

Alaska Power & Telephone Company

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Right-of-Way Grant

For

Alaska Power & Telephone Company
P.O. Box 207
Tok, Alaska 99780

FF095997
DOI-BLM-AK-02000-2012-0005-EA

Located in:

Eastern Interior Field Office
Eagle, Alaska

Prepared by:

U. S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Eastern Interior Field Office
1150 University Ave.
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709-3844

1. Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

1.1. BLM Purpose and Need

The BLM manages and administers the use of federal public lands and resources in Interior Alaska and is obligated to respond to applications for legitimate use of those lands and resources.

Alaska Power & Telephone (AP&T) has filed an application for a Right-of-Way Grant to authorize the installation, operation and maintenance of electrical power and telephone lines on public lands under the BLM's management jurisdiction. The BLM needs to respond to the application under the authority of Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and the regulations found in 43 CFR 2800.

1.2. Applicant's Purpose and Need

Alaska Power & Telephone has applied for a Right-of-Way Grant to authorize the installation, operation, and maintenance of buried electrical and telephone lines so they can supply reliable electrical power and telephone service to the National Park Service (NPS) buildings in Eagle. The requested right-of-way is 3 feet wide and 390 feet long. The installation of these new lines is necessary because the NPS (or their contractor) damaged the old buried lines and then buried them under a concrete pad foundation for the new comfort station; thereby eliminating the opportunity to repair them. The new lines and route are also necessary to avoid future excavation by the NPS to expand or repair their sewage system and drain field.

1.3. BLM Decision to be Made

The BLM will make a decision whether or not to issue Alaska Power & Telephone a Right-of-Way Grant to authorize their installation, operation, and maintenance of buried electrical and telephone lines on BLM-managed lands in Eagle, Alaska. The BLM will also determine the mitigation measures necessary to prevent undue and unnecessary degradation of the resources and to protect the natural and other values of such lands.

1.4. Potential Issues

1.4.1. Internal Scoping

There is a potential for disturbance of cultural, historic, and paleontological resources.

1.4.2. External Scoping

The proposed action is not likely to cause any public concern or controversy; therefore, no external scoping was conducted.

2. Location, Land Status and Conformance with Land Use Plans

2.1. Location

The proposed action will occur on Lot 1 of U.S. Survey 4033 in Eagle, Alaska which is located within NW ¼ of section 31 of Township 1S., Range 33E., Fairbanks Meridian.

2.2. Land Status

The subject lands were withdrawn by Public Land Order 753 in September, 1951 to reserve them for "the use of the Bureau of Land Management, Department of Interior, as an administrative site".

2.3. Conformance with Land Use Plans

The Proposed Action is located within the geographic area covered by the Fortymile Management Framework Plan of September, 1980 and is consistent with Lands Objective 1 of that plan which is to "make lands available for intensive use and public purposes".

3. Proposed Action and Alternatives

3.1. Proposed Action

The proposed action is to authorize Alaska Power & Telephone to install, operate, and maintain electrical power and telephone lines on public lands in order to provide service to one of their customers, the National Park Service. Authorization would be in the form of a Right-of-Way Grant.

Installation is planned to occur in June, 2012 and should be completed in two or three days. The excavated trench will be 3 feet wide, 3 feet deep, and 390 feet long. The buried electrical power lines will be placed inside of a 2" pvc conduit. The telephone lines are suitable for direct burial and will be placed approximately 12" above the electrical lines. A 10kva 7.2kv pad mounted transformer will be located at the end of the line near the NPS buildings. The total surface disturbance for the transformer pad will be approximately 36 square feet (6 feet x 6 feet).

In an effort to reduce or prevent the spread of any non-native plants, weeds, or seeds into the work area, Alaska Power & Telephone will power-wash all their excavation equipment, trailers, and vehicles before transporting them to the work location. They have also agreed to restore vegetation to the disturbed area with weed-free seed at the discretion of the BLM authorizing officer. A list of approved seed species will be provided by the BLM.

3.2. No Action Alternative

The no action alternative would result in the applicant not being issued a Right-of-Way Grant to authorize the proposed activities. This would, in turn, result in the National Park Service continuing to have unreliable electrical and telephone service.

4. Affected Environment

4.1. Proposed Action

4.1.1. Cultural Resources

The Alaska Heritage Resources Survey database, maintained by the Alaska State Historic Preservation Office, indicates known prehistoric, historic, and paleontological resources in the exact area of the Proposed Action. The area is a known historic Han Athabaskan late-19th century village site. Testing in the area of the Proposed Action from the mid-1970s through mid-2000s has yielded traces of both historic and prehistoric human occupation. In addition, in the early 2000s a late-Pleistocene wolf mandible was unearthed in the vicinity of the NPS Visitors Center parking lot.

4.2. No Action Alternative

4.2.1. Cultural Resources

If the proposed power and telephone line trench is not excavated, then there is no chance of disturbance to cultural, historic, or paleontological resources.

5. Environmental Effects

5.1. Proposed Action

5.1.1. Cultural Resources

There is a concentration of cultural, historic, and paleontological resources in the area of the Proposed Action. There is a strong possibility of adverse direct impacts to these resources by the Proposed Action, i.e., digging a trench through this area. There are no perceivable indirect impacts or cumulative impacts to such resources by the Proposed Action.

5.2. Mitigating Measures for Proposed Action

5.2.1. Cultural Resources

Mitigation Measure: Owing to the presence of both cultural and paleontological materials in the area of the Proposed Action, a qualified archaeological monitor must be present to observe the excavation of the power and telephone line trench.

Per agreements between the BLM and the National Park Service, the NPS is responsible for covering the costs and efforts associated with Section 106 (National Historic Preservation Act 1966, as amended) on BLM-managed lands in the Ft. Egbert vicinity on projects that are proposed and spearheaded by the NPS. This is one such project. The NPS Section 106

coordinator for the Eagle area is Thomas Leibscher (907-474-0620). If Tom is not available, the NPS archaeologist responsible for the Eagle area is Dr. Jeffrey Rasic (907-455-0632). Please call and schedule a time when a qualified archaeologist can meet the applicant at the proposed work site.

5.3. Residual Impacts

None

6. **Consultation and Coordination**

6.1. Persons/Agencies Consulted

Alaska Power & Telephone	Applicant		
Ruth Gronquist	Wildlife Biologist	Invasive, Nonnative Species, Vegetation,	BLM
Jim Herriges	Wildlife Biologist	Threatened/Endangered Species, Subsistence, Wildlife/Terrestrial	BLM
Darrel VandeWeg	Mining Compliance Spec.	Mineral Resources	BLM
Jason Post	Fisheries Biologist	Essential Fish Habitat, Wildlife/Aquatic	BLM
Holli McClain	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Wilderness Characteristics	BLM
Robin Mills	Archeologist	Cultural Resources, Native American Religious Concerns	BLM
Skip Theisen	Fire Management Specialist	Fire Management	BLM
Vic Wallace	Realty Specialist	Lands	BLM
Ben Kennedy	Hydrologist	Air Quality, Floodplains, Water Quality, Wetlands/Riparian, Soils	BLM
Collin Cogley	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Access and Travel Management	BLM
Rebecca Hile	Physical Scientist	Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	BLM
Kevan Cooper	Realty Specialist	Visual Resources, Wild and Scenic Rivers	BLM

List of Attachments

Attachment	Stipulations Generated by Environmental Assessment (1 p)
Attachment B	Assessment of Archeological, Historical, and Paleontological Resources (2 pp)
Attachment C	Compliance with ANILCA Section 810 Evaluation and Findings (1 p)


 Preparer's Signature
 Vic Wallace
 Realty Specialist

3-16-2012
 Date

Decision Record

Right-of-Way Grant (2850 03) to Alaska Power & Telephone to install, operate and maintain buried electrical and telephone lines on public lands in Eagle, Alaska.

FF095997

Decision: It is my decision to authorize the installation, operation, and maintenance of buried electrical and telephone service lines on BLM- managed lands in Eagle, Alaska. A Right-of-Way Grant will be issued to Alaska Power & Telephone for a period of twenty years; in accordance with regulations found in 43 CFR 2800 and pursuant to Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.

Rationale:

1. The proposed action is consistent with the use of public lands under the authority of Title V of the Federal Land Policy Management Act and the regulations found in 43 CFR 2800.
2. All mitigation measures are being carried forward in stipulations attached to the Right-of-Way Grant.
3. All concerns are appropriately addressed in EA DOI-BLM-AK-02000-2012-0005. This includes cultural resources and subsistence concerns (see attached NHPA Section 106 and ANILCA 810 findings).



Lenore Heppler
Field Manager, Eastern Interior Field Office

3-16-12
Date

Appeal Provisions:

This decision shall take effect immediately upon the date it is signed by the authorized officer and shall remain in effect while any appeal is pending unless the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) issues a stay (43 CFR 2801.10(b)).

Any appeal of this decision must follow the procedures set forth in 43 CFR Part 4. Within 30 days of the decision, a notice of appeal must be filed in the office of the authorized officer at Eastern Interior Field Office, 1150 University Avenue, Fairbanks Alaska 99709. If a statement of reasons for the appeal is not included with the notice, it must be filed with the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of Hearings and Appeals, U.S. Department of the Interior, 801 North Quincy St., Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22203 within 30 days after the notice of appeal is filed with the authorized officer. If you wish to file a petition for stay of the effectiveness of this decision pursuant to 43 CFR Part 4.21(b), the petition for stay should accompany your notice of appeal and must show sufficient justification based on the following standards: (1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied, (2) The likelihood of the appellants success

on the merits, (3) The likelihood of irreparable harm to the appellant or resources if the stay is not granted, and (4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay. If a petition for stay is submitted with the notice of appeal, a copy of the notice of appeal and petition for stay must be served on each party named in the decision from which the appeal is taken, and with the IBLA at the same time it is filed with the authorized officer. A copy of the notice of appeal, any statement of reasons and all pertinent documents must be served on each adverse party named in the decision from which the appeal is taken and on the Office of the Solicitor, U.S. Department of the Interior, 4230 University Drive Suite 300, Anchorage, AK 99508, not later than 15 days after filing the document with the authorized officer and/or IBLA.

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this decision, contact Vic Wallace at the Eastern Interior Field Office, 1150 University Avenue, Fairbanks, Alaska, 99709, or by telephone at 907-474-2363.

Finding of No Significant Impact

Right-of-Way Grant (2850 03) application FF095997, for electrical and telephone service entrance lines at the Bureau of Land Management's administrative site in Eagle, Alaska

Finding of No Significant Impact:

I have reviewed Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-AK-02000-2012-0005 and have concluded that the impacts of installing, operating, and maintaining buried electrical and telephone service entrance lines on public lands to provide reliable service to National Park Service offices in Eagle, Alaska, have been adequately addressed. There are no impacts that approached the threshold of significance. Therefore, I have determined that a Finding of No Significant Impact is appropriate and an environmental impact statement is not required.



Manager, Eastern Interior Field Office

3.16.12

Date

Stipulations and Administrative Requirements

for

FF095997

Stipulations

1. The right-of-way holder, Alaska Power & Telephone, shall coordinate with the National Park Service to ensure that a qualified archaeological monitor is present to observe the excavation of the power and telephone line trench. No excavation work shall begin without the archaeological monitor being present.

Administrative Requirements

1. An As-Built Survey of the electrical and telephone service lines and associated facilities will be submitted to BLM upon completion of construction.
2. The Holder shall maintain the right-of-way in a safe and usable condition.
3. The Holder shall protect all survey monuments found within the authorized area of operation. Survey monuments include, but are not limited to, General Land Office and Bureau of Land Management Cadastral Survey corners, reference corners, witness points, U.S. Coastal and Geodetic benchmarks and triangulation stations, military control monuments, and recognizable civil (both public and private) survey monuments. In the event of obliteration or disturbance of any of the above, the holder shall immediately report the incident, in writing, to the authorized officer and the respective installing authority if known. Where Bureau of Land Management right-of-way monuments or references are obliterated during operations, the holder shall secure the services of a registered land surveyor to restore the disturbed monuments and references using surveying procedures found in the Manual of Surveying Instructions for the Survey of Public Lands of the United States, 1973 edition. If the Bureau of Cadastral Surveyors or other surveyors are used to restore the disturbed survey monument, the holder shall be responsible for the survey cost.
4. The U.S. shall be held blameless for any injury occurring as a result of accident or negligence.
5. The Authorized Officer or his/her representative may inspect the site at any time to insure compliance with the stipulations.

COMPLIANCE WITH ANILCA SECTION 810
EVALUATION AND FINDING

Applicant: Alaska Power & Telephone Company, P. O. Box 207, Tok, AK 99708

Serial No.: FF095007

EA No.: DOI-BLM-AK-02000-2012-0005-EA

Permits: 2850-R/W

Location Lot 1 of U.S. Survey 4033 in Eagle, Alaska, NW ¼ of section 31 of Township 1S, Range 33E, Fairbanks Meridian.

Description of Proposed Action: The proposed action is to authorize Alaska Power & Telephone to install, operate and maintain electrical power and telephone lines on public lands in order to provide service to one of their customers, the National Park Service (NPS). Authorization would be a Right-of-Way Grant. Installation is planned to occur in June, 2012 and should be completed in two or three days. The excavated trench will be 3 feet wide, 3 feet deep and 390 feet long. The buried electrical power lines will be placed inside of a 2" pvc conduit. The telephone lines are suitable for direct burial and will be placed approximately 12" above the electrical lines. A 10kva 7.2kv pad mounted transformer will be located at the end of the line near the NPS buildings. The total surface disturbance for the transformer pad will be approximately 36 square feet (6feet x 6 feet). In an effort to reduce/prevent the spread of non-native invasive plants propagative parts or seeds into the work area, Alaska Power & Telephone plans to power wash all their excavation equipment before transporting it to the work location. They have also agreed to restore vegetation in the disturbed area with weed-free seed at the discretion of the BLM authorizing officer.

Date: 29 February 2012

EVALUATION

Effect of proposed action on subsistence uses and needs

Fisheries:

No reduction in harvestable fisheries resources or in the availability of fisheries resources due to alteration in distribution, migration or location is expected from the proposed action. No streams are within the area of the proposed action and no runoff or erosion is expected to impact any waterways nearby.

Wildlife:

No reduction in harvestable resources or in availability of resources due to alteration in resource distribution, migration or location is expected from the proposed action. The actions are within the range of the Fortymile Caribou Herd, which is considered one of the most important subsistence resources in the eastern interior, and other important subsistence species. A long history of human use has occurred at the site of proposed action. Granting of a R/W in which construction and maintenance activities in support of buried power and telephone lines will not impact wildlife subsistence resources or uses.

Other Resources:

The proposed action will not appreciably change or impact any other harvestable resources such as wood, water, berries or vegetation.

Availability of other lands for the purpose sought to be achieved:

No other lands were considered for this use because the proposed action involves supplying power and telephone service to existing infrastructure within previously disturbed area by the route of least disturbance.

Other alternatives which would reduce or eliminate the use, occupancy, or disposition of public lands needed for subsistence purposes:

There is no substantial evidence to indicate that a significant impact on subsistence resources will result from the proposed action. No other alternatives were evaluated.

FINDING:

The proposed action will not significantly restrict subsistence uses. No reasonably foreseeable and significant decrease in the abundance of harvestable resources or in the distribution of harvestable resources, and no reasonably foreseeable limitations on harvester access result from the proposed actions.

References:

Caulfield, R. 1979. Subsistence Use in and Around the Proposed Yukon-Charley National Rivers. Cooperative Park Studies Unit. University of Alaska. Occasional Paper No. 20. 111p.

Marcotte, J. 1991. Wild Fish and Game Harvest and Uses by Residents of Five Upper Tanana Communities, Alaska, 1987-88. Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Division of Subsistence. Technical Paper No. 168. 200p.