



**United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Glennallen District**

August 18, 2000

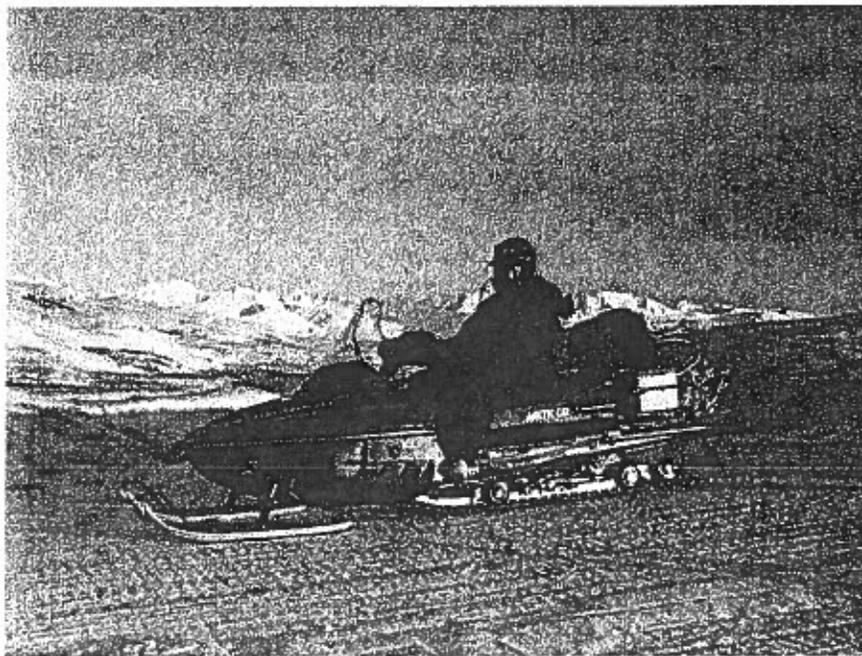


Glennallen District Office  
Mile 186.5 Glenn Highway  
Post Office Box 147  
Glennallen, Alaska 99588

Environmental Assessment

**AK-050-EA-00-029**

**Yamaha Motor Co., Commercial Snowmobile Testing Activities  
Near Paxson, Alaska**



File Number: AA-82391

# ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Finding of no Significant Impact  
Decision of Record

Type of Action: Minimum Impact permit 2920.2-2

Serial Number: AA-82391

EA No. Ak 050-EA-99-029

Applicant: Tom Moats  
Address: Yamaha Motor Corp. USA  
1255 Main St.  
Coons Rapids MN 55448

District: Glennallen AK 050

Planning Unit: Southcentral

Borough: N/A

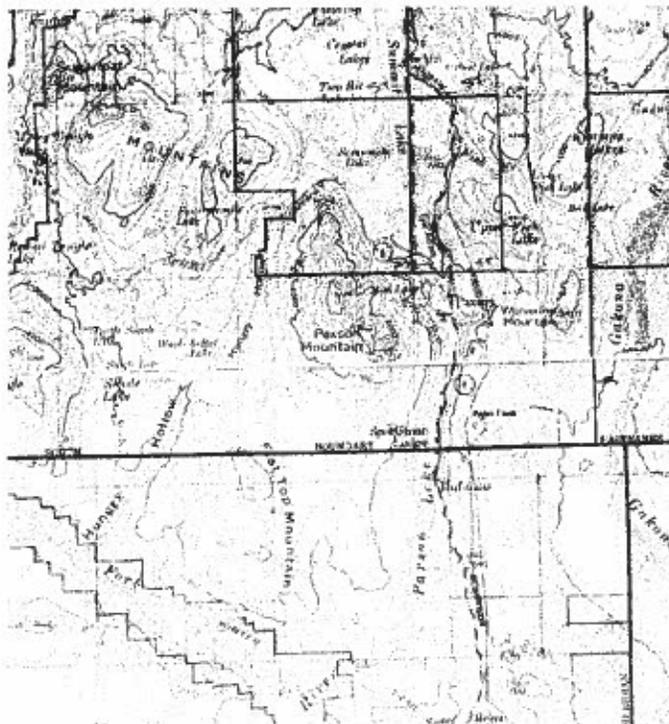
Date of Exam: N/A

Prepared by: David Mushovic

Title: Realty Specialist

## LANDS INVOLVED

Township	Range	Meridian	Section	Sudivision	Acres
21 S	10 E	Fbx		10 -20 mile Denali Highway	
22 S	11 E	Fbx			
	12 E	Fbx		Paxson Airstrip Mud Lake Paxson Lake Trail Gakona River Trail Alyeska Pipeline Alyeska Pipeline	
13 N	1 W	CR			



I. Proposed Action/Alternatives

On June 7, 2000, the Yamaha Motor Co., applied for a permit to conduct snowmobile testing on public lands administered by the BLM in and around Paxson Alaska. The following six sites have been identified as being on or crossing BLM administered lands: Denali Highway, Alyeska Pipeline, Gakona River Trail, Paxson Airstrip, Paxson Lake Trail, and Mud lake. The scheduled time frame for these activities is approximately a total of a one month period between October and May. All testing will occur on a minimum of 6 inch snow pack. All mechanical work, day to day operations, lodging, fueling etc will be conducted on private land at Paxson Alaska.

Proposed Action: Issue Yamaha Motor Co., a Land Use Permit (2920.2-2 Minimum Impact) for the purpose of conducting snowmobile testing on the subject land. The permit will be issued effective between October and May annually for a period of three years, with an option for renewal. The permit shall be subject to the attached stipulations and appropriate rentals shall be charged.

Alternative A: No action, deny the permit. It is the Bureau's policy to promote winter tourism and economic growth within the Copper River Basin, and to issue this type of authorization to qualified applicants when the use does not conflict with other resource uses and protection. Since the proposed action is temporary in nature and does not involve any significant impacts or surface disturbance, this is not a reasonable alternative. The impacts of the no action alternative will not be discussed further.

II. Relationship of the Proposed Action to Land Use Plans.

The Glennallen District is operated under the Southcentral Management Framework Plan approved March 1980, as amended May 1983, and July 1985. The proposed action has been reviewed and determined to be in compliance with the amendments to this plan which opened all public lands within the Denali and Tielke Blocks to proposals for sales, leases, and permits, pursuant to Sec. 203 and 302 of the Federal Land Policy Management Act.

The proposed action has been reviewed and determined to be in compliance with the State of Alaska's December 1986, Copper River Basin Management Plan. This plan identifies the primary uses as recreational and does not prohibit related permits or leases.

III. NEPA Compliance and Impacts

<u>Critical Element</u>	<u>Affected</u>		<u>Critical Element</u>	<u>Affected</u>	
	yes	No		Yes	No
Air Quality	___	<u>X</u>	T&E Species	___	<u>X</u>
ACECs	___	<u>X</u>	Wastes Haz/Solid	___	<u>X</u>
Cultural Resources	___	<u>X</u>	Water Quality	___	<u>X</u>
Farmland Prime/Unique	___	<u>X</u>	Wetlands/Riparian	___	<u>X</u>
Floodplains	___	<u>X</u>	Wild & Scenic Rivers	___	<u>X</u>
Nat Amer Rel. Concerns	___	<u>X</u>	Wilderness	___	<u>X</u>
Invasive nonnative Spec.	___	<u>X</u>	Environmental Justice	___	<u>X</u>

The Paxson area is used heavily all winter long by snowmobilers. There is some use related to hunting but the majority of the activity is recreational riding. Each winter the Arctic Man event is held at nearby

Summit Lake. During this one week there are approximately 10-15,000 people who show up to watch the race, hill climbing competitions and ride their personal machines. There are no verifiable use figures for the rest of the winter, but it is estimated that 100 people use the area each week. The Yamaha Corporation's activities will comprise less than 1% of the total snowmobile activity in this area, and will have no effect on the accumulative impacts.

Pursuant to 43 CFR 2920.0-5(k) this activity is considered casual use, causing no appreciable damage or disturbance to the public lands. Only since the Yamaha Motor Co., activities are commercial in nature is an authorization necessary. All activities such as repair work, oil/lubricant changing, and fueling will take place on private property. The only activity taking place on the public lands is the actual driving of snowmobiles. The majority of this activity will take place on existing trails or frozen water bodies. In all instances there will be a minimum of 6 inch snow pack and there will be no damage to vegetation or soil layers.

#### IV. ANILCA Section 810 Compliance.

Most of the subject lands are under selection by the State of Alaska and therefore not open to subsistence hunting. There is one small area located at mile ten of the Denali Highway that is open and within the area of use. The only other area that is open for subsistence hunting is another ten miles out the highway at Tangle Lakes and outside the area of proposed use. The subject activity was previously evaluated in 1992, and again in 1994 and both time found to cause no significant restrictions to the subsistence values or uses on these lands. The original report is contained in case file AA-75977.

On August 23, 2000, a subsistence evaluation was completed and is contained in this case file. The proposed action complies with Section 810 of ANILCA, and the size and scope of the proposed action will not significantly restrict subsistence. No reasonably foreseeable decrease or alteration in the distribution of harvestable resources including limitation access, will result from the proposed action.

#### V. NHPA Section 106 Compliance.

No surface disturbance. According to the Protocol for Managing Cultural Resources on Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in Alaska, between the Bureau of Land Management and the State Historic Preservation Officer, this undertaking is not subject to further Section 106 review (Appendix 2: Category One, Category Six (Denali Highway, Paxson Airstrip, and the Alyeska Pipeline)). The attached stipulations are sufficient to protect any unknown cultural resources. No effects to known cultural or historic resources are anticipated.

#### VI. Consultation and Other Decision Factors.

The lands are top filed by the state of Alaska. Pursuant to Sec 906(k) of ANILCA, However, portions of this selection has been determined to have no effect. For the lands selected by the State of Alaska, the proposed actions fall within the States blanket 906(k) letter of concurrence for non-consumptive uses, LAS 22937, dated March 14, 2000.

The Yamaha Motor Co., has been testing snowmobiles in the Paxson area for more than the past twenty years. They have been under previous permits issued by the BLM since 1990. Their use began before the area became popular with recreational users and is considered base line use before the accumulative impacts from the increase in recreational use. The Yamaha Motor Co has an excellent environmental record and has never been noted to be in non-compliance with the terms and conditions of their previous

permits. Only one instance of concern has been noted. This occurred in 1999, when a test rider struck and killed a caribou while going 100 mph on Midway Lake outside Tok. This is outside the Glennallen District and it is not in an area permitted by the BLM. A State Trooper investigation resulted in no citation being issued.

The local community relies on the Paxson lodge as a major source of jobs and income. The lodge's primary income is from tourism during the summer months. The subject activity provides a major economic boon to the local community by creating an influx of cash during the winter months when tourism is low.

#### VII Mitigation

All fueling repairs etc shall take place on private land.

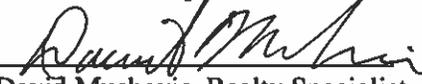
Common trails used for testing shall be properly posted with warning signs at appropriate locations.

High speed test will not be conducted within 300 yards of any caribou or moose. All areas used for high speed tests shall be posted and If determined necessary by the AO these areas will be fenced off to prevent animals from crossing the test track.

#### VIII. Rational/Recommendation

This action is consistent with our current plan and will not result in any undue or unnecessary environmental degradation.

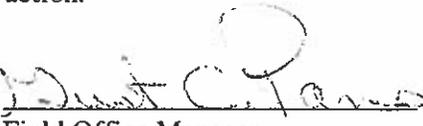
I recommend that the BLM issue Yamaha Motor Co., a minimum impact permit for the proposed action, subject to the attached stipulations. The permit should be issued for a period from October 1, to May 1, annually for a period of three years and should be renewable at the discretion of the authorized officer. Upon consultation with Appraiser, Boyce Bush, it has been determined that the projected rental for the proposed permit does not justify the cost of performing an appraisal. Therefore, pursuant to the current IM a minimum rental of \$100 per site per year should be required prior to issuance of the permit. Since the total rent required is more than \$250, cost recovery should be required.

  
David Mushovic, Realty Specialist

9/27/00  
Date

#### VII. Finding of No Significant Impact/Decision Record.

I have reviewed this environmental assessment including the explanation and resolution of any potential significant environmental impacts. I have determined that the proposed action with the mitigation measures described above will not have any significant impacts on the human environment and that an EIS is not required. I have determined that the proposed action is in conformance with the approved land use plan, and will have minimum impact on the environment. It is my decision to implement the proposed action.

  
Field Office Manager

9/28/00  
Date

Stipulations  
August 18, 2000

1.0 Definitions

1.1 The Glennallen Field Office Manager, or designated representative is the Authorized Officer (AO), as defined by 43 CFR 2920.0-5(c).

1.2 "Permittee" means Yamaha Motor Co., and any and all assignees that may be of record, including all agents, contractors, subcontractors, and employees.

1.3 "Permit" means the license, lease, permit, or other permission granted by the United States to the grantee for the use of public lands and resources.

2.0 General

2.1 This permit is subject to all prior valid and existing rights, and the United States makes no representations or warranties whatever, either expressed or implied, as to the existence, or nature of such valid existing rights.

2.2 Any modifications to the proposed activities must be approved in writing by the AO.

2.3 It is the responsibility of the permittee to ensure that field party members are familiar with and adhere to these stipulations.

2.4 These provisions do not relieve the permittee of any responsibilities or provisions required by any applicable State or Federal, law and regulations.

2.5 The permittee may be required by the AO to furnish transportation and quarters for designated field representatives or observers while inspecting field operations.

2.6 In the advent of a disagreement of the interpretation or implementation of these stipulations the permittee agrees that the AO shall have the final say in how these stipulations are interpreted and implemented.

2.7 Permittee shall defend, indemnify and hold the United States, it assigns, agents, employees, representatives and successors in interest harmless from and against any and all actions, fees, for injury to or death of any person, persons, or property arising in connection with and as a direct result of permittee's activities, included but not limited to United States negligence, if any, in failing to recognize or remedy a hazardous condition existing on public lands.

2.8 Permittee shall comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000 et seq) and the regulations of the Secretary of the Interior issued pursuant thereto.

2.9 This permit may not be encumbered, hypothecated, assigned, subleased, or transferred without prior written approval by the AO.

2.10 The AO may revoke or terminate this permit in whole, or in part, upon a determination by the AO that the terms, conditions, or stipulations of the grant have been violated, or by determination by the AO that the permittee's actions pose a threat to human health or safety, or irreparable harm to the surrounding environment.

2.11 The permittee shall not enclose or obstruct in any manner, or erect or maintain any signs or structures on roads or trails commonly used for public travel or access to public lands surrounding the permit unless directed to do so by the AO.

2.12 This permit does not authorize the permittee to take from the public lands any mineral or vegetative material, including timber, without securing authorization under 30 USC 601 et seq.

2.13 This permit does not authorize any other use of the public lands or improvements belonging to the US government.

2.14 Fire suppression or protection shall not be provided by the government. The lessee shall be responsible for taking reasonable precautions to prevent and suppress, brush, grass, and other fire hazards within the authorized area, extinguishing all fires before departing the premises.

### 3.0 Environmental

3.1 All operations will be conducted in such a manner as not to cause damage or disturbance to any fish or wildlife, or to impede rural residents from pursuing their traditional subsistence activities (ANILCA, PL 96-487).

3.2 All activities shall be conducted so as to avoid or minimize disturbance to vegetation. If it becomes necessary to remove vegetation, prior approval by the AO is required.

3.3 All operations shall be conducted with due regard for good resource management and in such a manner as not to block any stream, or drainage system, or cause the pollution or siltation of any stream or lake.

3.4 Use of pesticides or herbicides shall comply with the applicable Federal and State laws. Pesticides or herbicides shall be used only in accordance with their registered uses and within limitations imposed by the Secretary of Interior. Prior to the use of pesticides or herbicides, the permittee shall obtain from the AO written approval of a plan showing the type and quantity of materials to be used, pest(s) to be controlled, method of application, location of storage and disposal of containers, and any other information deemed necessary by the AO. Emergency use of pesticides or herbicides shall be approved in writing by the AO prior to such use.

### 4.0 Operational

4.1 There shall be no disturbance of any archaeological or historical sites, including graves and remains of cabins, and no collection of any artifacts whatsoever. Also, collection of vertebrate fossils, including mammoth and mastadon bones, tusks, etc., is strictly prohibited. Any cultural or pale ontological resources discovered by the holder, or any person working on his behalf, shall be immediately reported to the AO. The holder shall suspend all operations in the immediate area of such discovery until written authorization to proceed is issued by the AO. The permittee shall not occupy or otherwise disturb any cultural sites including historical cabins. The holder will be responsible for the cost of any evaluation and mitigating measures determined necessary by the AO.

4.2 All solid wastes shall be removed from the public lands to a Alaska State DEC approved solid waste disposal facility.

4.3 Areas of operation shall be left clean of all unauthorized foreign objects. This shall include, but is not limited to, wires, pins, flags and reflectors.

4.4 All fuel or lubricant spills will be cleaned up immediately, taking precedence over all other matters, except the health and safety of personnel. Spills will be cleaned up utilizing absorbent pads or other Alaska State DEC approved methods. Any such spill sites will be documented so that they can be located during the compliance check.

- 4.5 Recovered spill fluids will be removed and incinerated in approved receptacles.
- 4.6 As soon as possible, but not later than 24 hours, notice of any such discharge as defined in Alaska Statute Title 18, Chapter 75, Article 2, will be given to the AO and any other Federal and State Officials as are required by law.
- 4.7 All State and Federal safety standards and regulations for fuel transportation and handling will be followed. Only fuel products and amounts specifically authorized shall be stored on site, and shall be located at least 100 feet away from any source of water. All fuel containers, including barrels and propane tanks, shall be marked with the permittee's name, product type, and year filled.
- 4.8 The permittee shall protect all Survey Monuments. In the advent of obliteration or disturbance of a survey monument, the permittee shall immediately notify the AO. The lessee will be financially responsible to re-establish the survey monuments to the Bureau standards.
- 4.9 No hazardous materials shall be transported or disposed within the area of authorized use.
- 4.10 The permittee shall ensure that a copy of the permit and stipulations is present on site at all times.
- 4.11 The permittee shall notify the AO 7 days prior to removal of personal property and abandonment of the area, and shall be responsible for any rehabilitation of the site deemed necessary by the AO. At a minimum all disturbed areas shall be recontoured and revegetated using native species.
- 4.12 The holder shall have a representative available to accompany the Bureaus field representative during any compliance inspection, and shall provide the AO with documentation of all work performed. This shall included a description of the work, photographs, and maps or charts depicting the specific sites where operations were conducted.

#### 5.0 Special

- 5.1 All common trails used for testing shall have warning signs placed in appropriate locations.
- 5.2 No testing shall be conducted within 300 yards of any game animals including but not limited to caribou or moose.
- 5.3 All high speed test tracks shall be posted and if determined necessary by the AO these areas shall be fenced off to prevent animals from crossing the test track.
- 5.4 All fueling, repairs, and lubricating of machines shall occur on private property.

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Permittee signature

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date

United States Bureau of Land Management  
Glennallen District

**Checklist for Interdisciplinary Review of NEPA Documents**

Environmental Assessment (EA) Title: Yamaha Motor Co., Snowmobile Testing  
EA Number: AK-050-EA-00-029 Case File Number: AA-82391

Lead Preparer Name and Title: David Mushovic, Realty Specialist Due Date: 09/30/00

Interdisciplinary Review

Potentially Affected Resource	Staff Specialist	Comments Provided		Surname	Date
		Yes	No		
ACECs	Not Available		X	X	X
Air Quality	Mike Sondergaard		✓	MS	8/25/00
ANILCA, Section 810	Elijah Waters	✓		EW	8/23/00
Cultural Heritage	Debbie Muenster	✓		DM	9/25/00
Fire Management	John Rego		X	John Rego	14 Sept 00
Forestry	Mike Sondergaard		X	MS	8/25/00
Hazardous Materials	Mike Sondergaard		X	MS	8/25/00
Lands & Rights-of-Way	Dave Mushovic/Cathie Jensen		X	C Jensen	8-18-00
Law Enforcement	Not Available				
Minerals	John Rego		X	John A Rego	14 Sept 00
Operations/Maintenance	Kurt Sorenson		X	X	
Paleontology	Debbie Muenster		X	DM	9/25/00
Range	Not Applicable		X	X	X
Reclamation	John Rego		X	John A Rego	17 Sept 00
Recreation	KJ Mushovic/Marcia Butorac				
Riparian & Wetlands	Mike Sondergaard		X	MS	8/25/00
Soils	Mike Sondergaard		X	MS	9/25/00
T&E Animals	Elijah Waters	✓		EW	8/23/00
T&E Plants	Not Available		X	X	X
Visual Resources	Kathy Liska				
Water Quality	Mike Sondergaard		X	MS	8/25/00
Wilderness & WSAs	Not Applicable		X	X	X
Wildlife	Elijah Waters	✓		EW	8/23/00
Other:					

Review Recommended For (check ✓)

BLM State Office	Other Affected BLM Districts	Native Corporations	State Agencies	Affected Public	Other Affected Agencies

Environmental Coordinator Review: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment of Undertakings Not Subject to Further Section 106 Review Glennallen Field Office

GDO Document No. GDO-00-24  
BLM Serial No. AA-82391

Environmental Assessment No. AK -050-EA-00-029

Class of Inventory: No Further Section 106 Review

Dates of Inspection: 09/22/00

Inspector: Debbie Muenster

Maps: Gulkana D3, D4; Mt. Hayes A3, A4

Applicant: Yamaha Motor Co., Snowmobile Testing

**Location:** Along the Denali Highway between milepost 10 and 20 and on both the west and east flanks of the Richardson Highway near Paxson, Alaska (along the Alyeska Pipeline, Paxson Airstrip, Mud Lake, Paxson Lake Trail and the Gakona River Trail - figures 1 & 2). More specifically the area applied for along the Denali Highway between milepost 10 and 20 falls within various Sections of T21S, R10E and R11E, Fairbanks Meridian (figure 1); along the Alyeska Pipeline falls within various Sections of T22S, R12E, Fairbanks Meridian and T13N, R1W of the Copper River Meridian (figure 2); the Paxson Airstrip falls in Section 8, T22S, R12E, Fairbanks Meridian (figure 2); Mud Lake lies within Section 6, T22S, R12E, Fairbanks Meridian (figure 2); along the Paxson Lake Trail in various Sections of T22S, R12E, Fairbanks Meridian (figure 2); along the Gakona River Trail in various Sections of T22S, R12E, Fairbanks Meridian (figure 2); Gulkana D3, D4 quadrangles and the Mt. Hayes A3, A4 quadrangles.

**Project Description:** The applicant has applied for a permit to conduct snowmobile testing on public lands administered by the BLM in and around Paxson, Alaska. The following six sites have been proposed: Denali Highway between mileposts 10 and 20, Alyeska Pipeline, Paxson Airstrip, Mud Lake, Paxson Lake Trail and the Gakona River Trail. The scheduled time frame for these activities is a total of approximately a one month period between October and May. All testing will occur on a minimum of 6 inch snow pack. All mechanical work, day to day operations, lodging, fueling etc. will be conducted on private land at Paxson, Alaska.

**Acreage:** Approximately 30 miles of trail and road

**Recommendations:** According to the Protocol for Managing Cultural Resource on Lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management in Alaska between the Bureau of Land Management and the State Historic Preservation Officer, signed April 17, 1998, this undertaking is not subject to further Section 106 review (Appendix 2: Category One). There will be no ground disturbance from the proposed undertaking. Although a portion of the activity is taking place within the Tangle Lakes Archaeological District, the activity is not taking place on a property which contributes to the significance of the National Register District. In addition, some activities will be in locations where previous human disturbance has modified the landscape so extensively that the likelihood of finding cultural resource is negligible; the Denali Highway, Paxson Airstrip and The Alyeska Pipeline (Appendix 2: Category Six). The applicant may not travel beyond the bounds of the Denali Highway within the Tangle Lakes Archaeological District. As long as the applicant adheres to the attached stipulations, the applicant may proceed as proposed in the application. However if heritage or paleontological resources are encountered during implementation of the project, the project will cease and the Glennallen Field Office, cultural resource staff, shall be notified.

The following stipulation should be attached to the permit: "There shall be no disturbance of any archeological or historical sites, including graves and remains of cabins, and no collection of any artifacts whatsoever. Also, collection of vertebrate fossils, including mammoths and mastodon bones, tusks etc., is strictly prohibited."

Signed:



Debbie Muenster  
Glennallen Field Office Archaeologist (AK-050)

## Compliance with ANILCA Section 810 Summary

E.A. No.: AK-050-EA-00-029

Applicant(s): Yamaha Motor Company

Proposed Action: Snowmobile Testing Activities

Location: Glennallen District, near Paxson

Township/Range: BLM lands within T21S-R10E, T21S-R11E, T22S-R12E; Fairbanks Meridian; T13N-R1W, Copper River Meridian

Map: Gulkana D-3, Mt Hayes A-3, A-4

Evaluation by: Elijah Waters

Discretionary Action?: yes

Categorical Exclusion?: no

Type of Assessment/Sources: Prior knowledge of area.

Findings: The proposal is not expected to cause a significant restriction to subsistence uses.

Comments: None

Effect of the proposal on subsistence uses and needs: None. Most of the proposed action occurs on selected land, and is therefore not open to subsistence uses. Also, the proposed action occurs in a popular area for recreational snowmachine users. It is unlikely that there will be any noticeable difference in the level of snowmachine use. The proposed action occurs after the subsistence moose season and will therefore have no effect. Also, the caribou are available in the area for several weeks each year, and there is a small chance that it would be during the time of the proposed action. The proposed use is unlikely to have any impacts on subsistence resources.

Expected reduction, if any, in the availability of resources due to alternations in resource distribution, migration, or location: None, for the reasons stated above. Any animals displaced temporarily would likely return to the area.

Expected limitations, 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: There are other public lands in the area. However, the proposed site has immediate road access and has been used in the past. Therefore, the proposed activity appears to be best suited for location in the requested use area. Based on observation and discussions with long term residents, the lands within the

requested use area are not "key" areas for subsistence activities.

Other alternatives, if any, which would reduce or eliminate the use, occupancy, or disposition of public lands needed for subsistence purposes: Consideration of another alternative would not really change the situation for subsistence users. The proposed action, approved or not, has little to no impact on subsistence users or resources.

Finding: This alternative would not significantly restrict subsistence uses. No reasonably foreseeable and significant decrease in the abundance of harvestable resources, no reasonably foreseeable alteration in the distribution of harvestable resources, and no reasonably foreseeable limitations on harvester access would result from this proposal.

Elijah Waters

Elijah Waters

8/23/00

Date

REVIEW COMMENT FORM

Plan/EA/EIS: AA082391 Reviewer: Debbie Muenster Date: 9/25/00

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Comment: Dave - could you word it like this - makes a bit more sense to me. Please be sure to put the highlighted stipulation in the permit. Thanks

As long as the attached stipulations are adhered to, no surface disturbance is anticipated. Although a portion of the activity is taking place within the Tangle Lakes Archaeological District, the activity is not taking place on a property which contributes to the significance of the National Register District. **The applicant may not travel beyond the bounds of the Denali Highway within the Tangle Lakes Archaeological District.** According to the Protocol for Managing Cultural Resources on Lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management in Alaska between the Bureau of Land Management and the State Historic Preservation Officer, this undertaking is not subject to further Section 106 review (Appendix 2: Category One, Category Six (Denali Highway, Paxson Airstrip and the Alyeska Pipeline). No effects to cultural resources are anticipated. The attached stipulations should be sufficient to protect any unknown cultural resources.