



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Eastern Interior Field Office
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Fairbanks, Alaska 99709-3844
<http://www.blm.gov/ak>

In Reply Refer To:
FF-095632

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION /PLAN CONFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION AND DECISION

DOI-BLM-AK-02000-2012-0004-CX

Proposed Action: Issue a 5 year Special Recreation Permit for a non-motorized competitive race.

Date of Proposed Action: March 2012 through March 2016.

Location: The White Mountains National Recreation Area cabins and trail system.

Applicant: Endurance North, Inc.

Serial Number: FF095633

Description of Proposed Action:

Endurance North, Inc. has reapplied for a 5 year Special Recreation Permit which entails an annual non-motorized competitive race in the White Mountains National Recreation Area (NRA). The proposed action would be to conduct a three day (60 hour), 100-mile winter endurance race in the White Mountains NRA starting the first Sunday, following the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District spring break period. The race dates are March 25th-March 27th 2012, March 24th-March 26th 2013, March 23th-March 25th 2014, March 22th-March 24th 2015, and March 27th-March 29th 2016. The race will begin and end at the Wickersham Dome Trailhead. The race route will utilize the Wickersham Creek, Trail Creek, Cache Mt. Loop, and the Fossil Creek trails (see attached race map.)

The race will begin Sunday morning at 8:00 AM and conclude at 8PM on Tuesday. The race will have three categories of competitors including skiers, runners, and bicyclist. The race will be limited to 65 racers. Less than 25 spectators are expected due to the remote location of the race. Approximately 15 volunteers will be at various points along the race. A lead pace snowmobile will precede the race for the first 20 miles alerting public users of the race and activity. The race route crosses the Beaver Creek Wild and Scenic River (WSR) corridor in two locations. On the Trail Creek trail located between Crowberry and Cache Mt. Cabins, and on the Wickersham Creek trail near Borealis LeFevre Cabin.

Trails: Directional signs will be established just prior to the race at all trail junctions and areas in question

to assist race participants with staying on course. Signs will consist mainly of arrows stapled to lathe. Shortly after the last racer has passed, a “trail sweep” will be conducted. Race volunteers on snowmobiles will remove all signs and litter found along the trail, and ensure all race participants are safe. One week in advance of the race, notices will be placed at all four trailheads leading into the White Mountains NRA, informing the public of the race. The notices will include dates and times of the race and a map of the race route. During the race, all race participants will be required to yield trail right-of-way to all other users or be disqualified.

Checkpoints (Cabins): Along with using the developed and maintained winter trails in the White Mountains NRA, the applicant proposes to use up to three public use cabins as checkpoints. These cabins include: Cache Mt. (two nights), Windy Gap (two nights), and Borealis (two nights). A fourth checkpoint would be established near the Moose Creek Cabin using a wall tent. The Wickersham Creek Trail Shelter would also be staffed by race volunteers but not serve as an official checkpoint. Each checkpoint will be staffed by two race officials who will have a satellite phone to call in race results and provide for safety. Food and water will be available at each of the checkpoints for participants. A portable waste collections bucket will be provided at each checkpoint to be used by participants and race officials to minimize the potential for over-use of the outhouses. At the end of the race all checkpoints will be left clean and at pre-race conditions, if not better. At the cabins, all stoves and lanterns will be left in working order and an ample amount of firewood will be left. While on the trails, participants will be required to defecate well off the trail or be disqualified.

Start/Finish (Wickersham Dome Trailhead): The Wickersham Dome Trailhead will serve as the race start and finish. Carpooling or shuttle services will be provided to transport most race participants to the Wickersham Dome Trailhead. Racers, volunteers, and spectators will park across the Elliott Highway at the Alaska State DOT pull-out. The applicant will provide highway caution signs and a crossing guard near the trailhead on the Elliott Highway to provide for safety during the start of the race. A small RV will be parked at the DOT pull-out at the start of the race and later moved to the trailhead parking area. This RV will serve as race headquarters and will be occupied 24 hours a day for the duration of the race. The race headquarters will also be in regular communication with the checkpoints via satellite phone.

This permit will expire at the end of the race period March 29th, 2016.

Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan Name: White Mountains Resource Management Plan/Record of Decision

Date Approved/Amended: 2/2/1986

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP Goals and Objectives. Objective 2: Where compatible with recreation goals, permit multiple-use of resources on land classified as semi-primitive (Goals and Objectives Section for Management of the White Mountains NRA, page 4). Goal 3: Provide for multiple-use where compatible with primitive and semi-primitive recreation.

Recreation Activity Management Plan for the White Mountains NRA, February 1988. Competitive Events: Competitive events require a permit and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis to insure compatibility with the objectives of this plan (Program Action Section, page 16).

Compliance with NEPA:

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.5E(9)(DOI 2004), which states, “Renewals and assignments of leases, permits or rights-of-way where no additional rights are conveyed beyond those granted by the original authorization.”

The proposed action must be screened against the extraordinary circumstances found in 43 CFR 46.215 and listed below. Any “yes” finding requires that an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement be prepared for the Proposed Action.

EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES	YES/NO
1) May have significant impacts on public health or safety.	No
2) May have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.	No
3) May have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.	No
4) May have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.	No
5) Might establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.	No
6) May have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.	No
7) May have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.	No
8) May have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.	No
9) Might violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.	No
10) May have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).	No
11) Might limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).	No
12) Could contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).	No

Recommendation

I have found that the Proposed Action is compatible with the White Mountains Resource Management Plan, and is an action that can be categorically excluded. The Proposed Action does not trigger any of the Extraordinary Circumstances found in 516 DM Chapter 2, Appendix 2. I recommend that the Proposed Action be allowed and that an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement is not needed.

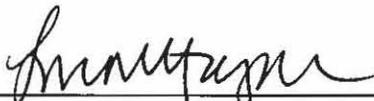


Tim DuPont, Outdoor Recreation Planner
Eastern Interior Field Office

1/30/2012
Date

Concurrence

I concur that the above action is in conformance with the Resource Management Plan, does not meet any of the extraordinary circumstances, and qualifies as a Categorical Exclusion.



Lenore Heppler
Field Manager
Eastern Interior Field Office

1/30/12
Date

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact Tim DuPont, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Eastern Interior Field Office, at 907-474-2370.

**Decision for Categorical Exclusion
DOI-BLM-AK-02000-2012-0004-CX**

Endurance North, Inc. /Competitive Use Permit

Decision

It is my decision to reauthorize the “White Mountains 100” non-motorized competitive race to be held in the White Mountains National Recreation Area by Endurance North, Inc. Associated with this permit the BLM authorizes Endurance North, Inc. the use of the winter trail system and exclusive reservation for the following three public use cabins—Cache Mountain Cabin, Windy Gap Cabin, and Borealis LeFevre Cabin, for use as checkpoints during the race. The Special Recreation Permit for the race is for five years. The following stipulations were developed to mitigate issues of concern for the race and must be adhered to.

Stipulations for Special Recreation Permit

Endurance North, Inc. WMNRA 100 mile Competitive Race

1. The race start will be required to occur by 8 AM to reduce the impacts on other users.
2. Only one vehicle will be allowed to park at the Wickersham Dome Trailhead, the headquarter RV, all others will be required to be parked across the Elliott Highway at the DOT pull-out. A crossing guard and appropriate signs will be used to provide for safety.
3. A sign including map and brief description of the race will be posted at the Wickersham Dome, Colorado Creek, and McKay Creek Trailheads one week in advance to inform other users of the race and specifically where and when race participants are expected to be to avoid unwanted encounters. Contact the BLM on where at the trailhead to post.
4. A lead pace snowmobile will precede the racers out of the trailhead for the first 20 miles to make other trail users aware of the oncoming event.
5. All race participants and officials will yield trail right-of way to all other users.
6. The use of the Cache Mt., Windy Gap, and Borealis Cabins along with the Wickersham Trail Shelter will be allowed. Use of any other cabins or associated outhouses by race participants or volunteers is not permitted unless in an emergency situation.
7. All cabins and shelters used by the race will be left neat and clean. All trash will be packed out. At least one full bottle of propane will be left, all cabin amenities will be left operational, and an ample amount of firewood will be left for the next user.
8. The BLM will provide locations for firewood to be gathered at the three cabins and one shelter site.
9. An appropriate human waste receptacle will be required at each checkpoint. All human waste gathered at these sites will be backhauled and properly disposed of. No use of pit toilets at the checkpoints is allowed.
10. The applicant will be responsible for any cabin or trail damages incurred by the race.

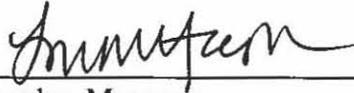
11. A designated “trail sweep” crew will follow the race by no greater than 12 hours and will remove all temporary signs, markings, and trash found along the trail.
12. The Authorized Officer reserves the right to impose closure of any area to permittee in periods when dangers to natural resources are severe.
13. No fuel or other hazardous material will be stored within 300 feet of any water body.
14. All hazardous materials storage containers shall be permanently marked with Permittee’s name, product type, and year filled or purchased (e.g., White Mountains 100, Unleaded Gasoline, 2012).
15. All spills shall be contained and cleaned up as soon as possible. The Permittee will report any spill or release of petroleum products that affects bodies of water to the ADEC as soon as possible (in Fairbanks 457-2121 or 1-800-478-9300 outside normal business hours). In addition, the Authorized Officer.

Rationale:

- 1)
The White Mountains 100 race has been held for the past 2 years and received a superior rating on their Post Use Reports. Officials, racers and spectators adhered to all stipulations.
- 2) Concerns regarding trash, wilderness characteristic and wildlife impacts have been mitigated.
- 3) The White Mountains is managed for multiple use recreational activities. All actions proposed, such as skiing, biking, running, and cabin usage, are considered standard and common practices during this time of season.
- 4) This authorization is for five years. Annual post use reports will be reviewed and stipulations added if necessary to protect health, safety and critical resource values.
- 5) The proposed action is consistent with the approved White Mountains National Recreation Area Resource Management Plan.
- 6) This proposed action will not significantly restrict subsistence uses.
- 7) With the attached stipulations there will be no adverse affects to historic values.
- 8) There will be no affect on Essential Fish Habitat.

Appeal Procedures

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of Hearings and Appeals, in accordance with 43 CFR Part 4 and DOI Form 1842-1. The notice of appeal must be filed in the Bureau of Land Management Eastern Interior Field Office (at the above address) within 30 days from receipt of this decision. Appeals from administrative decisions issued by BLM-Alaska must be filed in writing in the office of the deciding official, either by mail or hand delivery. Notices of appeal transmitted by electronic means, such as facsimile or e-mail will not be accepted as timely filed.



Lenore Heppler, Manager
Eastern Interior Field Office

1/30/12

Date

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this CX review and decision, contact Tim DuPont, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Eastern Interior Field Office, at 907-474-2370.