



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

Glennallen Field Office  
Milepost 186.5 Glenn Highway  
Glennallen, Alaska 99586  
<http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/fo/gdo.html>

**Environmental Assessment**  
**Access in North Slana, Susloisitna**  
**Applicant: Coy Brown**  
**Case File Number: AA-092894**  
**DOI-BLM-AK-A020-2011-0026-EA**



**Location:**

Section 22, 23, 25, 26 and 36, Township 12 North, Range 9 East, Copper River Meridian

**Prepared By:**

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November 7, 2011

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## 1.0 Introduction

In March of 2011, Mr. Coy Brown submitted an application for an individual right-of-way (ROW) grant to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), so that he may perform maintenance on an existing trail system in the Suslositna area and construct a new section of trail to include a bridge to cross the Suslositna Creek when he accesses his private parcel of land. The ROW request includes several routes which all begin from a common route, and then venture in different directions to reconnect again on a common route.

The Suslositna community is a portion of the settlement area known as North Slana, a block of land made available by the Bureau of Land Management in the 1980's for settlement of three types of parcels: home-sites, headquarter sites, and trade and manufacturing sites. Mr. Brown was able to purchase a parcel of land under the home-site program and owns a five acre parcel located within section 36 of Township 12. North, Range 9 East, Copper River Meridian.

All residents of this community gain their access through a trail system, a total of over 6 miles, which begins at a landing on the southeast bank of the Slana River. The trail begins on a portion of land owned by Ahtna, Incorporated and residents must obtain a permit for their access and use of Ahtna, Inc. land located on both banks of the river.

The Suslositna Homeowners Association holds a BLM ROW grant for the existing trails on BLM lands within the Suslositna Valley. Residents formed the not-for-profit organization to perform maintenance as a community and to work together to secure funds and improve the existing trail system. Mr. Brown is not a member of this association, and has submitted this request so that he may perform maintenance as he feels necessary and to gain permission for the construction of a new trail with a new bridge crossing over the Suslositna Creek. The association does not have exclusive rights over the trail system, and their current authorization does not include the new section of trail and bridge which Mr. Brown is requesting to build and maintain. If Mr. Brown were granted a ROW, he would not have exclusive rights to the existing trails nor the new portion he wishes to construct. He would hold sole responsibility for the construction and maintenance of the new portion of trail, as he would be the only one who would currently hold an authorization to construct and perform maintenance on this section.

As you read this document, the trail system is discussed and described as if you are traveling south and east from Ahtna, Incorporated, land at the Slana River to the head waters of the Suslositna Creek. The trail splits in a couple of locations and crosses the Suslositna creek at several locations. At these crossings, the residents have constructed light duty bridges, intended to facilitate their All-Terrain Vehicles which is their main mode of transportation along the trail during snow free months.

For clarity, the trail is broken into portions (see Map 1). The portion from the left bank of the Slana River to the first intersection on the trail system is called portion A. From this intersection, the trail has two routes, one which follows the Suslositna Creek, called portion B, and one which ventures away from the creek, called portion C. These two routes re-intersect, forming intersection two. From intersection two, the remaining trail system is portion D. The small existing trail loop connecting Mr. Brown's parcel to trail portion D, is portion E. The trail portion Mr. Brown would like to construct and would include a new bridge over the Suslositna Creek would begin midway on portion B and would intersect the trail at approximately 500 feet after intersection two on portion D. This new route would be called portion F.

Please see Map 1 – Suslositna Homeowners Trail.

### ***1.1 BLM's Purpose and Need***

The purpose of the proposed action is to provide Mr. Brown with a BLM ROW, granting him an authorization for access and maintenance from public lands near the Slana River to his parcel located within the Suslositna valley, which is approximately 2.75 to 3.25 miles with the various routes included.

The need for the action is established by BLM's responsibility under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) to respond to a request for a ROW grant for access to private property.

### ***1.2 Decisions to be Made***

The BLM will decide whether or not to grant Mr. Brown the ROW. If the decision is made to grant the ROW, the BLM will also decide 1) what terms and conditions will apply, and 2) what routes will be included.

### ***1.3 Decision Framework and Policy***

The East Alaska Resource Management Plan (EARMP) of September 2007 and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) provide the overall long term management direction for the BLM Glennallen Field Office. The EARMP and FLPMA are the decision documents and legal basis for the integrated long term resource planning on BLM Glennallen Field Office managed lands. They establish the direction and goals for the BLM to follow for the management of these lands and resources. The proposed action and alternatives are consistent with the EARMP and FLPMA. Specifically the proposed action is consistent with the following sections of the EARMP:

#### **I. LANDS AND REALTY**

##### ***I-1: Goals***

- Provide a balance between land use (rights-of-way, land use permits, leases and sales) and resource protection that best serves the public at large.

## T. TRAVEL MANAGEMENT AND OHV USE

### *T-1: Goals (OHVs)*

- Manage trails to minimize resource impacts and reduce user conflicts.
- Manage OHV use associated with permitted and development activities to provide for access while protecting resources

The proposed action would be subject to an array of laws, regulations, and acts to include:

- Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA) Section 810
- National Historic Preservation Act as Amended 1992
- The Bald Eagle Protection Act of 1940 (as amended 1959, 1962, 1972, and 1978)
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (as amended 1936, 1960, 1969, 1974, 1978, 1986, and 1989)
- North America Wetlands Conservation Act of 1989 (as amended 1990 and 1994)
- Executive Order 11987 of May 1977 (Exotic Organisms)
- Executive 11990 of May 1977 (Protection of Wetlands)

### ***1.4 Land Status***

The request is for a ROW on public lands managed by the BLM. The first portion of the proposed ROW occurs in Township 12 North, Range 9 East, sections 22 and 23, Copper River Meridian on lands selected by the State of Alaska for conveyance. The remaining portions of the proposed ROW occurs in Township 12 North, Range 9 East, sections 25 and 26, Copper River Meridian on BLM unencumbered land within the North Slana settlement land. The portion of the trail within sections 22 and 23 is a State of Alaska conveyance priority fourteen and are expected to remain with BLM.

There are no ANCSA selections on any lands affected by the proposed action.

### ***1.5 Scoping and Issues***

Public notice for this EA was posted on October 17, 2011, on the BLM Glennallen Field Office Website NEPA log:

[HTTP://WWW.BLM.GOV/AK/ST/EN/INFO/NEPA/GFO\\_NEPA\\_REGISTER.HTML](http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/info/NEPA/GFO_NEPA_REGISTER.HTML). No comments have been received.

An interdisciplinary team (IDT) was assembled and initially met on September 26, 2011. A field visit by the IDT was conducted on October 4, 2011 and a second internal scoping meeting on October 18, 2011 revealed the following as issues to be addressed in the EA:

- Cultural Resources;
- Travel management – trail widening to reach the site, trail reroutes to reach the site, improved access throughout the area;
- Riparian, Fisheries, and Hydrology.

## 2.0 Proposed Action and Alternatives

### 2.1 Proposed Action by the Applicant

The BLM Glennallen Field Office is considering authorizing a right of way for the applicant to access his private parcel located within the Suslositna Valley. The authorization would include performing trail maintenance to the existing trail portions A, B, C, and D, constructing a new trail portion F, and building new bridges over the Suslositna Creek for portions F and E., as described within the introduction of this document and illustrated in appendix A.

#### Access

Mr. Brown currently has access via casual use and use of the existing trail system, currently maintained by the Suslositna Homeowners Association, which holds BLM ROW authorization AA87119, for access and maintenance over six miles of existing trails on BLM managed public lands in the area.

### 2.2 Alternatives being considered by the BLM

The National Environmental Policy Act requires that a reasonable range of alternatives be developed that address the issues. Based on the issues, the interdisciplinary team developed three alternatives for consideration:

Alternative 1: Is the No Action alternative as required by NEPA.

Alternative 2: This alternative analyzes the issuance of portions A – D, not including portion F or E, as identified and mapped.

Alternative 3: This alternative analyzes the action as proposed by the applicant, portions A-F.

#### **2.2.1 Alternative 1- No Action: Do not approve the right-of-way across public land**

The No Action Alternative denies the applicants request to hold an authorization for performing maintenance on portions A through E; constructing new trail on portion F; and constructing a new bridge on portion F and E.

#### **2.2.2 Alternative 2- The authorization for access and maintenance on the existing trails, portions A-E, as identified and mapped.**

This alternative would authorize Mr. Brown a non-exclusive ROW grant to perform maintenance and facilitate his access on the existing trail system only as mapped and identified in portions A through E. No new construction of trails or bridges would be allowed for portions F and E.

#### **2.2.3 Alternative 3 – Authorizing the proposed action by Mr. Brown, portions A to F.**

This alternative would authorized Mr. Brown a non-exclusive ROW grant to perform maintenance and facilitate his access on the existing trails, portions A through E; allow the construction of a new portion of trail with a bridge over Suslositna Creek, portion F; and to

construct a bridge at portion E. This alternative would give the authorization for construction and maintenance of portion F, including the associated bridge, only to Mr. Brown.

### ***2.3 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated From Detailed Analysis***

No alternatives were eliminated from detailed analysis.

## **3.0 Affected Environment**

This section describes the existing environment and the current conditions of important resources in the area of the right-of-way that would be affected by any of the alternatives under consideration. Topics examined include:

- Archaeology & Paleontology
- Travel Management and Recreation
- Riparian, Fisheries and Hydrology

### ***3.1 Archaeology & Paleontology***

The Suslositna Creek drainage contains both prehistoric and historic cultural resources. Archaeological surveys along existing OHV trails in the project area have located three nearby cache pit features for the storage of fish near the mouth of the Suslositna River, including NAB-372, NAB-457, and NAB-458. This indicates that a fish camp or village site may be nearby along the banks of the river. Additionally, a prehistoric camp, NAB-490, and a historic trapping cabin dating from prior to the 1940's, NAB-489, were also discovered near the headwaters of the creek, several miles upstream. However, no archaeological surveys have been conducted along the proposed OHV route F.

The entire Suslositna Creek drainage consists of Quaternary aged sediments from glaciers and streams, which have a low likelihood of containing significant paleontological resources.

### ***3.2 Travel Management and Recreation***

OHV trails in the Suslositna watershed are managed under the 2007 East Alaska Management Plan which limited OHV's to existing trails. Existing OHV trails in the Suslositna watershed were pioneered without proper trail layout design or engineering, which resulted in more routes being established to access homesteads and lands beyond the river corridor.

The travel network within the Suslositna watershed was developed primarily as a means of access to private inholdings in the surrounding area. The main trails tend to parallel the creek itself while meandering in and out of the riparian area. One major spur trail is present (segment C) which appears to be utilized as an alternative route to segment B and as a wood gathering area. Shorter spurs access private inholdings within the area. The first mile of trail is located in lowland bogs, tundra, and black spruce. The trail is very wet and muddy during the spring, summer and fall; as such it is subject to erosion and trail braiding. Homeowners have installed traditional log corduroy as well as elevated wood planking in an attempt to lessen these impacts and reduce hardships to their travel. After mile one the trail improves significantly and transitions to more stable soils forested with white spruce and cottonwood,

with some rock composition present. While conditions along the trail are adequate for the current level of use, improvements could be made to elevate and promote drainage within the first .9 miles and at a handful of locations in segments B and D.

Recreational use within the area and associated trail system is extremely low. Recreation features and experiences are limited in nature and as such the route serves more of a utilitarian purpose for property owners. Access to the Suslositna trail system requires ferrying or fording the Slana River which creates a natural barrier to casual recreational use. Access can be gained to the end of segment D by traveling the Bear Valley trail entering from the north. This access route is long (20+ miles) and also not highly utilized by recreational users with an exception during the moose hunting season (Sep. 1 – 20). Use estimates for 2011 along the Suslositna trail system total 1500 users (BLM RMIS), of which nearly one hundred percent are private property owners.

### ***3.3 Riparian, Fisheries and Hydrology***

#### **Fish Resources**

The Suslositna Creek is listed with the State of Alaska as important for the spawning, rearing, or migration of anadromous fish, as stream number 212-20-10080-2605-3040. The creek has documented sockeye salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*) present.

#### **Riparian Vegetation**

The riparian vegetation in the creek valleys of Suslositna watershed is mature forest composed of a poplar, willow, alder, and spruce. Naturally vegetated riparian areas perform many beneficial functions for aquatic resources and comprise some of the most important and productive habitat on BLM-managed lands. These riparian functions may be grouped into four broad categories of habitat, water quality, water quantity, and food supply. The complexity, hydraulic resistance, and stability provided by riparian vegetation to streams affects the size, shape, and distribution of the stream channel and habitat features such as pools, riffles, and undercut banks. The riparian vegetation also helps to maintain the hydrologic connectivity between mainstem stream channels, side channels, tributaries, backwater sloughs, and hyporheic (groundwater) zones. Water quality functions performed by riparian vegetation includes fine sediment deposition and filtering of contaminants, thereby reducing erosion and turbidity while maintaining high water quality required by many aquatic organisms. Riparian habitats also provide leaf litter and detritus to rivers and streams supporting the primary production that is the basis of the aquatic food supply. An example of a riparian food supply is the detritus (decomposed vegetative matter) from decaying leaves, twigs, etc. which fall into the stream and provide a key energy source fueling the base of the aquatic food chain.

Riparian vegetation condition directly influences the condition, quality, and maintenance of aquatic habitat. Riparian plants filter sediments and nutrients, provide shade, stabilize streambanks, provide cover in the form of large and small woody debris, produce leaf litter

energy inputs, and promote infiltration and recharge of the alluvial aquifer. As a result of these functions, spawning beds for fish and microhabitats for macroinvertebrates remain relatively free of damaging fine sediment deposits. Riparian vegetation reduces sedimentation of pools, thereby maintaining water depths and structural diversity of the channel. Base flow levels are augmented throughout the year by the slow release of water stored in aquifers. Complex, off-channel habitats, such as backwaters, eddies, and side channels, are often formed by the interaction of streamflow and riparian features such as living vegetation and large woody debris. These areas of slower water provide critical refuge during floods for a variety of aquatic species and serve as rearing areas for juvenile fish.

The bank stabilizing function of riparian vegetation not only helps reduce erosion and influence channel morphology but also acts to supplement instream cover by the developing of undercut streambanks and by providing overhanging vegetation. Well-vegetated stream channels and stable streambanks help reduce turbidity and channel scouring resulting from high runoff rates and, in turn, can enhance primary production.

The current condition of the banks is stable, with little evidence of human influence other than at the bridged stream crossings.

### **Erosion and Sedimentation**

Removing the vegetative cover, altering the natural topsoil, or changing the shape of the slope can increase the potential for erosion, increase runoff; and create more sediment in waterbodies.

Soil compaction and the shear forces caused by OHV weight create mud holes that alter hydrologic patterns and increase erosion and sedimentation. The main factors influencing erosion rate include the volume and velocity of runoff from precipitation, the rate of precipitation infiltration through the soil, the amount of plant cover, the slope length or the distance from the point of origin of overland flow to the point of deposition. Accelerated erosion occurs whenever the soil surface is disturbed. Sediments created by accelerated erosion clog streams and fill lakes and impair the water-holding capacity. Erosion decreases the productive value of the soil as well as reducing the quality of the waters that receive the sediment. These changes can lead to decreased survival of fish in the egg and alevin stages; decreased density, biomass, and diversity of aquatic insects; and decreased primary production.

## **4.0 Environmental Impacts**

## ***4.1 Effects of Alternative 1: No Action***

### **4.1.1 Archaeology & Paleontology**

The existing trails have been archaeologically surveyed and no cultural resources were located which were being impacted by those trails. Therefore, no direct effects to archaeological or paleontological resources are anticipated from Alternative 1.

### **4.1.2 Travel Management and Recreation**

#### ***Access to Private In-holdings***

Direct Effects: This alternative does not prevent the applicant from access to his parcel. The applicant has access via the grant authorized to the Suslositna Homeowners Association and under federal regulations defined as casual use. The no action alternative, however, does not permit the applicant to perform maintenance to the existing trails and does not permit the applicant to construct a new section of trail portion F nor build a bridge to facilitate his crossing the Suslositna Creek at portion F and E. The no action alternative would not limit nor reduce Mr. Brown's existing legal access to his property.



Bridge on Suslositna Creek trail

Indirect Effects: A bridge failure would lead to increased debris and materials within Suslositna Creek. A high precipitation event or annual spring thaw may dislodge these materials from the creek bottom carrying them further downstream. These materials traveling at increased velocities downstream may create failures at other bridge locations.

### **4.1.3 Riparian, Fisheries and Hydrology**

#### **Direct and Indirect Effects**

No new ground disturbing activities are proposed; therefore no direct effects are anticipated. Limiting OHV trails and river crossings to those already existing would minimize damage to sensitive fisheries habitats.

## ***4.2 Effects of Alternative 2-The authorization for access and maintenance on the existing trails, portions A-E, as identified and mapped.***

### **4.2.1 Archaeology & Paleontology**

The effects of Alternative 2 to cultural and paleontological resources are essentially the same as Alternative 1. The existing trails have been archaeologically surveyed and no cultural or paleontological resources were located that were being impacted by those trails. Therefore, no direct effects to archaeological or paleontological resources are anticipated from this alternative.

### **4.2.2 Travel Management and Recreation**

The effects of Alternative 2 to travel management and recreation are essentially the same as Alternative 1.

While the existing trail system within the Suslositna Creek watershed is acceptable for public safety the associated bridges at stream crossings are in need of maintenance. A bridge failure occurred in September of 2011 which could have caused serious injury or death to users of the trail system. Another bridge failure would lead to increased debris and materials within Suslositna Creek. A high precipitation event or annual spring thaw may dislodge these materials from the creek bottom carrying them further downstream. These increased materials traveling at increased velocities downstream may create failures at other bridge locations.

If this alternative is chosen, a recommended condition would be to require that a single sign shall be placed at the beginning of the Suslositna Creek trail systems which states that all trails are maintained privately and travel is conducted at the risk of the user.

### **4.2.3 Riparian, Fisheries and Hydrology**

The effects of Alternative 2 to riparian, fisheries and hydrology are essentially the same as Alternative 1. No new ground disturbing activities are proposed; therefore no direct effects are anticipated. Limiting OHV trails and river crossings to those already existing would minimize damage to sensitive fisheries habitats.

There could be a slight positive benefit to fisheries habitat due to a potential increased maintenance of the trails. Having maintenance authority would be an incentive for Mr. Brown to improve the trail. Effects of this action would be a reduction in erosion and sedimentation that could potentially be deposited into the Suslositna Creek during heavy rainfall or high stream discharge. This alternative reduces, however slight, the potential for stream destabilization, riparian habitat degradation, erosion, and sedimentation as compared to the no action alternative.

### ***4.3 Effects of Alternative 3 – Authorizing the proposed action by Mr. Brown, portions A to F.***

#### **4.3.1 Archaeology & Paleontology**

Direct Effects: Trail construction and maintenance on proposed portion F could affect undiscovered cultural resources through the disturbance and erosion of soil stratigraphy and any associated artifacts, resulting in the irretrievable loss of cultural resources.

To mitigate or prevent these impacts, the following stipulations should be in the terms and conditions:

1. Applicant should delineate his proposed route F by flagging it for an archaeological survey.
2. As soon as snow cover allows, an archaeological survey of the trail and its immediate vicinity will be conducted to determine if any cultural resources will be impacted by proposed route F.
3. If there are cultural resources discovered, the field office will work with the cultural resource specialist to reroute the trail.

#### **4.3.2 Travel Management and Recreation**

The construction of proposed route F would increase the overall footprint of the trail network in the Suslostina Creek drainage. The issuance of a ROW twenty feet in width over approximately one eighth mile of trail would create .30 acres of new ground disturbance. This route would be duplicative in nature providing access to segment D, which is already accessed by two trail segments, segments C and B.



Typical Trail Conditions Segment B



Typical Trail Conditions Segment C

Travel intensity and associated effects (soil displacement, erosion, and soil compaction) would be reduced on segments C and B if route F was constructed. Essentially it would offer a third route to segment D in addition to segments B and C. The construction of segment F, if constructed in similar fashion to existing trails in the area, would be subject to some erosion, incising, and trail braiding in low lying areas.

Segment F would need to be aligned on higher elevations, outside of the floodplain, and be designed with sustainable trail building measures in mind. Trail layout, design, and

construction would need to adhere to Best Management Practices. Property owners do an admirable job of keeping the trails passable throughout the seasons, however current maintenance levels would not meet sustainable trail standards. Increasing the amount of trail and thereby increasing the amount of necessary maintenance would increase burden on property owners in the area.

Segment F would require the construction and maintenance of a new bridge crossing Suslositna Creek. While the existing trail system within the Suslositna Creek watershed is acceptable for public safety the associated bridges at stream crossings are in need of maintenance. A bridge failure occurred in September of 2011 which could have caused serious injury or death to users of the trail system. Another bridge failure would lead to increased debris and materials within Suslositna Creek. A high precipitation event or annual spring thaw may dislodge these materials from the creek bottom carrying them further downstream. These increased materials traveling at increased velocities downstream may create failures at other bridge locations. Adding a 5<sup>th</sup> bridge to the trail network would increase the maintenance responsibilities and risk of failure associated with the bridges by twenty percent.

If this alternative is chosen, a recommended condition would be to require that a single sign shall be placed at the beginning of the Suslositna Creek trail systems which states that all trails are maintained privately and travel is conducted at the risk of the user.



Suslositna Creek trail

### 4.3.3 Riparian, Fisheries and Hydrology

This alternative would add approximately an additional 660' of OHV trail paralleling the Suslositna Creek and construction of another bridge. Additional riparian areas will be removed in construction of the new trail and approaches to the new bridge. Alternative 3 has the greatest potential for stream banks destabilization, riparian vegetation loss, erosion, and sedimentation. At a minimum there would be a 20% increase in loss of riparian vegetation over the no action alternative due to the additional stream crossing required.

An indirect effect to the aquatic resources could be erosion of a new trail surface with deposition of eroded materials off the trail and onto adjacent productive/functioning wetland,

riparian, or upland soils. The trail may be compacted, rutted, or eroded to varying degrees, depending on specific physical soil conditions and amount and type of motorized use, especially during wet conditions.

#### ***4.4 Cumulative Effects of the Proposed Action and Geographic Scope***

The cumulative effects analysis is based on a geographic scope area consisting of the lands and view shed associated with the Suslositna Valley trail system and watershed. This area is comprised of similar terrain, vegetation, and uses. Effects associated with the proposed action would occur within this area.

##### **4.4.1 Archaeology & Paleontology**

There are no anticipated cumulative effects to cultural or paleontological resources from any of the alternatives.

##### **4.4.2 Travel Management and Recreation**

There are no known cumulative effects of any of the alternatives in relation to effects to the trail network within the Suslositna Creek drainage.

##### **4.4.3 Riparian, Fisheries and Hydrology**

Past, present, and future OHV travel have affected aquatic resources throughout the Suslositna watershed. Effects of past, present, and future actions would be the same as discussed under riparian vegetation, erosion, and sedimentation sections in affected environment section. Under Alternative 1, OHV use would be limited to existing trails and bridges, contributing to a reduction in seasonal adverse effects to fish habitat through alterations in drainage patterns, degradation of water quality, and riparian loss or damage, especially in heavy use areas. Therefore, adoption of the management actions under this alternative, combined with past, present, and future actions may have an overall beneficial effect on fish habitat within the Suslositna watershed.

## **5.0 Coordination and Consultation**

### ***5.1 Interdisciplinary Team Members Participating on ID Team, October 18, 2011***

John Jangala, Archaeologist, Bureau of Land Management  
 Cory Larson, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Bureau of Land Management  
 Elijah Waters, Branch Chief, Bureau of Land Management  
 Joseph Hart, Realty Specialist, Bureau of Land Management  
 Tim Sundlov, Fisheries Biologist, Bureau of Land Management  
 Marnie Graham, Public Affairs, Bureau of Land Management

A site visit to the proposed route was conducted by Cory Larson, John Jangala, Ben Seifert, Tim Sundlov and Joseph Hart on October 4, 2011, and Elijah Waters and Joseph Hart on October 6, 2011.

## ***5.2 Non-Governmental Organizations, Native Entities, Private Parties***

BLM NEPA guidance requires public involvement in the preparation of all Environmental Assessments. Public notice for this EA was posted on October 3, 2011, on the BLM Glennallen Field Office Website NEPA log:

[HTTP://WWW.BLM.GOV/AK/ST/EN/INFO/NEPA/GFO\\_NEPA\\_REGISTER.HTML](http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/info/NEPA/GFO_NEPA_REGISTER.HTML). No comments have been received.

The lands affected by the proposed action are not encumbered by ANCSA selections. The Native village of Mentasta (nearest federally recognized Tribe) is approximately 15 road miles to the North and West, therefore no Native Entities were consulted.

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
FOR  
Coy Brown  
Access and Trail Maintenance  
DOI-BLM-AKA-020-2011-0026-EA  
Serial # AA92894**

**Background**

The Bureau of Land Management prepared an Environmental Assessment (AKA-020-2011-0026-EA) which analyzed the effects of issuing a ROW grant for access to private property accessed through public lands near Slana. The EA considered a range of route alternatives, over both existing routes and proposed new construction. Authority for this action is the: Federal Land Management Policy Act 1976 as amended. (43 U.S.C.1761)

**Additional information**

The Suslositna Homeowners Association holds a BLM ROW grant for the existing trails on BLM lands within the general area of the proposed action (the Suslositna Valley). This existing ROW is non-exclusive, and currently serves as Mr. Brown's primary access to his property. The current authorization does not include the new section of trail and bridge which Mr. Brown is requesting to build and maintain.

**Finding of No Significant Impact**

On the basis of the information contained in the EA (AKA-020-2011-0026-EA), and all other information available to me, it is my determination that: (1) the implementation of the alternatives will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the East Alaska Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (June 2006); (2) the alternatives are in conformance with the Record of Decision, East Alaska Resource Management Plan (July 2007); and (3) the Proposed Action and alternatives do not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement or a supplement to the existing environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

This finding is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to the context and to the intensity of the impacts described in the EA.

s/s Elizabeth Maclean  
Elizabeth Maclean  
BLM Glennallen Field Manager

12/15/11  
Date

**DECISION RECORD  
FOR  
Coy Brown  
Access and Trail Maintenance  
DOI-BLM-AKA-020-2011-0026-EA  
Serial # AA92894**

On March 15, 2011, Mr. Coy Brown submitted an application for a right-of-way for access and trail maintenance within the Suslositna Valley. His application included several routes, and the construction of new trail portions and new bridges over Suslositna Creek. Several of the routes requested paralleled each other for a portion of the area.

**DECISION**

After consideration of the environmental impacts associated with this action, BLM's decision is to approve alternative 2 for a period of ten years with option to renew as described in the attached Environmental Assessment (EA) and authorize Coy Brown non-exclusive access and authorization for maintenance of trails mapped and identified within the Suslositna Valley.

This approval is subject to adherence with the operating plan and mitigating measures contained in the attached EA and proposal.

**RATIONALE**

The decision to authorize the proposed action is based on the following:

1. The BLM considered the proposed action and alternatives and conducted an environmental analysis of the impacts associated with each and has determined that there are no significant impacts associated with alternative 2.
2. The selected alternative will not result in any undue or unnecessary environmental degradation.

**Contact the Glennallen Field Office for questions regarding this decision.**

s/s Elizabeth Maclean  
Elizabeth Maclean Date  
BLM Glennallen Field Manager

12/15/11  
Date

**RIGHT-OF-WAY GRANT/TEMPORARY USE PERMIT**

Serial Number  
AA-092894

1. A (right-of-way) (permit) is hereby granted pursuant to:

- a.  Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976 (90 Stat. 2776; 43 U.S.C. 1761);
- b. \_\_\_ Section 28 of the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended (30 U.S.C. 185);
- c. \_\_\_ Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Nature of Interest:

- a. By this instrument, the holder Coy Brown receives a right to construct, operate, maintain and terminate a Non-Exclusive right-of-way for existing trails on public lands (or Federal land for MLA Rights-of Way) described as follows:

A non-exclusive right-of-way grant for access and maintenance for existing trails as identified and mapped within the following described public lands: T. 12 N., R. 9 E., sections 22, 23, 35, 26 and 36. Copper River Meridian. Further described as trail portions A, B, C, D and E.

Please see attached map.

b. The right-of-way permit area granted herein is Twenty (20 ft) feet wide, 21,230 feet long and contains 9.8 acres, more or less. If a site type facility, the facility contains \_\_\_\_\_ acres.

c. This instrument shall terminate on \_\_\_\_\_, 20, 10 years from its effective date unless, prior thereto, it is relinquished abandoned, terminated, or modified pursuant to the terms and conditions of this instrument or of any applicable Federal law or regulation.

d. This instrument  may \_\_\_ may not be renewed. If renewed, the right-of-way or permits shall be subject to the regulations existing at the time of renewal and any other terms and conditions that the authorized officer deems necessary to protect the public interest.

e. Notwithstanding the expiration of this instrument or any renewal thereof, early relinquishment, abandonment, or termination, the provisions of this instrument, to the extent applicable, shall continue in effect and shall be no binding on the holder, its successors, or assigns, until they have fully satisfied the obligations and/or liabilities accruing herein before or on account of the expiration, or prior termination, of the grant.

3. Rental: **Annual Rental rate within Zone 4 for 2011 @ 47.98 per acre (9.8 acres x \$47.98) total \$470.20 annually.**

For and in consideration of the rights granted, the holder agrees to pay the Bureau of Land Management fair market value rental as determined by the authorized officer unless specifically exempted from such payment by regulation. Provided, however, that the rental may be adjusted by the authorized officer, whenever necessary, to reflect changes in the fair market rental value as determined by the application of sound business management principles, and so far as practicable and feasible, in accordance with the comparable commercial practices.

4. Terms and Conditions:

- a. This grant or permit is issued subject to the holders' compliance with all applicable regulations contained in Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations parts 2800 and 2880.
- b. Upon grant termination by the authorized officer, all improvements shall be removed from the public lands within 90 days, or otherwise disposed of as provided in paragraph (4) (d) or as directed by the authorized officer.
- c. Each grant issued pursuant to the authority of paragraph (1) (a) for a term of 20 years or more shall, at a minimum, be reviewed by the

authorized officer at the end of the 20th year and at regular intervals thereafter that do not exceed 10 years. Provided, however, that a right-of-way or permit granted herein may be reviewed at any time deemed necessary by the authorized officer.

- d. The stipulations, plans, maps, or designs set forth in the Exhibit(s) A, dated 11-23-2011 attached hereto, are incorporated into and made a part of this grant instrument as fully and effectively as if they were set forth herein in their entirety.
- e. Failure of the holder to comply with applicable law or any provision of this right-of-way grant or permit shall constitute grounds for suspension or termination thereof.
- f. The holder shall perform all operations in a good and workmanlike manner so as to ensure protection of the environment and the health and safety of the public.
- g. Pursuant to 43 CFR 2800.1-2(b)(1)(iii), no rental shall be collected provided all use is strictly related to rural utility services. Commercial use by other non-rural related services requires rental. The sale or lease of any excess capacity for commercial purposes to other telecommunications service providers that are not exempt from rent by statute, or regulations, shall result in the loss of the rental exemption for that portion of the fiber optic capacity being sold or leased for the commercial purposes. The rental for this portion shall be assessed based on the fair market value as determined by the authorized officer.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, The undersigned agrees to the terms and conditions of this right-of-way grant or permit.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Holder)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Authorized Officer)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Title)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Effective Date of Grant)

# Suslositina Homeowners' Trail

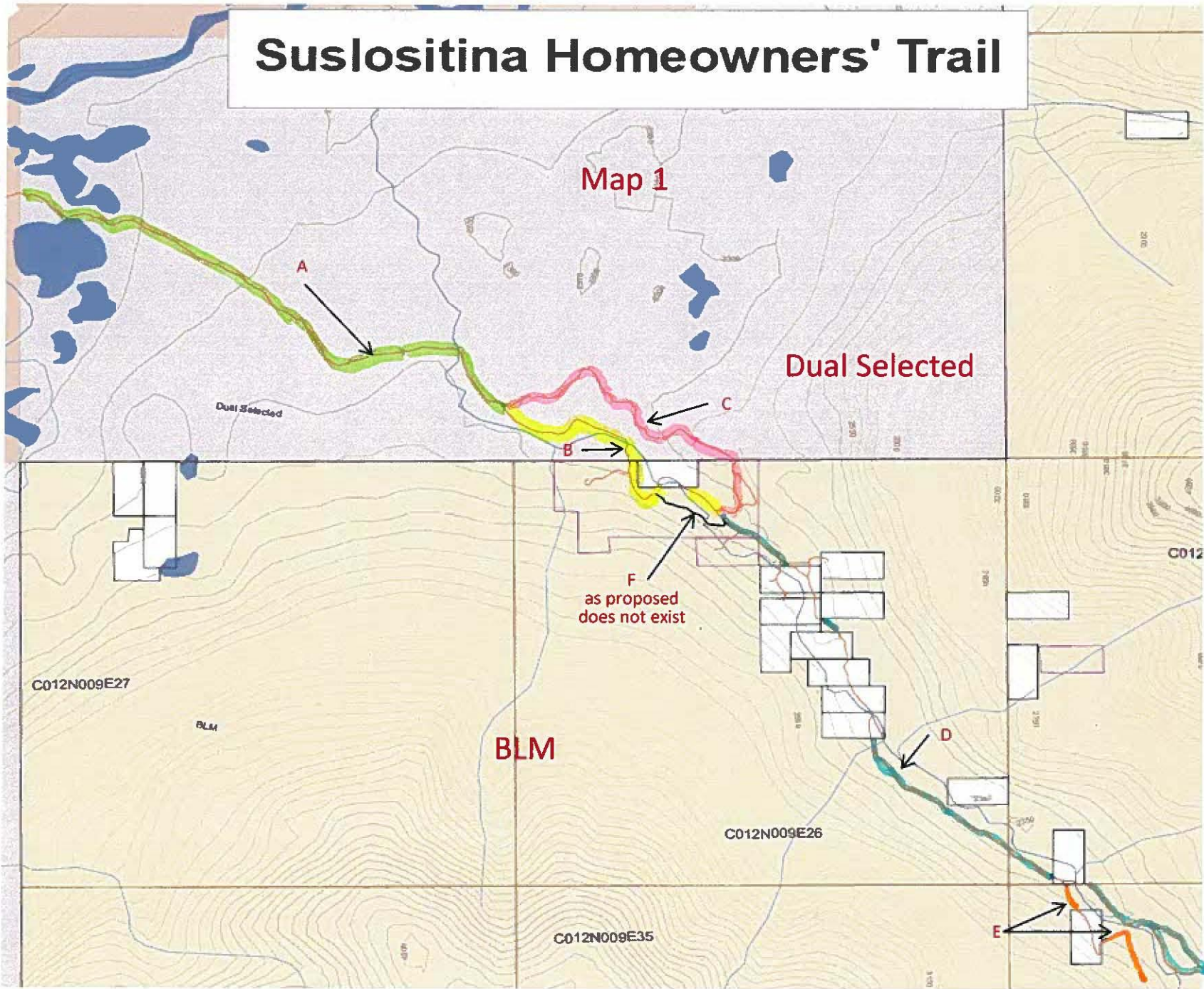
Map 1

Dual Selected

F as proposed does not exist

BLM

- A
- B
- C
- D
- E
- F



Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
**Glennallen Field Office**

NEPA Interdisciplinary Review

Project Name: Coy Brown Right-of-way

Casefile Number: AA-092894

NEPA Document Number: DOI-BLM-AKA-020-2011-0026-EA

NEPA Preparer: Joseph Hart

Please return to preparer by:

Staff Specialist	Resource Area	Comments Provided Yes / No	Date Reviewed
Brenda Becker	Lands and Realty	No	11/16/2011
Marcia Butorac	Recreation and Facilities	No	11/14/2011
Elijah Waters	ANILCA, Section 810		
Elijah Waters	T&E Animals		
Elijah Waters	T&E Plants		
Elijah Waters	Wildlife		
Heath Emmons	Wild and Scenic Rivers	No	11/14/2011
Marnie Graham	Public Affairs	Yes	10/26/2011
Denton Hamby	Special Recreation Use	No	10/3/2011
Denton Hamby	Visual Resources	No	10/3/2011
Brad Honerlaw	Law Enforcement	N/A	
Alysia White	Law Enforcement	Yes	10/31/2011
John Jangala	Cultural Heritage	Yes	10/19/2011
John Jangala	Paleontology	Yes	10/19/2011
Cory Larson	Travel Management	Yes	11/14/2011
James Whitlock	Minerals	N/A	
Ben Seifert	Fire Management	No	11/09/2011
Ben Seifert	Forestry	No	11/09/2011
Ben Seifert	Invasive Weeds	No	11/09/2011
Mike Sondergaard	Soils		
Mike Sondergaard	Air Quality		
Tim Sundlov	Riparian & Wetlands	Yes	11/15/2011
Tim Sundlov	Water Quality	Yes	11/15/2011
Tim Sundlov	Fish Biology	Yes	11/15/2011
Joseph Hart	Hazardous Materials	No	10/26/2011
Elijah Waters	Branch Chief - Resources		

Authorized Officer Review: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_