

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

**Anchorage Field Office
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DECISION RECORD

**Right-of-Way; Temporary Storage
Applicant: University of Alaska, Alaska Center for Energy & Power
Case File Number: AA-092889
DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2011-0022-CX**

1. Decision:

It is my decision to authorize a Right-of-Way (ROW) to University of Alaska, Alaska Center for Energy & Power (UofA), Case File Number: AA-092889, for a period of approximately two years (Until October 31, 2012). Stipulations and conditions are attached.

2. Proposed Action:

The proposed action is to grant a temporary ROW to the UofA for a period of two years (October 31, 2012) to store a drill rig and heavy equipment within a former gravel pit along the Pilgrim Hot Springs Road. The equipment would be either driven or slung by helicopter to the Pilgrim Hot Springs. The ROW is approximately 3 acres. The ROW will be used for temporary storage of equipment used in the assessment of geothermal resources at Pilgrim Hot Springs, located on private lands. Due to the poor conditions of the Pilgrim Hot Springs Road, the UofA has requested use of the former gravel pit to store equipment.

3. Rationale for the Decision:

The rationale for the decision is based on the need of the applicant to improve alternative energy resources in rural Alaska.

The proposed action is in conformance with the Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Resource Management Plan, Approved: September, 2008. The area of the proposed activity is not within a critical subsistence use area and no serious wildlife problems are anticipated.

4. ANILCA Section 810 Compliance:

The proposed action will not significantly restrict subsistence uses. No reasonably

foreseeable and significant decrease in the abundance of harvestable resources or in the distribution of harvestable resources, and nor reasonably foreseeable limitations on harvester access will result from the proposed action.

5. 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.

6. Lands with Wilderness Characteristics:

The proposed action has been reviewed for the following Wilderness Characteristics and found to contain none of the characteristics:

- 1) Size-roadless areas of over 5000 acres of contiguous BLM lands.
- 2) Naturalness-affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the works of humans substantially unnoticeable to the average visitor
- 3) Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.
- 4) Supplemental values-if size, naturalness, and solitude/outstanding opportunities are met, then consider if the area contains ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. Supplemental values are not required to be present in order to classify an area as Lands with Wilderness Characteristics.

The proposed action is located along a developed gravel road. The gravel road (Pilgrim Hot Springs Road) provides access to Pilgrim Hot Springs and is frequently used by residents of Nome, Alaska and other visitors to the Nome area who have access to vehicles. Pilgrim Hot Springs Road can be accessed from the main Nome to Kougarak Highway.

7. Consultation and Coordination:

Public participation was accomplished through the development of the Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Management Plan which anticipated routine land authorizations in accordance with Title V of FLPMA. Adequate measures to protect public lands through stipulations and required operating procedures are in place. Internal scoping was conducted by AFO staff and included threatened and endangered species, cultural clearances and ANILCA 810 analysis.

8. Compliance and Monitoring Plan:

Compliance and monitoring of this authorization will be conducted by the BLM Anchorage Field Office. Inspection will be made prior to the applicant's use and after the applicant reclaims the land.

/s/

5/23/2011

Matthew S. Varner
Anchorage Field Manager, Acting

Date

Attachments: Terms and Stipulations



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

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<http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/fo/ado.html>

**Categorical Exclusion
Right-of-Way; Temporary Storage
Applicant: University of Alaska
Case File Number: AA-092889
DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2011-0022-CX**



Location:

Kateel River Meridian, Alaska,

T. 5 S., R. 31 W.,
sec. 12, SE¹/₄SE¹/₄ (within)

Prepared By:

Anchorage Field Office
April, 2011

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

A. Background

BLM Office: Anchorage Field Office Lease/Serial/Case File No: AA-092889

Environmental Document No: DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2011-0022-CX

Proposed Action:

The proposed action is to grant a temporary right-of-way (ROW) to the University of Alaska's Center for Energy and Power (UofA) for a period of two years (October 2012) to store a drill rig and heavy equipment within a former gravel pit along the Pilgrim Hot Springs Road. The equipment would be either driven or slung by helicopter to the Pilgrim Hot Springs. The ROW is approximately 3 acres. The ROW will be used for temporary storage of equipment used in the assessment of geothermal resources at Pilgrim Hot Springs, located on private lands. Due to the poor conditions of the Pilgrim Hot Springs Road, the UofA has requested use of the former gravel pit to store equipment. The UofA, Alaska Center for Energy and Power has been awarded funds by the Department of Energy and Alaska Energy Authority to conduct geothermal resource evaluations at Pilgrim Hot Springs. Due to the poor conditions of an existing gravel road (Pilgrim Hot Springs Road) from the main Nome to Kougarok Highway, the UofA has requested that BLM grant a ROW for two field seasons to store equipment necessary to conduct drilling operations.

Location:

Kateel River Meridian, Alaska,

T. 5 S., R. 31 W.,
sec. 12, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ (within)

Description:

The equipment will be stored at a gravel pit. The gravel pit was used by the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities during construction of the Pilgrim Hot Springs Road through a Free Use Permit authorized by BLM. The gravel pit has been reclaimed. Drilling will take place on private lands owned by village and regional corporations (corporations established by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act). UofA will either drive the drill rig from the gravel pit or sling the drill rig by helicopter. An RFP has been put out by UofA for the drilling services and at this time it is unknown the exact equipment that will be used by the contractor. However, it is anticipated that a track mounted drill rig, an air compressor unit and a small bull dozer (Cat

D-6) will be necessary to perform the drilling services. These three pieces of equipment would be taken to the gravel pit by truck from Nome. .

Applicant: University of Alaska's Center for Energy and Power

B. Land Use Plan Conformance 43 CFR 1610.5-3(a)

Land Use Plan Name: Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Approved: September. 2008

The proposed action is in conformance with plan because it is specifically provided for in the following planning decisions: Under Lands and Realty I-2n Rights of Way: It states "The BLM may issue rights-of-way for a variety of uses including but not limited to: roads, water pipelines, electric lines and communication sites under the authority of Title V of FLPMA."

C. NEPA Compliance

The proposed action for the short term right-of-way is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with United States Department of the Interior 43 CFR §46.210 or United States Department of Interior Manual, Part 516, Chapter 11, and the BLM NEPA Handbook H-1790-1, Appendix 4 p. 152 which provides:

E. Realty

19. Issuance of short-term (3 years or less) rights-of-way or land use authorizations for such uses as storage sites, apiary sites, and construction sites where the proposal includes rehabilitation to restore the land to its natural or original condition.

D. Extraordinary Circumstances

The following Departmental List of Extraordinary Circumstances apply to individual actions. Departmental instructions mandate that environmental documents must be prepared for actions which may:

1. Have significant adverse impacts on public health or safety.
2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order

11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.

3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.
5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.
7. Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.
8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.
9. Violate Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).
11. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).
12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).

This categorical exclusion is appropriate because there are no extraordinary circumstances that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances in 43 CFR §46.215 are pertinent.

E. 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.

F. Signature

The proposed action is in conformance with a management framework plan or a resource management plan, 43 C.F.R. § 1610.8(a)(3) (2006). The Department of the Interior has determined and found that the proposed action is within a category of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment and that neither an environmental assessment nor an environmental impact statement is required, 40 C.F.R. §1508.4 (2006).

Authorized Official: /s/ Matthew S. Varner, Acting FM Date: 5/23/2011