

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION /PLAN CONFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION

DOI-BLM-AK-F020-2014-0008-CX

A. Background

Proposed Action: Renewal of a Special Recreation Permit for guided hunting on Beaver Creek Wild and Scenic River.

Date of Proposed Action:

The proposed action is to renew the applicants permit for another five years ending December 31, 2018. The annual activity will generally occur during the fall hunting season in early September.

Location:

The proposed action would take place within the Beaver Creek National Wild and Scenic River Corridor and White Mountains National Recreation Area. The specific trip route would be from the developed river put-in site on Nome Creek downstream as far as Victoria Creek.

Applicant:

Randall AC Smith, Crystal River Guide Service

Serial Number: FF095592

Description of the Proposed Action

The applicant proposes to float and conduct guided big game hunting, primarily moose and bear, along the Beaver Creek National Wild and Scenic River. Activities will also include camping and fishing.

Access will be by vehicle to the Beaver Creek put-in site at the lower end of the Nome Creek Road and include a fly-out from a sufficient gravel bar most likely in the lower sections of Beaver Creek near Victoria Creek confluence.

The applicant proposes no more than 1 trip per year with no more than 6 people total, including the guide and assistant guide, for an average of 10 days per trip within the Beaver Creek National Wild and Scenic River Corridor. Camping will occur on random gravel bars along the river.

The applicant proposes to utilize a fire pan and dispose of both solid (human) and liquid waste by means of a cat hole or pit method. The remaining solid waste will be carried out. Safety equipment will include a satellite phone, first-aid kit, and signaling devices.

There are no proposed changes from the original application.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable Land Use Plans (LUP) because it specifically provided for the following in the LUP decision:

White Mountains Resource Management Plan/Record of Decision

Date Approved: February 2, 1986

Goal 1: Provide for a variety of public outdoor recreational opportunities which emphasize the existing natural primitive and semi-primitive values appropriate to the WMNRA designation.

Objective 6: Provide for semi-primitive motorized recreation on lands along the southern and western boundaries of the WMNRA. Management Direction: Special Recreation Use Permits would be required for commercial use, competitive events, and special uses involving over 50 participants.

This action in the White Mountains National Recreation Area has also been reviewed under past National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) action: DOI-BLM-AK-02000-2009-0026-EA.

C. Compliance with NEPA

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the NEPA in accordance with 516 DM 11.9 E (9) (DOI 2004), which states: "Renewals and assignments of leases, permits or rights-of-way where no additional rights are conveyed beyond those granted by the original authorization."

The proposed action must be screened against the extraordinary circumstances found in 43 CFR 46.215 and 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) May have significant impacts on public health or safety.	No
2) May 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
3) May have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.	No
4) May have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.	No
5) Might establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.	No
6) May have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.	No
7) May 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) May 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) Might violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.	No
10) May have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).	No
11) Might 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) Could contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the 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

Recommendation

I have found that the Proposed Action is compatible with the White Mountain Resource Management Plan, and is an action that can be categorically excluded. The Proposed Action does not trigger any of the Extraordinary Circumstances found in 516 DM Chapter 2, Appendix 2. I recommend that the Proposed Action be allowed including the stipulations and standard operating procedures generated in the previous EA for this action and that an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement is not needed.

/s/ Collin Cogley
Collin Cogley ORP
Eastern Interior Field Office

5/17/14
Date

Concurrence

I concur that the above action is in conformance with the applicable land use plans, does not meet any of the extraordinary circumstances, and qualifies as a Categorical Exclusion (CX).

/s/ Michael Gibson for
Lenore Hepler
Field Manager
Eastern Interior Field Office

5/20/14
Date

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact Collin Cogley, Eastern Interior Field Office, at 907-474-2382.