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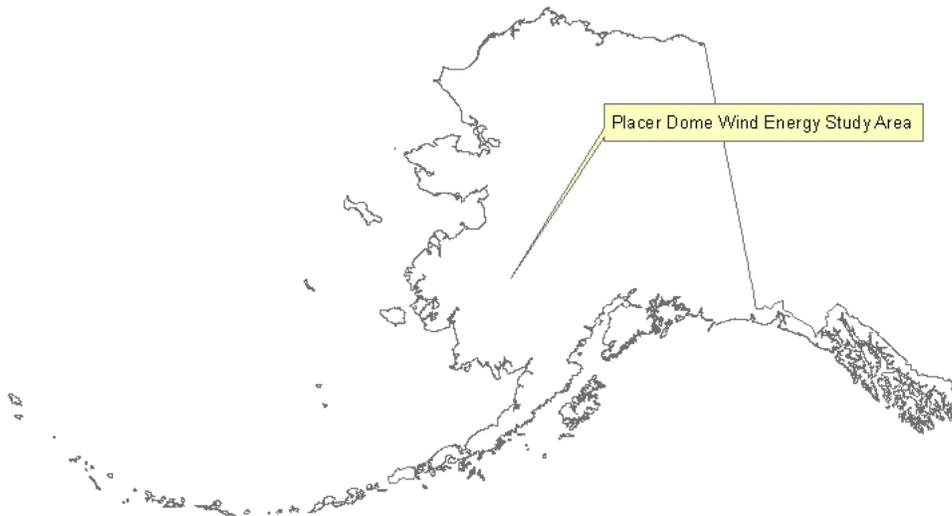
Bureau of Land Management
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**Documentation of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)
Installation of Three Temporary Wind Monitoring Towers
Right-of-Way**

Placer Dome U.S. (Barrick), Anchorage, Alaska

AA-85917

AK-040-06-DNA-053



Location:
Sections 14, 15, and 22, T. 21 N., R. 50 W., Seward Meridian

Prepared By:

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Realty Specialist**

September 21, 2006

Description of the Proposed Action: Placer Dome, U.S., proposes to install three temporary wind monitoring towers at sites southeast of Juningrula Mountain. These new sites are at lower elevations than the sites used in 2005 and were chosen in an attempt to avoid icing which is preventing a true assessment of the efficient use of wind energy to support Placer Dome’s mining operations at Donlin Creek.

Four towers were built in 2005 at higher elevations. Data from lower elevations is necessary to better define the wind resource.

Applicant (if any): Placer Dome U.S. (Barrick)

B. Conformance with the Land Use Plan (LUP) and Consistency with Related Subordinate Implementation Plans: The Proposed Action has been reviewed and found to be in compliance with the Southwest Planning Area Management Framework Plan (MFP), Signed November 1981. Lands Objective L-2, states that BLM will allow rights-of-way grants through the Planning Area.

C. Identify applicable NEPA documents and other related documents that cover the Proposed Action. Environmental Assessment AK-040-05-EA-029.

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 current Proposed Action is substantially the same action as previously analyzed. The sites are in the same area (township) but at lower elevations.

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?

Yes, the same alternatives exist in this proposal as in AK-040-05-EA-029. The other alternative analyzed in AK-040-05-EA-029 was the “No Action” alternative.

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

The existing analysis was done in July 2005 and finalized with a FONSI on July 18, 2005. No new information has been received and no circumstances have changed since the July 2005 analysis.

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

Yes, AK-040-05-EA-029 analyzed the environmental effects of installing wind monitoring devices on mountaintops in township T. 21 N., R. 50 W., Seward Meridian.

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?

Yes, the direct and indirect impacts are the same. The analysis in AK-040-05-EA-029 is site specific to the same remote township as that affected by the current proposed action. Both this proposed action and the proposed action in AK-040-05-EA-029 address the installation of wind monitoring devices on mountaintops in T. 21 N., R. 50 W., Seward Meridian.

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)?

Yes, the cumulative impacts from the current Proposed Action are substantially unchanged from those analyzed in AK-040-05-EA-029.

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

Yes.

E. Interdisciplinary Analysis:

All Anchorage Field Office specialists reviewed the proposed actions under AK-040-05-EA-029 and under this DNA. Cultural Resource, Threatened and Endangered Species and Subsistence clearances were obtained in support of this DNA.

F. Mitigation Measures:

The mitigation measures employed under AK-040-05-EA-029 are also applicable to the proposed action addressed in this DNA. As the proponent will be installing more guy-wired towers in the township, additional measures are imposed to address impacts on migratory birds. The applicable mitigation measures are as follows:

1. Proponent shall not remove vegetation or soil at tower sites. Vegetation may be cut around the towers and anchor points as necessary.
2. Proponent shall utilize one snow machine, access route to and from each tower site. Snow machine, access routes will be utilized only when there is at six (6) inches of snow cover or more.
3. If feasible, snow machine, access routes shall be located on ridge tops.
4. All debris, equipment and trash shall be removed from the site when work is completed.
5. Towers shall not be sited in or near wetlands, other known bird concentration areas (*e.g.*, state or Federal refuges, staging areas, rookeries), in known migratory or daily movement flyways, or in habitat of threatened or endangered species. Towers shall not be sited in areas with a high incidence of fog, mist, and low ceilings.
6. If taller (>199 feet AGL) towers requiring lights for aviation safety must be constructed, the minimum amount of pilot warning and obstruction avoidance lighting required by the FAA shall be used. Unless otherwise required by the FAA, only white (preferable) or red strobe lights shall be used at night, and these shall be the minimum number, minimum intensity, and minimum number of flashes per minute (longest duration between flashes) allowable by the FAA. The use of solid red or pulsating red warning lights at night shall be avoided. Current research indicates that solid or pulsating (beacon) red lights attract night-migrating birds at a much higher rate than white strobe lights. Red strobe lights have not yet been studied.
7. Tower designs using guy wires for support shall have daytime visual markers on the wires to prevent collisions by diurnally moving birds. (For guidance on markers, see *Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC). 1994. Mitigating Bird Collisions with Power Lines: The State of the Art in 1994. Edison Electric Institute, Washington, D.C., 78 pp*, and *Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC). 1996. Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines. Edison Electric Institute/Raptor Research Foundation, Washington, D.C., 128 pp*. Copies can be obtained via the Internet at <http://www.eei.org/resources/pubcat/enviro/>, or by calling 1-800/334-5453).
8. Towers and attendant facilities shall be sited, designed and constructed so as to avoid or minimize habitat loss within and adjacent to the tower “footprint”. However, a larger tower footprint is preferable to the use of guy wires in construction. Road access and fencing shall be minimized to reduce or prevent habitat fragmentation and disturbance, and to reduce above ground obstacles to birds in flight.
9. If significant numbers of breeding, feeding, or roosting birds are known to habitually use the proposed tower construction area, relocation to an alternate site is recommended. If this is not an option, seasonal restrictions on construction may be imposed in order to avoid disturbance during periods of high bird activity.

10. If a tower is constructed or proposed for construction, Department of Interior personnel shall be allowed access to the site to evaluate bird use, conduct dead-bird searches, to place net catchments below the towers but above the ground, and to place radar, Global Positioning System, infrared, thermal imagery, and acoustical monitoring equipment as necessary to assess and verify bird movements and to gain information on the impacts of various tower sizes, configurations, and lighting systems.
11. Towers no longer in use or determined to be obsolete shall be removed within 12 months of cessation of use.
12. In order to obtain information on the usefulness of these guidelines in preventing bird strikes, and to identify any recurring problems with their implementation, which may necessitate modifications, please advise us of the final location and specifications of the proposed tower(s), and which of the measures recommended for the protection of migratory birds were implemented. If any of the recommended measures cannot be implemented, please explain why they were not feasible.

Conclusion:

This proposal is in conformance with an applicable land use plan and previous NEPA documentation fully addresses its environmental consequences. Therefore, no further environmental analysis is necessary. The prior NEPA documentation and this review constitute BLM's compliance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act.

Mike Zaidlicz
Acting Anchorage Field Manager

October 12, 2006
Date