

**DECISION RECORD
and
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

I. Decision:

It is my decision to authorize Mr. Thomas E. Baumgartner's winter, overland move of a John Deere 450C Crawler Tractor (dozer) and Sled on approximately 35 miles of the Iditarod National Historic Trail that traverse BLM lands in the Farewell Burn area south of McGrath, Alaska.

II. Rationale for the Decision:

Interior Alaska is virtually roadless. As a consequence, heavy equipment is often barged into the interior and subsequently moved overland to areas where it is needed. Typically it is either moved along ridge tops or, in non-mountainous areas, it is moved during the winter with adequate snow cover and ground frost to avoid and/or minimize damage to permafrost, vegetation and soils.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act directs the Secretary of the Interior to manage the public lands under principles of multiple use and sustained yield through the issuance of permits or other appropriate legal instruments while preventing unnecessary or undue degradation of the lands, 43 U.S.C. §1732(b).

The statute's implementing regulations provide that:

Permits shall be used to authorize uses of public lands ... that involve ... little or no land improvement ... upon a determination that the proposed use is in conformance with Bureau of Land Management plans ... if the public lands covered by the proposal are appropriate for the proposed land use and if the proposal is otherwise legal.

[43 CFR §2920]

The route for the proposed heavy equipment move traverses lands within the planning area of BLM-Alaska's November 1981, Southwest Management Framework Plan. It also utilizes the Iditarod National Historic Trail corridor and is subject to the provisions of the March 1986, Iditarod National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan.

BLM- Alaska's Southwest Management Framework Plan, management objective, L-1.2, "[a]llows [for] rights-of-ways throughout the planning area to meet transportation needs . . . [and to] facilitate development of public and private resources within the planning area to the extent that such development does not produce undue environmental degradation."

The Iditarod National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management Plan includes the following management objective: 6) "Public use of the Trail segments should be

encouraged, protected, and managed to the extent possible that such use does not impact the historic values of the Iditarod NHT.”

There will be little or no land improvement resulting from the movement of Mr. Baumgartner’s equipment along that portion of the Iditarod National Historic Trail that traverses BLM lands in the Farewell Burn as the purpose of the move is to traverse the land as opposed to modifying it. Overland, movement of the equipment is in compliance with the intent of BLM- Alaska’s Southwest Management Framework Plan’s objective, L-1.2. and allows for transport of the equipment across BLM lands in the roadless Farewell Burn. Overland movement of the equipment through the Farewell Burn falls within the original purpose and need for development of the Seward to Nome Trail. Although the Seward to Nome Trail is now designated a National Historic Trail and although the advent of the airplane now meets some of the needs associated with the trail’s initial development, the need for overland moves of heavy equipment through roadless areas of interior Alaska persists today, and is in keeping with the original purpose and need for the trail’s development.

III. Finding of No Significant Impact:

The proposed action is consistent with existing national environmental policies and objectives as set forth in Section 101 (a) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA).

The equipment will be moved during winter in Alaska with adequate snow cover and ground frost to protect cultural resources, vegetation, soils and permafrost. Interference with other travelers and wildlife along the route will be transitory and sporadic. Impacts to soils, vegetation and visual resources will also be transitory with an expectation of resource recovery within a relatively short period of time.

Further and based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, it is my determination that the proposed action does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment and that an environmental impact statement is not required.

IV. ANILCA Section 810 Compliance:

The proposed action will not significantly restrict Federal subsistence uses, decrease the abundance of federal subsistence resources, alter the distribution of federal subsistence resources, or limit qualified Federal subsistence user access.

V. Adverse Energy Impact Compliance:

This action has been analyzed as required by Washington Office Instruction Memorandum 2002-053 to determine if it will cause an adverse impact on energy development. The action will not have an adverse direct or indirect impact on energy

development, production or distribution. The preparation of a Statement of Adverse Energy Impact is not required.

VI. Compliance and Monitoring Plan:

Mitigation measures have been set forth in the Environmental Assessment. Those measures are incorporated into the terms, conditions, and stipulations attached to the temporary use permit (see attachment A) authorizing Thomas E. Baumgartner to conduct the overland move.

Disturbance of the Iditarod National Historic Trail bed, if any, will be remediated in route.

/s/ Mike Zaidlicz
Mike Zaidlicz
Anchorage Field Manager

3/14/2008
Date