

# **Alaskan Quest Filming**

## **Introduction**

Kent M. Kaiser dba Alaskan Quest has filed an application proposing to film an outdoor adventure on the Melozitna River from September 12–22, 2014.

## **Summary**

The proposal would include floating the Melozitna River the majority of which is on State conveyed lands. Only three sections of public lands would be utilized for filming.

## **Alternatives Considered**

The No Alternative Option is the only alternative considered and was not selected as it would not allow for the applicant to film on public lands.

## **Decision**

I have decided to authorize a permit for filming an outdoor adventure to Kent M. Keiser dba Alaskan Quest from September 12 — 22, 2014. The applicant and one other person would film their hunting of moose, wolf and black bear while floating the Melozitna River with a non-motorized raft.

## **Management Considerations**

The Categorical Exclusion and supporting documentation have been prepared consistent with the requirements of various statutes and regulations, including but not limited to:

- Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA)
- Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA)
- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA)

One BLM land use plan applies to the overall project area, the Central Yukon Resource Management Plan, Tozitna SubUnit.

## **Public Involvement**

It was determined that due to the remoteness of the action, there would be no impact to the general public. Additionally, this document was published to the electronic Central Yukon Field Office NEPA Register on January 15, 2014. No comments have been received.

## **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 Recommendation**

Having considered a full range of alternatives, associated impacts, and public and agency input, I recommend the adoption and implementation of the attached Approved Plan in conformance with the Central Yukon Resource Management Plan.

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

February 13, 2014  
Date

## — Essential Fish Habitat Assessment

NEPA Document No.: DOI-BLM-AK-F0300-2014-0009-CX

Prepared by: David A. Esse

Date: 1/15/14

**Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Finding:** While anadromous species are present in the project area (ADF&G 2014), the impacts from the proposed action on essential fish habitat are expected to be nonexistent in the area encompassed by this permit. Based on this fact, the proposed action is assigned the EFH determination: *will not affect*, and no further EFH consultation is required.

**References:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). 2014. Fish Distribution Database. Internet website at: <http://www.sf.adfg.state.ak.us/SARR/FishDistrib/PDFListing/int/wisb1.pdf>.

# — Wilderness Characteristics Assessment

**NEPA Document No.:** DOI-BLM-AK-F0300–2014–0009–CX

**Case File No.:** F-96747

**Applicant:** Kent M. Kaiser dba Alaskan Quest

**Location:** Melozitna River more particularly described as Secs. 12, 22 and 27, T. 2 N., R. 24 E., Kateel River Meridian, Alaska containing approximately 6.00 acres

**Prepared by:** Lisa Shon Jodwalis

**Date:** 30 January 2014

## **Proposed Action**

Kent M. Kaiser dba Alaskan Quest proposes to film an outdoor adventure of camping, fishing and hunting wolf, black bear and moose while floating the Melozitna River from September 12 — 22, 2014. The majority of the Melozitna River area has been conveyed to the State of Alaska and only the public lands described would be permitted by BLM.

## **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 in land use plans and when analyzing projects under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The BLM has further determined that, if a project or activity does not negatively affect wilderness characteristics, the permitting process may proceed as usual, regardless of whether an inventory of wilderness characteristics has been completed (Barns, 2012).

## **FINDING**

The proposed activities in this area do not significantly impair the size or naturalness of this area, or the opportunities for solitude and recreation of a primitive and unconfined nature. Adherence to the principles of Leave No Trace camping and the stipulations attached to the applicant's Special Recreation Permit will further minimize the effects of human activities. The proposed action will not impair existing wilderness characteristics.

## **Type of Assessment/Sources**

Chris Barns, BLM Representative, Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center, 9 September 2012. "Wilderness Characteristics Guidance for the BLM. Training Module IIID – LWCs and Proposed Projects." Online at Wilderness.net: <http://www.wilderness.net/index.cfm?fuse=NWPS&sec=manageBLM>

## — Section 810 Analysis

**NEPA Document No.:** DOI-BLM-AK-F0300–2014–0009–CX

**Applicant:** Kent M. Kaiser dba Alaskan Quest

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**Location:** Melozitna River

**Township/Range:** Secs. 12, 22 and 27, T. 2 N., R. 24 E., Kateel River Meridian, Alaska.

**Evaluation by:** Erin Julianus and David A. Esse

**Date:** 1/22/2014

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

### **Effect of the proposal on subsistence uses and needs**

#### Fisheries:

The Melozitna River contains chum and Chinook salmon as well as non-salmon species such as pike and inconnu. The surrounding communities of Galena, Koyukuk, and Ruby use significant numbers of the fish species for subsistence purposes. In 2009, these villages harvested a combined 14,476 salmon and 9,102 non-salmon fish species for subsistence purposes (Fall *et al.* 2012).

The proposed action is expected to increase the number of individuals using the Melozitna River. However the limited scope of these activities would not significantly reduce harvestable fisheries resources that are available for subsistence use. 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:

The permitted activity would include filming activities associated with hunting moose, black bear, and wolf in Game Management Unit 21C within the vicinity of the Melozitna River. These species are also subsistence species used by the surrounding communities of Ruby, Hughes, and Galena, as well as furbearers and other small game (Andersen *et al.* 2004). However, access to the area is limited, so subsistence use of lands within GMU 21C is low and subsistence harvest generally contributes less than 2% to the overall harvest of big game species in the Unit (Stout 2010, Andersen *et al.* 2004).

Moose densities in GMU21C are low (0.25–0.35 moose/sq. mi) due to predation by wolves and bears (Stout 2010). Because access to the Unit is difficult and expensive, most moose hunters who use the area are nonsubsistence users (nonlocal residents and nonresidents). Generally less than

25 moose are harvested in the Unit per year (Stout 2010). These harvest numbers are considered low, and are not thought to contribute to the low moose densities in the Unit. Nonresident hunters are permitted to harvest one (1) bull with 50+ inch antlers in Unit 21C.

Population and harvest data for black bears in Unit 21 is lacking, but bear densities within the unit are thought to be variable, with higher densities in lower elevation areas associated with boreal forest and river floodplains (Peirce 2011). There is no sealing requirement for Unit 21. As a result, reported harvest is low, but overall harvest is thought to be low as well. Less than three (3) black bears were harvested by the communities of Ruby, Hughes, and Galena in Unit 21 in 2002 (Andersen *et al.* 2004). There is no closed season on black bears for Unit 21, and state hunting regulations permit the harvest of three (3) black bears per year.

The wolf population in Unit 21C was estimated to be 48–66 wolves in 6–10 packs in 2007 (Stout 2009). Reported harvest for Unit 21 was 28 wolves in 2007–08 and estimated harvest (both trapping and hunting) of wolves in Unit 21 was 48 wolves. Of the 28 wolves reported harvested in the 2007–08 season, seven (7) wolves were accessed by airplane transport (Stout 2009). The state hunting season for resident and nonresident hunting of wolves in Unit 21C is 10 August - 31 May.

Other resources: The proposed activity will not significantly impact other resources such as water, wood, or berries. Subsistence activities that target these resources occur in a much broader area than where the proposed action is to take place. Therefore, the proposed action will not significantly affect subsistence uses and needs.

**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 area while the permittee and associates are present. Fish and wildlife may be harvest as part of the activities of the permittees. However, there is no expected major 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, the permitted activity will take place in the Game Management Unit in which planned hunting activities will take place. Therefore, no other lands were considered for this action.

**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**

Andersen, D.B., C. Brown, R. Walker, and G. Jennings. 2004. The 2001–2002 harvest of moose, caribou, and bear in Middle Yukon and Koyukuk River communities. Alaska Department of Fish and Game Division of Subsistence, Technical Paper No. 278, Juneau, AK, USA.

Fall, J.A., N. Braem, C. Brown, S. Evans, D. Holen, T. Kreig, R. La Vine, T. Lemons, M. Marchioni, L. Hutchinson-Scarborough, L. Still, A. Trainor, and J. Van Lanen. 2012. Alaska subsistence fisheries 2009 annual report. Alaska Department of Fish and Game Division of Subsistence, Technical Paper No. 373, Anchorage, AK, USA.

Peirce, J.M. 2011. Units 19, 21A, and 21E black bear. Pages 215–224 in P. Harper, editor. Black bear management report of survey and inventory activities 1 July 2007–30 June 2010. Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Project 17.0. Juneau, Alaska, USA.

Stout, G.W. 2010. Unit 21C moose. Pages 466–476 in P. Harper, editor. Moose management report of survey and inventory activities 1 July 2007–30 June 2009. Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Project 1.0. Juneau, Alaska, USA.

———2009. Units 21B, 21C, and 21D wolf. Pages 209–219 in P. Harper, editor. Wolf management report of survey and inventory activities 1 July 2005–30 June 2008. Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Project 14.0. Juneau, AK, USA.