



# 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>

## CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

### A. BACKGROUND

**Project Name / Type:** ADOT Geotechnical Drilling at Ruby Creek Bridge (2800)

**NEPA Register Number:** DOI-BLM-AK-A020-2013-0024-CX

**Case File Number:** AA-093616

**Location / Legal Description:** Sections 6-7, T. 15 S., R. 10 E., Fairbanks Meridian, at Ruby Creek

**Applicant (if any):** Alaska Department of Transportation

### Description of Proposed Action:

Alaska Department of Transportation (ADOT) has submitted an application to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for a short term right-of-way to conduct geotechnical exploratory drilling for the proposed Ruby Creek bridge replacement.

ADOT is proposing to drill approximately 26 test holes approximately 400 feet apart to an estimated depth of 15-20 feet along the proposed 1.5-mile Richardson Highway realignment route. Drilling would be completed using a track-mounted CMR-850X drill rig. The alignment consists mostly of a mature spruce-dominated forest in its natural state. Accessing drill hole sites along the new alignment would require removing some trees and shrubs to accommodate a 10-foot wide path. If steep terrain is encountered that could impede drill rig travel, ADOT would need to move soil to level steep terrain for drill access.

Drill holes would be filled and disturbed ground would be restored. Rehabilitation of the access route would include saving the tundra sod, re-contouring to something close to natural conditions and replacing the stockpiled tundra sod. The alignment crosses Ruby Creek, but no drilling or equipment operation is proposed within the creek itself or in riparian vegetation, only on the upland creek banks.

Drilling operations would occur in late summer or early fall of 2013.

## B. LAND USE PLAN CONFORMANCE

**Applicable Land Use Plan:** East Alaska Resource Management Plan, September 2007

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable land use plan, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following land use plan decisions (objectives, terms, and conditions):

### I. Lands and Realty (page 19)

#### 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.

#### I-2: Land Use Authorizations

Land use authorizations include various authorizations and agreements to use BLM lands such as right-of-way grants, road, temporary use permits under several different authorities; leases, permits, and easements under section 302 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA); airport leases under the Act of May 24, 1928; and Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) leases.

## C. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

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 the Interior Manual, Part 516, Chapter 11, which provides:

#### Realty

**E. 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.

## D. EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

The proposed action must be screened against the Extraordinary Circumstances found in 43 CFR § 46.215 (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.	Have significant adverse impacts on public health or safety.	No
2.	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

EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES	YES/NO
3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].	No
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.	No
5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.	No
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.	No
7. 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. 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. Violate Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.	No
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).	No
11. 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. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or 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

**E. SIGNATURE**

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable land use plan and is an action that can be categorically excluded. The Proposed Action does not trigger any of the Extraordinary Circumstances found in 516 FM Chapter 2, Appendix 2. I recommend that the Proposed Action be allowed and that no further environmental analysis is required.

*/s/ Laurie Hull-Engles*

September 3, 2013

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Laurie Hull-Engles  
Acting Glennallen Field Manager

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Date