

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

**Anchorage Field Office  
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**DECISION RECORD**

**Iditarod National Historic Trail Kaltag Trail Brushing  
Environmental Assessment # DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2010-0021-EA  
Case File # AA 092396**

**DECISION TO IMPLEMENT THE PROPOSED ACTION ALTERNATIVE:**

It is my decision as Manager of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Anchorage Field Office (AFO) to accept the proposed action as stated in the environmental assessment (EA), authorizing the proposed 2010/2011 trail brushing project as well as future projects that would occur on State of Alaska and Native Corporation-owned lands, only with the proper permits in place from those entities.

The successful contractor awarded this trail brushing contract shall comply with all stipulations of the contract in order to prevent or minimize impacts to the natural, cultural, and historic resources of the area.

**RATIONALE FOR THE DECISION:**

No significant impact will occur to resources as a result of implementing the proposed action. The proposed action is not expected to be controversial, does not establish a precedent, or represent a decision in principle about future considerations, nor is it related to any other proposed actions representing cumulatively significant impacts.

The proposed action is in conformance with the BLM Management Framework Plan for the Southwest Planning Area (1981). The project implements recommendations of the Iditarod National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan (1986). The project has been considered in the context of public health and safety and consistency with regards to Federal, State, and local laws.

The project will improve public trail user safety along the Iditarod National Historic Trail. This project will also meet the goals of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act by creating jobs through contract solicitation for Phase I.

**ANILCA SECTION 810 COMPLIANCE:**

The proposed action will not significantly restrict Federal subsistence uses, decrease the abundance of

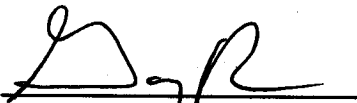
federal subsistence resources, alter the distribution of federal subsistence resources, or limit qualified Federal subsistence user access.

**ADVERSE ENERGY IMPACT COMPLIANCE:**

This action has been analyzed as required by Washington Office Instruction Memorandum 2002-053 to determine if it will cause an adverse impact on energy development. The action will not have an adverse direct or indirect impact on energy development, production or distribution. The preparation of a Statement of Adverse Energy Impact is not required.

**COMPLIANCE AND MONITORING PLAN:**

A BLM AFO Contract Officer Technical Representative (COTR) will be the point of contact for the contractor. The COTR will provide a project introduction and beginning project work inspection in June, 2010. The COTR will also provide a second project work inspection.



James M. Fincher  
Field Manager

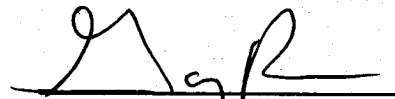
3-12-10  
Date

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**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
Iditarod National Historic Trail Kaltag Trail Brushing  
Environmental Assessment # DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2010-0021-EA  
Case File # AA 092396**

**Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI):**

The proposed action is consistent with existing national environmental policies and objectives as set forth in Section 101 (a) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). Further, and based on the analysis of potential environmental effects contained in the attached environmental assessment, it is my determination that the proposed action does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment and that an environmental impact statement is not required.



James M. Fincher  
Anchorage Field Office Manager

3-12-10  
Date



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

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Anchorage, Alaska 99507  
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## Environmental Assessment Iditarod National Historic Trail Kaltag Brushing Bureau of Land Management

DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2010-0021-EA



**Prepared By:**  
Jorjena Daly  
Outdoor Recreation Planner  
March 11, 2010

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A) BACKGROUND

The Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT) receives the majority of its use from locals who regularly use the route for inter-village travel and subsistence activities. Records demonstrate a long history of use by Native peoples as a major travel corridor between the Pacific Ocean/Norton Sound and the Yukon River, later cleared by the Army Signal Corps for a WAMCATS telegraph system in the late 1800's. The route has been used frequently since the telegraph installation and there has been extensive clearing during the past century. The route has been visible on maps dating back to 1905.

Native inter-village travel and subsistence activities are a regular use of the route today. The first Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race to Nome occurred in 1973. The INHT Comprehensive Management Plan (INHT CMP) was completed in 1986 to ensure protection of the important historical resource for future generations. Since 1986, the Bureau of Land Management's Anchorage Field Office (BLM AFO) has permitted additional events and use of the INHT trail. The Iron Dog Snowmobile Race began in 1984 and follows the INHT for the majority of the race route. The first trip to Nome on mountain bikes occurred in 1989 and since then, various human-powered competitive events (bike, ski, foot) of different lengths have occurred along portions of the INHT. Since 2000, the Iditarod Trail Invitational (bike, ski, foot race) has followed the entire length of the INHT to Nome. Currently, the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, Iron Dog, and the Iditarod Trail Invitational events are the three main events that occur annually along the INHT in February and March.

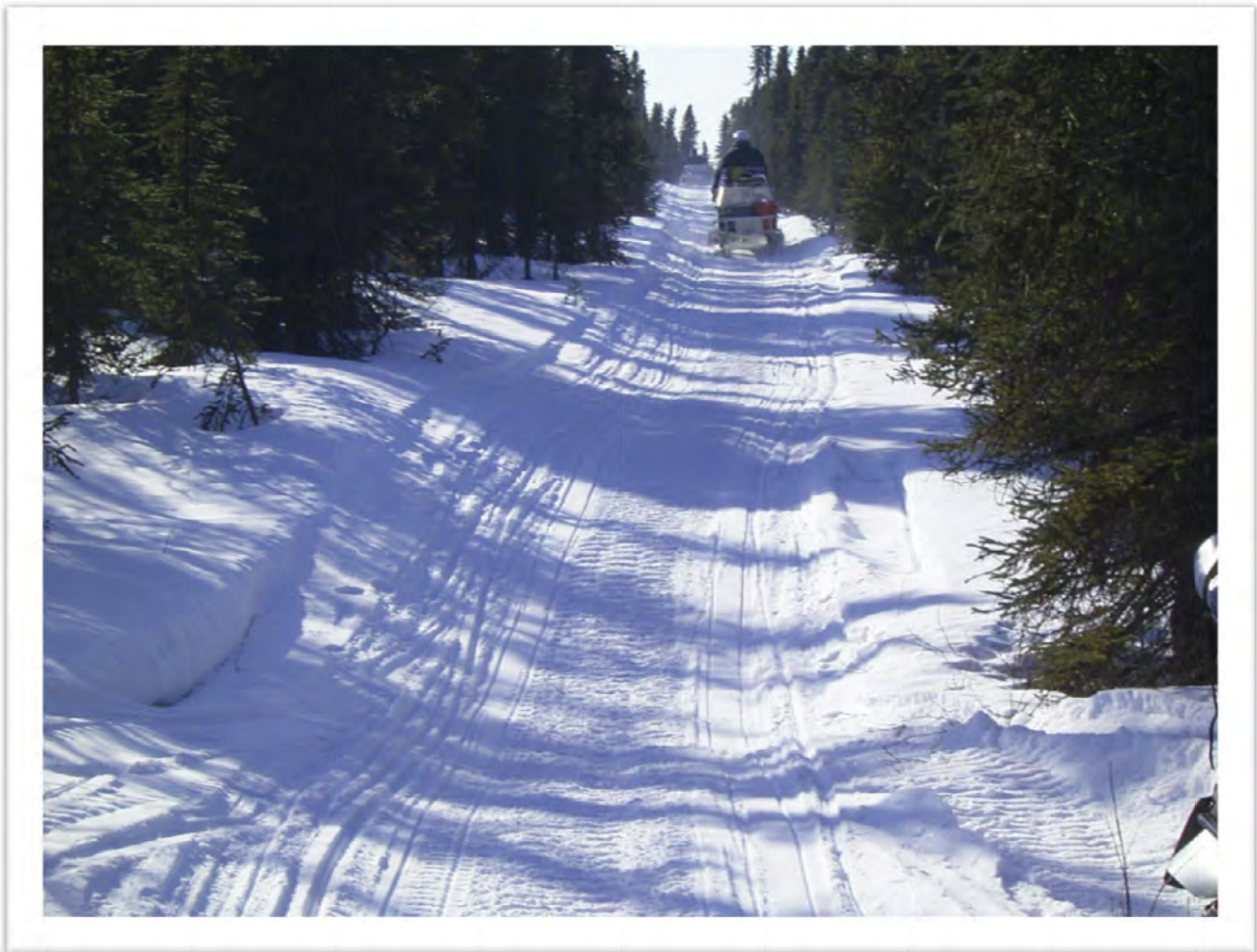
Trail use has increased among locals in recent years and event participation has also increased over time. The events that occur along the INHT require a considerable commitment to trail grooming and marking on behalf of the event permit holders, for the safety of event participants. Village residents have grown accustomed to the trail grooming and marking efforts for these annual events and increasingly travel the INHT to attend school and community functions in nearby villages, as well as subsistence hunting, fishing, and firewood gathering.

Due to the rise in the amount of traffic along the INHT, two-way traffic has become more common. Some sections of the INHT are too narrow and do not allow for safe passing. The "Kaltag Portage" section of the INHT has been known among local residents and event participants to be one of the most narrow trail sections. Numerous requests for attention to trail brushing in this trail section have been made to various INHT Managing Partners. It is very difficult to pass other traffic along this section.

These narrow trail sections have become overgrown with vegetation. Possible causes of trail vegetation encroachment include the continued suppression of wildfire, a warming climate trend, and no formalized trail maintenance standards and associated responsibilities defined in

the INHT CMP (1986).

Picture: Narrow section of trail along “Kaltag Portage”



The INHT CMP (1986, p. 82) does state however, that “Maintenance of the INHT should be concentrated along the primary route and along connecting trails in the active management category and will include trail marking and clearing, sign maintenance, and shelter maintenance.”

The BLM AFO is the federal administrator for implementation of the INHT CMP (1986). The INHT route crosses over many different landowners (State of Alaska, US Forest Service, various

Native Corporations). The other landowners are considered “managing partners,” with similar trail maintenance responsibilities. Under the INHT CMP, the BLM AFO has direction, as a managing partner/landowner, to maintain the trail as part of the Cooperative Management System (1986, p.82) utilizing “...volunteers to mark, establish, maintain, and patrol the Trail.”

The BLM AFO is also the recipient of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds for this proposed 2010 and 2011 INHT Kaltag Trail Brushing Project.

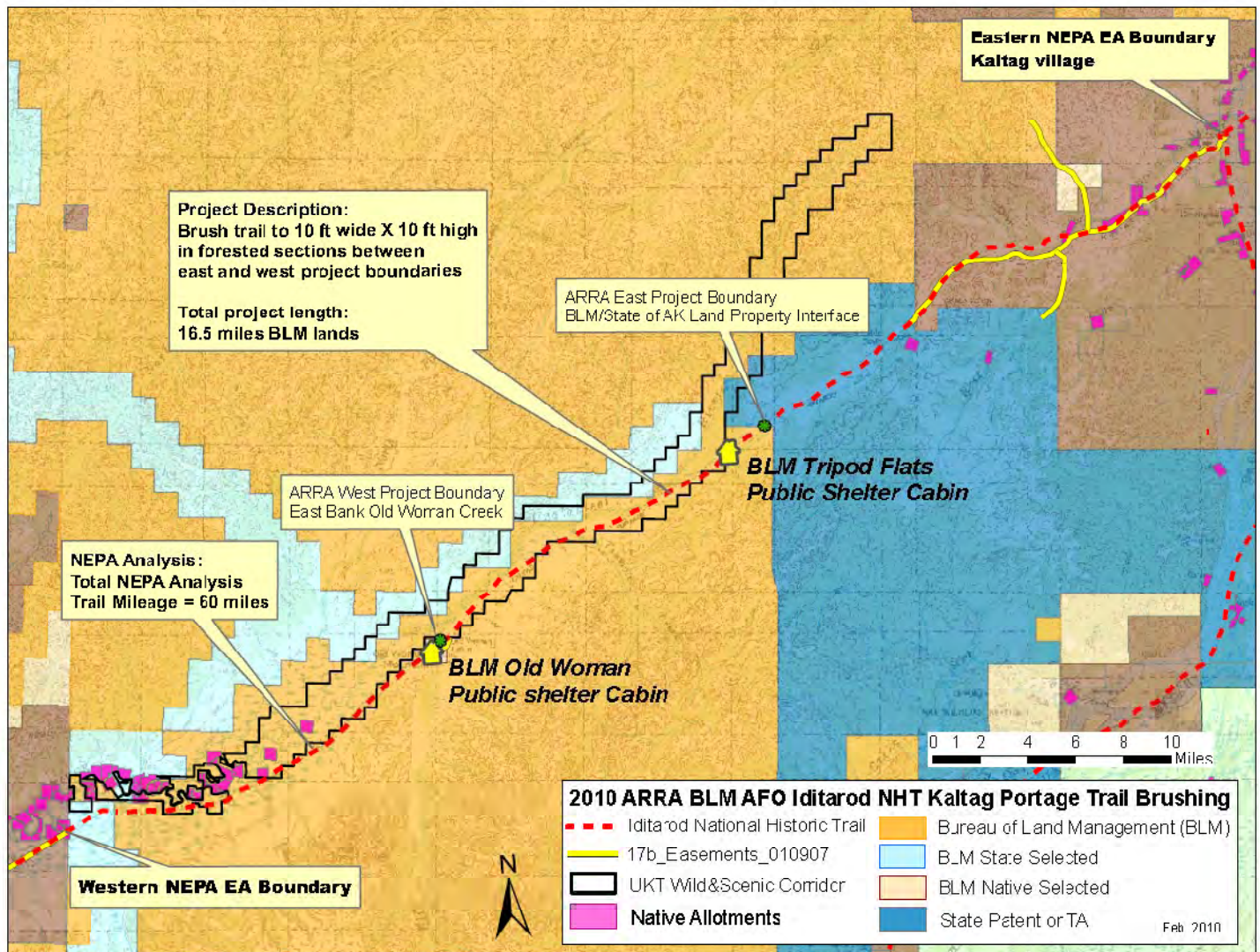
Picture: Trail users trying to pass along “Kaltag Portage”



**B) PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION**

The intent of this analysis is to evaluate the potential of the proposed project to have an effect upon the natural, cultural, and historic resources along the 60-mile length of INHT route from the “west NEPA boundary” to the “east NEPA boundary,” indicated on the map below.

In order to achieve the intent of creating jobs for the ARRA funding received for this project and address trail user safety concerns, the proposed **PHASE I** INHT Kaltag Trail Brushing project would be awarded to a contractor that can provide the requested services by February 2011 (Exhibit A: Trail Contract Scope of Work). The proposed trail brushing work would brush approximately 16.5 miles of a currently narrow section of the INHT located on BLM-owned lands. **Future PHASE work** would occur on the remaining approximately 43.5 miles of the INHT on State of Alaska, BLM, and Native Corporation – owned lands.



The ARRA-funded project component (Phase I) would be implemented in years 2010 and 2011. The primary intent of this project work would include trail brushing entirely on BLM lands and secondly on state lands, only if funding allows. The project would begin at the east side of Old Woman Creek and continue east along the INHT and other trail sections identified by the BLM (see attached map). The work would continue east approximately 16.5 trail miles just past Tripod Flats cabin to the BLM property boundary with State of Alaska-owned lands. All trail brushing would stop at this boundary for the ARRA-funded project, unless determined otherwise by the BLM with proper State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) permits issued.

There would be areas where no vegetation cutting would occur. These no-cut areas include those within a 300-foot riparian buffer or proximal to documented cultural and historic sites. The no-cut areas would be identified for the successful contractor by a BLM representative and provided on maps and/or aerial observation. Exhibit A, Trail Contract Scope of Work, contains details on the trail existing condition, proposed trail brushing and marking, project work specifications, and project mitigations.

The remaining 43.5 trail miles (Future Phases) analyzed, but not covered in the ARRA-funded project component, would receive trail brushing at a later date. The State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources is aware of the proposed project and has begun the subsequent authorization process required to provide a future letter of concurrence. A similar process would be followed to eventually request authorization for trail brushing on the INHT over Native Corporation and Native Allotment lands. All required permits and authorizations for the proposed work would be granted prior to commencing work.

Completion of this project would improve the trail condition and safety along the trail, as well as bring the INHT trail clearing widths in-line with other widely-used winter trail standards (10 feet high x 10 feet wide).

### **C) ISSUES AND DECISION TO BE MADE**

Resource Specialists within the BLM AFO, have raised the following issues and concerns after reviewing the proposal:

- Potential for invasive plant introduction from trail brushing logistics, equipment and tools.

This EA will provide the information necessary to evaluate the impacts associated with the Proposed Action and no action alternative. The decision-maker will take into account technical, economic, environmental, and social issues and the purpose and need of the proposed project. The BLM NEPA analysis will evaluate whether the proposed project should be approved,

rejected, or modified, and if additional mitigation is necessary.

#### **D) REQUIRED PERMITS AND LICENSES**

All BLM authorized actions are to comply with both Federal and State laws and regulations. The State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources has begun their authorization process for portions of the proposed project that would occur across State Land. A similar approach will also be taken to seek approval for the proposed project across Native Corporation and Native Allotment Lands.

#### **E) RELATIONSHIP TO STATUTES, REGULATIONS, POLICIES, PLANS OR OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSES**

The National Trails System Act is the primary authority for the proposed action, along with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, and the **Federal Land Policy and Management Act** (FLPMA). The FLPMA directs the Secretary of the Interior to manage use of the public lands and prevent their unnecessary or undue degradation.

The role, responsibilities, and limitations of authority for the Administrator of a unit of the National Trail System are defined in the **National Trails System Act** (NTSA). In the Act (P.L. 90-543, as amended through P.L. 109-418, December 21, 2006) the Secretary of the Interior is charged with responsibility for Administration of the Iditarod NHT. The responsibility for Administration is delegated to the Bureau of Land Management Anchorage Field Office.

Authority is also provided under the **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009**. Section 3 identifies the following objectives, which the proposed action aims to achieve: “...to *preserve and create jobs and promote economic recovery... [and] to invest in transportation, environmental protection, and other infrastructure that will provide long-term economic benefits...*”.

The proposed action is in conformance with the **Management Framework Plan Southwest Planning Area**: direction for recreation “Maintain the integrity of the Iditarod National Historic Trail and associated historic and cultural sites in compliance with the National Trails System Act and the INHT Comprehensive Management Plan.” (1981, p.142)

Trail marking, clearing, and sign maintenance is recommended in the **INHT Comprehensive Management Plan** (1986, p. 82).

#### **F) LAND STATUS AND ADJACENT USES**

The portion of the INHT, on BLM – owned lands, is classified as BLM unencumbered lands.

## II. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

This section describes the Proposed Action in sufficient detail to analyze the impacts. The descriptions include all design features and discrete actions which have the potential to affect the environment, including those intended to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts.

### A) NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the no action alternative, the goals of the ***American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*** “...to preserve and create jobs and promote economic recovery... [and] to invest in transportation, environmental protection, and other infrastructure that will provide long-term economic benefits...” would not be met. The vegetation would also continue to encroach upon this already narrow trail corridor and not address the safety of trail users.

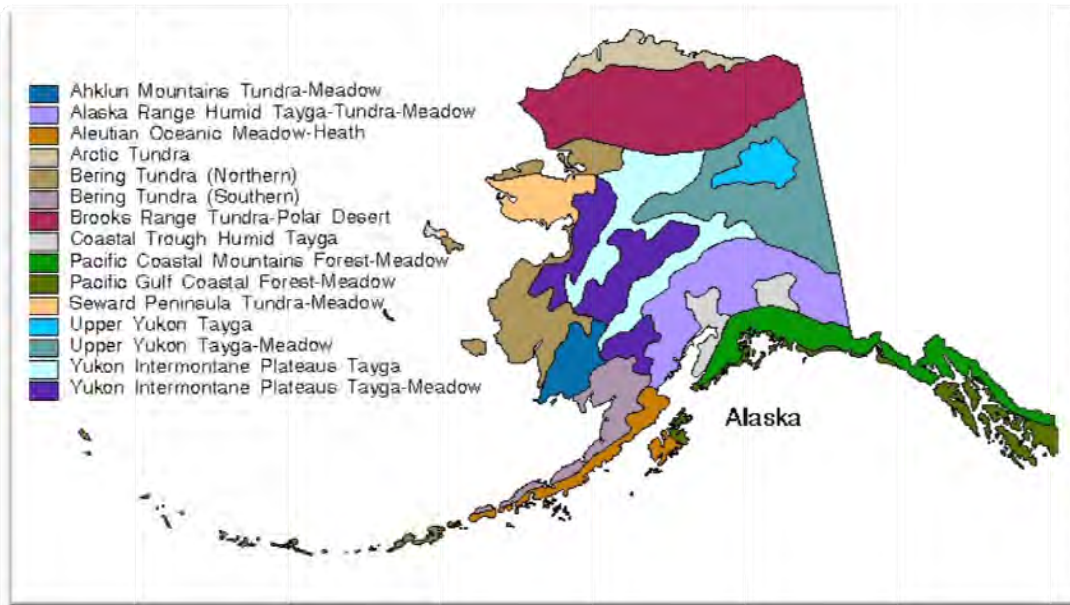
### B) PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action is to: 1) Create jobs; and 2) Improve trail safety by brushing encroaching vegetation from the trail clearing limits, five feet from trail centerline on each side, or a total clearing limit of 10 feet wide by 10 feet high. The project would begin at the east side of Old Woman Creek and continue east along the INHT and other trail sections identified by the BLM (see attached map). The work would continue east approximately 16.5 trail miles just past Tripod Flats cabin to the BLM property boundary with State of Alaska-owned lands.

## III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The INHT runs across latitudes 61°N through 64°N; primarily through the boreal forest or Taiga of Alaska. The boreal forest ecosystem is permafrost based and is comprised of forests, wetlands, bogs, fens, peatlands, rivers and lakes. It’s a sensitive place and easily damaged. Soils are cold and often very shallow. Water tables are high. Growing seasons are short. Biological processes are slow. Nutrient availability is low. Native plants and animals have adapted to life under harsh climatic conditions.





### Ecosystem Provinces

One of the above Ecosystem Provinces will be impacted by this proposed project, the Yukon Intermontane Plateaus Taiga-Meadow Region.

### Characteristics Yukon Intermontane Plateaus Taiga-Meadow

**Land-surface form.**--This area includes low mountains and hills interspersed with valleys. Elevations range from 980-1,970 ft (300-600 m) on ridges in the north to 4,920 ft (1,500 m) in the south. Much of the area exhibits glacial features, but in the north only the higher peaks were once covered by glaciers. Deep, narrow valleys are prevalent.

**Climate.**--The climate is transitional from maritime to extreme continental. Winters are milder and summers cooler than in the interior. The average January temperature is about 4F (-16C), and the average July temperature is just above 50F (10C). The growing season is 4 months. Average annual precipitation is about 16 in (400 mm); precipitation is heaviest in late summer, when there are heavy rains. Snowfall ranges from 59 to 78 in (1,500 to 2,000 mm).

**Vegetation.**--Black spruce forest vegetation is dominant in this area. Many hills and ridges, however, support only a tundra vegetation consisting of sedges and shrubs. There are forests of white spruce and paper birch on the hills overlooking the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers. Alpine meadow vegetation is predominant at higher elevations.

**Soils.**--The dominant soils are Inceptisols.

**Fish.** --The portion of the trail affected by the proposed action is within the Unalakleet River watershed. The Unalakleet River and its tributaries provide spawning and rearing habitat for 4

species of salmon, as well as habitat for resident fish species including grayling and arctic char.

**Wildlife.** -- The open tundra and boreal forest areas of the proposed action provide habitat for caribou, moose, black bear, brown bear, wolverine, martin, muskrats, red fox, snowshoe hare, lynx and mink, as well as numerous species of resident and migratory landbirds and waterfowl. Several resident and migratory species of raptors breed in the Unalakleet watershed and include hawk owl, saw-whet owl, boreal owl, horned owl, peregrine falcon and bald eagle. The western arctic caribou herd (WACH) moves into the Unalakleet River area during the winter months in some years, when several thousand caribou may inhabit the area before migrating north in the spring. The WACH has not wintered in the area since the winter of 2006.

#### **IV. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS**

This section provides the evaluation of direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts related to the Proposed Action and no action alternative only, since no additional alternatives were analyzed in detail. Impacts may be to society, the economy, or the biological or physical environment. Any issues or concerns raised by BLM AFO staff are discussed below. If these resulted in any measures to mitigate the environmental impacts, those measures are also discussed in this section. Finally, any residual impacts to the environment, despite applications of mitigation measures, are identified here.

##### **A) INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE SPECIES**

The effect of the Proposed Action upon existing vegetation includes an increased threat of invasive, non-native species introduction during the proposed project's implementation phase. Measures to decrease this threat include best management practices (BMPs) for preventing the introduction and spread of non-native and invasive plants. These BMPs are incorporated into Exhibit A: Trail Contract Scope of Work.

Adherence to the BMP's are the responsibility of the contractor or persons who perform the work. Project workers must thoroughly clean all tools, vehicles, and transport equipment used prior to moving equipment across or onto BLM managed lands, to prevent the spread of invasive weeds. Cleaning methods for preventing the spread of weeds include washing and/or brushing equipment to remove material that can contain weed seeds or other propagates in order to ensure equipment is weed and weed seed free. High pressure washing shall be used to treat the insides of bumpers, wheel wells, undercarriages, inside belly plates, excavating blades, buckets, tracks, rollers, drills, buckets, shovels, and any digging tools.

##### **B) HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

There are no known contaminated sites, or hazardous materials stored within the subject area. The No Action Alternative would have no effect on the existing environment. The effect of the Proposed Action upon the existing environment includes threats associated with improper management of hazardous materials (hazmat) that may be used to accomplish the trail work. These hazmats include petroleum, oil, and lubricants (POL); used batteries; and insect repellants. POL and various types of

batteries would be needed to operate the machinery necessary for conduct of the Proposed Action. Insect repellants which contain various amounts of pesticide and other harmful chemicals would be needed by employees working in the field. Spills and improper disposal of hazmat wastes would adversely affect the environment and could pose threat to the health of trail users who may become subsequently exposed. Mitigation of the potential adverse affects would be maximized by strict compliance with the numerous federal and State laws and regulations as well as best management practices to prevent spills, properly respond to any that may occur, and to properly dispose of wastes generated during the proposed action. Spill prevention can be provided by:

- keeping on-site quantities to a minimum,
- providing and using secondary containment during storage,
- having adequate spill response materials on hand at each work site where hazmat is used or stored, and
- most importantly by properly training workers and managers in hazmat spill prevention and response, and waste management/disposal procedures.

### **C) VEGETATION**

The effect of the Proposed Action upon the existing vegetation would include brushing 4-5 feet in either direction from the centerline of the trail for a total vegetation brushing width of 8-10 feet and a total clearing height of 10 feet. Black spruce, cottonwood, birch, willow and other woody species would be among those cleared from the trail corridor. The minimal amount of vegetation proposed to be removed from this trail corridor to bring it up to a safe standard would not have a significant adverse effect on the function of the surrounding ecosystem relative to vegetative processes.

### **D) CULTURAL RESOURCES**

There should be no adverse effect upon cultural resources from this undertaking. Four historic sites are located adjacent to this section of trail. The Whaleback Cabin (UKT-0026) and the Old Woman Mountain Cabin (NOB-0034) have been destroyed by river erosion. Both the Ten Mile Roadhouse (NOB-0033) and the Twenty-two Mile Roadhouse (NOB-0003) still exist but occur within large clearings and outside the area of brushing work.

### **E) THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES**

The impact of the proposed action and alternatives on threatened and endangered plants and animals and their habitats has been evaluated in accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. Based on currently available information, the proposed action would not affect any threatened or endangered species or their habitats. Therefore, no consultation with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service is considered necessary pursuant to Section 7 of the Act and none will be undertaken.

### **F) ANILCA §810 SUBSISTENCE**

This section of the INHT is within the Game Management Area 22A. This proposed action would not significantly restrict subsistence uses. As a result of the proposed action there are no reasonably foreseeable significant decreases in the abundance or distributions of fish and wildlife subsistence

resources and no reasonably foreseeable limitations to subsistence access.

### G) WILDLIFE

The proposed action would occur in a relatively short period of time, is temporary in nature and therefore would not affect wildlife resources in the long term. A temporary displacement of wildlife may occur during clearing activities, but would not result in long term consequences. Fisheries resources would not be significantly affected by this proposal.

### H) VISUAL RESOURCE

A scenic resource inventory was conducted in the INHT CMP Volume Two (V2): Resource Inventories (1986, p.139). The significance of the scenic quality of the INHT was recognized by Congress in the National Trails System Act. On the INHT, “visually significant segments were identified according to criteria relating to the degree of naturalness... and management recommendations were made to ensure continued protection of the visual resources along the INHT” (INHT CMP V2, p. 139).

Three scenic quality classes resulted from the scenic resource inventory conducted.

Scenic Quality Classes

Scenic Class	Description
Class A	Areas that combine the most outstanding characteristics of each rating factor
Class B	Areas in which there is a combination of some outstanding features and some that are fairly common to the physiographic region
Class C	Areas in which the features are fairly common to the physiographic region

The scenery within the INHT proposed trail brushing project is described as “moderately steep, rounded mountains form broad, U-shaped Unalakeet Valley. Continual vistas through vegetation to mountain ridges and peaks.”

Visual effects of the proposed action upon the Outstandingly Remarkable Values of the Unalakeet Wild and Scenic River, would be minimal. For the most part, “...vegetation along the river generally restricts views of the surrounding hills, the esthetic qualities of the diverse plant communities add immeasurably to the overall river environment” (1983, p.6). There are few to no areas where the trail is visible from the river, and efforts would be taken to minimize visual impacts of cut vegetation where the trail may be visible.

Visual effects associated with the Proposed Action would appear similar from the air as the majority of 1,000+ mile INHT corridor. On the ground, visual effects would be mitigated with appropriate trail clearing techniques outlined in Exhibit A, Trail Contract Scope of Work. The forthcoming Bearing Sea Western Interior Resource Management Plan effort would conduct a thorough visual resource inventory and include Visual Resource Management designations. The severity of the impact of the

proposed action is minimal in light of how visible the trail has been across the landscape since the late 1800's.

**V. TRIBES, INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, OR AGENCIES CONSULTED**

The State Department of Environmental Quality was contacted and has initiated the authorization process for a Letter of Concurrence.

**VI. LIST OF PREPARERS**

Larry Beck, Environmental Protection Specialist  
Donna Redding, Archaeologist  
Laurie Thorpe, Natural Resource Specialist  
Bruce Seppi, Wildlife Biologist  
Jorjena Daly, Outdoor Recreation Planner

**VI. REFERENCES**

*Iditarod National Historic Trail, Seward to Nome Route, Comprehensive Management Plan.*  
US Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, 1986.

*Management Framework Plan Southwest Planning Area,* US Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Anchorage District Office, November 1981.

*BLM Special Recreation Permit Authorization for Iditarod National Historic Trail Permitted Events,* Environmental Assessment. February, 2009 (Moore, Jim).

Unalakleet Wild and Scenic River Management Plan, 1983.

**EXHIBIT A: TRAIL CONTRACT SCOPE OF WORK**

**SECTION C – DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES/STATEMENT OF WORK**

**C.1.0. SCOPE OF CONTRACT**

The purpose of this contract is to furnish all labor, equipment, supervision, transportation, materials, operating supplies, and incidentals necessary to perform trail maintenance in accordance with it's specifications, terms, and conditions for trail brushing, clearing, and marking on the trail sections specified herein, in compliance with drawings, specifications, conditions, and/or provisions of this solicitation.

**C.1.1. BACKGROUND**

This portion of the Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT) is travelled by locals between the villages of Unalakleet and Kaltag. Trail use also increases during the Iron Dog Snowmobile Race, the Iditarod Trail Invitational Race, and the Iditarod Sled Dog Race. Two-directional traffic occurs on this trail and passing for two snowmachines or two dogsleds is difficult. Thick vegetation has encroached upon the trail, which has decreased sight distance and created very narrow areas unsafe for passing other trail users.

**C.1.2. EXISTING CONDITION**

The existing trail surface is frozen tundra, frozen river, and snow in winter. In the non-winter months, the trail is a mixture of wet and dry tussock tundra (difficult walking). The existing trail corridor is as narrow as 4-5 feet wide in places where the vegetation has encroached upon the trail. Brush and branches also hang down into the trail when weighted with snow, causing overhead hazards, particularly for upright dog mushers.

**C.1.3. OBJECTIVE**

Trail brushing work will begin at the east side of Old Woman Creek and continue east along the Iditarod National Historic Trail and other trail sections identified by the BLM (see attached map). Brushing work will occur on approximately 15 miles of INHT located on BLM land. Brushing work will end on the INHT State of Alaska land boundary. Areas where no vegetation cutting will occur will be identified by BLM, prior to beginning project work.

**C.1.4. CONTRACTOR REQUIREMENTS**

**OIL & HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES SPILL PREVENTION & RESPONSE**

The Contractor is responsible for prevention of, reporting, and cleanup of all spills of oil or hazardous substances during performance of this project in accordance with standards in Title 18 Alaska Administrative Code, Chapter 75, Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Control (18AAC75). In addition to the spill reporting requirements of 18AAC75, contractor will report same to the BLM COTR or Contract Officer (CO) immediately upon learning a spill has occurred.

To prevent spills, refueling shall be performed only at designated locations where the contractor has established adequate spill containment and appropriate spill response materials. Spill pans shall be placed under equipment when parked.

### **INVASIVE WEED INFESTATION PREVENTION**

All work-related tools, vehicles, and transport equipment used in access, construction, maintenance and project operations must be thoroughly cleaned **prior to** moving equipment across or onto BLM managed lands. Washing and/or brushing tools and equipment to remove material that can contain weed seeds or other propagates helps to ensure equipment that is being transported across or onto BLM managed lands are weed and weed seed free. High pressure washing 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., to remove potential weeds, seeds, and soil carrying weed propagules, and vegetative material.

If using mulch, hay, or straw for any component of work to be completed, the contractor must use certified weed-free mulch, hay or straw. If straw is used for temporary camping tent pads or other logistical needs, it must be removed after use. Users must place a containment tarp underneath the straw pad to ensure all straw and contents can be efficiently removed from the site to prevent non-native and/or weed seed propagules from being deposited onto the ground. Sources for weed free mulch, hay, or straw can be found by calling the Plant Materials Center: 907-745-4469.

### **TIMING OF PROJECT WORK**

**PHASE I** of this project must occur in the month of June, 2010. Phase I must be complete by June 30, 2010 (no exceptions). Phase I will involve:

- Two contract workers must travel to the village of Unalakleet or Kaltag, all travel expenses are the responsibility of the contractor. The two contract workers must be prepared to perform trail brushing work and arrive with all necessary tools and personal protective equipment.
- A BLM Contract Officer Technical Representative (COTR) will meet the two contract workers and conduct a brief project meeting in the village.
- The BLM COTR, and 1-2 contract workers will conduct trail reconnaissance from the air and then land at Old Woman Cabin and/or Tripod Flats Cabin. The aircraft may land along other portions of the trail if deemed necessary by the BLM COTR.
- The 1-2 contract workers shall perform brushing work on the trail.
- The BLM COTR will conduct an inspection on Phase I of the work completed.
- The BLM COTR, and 1-2 contract workers will return to the village.
- Aircraft resources will not be the responsibility of the contractor for Phase I.
- Upon notification of award of the contract, the successful contractor must contact the COTR within 5 business days to arrange dates for the project meeting and project work.

**PHASE II** of this project includes all remaining Trail work to be completed after the successful completion of Phase I.

- The entire project must be completed on or before February 28, 2011.

## **CONSTRUCTION SPECIFICATIONS**

### **TRAIL BRUSHING WORK:**

- 1) The Bureau of Land Management will identify “no-cut” areas prior to beginning work.
- 2) The trail clearing limits are 8-10 feet wide. The trail travel corridor must be cleared of all brush, vegetation, and trees a minimum of 8-10 feet in width. This width will reasonably allow two snowmobiles or dog teams to slow down and safely pass while traveling in opposite directions.
- 3) Overhanging vegetation and tree limbs within the travel corridor must be cleared 10 feet above the normal snowpack surface to allow for safe passage of a dog musher standing upright.
- 4) Contractor shall: Saw or cut limbs flush with the tree trunk so as not to leave a protruding stub. Make cuts in a manner that will not tear or strip bark from the trees. Cut and remove from the clearing limits all woody plants that exceed ¼ inch in stem diameter at ground level and 18” in height. Brush and small woody plants shall be cut flush with the ground surface as much as practical considering snow level. All vegetation and tree stumps within the travel corridor will be cut as flush to the working trail surface as possible.
- 5) It is VERY important to minimize short tree stumps or stubs that could result along the trail if vegetation is not cut as low to the ground as possible. These stumps and stubs are a danger to trail users and must be minimized.
- 6) All work must occur over frozen tundra to minimize all impacts to vegetation from motorized access to work site. If work occurs with snow on the ground, then vegetation must be cut as low as feasibly possible to avoid stumps or stubs.
- 7) If clearing operations result in cut log ends that project into the air, these logs shall be cut again where needed to drop these sections of logs onto the ground.

- 8) All felled trees shall be limbed to a 4 inch diameter top. All slash, or limbs, lopped tops, and brush shall be scattered outside the trail clearing limits. The slash shall be pulled at least 4 feet from the vegetated trail edge, into the forested area. Slash piles shall not exceed a height of 60" above the ground. Where the sideslope above the trail is less than 10 percent, slash material may be scattered above the trail. Logs may be left on the uphill side of the trail, if they are placed so that they will not move into the clearing limits, regardless of sideslope.
- 9) Do not place materials in stream channels, drainageways, ditches, culvert inlets or other locations where they would prevent the free flow of water away from the trailbed.
- 10) Brushing along streams and at stream crossings will be done in a way that maintains the plants for shade and streambank stability, while allowing for safe passage. Some of these areas may be designated "no-cut" areas provided by the COTR. Brushing should be limited to cut slopes and within the trail tread within 25 feet of a stream and at all stream crossings. Brushing clearing standards will retain brush where it is providing shade to the stream.
- 11) Brushing work shall provide sight distance (40-50 feet) for snowmobiles traveling up to 20 miles per hour and dog sleds to safely see ahead on the trail.
- 12) Brushing work shall avoid sharp turns and curves that may cause injury to dog teams. Brushing work must clear a broad sweeping curve for turns.
- 13) Brushing work on steep grades and sharper turns may require wider vegetation clearing to allow safe passing widths for trail users.

**TRAIL MARKING WORK:**

- 1) Trail marking work in forested areas must utilize reflectors where high visibility is especially needed. Reflectors and signs must accommodate trail travel in both directions and be placed as appropriate to allow winter travelers to follow the trail at night or in a storm, usually placed about every eighth-of-a -mile apart or as needed.
- 2) Special Iditarod National Historic Trail Reflectors and Trail signs will be provided by the Bureau of Land Management.

- 3) Sign significant trail junctions to avoid wrong turns.

**CLEANUP OF WORK AND TEMPORARY CAMP AREAS**

The project area(s) shall be restored to as close to its original natural appearance as possible. The work area impact must be kept to a minimum. All debris and litter shall be removed from site. Litter shall be packed out, and the native debris shall be scattered outside the trail clearing limit. No debris shall be scattered into any stream, lake, snow pond, meadow, or other water course. All straw is used for temporary camping tent pads or other logistical needs, must be removed after use. The straw used must follow requirements listed in the "Invasive Weed Infestation Prevention" section above.

**C.1.6. BID ITEM**

**INHT KALTAG TRAIL BRUSHING AND MARKING**

The project would begin at the east side of Old Woman Creek and continue east along the INHT and other trail sections identified by the BLM (see attached map). The work would continue east approximately 16.5 trail miles just past Tripod Flats cabin to the BLM property boundary with State of Alaska-owned lands.

Description of work
<b>Beginning of Project</b> at the East side of Old Woman Creek and continue east along the INHT and other trail sections identified by the BLM (see map).  Begin trail brushing and clearing to an 8'-10' width and 10' height above normal snow level. Begin trail marking.
<b>End of Project</b> approximately 16.5 miles East on the boundary of BLM and State of Alaska-owned lands. End trail brushing and clearing to an 8'-10' width and 10' height above normal snow level. End trail marking.

***Project work map follows on next page***

C.1.7. MAP

