

# Prospect Creek Airport and Access Road

## Compliance

The proposed action is in conformance with the approved Bureau of Land Management Utility Corridor Resource Management Plan approved January 11, 1991.. The project has been considered in the context of public health and safety and consistency with regards to Federal, State, and local laws.

## Selected Action

The proposed action described in the Category Exclusion mentioned below is the selected action. A twenty (20) year airport lease case file F-12631 and a twenty (20) year right-of-way grant case file F-91216 for the access road from the Dalton Highway MP 137 to the airport will be issued to the State of Alaska, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. This lease and grant is for the continued operation of the Prospect Creek Airport and the access road to the airport.

## Compliance with NEPA:

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 Interior Manual, Part 516, Chapter 11 which provides:

11.9 E (Realty)

(9) Renewals and assignments of leases, permits, or rights-of-way where no additional rights are conveyed beyond those granted by the original authorizations.

## Public Involvement:

It was determined that no public involvement was needed due to the remoteness of the action.

## Rationale:

The proposed action is consistent with the use of public lands under the authorities of Titles III and V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and the regulations found in 43 CFR 2920 and 43 CFR 2800. All concerns are appropriately addressed in the DOI-BLM-AK-F030-2013-0027-CX. This includes cultural resources and subsistence concerns (see attached ANILCA 810 findings, boundary fish and wilderness characteristic assessments and essential fish habitat).

## Appeal or Protest Opportunities:

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 Central Yukon Field Office, 1150 University Avenue, Fairbanks, Alaska 99709 within 30 days from receipt of this decision. If you decide to file an appeal, you must carefully follow the procedure described on the enclosed form 1842-1. If you don't file your appeal at the locations specified on the form within 30 days, the Board may dismiss your appeal as untimely without considering its merits. Be sure to send a copy of your notice of appeal to each party named in this decision and to all of the addresses on the enclosed form 1842-1. You may also ask the Board to stay or suspend the effect of this decision while your

appeal is pending. If you desire a stay, you must enclose your request for a stay with your notice of appeal. You have the burden of showing a stay is justified.

The Board will grant a stay only if you provide sufficient justification based on the following standards:

1. The relative harm to the parties if the Board grants or denies the stay,
2. The likelihood of the success of your appeal on its merits,
3. The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the Board does not grant the stay, and;
4. Whether the public interest favors granting a stay.

**Authorizing Official:**

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/s/ Gary M. Foreman  
for Shelly W. Jacobson  
Field Manager, Central Yukon Field Office

August 8, 2013  
Date

**Contact Person**

For additional information concerning this Finding, contact.

Robin Walthour  
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1150 University Avenue  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709  
(907) 474-2304

## — Essential fish Habitat Assessment

**Prepared by:** Carl Kretsinger

**Date:** 13 May 2013

**Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Finding:** The State of Alaska, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities is proposing to renew the right-of-way for the existing Prospect Creek airport and airport access road. These existing facilities are within about 1.5 miles of the Jim River which is known to be used by both chum and Chinook salmon (ADFG 2013) and therefore meet the definition in 50 CFR part 600 to be considered as *Essential Fish Habitat*. Two small (< 4 mile long) tributaries to the Jim River drain a small portion of the Jim River watershed (< 6 mi<sup>2</sup>) surrounding the existing airport and run within < ¼ mile of either end of the airstrip. The tributary to the south end of the airstrip is bisected by the access road. Neither of these tributaries is known to support salmon or considered to be essential fish habitat.

The activities associated with the proposed right-of-way renewal are not expected to adversely impact or threaten essential fish habitat within the nearby Jim River. The proposed action is assigned the EFH determination: *will not affect*, and no further EFH consultation is required.

### **References:**

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG). 2013. Online regulatory maps for the anadromous waters catalog. Website: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/SARR/AWC/index.cfm?ADFG=maps.display>.

# — Wilderness Characteristics Assessment

**NEPA Document No.:** DOI-BLM-AK-F-0300-2013-0027-CX

**Case File/Serial Nos.:** F-12631 and F-91216

**Applicant(s):** State of Alaska, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

**Location:** Prospect Creek Airport, MP 137 Dalton Highway approximately 217 miles northwest of Fairbanks, Alaska, within Secs. 17, 19 and 20, T. 23 N., R. 14 W., Fairbanks Meridian, containing approximately 394.01 acres.

**Prepared by:** Lisa Shon Jodwalis, Park Ranger-Interpretation

**Date:** May 9, 2013

## **Proposed Action**

The State of Alaska, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities proposes to renew the current lease to the Prospect Creek Airport for twenty (20) years to continue operations of the facility. They also propose to renew the grant for an existing access road from the Dalton Highway MP 217 for twenty (20) years for the continued operation and maintenance of the road to the facility. The airport has a single runway that is 5,000 feet long by 150 feet wide with a gravel surface. There is one taxiway, 60 feet by 400 feet, connecting the apron to the runway. the apron is 400 feet by 200 feet. Aviation buildings include the following Alyeska buildings: observation building, garage, general building, storage and a fuel station (10,000 gallons of Jet B).

The existing access road was constructed by Alyeska during pipeline and airport construction in 1974-75. The existing road is gravel and approximately 100 feet wide and 3,200 feet long. Primary use of the road will occur between April and October with intermittent use during the remaining months of the year. Users would consist of State of Alaska, Department of Transportation and Public Facility employees, Alyeska, Federal agencies, guides and hunters and the general public. The State of Alaska has an agreement with Alyeska to maintain the road. This proposal is within the Jim River ACEC designated area.

## **BLM Purpose and Need**

### **BLM Decision**

### **Evaluation**

The basis for this evaluation is BLM Manual 6310-Conducting Wilderness Characteristics Inventory on BLM Lands, and BLM Manual 6320 - Considering Lands with Wilderness Characteristics in the BLM Land Use Planning Process, which direct offices to conduct and maintain inventories regarding the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics, and to consider identified Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC) in land use plans and when analyzing projects under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Effects on wilderness characteristics on BLM lands within the Utility Corridor are evaluated according to the Nonwilderness Assessment, a special project approved by the BLM Director and conducted by the BLM along portions of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) corridor in 1980. This assessment identified lands under BLM administration that were considered lacking in

the wilderness characteristics as defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964. The assessment was conducted in a manner that met the requirements of Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA). The Dalton Highway and Trans-Alaska Pipeline parallel each other for the entire length of the Utility Corridor. The pipeline is 48” in diameter and elevated above ground for much of its length so it is highly visible. The Dalton Highway supplies Alaska’s arctic oilfields and supports considerable industrial traffic year-round. These man-made features and associated human activities are highly visible and audible. Permitted activities such as gravel- and gold mining occur throughout the area and have expanded in some locations. These developments are substantially noticeable and alter the natural character of lands in the Utility Corridor. The action being considered is located within the Prospect Segment of the Nonwilderness Assessment, which covered approximately 555,000 acres total in 1980. Portions of this segment meet the 5,000 acre minimum size. However it was determined that the Prospect Segment did not meet the standards for naturalness due to roads, camps, airfields, pipelines, material sites and associated facilities. These disturbances bisect the entire length of the segment.

## **FINDING**

The proposed action will not occur on lands identified as having wilderness characteristics and therefore will not affect wilderness characteristics.

### **Type of Assessment/Sources**

U.S. Department of Interior, BLM, 1980. Nonwilderness Assessment: The Alaska Natural Gas Transportation System, Final Decision. Anchorage, Alaska

maps, GIS data, Google Earth images

## — Section 810 Analysis

**NEPA Document No.:** DOI-BLM-AK-F-0300–2013–0027–CX

**Applicant:** State of Alaska, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

**Case File/Serial Nos.:** F-12631 and F-91216

**Proposed Action:** The State of Alaska, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities proposes to renew the current lease to the Prospect Creek Airport for twenty (20) years to continue operations of the facility. They also propose to renew the grant for an existing access road from the Dalton Highway MP 217 for twenty (20) years for the continued operation and maintenance of the road to the facility. The airport has a single runway that is 5,000 feet long by 150 feet wide with a gravel surface. There is one taxiway, 60 feet by 400 feet, connecting the apron to the runway. the apron is 400 feet by 200 feet. Aviation buildings include the following Alyeska buildings: observation building, garage, general building, storage and a fuel station (10,000 gallons of Jet B).

The existing access road was constructed by Alyeska during pipeline and airport construction in 1974–75. The existing road is gravel and approximately 100 feet wide and 3,200 feet long. Primary use of the road will occur between April and October with intermittent use during the remaining months of the year. Users would consist of State of Alaska, Department of Transportation and Public Facility employees, Alyeska, Federal agencies, guides and hunters and the general public. The State of Alaska has an agreement with Alyeska to maintain the road. This proposal is within the Jim River ACEC designated area.

**Location:** Prospect Creek Airport and access road, MP 215 Dalton Highway approximately 215 miles northwest of Fairbanks, Alaska.

**Township/Range:** Secs. 17, 19 and 20, T. 23 N., R. 14 W., Fairbanks Meridian, Alaska, containing approximately 394.01 acres

**Evaluation by:** Carl Kretsinger and Jen McMillian

**Date:** 13 May 2013

**Type of Assessment/Sources:** Prospect airport and airport access road right-of-way renewal

### **Effect of the proposal on subsistence uses and needs**

Fisheries: The proposed action would have no influence on fish or aquatic habitat and is not anticipated to restrict subsistence opportunities having to do with the harvest of fishery resources.

Wildlife: The proposed action will have not influence on wildlife and is not anticipated to restrict subsistence opportunities having to do with the harvest of wildlife resources.

Other resources: The proposed action will not appreciably change or impact any other harvestable resources such as wood, water, berries or vegetation.

### **Expected reduction, if any, in the availability of resources due to alteration in resource distribution, migration, or location:**

None.

**Expected limitation, if any, in the access of subsistence users resulting from the proposal:**

None.

**Availability of other lands, if any, for the purpose sought to be achieved:**

The airport and access road are existing facilities. No other lands were considered practical for fulfilling the current and/or projected future need for these facilities.

**Other alternatives, if any, which would reduce or eliminate the use, occupancy, or disposition of public lands needed for subsistence purposes:**

There is no substantial evidence that would indicate a significant impact on subsistence will result from the proposed action. No other alternatives were evaluated.

**Findings:**

The evaluation concludes that the proposed action will not significantly restrict subsistence uses. No reasonably foreseeable and significant decrease in the abundance of harvestable resources or in the distribution of harvestable resources, and no reasonably foreseeable limitations on harvester access have been forecasted to emerge as a function of the action that is analyzed in this document.

**References**