

**Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)
for the
Proposed Delta River Special Recreation Management Area Plan
and East Alaska Resource Management Plan Amendment**

AK-050-EA-08-001
Bureau of Land Management
Glennallen Field Office
PO Box 147
Glennallen, Alaska 99588
(907) 822-3217

1.0 FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

On the basis of the information contained in the attached Environmental Assessment (EA) and all other information available, it is my determination that Alternative 2 (Proposed Action) will have no significant effect on the quality of the human environment and that none of the anticipated environmental effects meet the definition of significance as defined at 40 CFR 1508.27. Therefore, in accordance with Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

The BLM reviewed the context of Alternative 2 (Proposed Action) and the intensity factors described below and found that these would not result in any significant effects to resources and values in the Delta River SRMA or surrounding lands. In fact, the proposals in Alternative 2 (Proposed Action) would offset some of the anticipated effects of future increased development and human activity in and near the Delta River SRMA. Any negative effects from Alternative 2 (Proposed Action) would be negligible and would not substantially increase the incremental, or potential cumulative impacts, in the Delta River SRMA and surrounding lands. The following intensity factors have been considered in evaluating significance for this proposal (40 CFR 1508.27):

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse:

The EA considered the potential beneficial and adverse effects of the Proposed Action in Chapter 4. None of these effects were found to meet the definition of significance as defined at 40 CFR 1508.27. The Proposed Action provides the best overall direction in support of protecting river resources and outstandingly remarkable values while allowing the widest range of public uses in the Delta River SRMA. The Proposed Action minimizes social conflicts and protects river resources through a strong emphasis in education and interpretive outreach. The Proposed Action includes adaptive management standards that are based on river user tolerances for different impacts. Monitoring and non-compliance with these standards drives the implementation of management actions; in most cases less restrictive measures will be implemented prior to more restrictive actions.

In contrast, management under the other alternatives, though meeting the purpose and need at various degrees, contained elements that would result in less balance among recreational activities and multiple user groups by placing a higher emphasis on certain recreational activity types and by setting limits on methods of access within the river corridor; thereby increasing the potential for social conflict issues.

2. Degree of effect on public health and safety:

The Proposed Action achieves a balance between resource protection and beneficial uses of the human environment and would improve public health and safety by implementing adaptive management actions to control adverse impacts related to human waste and litter management within the river corridor.

3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas:

The Delta River SRMA shares the same boundary as the Delta Wild and Scenic River and provides a variety of important cultural, wetlands, and ecological values. The Proposed Action implements protections to benefit outstandingly remarkable values within the river corridor.

4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial:

Public input regarding the Proposed Action has been solicited during the planning process. The Draft EA was released for a 45-day public review and comment period, during which 68 written comments were received from the general public, organizations, and state and federal governmental entities. Based on these comments, the effects on the quality of the human environment are not considered highly controversial.

5. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk:

No highly uncertain or unknown risks to the human environment were identified during the analysis of the Proposed Action.

6. Degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration:

This Proposed Action neither establishes a precedent for future Bureau of Land Management (BLM) actions with significant effects, nor represents a decision in principle about a future consideration. Monitoring of adaptive management indicators and standards for impact issues has been clearly stated in the Proposed Action. Monitoring that results in the need for future restrictions, such as an Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) closure to motorboat use and/or airplane landings, would be subject to the ANILCA closure procedure specified in 43 CFR 36.11(h), including public hearings and Federal Register posting requirements.

7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts:

No individually or cumulatively significant impacts were identified for the Proposed Action. Any adverse impacts identified for the Proposed Action, in conjunction with any adverse impacts of other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions will only result in negligible to moderate impacts to river resources. The cumulative effects are analyzed in Chapter 4 of the EA.

8. Degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed on the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources:

The portion of the Delta River SRMA within the Tangle Lakes Archaeological District (TLAD) is one of the densest areas for late Pleistocene and early Holocene archaeological sites in the North American Subarctic, containing a relatively rich picture of the area's prehistory and history based upon one of the largest and densest cluster of archaeological sites in this part of Alaska. Many of these sites, and almost all of those within the TLAD, are considered to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as contributing properties to the archaeological district. The most significant threats to these archeological sites are from the use of Off Highway Vehicles (OHV) and campsites along the river corridor. The effects analysis in Chapter 4 of the EA has shown that the prescribed OHV and campsite management actions developed for the Proposed Action will be beneficial for cultural resources in the TLAD and throughout the entire river corridor.

9. Degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat:

There are no known endangered or threatened species or critical habitat located within the planning area.

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local environmental protection law:

The Proposed Action does not violate any known federal, state, or local environmental protection laws. The Proposed Action is in compliance with the East Alaska Resource Management Plan (EARMP), which provides direction for the protection of the environment on BLM public lands administered by the Glennallen Field office.

Approved:

Bud Cribley, BLM State Director

Date