United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Glennallen Field Office
P.O. Box 147
Glennallen, Alaska 99588
http://www.blm.gov/ak

DETERMINATION OF NEPA ADEQUACY (DNA) WORKSHEET

Proposed Action Title/Type:	Alaska Energy Authority Seismic Monitoring Site – Deadman Mountain
NEPA Register Number:	DOI-BLM-AK-A020-2013-0022-DNA
Case File Number:	AA-093598
Location / Legal Description:	Section 25, T. 21 S., R. 4 W., Fairbanks Meridian
Applicant (if any):	Alaska Energy Authority (AEA)

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

AEA has submitted an application to the BLM Glennallen Field Office for a right-of-way for a seismic monitoring site at Deadman Mountain on BLM-managed lands in the Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project area. A long-term earthquake monitoring system network was established during the 2012 field season to begin collecting background seismicity and strong motion data at the dam site and lower reservoir area.

The seismograph station would be located with sensors in bedrock below grade, and a one-meter diameter above ground plastic vault would be uses to access the sensor. The vault would be concreted into the soil and a slab would be placed at the bottom. Cabling from the vault would be buried and would connect to a 4’ X 4’ X 5’ fiberglass housing unit, which would be anchored by a concrete footing or guy wires. An above-ground hut would contain the instrument, datalogger, and batteries and would be powered by solar power. The housing/hut would protect the instrument and power bank from inquisitive animals.

The site is accessible only by helicopter. Inspection and maintenance of the instrument site would be required to maintain the data collection network, and it is estimated that the instruments would be checked 2 to 3 times per year. The station would remain in place permanently.

The BLM will decide whether to authorize a non-exclusive right-of-way (43 CFR § 2800) for a seismic site for 20 years with option for renewal, for approximately a ½ acre site encompassing this seismic monitoring site and helicopter landing area.

B. LAND USE PLAN CONFORMANCE

The East Alaska Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (RMP/ROD) of September 2007 provides the overall long-term management direction for lands encompassed by the proposed project. The proposed action is consistent with the following decision in the RMP/ROD:

I. LANDS AND REALTY

I-1: Goals

Provide a balance between land use (rights-of-way, land use permits, leases and sales) and resource protection that best serves the public at large.

C. IDENTIFY APPLICABLE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) DOCUMENTS AND OTHER RELATED DOCUMENTS THAT COVER THE PROPOSED ACTION.

Alaska Energy Authority – Seismic Monitoring Site Environmental Assessment, DOI-BLM-AK-A020-2012-0032-EA. Finding of No Significant Impact and Decision Record signed on September 11, 2012.

D. NEPA ADEQUACY CRITERIA

1. Is the new proposed action a feature of, or essentially similar to, an alternative analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? Is the project within the same analysis area, or if the project location is different, are the geographic and resource conditions sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? If there are differences, can you explain why they are not substantial?

Yes, the current proposed action is the same as the proposed action (Alternative 2) analyzed in the existing EA (2012 EA, p. 3-5). Although in the same general area, the exact project footprints are different. However, both project sites occur on remote mountain tops in the Talkeetna Mountains. Resource conditions are sufficiently similar between the two sites.

2. Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s) appropriate with respect to the new proposed action, given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?

Yes, the range of alternatives analyzed in the 2012 EA is appropriate with respect to the new proposed action, given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values.

3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as, rangeland health standard assessment, recent endangered species listings, updated lists of BLM-sensitive species)? Can you reasonably conclude that new information and new circumstances would not substantially change the analysis of the new proposed action?

Yes, the existing analysis is still valid. There is no new information or circumstances that would change the analysis for this site.

4. Are the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects that would result from implementation of the new proposed action similar (both quantitatively and qualitatively) to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document?

Yes, the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects are the same for the current proposed action as those described in the 2012 EA. As noted in item #3, there is no new information or circumstances that would otherwise change the effects analysis for the current proposed action. The cumulative effects analysis in the 2012 EA identified the potential for increased monitoring activities, such as the current proposed action, in the future. Additionally, it is assumed that AEA staff visits to the new monitoring site could be combined with visits to the previously authorized site. Therefore, the authorization of the new site does not necessarily represent increased helicopter traffic in the area.

5. Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current proposed action?

Yes, the public involvement and interagency review are adequate for this action.

E. PERSONS, AGENCIES, AND BLM STAFF CONSULTED

Note: Refer to the EA/EIS for a complete list of the team members participating in the preparation of the original environmental analysis or planning documents.

F. CONCLUSION

Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the applicable land use plan and that the NEPA documentation identified in Part C of this DNA Worksheet fully covers the proposed action and constitutes BLM's compliance with the requirements of the NEPA.

/s/ Laurie Hull-Engles July 15, 2013

Signature of the Responsible Official Date

Note: The signed Conclusion on this worksheet is part of an interim step in the BLM's internal decision process and does not constitute an appealable decision. However, the lease, permit, or other authorization based on this DNA is subject to protest or appeal under 43 CFR § 4 and the program-specific regulations.

Attachments

Alaska Energy Authority – Seismic Monitoring Site Environmental Assessment, DOI-BLM-AK-A020-2012-0032-EA. Finding of No Significant Impact and Decision Record signed on September 11, 2012.

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