



# United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Anchorage Field Office  
4700 BLM Road  
Anchorage, Alaska 99507-2591  
<http://www.blm.gov/ak>

## CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION (CX)

### A. Background

**Project Name/Type:** Campbell Tract Facility Road Alignment Geotechnical Exploration

**NEPA Register Number:** DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2017-0010-CX

**Case File No.** AA-77723

**Location / Legal Description:** Seward Meridian, Alaska, SW1/4NW1/4, Section 3, T. 12N., R. 3W.

**Applicant:** State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities  
4111 Aviation Avenue  
Anchorage, AK 99519

### Description of Proposed Action

The State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (Alaska DOT & PF) is proposing to perform geotechnical exploration drilling along a proposed Campbell Tract Facility Entrance Road Alignment Path. The Anchorage Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management is proposing to issue a Right Of Way grant to authorize the State of Alaska DOT & PF to perform these activities.

This Categorical Exclusion incorporates by reference the Federal Highway Administration Categorical Exclusion AK-BLM-AFO-2014(1), the 'CTF' Alternate Entrance Alignment (hereafter referred to as FHWA CTF for citation). The FHWA CTF contains a Nationwide Permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for any temporary wetland impacts, (FHWA CTF p. 4-58) additional information on the presence of any threatened, endangered, and sensitive species in the project area, (FHWA CTF p. 68-70), additional information on the Migratory Bird Act (FHWA CTF p. 71-72), and the report of determination for Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (FHWA CTF p. 73-74). The FHWA CTF will be available for public viewing as part of this Categorical Exclusion and Decision Memo.

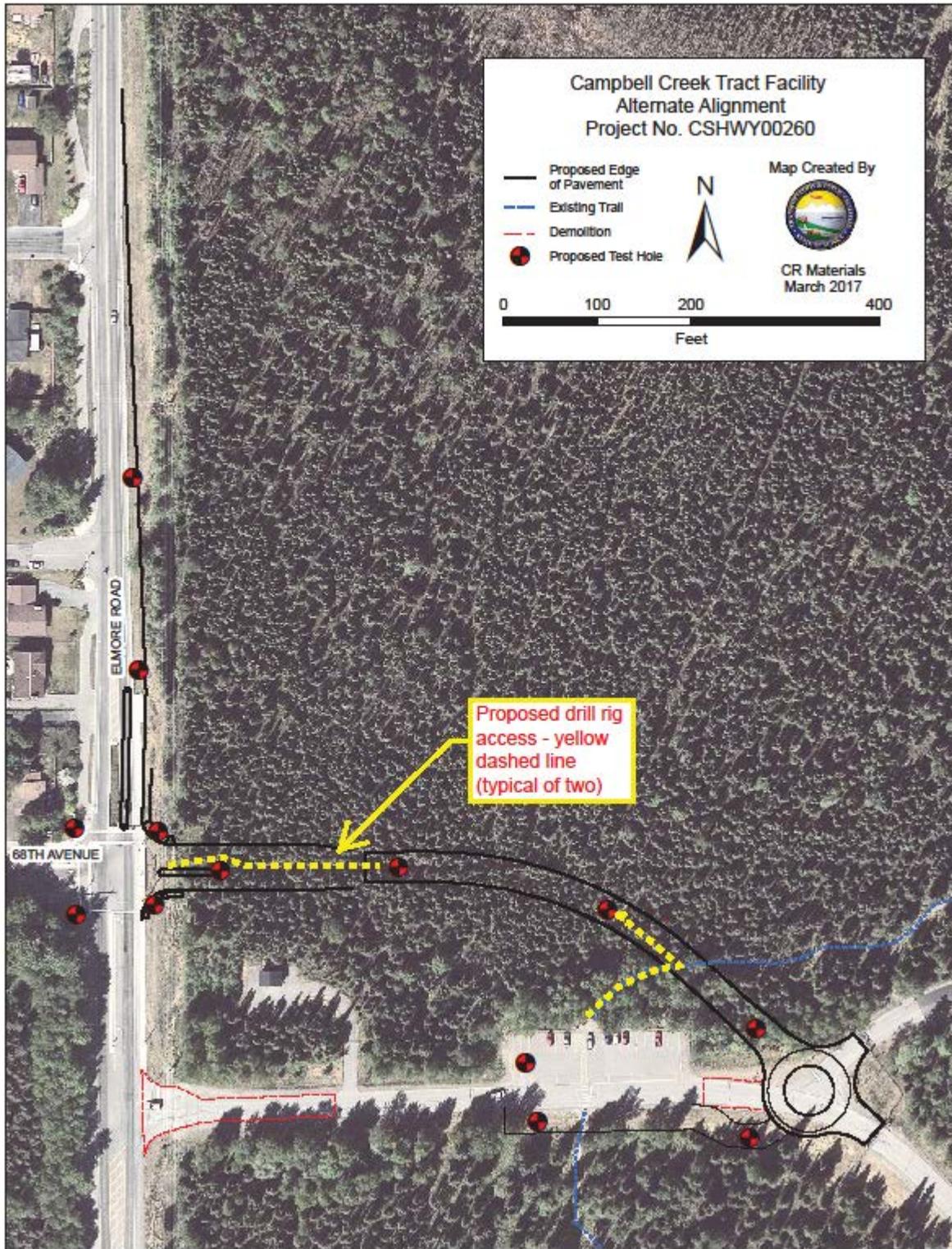
The purpose is to respond to the application from Alaska DOT&PF to perform drilling to analyze the soil conditions along the proposed road alignment path and determine if the area is suitable for construction. The need is established by the BLM's responsibility under Sec. 302 of FLPMA to respond to requests for use of Federal lands.

There are 7 holes proposed to complete the drilling operation on BLM land (see Figure 1 below); another 6 boreholes along Elmore Road are outside of BLM lands. Initial subgrade investigation will include boring the existing asphalt road surface with a 12-18 inch diameter hole to a depth of approximately 3 feet. These borings will be on both the existing road surface and undisturbed land. After measuring the pavement and collecting samples of the pavement base and subgrade, the holes will be backfilled in accordance with State regulations. (FHWA CTF p. 1)

Additional investigation holes having a maximum anticipated depth of 30 feet will be drilled. These borings would be accomplished with an 8 inch diameter hole to various depths, generally 10 to 30 feet. Soil samples will be collected at regular intervals for visual classification and laboratory testing. Upon completion, the holes will be backfilled in accordance with State regulations. (FHWA CTF p. 1)

Noise will be generated from the drill machine motor. The noise generated from the drill motor is similar in decibels to a backhoe motor and the 5-7 horsepower gasoline powered engine water pump and air compressor are quieter than a gas-powered lawn mower. (FHWA CTF p. 1)

Two access routes (see Figure 1 below) will be created to facilitate the drilling operations. Both access sites have undisturbed sections of land that will be cleared in accordance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act time period for Southeast Alaska, which prohibits clearing of vegetation from April 15 to July 15. (FHWA CTF p. 1)



**Figure 1. Location of geotechnical drilling locations for the Entrance Road alignment. Drilling sites along the yellow dashed lines, and around the Smokejumper Parking lot and the proposed roundabout to the southeast are on BLM land and are analyzed in this CX. Drill sites along Elmore Road are outside of BLM jurisdiction. (FHWA CTF p. 3)**

**B. Land Use Plan Conformance**

The area within which the proposed action would take place is managed by The Ring of Fire Record of Decision and Approved Management Plan (BLM, 2008). This plan directs management of the Campbell Tract Facility Special Recreation Management Area to continue to be guided by *A Management Plan for Public Use and Resource Management on the Bureau of Land Management Campbell Tract Facility* (CTF Management Plan) (BLM, 2008 p. 10). Additionally, this plan allows for the issuance of short-term revocable FLPMA permits in accordance with 43 CFR 2020.2-2 (BLM, 2008 p. 2-10).

The CTF Management Plan states that “the primary objective for management of the Campbell Tract Facility is to continue and facilitate its use as a BLM administrative site.” The geotechnical drilling would determine the feasibility of further development of the Road Entrance Alignment and Smokejumper Parking Lot at Campbell Tract for both administrative and recreational uses.

**C. Categorical Exclusion**

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 2, Appendix 1. Specifically the proposed action meets the criteria for a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 2, Appendix 1, BLM H-1790-1 National Environmental Policy Act Handbook Appendix 3(1.6) Departmental Categorical Exclusions.

**“Nondestructive data collection, inventory (including field, aerial, and satellite surveying and mapping), study, research, and monitoring activities.”**

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply.

**D. Extraordinary Circumstances**

The proposed action must be screened against the Extraordinary Circumstances found in 43 CFR § 46.215 (listed below). Any “yes” finding requires that an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement be prepared for the Proposed Action.

<b>Extraordinary Circumstances</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
2.1 Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
2.2 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.		X

<b>Extraordinary Circumstances</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
2.3 Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2) (E)].		<b>X</b>
2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		<b>X</b>
2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		<b>X</b>
2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		<b>X</b>
2.7 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.		<b>X</b>
2.8 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.		<b>X</b>
2.9 Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		<b>X</b>
2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		<b>X</b>
2.11 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).		<b>X</b>
2.12 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).		<b>X</b>

**E. Approval and Contact Information**

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable land use plan and is an action that can be categorically excluded. The Proposed Action does not trigger any of the Extraordinary Circumstances found in 516 FM Chapter 2, Appendix 2. I recommend that the Proposed Action be allowed and that no further environmental analysis is required.



Bonnie Million  
Field Manager, Anchorage Field Office

6/29/2017  
Date

**Contact Person:**

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact:

Curt Fortenberry  
Project Manager  
Fairbanks District Office  
222 University Avenue  
Fairbanks, AK 99709

Phone: 907-474-2206  
Email: Cfortenb@blm.gov

**Attachments**

Stipulations and Best Management Practices

## **Stipulations and Best Management Practices**

### **Vegetation/Ecology:**

Contractors will utilize best management practices (BMPs) to prevent non-native invasive species (NNIS) introduction and spread into the project area. All clothing, gear, vehicles, materials, transport equipment used in access, construction, maintenance and operations of 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.

Prevent the spread of any existing non-native plant species in the project area. 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.

### **Stipulations:**

- All equipment and vehicles that access public lands off the paved highway are required to be cleaned of all attached mud, dirt, and plant parts to reduce introduction of non-native and invasive plants. Cleaning will occur at a vehicle washing station or steam cleaning facility (power or high-pressure wash) off public lands.
- If possible, avoid travel (foot, vehicle, equipment) in known areas of contamination. If travel is necessary, work in contaminated areas last, and clean all equipment prior to moving outside contaminated area, or to another work site.

### **Migratory Bird Act/wildlife:**

Under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) (16 U.S.C. 703), it is illegal for anyone to "take" migratory birds, their eggs, feathers or nests. "Take" includes by any means or in any manner, any attempt at hunting, pursuing, wounding, killing, possessing or transporting any migratory bird, nest, egg, or part thereof. Take and possession under MBTA can be authorized through regulations, such as hunting regulations, or permits, e.g., salvage, research, depredation, or falconry. The MBTA does not distinguish between intentional and unintentional take. In Alaska, all native birds except grouse and ptarmigan (protected by the State of Alaska) are protected under the MBTA.

The Migratory Bird Act recommended time period to avoid vegetation clearings in Southeast Alaska for forest or woodland habitat is April 15<sup>th</sup> to July 15<sup>th</sup>. Clearing activity for geotechnical drilling will occur no earlier than August 2017, outside of the Migratory Bird Act time period.

Destruction of active bird nests, eggs, or nestlings that can result from spring and summer vegetation clearing, grubbing, and other site preparation and construction activities would violate the MBTA. Some species and their nests have additional protections under other federal laws, including those listed under the Threatened and Endangered Species Act (ESA), and bald and golden eagles (protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act or BGEPA).

**Stipulations:**

- Apply timing window requirements to project planning, unless project-specific review results in unique guidelines from the USFWS for your project.
- If an active nest is encountered at any time, including before or after the local timing window, leave it in place and protected until young hatch and depart. “Active” is indicated by intact eggs, live chicks, or presence of adult on nest. Timing guidelines should considerably reduce the risk of inadvertent nest destruction, but final compliance with the law is your responsibility: do not destroy eggs, chicks, or adults of wild bird species.
- If there are any questions regarding the MBTA and the timing guidelines, including projects that may occur in “boundary areas” between regions described on the matrix, contact the local Fish and Wildlife Field Office for assistance:  
Anchorage (907) 271-2888  
Kenai (907) 262-9863  
Fairbanks (907) 456-0203  
Juneau (907) 780-1160 (FHWA CTF p. 71)

**Cultural:**

The State DOT& PF and their contractor will conduct all operations to avoid damage or disturbance to any historical or archaeological sites and artifacts. The Antiquities Act (1906), Archaeological Resources Protection Act (1979), Federal Land Policy and Management Act (1976), and general United State property laws and regulations, all prohibit the appropriation, excavation, injury, or destruction of any historic or prehistoric ruin or monument, or any other object of antiquity situated on lands owned or controlled by the United States (16 U.S.C. 470; 16 U.S.C. 432; 43 U.S. 1733(a); 18 U.S.C. 1361; 18 U.S.C. 641; 43 CFR 8365.1). Such items include both prehistoric stone tools and sites, as well as historic log cabins, remnants of such structures, refuse dumps, and other such features.

**Stipulations:**

- Contact the Bureau of Land Management Archaeologist at (907) 267-1341 two days before drilling begins so that an archaeological monitor can be present during construction, if available.
- If any inadvertent archaeological discoveries are made during the course of the project, stop work immediately and notify the Bureau of Land Management State Engineer at (907) 474-2206 and Archaeologist at (907) 267-1341. All work must cease at that location until the discovery is identified and evaluated by a professional archaeologist.

**Wetlands:****Stipulations:**

- In accordance with Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, the effects of project activities on wetlands has been evaluated. Some drilling may be performed within wetlands; however, the drilling will be temporary with no permanent fill or discharge. Straw bale check dams may be installed to control sediments (FHWA CTF p. 2).