



Bureau of Land Management

Anchorage Field Office
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Anchorage, AK 99507
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**Administrative Determination (AD)/Documentation of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)
Reindeer Grazing Permit**

Applicant: Faye Ongtawasruk

Case File No.: F-898

AK-040-06-AD/DNA-021

Location:

T. 1 N., R. 43 W., Sections 26-28, 34-36, K.R.M.
T. 2 N., R. 41 W., Sections 5, 8, 17, K.R.M.
T. 2 N., R. 42 W., Sections 4-6, 9, 16, 21-24, 26, 27, K.R.M.
T. 2 N., R. 43 W., Sections 5-7, 20-22, 25-30, 35, 36 K.R.M.
T. 2 N., R. 44 W., Sections 3, 4, 9, 10, 15, 23, 24, K.R.M.
T. 3 N., R. 41 W., Sections 13-16, 21-24, 25-28, 32-36, K.R.M.
T. 3 N., R. 42 W., ALL, K.R.M.
T. 3 N., R. 43 W., Sections 1, 12, 19, 31, 32, K.R.M.
T. 3 N., R. 44 W., Sections 13, 23, 24, 25-27, 33-36, K.R.M.
T. 4 N., R. 40 W., S1/2 NE1/4, K.R.M.
T. 4 N., R. 41 W., S1/2, K.R.M.
T. 4 N., R. 42 W., ALL, K.R.M.
T. 4 N., R. 43 W., Sections 4-8, 17-19, K.R.M.
T. 4 N., R. 44 W., Sections 13, 24, K.R.M.
T. 5 N., R. 38 W., Sections 5 SW1/4, 6, 7, 8 W1/2,
NE1/4, W1/2SW1/4, 17-21, 27 W1/2, W1/2SW1/4, 28-34, K.R.M.
T. 5 N., R. 39 W., ALL, K.R.M.

Prepared By:

Thomas S. Sparks
Natural Resource Program Coordinator
2/22/06

Administrative Determination (AD)
Documentation of Land Use Plan Conformance and NEPA Adequacy (DNA)
U.S. Department of the Interior - Bureau of Land Management
Anchorage Field Office

A. BLM Office: Anchorage Field Office **Lease/Serial Case File No.:** F-898

Proposed Action Title/Type: Reauthorization of Reindeer Grazing Permit for a four (4) year period/4300

Location of Proposed Action: Traditional boundary of the Ongtowsruk Reindeer Grazing Allotment described as:

Beginning at the mouth of Lost River on the Bering Sea, thence northerly up the west bank of Lost River to its headwaters; thence northerly to the Continental Divide; thence northeasterly along the Continental Divide between the Mint River and Pinguk River drainages on the north and the Don River, California River, and Agiapuk River Drainages on the south to a point directly south of the headwaters of the South Fork of the Nuluk River; thence north to these headwaters and then easterly along the northern bank of the South Fork of the Nuluk River to its confluence with the Nuluk River; thence down the west limit of the Nuluk River to its confluence in Ikpek Lagoon; thence westerly along the southern and western shore of Ikpek Lagoon to its confluence with the Chukchi Sea; thence southwesterly along the coast of the Chukchi Sea to Wales; thence southwesterly along the Bering Sea Coast to the mouth of Lost River, the point of beginning.

Description of the Proposed Action

The proposed action is to renew a Reindeer Grazing Permit to Mr. Faye Ongtowsruk from 1/4/06 to 12/31/09, a period of four (4) years in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU, AK 025-2003-05) signed between the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service and State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources.

Applicant (if any): Faye Ongtowsruk

B. Conformance with the Land Use Plan (LUP) and Consistency with Related Subordinate Implementation Plans

The proposed action is consistent with the Northwest Management Framework Plan completed in 1982. The objective for range management of the Northwest Management Framework Plan was to encourage proper utilization of range by livestock. Reindeer grazing was recognized as an important use by livestock on public lands. Conflicts between reindeer and caribou were identified by allowing for adjustments of reindeer allotment boundaries and/or designating non use areas to avoid conflict with caribou winter range. The area of potential conflict concern at the time of the Plan was east and west of the Buckland River. The Northwest Management Framework Plan also called for the development of an Allotment Management Plan to support objectives to maintain and improve the range resource and reduce fire control costs. Only one Allotment Management Plan has ever been signed, that of Mr. Henry, for the lands near Koyuk.

C. Identify applicable NEPA documents and other related documents that cover the Proposed Action.

EA-070-92-18, DNA AK-020-96-057 and the MOU, AK 025-2003-05

D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria

- 1. Is the current Proposed Action substantially the same action (or is a part of that action) as previously analyzed? Is the current Proposed Action located at a site specifically analyzed in an existing document?**

The proposed action is identical as that analyzed in EA-070-92-18. The proposed action is located on the same lands as previously analyzed.

- 2. Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s) appropriate with respect to the current Proposed Action, given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?**

The range of alternatives analyzed in of EA No. AK-070-92-18 is appropriate with respect to the proposed action given current circumstances. The Ongtowsruk family has been in the reindeer business since 1970. In the past 10 years, the Ongtowsruk herd has declined to several hundred due to the relatively recent westerly migration of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd (WACH) onto the Seward Peninsula in the winter months. In 1999 and 2000 the WACH migrated to the eastern portion of the Ongtowsruk range causing a major loss of reindeer. The BLM lands comprise approximately one third of the approximately 608,000 acres within the Ongtowsruk traditional grazing area. The National Park Service has issued a Special Use Permit to Mrs. Ongtowsruk for a four year period (1/4/06-12/31/09). The adjacent landowners, Wales Native Corporation, Inalik Native Corporation Bering Straits Native Corporation, and the State of Alaska

have issued letters of non objection. Other than intermittent use as winter caribou range on the far eastern portion of the Ongtowasruk range, there are no competing resource values, environmental concerns or interests in the BLM administered lands.

3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances?

Although the WACH had entered onto the Seward Peninsula when EA-070-92-18 was completed, only in 1999 and 2000 did the WACH move into the eastern limits of the Ongtowasruk range. Given the cyclical nature of the WACH and its traditional wintering grounds within the far eastern Seward Peninsula the existing analysis is appropriate given the over 30 year history of the Ongtowasruk's use of the range for reindeer herding activities over that of the competing WACH interests. The existing analysis acknowledged the potential for overgrazing of vegetation (lichen) and the potential impact on the plant ecosystem.

4. Do the methodology and analytical approach used in the existing NEPA document(s) continue to be appropriate for the current Proposed Action?

The methodology and analytical approach used in the existing EA is appropriate for the current proposed action.

5. Are the direct and indirect impacts of the current Proposed Action substantially unchanged from those identified in the existing NEPA document(s)? Does the existing NEPA document analyze site-specific impacts related to the current Proposed Action?

The direct and indirect impacts of the proposed action are substantially unchanged from those identified in the existing EA. Analyzing the impacts of the proposed action under a new EA would result in the same conclusions drawn by the existing EA. The existing EA addresses the critical elements and sufficiently analyzes site-specific impacts of the proposed action by addressing impacts related to soils, vegetation, cultural resources, socioeconomic conditions, terrestrial wildlife, wastes, hazardous substances, and subsistence.

6. Are the cumulative impacts that would result from implementation of the current Proposed Action substantially unchanged from those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)?

The cumulative impacts that would result from implementation of the current proposed action would have the same results as those analyzed in the existing EA.

7. Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current Proposed Action?

The existing EA was publicized in the Anchorage Daily News on 9/1/92. Agencies consulted for the existing EA included Bering Straits Native Corporation, Wales Native Corporation, National Park Service, State of Alaska, Departments of Fish and Game, Habitat Division, Land Management, and Division of Intergovernmental Coordination.

E. Interdisciplinary Analysis:

The following individuals of the Anchorage Field Office and their disciplines were consulted in the analysis of the proposed action:

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| *ACECs | Kelley |
| *Air Quality | Chuck Denton |
| *Cultural Resources (Paleontology) | Redding |
| *Environmental Justice | Sparks |
| *Farmlands, Prime/Unique | Lead Preparer |
| Fire | Sterbenz |
| Fisheries | Scott |
| *Floodplains | Chuck Denton |
| Forestry | Sterbenz |
| Iditarod Trail | Svejnoha/Schlapfer |
| *Invasive, Nonnative Species | Kelley/Seppi |
| Land Status | Sparks |
| Lands/Realty | Realty Specialist |
| Minerals | Persson |

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|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| *Native American Religious Concerns | Redding |
| Recreation | Schlapfer |
| Soils | Kelley |
| *Subsistence | Jeff Denton |
| Surface Protection | Kelley |
| *T&E Species | Seppi |
| Vegetation | Kelley |
| Visual Resources | Schlapfer |
| *Wastes, Hazardous/Solid | Beck |
| *Water Quality, Surface & Ground | Chuck Denton |
| *Wetlands/Riparian Zones | Seppi |
| *Wild & Scenic Rivers | Schlapfer |
| *Wilderness | Schlapfer |
| Wildlife | Seppi |

F. Mitigation Measures:

Mitigation measures enacted by the National Park Service, under Permit # ARO WEAR 2600 003, “conditions of permit” and “Additional Conditions of the Ongtowsruk Reindeer Grazing Permit” are recognized by the BLM as per the MOU.

G. Conclusion

Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the applicable land use plan and that the NEPA documentation fully covers the Proposed Action and constitute BLM's compliance with the requirements of NEPA.

Gary Reimer
Anchorage Field Manager

May 1, 2006
Date