

DETERMINATION OF NEPA ADEQUACY (DNA)

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

OFFICE: Eastern Interior Field Office (AKF020)

TRACKING NUMBER: DOI-BLM-AK-F020-2016-0010-DNA

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER: FF096938

LOCATION/LLEGAL DESCRIPTION: Donnelly Dome, south of Delta Junction, Alaska. Within Sec. 10, T.13S., R.10E., Fairbanks Meridian.

APPLICANT: Earthscope, Robert Busby, IRIS/USArray

A. Description of the Proposed Action and any applicable mitigation measures:

Earthscope would like to amend their existing right-of-way permit (FF096938) by establishing an additional seismic monitoring station in the vicinity of Donnelly Dome approximately 18 miles south of Delta Junction, Alaska. The specific coordinates of the site (K24K-3) are 63.80362°, 145.77836°.

The station will occupy a footprint not to exceed 20x20 ft. Features of the site include the digging of a 6" diameter hole with an auger and installation of a casing up to five meters deep in the ground, in which a seismic sensor will be placed. An additional hole will be drilled approximately three feet away from the first and a 1" diameter pipe will be installed to house a soil temperature probe. The electronics at the station will be housed in a 5x5x7 ft. enclosure located approximately 15 ft. from the sensor and may be anchored to the ground. Cables connecting the sensor to the equipment in the enclosure may be buried in the ground by digging a shallow trench between the two. Access to the site will be via helicopter. Installation, maintenance, and removal of the station will require approximately 30 ft. of workspace in all directions around the seismic borehole and the hut enclosure assembly. The station will remain in place for up to five years, at which time the equipment will be removed and the site will be restored to its original state.

The applicable mitigation measures for this project will be the same as those provided to and agreed upon by the applicant in the original permit authorization. In addition, the following permit stipulations have been added and will affect the original and amended authorization:

1. Destruction of active bird nests, eggs, or nestlings can result from spring and summer vegetation clearing and other site preparation and construction activities. Under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) it is illegal for anyone to “take” migratory birds, their nests, or their eggs. The grantee, their employees, and their contractors are required to comply with the MBTA in the execution of all activities under this grant. There are recommended time frames to avoid vegetation clearing which will minimize the chances of “take.” The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) provides guidance for MBTA compliance in Alaska, including dates to avoid vegetation clearing. The proposed action spans several regions with different time frames. The permittee is responsible for reviewing the following website for exact dates to avoid vegetation clearing:
http://www.fws.gov/alaska/fisheries/fieldoffice/anchorage/pdf/vegetation_clearing.pdf.
2. The permittee shall report any non-native invasive plant species (NNIS) observed within the project area to the BLM. Current species of concern include white sweetclover, bird vetch, perennial sowthistle, yellow toadflax, foxtail barley, and ox-eye daisy. Tips for identifying these species are in informational booklets that are provided to the permittee by the BLM. If the permittee can either positively identify or suspects that one of these species is present in the project area they are required to report this to the BLM. The report should include a description of the infested area and a photograph of the plant.
3. The permittee will use the following best management practices (BMPs) to prevent NNIS introduction and spread:
 - Clothing, gear, transport equipment, and materials used in access, construction, maintenance and operations of the project must be thoroughly cleaned of any contaminants prior to being mobilized for project operations. Washing with high pressure water and/or brushing equipment at the point of origin to remove potentially contaminated material is recommended to treat the insides of bumpers, wheel wells, undercarriages, inside belly plates, excavating blades, buckets, tracks, rollers, drills, buckets, shovels, any digging tools, etc.
 - Work uncontaminated sites first, and then move into known contaminated areas to avoid transport of contaminants into clean areas. Clean all equipment thoroughly after working in contaminated areas before moving to another work site.
 - If NNIS are present in the project area, the permittee will consult agency specialists and/or licensed contractors to determine opportunities to contain and/or reduce infestations.

B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

The proposed action is in conformance with the Fortymile Management Frame Work Plan (1980). Specifically, Lands Objective 1: Make lands available for intensive use and public purposes.

C. Identify applicable NEPA documents and other related documents that cover the proposed action.

DOI-BLM-AK-F000-2015-0001-EA

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 proposed action is the same as that which was analyzed in the EA mentioned above. The additional site being proposed will be constructed, maintained, removed, and reclaimed in the same manner as described in the existing NEPA document. The site being proposed is within the same general analysis area; however, the specific site was not considered in the EA. The site will be located at high elevation and in an area close to bedrock. The resource conditions at the site are similar to those analyzed in the previous authorization.

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 DOI-BLM-AK-F0000-2015-0001-EA analyzed the proposed action and a no action alternative which are appropriate for the current proposed action. The current environmental concerns, interests, resource values and circumstances do not differ substantially from those considered in the EA.

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. Based on internal review and scoping of the proposed action by BLM resource specialists, there is no new information or circumstances currently recognized that would change the analysis of the proposed action. There are no threatened, endangered, proposed, or candidate species and no new BLM sensitive species in the vicinity of the proposed action. No changes have been made to resource-related plans of State, local or tribal governments or other Federal agencies that would affect the current proposal.

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 direct, indirect and cumulative impacts identified in DOI-BLM-AK-F0000-2015-0001-EA were associated with Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) for wildlife within the Central Yukon Field Office. The site being proposed is not within an ACEC and the action is consistent with what was analyzed in the existing NEPA document.

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

Yes. Internal review by an interdisciplinary team was determined to be sufficient for the referenced EA. The current proposed action is located within lands managed by the BLM but withdrawn for military training and testing purposes. In accordance with Public Law 106-65, the BLM has coordinated with and received concurrence from the U.S. Army for this action. As such, the internal scoping process, the interdisciplinary team analysis, and the level of inter-agency coordination were deemed adequate for this action.

E. Persons/Agencies/BLM Staff Consulted

Name	Title	Resource/Agency Represented
Geoff Beyersdorf	District Office Manager	BLM/FDO
Lenore Heppler	Field Office Manager	BLM/EIFO
Michael Gibson	Assistant Field Office Manager	BLM/EIFO
Robin Mills	Archaeologist	BLM/EIFO
Ruth Gronquist	Wildlife Biologist	BLM/EIFO
Jason Post	Fish Biologist	BLM/EIFO

