Wishbone Hill is of high rank (10,400-13,200 Btu/lb) and has low sulfur (0.2-0.6 percent) and low moisture (3-9 percent) contents (Alaska Department of Natural Resources, 1990). The mine is expected to employ 215 people and export one million short tons per year to Japan.

The final environmental impact statement (FEIS) for the Diamond Chuitna coal mine in the Beluga coal field (fig. 13) was issued in February 1990, but it failed to address a proposed port road, thereby facing a legal challenge within a week of its release (Anchorage Times, February 8, 1990). The Alaska Superior Court ruled that the proposal must include the port road (Anchorage Daily News, May 28, 1990). The new permit work should not hold up development of the mine, which is proposed to start operating in the mid-1990's. Situated 45 miles west of Anchorage, the mine could produce up to 12 million short tons per year and employ more than 800 workers.

On July 9, 1990, the Alaska Superior Court put on hold all State-sponsored land conveyances, permits, and leases on Alaska Mental Health lands (AMHL) (Alaska Journal of Commerce, August 23, 1990), including the coal developments at Wishbone Hill, Healy, and Diamond Chuitna. The AMHL program was created at Statehood by the Federal Government to be held in trust by the State, and part of the revenues generated therefrom were to provide funding for Alaska's mentally ill. AMHL revenues were to be based on a percentage of the land's value. Mental-health workers claim that these one million acres of AMHL, including some of the most valuable acreage in the State, have been undervalued for years, cheating patients out of valuable program dollars. The long-standing dispute finally resulted in the 1990 Superior Court decision. The present State administration supports the \$2.24-billion valuation approved last year by an interim AMHL commission (Anchorage Daily News, December 23, 1990), and if this valuation is accepted by the courts, the coal projects would be allowed to proceed as scheduled.

The North Slope of Alaska contains an estimated 3.2 trillion short tons of coal, including 1.9 trillion short tons of high-rank coal (Stricker, 1991; Roberts and others, 1991) (fig. 13). The Arctic Slope Regional Corporation owns substantial portions of the coal fields in the western part of the North Slope and would like to develop this resource (Alaska Journal of Commerce, April 23, 1990). The main obstacles to large-scale development in this area are the lack of a transportation infrastructure and the short ice-free shipping season. However, the coal could be used locally to heat Native villages and to run electric generators in Nome and

Kotzebue that presently use State-subsidized oil. A successful small-scale mining operation in the western Arctic might also interest the military and the Red Dog mine in using coal to meet their power needs.

Usibelli Coal Mines Incorporated was nominated for the U.S. Department of Interior's 1989 "Excellence in Surface Coal Mining and Reclamation" Award (Alaska Report, January 10, 1990). The company was nominated for its work on collecting and treating all mine water to drinking water standards before returning it to Hoseanna Creek, the drainage for the mine's operations.

Peat mined in Alaska is used primarily in agriculture and greenhouses as a soil conditioner; minor amounts are burned locally in villages for heat. After holding steady for four years, peat production increased 27 percent in 1990 to 65,000 cubic yards, up 14,000 cubic yards from 1989 (Swainbank and others, 1991).

Activity by Federal Agencies

U.S. Geological Survey

Branch of Coal Geology personnel have completed resource studies of the Tertiary coals in the Sagavanirktok Formation in the east-central portion of the North Slope (fig. 13). These coals are also low-sulfur, with a mean of 0.37 percent and a range of 0.08-2.02 percent total sulfur (Roberts, 1991). The coal beds are wedge-shaped and dip northeast, such that recoverable resources increase with depth. Coal estimates total 671 billion short tons over the following depth intervals: 209 billion short tons at 0-500 feet of overburden; 93.5 billion short tons at 500-1,000 feet of overburden; 352 billion short tons at 1,000-6,000 feet of overburden; and 16.5 billion short tons at greater than 6,000 feet of overburden (Roberts and others, 1991).

Branch of Coal Geology personnel continue to investigate the major-, minor-, and trace-element distribution in the Usibelli coal mine near Healy (fig. 13). In 1990, a face channel of 28 samples from the No. 4 bed was collected for chemical analysis. Previous work by Affolter and Stricker (1987) at the Usibelli mine indicates that many trace elements vary both vertically and horizontally within the three coal beds being mined. The subbituminous coals mined at Healy have some of the lowest reported sulfur values for any coal presently mined in the United States, containing 0.1-1.5 percent total sulfur (Stricker, 1991).

U.S. Bureau of Mines

The USBM examined the potential for coal development in the areas adjacent to Omalik Lagoon, Kotzebue, Beluga, and Point MacKenzie (fig. 13). These evaluations were done for a study by the ACE on the future needs of

port site facilities in Alaska. The results were published in 1990 as open-file reports (Sherman and others, 1990a, 1990b, 1990c; U.S. Bureau of Mines, 1990a). These reports are listed in appendix 1, USBM section.

Northwestern Alaska.—The most likely scenario for developing the coal resources of northwestern Alaska would be small-scale production for regional use. Coal could be produced at prices equivalent to \$1.28/gallon fuel oil at Kotzebue and \$1.46/gallon fuel oil at Omalik Lagoon; however, the villages' oil-fired power plants would have to be converted to burn coal. Large-scale production of coal for export is presently infeasible due to high costs, technical hardships of operating in an arctic environment, and the short ice-free shipping season.

South-central Alaska.—Port sites at Beluga and Point MacKenzie would be well supplied from expanded coal development in central and south-central Alaska. The Beluga coal field is regarded as having the world's largest surface-minable reserves of low-sulfur coal close to tidewater and ocean shipping, and the modeled mine could ship 12 million short tons of coal per year for 30 years from the Beluga site. The Point MacKenzie site could be the destination for coal from the Usibelli coal mine in Healy and the Wishbone Hill mine near Palmer. The Usibelli mine currently ships 750,000 short tons per year to Korea via Seward, and Wishbone Hill could ship approximately 1.1 million short tons per year for 10 years.

Bureau of Land Management

The BLM continued its management of a lease in the Jarvis Creek coal field south of Delta Junction (fig. 13) and awarded a permit to Hobbs Industries to conduct exploration activities on the lease. Coal from this field is a potential feedstock for gas production, which would be used to generate electrical power for the U.S. Army base at Fort Greeley. Interest in additional coal leasing on Federal land is currently growing.

The BLM has been assessing the coal potential of NPRA in cooperation with the ADGGS and other agencies. Two technical papers dealing with coal resources in northern Alaska were presented at the Fifth Circum-Pacific Energy and Mineral Resources Conference in Hawaii (Gibson and Mowatt, 1990; Mowatt and others, 1990b). These papers are listed in appendix 1, BLM section.

Fish and Wildlife Service

The FWS has been reviewing and commenting on the EIS and Section 404 CWA permit for the Diamond Chuitna coal mine proposed for development on the west side of Cook Inlet. The FWS also is reviewing plans for the proposed Wishbone Hill coal development north of Palmer.

These reviews include technical recommendations to mitigate possible fish and wildlife habitat losses.

Department of Energy

The construction of a state-of-the-art mine-mouth power plant at the Usibelli coal mine in Healy has moved into the first phase of public comment (Anchorage Times, October 10, 1990). The plant is being financed by a \$93.9-million Clean Coal Technology cooperative agreement monitored by the DOE's Pittsburgh Energy Technology Center. The 50-megawatt power plant will provide electricity to railbelt communities, as well as demonstrate a new coal-burning technology in Alaska. The plant is intended to burn Alaska's low-sulfur coal producing virtually no smokestack emissions by scrubbing out particulate matter, nitrogen-oxide compounds, and sulfur dioxide.

Uranium Resources

The United States uranium mining industry did poorly in 1990 because the price of uranium remained low, a condition resulting not only from the abundance of cheap imported uranium, but also from the unexpectedly low domestic demand during the 1980's. Inventory liquidations during 1990 also helped to keep the current U_3O_8 spot price low (Chenowith, 1990). More than 20 percent of the electricity used in the United States during 1990 was generated from nuclear power plants, yet only 25 percent of the uranium consumed came from current production. As a result, the Secretary of Energy declared the domestic uranium industry to be nonviable for the sixth straight year.

Uranium exploration expenditures in Alaska were nonexistent during 1990, as they have been since 1983. The outlook for the development of Alaska's uranium resources remains bleak due to high exploration costs, remote mills, and distant markets.

Activity by Federal Agencies

U.S. Geological Survey

A core program in uranium research is carried out by the USGS in the Branch of Sedimentary Processes. This program is designed to keep the United States abreast of geologic and technologic advances in uranium research and to maintain the capability to carry out such work. Current research on Alaska's uranium resources is limited to using previously acquired data due to the lack of funding for field work or other new data collection.

A report describing uranium mineralization and its relation to diagenesis in the Tertiary Kootznohoo Formation

was released during 1990 (Dickinson and Vuletich, 1990). Another recent report described uranium and thorium anomalies in the National Uranium Resource Evaluation (NURE) data from the Cordova and Middleton Island areas of south-central Alaska (Goldfarb and others, 1989). Both these reports are listed in appendix 1, USGS section.

Geothermal Resources

Hot springs occur throughout Alaska and historically have been used on a small, highly localized scale for recreation, space heating, and agriculture. However, with widespread young volcanic activity on the Aleutian Islands, the Alaska Peninsula, the Wrangell Mountains, and elsewhere in the State, the potential exists for geothermal energy production to serve many population centers.

No Federal research was funded for geothermal studies in 1990.

NONFUEL-MINERAL RESOURCES

Metallic Minerals

Industry Activity

Economic and Regulatory Overview

In 1990, Alaskan minerals exploration and production grew for the fourth consecutive year. Strong base-metal and precious-metal prices spurred exploration expenditures to \$56.7 million (Swainbank and others, 1991), a 19-percent increase over 1989 and the highest since 1981. Mineral production totaled \$534 million, nearly double the value of 1989 production (table 6); this was due to the first shipments of zinc concentrate from the Red Dog mine and to increased zinc-lead-silver production at the Greens Creek mine. Metallic minerals accounted for 79.5 percent, industrial minerals for 12 percent, and coal and peat for 8.5 percent, by value, of reported mineral production. In contrast to expanding exploration and production values, development expenditures in 1990 plummeted 90 percent to \$11.4 million after completion of the Red Dog and Greens Creek mine infrastructures in 1989. Lack of development coupled with mine closures lowered the number of people employed by the mining industry to 3,866 workers, down 7 percent from 1989 levels. The total value of Alaska's mineral industry, defined as the sum of exploration, development, and production expenditures, rose 31 percent overall to \$602 million, compared to the previous all-time high of \$553 million in 1988.

Gold lost its ranking as principal ore commodity in 1990 as a result of the closure of two mining operations: Westgold pulled its dredge *Bima* from offshore Nome be-

cause of low gold prices (Anchorage Times, September 21, 1990), and Cambior Mines closed its Valdez Creek placer operations throughout most of the year for development work (Anchorage Times, November 13, 1990); Cambior plans full-scale production in 1991 (Swainbank and others, 1991). Placer gold production totaled approximately 192,800 ounces (oz) from 216 sites around the State (fig. 14); the Greens Creek mine produced 38,000 oz lode gold. A full three-quarters of 1990 exploration expenditures involved the Alaska-Juneau, Jualin, and Kensington gold properties in southeast Alaska, and the Ester Dome and Fort Knox gold prospects near Fairbanks (Anchorage Daily News, January 1, 1991).

The leading ore metal by value was zinc, due mainly to the start-up of production at the Red Dog mine. Silver production doubled, and lead production increased fivefold, largely as a result of activity at the Greens Creek mine. Greens Creek is the largest underground silver lode mine in the United States (Alaska Journal of Commerce, August 20, 1990) and produced 7.6 million oz silver in 1990 (Anchorage Daily News, January 1, 1991). Tin production plummeted after the 1989 closure of the Lost River operation on the Seward Peninsula; all tin produced in 1990 came from placer mines in central Alaska (fig. 14).

The State government announced its dedication to opening legal access to mineral deposits on Federal lands and to streamlining the State permitting process for placer mining (Anchorage Daily News, December 26, 1990). State law currently requires the reclamation of mined lands to stable, but not necessarily original, condition; small parcels (up to 5 acres) or volumes (1,500 cubic yards) are exempt. The required performance bond of \$750/acre can be satisfied by annual payments into a bond pool (Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, April 18, 1990). Although Alaska closed 289,500 acres of land to new mineral exploration in 1990, more than 90 percent of the 80 million State-owned acres remains open. Only 15 percent of Alaska's Federal lands, the largest ownership block in the state, are available to mineral entry (Alaska Journal of Commerce, October 19, 1990).

An EIS issued by the NPS concludes that the 30 mines that had operated within Denali, Wrangell-St. Elias, and Yukon-Charley Rivers National Parks and Preserves had damaged the environment and should be purchased rather than allowed to reopen (Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, April 26, 1990). The NPS will receive about \$6 million in its 1991 budget to begin purchasing patented and unpatented claims in the Kantishna district of Denali National Park (Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, December 7, 1990).

The Alaska Miners Association's annual fall convention in Anchorage was the largest since 1981. The highlight of the convention was a two-day symposium on the metallogeny of the Soviet Far East, Alaska, and western Canada. The symposium, sponsored in part by the USGS, included presentations by geologists from the three countries.

Level IV studies consist of detailed mapping (1:63,360 or larger scale) and sampling of individual mineral deposits or mining districts, and related research. Ongoing level IV activities in Alaska include studies of gold-vein deposits at and near the Apollo mine on Unga Island, geochemical studies of massive sulfide deposits in mafic volcanic rocks of the Chugach and Prince William terranes, and metamorphic and structural studies in the central and western Brooks Range (fig. 17; table 7).

Major reports published recently as a result of AMRAP projects and related mineral-resource projects include an assessment of undiscovered mineral resources of the Tongass National Forest (Brew and others, 1991a, 1991b; Drew and Brew, 1990), metamorphic-facies maps of all regions of the State (Doyle and others, 1991; Dusel-Bacon, 1991a, 1991b; Dusel-Bacon and others, 1991a, 1991b, 1991c), geochemistry and geologic controls on mineralization in the Bethel quadrangle (Frost, 1990; Frost and Box, 1991), a preliminary geologic map and discussion of areas favorable for mineralization in the Baird Mountains quadrangle (Karl and others, 1990; Goldfarb and others, 1990a), a preliminary assessment of the resource potential of the Sitka quadrangle (Karl and others, 1991), and a description of gold placers in the Circle District (Yeend, 1990b). Numerous short papers have also been published in the volumes on geologic and geochemical studies by the USGS in Alaska (Dover and Galloway, 1990; Goldfarb and others, 1990d). All of these papers are listed in appendix 1, USGS section.

Precious Metals

USGS geologists are involved in several studies of precious-metal occurrences in Alaska. Present research (fig. 17; table 7) focuses on gold-quartz veins north of Nome, lode-gold mineralization of the Apollo and Shumagin mines on the Alaska Peninsula, lode-gold deposits in southeastern Alaska, metallogenesis of the eastern Alaska Range, mining geophysics of central Alaska, and the geology of placer-gold deposits. Many level III AMRAP studies also involve research related to precious-metal deposits. Reports published in 1990 include gold analytical results from several south-central and interior quadrangles (Cathall and others, 1990), lead isotope results from vein occurrences in the Yukon-Tanana area (Church and others, 1990), a study of mineralizing fluids in the Juneau gold belt (Goldfarb and Leach, 1990), gold determinations in the Iditarod quadrangle (Hopkins and others, 1991), areas favorable for gold mineralization in the Anchorage quadrangle (Madden-McGuire and Winkler, 1991), and a discussion of gold placers of the Eureka Creek and Tofly areas and the Circle District (Yeend, 1990a, 1990b). These reports are listed in appendix 1, USGS section.

USGS geologists are studying the occurrence of strategic and critical minerals in Alaska. Current research (fig. 17; table 7) includes studies of mafic and ultramafic rocks and their associated deposits of platinum-group metals (PGM), chrome, nickel, and cobalt; tin commodity studies are also ongoing. The DOI has given high priority to the identification of strategic mineral deposits in Alaska, partly to improve information about resource potential before further land withdrawals by Congress, and partly out of concern over the stability of foreign suppliers (Anchorage Times, August 3, 1990).

Other Metals

Research on other metals and geologic background investigations (fig. 17; table 7) are continuing on a north-western Alaska crustal study, a geologic and mineral-resource study of the eastern Norton Bay area, the Yukon-Koyukuk geologic transect, a geophysical study of the Yukon-Koyukuk basin, a mining geophysics study of central Alaska, a study of metamorphic terranes in interior Alaska, and metamorphic-facies mapping of Alaska. Topical publications during 1990 detailed the results of studies on mercury and antimony deposits in southwestern Alaska (Goldfarb and others, 1990b, 1990c; Gray and others, 1990a, 1990b, 1991). These five papers are listed in appendix 1, USGS section.

Mineral-resource data for the Tongass National Forest in southeastern Alaska were compiled as part of a revision of the USFS management plan for the Nation's largest national forest (17 million acres). Results include a 1989 USBM compilation of data on the discovered mineral resources of the forest and a recent USGS publication that estimates the undiscovered locatable mineral resources of southeastern Alaska (Brew and others, 1991). Based on geology, geophysics, geochemistry, mineral economics, and exploration history, the USGS report defines 124 tracts that are permissive for the occurrence of undiscovered mineral resources; each tract was judged to contain one or more types of mineral deposits. Probabilistic estimates of the undiscovered mineral resources include 168 metric tons of gold, 7,550 metric tons of silver, 5 million metric tons of copper, 2.2 million metric tons of zinc, and 0.45 million metric tons of molybdenum. Lands currently open to mineral entry in the Tongass National Forest are estimated to contain slightly over half of the undiscovered locatable mineral resources of southeastern Alaska.

Cooperative Programs with Soviet Scientific Agencies

In 1987, joint studies were proposed during a visit of the Chief Geologist and Chief of the Branch of Alaskan

Table 7. Level IV studies of the USGS Alaska Mineral Resource Assessment Program and related projects active in 1990

[Project chiefs are listed in parentheses. Projects marked by asterisk are of statewide scope]

| Areal mineral-resource assessments |
|--|
| <p>*Alaska mineral resources, probability estimations (W.D. Menzie) Alaska Peninsula, geology and mineral resources (F.H. Wilson) Colville mining district, geology and mineral resources (J.M. Schmidt, USGS; S. Fechner, USBM) Eastern Alaska Range, metallogenesis (W.J. Nokleberg) Fortymile district, placer gold deposits (W.E. Yeend) Juneau gold belt, lode gold deposits (R.J. Goldfarb) Norton Bay-Unalakleet area, geology and mineral resources (W.W. Patton, Jr.) *Placer gold deposit studies (W.E. Yeend) *Placer platinum deposit studies (J.B. Cathrall) Southwestern Alaska, epithermal mercury deposits (J.E. Gray) *Tin commodity studies (B.L. Reed) Western Brooks Range, mineral deposits (J.M. Schmidt)</p> |
| Areal energy-resource assessments |
| <p>Nenana basin coal fields, genesis of trace elements (G.D. Stricker) Nenana basin coal studies (C. Wahrhaftig) Nenana basin, geologic framework and petroleum potential (R.G. Stanley) Northern Alaska coal resources (G.D. Stricker) Yukon-Kandik basin, petroleum potential (H.E. Cook)</p> |
| Exploration geophysical studies |
| <p>Central Alaska, mining geophysics (D.L. Campbell) *Statewide gravity network (D.F. Barnes) Yukon-Koyukuk basin and its borderlands, geophysics (J.W. Cady)</p> |
| Biostratigraphic studies |
| <p>*Brachiopod and conodont paleogeography (J.T. Dutro, Jr. and A.G. Harris) Brooks Range and Arctic Slope studies (L.N. Marincovich) *Paleozoic and Mesozoic radiolarians (C.D. Blome and B.L. Murchey)</p> |
| Framework or process studies |
| <p>*Alaska mafic and ultramafic rocks (R.A. Loney) *Alaska metamorphic-facies map (C. Dusek-Bacon) Alaska Peninsula, Upper Mesozoic stratigraphy (R.L. Dettmerman and F.H. Wilson) Apollo and Shumagin mines, gold mineralization (W.H. White) Central Alaska metamorphic studies (J.H. Dover) Chugach massive sulfide deposits, geochemistry (S.W. Nelson) Groundhog Basin-Glacier Basin silver-tin-lead-zinc deposits (R.J. Newberry and D.A. Brew) Interior metamorphic terranes, structural analysis (J.H. Dover) Katmai region, Tertiary magmatism (J.R. Riehl and M.A. Lanphere) Northwestern Alaska crustal study (A.B. Till)</p> |

Table 7. Level IV studies of the USGS Alaska Mineral Resource Assessment Program and related projects active in 1990—Continued

| Framework or process studies |
|--|
| <p>*Paleomagnetism of accreted terranes (C.S. Gromme) Salt Chuck platinum-palladium deposits (R.A. Loney) Seward Peninsula gold veins (B.M. Gamble) Yukon-Koyukuk crustal transect study (W.W. Patton, Jr.)</p> |
| Exploration geochemical studies |
| <p>Western Brooks Range, stratabound base-metal deposits (K.D. Kelley)</p> |
| Isotopic and radiometric studies |
| <p>*K-Ar studies and radiometric age file (N. Shew) *Lead isotope studies of Alaska mineral deposits (S.E. Church) *Uranium-lead and rubidium-strontium isotope studies (J.N. Aleinikoff)</p> |

Geology to the Soviet Far East Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences. In 1988, two study proposals were exchanged, and memoranda of understanding were signed in 1989 between the USGS and the USSR Ministry of Geology, and between the National Science Foundation and the USSR Academy of Sciences.

The first proposal involves the comparative metallogenesis of lode mineral deposits in the USSR Far East and Alaska. As one of its goals, the study proposes to refine extrapolated trends in geology and lode mineral deposits from western Alaska across the Bering Strait into lesser known areas of the USSR Far East. In 1989, a team of USGS geologists visited the Soviet Far East for five weeks. In 1990, the USGS and State of Alaska sponsored visits by two teams of Soviet geologists. Several mineral deposits near Nome and Fairbanks and in south-central Alaska were visited; some tours were hosted by private industry. Agreements were reached during the year for the Soviet scientists to prepare a tectonic-magmatic map of the USSR Northeast and to release lode deposit data. Canada joined the international effort during the year, and guidelines were established for publishing metallogenic maps of the USSR Far East, Alaska, and western Canada. A new tectonic-magmatic map of Alaska will also be produced.

The second proposal encompasses a joint comparative study of the geologic setting and age of ophiolites and their host terranes in Alaska and the USSR Far East. Ophiolites typically mark fossil boundaries of lithospheric plates, and the study of ophiolites can lead to insights into the mechanisms of plate subduction and terrane accretion. Moreover, ophiolites commonly contain copper, chromium,

on-site evaluation. Eight such properties were visited by the USBM and USFS during 1990. At each property, physical hazards (rotten timbers, weak rock, old equipment, abandoned explosives) and environmental hazards (mercury contamination, stream sedimentation, acid mine drainage) were investigated. For each mine visited, the USFS was advised of its location, history, physical and environmental hazards, and mitigation recommendations. The USFS will use the information for planning hazard abatements on these properties.

Permitting and environmental constraints.—The USBM published a report detailing the costs of mine permitting requirements and procedures for placer and lode mines in Alaska (Sherman, 1990a). For placer mines, the study found that increased operating costs and lost production time during a short operating season account for a markedly decreasing rate of return as effluent treatment is increased. Lode mines face greater permitting and compliance costs than similarly sized placer mines due to the physical impact of their operation. Direct permitting costs for lode mines average 4 percent of total project cost, and total permitting and compliance costs are approximately 8 percent. Indirect costs associated with compliance include mitigation, monitoring, and reclamation.

Public information.—The Minerals Industry Location System (MILS) data base continued to receive widespread use by the government, industry, and the public. In addition to on-site visitors, 10 reports and 4 map overlays were generated in 1990 in response to information requests. One such report was prepared for a State Senator, detailing mineral development potential along the route of the proposed Trans-Alaska Highway, from Prospect Creek Camp on the Dalton Highway, through Bettles and Bornite, to Nome on the Seward Peninsula. Major mineral deposits along the route include the Bornite, Arctic, Sun, and Smucker copper deposits. Within 24 hours of the request, the USBM had prepared (1) a map showing the proposed route and location of mineral deposits along the route, (2) a list of the 374 deposits showing name, type, current status, and primary commodity, and (3) an estimate of the gross dollar value for deposits with known reserves along the road corridor.

Policy Analysis

All 16 quadrangles in southeast Alaska were digitized, and the land status updated to June 1988; 27 quadrangles in south-central and north-central Alaska were also digitized. Land status was updated in a draft form to June 1989 in 16 of these quadrangles.

Initial compilation of the Mineral Claim Information System (MCIS) was completed (Sherman, 1990b). There are approximately 73,100 active claims (30,700 Federal and 42,400 State) on the 1990 MCIS data base, a drop of 7.5

percent from the 79,100 claims (33,900 Federal and 45,200 State) active in 1989.

State Mineral Activities

The State Mineral Officer wrote the annual preliminary "Mineral industry survey of Alaska in 1990," summarizing significant nonfuel mineral activity. Legislative and executive actions of interest to the mineral industry were monitored and reported monthly. News items were prepared for the weekly "Mineral Alerts" and for the bimonthly survey "Minerals and Materials." Mineral briefing profiles were prepared for DOI and USBM officials as required. Mineral news of interest to the USBM and its commodity specialists were forwarded weekly.

Minerals information and analysis are provided through a series of scheduled and unscheduled publications and reports, and through other responses to inquiries from State and Federal agencies, industry, and the public. One priority is the identification and evaluation of issues, problems, and trends, in order to provide the USBM additional opportunities for constructive action in the minerals field.

Mineral Land Assessment

During 1990, the USBM conducted mineral land assessment activities in the Ketchikan and Valdez Creek mining districts and prepared for 1991 field work in the Colville mining district (fig. 19, table 8). Each mining district study is designed to determine the mineral development potential of the district by identifying and assessing known mineral resources and reserves, evaluating the probability that more resources exist, and determining the feasibility of mining certain deposit types. The studies include site-specific evaluations when the presence of significant minerals is noted. The USBM produces annual "data dumps" of the field mapping and analytical results; a final executive summary is published at the end of the study. The mining district studies are done in cooperation with other Federal and State agencies.

Ketchikan.—Field work in the Ketchikan mining district commenced in 1990. More than 150 mines, prospects, and mineral occurrences were investigated on southern Prince of Wales Island. More than 1,300 rock, placer, and limestone samples were taken, and approximately 3 miles of underground workings were mapped. Analytical results provided by an outside contractor have been coupled with field data, and analytical tables were generated. A narrative summary of 1990 field activities will be published in 1991.

Valdez Creek.—In 1990, the USBM completed its 4-year assessment of the mineral resources and mineral development potential of the 5.7-million-acre Valdez Creek

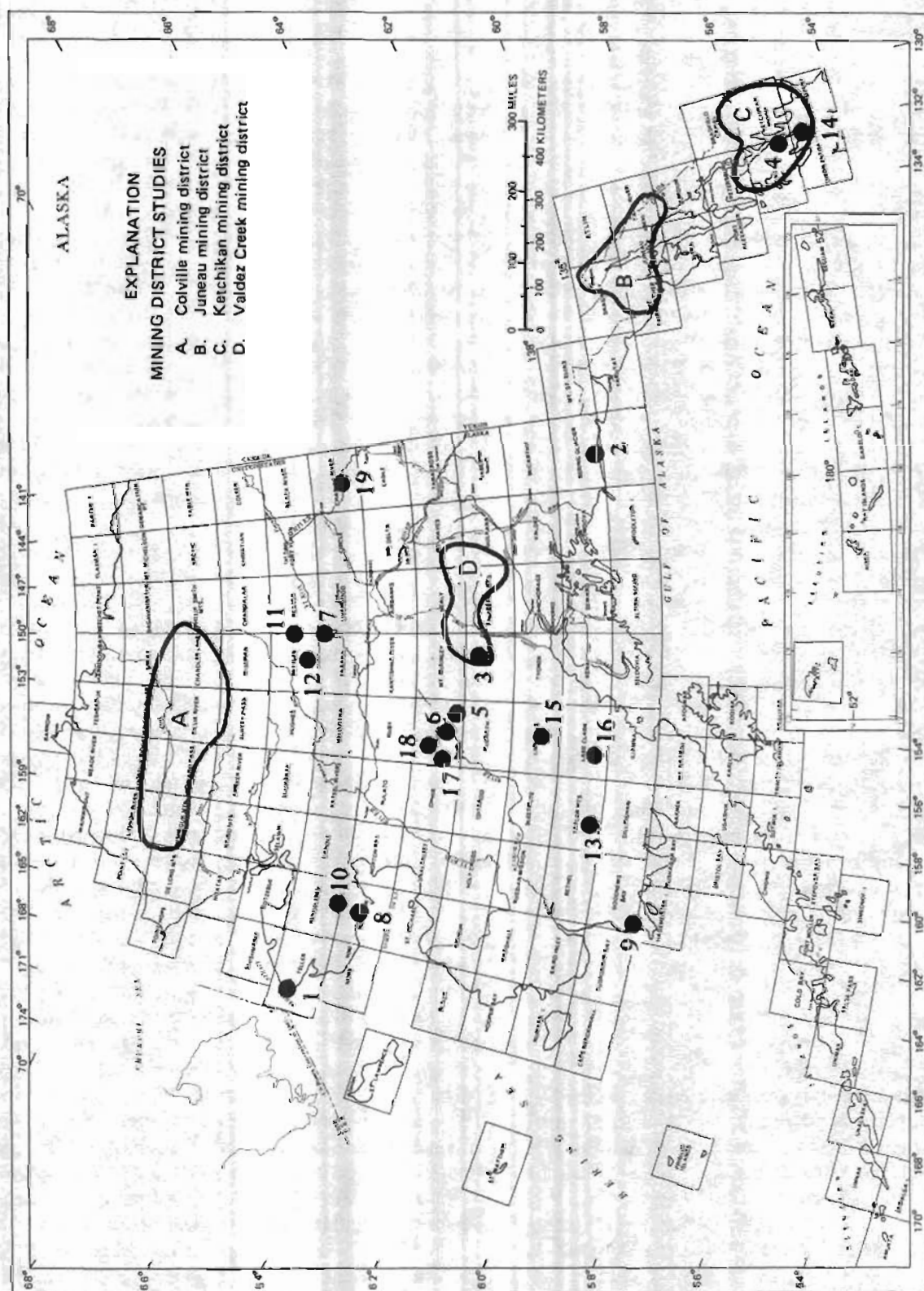


Figure 19. Locations of 1990 USBM mining district studies (A,B,C,D) and studies of strategic and critical minerals (1-19) listed in table 8. 1:250,000-scale quadrangles are outlined and labeled.

ground-water quality, long-term monitoring of mine sites, bonding, and environmental liability.

The USBM Mineral Institute program supports several projects at the UAF School of Mineral Engineering. This program receives 2:1 matching funds from the State of Alaska and the USBM that are used for various faculty and graduate student projects, scholarships, and other appropriate mineral industry activities. One such project entailed the field testing of electrical thawing probes to be used in the mining of permafrost placer gravels. The USBM also continues to support the operation of the ACE Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory permafrost tunnel near Fox. Support funds routine maintenance of the facility and is shared equally with the ACE and UAF.

Finally, the USBM closed its Alaska Technology Transfer Office in Anchorage.

Bureau of Land Management

In 1990, there were filings/recordings of a total of 29,566 Federal mining claims in Alaska. The total number of active mining operations on BLM-administered lands included 133 Notices (5 acres or less total surface disturbance) and 111 Plans of Operations (greater than 5 acres of total surface disturbance). Seven mineral patents for 56 claims conveying 1,204 acres into private ownership were issued by the BLM during fiscal year 1990. Additionally, patent of one mining claim was denied for insufficient title evidence and lack of diligence on the part of the applicant. Decisions were issued that resulted in the closure of 8,480 claims.

Work continued on an automated minerals data base for BLM lands containing BLM-generated mineral-potential information, minerals data (well, seismic, and other), and a minerals bibliography. At the Fifth Circum-Pacific Energy and Mineral Resources Conference in Hawaii, technical papers were presented on the mineral resources of western Arctic Alaska, the Red Dog deposit, and PGM relationships in mafic-ultramafic rocks in northwest Alaska (Mowatt and others, 1990a, 1990c; Mowatt and Mowatt, 1990b). These papers are listed in appendix 1, BLM section.

Fish and Wildlife Service

In keeping with its primary mission, efforts of the FWS relating to mineral activity emphasize fish, wildlife, and habitat protection on refuge lands. Mining is not always compatible with these goals. However, in areas where mining claims were located before the refuge was established, claims may remain "active." By the end of 1990, the number of active mining claims on refuge lands (fig. 3) had been reduced from 123 claims on eight refuges in 1989 to 69 claims on four refuges: Alaska Peninsula (55 claims), Arctic (9 claims), Becharof (1 claim), and Tetlin (4 claims).

For northern Alaska, reviews and comments were provided by the FWS to the ACE on 16 applications for permits or permit modifications for placer mining, mineral assessment, gold dredging, and Cominco's Red Dog zinc-lead mine.

In south-central Alaska, the FWS reviewed operations at the largest placer mine in the State, the Valdez Creek mine near the Denali Highway. Reviews were also conducted at the Bear Creek/Tuluksak River area in the Yukon Delta Refuge and at the Salmon River on the Togiak Refuge. These mines were evaluated relative to resident fish by-pass facilities, Section 404 CWA permits, and environmental assessments. Three reports on placer mining impacts on refuges were completed (Crayton, 1990; Jackson, 1990a, 1990b). These reports are listed in appendix 1, FWS section.

Several mining proposals in southeast Alaska continue to involve the FWS. Until the EPA denied the Section 402 NPDES permit application for the Quartz Hill molybdenum mine proposed in the Misty Fjords National Monument east of Ketchikan, the FWS had provided informal input to the USFS regarding mitigation plans and monitoring studies. The FWS has been involved, as applicable, in predevelopment consultation on studies, proposals, EIS's, water quality, and toxic waste issues for the A-J gold mine in Juneau, the Kensington and Jualin gold mines north of Juneau, and the Windy Craggy copper mine northwest of Haines. Although the Windy Craggy deposit is in Canada, its development will produce downstream repercussions in Alaska.

The FWS initiated or continued several studies of contaminants and the effects of mining in wildlife refuges. These included data summaries of previous baseline contaminant studies, conducted from 1985 to 1989, of river water, sediment, and fish from the Kanuti, Koyukuk, Nowitna, Selawik, Tetlin, and Yukon Flats Refuges. These data will be used to identify potential impacts of placer mining. Study proposals were developed and reviewed for further investigations of mercury and other trace-metal contamination in the Koyukuk, Nowitna, and Yukon Flats Refuges. As part of a continuing study of elevated mercury concentrations found in certain fish in the Kanuti Refuge in 1985-89 studies, tissues from sculpin, wolf, and marten were collected. Water-quality data were collected from Upper Braided Creek in the Alaska Peninsula Refuge for use in evaluating impacts of planned mining operations in that area. Preparatory to cleaning up two old placer mines on the Yukon Delta Refuge, the waste oil and materials from drums left at those sites were analyzed.

On non-refuge lands, sediment and vegetation samples were collected for metals analysis from placer mining settling ponds and gravel pits in order to evaluate strategies for settling-pond rehabilitation. A fish kill in Fish Creek downstream of placer mining near Tanana was investigated. The FWS assisted the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in the investigation of contaminant problems at the Red Dog mine and reviewed WestGold's draft annual report for

1989 studies associated with NPDES/State contaminant-monitoring requirements for gold dredging near Nome.

The FWS worked to finalize reports on previous studies of trace metals in shallow Arctic marine sediments contaminated by drilling effluents and on waterfowl contamination at Prudhoe Bay.

Minerals Management Service

OCS Mining Program, Norton Sound Lease Sale

The MMS has scheduled a competitive OCS mineral lease sale in Norton Sound for areas south and southeast of Nome (fig. 15). The sale focuses on gold-bearing placer deposits at or near the sea floor in Federal waters at depths ranging from 60 to 100 feet. The proposed sale includes an area of 147,050 acres that extends up to 10 miles seaward of the State of Alaska's 3-mile coastal water limit. Preliminary studies indicate that the sale area could yield as much as 1,060,000 oz gold, although expected production is estimated at 530,000 oz.

Industry responses to a Request for Comments and Nominations in March 1988 revealed that sufficient interest existed to justify proceeding with an offshore gold sale. Onshore mining of stream and beach placers near Nome has occurred intermittently since the first gold discoveries in 1899. Since that time, miners have recovered 4.5 million oz gold from the Nome mining district and over 6 million oz total from the Seward Peninsula. For the past 5 years, Westgold used the floating dredge *Bima* to mine 21,750 acres of mineral leases in State of Alaska waters landward of the proposed sale area, extracting approximately 130,000 oz gold during that time. However, at the end of the 1990 season, Westgold ceased production, citing high operating costs, and put the *Bima* up for sale.

National Park Service

The NPS Alaska Regional Office, Minerals Management Division, is organized into two branches: Resource Assessment, and Mining and Minerals. Personnel from both branches review mining plans of operations and evaluate available natural, cultural, physical resource, and engineering information on areas subject to mineral-related operations. They also conduct claim validity examinations and develop and implement long-term reclamation programs. In addition to the Regional Office in Anchorage, the Denali and Wrangell-St. Elias National Parks and Preserves have professional minerals-management staffs of environmental specialists and geologists who implement park-specific aspects of the minerals management programs. Major accomplishments during 1990 are detailed below.

1. During 1990, the NPS continued to operate under

the court-ordered injunction that suspended mining operations in, and required EIS's for, Denali National Park and Preserve, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, and Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. In these three areas, mining operations could proceed only if court-approved. For all other National Park System units in Alaska, mining plans of operations could still be submitted and approved by the NPS if all regulatory requirements were met, including the completion of environmental assessments and a finding of no significant impact. In May 1990, FEIS's for the three parks under injunction were released to the public; in August, copies of the FEIS's were filed with the U.S. District Court. In its Record of Decision on January 2, 1991, the court dissolved the injunction and approved the NPS recommendation to acquire all patented and valid unpatented mining claims in these units on a "willing seller" basis (fig. 20). Pending acquisition, the NPS will continue to process complete plans of operations for mining activities under the existing regulations.

In fiscal year 1991, Congress approved \$6 million to begin the purchase of mining claims in Denali National Park and Preserve. Claims in the Kantishna mining area will be purchased from willing sellers during 1991. Negotiations with one claimant were nearing completion at the end of 1990.

2. The provisions of Section 1010(b) of ANILCA require that regulations be promulgated under which Federal agencies would conduct their AMRAP activities in units of the National Park System. During 1990, an interagency working group was formed to address the issue; the group was coordinated by the DOI Office of Program Analysis and included representatives from the NPS, BLM, FWS, MMS, USBM, and USGS. The draft regulations were written at 36 CFR Part 9, Subpart D, to apply only to AMRAP activities in National Park System units in Alaska. At year end, the regulations were being reviewed at the departmental level, and an environmental assessment for the regulations was being prepared.

3. Mineral examinations for claim validity determinations were made on 17 placer and 17 lode claims in Denali National Park and Preserve.

4. Black and white and color aerial photography was done in the Kantishna area of Denali National Park and Preserve and in the Kennicott area of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. Surveying of 25 mining claims in Denali was completed.

5. The NPS received six plans of operations for proposed mining activities during the 1990 mining season in Denali National Park and Preserve, Kenai Fjords National Park, and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. After processing and review, including NPS preparation of environmental assessments, one plan in Wrangell-St. Elias was determined to be complete and received approval for the season. One permit for access to a mining claim in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve was issued. Two

operations, one each in Bering Land Bridge National Preserve and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, continued mining under previously approved plans.

6. Work continued on the Glen Creek Reclamation Project for a former placer mining site in Denali National Park and Preserve. This project aims to restore Glen Creek and its floodplain to a more natural state and to assist in the revegetation of the site. After site preparation of 27 acres in 1988, native plants from park sources were planted in the reclaimed area in 1989. Revegetation experiments initiated in this area in 1990 are providing data to determine the types of former mining sites and tailings that will revegetate naturally. Transplanted alder seedlings thrive on sites that fail to regenerate of their own accord.

7. The Alaska Region has instituted an Abandoned Mineral Lands (AML) program that documents features on or associated with former mining operations in the parks. Program objectives are to eliminate and/or mitigate safety hazards and to preserve any significant natural and cultural resource values. In 1990, 12 AML site inventories were completed in Denali and Wrangell-St. Elias National Parks and Preserves. A total of 8 tons of mining-related debris was removed from the Peavine Bar site in Wrangell-St. Elias Park.

8. The Cultural Resources Division of the NPS continued to ensure that all mineral-related activities were ac-

complished under the mandates of the National Historic Preservation Act. Multidisciplinary cultural-resource field crews conducted intensive ground surveys in four park units. Five historic mining sites were documented under the Alaska Region's AML program.

U.S. Forest Service

Tongass National Forest

Management Plan.—The revised Tongass Land Management Plan (TLMP) contains a prescription for minerals management, the first time such a treatment has been used in the National Forest planning process. Controversy over the prescription has erupted between the mining industry, which, while generally supportive of the prescription, believes that it was too narrowly applied, and environmental groups, which contend that it amounted to a land "give-away" to the mining industry.

The Tongass Timber Reform Act (TTRA), PL 101-626, created an additional 296,080 acres of wilderness in the Tongass National Forest, bringing total wilderness acreage there to 5,693,246 acres. Following passage of the TTRA, 63 percent of the Tongass National Forest is now open to mineral entry. Due to new policies set forth in the



Figure 20. North-looking view of mining claims in Kantishna area of Denali National Park and Preserve that are proposed for acquisition by National Park Service. Photograph by D. Schramm.

TTRA, it was decided to prepare a TLMP supplement, which should be published in September 1991.

Greens Creek.—The Greens Creek mine, the largest producing silver mine in the United States, is located in the Admiralty Island National Monument, administered by the Tongass National Forest. Discovered in 1974, the original eight "core" claims were staked that year, and the deposit was first drilled in 1975. The mine's development and production is authorized under ANILCA Section 503(f)(2)(A); the USFS completed a Mine Development EIS for the project in January 1983. Under the provisions of ANILCA Section 503(e)(1), USFS mineral examiners evaluated nine new mining claims in 1987, notifying the Greens Creek Mining Company in September 1988 that the claims were valid, thus increasing the viable ore reserves of the mine. The mine was aggressively developed, and production began in February 1989. In March 1990, based on the projected geometry of the deposit, Kennecott Greens Creek Mining claimed extralateral rights under the provisions of the 1872 General Mining Law. Extralateral rights allow the company to pursue development of the downward extent of the ore body beyond the vertical boundaries of the valid mining claims. The USFS evaluated the company's assertion and recognized the company's case for extralateral rights in May 1990. This is one of the few modern-day applications of extralateral rights to a working mine.

Quartz Hill.—U.S. Borax and Chemical Corporation's Quartz Hill molybdenum deposit is in the Misty Fjords National Monument, on a 152,000-acre tract that is excluded from designation as wilderness. Evaluation and development of the deposit is authorized under ANILCA Section 503(f)(2)(A). The USFS completed the Mine Development FEIS for Quartz Hill in October 1988. The two sites considered in the FEIS for marine tailings disposal were the Boca de Quadra fjord and the Wilson Arm/Smeaton Bay fjord. In his Record of Decision, the Alaska Regional Forester concluded that, environmental impacts being almost equal, tailings disposal in the Wilson Arm offered distinct economic advantages. The EPA, a cooperator in the preparation of the FEIS, issued a draft discharge permit for Wilson Arm in November 1988.

The Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund (SCLDF) appealed the USFS decision on behalf of several environmental and commercial fishing organizations, contending that economics should not have been an element of the Regional Forester's decision due to the environmental sensitivity of Misty Fjords National Monument. On January 11, 1990, the Regional Forester reaffirmed his decision, noting that Congress specifically directed the USFS to consider the effect of mitigation measures on the economic viability of the project. However, in May 1990, citing SCLDF information and other reasons, the EPA reversed itself and announced plans to deny the disposal permit. In September 1990, the EPA, with the concurrence of the State of Alaska, issued a final decision to deny the discharge permit for Wilson Arm.

As a consequence of this action, U.S. Borax and Chemical Corporation has suspended further permitting activities on the Quartz Hill project.

Other.—There is a considerable amount of exploration and development activity in the Juneau Gold Belt of the Tongass National Forest. Many of these activities are regulated by the USFS through required plans of operations. The Juneau Ranger District is presently preparing a Mine Development EIS for the Kensington gold project (fig. 21). The USFS also conducted a mineral patent examination on the Kasaan Peninsula near Ketchikan.

Chugach National Forest

The USFS conducted a mineral patent examination near Moose Pass on the Kenai Peninsula. The results of the examination will be forwarded to the BLM, which will then decide if the patent should be granted.

The USFS completed a three-year study of the cumulative effects of placer mining on water quality in the Chugach National Forest. Stream sampling was based on the type and intensity of mining occurring on a given drainage system. Weekly samples were taken above and below the mine sites and tested for pH, alkalinity, conductivity, total suspended solids, and turbidity. A report will be prepared by the end of the summer of 1991; no significant impacts have been noted at this time.

The Chugach National Forest is also being inventoried by the USBM for environmental and safety hazards that may have resulted from past mining activities. For this investigation, the USFS is providing field and technical assistance to the USBM through a partnership agreement. The inventory began in 1990 on the Kenai Peninsula and will be extended into the Prince William Sound area for the 1991 field season. The USBM will prepare a report that includes the type and severity of identified hazards as well as recommended mitigation measures.

In 1992, the USGS and USBM will be conducting minerals investigations in the upper regions of Unakwik Inlet and College Fjord and in an area between the Copper River Delta and the Tasnuna River. The resultant information on mineral potential will be used to update the minerals inventory for the Chugach National Forest.

Industrial Minerals

The use of nonmetallic, nonfuel resources in Alaska recovered only slightly from 1989 levels; this reflects the continuing lack of significant urban and industrial construction (Swainbank and others, 1991). Sand and gravel production was up 5 percent to 15.1 million tons, and building stone production rose 10 percent to 3.2 million tons (table 6). Jade and soapstone production figures were not available for 1990.

As reported last year (Schneider, 1990), Alaskan gla-

cier ice has become an exportable commodity for its status symbol quality when used in exotic drinks. Enough companies have expressed interest in the trade that the Alaska Department of Natural Resources has had to establish regulations for the ice harvest (Anchorage Daily News, April 22, 1990). Because most harvesting has occurred in Prince William Sound and the bays of Kenai Fjords National Park, the regulations are in response to environmental concerns over the impacts of increased marine traffic in these waters (Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, August 6, 1990). Twenty-one temporary permits have been issued to eight harvesters; the State is waiting to learn more about the developing market, which is mainly represented by Japan and Hawaii (Anchorage Daily News, December 23, 1990).

Activity by Federal Agencies

U.S. Bureau of Mines

A published USBM investigation concluded that the Valdez Creek mining district may contain economic quanti-

ties of industrial materials such as argillite, basalt, intrusive rock, limestone, perlite, sand and gravel, and zeolites (Southworth, 1990). A USBM Special Publication also summarized the industrial minerals of the Juneau mining district (Maas, 1990). Both reports are listed in appendix 1, USBM section.

Bureau of Land Management

The disposal of salable mineral materials, namely sand and gravel, continued to be a minor activity for the BLM in Alaska.

Fish and Wildlife Service

The FWS continued to review, permit, and monitor small sand and gravel operations in various parts of the State to support local transportation and industry. Minor amounts of gravel were removed from three sites in the Izembek Refuge.



Figure 21. New adit for Kensington lode-gold mine on Lynn Canal in Tongass National Forest. From 1897 to 1904, 12,000 tons of ore was mined from surface and shallow workings. The USFS is preparing an environmental impact statement for the mine's current development by Echo Bay Mines and Coeur d'Alene Mines. Photograph by R. Griffin.

Annually, the USFS permits the removal of many thousands of tons of sand, gravel, and stone. Nearly 2.8 million tons of this material, in the form of quarried stone, is used in the construction of timber-sale roads. Lesser amounts are used by State and local governments for the construction and maintenance of breakwaters, airports, and roads.

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APPENDIX 1.—ALASKA MINERAL REPORTS RELEASED DURING 1990 AND EARLY 1991

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reports from the publications of any agency. Reports by Federal or State agencies can generally be obtained from the agency offices in Alaska, or are available at the Alaska Resources Library, Federal Building, 701 C Street, Anchorage, AK 99513-7599.

The USGS publishes a monthly listing of its own releases, "New Publications of the U.S. Geological Survey," available free from the U.S. Geological Survey, 582 National Center, Reston, VA 22092. These listings are also compiled into an annual volume, "Publications of the U.S. Geological Survey, 1990." Information about the prices and sources of listed reports is given in these two publications and is also available from the USGS Earth Science Information Centers.

The USBM's central distribution office is the Branch of Production and Distribution, 4800 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213. Many USBM reports are available from the U.S. Government Printing Office in Washington, DC, or from the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) in Springfield, VA 22161. USBM reports listed here are available from the USBM library in Juneau; for further information, contact the Chief, Alaska Field Operations Center, 201 East 9th Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99501.

MMS publications may also be purchased from NTIS, which issues listings of all available MMS volumes. A limited number of complimentary reports are available at the MMS Library/Public Information Room, Alaska OCS Region, Minerals Management Service, 949 East 36th Avenue, Room 110, Anchorage, AK 99508-4302; phone (907) 271-6439.

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APPENDIX 2.—ROLES OF FEDERAL AGENCIES IN MINERAL PROGRAMS

Department of the Interior

U.S. Geological Survey

The mission of the USGS is to develop and interpret the geologic, topographic, and hydrologic data necessary for prudent management of the Nation's minerals, land, and water. The USGS carries out its mission through research that produces geographic, cartographic, and remotely-sensed information; geologic, geochemical, and geophysical maps and studies; energy, mineral, and water resource assessments; geohazards research, including toxic waste studies; and participation in multidisciplinary projects, maintaining data bases, and publishing reports and maps.

In Alaska, the USGS is active in assessing minerals, including metalliferous and energy resources. Field and laboratory researchers also gather information about domestic petroleum, coal, uranium, and geothermal resources. At the request of land-managing agencies, the USGS provides mineral resource assessments for land planning, including wilderness studies. Within Alaska, the USGS maintains offices for its Geologic, National Mapping, and Water Resources Divisions. Within the Geologic Division, the Branch of Alaskan Geology is the primary USGS office studying mineral resources in Alaska; the Branch is headquartered in Anchorage with a field office in Fairbanks. Other Alaska Branch geologists are stationed in Menlo Park, California. During the summer field season, many USGS scientists from other branches within the Geologic Division conduct mineral-related research in Alaska.

U.S. Bureau of Mines

The mission of the USBM is to help ensure that the Nation's mineral supplies are adequate to maintain national security, economic growth, and employment. The USBM's Alaska Field Operations Center (AFOC) has headquarters in Anchorage and offices in Juneau and Fairbanks. The AFOC carries out its mission through five programs:

1. *Minerals availability program.*—This program is part of a worldwide USBM program responsible for developing the Minerals Availability System (MAS) computer data base and the Mineral Industry Location System (MILS), a subset of MAS. MILS contains basic information about the identification and location of known mineral deposits. MAS is more extensive, containing information about reserve estimates, mineral extraction and beneficiation methodologies, environmental constraints to mining, and cost analyses for selected major mineral deposits. A computer and communication system allow the information

to be stored, manipulated, and retrieved as computer-plotted map overlays and printouts of MAS/MILS data, enabling rapid and uniform development of cost data for MAS mineral-deposit evaluations. MAS and MILS mineral-deposit data are cross-indexed to several other minerals-information data bases.

2. *Policy analysis.*—This program emphasizes the analysis of newly developed and existing mineral data to interpret their significance in the context of local and national mineral needs. Assessment of technical, institutional, political, social, and economic factors that affect the supply of, and demand for, domestic and international minerals is the key to identifying mineral issues.

3. *State mineral activities.*—This program covers minerals-related activities in Alaska and assists in developing and releasing nonfuel-mineral-industry information. The program also provides the USBM with direct communication to the ADGGS, the Alaska Division of Mining, other minerals-oriented government agencies, industry, private firms, and individuals. The USBM's State Mineral Officer collects, analyzes, and reports mineral data and develops information regarding activities and trends in the mining industry. This program produces the annual USBM Minerals Yearbook chapters and Mineral Industry Surveys.

4. *Mineral land assessment.*—This is the USBM's major Alaskan program, conducted in cooperation with other Federal and State agencies. Mineral assessments are both areal and commodity-oriented. In support of the Secretary of the Interior's commitment to assess the mineral potential of public lands in Alaska, the AFOC initiated a program in 1985 to evaluate mineral resources of the mining districts in the State. The program seeks to identify the type, amount, and distribution of mineral deposits; related studies will determine their economic feasibility. Legislative effects on mineral development will also be addressed. The USBM has completed its study of the Juneau mining district; studies of the Ketchikan and Valdez Creek mining districts are in progress.

A statewide program provides an inventory and specific technical evaluations of Alaska's strategic and critical mineral and advanced material deposits on Federal lands that are closed to mineral entry, and on lands that are open to entry but not of current interest to industry. In addition to locating, mapping, and estimating the size and grade of deposits, the USBM obtains bulk samples for metallurgic research to determine recovery and extraction methods and costs. These studies are undertaken in cooperation with the USBM Research Centers in Albany, Oregon, and Salt Lake City, Utah. These investigations provide reserve estimates of marginal and submarginal deposits in Alaska and its coastal waters.

5. *Minerals research.*—The USBM is attempting to provide solutions to mining, mineral recovery, and environ-

mental problems in Alaska through a number of research efforts and technology transfer. Several research projects are currently being conducted in Alaska by USBM research centers or at universities sponsored by the USBM's Mineral Institute Program. USBM and university research centers cooperate with the AFOC to solve mineral utilization problems.

Minerals Management Service

The MMS was created in 1982 with a twofold mission: (1) to collect and disburse revenues generated from mineral leases on Federal and Indian lands, and (2) to oversee the orderly development of America's offshore energy and mineral resources while properly safeguarding the environment. The MMS supervises mineral leasing, exploration, development, and production on the OCS. It is responsible for oil rig safety, oil rig pollution control regulations, determination of the environmental impact of resource development, and estimation of oil and gas resources. The MMS also has the authority to lease the OCS for ocean mining of hard minerals. At present, revenues from the Alaska OCS are primarily derived from competitive leasing activities; no development or production occurs there at this time. The responsibility of MMS for onshore Alaskan minerals is limited to the collection of royalties, bonuses, and rents from Federal and certain Native lands. The MMS also holds occasional Synthesis Meetings and Informational Transfer Meetings, Regional Technical Working Group Meetings, Coordination Team Meetings, and public hearings on Environmental Impact Statements. To determine public concerns for consideration and inclusion in EIS's, scoping meetings related to specific planning or subject areas are held in the local villages. The public is invited to attend these meetings and can contact the MMS Regional Office for specific subjects, dates and times.

In Alaska, the MMS is active in assessing the oil and gas potential of offshore basins through the analysis of geophysical and geologic data. This work is integrated into the National Resource Assessment and is a basis for evaluations of the potential monetary worth of individual OCS lease blocks, for appraisals of the resource potential of entire basins, and for the formulation of geologic models of basin development. The MMS also conducts specialized studies of Deep Stratigraphic Test (DST) wells and exploratory wells drilled on OCS lands. All of this work is carried out at the MMS Regional Office in Anchorage, Alaska. The results of these studies are published through the MMS OCS Report series or in appropriate scientific journals. The MMS also sponsors resource-oriented geologic studies through the Program for Studies Related to Continental Margins, which funds research by State agencies and affiliated academic institutions.

Bureau of Land Management

The BLM manages Federal onshore mineral resources. The BLM also works cooperatively with the NPS, FWS, and USFS to provide technical evaluation of the mineral-related issues on lands under these agencies' jurisdiction.

Multiple-use resource management decisions concerning all minerals on the 92 million acres of land currently managed by the BLM in Alaska (fig. 1) are made through the Resource Management Planning process. The BLM first identifies the mineral potential of each planning unit. The effects of minerals exploration, development, and production, and land abandonment and rehabilitation are then analyzed in regard to the needs and sensitivities of the other resources present. Mitigation measures are developed and evaluated to reduce or avoid adverse impacts of the anticipated mineral activities. Field monitoring of all phases of mineral activity ensures that no unnecessary or undue degradation occurs. The BLM also provides resource management for retained Federal mineral estates on an additional 100 million acres.

Fish and Wildlife Service

The FWS provides Federal leadership to conserve, protect, and enhance fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of people. In Alaska, the FWS seeks to accomplish this mission through programs that implement provisions of the Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, ANILCA, Rivers and Harbors Act, Clean Water Act, various migratory-bird laws and treaties, and other statutes.

Under ANILCA, 16 refuges in Alaska (fig. 3) were created or enlarged to conserve fish and wildlife populations and their habitats, as well as other values. Except for valid rights existing at the time of establishment, these refuges are closed to entry and location under mining laws. The refuges are open to entry under leasing laws but are closed to the mining of coal by the Federal Coal Leasing Amendments Act of 1975 and are closed to geothermal resource leasing by the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970. Although many traditional activities have been deemed appropriate for these refuges, other uses, including oil and gas leasing, will be permitted only when such activities are compatible with the purposes for which a specific refuge was established.

National Park Service

In 1916, Congress established the National Park Service and stated that the fundamental purpose of the Nation's

parks, monuments, and other reservations was "to conserve the scenery and natural and historical objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of same in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations" (39 Stat. 535). NPS management policies are based on the concept of conservation and preservation while providing for appropriate enjoyment of natural and cultural resources within the park system.

Congress enacted the "Mining in the Parks" Act in 1976, declaring that a continued application of the mining laws of the United States to park units conflicts with the purposes for which the parks were established and that all mining operations in park units "should be conducted so as to prevent or minimize damage to the environment and the other resource values" (90 Stat. 1342). The NPS manages mining activities on park lands through regulations found at Title 36 CFR, Part 9, Subpart A. These regulations apply to mining-related activities on patented or valid unpatented claims located under the Mining Law of 1872, and proposed plans of operations for such claims must conform to the statutes. Regulations at Title 36 CFR, Part 9, Subpart B, also require plans of operation for operators who, within park units, must access their nonfederally owned oil and gas rights on, across, or through federally owned or controlled lands or waters.

Department of Agriculture

U.S. Forest Service

The mission of the USFS is to provide a continuing flow of natural-resource goods, including mineral and energy resources, to help meet national needs, and to contribute to meeting such needs worldwide. It is the responsibility of the USFS to encourage and support environmentally sound mineral enterprises on Federal lands under its administration. In managing the use of these resources, the USFS objective is to minimize unnecessary adverse environmental impacts to surface and cultural features and values that might result from lawful exploration and development operations. This objective is accomplished through the application of reasonable conditions that do not interfere with well-planned mineral operations. The USFS also provides research information and technology to help with post-mining reclamation. In implementing this policy, the USFS Chief directed that:

1. A key objective of the minerals program is to encourage and facilitate the orderly exploration, development, and production of mineral resources.
2. Minerals, like range, recreation, timber, water, wildlife, and wilderness, are one of the multiple uses the USFS manages.
3. USFS managers must develop a good understand-

ing of the minerals industry, its practices, and the minerals laws and regulations.

4. Managers must develop a strong working relationship with the minerals industry.

5. Visibility and interaction with the minerals industry must be increased by attendance and participation of line officers and appropriate staff at industry and professional association activities and meetings.

6. Directories, organization charts, and receptionists direct the mineral industry to personnel who have minerals-administration responsibilities.

Department of Energy

The DOE's mission is to reduce the Nation's vulnerability to disruptions of energy supplies and to mitigate any adverse impacts on the Nation should a shortage occur. With regard to Alaska, the energy sources currently being addressed by the DOE are fossil fuels (petroleum and coal) and geothermal.

The strategy for responding to petroleum-supply interruptions is to rely on the free market, supplemented as necessary and appropriate with other measures, such as the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. The DOE's Fossil Energy Re-

search and Development Programs are aimed at careful consideration of the alternatives available and the relative chances for success in fostering an adequate supply of energy at a reasonable cost through long-term, high-risk research and development. Alternatives for increasing domestic petroleum supplies include (1) DOE's Unconventional Gas Recovery Program, which emphasizes the development of advanced technologies for the extraction of natural gas from resources that are classified as unconventional because of unique geologic settings and production mechanisms that are not now well understood, and (2) DOE programs for developing tertiary oil recovery, tar sands, and heavy-oil deposits.

The purpose of the DOE's Geothermal Energy Program is to develop the technology needed by industry for the use of geothermal resources. DOE research is aimed toward improving methods used to locate, extract, and convert geothermal heat to usable forms of energy. Through DOE funding in Alaska, Federal and State agencies have researched and published several studies of specific geothermal systems.

A further purpose of DOE programs is to generate data essential to the private sector's decisionmaking process to facilitate the development of commercial projects.