



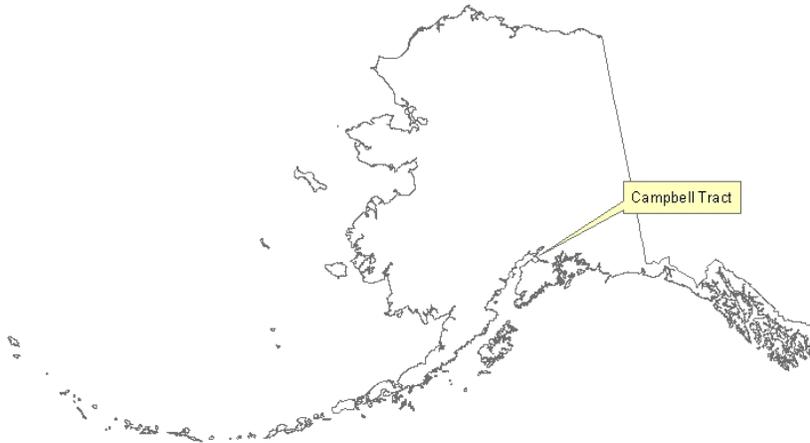
Bureau of Land Management

Anchorage Field Office
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Anchorage, AK 99507
<http://www.anchorage.ak.blm.gov>

**Environmental Assessment
WWII Interpretive Pull-outs**

Applicant: BLM, Anchorage Field Office

AK-040-06-EA-050



**Location:
Campbell Tract
Section 2, T. 12 N., R. 3 W., Seward Meridian
USGS Quadrangle Anchorage A-8 NE**

**Prepared By:
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Archaeologist**

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Campbell Tract (CT) is a 730 acre Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Administrative Site of natural forested public land located within the city limits of the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA).

The primary purpose of the CT is to support the administrative functions and offices for the Anchorage Field Office (AFO) of the BLM. The CT surrounds the Campbell Airstrip, a 5000 foot gravel runway dating to 1942 and is actively used by the AFO and other agencies for government purposes. The CT also supports the Campbell Creek Science Center. The CT also provides a network of recreational trails (approximately 11 miles) for a variety of recreational users.

A. Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action:

One of the goals of both the cultural resource and the recreation programs is to provide outreach to the public with the long term purpose of protecting resources through public education. The WWII remains on CT were determined eligible to the National Register of Historic Places in 2004 and an interpretive effort to inform and educate the public about this local history is a reasonable effort to further these goals.

B. Conformance With Land Use Plan:

The Proposed Action has been reviewed and is in compliance with the Southcentral Management Framework Plan (MFP), March 1980. Objective Number CR-1 of MFP states that BLM intends to “Protect and preserve cultural sites from damage or destruction”. Towards this end BLM’s Heritage Education program works toward teaching the values of our historic and archaeological past in order to better protect and preserve this resource. The 1988 Campbell Tract Facility Management Plan objective C2b supports environmental education on the Campbell Tract. The 1993 Campbell Creek Environmental Education Center Development Plan and Environmental Assessment also supports this type of activity (pp 16).

II. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVE

A. Proposed Action:

The Cultural Resources and the Recreation Programs at the Anchorage Field Office (AFO) propose to establish two WWII interpretive pull-outs along existing trails in the area of the original WWII camp (T.12 N., R. 3 W., sec. 2 Seward Meridian, USGS Quadrangle Anchorage A-8 NE). These pull-outs will each contain two 3’x 2’ interpretive panels placed in low profile bases with a 45 degree viewing angle and a short bench (approximately 4’x 1’) made from recycled materials. These trail segments were chosen because this is where the Army’s Quonset hut camp was located during WWII and because this area is already

popular with the public and would add an extra dimension to their recreational experience here.

The pull-outs are being considered as a traffic control feature to avoid groups of people stopping on the trail and obstructing other users (e.g. equestrians, mountain bikers, skate skiers who typically move faster or require more space than pedestrian traffic). These pull-outs will be constructed of gravel (3/4 minus) overlying native soil at the same level as the adjacent trail. Each pull-out will measure approximately 12 feet deep and 15 feet wide between two panels placed along the edges and a short bench in the center. Since this project will be an Eagle Scout project the work will be done by hand tools.

The first pull-out will be located on the east side of a short section of trail between the pedestrian bridge and Birch Knob trail. This pull-out will require the removal of some alder and some previously disturbed soil to maintain the same level as the adjoining trail. An adjoining cleared area just off of the bridge containing three upright general information panels will be partially re-vegetated to compensate for the removed alder and to separate the upright general information panels from the WWII interpretive pull-out.

The second WWII interpretive pull-out will be located on the south side of Viewpoint Trail approximately 30 feet before it meets Rovers Run Trail and the concrete foundations of the WWII era powerhouse. Only ground cover will be removed, no trees will be cut.

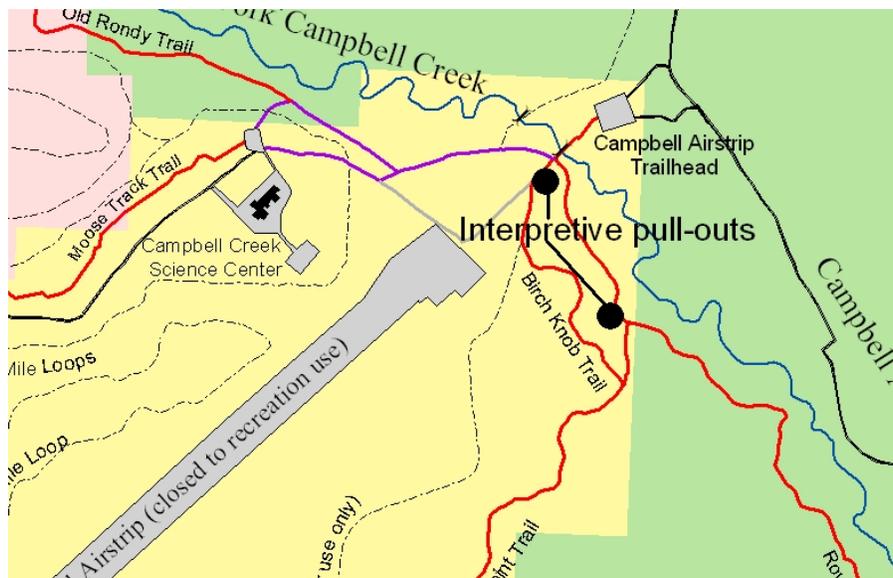


Figure 1

B. No Action Alternative:

The No Action Alternative is to continue present management of the CT. Under this alternative, management practices and resource uses would remain the same. The pull-outs for the interpretive panels would not be placed on these trail segments.

III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

A. Critical Elements

Critical elements either not present or are not affected are: Air Quality, Environmental Justice, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, Prime and Unique Farm lands, Flood Plains, Native American Religious Concerns, Threatened and Endangered Species, Wastes (Hazardous/Solid) Water Quality (Ground/Surface), Wetlands/Riparian Zones, Wild and Scenic Rivers and Wilderness.

1. Cultural Resources:

The CT contains scattered WWII remains dating from 1942 when a 5000 foot military airstrip and support facilities were constructed to support nearby Ft. Richardson. War related improvements included an airstrip, taxiways and revetments for aircraft use and various sod structures for housing and administrative functions. These facilities were constructed from sod and locally available materials due to a shortage of building supplies and now appear as shallow pits and earth mounds covered with vegetation and overgrown concrete foundations with occasional scattered boards and nails. A Quonset hut installation was later established on the banks of Campbell Creek but was removed shortly after WWII. Most of these cultural sites and remains lie off the north end of the existing Campbell Airstrip. These remains, collectively known as Campbell Garrison with Alaska Heritage Resource Survey (AHRs) number ANC-1384, were determined to be eligible to the National Register of Historic Places June 29, 2004. The interpretive panels located on the pull-outs proposed by this project will educate the public about the WWII history of the Campbell Garrison.

2. Invasive, Non-Native Species:

There are 38 non-native plant species known to exist in Anchorage that are listed in the Alaska Exotic Plants Information Clearing House list. Several of these species likely occur in the identified trail relocation areas. These include Buckhorn Plantain *Plantago sp.*, Yellow Toadflax *Linaria vulgaris*, Blue Burr Stickweed *Lappula echinata*, Annual Bluegrass *Poa annua*, Leafy Spurge *Euphorbia esula*, Tufted Vetch *Vicia cracca* and

possibly other species. These species are generally found in disturbed areas and often colonize areas around roads and trails.

The Amber-marked Birch Leaf Miner *Profenusa thomsoni*, a small insect introduced from Europe, in the Anchorage area since the mid 1990's, has infected many of the birch trees in the entire Anchorage Bowl, including the CT. It causes defoliation of some trees and can kill trees that are weak or otherwise stressed.

3. Subsistence:

The CT lands are Federal Public Land as defined in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), Section 810 and fall under the authority of the Federal Subsistence Board and the Subsistence Regulations for the Harvest of Fish and Wildlife on Federal Public Lands in Alaska. The CT lies within the Anchorage Management Unit of Game Management Unit 14C under which the current Subsistence Regulations noted above is closed to the taking of wildlife under both State (hunting and trapping) and Federal Subsistence Regulations. The taking of wildlife on the CT is further limited by Supplemental Rules issued on November 20, 1998 under 43 CFR 8365.1-6 that closed the CT to the use of firearms, archery equipment, traps, or snares. The CT has no documented consistent use by rural Alaskans of fish or game and no knowledge of such use has become available since the inception of the Federal Subsistence Program or the issuance of the noted Supplementary Rules.

B. Land Status:

CT is under the jurisdiction of the BLM by withdrawal for an administrative site directed by PLO 7471 which expires in 2022.

C. Vegetation:

The CT contains a variety of habitats including spruce and birch forests, bogs, and riparian areas. Cottonwood, aspen and birch dominate the woodlands, interspersed with less mature white spruce, numbers of which have experienced high rates of recent beetle kill. The under-story is comprised of shrubs, forbs, lichens and moss above a ground cover of heavy organic litter.

D. Recreation:

The CT is designated for non-motorized recreational use. There are approximately 11 miles of developed recreation trails on CT. The proximity of CT to urban Anchorage places high demands on the site from a variety of users. Most recreation occurs on trails that were developed on old tank roads and airplane taxiways.

Recreation users are primarily residents of Anchorage and surrounding communities. Estimated 2004 visitation was 69,000 user days. Users are typically found walking, running, mountain biking, skiing, snowshoeing, dog mushing and horseback riding throughout the CT. Many users live close to CT and use the area regularly for exercise, often with their family dogs. Regular competitive events, often starting on adjacent non-BLM lands traverse CT including the Nordic Ski Club's Tour of Anchorage and the World Sled Dog Championship Races.

E. Wildlife:

The CT contains a rich diversity of resident and non-resident wildlife. Resident species include moose, porcupine, mink, weasel, red squirrel, muskrat, beaver, snowshoe hare, voles, and shrews and at least 50 species of resident and non-resident birds including horned owl, northern saw-whet owl, boreal owl, northern goshawk, and spruce grouse. Non-resident species moving seasonally through CT to and from the Chugach Mountains to the east include brown bear and black bear, red fox, lynx and wolf. The South Fork of Campbell Creek traverses the northeast corner of CT. This stream supports populations of king and silver salmon, as well as rainbow trout, Dolly Varden, and spiny sculpin. Both black and brown bear intensively fish Campbell Creek during salmon runs.

F. Soils:

Soil found at the project site is of the Kashwitna-Kichatna complex. This soil is coarse-silty loess over gravelly outwash material and is found on slope ranging from 0-3 percent. This soil is considered well drained with an available water capacity of 7.3 inches. Typical means of erosion is by wind or the creek.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

A. Impacts of the Proposed Action:

1. Critical Elements:

a. Cultural Resources:

Impacts to cultural resources will be beneficial due to an enhanced awareness of the history of CT.

b. Invasive, Non-Native Species

Invasive, non-native plant species are known to occur near the project site and throughout the Anchorage Bowl. As vegetation is removed for this project, the potential for an increase in invasive species will be higher. Invasive species would likely colonize disturbed areas.

- c. Subsistence:
The Proposed Action and No Action Alternative have been analyzed and determined to have no effect on any subsistence uses or needs under Section 810.
 - 2. Vegetation:
A small amount of vegetation will be removed during construction of this project. It is anticipated that there will be no excessive erosion issues.
 - 3. Recreation:
The impacts to recreation will be beneficial. The placement of interpretive panels in pull-outs or in wider areas of the trail segments will not impact the experience of recreational users seeking to move through the area quickly (e.g. joggers, mountain bikers), while those users moving more slowly though the landscape will benefit from the educational and historical aspects of the panels. The benches provided in the pull-outs will offer opportunity to users who might otherwise not visit these trails.
 - 4. Wildlife:
During salmon runs black and brown bear fish along the Campbell Creek. Placement of panels should be located at points as far from the creek as feasible.
 - 5. Soils:
Construction and increased foot traffic will result in a loss of vegetation and soil compaction in the immediate project area. Little to no erosion is expected.
- B. Impacts of Alternative #1 - No Action Alternative:
Under the No Action Alternative, knowledge of the history of this area will be limited.
- D. Cumulative Impacts:
The Campbell Tract may see a slight increase in users as a result of this action. Clearing activities will cause some loss of vegetation. Although minor, this loss will be considered in continuing monitoring and management of habitat on CT.
- E. Mitigation Measures:
During and following installation of the pull-outs, disturbed areas should be monitored for invasive, non-native species and eradicated by hand or mechanical means.

V. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

A. Persons and Agencies Consulted:

B. List of Preparers:

Donna Redding, Cultural Resources

Doug Ballou, Recreation