

Decision Record Memorandum

Float Plane Base and Base Camp

Introduction

Every year since 2008, Arrowhead Outfitters has been authorized a permit to use public lands for a base camp and float plane staging area for transporting their hunting clients located at mile posts 145 and 150.5 off the Dalton Highway from August through September each year.

Summary

BLM proposes to convert the existing permit to a right-of-way grant. Permits are to be issued one time only for up to three (3) years and a grant maybe issued for up to 20 years. Additionally Arrowhead Outfitters proposes to move their current base camp location to a decommissioned material pit located at mile post 159.3 off the Dalton Highway (approximately nine (9) miles north of Grayling Lake). This location meets their need for a clear internet signal as well as having adequate parking for their personal vehicles as well as their customer's vehicles. The existing permit authorizes a base camp site, staging and refueling two (2) float planes at Grayling Lake located at mile post 150 off the Dalton Highway for transporting hunting clients. This proposal would be from August 1, 2016 through October 15, 2026 for approximately ten (10) years.

Decision

I have decided to authorize a site right-of-way grant for the establishment of a base camp in a decommissioned material pit at mile post 159.3 on the Dalton Highway and float plane refueling and staging area on Grayling Lake, mile post 150 each year for ten (10) years from August 1, 2016 through October 15, 2026, to Arrowhead Outfitters. Terms and conditions attached to the authorization.

Management Considerations

The Categorical Exclusion and supporting documentation have been prepared consistent with the requirements of various applicable 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 Utility Corridor Resource Management Plan.

Public Involvement

It was determined that due to the remoteness of the area there would be no impact to the general public. Additionally, this document was published to the electronic Central Yukon Field Office NEPA Register on April 16, 2016. No comments have been received as of June 29, 2016.

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, 222 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 do not 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 as the Utility Corridor Resource Management Plan.

/s/ Timothy J. La Marr
Timothy J. La Marr
Field, Manager, Central Yukon Field Office

July 8, 2016
Date

Appendix A- Essential Fish Habitat Determination

NEPA document: DOI-BLM-AK-F030-2016-0018-CX

Case File No.: F-97031

Title: Float plane staging area and base camp

Prepared by: David Esse

Date: 4/14/16

Essential Fish Habitat Finding: No anadromous species are present in the project area (ADF&G 2016) so the effects on EFH are expected to be nonexistent in the area encompassed by this permit. Based on this fact, the proposed action is assigned the EFH determination: *No effect*, and no further EFH consultation is required.

Reference: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). 2016. Fish distribution database. Internet website at: <http://www.sf.adfg.state.ak.us>.

Appendix B - Wilderness Characteristics Assessment

NEPA Document No.: DOI-BLM-AK-F030-2016-0018-CX

Applicant: Arrowhead Outfitters

Serial No.: F-97031

Location: Float Plane base at Grayling Lake mile post 150 and base camp at mile post 159.3 off Dalton Highway.

Township/Range: Sec. 27 and 34, T. 25 N., R. 13 W., and Secs. 23 and 26, T. 26 N., R. 13 W., Fairbanks Meridian, Alaska

Evaluation by: Robin Walthour

Date: April 16, 2015

Proposed Action: BLM proposes to convert the existing permit to a right-of-way grant. Permits are to be issued one time only for up to three (3) years and a grant may be issued for up to 20 years. Additionally Arrowhead Outfitters proposes to move their current base camp location to a decommissioned material pit located at mile post 159.3 off the Dalton Highway (approximately nine (9) miles north of Grayling Lake). This location meets their need for a clear internet signal as well as having adequate parking for their personal vehicles as well as their customer's vehicles. The existing permit authorizes a base camp site, staging and refueling two (2) float planes at Grayling Lake located at mile post 150 off the Dalton Highway for transporting hunting clients. This proposal would be from August 1, 2016 through October 15, 2026 for approximately ten (10) years.

The base camp would be temporarily parked on a hard gravel pad next to the camp site which consists of a 30 foot self-contained RV, 20 foot enclosed utility trailer and a pick-up truck. There would be two large holding tanks which he dumps the RV holding tanks into; he can go for three-four weeks before he would need to dump holding tanks at Coldfoot or BLM dump at 7 mile. The base camp would also house a small generator, ATV with small trailer, 10 foot x 10 foot screened tent, 12 foot x 14 foot canvas tent, toilet tent with porta-potty, satellite dish with base and 12-20 client vehicles. The proposed camp location is approximately three (3) miles north of Grayling Lake at a decommissioned material pit. At the Grayling Lake location they propose to stage two floatplanes M6 Maule-235 (N56458) and M7 Maule-235 (N770XR) while conducting their flight operation for approximately 35 hunting clients annually. They also propose to install a temporary dock due to an accommodation for a physical limitation to assist him in loading, unloading, refueling and docking their aircraft. When not in use, the ATV would be parked out of sight from the public. The dock consists of wood 4 foot x 60 foot which would be removed at the end of the season. The following equipment would be staged at the aircraft tie down area — a very small generator for heating up the aircraft during very cold temperatures, stored in a storage container and under a tarp when not in use. A plastic tote containing absorbent pads, aircraft cowling cover and wing covers, paper towels and miscellaneous items. A small containment box with a few quarts of aviation oil, funnel and extra five gallon gas cans. In the back of a pick-up truck is a 275 gallon temporary fuel storage tank containing aviation gas that

would be located near the lakes edge in approved proper containment. Crew will consist of five (5) persons, 2 pilots, 2 ramp/camp crew and office manager. They propose to annually fly approximately 35 clients from this site.

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

Effects on wilderness characteristics on BLM lands within the Utility Corridor are evaluated according to the Nonwilderness Assessment, a special project approved by the BLM Director and conducted by the BLM along portions of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) corridor in 1980. This assessment identified lands under BLM administration that were considered lacking in the wilderness characteristics as defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964. The assessment was conducted in a manner that met the requirements of Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA).

The Dalton Highway and Trans-Alaska Pipeline parallel each other for the entire length of the Utility Corridor. The pipeline is 48” in diameter and elevated above ground for much of its length so it is highly visible. The Dalton Highway supplies Alaska’s arctic oilfields and supports considerable industrial traffic year-round. These man-made features and associated human activities are highly visible and audible depending on proximity and local topography. Permitted activities such as gravel- and gold mining occur throughout the area and have expanded in some locations. These developments are substantially noticeable and alter the natural character of lands in the immediate vicinity.

The action being considered is located within the Prospect Segment of the Nonwilderness Assessment, which covered approximately 555,000 acres total in 1980. Portions of this segment meet the 5,000 acre minimum size. However it was determined that the Prospect Segment did not meet the standards for naturalness due to roads, camps, airfields, pipelines, material sites and associated facilities. These disturbances bisect the entire length of the segment.

Finding: The proposed action will occur in an area that has been determined not to have wilderness characteristics. The proposed action will not have any impact on wilderness characteristics.

Type of Assessment/Sources:

- Department of Interior, BLM, 1980. Nonwilderness Assessment: The Alaska Natural Gas Transportation System, Final Decision. Anchorage, Alaska
- USGS topographic maps, GIS data, Google Earth images

Appendix C - Compliance with ANILCA Section 810

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Evaluation by: Erin Julianus and David Esse

Date: 4/17/2016 and 4/14/16

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

Effect of the proposal on subsistence uses and needs

Fisheries:

With the exception of airplane landings at Grayling Lake, this activity will not occur in, or affect, fish habitat (streams or lakes). In addition, the Jim River (to which Grayling Lake flows) is closed to subsistence fishing. Subsequently, the proposed action will not significantly reduce harvestable fisheries resources that are available for subsistence use. The proposed action will not alter the distribution, migration or location of harvestable fisheries resources for the same reason. Neither will it create any legal or physical barriers that would limit access by subsistence users of the fisheries resource.

Wildlife:

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, will result from the proposed action.

Other resources:

The proposed action is not anticipated to change or impact any other harvestable resources such as wood, water, berries, or vegetation since no collection of these resources is planned for under the proposed action.

Availability of other lands, if any, for the purpose sought to be achieved:

Other lands are available for this purpose. This location is ideal because activities associated with the proposed action will not be visible from the Dalton Highway.

Other alternatives, if any, which would reduce or eliminate the use, occupancy, or disposition of public lands needed for subsistence purposes:

None

Finding:

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.