



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Anchorage Field Office
4700 BLM Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99507-2591
<http://www.blm.gov/ak>

Iditarod National Historic Trail Safety Marking / Signs Categorical Exclusion, DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2013-0009-CX

DECISION RECORD

Decision

It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action on BLM-managed lands as described in the attached Categorical Exclusion documentation, DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2013-0009-CX.

The decision would be effective for five years, as the Proposed Action constitutes mandated and routine trail marking for the Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT).

Rationale for the Decision

The Proposed Action has been reviewed by Anchorage Field Office staff and appropriate Project Design Features will be incorporated during project implementation to minimize or eliminate impacts. The Proposed Action enables the BLM to fulfill the direction regarding trail markers provided in the *INHT Comprehensive Management Plan*. Based on the attached Categorical Exclusion review, I have determined that the proposed action involves no significant impact to the human environment and no further analysis is required.

Appeal Opportunities

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR § 4. To appeal you must file a notice of appeal at the BLM Anchorage Field Office, 4700 BLM Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99507, within 30 days from receipt of this decision. The appeal must be in writing and delivered in person, via the United States Postal Service mail system, or other common carrier, to the Anchorage Field Office as noted above. *The BLM does not accept appeals by facsimile or email.* The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error.

If you wish to file a petition pursuant to regulation 43 CFR § 4.21 (58 FR 4939, January 19, 1993) for a stay of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for a stay must accompany your notice of appeal. Except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulation, a petition for a stay of decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards: (a) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied, (b) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits, (c) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and (d) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

Copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be submitted to each party named in this decision and to the Interior Board of Land Appeals and to the Office of the Solicitor (see 43 CFR § 4.413); Office of the Regional Solicitor, Alaska Region, U.S. Department of the Interior, 4230 University Drive, Suite 300, Anchorage, Alaska 99508; at the same time the original documents are filed with this office. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

/s/ Alan Bittner

March 12, 2013

Alan Bittner
Anchorage Field Manager

Date

Attachments

DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2013-0009-CX



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CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION (CX)

A. BACKGROUND

Project Name / Type: Iditarod National Historic Trail Safety Marking / Signs

NEPA Register Number: DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2013-0009-CX

Case File Number: n/a

Location / Legal Description: Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT) per INHT Comprehensive Management Plan (1986)

Applicant (if any): n/a

Description of Proposed Action: The BLM is directed by the National Trails Act (as amended), the INHT Comprehensive Management Plan, and as the INHT Administrator to facilitate development and installation of uniform trail markers and signs along actively used segments of the Trail. INHT-specific trail markers include tripods, reflectors, distance signs, and orientation panels at trailside public cabins and communities. The BLM is considering supporting partner-installation of a combined total of approximately 500 tripods, markers and/or signs along the INHT. Almost all would be installed without ground disturbance on existing trees, or for treeless trail segments, on wooden tripods made of poles that are set on the ground. For markers requiring ground disturbance, those locations would be reviewed and cleared or mitigated by the BLM Anchorage Field Office archaeologist prior to installation (see stipulations below).

Installation would occur primarily during winter using hand tools, with access being accomplished by snowmobile. Occasionally, the BLM may provide support to winter projects by positioning materials in the summer using helicopters. In the case that materials are stored on non-BLM lands, temporary storage permits would be acquired from the appropriate landowner. The proposed installation work is planned to begin in 2013 and continue for a period of five years. Marker- and sign-installation work would be completed in partnership with cooperating agencies, organized groups, and local governments.

Materials would be purchased primarily by BLM partners and installed by the partners as well as BLM on INHT segments both on and off of BLM-managed lands. In some cases, the BLM

would acquire and install materials. The BLM would maintain signage design, fabrication, and installation policy and records as part of its National Trail Administration duties.

B. LAND USE PLAN CONFORMANCE

Applicable Land Use Plan(s): Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan (2008)

and

Southwest Planning Area Management Framework Plan (1981)

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable land use plans, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following land use plan decisions (objectives, terms, and conditions):

M. Recreation

M-3: Management Actions

1. Implement the Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT) Management Plan. (Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Approved RMP, p. 36).

The INHT Comprehensive Management Plan states that the BLM, through the Secretary of the Interior,

Shall establish a uniform marker... such markers shall be erected...and maintained by the Federal agency administering the trail...(p. 80).

C. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

The proposed action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with United States Department of the Interior 43 CFR 46.210 or United States Department of the Interior Manual, Part 516, Chapter 11, which provides:

G. Transportation

2. Installation of routine signs, markers, culverts, ditches, waterbars, gates, or cattleguards on/or adjacent to roads and trails identified in any land use or transportation plan, or eligible for incorporation in such plan.
4. Placement of recreational, special designation, or information signs, visitor registers, kiosks, and portable sanitation devices.

D. EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

The proposed action must be screened against the Extraordinary Circumstances found in 43 CFR § 46.215 (listed below). Any “yes” finding requires that an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement be prepared for the Proposed Action.

EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES	YES/NO
1. Have significant adverse impacts on public health or safety.	No.
2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.	No.
3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].	No.
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.	No.
5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.	No.
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.	No.
7. Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.	No.
8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.	No.
9. Violate Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.	No.
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).	No.
11. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).	No.
12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).	No.

The following stipulations are included to protect potential cultural resources in the area:

- Any cultural and/or paleontological resource (historic or prehistoric site or object) discovered by the holder, or any person working on his behalf, on public or Federal land shall be immediately reported to the authorized officer. Holder shall suspend all operations in the immediate area of such discovery until written authorization to proceed is issued by the authorized officer. An evaluation of the discovery shall be made by the

authorized officer to determine appropriate actions to prevent the loss of significant cultural or scientific values. The holder shall be responsible for the cost of evaluation and any decision as to proper mitigation measures shall be made by the authorized officer after consulting with the holder.

- For markers requiring ground disturbance, those locations would be reviewed and cleared or mitigated by the BLM Anchorage Field Office archaeologist prior to installation.
- If in connection with operations under this authorization, any human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects or objects of cultural patrimony as defined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (P.L. 101-601; 104 Stat. 3048; 25 U.S.C. 3001) are discovered, the holder shall stop operations in the immediate area of the discovery, protect the remains and objects, and immediately notify the authorized officer. The holder shall continue to protect the immediate area of the discovery until notified by the authorized officer that operations may resume.

E. SIGNATURE

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable land use plan and is an action that can be categorically excluded. The Proposed Action does not trigger any of the Extraordinary Circumstances found in 516 FM Chapter 2, Appendix 2. I recommend that the Proposed Action be allowed and that no further environmental analysis is required.

/s/ Alan Bittner

March 12, 2013

Alan Bittner
Anchorage Field Manager, Acting

Date