

NEPA - Project Scoping

Document Type: Environmental Assessment (EA)

Document Number: DOI-BLM-AK-F020-2013-0011-EA

Action: SRP Big Game Guiding – Glacier Mountain area

Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Purpose and Need

The purpose for action is to determine whether or not to issue a Special Recreation Permit (SRP) for commercial big game hunting activities on BLM-managed lands in the Fortymile subunit. 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. The 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.

Applicant's Purpose and Need

Mr. Jeff Burwell with Alaska Peak Air Adventures has applied for a SRP for his second season with the purpose of providing guided fall hunting trips for up to two clients for sheep and four additional clients' caribou or grizzly bear hunts this season in the Glacier Mountain area. Mr. Burwell needs to obtain a SRP in order to conduct commercial guiding activities in this area. Guided hunting trips and supporting activities are scheduled to be conducted between early August and late October.

BLM Decision to be Made

The BLM will decide whether or not to issue a 2930 SRP for the applicant's commercial big game hunting operation for the 2013 season. If a SRP is issued, the BLM will determine the terms, conditions and stipulations prior to issuance.

Location, Land Status and Conformance with Land Use Plans

Location: The proposed action will take place in all or portions of Townships 1S 25E, 1S 26E, 1S 27E, 1S 28E, 1S 30E, 2S 27E, 2S 29E, 2S 30E, 3S 28E, 3S 29E, 3S 30E, and 4S 29E Fairbanks Meridian. See attached map (See attached map).

Land Status: The majority of the proposed acreage is selected by the State of Alaska. No selected Native corporation lands are included in the proposed action. (See attached map).

Conformance with Land Use Plans: Even though it is not specifically provided for, the proposed action is in conformance with the Fortymile Management Framework Plan (September 1980, because it is clearly consistent with the goal of the plan which is stated in the *Summary of Land*

Use Decisions and Management Direction: “This Plan has been written with the goal of providing the most appropriate management for each area and situation, in accordance with the principals of multiple use”. Issuance of special recreation permits is clearly consistent with the principals of multiple use.

Description of Proposed Action and Alternative Actions

Proposed Action Alternative:

The proposal by Alaska Peak Air Adventures (APAA) is to run a limited number of guided hunting expeditions in the Glacier Mountain and Mount Eldridge area. They will offer trips that will include hunting sheep, caribou, and grizzly bears on BLM-managed lands. They will use horses and possibly aircraft, outside of current designated closure dates, to conduct the hunts. Access to the hunt area will be overland via the “Mini-cup”/Wallcut Mountain Trail, west off of American Summit. (See attached map).

APAA plans to take up to a total of six (6) hunters annually on BLM-managed lands in the proposed area with no more than a total of two (2) of the hunters hunting sheep. The operating season will run from August through October. Clients will be under their care and supervision for the entire duration of the hunt. Provisions will be provided for 10 day trips per group.

While operating on BLM managed lands, APAA will incorporate “Leave No Trace” and “Pack it in – Pack it out” ethics. They will be using short-term, primitive, small spike camps. The camps will not be permanent or long-term in nature. Fuel will not be stored in containers larger than 5 gallon gas cans at any time. Human waste will be handled using “cat holes” located a minimum of 200 feet from the nearest water sources. No live standing timber will be cut and fresh water will be filtered from local streams. Pack trips will utilize no more than 10 animals per trip. Horses and mules will be tethered to live trees using the “highline” method and will be naturally grazing and eating certified “weed free” pellets or hay. Aircraft may be utilized prior to August 5 and after September 20 for support and/or cleanup. APAA plans to offer adventures that are of the highest quality while considering safety and security of their clients as priority. The APAA will provide the BLM with a list of all personnel in the field along with a copy of any applicable licenses and proposed trip dates and any changes that may occur up to the time of the hunt.

The Delayed Start Alternative:

The Delayed Start Alternative is identical to the proposed action except that sheep hunts would not be authorized to occur between August 10, the beginning of sheep season, and August 25. This would allow for a two week priority for non-guided sheep hunting opportunities in the area.

No Action Alternative:

The no action alternative would result in the applicant not being issued a permit to conduct guided hunting trips in the Fortymile Management area.