

Chandalar Airport Access Road

Introduction

The State of Alaska, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities has filed an application proposing to renew their existing right-of-way grant for a public access road from the Dalton Highway to the Chandalar Airport.

Summary

The proposal would renew the existing right-of-way grant for public access from the Dalton Highway to the Chandalar Airport.

Alternatives Considered

The No Alternative Option is the only alternative considered and was not selected as BLM would not allow public access from the Dalton Highway to the Chandalar Airport.

Decision

I have decided to authorize a thirty year (30) year right-of-way for the continued use of a public access road from the Dalton Highway to the Chandalar Airport.

Management Considerations

Management considered the Utility Corridor Management Plan

Public Involvement

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

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.

Approval from Authorized Official:

Field Office Manager Decision

Having considered a full range of alternatives, associated impacts, and public and agency input, I have decided to adopt and implement the attached Approved Plan as the Utility Corridor Resource Management Plan.

Gary M. Foreman
Signature
for Nichelle Jacobson
Field Manager
Central Yukon Field Office

February 28, 2014
Date

— Essential Fish Habitat Assessment

NEPA Document No.: DOI-BLM-AK-F0300-2014-0008-CX

Prepared by: David A. Esse

Date: 1/10/2014

Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Finding: There are no anadromous fish present in the proposed project area (ADF&G 2014). Therefore, the proposed action cannot have an adverse effect on EFH. The proposed action is assigned the EFH determination: *No effect*. EFH consultation with NMFS is not required.

References: Alaska Department of Fish and Game. 2014. Fish distribution database. Internet website at: <http://www.sf.adfg.state.ak.us>.

— Wilderness Characteristics Assessment

NEPA Document No.: DOI-BLM-AK-F0300–2014–0008–CX

Case File No.: F-91394

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

Location: Mile post 236 on the Dalton Highway, more particularly described as within Secs. 3 and 10, T. 16 S., R. 11 E., Umiat Meridian, Alaska, containing approximately 1.607 acres.

Prepared by: Lisa Shon Jodwalis

Date: 13 February 2014

Proposed Action

The State of Alaska, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities proposes to renew their existing right-of-way grant for an access road from the Dalton Highway to the Chandalar Airport. The road is comprised of gravel measuring 700 feet long and 10 feet wide for a total of 1.607 acres. The SOA/DOTPF is also responsible for maintenance of the road.

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). Wilderness characteristics are defined in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 and include sufficient size, naturalness, and outstanding opportunities for either solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation and may also include supplemental values.

On BLM lands within the Utility Corridor, the effects of proposed projects on wilderness characteristics are evaluated in accordance with the Nonwilderness Assessment, a special project inventory approved by the BLM Director and conducted by the BLM along portions of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) corridor in 1980. The assessment complied with the wilderness review requirement in Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA).

The action being considered is located along the Dalton Highway within the Atigun Segment of the Nonwilderness Assessment, which covered approximately 528,000 acres. It was determined that 223,000 acres of this segment, primarily in proximity to the North Slope Haul Road (Dalton Highway) and Trans-Alaska Pipeline, lacked naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive, unconfined types of recreation and thus did not meet the criteria contained in the Wilderness Act.

FINDING

The proposed action will occur on lands identified as lacking 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
- USGS topographic maps, GIS data, Google Earth imagery
- Personal knowledge of and 2013 aerial survey of area

— Section 810 Analysis

NEPA Document No.: DOI-BLM-AK-F0300-2014-0008-CX

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

Case File No.: F-91394

Proposed Action: The State of Alaska, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities proposes to renew their existing right-of-way grant for an access road from the Dalton Highway to the Chandalar Airport

Location: Mile post 236 on the Dalton Highway

Township/Range: Secs. 3 and 10, T. 16 S., R. 11 E., Umiat Meridian, Alaska, containing approximately 1.607 acres

Evaluation by: Erin Julianus and David Esse

Date: 1/22/2014 and 1/10/14

Type of Assessment/Sources: Review of application materials, subsistence database, local knowledge, interviews with staff knowledgeable about the area and the proposed action

Effect of the proposal on subsistence uses and needs

Fisheries: There is no subsistence activity for fish within the project area. Thus, the proposed action would not alter the distribution, migration or location of harvestable fisheries resources. The proposed action will not create any legal or physical barriers that would limit access by subsistence users of the fisheries resource.

Wildlife:

Species of wildlife that are used for subsistence harvest in the area include moose, sheep, bears, furbearers, and small game. These species may temporarily avoid the area when permitted activity is occurring, but the activity will not permanently impact their distribution in the area.

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. Fish and wildlife resources may temporarily avoid the project area while the permittee and associates are present. However, there is no expected reduction in the availability of resources due to alteration in resource distribution, migration, or location.

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

None. Access to subsistence resources will not be hampered by the proposed action.

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

There are other lands available for the project to be achieved. However, since the road in this right of way has already been constructed and construction of a new road would create larger disturbances to subsistence species activities, no other lands were considered.

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 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