

In Reply Refer To:
FF-096580

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION /PLAN CONFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION

DOI-BLM-AK-F020-2015-0011-CX

A. Background

Proposed Action: Special Recreation Use Permit-Commercial Guided river trips: Birch Creek and Beaver Creek Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSR).

Date of Proposed Action: Summer seasons 2015-2019

Location: Steese National Conservation Area (SNCA) and the White Mountains National Recreation Area (WMNRA).

Applicant: Egil Fjellheim of KME, LLC

Serial Number: FF096580

Description of the Proposed Action

Mr. Fjellheim of KME, LLC, is requesting to continue to conduct guided river float trips on Beaver Creek WSR and Birch Creek WSR. Mr. Fjellheim is planning on no more than 2 float trips on Beaver Creek and 2 float trips on Birch Creek annually. The float trip dates are between June 15th and September 15th, of the years 2015-2019. Each trip will have a maximum of eight paying guests and two guides with a minimum of two guests and one guide.

Mr. Fjellheim anticipates 10-15 days per float trip on the Beaver Creek segment located within the White Mountains National Recreation Area, and 10 days per trip on Birch Creek. The applicant mentions that he will provide fishing opportunities for grayling and pike, employing for the most part, a "catch and release" philosophy. Some fish may be eaten on the trip though.

The group will use minimum impact camping techniques, cooking will be over propane stoves, and all trash will be carried out. No items will be stored on BLM managed lands. The applicant states he will not engage in big game hunting activities.

The Categorical Exclusion tiers off the existing Environmental Assessment and if adopted will authorize the same activity previously analyzed in DOI-BLM-AK-F020-2013-0018-EA for a period of five years.

Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan Name: Resource Management Plan/Record of Decision (RMP/R) for the WMNRA, February 1986. Resource Management Plan/Record (RMP/R) of Decision

(RMP/R) for the SNCA, February 1986. River Management Plan for Birch Creek WSR, October 1983.

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUPs because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s): RMP/Record of Decision for the WMNRA: Special Recreation Use Permits would be required for commercial use, competitive events, and special uses involving over 50 participants. RMP/Record of Decision for the SNCA: Special Recreation Use Permits are required for commercial uses such as commercial outfitting and guiding and commercial river trips, etc.

B. 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."

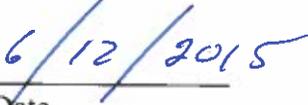
The proposed action must be screened against the extraordinary circumstances found in 43 CFR 46.215 and listed below. Any "yes" finding requires that an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement be prepared for the Proposed Action.

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

I have found that the Proposed Action is compatible with the White Mountain National Recreation Area and the Steese National Conservation Area Resource Management Plans, 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 and that an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement is not needed.



 Outdoor Recreation Planner



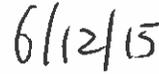
 Date

Eastern Interior Field Office

Concurrence

I concur that the above action is in conformance with the White Mountain National Recreation Area and the Steese National Conservation Area Resource Management Plans, does not meet any of the extraordinary circumstances, and qualifies as a Categorical Exclusion.

 Acting For



Lenore Heppler
Field Manager
Eastern Interior Field Office

Date

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact Tim DuPont, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Eastern Interior Field Office, at 907-474-2370.