

Commercial permit for
Prescott College/Beaver Creek

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

SPECIAL RECREATION PERMIT (SRP)

For
Rachel Peters
Prescott College
220 Grove Avenue
Prescott, Arizona 86301

AA093276

DOI-BLM-AK-F020-2012-0013-EA

Located in:

Eastern Interior Field Office
White Mountains National Recreation Area

Prepared by:

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

I. Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action:

BLM Purpose and Need

The purpose for action is to determine whether or not to issue a Special Recreation Permit (SRP) for a commercial trip on BLM-managed lands in the White Mountains National Recreation Area (WMNRA) and Beaver Creek Wild and Scenic River (Figure 1) for the 2012 season. The need for action is established under the authority of Section 302 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 and the regulations found in 43 CFR 2930. FLPMA directs the BLM to regulate the use, occupancy and development of public lands. The purpose of the regulations found in 43 CFR 2930 is to determine when a permit is required to use public lands for recreational purposes and to establish procedures for the orderly and timely processing of permit applications.

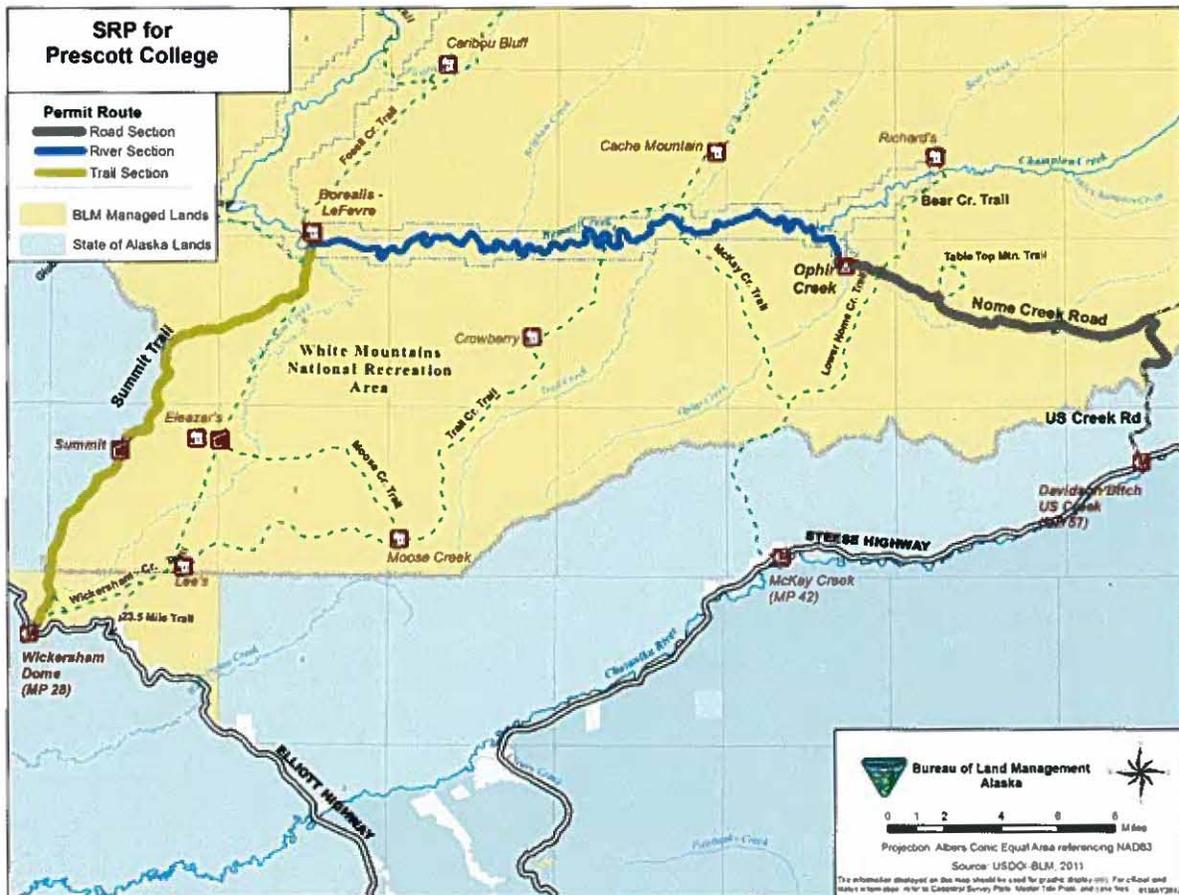


Figure 1. Prescott College proposed use area.

Applicant's Purpose and Need

Prescott College is sponsoring a *Summer Studies in Alaska* curriculum for the 2012 summer season. They have applied for a SRP to conduct a field trip in the WMNRA including a float

down Beaver Creek to the Borealis Cabin and hike out the Summit Trail to the Wickersham Dome Trailhead. Prescott College needs to obtain a SRP for this trip.

BLM Decision to be Made

The BLM will decide whether or not to issue a 2930 SRP for the applicant's commercial operation. If a SRP is issued, the BLM will determine the terms, conditions and stipulations prior to issuance.

II. Potential Issues:

Internal Scoping: No significant issues were identified for the proposed action.

External Scoping: The proposed action is consistent with the purposes and management of the WMNRA and is not expected to cause any public concern or controversy; therefore, no external scoping was conducted.

III. Location, Land Status and Conformance with Land Use Plans:

Location: The proposed action will take place in the White Mountains National Recreation Area. The travel route will take the group down Beaver Creek from the Nome Creek put-in to roughly the Borealis Cabin. From that point the group will hike out the Summit Trail to the Wickersham Dome trailhead. (Figure 1)

Land Status: The entire trip will be conducted on BLM-managed lands including Beaver Creek and developed hiking trails and facilities.

Conformance with Land Use Plans: The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of December 2, 1980 (ANILCA, PL 96-487) classified and designated both the WMNRA and the Beaver Creek Wild and Scenic River. The WMNRA encompasses nearly one million acres north of Fairbanks, located between the Steese and Elliott Highways.

The proposed action conforms with and is tiered to the existing land use plan (LUP) and environmental documentation below.

- Resource Management Plan/Record of Decision for the WMNRA, February 1986. Goal 3: Provide for multiple-use where compatible with primitive and semi-primitive recreation. Objective 2: Where compatible with recreation goals, permit multiple-use of resources on land classified as semi-primitive.

IV. Proposed Action and Alternatives:

Proposed Action Alternative:

Prescott College has applied to conduct one guided six-day trip down Beaver Creek Wild and Scenic River to the Summit Trail and hike out to the Elliott Highway June 10-15, 2012. The group will consist of eight students and two staff. They will use pack-rafts to float to the Borealis Cabin which they will rent for one night, the group will then hike out to the Wickersham Dome trailhead and be picked up by vehicle. During the trip teaching opportunities including outdoor skills, natural and cultural history, and leadership will be conducted. The group proposes to teach and practice "Leave No Trace" camping principles. Cooking will be done in small groups with gas stoves and all trash will be carried out.

No Action Alternative:

The no action alternative would result in the applicant not being issued a permit to conduct this float/hike trip in the WMNRA.

V. Affected Environment:

The proposed action would occur within the WMNRA and use a portion of the Beaver Creek Wild and Scenic River. The group would access the Nome Creek put-in site via the Steese Highway, US Creek, and Nome Creek roads. The Nome Creek area generally has a modest level of recreational use during the proposed dates and is developed to accommodate heavier use. Beaver Creek is designated as a "Wild" river and generally has limited use. There are few developments along the upper section of river including a couple of winter trail crossings and one public use cabin at the end of the planned float action. The Summit Trail that connects Beaver Creek to the Wickersham Dome trailhead has been developed for non-motorized hiking purposes. Use of the trail varies from very little use at the Beaver Creek end to regular steady use near the trailhead.

VI. Impacts: Direct, Indirect, Cumulative:

No issues with the potential for significant impacts were identified for analysis during internal scoping. The proposed activity is consistent with the purposes of the WMNRA and Beaver Creek Wild and Scenic River and with management for a semi-primitive recreation setting.

Mitigating Measures for Proposed Alternative

No issues requiring mitigation were identified. The applicant will follow "Leave No Trace" camping principles. Standard Operating Procedures developed for the recreation program will be attached to the permit.

Residual Impacts

There would be no residual impacts.

VII. Consultation and Coordination:

Persons/Agencies Consulted

Person	Title	Responsibility	Agency
Rachel Peters	Applicant		Applicant
Collin Cogley	Preparer	ACECs, Environmental Justice, Farm Lands, Socioeconomics, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and , Access	BLM
Jim Herriges	Wildlife Biologist	Vegetation, Invasive, Nonnative Species, Threatened/Endangered Species, Subsistence, Wildlife/Terrestrial	BLM
Rebecca Hile	Physical Scientist	Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	BLM
Ben Kennedy	Hydrologist	Air Quality, Floodplains, Water Quality, Wetlands/Riparian, Soils	BLM
Holli McClain	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Visual Resources, Wilderness Characteristics	BLM
Robin Mills	Archeologist	Cultural Resources, Native American Religious Concerns	BLM
Jason Post	Fisheries Biologist	Essential Fish Habitat, Wildlife/Aquatic	BLM
Skip Theisen	Fire Management Specialist	Fire Management	BLM
Darrel VandeWeg	Geologist	Minerals	BLM
Eric Yeager	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation	BLM

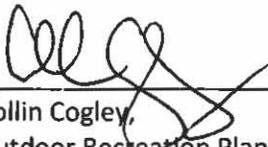
VIII.

List of Attachments

Attachment 1 - Assessment of Archeological, Historical, and Paleontological Resources

Attachment 2 - ANILCA Section 810 Evaluation and Findings

Attachment 3 - Standard Operating Procedures for Permit AA093276



Collin Cogley,
Outdoor Recreation Planner

Preparer's Signature:

5/22/12 Date