

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION /PLAN CONFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION

DOI-BLM-AK-F020-2013-0004-CX

A. Background

Proposed Action: Milepost 1236- 1235 Alaska Highway, Site Characterization

Date of Proposed Action: May 15, 2013 through September 30, 2013

Location: Milepost 1236 – 1235 Alaska Highway, U.S. Survey No. 14119
Sections 1, 2, 11 & 12, T11N, R22E, Copper River Meridian

Applicant: Bureau of Land Management, Eastern Interior Field Office

Serial Number: FF093549 (256800)

Description of Proposed Action:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposes to conduct site characterization activities to support conveyance of land parcel USS 14119 to an Alaskan Veteran Native. The inspection of the 160 acre parcel will be conducted to identify any environmental liabilities that may exist. By completing a site characterization BLM will be able to invoke the innocent landowner defense and demonstrate the legal principle of “due diligence” as related to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). The 160 acre parcel is surrounded by State of Alaska and Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge land. The BLM’s land interests in this area are minimal.

The project is scheduled for the first two weeks of June 2013. All vehicles, transportation, and construction equipment will be power washed to ensure that they are weed and weed seed free. Site conditions allow wheeled vehicle access to all areas that will be investigated. No vegetation clearing is anticipated at this time. A visual inspection of the property will be conducted to locate any potential surficial evidence of the release of petroleum hydrocarbons or other contaminants to the property. A remotely operated video camera will be utilized to document the conditions and contents of the vault/manhole located on the property. Spatial data will be collected to include the pipeline corridor and gravel pad. Subsurface soil characterization will be collected utilizing a direct push drill rig. Ten boreholes will be advanced to a depth of approximately 15 feet to test for the presence of petroleum contamination along the pipeline corridor and at the gravel construction pad. Eight boreholes will be advanced along the pipeline corridor with the remaining two boreholes advanced within or adjacent to the gravel pad. Borehole locations may be moved, if the field team finds signs of petroleum contamination such as stained soil, distressed vegetation, and odors.

Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan Name: Fortymile Management Framework Plan

Date Approved/Amended: September 8, 1980

The Proposed Action is in conformance with the LUP, even though not specifically provided, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP objective:
Lands Objective 7: “Terminate and prevent unauthorized use on public lands in the Resource Area.”

B. Compliance with NEPA

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with BLM Handbook 1790-1, Appendix 4 (J) (3), which states “Conduction preliminary hazardous materials assessments and site investigations, site characterization studies and environmental monitoring. Included are siting, construction, installation and /or operation of small monitoring devices such as wells, particulate dust counters and automatic air or water samples.”

The proposed action must be screened against the extraordinary circumstances found in 43 CFR 46.215 and 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) May have significant impacts on public health or safety.	No
2) May 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) May have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.	No
4) May have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.	No
5) Might establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.	No
6) May have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.	No
7) May 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) May 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) Might violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.	No
10) May have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).	No
11) Might 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) Could contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the 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

Recommendation

I have found that the Proposed Action is compatible with the Fortymile River Management Plan and is an action that can be categorically excluded. The Proposed Action does not trigger any of the Extraordinary Circumstances found in 516 DM Chapter 2, Appendix 2. I recommend that the Proposed Action be allowed and that an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement is not needed.

/s/ Rebecca Hile
Rebecca Hile, Physical Scientist
Eastern Interior Field Office

April 10, 2013
Date

Concurrence

I concur that the above action is in conformance with the Fortymile Management Framework Plan, does not meet any of the extraordinary circumstances, and qualifies as a Categorical Exclusion.

/s/ Lenore Heppler
Lenore Heppler
Field Manager
Eastern Interior Field Office

April 10, 2013
Date

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact Rebecca Hile, Physical Scientist, Eastern Interior Field Office, at 907-474-2371.