

## **DETERMINATION OF NEPA ADEQUACY (DNA)**

### **US Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management**

OFFICE: Eastern Interior Field Office

TRACKING NUMBER: DOI-BLM-AK-F020-2012-0008-DNA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: FF093667 (2800)

LOCATION/LEGAL DESCRIPTION: FM T9N R23E Section 25

APPLICANT: US Air Force (USAF), 354<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing

#### **A. Description of the Proposed Action and any applicable mitigation measures**

The USAF has applied for a right-of-way grant to re-authorize the operation and maintenance of the Snowy Peak communication site in order to continue to provide expanded communication capabilities in Alaska's eastern airspace. The area of coverage includes the Military Operating Areas Yukon 2, Yukon 4, and Yukon 5, which previously had limited or no Ground-to-Air Transmit and Receive (GATR) VHF/UHF radio coverage. The communications facility provides improved GATR VHF/UHF radio capability within the eastern Pacific Alaska Range Complex. The communication site consists of a 1,100 square-foot gravel helicopter pad, a sheltered area to house communication equipment, three 60' antenna towers, and a power generation area containing a wind and propane generator and five 200-gallon propane storage tanks. The total area is less than one-half acre. The facility is unmanned, but requires fuel and maintenance personnel to be flown in to the site at least twice a year. There are no proposed changes to the plan of operations or facility. See attached for current stipulations.

#### **B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance**

Lands are not covered under any BLM land management plan.

#### **C. Identify applicable NEPA documents and other related documents that cover the proposed action.**

USAF Environmental Assessment (EA) for Construction of a Communications Facility at Snowy Peak, Alaska, April 2004; Finding Of No Significant Impact (FONSI) signed 15 May 2004.

BLM Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact for 354<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, Eielson Air Force Base Snowy Peak Communication Site, signed 30 March 2005. FONSI Adopted the USAF EA finding that it adequately analyzed the impacts of the proposed action and alternatives. It was assigned BLM NEPA document # AK-025-04-92.

#### **D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria**

**1. Is the new proposed action a feature of, or essentially similar to, an alternative analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? Is the project within the same analysis area, or if the project location is different, are the geographic and resource conditions sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? If there are differences, can you explain why they are not substantial?**

The proposed action is the exact same as the alternative analyzed and selected in the adopted EA. The re-authorization would be for the same activity at the same site. There are no proposed changes to the plan of operations or the facility.

**2. Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s) appropriate with respect to the new proposed action, given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?**

Yes. The range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document is adequate given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values. The existing NEPA document analyzed three alternatives. The proposed action was the selected alternative.

**3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as, rangeland health standard assessment, recent endangered species listings, updated lists of BLM-sensitive species)? Can you reasonably conclude that new information and new circumstances would not substantially change the analysis of the new proposed action?**

Although wilderness characteristics is a new resource that has been identified for this area the communication site was there when the inventory for wilderness characteristics was completed and it was determined that the area still has wilderness characteristics. This new information does not substantially change the analysis of the proposed action and does not require additional analysis.

**4. Are the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects that would result from implementation of the new proposed action similar (both quantitatively and qualitatively) to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document?**

The effects of the proposed action are the same as those analyzed in the existing NEPA document.

**5. Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current proposed action?**

Public involvement and interagency review associated with the existing NEPA document is adequate for the current proposed action. During scoping for the original NEPA document

interested parties, nearby communities, and tribal groups were contacted. No concerns were raised.

The Doyon, Limited Regional Corporation and the Native Village of Fort Yukon were sent information on the proposed renewal of the communication site via email on February 29, 2012. Jeff Filut, Land Specialist with Doyon, Limited, and Rocky James, Natural Resources Director with the Gwichayaa Zhee Gwich'in Tribal Government, speaking on behalf of the Native Village of Fort Yukon, responded with no objections. Mr. James, however, requested that we conduct a site visit in the future to ensure the USAF is abiding by the terms of the right-of-way grant.

**E. Persons/Agencies/BLM Staff Consulted**

Refer to the above referenced EA for a complete list of team members participating in the preparation of the original environmental analysis (pages 27-28). The Upper Black River NEPA team was consulted regarding the proposed renewal. The team consists of the following individuals:

<b>Valued Environmental Components</b>	<b>Specialist</b>
Air Quality, Floodplains, Soils, Water Quality, Wetlands/Riparian Zones	Ben Kennedy
Cultural Resources, Native American Religious Concerns	Robin Mills
Essential Fish Habitat, Wildlife/Aquatic	Jason Post
Fire Management	Skip Theisen
Invasive/Nonnative Species, Subsistence, Threatened or Endangered Species, Vegetative Resources, Wildlife/Terrestrial	Jim Herriges
Mineral Resources	Darrel Vandeweg
Recreation, Visual Resources, W&S Rivers, Wilderness Characteristics	Holli McClain
Planning and Environmental Coordinator	Jeanie Cole

**F. Conclusion**

Based on the review documented above, I conclude that the NEPA documentation fully covers the proposed action and constitutes the BLM's compliance with the requirements of NEPA.

/s/ Dianna Leinberger 7/10/12  
 Dianna Leinberger, Project Lead Date

/s/ Jeanie Cole 7/17/2012  
 Jeanie Cole, NEPA Coordinator Date

/s/ Lenore Heppler 7/11/12  
 Lenore Heppler, Field Manager Date