



# United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Glennallen Field Office  
P.O. Box 147  
Glennallen, Alaska 99588-0147  
<http://www.blm.gov/ak>

## DETERMINATION OF NEPA ADEQUACY (DNA) WORKSHEET

**Proposed Action Title/Type:** Thompson Pass Helicopter Supported Special Recreation Permit (2015)

**NEPA Register Number:** DOI-BLM-AK-A020-2015-0001-DNA

**Case File Number:** AA81350 / AA81716 / AA093344 / AA82942/ AA93376

**Location / Legal Description:** The specific area of analysis includes all the BLM-managed lands encompassed completely by or in portions of: T.6S., R.1E.; T.6S., R.1W.; T.7S., R.1W.; T.7S., R.1E.; T.8S., R.1W.; T.8S., R.4W.; T.8S., R.7W.; T.8S., R.8W.; T.8S., R.1E.; T.8S., R.2E.; T.9S., R.2W.; T.10S., R.4W.; T.10S., R.5W.; T.10S., R.6W.; Copper River Meridian

**Applicant (if any):** Scott Raynor, Valdez Heli Guides  
Dean Cummings, H20 Guides  
Alexandra Meiners, Alaska Rendezvous Guides  
Joshua Swierk, Black Ops  
Dave Geis, Alaska Snowboard Guides

### A. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The BLM Glennallen Field Office has received five Special Recreation Permit applications for commercial heli-ski operations on BLM-administered lands north and south of Thompson Pass, Alaska. Operations would occur on snow-covered slopes, ridge tops and in valley bottoms. The requested permits would help meet public demand for guided winter recreational activities in the Copper River region. These permits would be valid for the 2015 operating season, February 15th through May 15th.

The BLM is proposing to authorize five one-year Special Recreation Permits to the applicants listed above for 2015 heli-ski season. If approved commercial heli-ski operations would occur on BLM-managed lands in the Thompson Pass area.

### B. LAND USE PLAN CONFORMANCE

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable land use plan because it is specifically provided for in the following land use plan decision(s):

## East Alaska Resource Management Plan (EARMP) of 2007

The Proposed Action has been reviewed and determined to be in compliance with the EARMP for authorized allocations within the Proposed Action area. The Proposed Action is in conformance with the plan and is consistent with the following planning decisions:

### M. RECREATION

#### M-1: Goal

Manage recreation to maintain a diversity of recreational opportunities. (Page 34-38 of the EARMP)

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

2005 Environmental Assessment for Commercially Guided Helicopter Skiing and Associated Commercial Filming/Photography in Thompson Pass and Surrounding Public Lands, (EA #AK-050-EA-05-02)

2001 Environmental Assessment for Commercially Guided Helicopter Skiing, and the World Extreme Skiing Competition in Thompson Pass and Surrounding Public Lands, (EA #AK-050-EA-01-22)

Both of these documents are on file at the Glennallen Field Office.

### **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 identical to Alternative 2 in the 2001 EA and Alternative 2 in the 2005 EA referenced above.

The current Proposed Action is located in the same region analyzed in the two existing NEPA documents. The 2001 and 2005 EAs analyzed up to five heli-ski operation permits as well as additional activities such as a competitive ski events and commercial filming.

*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 ranges of alternatives presented in the 2001 and 2005 EAs are appropriate and sufficient in respect to the current Proposed Action. There are no new issues or concerns that would prompt development or consideration of additional alternatives. The issues identified for analysis in the 2001 EA (noise impacts to wildlife, noise impacts to other recreationists, public

safety, and protection of cultural resources) remain unchanged (p. 8, 2001 EA). There are no new issues around which to develop additional alternatives for the current Proposed Action.

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. No new information or circumstances pertaining to this activity has arisen since the EAs were prepared in 2001 and 2005 that would affect the applicability of the past analysis. The environmental consequences sections regarding wildlife, recreation, and public safety is appropriate and adequate for the current Proposed Action.

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 impacts of the current Proposed Action are anticipated to be substantially similar, if not identical, to those that were identified in the existing NEPA documents. The stipulations for the current Proposed Action are substantially similar to those identified in the previous NEPA documents.

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

Yes, preparation of the 2001 EA included a scoping comment period, public meetings, and consultation with several government agencies and organizations (p. 7, 2001 EA). In 2005, a series of public workshops and meetings were held in the Copper River region (p. 3, 2005 EA).

## **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.

Sarah Bullock	Wildlife Biologist, BLM
Cory Larson	Planning and Environmental Coordinator, BLM
Denton Hamby	Outdoor Recreation Planner, Preparer BLM
John Jangala	Archeologist, BLM

## **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 the Bureau of Land Management's compliance with the requirements of the NEPA.

---

*/s/ Dennis C. Teitzel*  
Dennis C. Teitzel, Glennallen Field Manager

*1/23/2015*  
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.