

Categorical Exclusion

Prepared by
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

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A. Background

DOI-BLM-AK-F030–2013–0039CX

BLM Office: Central Yukon Field Office

Lease/Serial/Case File No.: F-96574

Proposed Action Title/Type: State of Alaska, Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys
Lobe Research

Location of Proposed Action:

The location of the proposed action covers over 69,000 acres in multiple townships and ranges in both the Fairbanks and Umiat Meridians, from mile post 208 (Dietrich Camp) to 231 (Chandalar Shelf) off the Dalton Highway (see map below).

Description of Proposed Action: Between MP 208 and MP 231 off the Dalton Highway are a series of frozen debris lobes (FDLs) that present potential geologic hazards to existing infrastructure.

The State of Alaska, Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys, proposes to use a crew of 7 geologists and helicopter pilot to gather GPS data in order to record the rate and movement of the FDL. They propose to survey 6 to 12 different lobe sites (see map below). The initial field work would begin June 20 through July 1, 2013. At that time they propose to install steel rebar rods (1/2" x 4'), with yard sticks attached to the top, into the ground using a hammer along a series of transects parallel and perpendicular to the FDL. They anticipate 1–4 transects per FDL and approximately 100 rods would be spaced 300 feet apart. The location would then be recorded with GPS and a second survey would be conducted between September 1–15, 2013, to record the location of the rods to determine rate of movement. The rods would remain in place as long as possible, three years with this permit, in order to record movement. The crew would utilize a Hughes 500 helicopter which would be based out of Wiseman. All refueling would be at the base camp.

In August and September 2013 a second crew would evaluate the geologic character of the FDLs and other potential geologic hazards. Work would include identifying materials present and determining depth of permafrost. Natural exposures would be examined, described and they would use shovels to dig small pits (approximately 12) through the soil to identify underlying materials. The pit would be 3-4 feet wide by 3 feet deep. The soil would be placed on a tarp and then backfilled upon completion, smoothed, and the organic mat replaced. Additionally they would use a thin frost probe to poke through the unfrozen ground to measure depth to frozen ground.

They would collect soil and bedrock samples on and near FDLs. When absolutely necessary they may need to trim some vegetation for landing zones so helicopter can pick up crew members.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan Name: Utility Corridor Resource Management Plan

Date Approved/Amended: January 11, 1991

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s):

Utility Corridor RMP, Appendix N — Lands and Realty Program (Page N-8)

7. Process applications for land use authorizations from the general public, Federal and State agencies and research organizations on a case by case basis

The proposed action is in conformance with the LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decision(s) (objectives, terms, and conditions).

C. Compliance with NEPA:

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 2, Appendix 1, or 516 DM 11.9.

11.9 E (Realty)

(19) Issuance of short-term (3 years or less) rights-of-way or land use authorizations for such uses as storage sites, apiary sites, and construction sites where the proposal includes rehabilitation to restore the land to its natural or original condition.

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply.

D. Approval and Contact Information

The proposed action is in conformance with a management framework plan or a resource management plan, 43 CFR management plan, 43 CFR § 1610.8(a)(3). The Department of the Interior has determined and found that the proposed action is within a category of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment and that neither an environmental assessment nor an environmental impact statement is required, 40 CFR §1508.4.

It is therefore my decision to implement the action, as described, with appropriate mitigation measures or stipulations. Mitigation Measures/Stipulations: (See Attached Appendices).

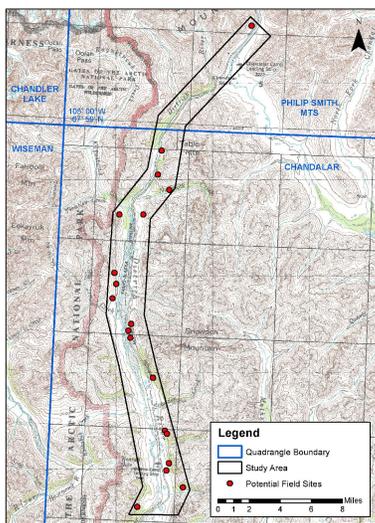


Figure 1.1. Lobe Research Area

/s/ Nichelle W. Jacobson
 Nichelle W. Jacobson
 Field Manager, Central Yukon Field Office

June 12, 2013
 Date

Contact Person

Robin Walthour, Realty Specialist

Central Yukon Field Office

1150 University Avenue

Fairbanks, Alaska 99709

(907) 474-2304 or rwalthour@blm.gov