

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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North Slana Land Sales (Voight and Riley)
Environmental Assessment, DOI-BLM-AK-A020-2013-0002-EA

Case File, AA-092892 and AA-092949

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Acronyms

ADFG	Alaska Department of Fish and Game
ANILCA	Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act
ATV	All-Terrain Vehicle
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
FLPMA	Federal Land Management Policy Act
EA	Environmental Assessment
EARMP	East Alaska Resource Management Plan
GFO	Glennallen Field Office
GMU	Game Management Unit
NORA	Notice of Realty Action

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Summary of Proposed Project

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is considering whether to dispose of up to three parcels of public land in North Slana, Alaska by non-competitive direct sales to resolve failed claims and continued unauthorized use. The subject parcels are located within the North Slana community, accessed by the Bear Valley and Suslositna trail systems from the Glenn (Tok Cutoff) Highway.

1.2 Project Area Description and Land Status

The North Slana settlement area is Federal unencumbered land, withdrawn as a homestead area. North Slana is located approximately 70 miles northeast of Glennallen along the Glenn highway (Tok cutoff), near the community and Village of Mentasta (see Figure 1). The legal description for the project area is: T. 11 N., R. 8 E., Sections 24 – 27, 34 – 36, Copper River Meridian (South Slana); T. 12 N., R. 9 E., Sections 12 – 13, 24 – 27, 34 – 36, Copper River Meridian (North Slana).

The 10,000-acre Slana settlement area is divided into two separate blocks of land referred to as North and South Slana. All of the subject parcels are located in North Slana. North Slana has two main access points (Bear Valley and Suslositna Valley) which begin from the Glenn (Tok Cutoff) Highway.

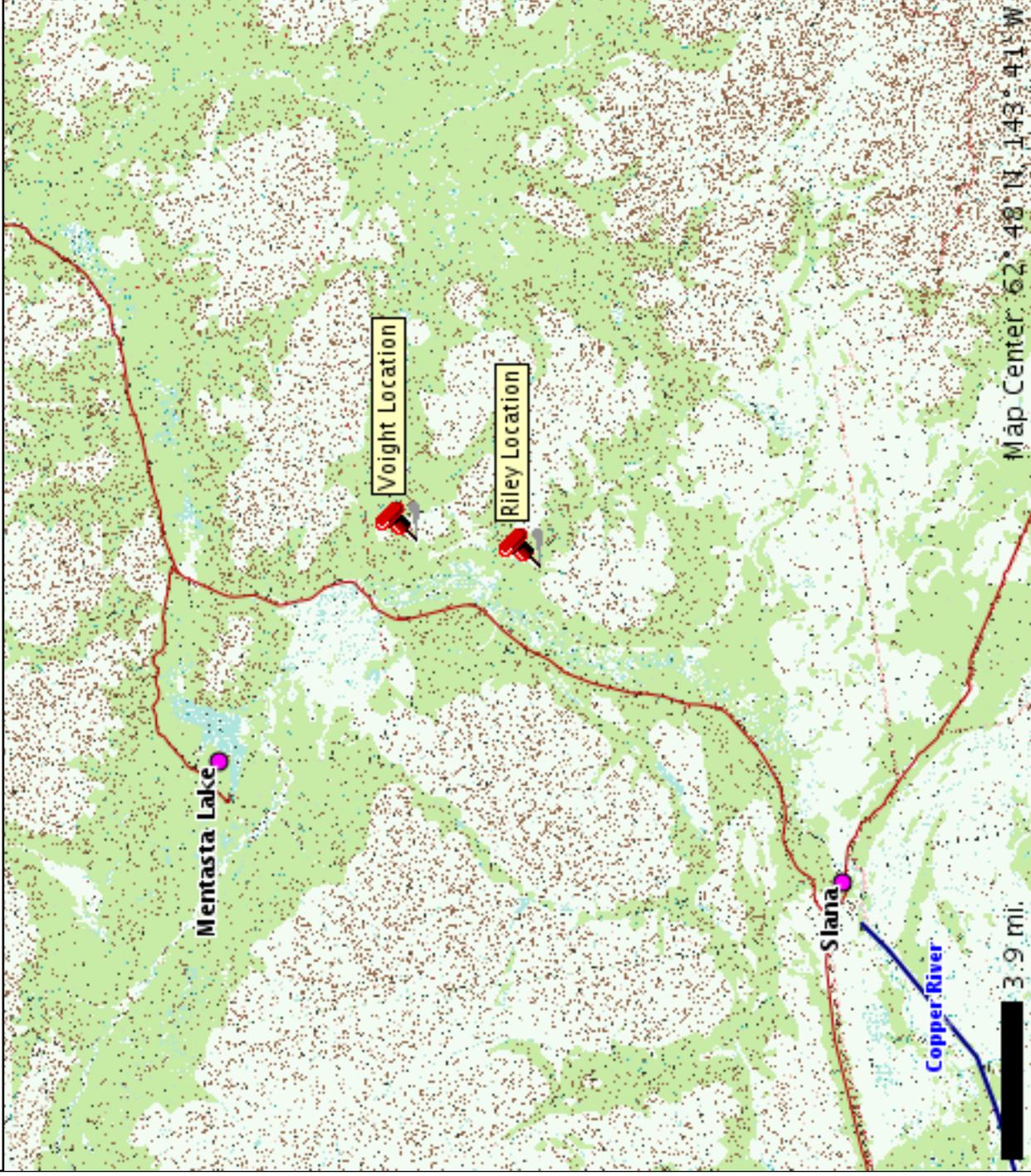
Sale #1, (Voight):

This sale consists of one five-acre parcel in the northernmost section of the North Slana settlement area, Section 12, T. 12 N., R. 9 E., Copper River Meridian. The northern portion of North Slana is commonly referred to as Bear Valley (see Figure 2).

Sale #2, Tracts A and B (Riley):

This sale consists of two parcels (tracts) totaling 15 acres. The proposed 15-acre land sale is located in the southern section of the North Slana settlement area, within the Suslositna Valley, within Section 26, T. 12 N., R. 9 E., Copper River Meridian (see Figure 3).

Map created March 24, 2014



Legend

- Towns (pink dot)
- Towns (pink dot)
- Highways (orange line)
- Major Rivers (blue line)
- Lakes (blue area)
- International Boundary (grey line)
- Alaska (green area)

Scale: 1:249,176

DO NOT USE FOR NAVIGATION

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Joaquín Failed Claim Purchase

Tract A

Tract B

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

C012N099E

26

23

Legend

- Tracts of Interest
- Private Property
- Trails



0 0.0150.03 0.06 0.09 0.12 0.15 Miles

Disclaimer: The information displayed on this map should be used for graphic display only. For total land status information, refer to California Survey plats. Master Title Plats and land status case-files.

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1.3 Background

The passage of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), Section 702 provided a ten-year extension on The Homestead Act of May 14, 1898, as amended, for the staking of homesites, headquarter sites, and trade and manufacturing sites in Alaska. Slana was subsequently identified as suitable for disposal in the 1980 *Southcentral Management Framework Plan*. Public Land Order (PLO) 6456 set aside 10,250 acres for disposal in the Slana settlement area in 1983.

The Slana settlement areas had several hundred applicants as a result of the Homestead Act extension and PLO. The Act required applicants to meet certain requirements prior to receiving conveyance of any land. In many cases, a person would apply for one of each of the types of land under the Act: a homesite, a headquarters site, and a trade and manufacturing site. Many applicants were unable to meet the requirements for each type of application. As a result, many of the claims either failed or were rejected and, in some cases, withdrawn. In the case of many failed claims, applicants were in the process of trying to meet requirements and had constructed sheds, cabins, or other improvements upon the land with the full intention of continuing to use them.

Many parcels are still occupied by the settlers who attempted, but failed, to meet program requirements for conveyance of the land associated with a home-site, headquarters or trade and manufacturing site in the 1980s. Their continued occupancy and use of these parcels have not been authorized since the claims were abandoned or rejected. The Glennallen Field Office is now trying to resolve the cases of unauthorized use using the guidance that was provided in the 2007 East Alaska Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (EARMP).

This Environmental Assessment discloses the impacts of the proposed land sales. A Notice of Realty Action (NORA) will be prepared and published in the Federal Register for each sale with additional details pertaining to any sale(s). An appraisal of the parcel(s) has been performed to document and determine the fair market value of the land being considered for disposal.

1.4 Purpose and Need

The BLM action under consideration is a direct land sale pursuant to Sections 203 and 209 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA). The need for action is driven by continued unauthorized use as a result of failed homestead claims. The purpose of the BLM's action is to resolve the unauthorized uses consistent with the EARMP direction pertaining to land disposals in the Slana settlement area.

1.4.1 Decision to be made

The BLM will decide how to best resolve the continued unauthorized use on these failed homestead claims.

1.5 Land Use Plan Conformance and Other Applicable Laws, Regulations, etc.

Sections 203 and 209 of FLPMA, as amended and section 2711.3-3 of 43 Code of Federal Regulations allow for direct sale of public land when a competitive sale is inappropriate and when the public interest would best be served by a direct sale to resolve inadvertent unauthorized use or occupancy of the lands. Additionally, in 2007, the approval of the EARMP provided specific guidance for addressing the “Unauthorized Use” situations created by the failed claims throughout the Slana settlement areas. Section I-3-b of EARMP allows the BLM to enter into a direct sale of this public land to resolve the unauthorized use and resulting trespass of these parcels. Since these claims were failed, they are no longer considered parcels under the Homestead Act and are simply considered to be unencumbered Federal land.

The EARMP and FLPMA provide the overall long term management direction for the BLM Glennallen Field Office. The proposed action and alternatives are consistent with the EARMP and FLPMA. Specifically, the proposed action is consistent with the following sections of the EARMP (BLM 2007):

I. Lands and Realty

I-3-b: Allocations (Disposals)

1. All lands within the Slana settlement area (approximately 10,000 acres) would be available for FLPMA Section 203 disposal under the following priority:
 - Lands would be sold non-competitively to the claimant where the lands contain improvements that are still owned, occupied, or used by the claimant.
 - Lands may be sold with the preference right to a fail claimant where improvements exist that are owned but no longer used by the failed claimant.
 - The remaining lands may be disposed of at the discretion of the Glennallen Field Office, in close consultation with the community of Slana and Ahtna, Inc. Further disposals would be used to consolidate land patters or provide lands for community infrastructure. Disposal to the general public at large by competitive or modified competitive bid will not be considered.

1.5.1 Other Applicable Laws, Regulations, Policies, etc.

The following laws, regulations, and policies apply to the Proposed Action, however, this is not a comprehensive list:

- Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA) Section 810
- National Historic Preservation Act as Amended 1992
- The Bald Eagle Protection Act of 1940 (as amended 1959, 1962, 1972, and 1978)
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (as amended 1936, 1960, 1969, 1974, 1978, 1986, and 1989)

- North America Wetlands Conservation Act of 1989 (as amended 1990 and 1994)
- Executive Order 11987 of May 1977 (Exotic Organisms)
- Executive 11990 of May 1977 (Protection of Wetlands)

1.6 Summary of Public Involvement

The BLM offered two public scoping periods, one for each proposed land sale. The Voight sale scoping period was offered from January 28 to March 1, 2013. The Riley sale scoping period was offered from May 14 to June 21, 2013. In both cases, approximately 90 interested parties, including the residents of the settlement areas, were notified and one response, pertaining to both sales, was received from Ahtna, Inc. The comments received were determined to be out of scope for further consideration in the Environmental Assessment.

1.7 Issues Identified / Issues Eliminated from Further Analysis

The following issues were identified through internal scoping and will be carried forward for analysis:

- Issue 1: What are the effects of removing personal property from public lands?
- Issue 2: How would timber resources be affected by these land disposals?
- Issue 3: How would wildlife habitat be affected by these land disposals?
- Issue 4: How would public and personal uses of public lands in the area be affected?

The following issues were considered but eliminated from further analysis for the reasons provided:

How would access be impacted?

The Bear Valley Trail is the primary transportation corridor to public lands in the North Slana area. Regarding public access to/from Sale # 1, the existing trail system only provides access to private land. There is currently no right-of-way through the private land to access public lands beyond the private land. At Sale #2, a 25-foot right-of-way is reserved to the U.S. to allow public access through the subject parcels to public lands beyond. Therefore, access would be unaffected; this issues will not be addressed further in this EA.

How would aquatic and riparian resources be affected?

No parcels in the proposed Voight land disposal and one parcel in the proposed Riley land disposal (Parcel #4, Figure 3) have aquatic and riparian resources. Parcel #4 borders approximately 400 feet of Suslositna Creek which is listed with the State of Alaska as important for the spawning, rearing, or migration of anadromous fish. The creek has documented sockeye salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*) present. A site visit was performed in the summer of 2012 and no impacts to the floodplain, riparian areas, and aquatic resources were observed. Mr. Riley has occupied this parcel for the past 30 years and has not impacted the aquatic and riparian resources to date. It can be assumed that there will not be any new significant disturbance to aquatic and riparian resources in the reasonably foreseeable future. Regardless of the outcome of this action (sale or no sale), if new ground disturbing activities are proposed, ADF&G has the statutory responsibility for protecting freshwater anadromous fish habitat and providing free passage for

anadromous and resident fish in freshwater bodies (AS 16.05.841-871). Any activity or project that is conducted below the ordinary high water mark of an anadromous stream requires a Fish Habitat Permit from ADF&G.

How would cultural or paleontological resources be affected?

There are no anticipated effects to cultural or paleontological resources from this action. Archaeological surveys along the access trails to these areas, as well as in and around the proposed lands sales by McCoy (1991), Jangala (2006) and Jangala and Ketron (2012), located no cultural resources within the proposed sales. Additionally, no previously located sites in the proposed sales' vicinity are likely to be directly or indirectly affected by access along existing trail routes to the properties (Jangala 2014).

How would the land disposals affect Federally threatened or endangered species?

Based on currently available information, the proposed action would not affect any threatened or endangered species or their habitats because no species or associated habitats are present on the parcels. Therefore, no consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is considered necessary pursuant to Section 7 of the Act and none will be undertaken.

2.0 Alternatives

2.1 Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the BLM would not process the land sales. Instead, the BLM follow and enforce the trespass protocols to mitigate the continued unauthorized use. The BLM trespass protocols would require removal of personal property, structures, and improvements as well as clean-up and rehabilitation of the sites. Hazardous waste products would require special handling for proper disposal.

2.2 Alternative 2 - Proposed Action Alternative

The BLM's Proposed Action consists of two independent direct non-competitive land sales described separately below. In both cases, the BLM has had the parcels appraised and has documented the fair market value of each parcel. The failed claimants have agreed to resolve the unauthorized use and occupancy through purchase of the parcels at the full fair market value. The BLM would prepare the necessary patent documents to complete the sale of the public land only to the failed claimants. Upon closing of the sales, these lands would leave Federal management permanently and become private property.

Sale #1 (Voight)

The BLM would sell five (5) acres of public lands within the North Slana settlement area to mitigate the matter of continued and unauthorized use created by the failure of the applicant's claim for a headquarters site. There are no existing rights-of-way on or through this parcel.

Sale #2 (Riley)

The BLM would sell 15 acres of public lands within the North Slana settlement area to mitigate the matter of continued unauthorized use created by the failure of the applicant's claim for a

trade and manufacturing site. This sale would be subject to existing rights-of-way on these parcels. A 25-foot right-of-way is reserved to the United States government and to the Suslositna Home Owners Association to allow for trail maintenance and for public access through the parcels to public lands beyond.

2.3 Alternatives Considered but not Analyzed in Detail

The following alternatives were considered, but are not being carried forward for detailed analysis for the reasons presented:

Issue a lifetime lease to the failed claimants – This alternative was considered but eliminated because the subject parcel and surrounding land is not located within an ANILCA Conservation System Unit.

Issue a long-term land lease pursuant to 43 CFR § 2920 and FLPMA – This alternative was considered but eliminated because it does not permanently resolve the issues identified and because it is not in conformance with the EARMP. The EARMP specifies that GFO will only issue land leases to commercial operations. Regarding FLPMA leases, the EARMP, Section I. Lands and Realty decisions states that, "...Cabins or permanent structures used for private recreation cannot be authorized under this authority, (I-2-a: Management Actions, BLM 2007)." Neither of these parcels are operated as a commercial business currently, therefore a long-term lease is not available as a solution to mitigate the continued and unauthorized use.

3.0 Affected Environment and Environmental Effects

3.1 ISSUE 1: WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF REMOVING PERSONAL PROPERTY FROM PUBLIC LANDS?

3.1.1 Affected Environment

The two sales, totaling 20 acres, have been used since the early 1980s by the individuals for their personal use; each has accumulated a vast amount of personal property on the lands in question. The following list present personal property items typical of the sale parcels. The list is not comprehensive, but it does highlight some of the larger items or structures on site.

Overall, it is estimated 35 tons of materials and personal property is present on the sale parcels.

Buildings

Approximately 6-8 buildings, made of log and conventional lumber construction, are present on the sale parcels. The majority of the buildings present are conventional 2x4 lumber design constructed with nails and plywood and common house building materials; these buildings are an average size of 10 x 12 feet. The log cabins are more traditional, built using heavy local spruce timber with large spikes to hold the structure together. The log structures are larger, approximately 24 x 24 feet with logs no less than 8 inches round on the smaller ends. The log cabins also have a common roofing material and design, plywood and either tar paper with metal or asphalt roofing materials.

A large metal shop, approximately 16 x 24 feet, is present on Sale #2 and is assumed to be built on a concrete footer for longevity and stability. The shop is assembled with screws and special fasteners intended for metal construction. Sheet metal is used in overlapping sections. These pieces are rather heavy as they provide structural support without any inner support framing. Weather sealing materials and thermal rated doors, garage and entry, complete the structure.

Household Items

On the Sale #2 parcel, the larger log structure was used first as a lodge/bar, but has since been remodeled to accommodate a rural rustic home with modern comforts: a wood stove for heating; a Toyo stove as backup heating; carpet, hardwood, and linoleum flooring; furniture; cabinets, and modern appliances such as television and a satellite receiver.

Hazards

On both Sale #1 and #2, a number of hazards are present from the individuals' use of the parcels since the early 1980s. For example, the following items were observed on site: several snowmobiles which are assumed to be non-usable, generators, used appliances, household trash and basic solid waste, used asbestos stove pipes, 55-gallon oil drums used for various products, steel pipes and poles, heavy equipment (dozer), used ATV batteries and vehicle batteries, solar batteries and panels, and a vehicle.

3.1.2 Direct and Indirect Effects from No Action Alternative

The direct effect of No Action would be to begin the trespass procedures to remove the personal property as listed above. The individuals would enter into negotiations with the BLM for the time necessary to remove personal property and to remediate the land to as natural a state as possible.

Removal of personal property would result in increased traffic on the existing trail system, which is not well-maintained. This would cause ruts and trail braiding. Moving heavy equipment or loads would disturb soils and increase potential for the spread of noxious weeds to/from the parcels and the travel corridors. The moving of the hazards from the parcel to final disposal sites could result in spills or contamination of other lands during transport and handling.

Burning is a common disposal method for combustible products. Burning could increase potential for wildfires on public lands. The area these parcels are within are very well vegetated and remote, a wildfire starting in these locations could result in the loss of multiple homes and other private property.

The removal of an estimated 35 tons of materials and products in a timely manner would require substantial man power and time.

3.1.3 Direct and Indirect Effects from Proposed Action Alternative

The estimated 35 tons of personal property, products, and structures would remain in place and continue to be used by the individuals. The parcels would be sold to private owners and would

cease to be public lands. Therefore, since these parcels would transfer to private ownership and the personal property would not be removed, there would be no effects to public lands.

3.1.4 Cumulative Effects

An inventory of the remaining failed claims within the Slana settlement areas is underway by the GFO staff. Results of this inventory could be additional parcels undergoing similar consideration and process.

3.1.5 Recommended Mitigation

For the No Action Alternative, it is recommended that the removal of the personal property occur when the ground is frozen. This would reduce and minimize disturbance to soils and trail conditions. Similarly, burning of combustible products (for disposal) should be allowed only in winter. This would limit the potential for inadvertent wildfire starts.

3.2 ISSUE 2: HOW WOULD TIMBER RESOURCES BE AFFECTED BY THE LAND DISPOSALS?

3.2.1 Affected Environment

The two sales in the North Slana area contain vegetation indicative of Alaska's interior boreal forests with "open needleleaf" being the primary cover type. A vegetation cover type is a basic unit of vegetation classification that represents vegetation with a relatively uniform structure and floristic composition. Each cover type is distinguished by the dominant and co-dominant plant species in the major strata (horizontal layers) of existing vegetation, (L.A. Viereck, et.al, 1992). Individual tree species established on these parcels include: white spruce (*Picea glauca*), black spruce *Picea mariana*), quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), paper birch (*Betula papyrifera*), balsam poplar (*Populus balsamifera*), willow (*Salix spp.*), and Alder (*Alnus spp.*).

The two sales total 20 acres in size and are a fraction (0.2%) of the total Slana settlement area which consists of approximately 10,000 acres. It is estimated that 30% of the Slana settlement area contains "commercial" forests, having the size and volume to warrant development (3,000 acres). Of the 20 acres on the two sales, approximately 6 acres are considered "commercial" forests, approximately 8 acres are considered "non-commercial" woodlands, and the remaining 6 acres are non-forested. The majority of commercial forest is located on Sale #2 along the riparian/stream corridor. Considering the inaccessibility of these two parcels, and the distance from the existing road network, these commercial forest resources are not likely to be developed in the reasonably foreseeable future.

3.2.2 Direct and Indirect Effects from No Action Alternative

Under this alternative the two parcels would not be sold and the existing trespass case would remain unresolved. The 20 acres would remain under BLM management and managed for multiple-use similar to other public lands in the Slana settlement area (10,000 acres). Under the No Action Alternative, the BLM would enforce and follow trespass protocols, which call for

removal of structures and improvements and clean up and rehabilitation of the sites. Activities associated with trespass resolution are not expected to adversely affect the existing forest resources and they would remain available for casual and subsistence uses as well as provide the benefits of proper ecosystem functions. Incidental impacts to individual trees may occur during property removal and clean-up activities, but the No Action Alternative would not change the proportion of commercial and non-commercial woodlands.

3.2.3 Direct and Indirect Effects from Proposed Action Alternative

If the two parcels are sold to resolve the trespass cases, the 20 acres of forest resources would move out of BLM's management and into private ownership. Six acres of commercial woodland would leave Federal management. Within the Slana settlement area, this represents a 0.2% loss. At 0.2%, the change in ownership status is not likely to negatively affect the forest resources, vegetation on the parcels, or the forest resources and vegetation contained throughout the entire Slana settlement area. The forest resources on sale parcels would become unavailable for casual and subsistence uses by the public, and subject to potential development by the new owners.

3.2.4 Cumulative Effects

The sale of two parcels of unencumbered land totaling 20 acres within the Slana settlement area are the only land sales that will occur in the near term. There is potential in the reasonably foreseeable future for lands sales of additional parcels from the Slana settlement area, which may have nominal impacts to the area forest resources by ownership transfers. However, at this time, no other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions impacting available timber resources are known. No cumulative effects are identified.

3.2.5 Recommended Mitigation

No additional mitigation measures are recommended.

3.3 ISSUE 3: HOW WOULD WILDLIFE HABITAT BE AFFECTED BY THESE LAND DISPOSALS?

3.3.1 Affected Environment

The parcels consist of 20 acres of white and black spruce forest with a stream flowing within the Mentasta Mountains that provide habitat to a number of game and non-game species such as moose, caribou, small game, furbearers, and migratory birds. The whole North Slana area of unencumbered BLM managed lands consists of approximately 10,000 acres of white and black spruce forest habitat type. Specifically, the area is within North Slana is known to provide moose and Nelchina caribou herd wintering habitat (BLM, 2007). The area can also provide a corridor for the Nelchina caribou herd to migrate to the Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge and western Yukon, which also encompasses the herd's wintering range.

It is not known what small game and furbearers inhabit the area. It is not known what specific migratory bird species inhabit the parcels, though according to habitat associations with boreal

forest and boreal wetlands, priority species such as boreal owl (*Falco columbrius*), Townsend's Warbler (*Dendronica townsendi*), and solitary sandpipers (*Tringa solitaria*) are expected to be present (Sharbaugh, 2007). In addition, two species, the olive-sided flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*) and rusty blackbird (*Euphagus carolinus*) are listed as BLM Alaska sensitive species and may occur in the area (BLM, 2009). These migratory birds may utilize these areas or boreal forest and boreal wetland/stream areas for nesting and foraging in the spring and summer months.

3.3.2 Direct and Indirect Effects from No Action Alternative

If the parcels are not sold, the 20 acres would be retained as public lands. The BLM would continue to manage the land for its multiple-use mission of managing "public lands in a manner that will protect the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air, and atmospheric water resources; and, would provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife," (FLPMA 1976).

In addition, BLM would enforce and follow BLM trespass protocols, which call for removal of structures and improvements and clean up and rehabilitation of the sites (discussed previously). Depending on which season(s) clean up and rehabilitation occurs, wildlife habitats, whether winter foraging/migration corridor or spring/summer nesting and species within the immediate area would be disturbed by human presence and machinery needed to dispose of the accumulated items. However, this is not expected to negatively affect the species on a population level, due to the large expanse of contiguous spruce forest that surrounds the affected area, the relatively pristine area of the neighboring Mentasta Mountains, and the limited duration of the clean-up.

3.3.3 Direct and Indirect Effects from Proposed Action Alternative

If the two parcels are sold, 20 acres of habitat would be removed from BLM's administration and into private ownership. In addition, the BLM would not enforce and follow BLM trespass protocols, which call for removal of structures and improvements and clean up and rehabilitation of the sites (discussed previously) because the land is no longer under BLM's administration. The loss of 20 acres is not expected to negatively affect the species that inhabit the area, on a population level, due to the small footprint of the action (20 acres), when compared to the large expanse of contiguous spruce forest that surrounds the affected area, plus the relatively pristine area of the neighboring Mentasta Mountains. The loss of 20 acres of habitat represents a 0.2% loss in the 10,000-acre Slana settlement Area overall.

3.3.4 Cumulative Effects

At this time, the selling and transferring of the two sales, equaling 20 acres of wildlife habitat, from BLM administration to private ownership, to mitigate unauthorized use issues within the unencumbered lands of North Slana area (10,000 acres) and the expanded Mentasta Mountain is the only land sales that will occur in the near term. However, due to the past actions of successful and non-successful land claims in the North Slana settlement area, there is potential in the reasonably foreseeable future of selling additional parcels (i.e., transferring wildlife habitat from BLM management to private ownership) adjacent to other North Slana landowners. This

may or may not be a result of mitigation for continued and unauthorized use issues. It is unknown how many acres of wildlife habitat that would be transferred out of BLM administration with these foreseeable selling of land parcels adjacent, but this would reduce the amount of acres BLM could conserve and manage.

3.3.5 Recommended Mitigation

No additional mitigation measures are recommended.

3.4 ISSUE 4: HOW WOULD PUBLIC AND PERSONAL USES OF PUBLIC LANDS IN THE AREA BE AFFECTED?

3.4.1 Affected Environment

The 20 acres being considered for direct sale are currently public domain. These lands were used and occupied under the Homestead Act as described in Section 1.0 in an attempt by the named individuals to create private property. The general public can come and go upon this land under casual use without issue. The subsistence resources which are available upon these parcels are considered public domain.

Typical public uses of public lands in the vicinity of the sales include: berry picking, subsistence hunting, firewood gathering, hiking, camping, and ATV riding. Federally qualified rural residents, that have a positive customary and traditional use of the area, use the area to hunt moose, caribou, bear, small game, waterfowl, trapping furbearers, and gathering berries and other vegetation (LaVine et al., 2013).

Currently, there are no restrictions on public access or travel on these parcels. The entire 20 acres is available to casual use and subsistence activities.

3.4.2 Direct and Indirect Effects from No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the entire 20 acres would still be available to casual use and subsistence use activities by the public. Access to and through the area would remain unchanged. The No Action Alternative would have no effect on public and personal uses of public lands.

3.4.3 Direct and Indirect Effects from Proposed Action Alternative

On the Sale #1 parcel, the public would lose all access to and through the parcel because there is no existing right-of-way. This would be a loss of 5 acres of public casual use opportunities for recreational and subsistence opportunities. When compared to the 10,000 acres of the Slana settlement area and the even larger area of the Mentasta and Nebesna areas, the loss of these 5 acres will not have an impact to the availability of subsistence resources.

On the Sale #2 parcels, the public would be restricted to existing rights-of-way through the parcel for access to public lands beyond the parcel. This would be a loss of 15 acres to casual

use opportunities for recreation and subsistence activities. Federally qualified rural residents would lose access to a total of 15 acres of un-encumbered BLM administered lands on which to practice their subsistence lifestyles. However, these 15 acres represent a minute portion of the approximately 10,000 acres available in the entire North Slana area for subsistence users to practice their subsistence lifestyles. Therefore, this action is expected not to negatively affect users' ability to engage in their subsistence lifestyles.

In the context of the Slana settlement overall (10,000 acres), the loss of casual use opportunities on 20 acres is negligible.

The loss of 20 acres of hunting area within Game Management Unit (GMU) 13 would not have a noticeable impact to subsistence uses.

3.4.4 Cumulative Effects

At this time, the selling and transferring two parcels, equaling 20 acres of un-encumbered lands, from BLM administration to private ownership, to mitigate trespass issues within the unencumbered lands of North Slana area (10,000 acres) is the only land sales that will occur in the near term. However, due to the past actions of successful and non-successful land claims in the North Slana settlement area, there is potential in the reasonably foreseeable future of selling additional parcels (i.e., transferring additional un-encumbered lands from BLM administration to private ownership) adjacent to other North Slana landowners, as permitted within the EARMP. This may or may not be a result of mitigation for trespass issues. It is unknown how many acres of un-encumbered land that would be transferred out of BLM administration with these foreseeable selling of land parcels adjacent, but this would reduce the amount of acres BLM could conserve and manage.

3.4.5 Recommended Mitigation

No additional mitigation measures are recommended.

4.0 Consultation and Coordination

BLM Tribal Consultation with Cheesh'na Tribe from Chistochina occurred on February 26, 2014. No additional comments on this action resulted from that consultation.

5.0 List of Preparers

The BLM's interdisciplinary team responsible for the preparation of this EA consisted of the following resource specialists:

Sarah Bullock	Subsistence and Wildlife Biologist
Molly Cobbs	Planning and Environmental Coordinator
Joseph Hart	Realty Specialist, Project Lead
John Jangala	Archaeologist
Cory Larson	Trails and Travel Management

Ben Seifert Natural Resource Specialist (Forestry and Non-Native Invasive Species)
Tim Sundlov Fisheries Biologist
Elijah Waters Assistant Field Manager

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