

**Decision for Categorical Exclusion
DOI-BLM-AK-F020-2013-0013-CX
Go North Para Tours LLC Commercial Use Permit**

Decision

It is my decision to approve the renewal of Go North Para Tours LLC for the multiple trips listed in the proposed action of Categorical Exclusion (CX) DOI-BLM-AK-F020-2013-0013-CX. The following Standard Operating Procedures developed in prior National Environmental Policy Act documents will be carried forward as part of this decision.

Standard Operating Procedures for SRPs on BLM-managed lands

The permittee shall be required to distribute the following information along with “Leave No Trace” information to each group of clients prior to trip departure. The information shall include:

- All trip participants should stay on developed trails where they exist and use dispersed traveling techniques as described in “Leave No Trace” guidance in undeveloped areas.
- All equipment, including boot soles, rafts, and tents should be cleaned to assure that they are free of non-native seeds and plant parts before beginning the trips. Also be reminded that all felt or fibrous soled footwear is no longer allowed in Alaska waters; see current Fish and Game regulations.
- All trash and human waste should be retrieved or dealt with accordingly using established facilities or by “Leave No Trace” guidance.
- Campsites with human or naturally hardened sites should be utilized. Camp areas will be located at least 25 feet from the nearest trail. Camp areas will be cleaned of all litter before departure.
- Respect wildlife. Do not feed animals and avoid disturbing them from natural activities. BLM also recommends the use of bear-proof or odor proof containers on the river to prevent habituation of bears and other wildlife.
- Firewood collection will be limited to dead and down wood. Gas stoves or U.S. Forest Service approved fire pans should be used for cooking meals and any fires. All dead and out ashes and cinders will be scattered to the wind, preferably on the gravel bars or rocky areas. All left over wood will likewise be scattered around the area.
- Avoid camping in areas that result in disturbance of birds of prey (raptors) such as peregrine falcons, bald eagle and red-tail (Harlan’s) hawk. Nesting raptors will typically indicate disturbance by vocalizing loudly and often circle above people.

Rationale:

1. Go North Para Tours LLC has been permitted for these activities for the past ten years and received “good” to “superior” ratings on their annual end-of-year evaluations. No violations of stipulations or negative observations have been documented.
2. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands are managed for multiple use recreational activities. All actions proposed, such as camping, hiking, backpacking, and floating, are considered standard and common practices during these times of year.
3. 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.
4. The proposed action is consistent with the approved White Mountains National Recreation Area and Steese National Conservation Area Resource Management Plans.
5. The proposed action would not impact salmon or habitat known to support salmon and therefore the proposed action was assigned the Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Determination: *No effect*, and no further EFH consultation is required.
6. There are no anticipated impacts to cultural resources by the proposed action. An “Assessment of Archaeological and Historic Resources” has been completed for this project.
7. The evaluation and finding done to comply with Section 810 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act found no significant restrictions to subsistence use.

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, 1150 University Ave. Fairbanks, Alaska 99709, 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.

/s/ Lenore Heppler

Lenore Heppler, Manager
Eastern Interior Field Office

3/29/2013

Date

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this CX review and decision, contact Collin Cogley, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Eastern Interior Field Office, at 907-474-2382.