



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Anchorage Field Office
4700 BLM Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99507-2591
<http://www.blm.gov/ak>

Campbell Tract Airstrip Trail Extension, Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2012-0025-EA

DECISION RECORD

Background

The Campbell Tract Facility (CTF) is a 730-acre Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) and Administrative Site consisting of natural, mostly wooded, public land located within the city limits of the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA). The CTF is centered around the Campbell Airstrip, a 5,000-foot gravel runway dating to 1942, that is actively used by the Anchorage Field Office and other agencies for government purposes. The primary recreational interest at the CTF is year-round non-motorized trail use. Recent trail use counts recorded over 120,000 annual visits at CTF.

In the snow-free months, due to the current trail route, multiple-use trail users currently travel on the actual airstrip when the airstrip is operational and receives landings. This has been a long-term safety concern that continues to threaten Campbell Airstrip summer aviation operations.

Additionally, during the snow season, the existing multi-use trail currently joins a winter-designated dogsled trail near a corner with poor visibility. This has been a long-term winter safety concern.

Decision

I have decided to select *Alternative 2 – Proposed Action* for implementation.

This decision is based on site-specific analysis in the *Campbell Tract Airstrip Trail Extension, Environmental Assessment* (DOI-BLM-AKA-010-2012-0025-EA), the management decisions contained in the Record of Decision for the *Ring of Fire Resource Management Plan* (RMP/ROD), and the management decisions contained in *A Management Plan for Public Use and Resource Management on the BLM Campbell Tract Facility* (BLM 2012, BLM 2008, and BLM 1988; respectively). The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) indicates that the selected alternative has been analyzed in an EA and has been found to have no significant environmental effects. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required and will not be prepared.

My decision to authorize this minor trail re-route is summarized as follows (refer to EA, pp. 5-6 for more detail):

1. Beginning in July 2012, approximately 475 feet of new, 10-foot wide trail would be cleared of vegetation and hardened using a combination of manual labor and heavy equipment.
2. After the new trail is constructed, approximately 450 feet of existing trail would be obliterated using heavy equipment.
3. Physical barriers, such as wood lathe fencing or dead trees, would be used to prevent access to the old route.
4. Over time, and as funding allows, the old trail would be revegetated with large trees and smaller shrubs to discourage use and to promote early seral stage habitat.

Rationale for the Decision

The No Action Alternative was not selected because it would not meet the BLM's purpose for action nor would it satisfy the management decisions concerning modifications to the trail system in light of user group conflicts.

Alternative 2 was selected because it meets BLM's purpose and objectives and will resolve both winter and summer safety concerns at the north end of the airstrip. In winter, the selected alternative will successfully separate multiple-use trail users from dogsledders at an intersection with limited visibility (EA, pp. 6-7). In summer, the selected alternative will effectively direct Airstrip Trail users out of the landing zone towards Old Rony Trail (EA, pp. 6-7). (Currently, Airstrip Trail users are directed through an active landing zone to reconnect to Old Rony Trail.)

Laws, Authorities, and Land Use Plan Conformance

The EA and supporting documentation have been prepared consistent with the requirements of various statutes and regulations, including but not limited to (EA, p. 3):

- Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980
- Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976
- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

The project area for the selected alternative is subject to management guidance and decisions specified in:

Ring of Fire Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan – Anchorage Field Office, Alaska, dated March 2008.

The Proposed Action is consistent with the objectives outlined in the document and is not in conflict with other resources in the area. The RMP/ROD (BLM, p. ROD-10, 2008) specifies that "...Management of this [Campbell Tract] administrative site would continue to be guided by:

A Management Plan for Public Use and Resource Management on the BLM Campbell Tract Facility" (BLM 1988).

This CTF plan covers twenty management actions that make up the management program for the administrative site. The proposed trail actions are in conformance with the applicable land use plan because they are specifically addressed in the following decisions:

Action RM-1: Trail use conflicts

- c. Realign and widen, if necessary, the designated ski trail to accommodate multiple winter uses. Expand the trail system south of the currently designated ski trail for multiple winter uses (see RM-4a).

Action RM-4: Trail system improvements

- a. Develop new winter trails south of the existing, designated ski trail to provide for multiple winter uses, including skiing, horseback riding, and skijoring.

Public Involvement, Consultation, and Coordination

On June 8, 2012, the BLM posted an announcement on the Anchorage Field Office’s NEPA Register identifying the project and soliciting public comment. On June 11, 2012, the BLM contacted the membership of the Far North Bicentennial Park Trail User Group and received six responses in support of the project (EA, p. 3 and Appendix B).

Appeal Opportunities

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR § 4. To appeal you must file a notice of appeal at the BLM Anchorage Field Office, 4700 BLM Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99507, within 30 days from receipt of this decision. The appeal must be in writing and delivered in person, via the United States Postal Service mail system, or other common carrier, to the Anchorage Field Office as noted above. *The BLM does not accept appeals by facsimile or email.* The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error.

If you wish to file a petition pursuant to regulation 43 CFR § 4.21 (58 FR 4939, January 19, 1993) for a stay of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for a stay must accompany your notice of appeal. Except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulation, a petition for a stay of decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards: (a) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied, (b) The likelihood of the appellant’s success on the merits, (c) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and (d) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

Copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be submitted to each party named in this decision and to the Interior Board of Land Appeals and to the Office of the Solicitor (see 43 CFR § 4.413); Office of the Regional Solicitor, Alaska Region, U.S. Department of the Interior, 4230 University Drive, Suite 300, Anchorage, Alaska 99508; at the same time the original documents are filed with this office. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

/s/ James M. Fincher

June 21, 2012

James M. Fincher
Anchorage Field Manager

Date

Attachments

Finding of No Significant Impact, June 2012

References

BLM. 2008. Approved Ring of Fire Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision. Anchorage: 2008. Print.

BLM. 1988. A Management Plan for Public Use and Resource Management on the Bureau of Land Management Campbell Tract Facility. Anchorage: 1988. Print.



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Campbell Tract Airstrip Trail Extension, Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2012-0025-EA

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Background

In June 2012, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) (AKA-010-2012-0025-EA) analyzing the effects of a minor trail re-route to address long-term safety concerns at the north end of the Campbell Airstrip located at the Campbell Tract Facility (CTF) in Anchorage, Alaska.

Finding of No Significant Impact

This action and its effects have been evaluated consistent with the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for determining *significance*. Per 40 CFR § 1508.27, a determination of *significance* requires consideration of both context and intensity. The former refers to the relative context in which the action would occur such as society as a whole, affected region, affected interests, etc. The latter refers to the severity of the impact.

Context

The extent of the proposed project is limited to approximately 1,000 feet of linear disturbance. The anticipated effects are site-specific in nature. Project implementation would be of short duration (estimated one month). The net change in disturbed area, approximately 0.01 acre, is negligible in context of the CTF, overall. This project would not affect local, state, regional or national resources or interests.

Intensity

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

The EA considered and disclosed both potential beneficial and adverse effects of the alternatives. For example, the EA discloses that the proposed re-route would necessitate re-locating the fall migration bird banding research station (EA, p. 9), but the EA also acknowledges that the proposed re-route would successfully address two long-term safety issues concerning recreational traffic at the north end of the airstrip (EA, pp. 6-7).

2. *The degree to which the proposed action affects public health and safety.*

There is no potential for this project to affect the health and safety of the public at large. However, the project is intended to rectify two existing safety issues occurring year-round at the north end of the airstrip (EA, pp. 6-7). The extent of these beneficial effects on public safety are limited to trail users and aviation operations at the north end of the airstrip.

3. *Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity of historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.*

There are no parks, prime farmlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas in proximity to the Proposed Action. The CTF is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a Historic District. However, no cultural resources are located within the project's Area of Potential Effect (EA, p. 8). One possible historic feature, a dozer berm or other feature, is located adjacent to the proposed new trail. However, the project has been designed to avoid direct impact to this feature (EA, p. 8). Ultimately, this project has no potential to affect historic properties (EA, p. 8).

4. *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.*

The anticipated effects are similar to other recent trail improvement and construction efforts at CTF including, but not limited to, a 200-foot re-route of the Salmon Run Trail in June 2012 for reasons similar to the proposed project (see DOI-BLM-AK-A010-0021-DNA). No unique or appreciable scientific controversy has been identified regarding the effects of the Proposed Action.

5. *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.*

Similar to Item 4 above, the anticipated effects are similar to other trail improvement and construction efforts at CTF as well as in other comparable settings in Anchorage. The analysis has not shown that there would be any unique or unknown risks to the human environment.

6. *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.*

Per the Ring of Fire Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (RMP/ROD) (2008) and A Management Plan for Public Use and Resource Management on the BLM Campbell Tract Facility (1988), the project area is open and available to trail-based recreation. The proposed action is consistent with the RMP/ROD and step-down guidance. The proposed action neither establishes a precedent nor represents a decision in principle about future actions. Furthermore, the proposed action is consistent with other recent trail re-routes or improvement efforts to address safety-related issues on CTF trails.

7. *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.*

Cumulative effects are addressed for each of the resources (EA, pp. 7-11). The environmental analysis did not reveal any significant cumulative effects. The CTF has been modified extensively since occupation and development by the military prior to World War Two. Past military and BLM administrative development have resulted in large modifications to the landscape at CTF. Initially, the proposed action would result in visible modifications to approximately 0.2 acres (0.11 acres of new trail, 0.10 acres of restored trail). Over time, however, the restored area is expected to reestablish successfully. In the long-term, the net change in development, approximately 0.01 acres represents a negligible contribution to the overall cumulative effect of development and modification at the CTF.

8. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources.*

Similar to Item 3 above, the CTF is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a Historic District. However, no cultural resources are located within the project's Area of Potential Effect (EA, p. 8). This project has no potential to affect historic properties and therefore, has no potential to affect the eligibility of CTF as a Historic District (EA, p. 8).

9. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.*

There are no Federally threatened or endangered species within the project area (EA, p. 4).

10. *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.*

The Proposed Action does not threaten to violate any law. The Proposed Action is located within the planning area covered by the Ring of Fire RMP/ROD (2008) and associated step-down plans, which provides direction for the protection of the environment on public lands (EA, pp. 2-3).

Conclusion

Therefore, on the basis of the information contained in the EA (AKA-010-2012-0025-EA), and all other information available to me, it is my determination that:

1. None of the environmental effects identified meet the definition of significance as defined by context and intensity considerations at 40 CFR § 1508.27;
2. The alternatives are in conformance with the Ring of Fire RMP/ROD (2008); and
3. The Proposed Action and alternatives do not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment.

Therefore, neither Environmental Impact Statement nor a supplement to the existing EA is necessary and neither will be prepared.

/s/ James M. Fincher

June 21, 2012

James M. Fincher
Anchorage Field Manager

Date

Attachments

BLM 2012. Environmental Assessment: Campbell Tract Airstrip Trail Extension
DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2012-0025-EA, Prepared by Anchorage Field Office, Anchorage, Alaska.

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

Anchorage Field Office
4700 BLM Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99507
(907) 267-1246

**Environmental Assessment
Campbell Tract Airstrip Trail Extension
DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2012-0025-EA**

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1. Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proposing to construct a new multi-use trail extension from the northeast end of the Airstrip Trail, 475 feet straight to join Old Rondy Trail as well as obliterate and revegetate the existing multi-use trail from the Birch Knob junction, 450 feet straight southwest toward the end of the airstrip (Appendix A: MAP). The total acreage of new surface disturbance would be 4,750 square feet, or 0.11 acre.

1.1 Project Area Description

The proposed project is located at the BLM Campbell Tract, T. 12 N., R. 3 W., Sec. 3, Seward Meridian Campbell Tract, Anchorage, Alaska (Appendix A: MAP). The BLM Campbell Tract is administered by the BLM's Anchorage District, Anchorage Field Office (AFO).

1.2 Background

The Campbell Tract Facility (CTF) is a 730-acre Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) and Administrative Site consisting of natural, mostly wooded, public land located within the city limits of the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA). The primary purpose of the CTF is to support the administrative functions and offices for the AFO. The CTF is centered around the Campbell Airstrip, a 5,000-foot gravel runway dating to 1942, that is actively used by the AFO and other agencies for government purposes. The primary recreational interest at the CTF is year-round non-motorized trail use. Recent trail use counts recorded over 120,000 annual visits at CTF.

In the snow-free months, due to the current trail route, multiple-use trail users currently travel on the actual airstrip when the airstrip is operational and receives landings. This creates the

perception that it is acceptable for trail users to be on the airstrip. Continued use of the existing trail route on the airstrip would exacerbate the problem of trail users who do not stay on the designated Airstrip Trail, located well away from the actual airstrip. This has been a long-term safety concern that continues to threaten Campbell Airstrip summer aviation operations.

Additionally, during the snow season, the existing multi-use trail currently joins a winter-designated dogsled trail near a corner with poor visibility. It is not safe for multi-use trail users to be on the same trail as dogsledders, particularly when visibility is poor. This has been a long-term winter safety concern.

1.3 Purpose and Need

Action is needed by the BLM at this time because two incompatible uses occur on the same trail during winter months. Additionally, in the summer months, the current trail route promotes recreational use of the Campbell Airstrip which is not safe for recreation users or aviation operations.

The purpose of this action is to improve safety in the winter for both multi-use trail users and dogsledders and to improve aviation operation safety in the summer.

The decision to be made is whether to construct new trail and obliterate an existing trail.

1.4 Land Use Plan Conformance Review

In accordance with land use planning regulations (43 CFR 1610.8 (b)(1)), when an action is proposed on public lands covered by an existing land use plan; the action will consider the land use plan plus any other data and analysis necessary to make an informed decision and assess the impacts of the proposal and to provide a basis for a decision on the proposal.

The area within which the Proposed Actions would take place is covered by the following land use plan:

Ring of Fire Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan – Anchorage Field Office, Alaska, dated March 2008.

The Proposed Action is consistent with the objectives outlined in the document and is not in conflict with other resources in the area. The document (BLM, p. ROD-10, 2008) specifies that "...Management of this [Campbell Tract] administrative site would continue to be guided by:

A Management Plan for Public Use and Resource Management on the BLM Campbell Tract Facility" (BLM 1988).

This CTF plan covers twenty management actions that make up the management program for the administrative site. The proposed trail actions are in conformance with the applicable land use plan because it is specifically provided for in the following land use plan decisions:

Action RM-1: Trail use conflicts

- c. Realign and widen, if necessary, the designated ski trail to accommodate multiple winter uses. Expand the trail system south of the currently designated ski trail for multiple winter uses (see RM-4a).

Action RM-4: Trail system improvements

- a. Develop new winter trails south of the existing, designated ski trail to provide for multiple winter uses, including skiing, horseback riding, and skijoring.

1.5 Applicable Laws, Regulations, and Policies

The proposed action is consistent with, and this analysis considers, the following laws and regulations:

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.)
- Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1739)
- Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.)
- BLM 6840 Manual on Special Status Species
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, 16 U.S.C. 703-712, 50 C.F.R. 1
- Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1972, 16 U.S.C. 668

State and Federal laws protecting cultural resources on public lands:

State

- Alaska Historic Preservation Act (1971)

Federal

- 36 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 800
- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (1966), as amended
- Archaeological Resource Protection Act (1979)
- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990)
- American Indian Religious Freedom Act
- Executive order 13007
- National Programmatic Agreement, as revised 2012

Federal laws protecting paleontological resources:

- Paleontological Preservation Act 2009
- Antiquities Act (1906)

1.6 Summary of Public Involvement

On June 8, 2012, the BLM posted an announcement on the Field Office's NEPA register identifying the project and soliciting public comment. On June 11, 2012, the BLM contacted the membership of the Far North Bicentennial Park Trail User Group and received six responses in support of the project (Appendix B: Public Scoping Comments).

1.7 Issues Identified

The BLM identified the following issues through internal scoping and consideration of published and collected information regarding the proposed action area and its surrounding landscape.

Cultural and Tribal Resources

- Would trail construction activities including obliteration and revegetation of the existing trail affect National Register of Historical Places eligible cultural properties or paleontological sites?

Wildlife

- Would new construction affect long-term fall migratory bird banding research station?
- Would the proposed re-route increase the potential for bear-human conflicts on the Salmon Run Trail (or near the creek)?

Vegetation Resources

- How would construction activities affect the distribution and abundance of noxious and invasive plants in the Analysis Area?

Hazardous Materials

- Would use of heavy equipment and other machinery for construction of the new trail and obliteration of the old trail introduce hazardous materials to the Action Area?

1.8 Issues Eliminated from Further Analysis

The following list of issues and concerns were identified through the same means as those described in Section 1.7, but have been eliminated from further analysis for reasons detailed below:

- *Effects to Subsistence Resources* - CTF lands are Federal Public Lands as defined by Section 810 of Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act and fall under the authority of the Federal Subsistence Board and the subsistence regulations for the harvest of fish and wildlife on public lands in Alaska. However, the Campbell Tract is within the Anchorage Management Area and is closed to the taking of wildlife under both State and Federal subsistence regulations.
- *Effects to Threatened and Endangered Species* - No Federally threatened or endangered species are known to occur on CTF or within the Municipality of Anchorage.

2. Alternatives

2.1 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the current trail route would remain unchanged. Winter multi-use trail users would continue to use dogsled-only trails. Summer trail users would continue to recreate on the airstrip. Long-term safety concerns would continue.

2.2 Proposed Action Alternative

The Proposed Action Alternative consists of two components: construction of the new trail and reclamation of the existing trail.

Construction of New Trail

A new 475-foot trail would be constructed to a width of 10 feet, similar to other existing CTF trails to provide a seamless trail experience. The BLM would construct the new trail in July 2012. Trail construction would occur as follows:

- 1) The BLM would clear existing vegetation from the new trail corridor. When salvageable, vegetation would be retained for transplanting along the new trail margins or to be staged near the existing (old) trail for revegetation.
- 2) Heavy equipment (one Bobcat) would be used to remove difficult large stumps and to position piles of gravel for surfacing.
- 3) A Student Conservation Association youth handcrew would cut stumps out of the trail treadway, limb existing vegetation for visibility, and place geotextile cloth on the trail treadway.
- 4) Heavy equipment and the youth handcrew would deliver gravel surface material along the length of the new trail.
- 5) The BLM and youth handcrew would deliver water to the trail surface and compact it.
- 6) The BLM and youth handcrew would re-seed and re-vegetate any areas impacted by heavy equipment using native plants and seeds. Regular watering of revegetated areas would continue until new vegetation is successfully established.
- 7) Future compacting of the trail surface would occur as needed by the BLM.

Obliteration and Revegetation of the Old Trail

To discourage continued use of the existing trail, planting of large vegetation and placement of physical barriers would be required. The existing trail is part of an older airplane taxiway and would not support vegetation root establishment well due to its compacted surface and subsurface. Therefore, the 450-foot existing trail would have to be worked up, or ripped, with heavy equipment to loosen the soil beneath to support revegetation efforts. Trail obliteration and revegetation efforts would occur as follows:

- 1) The BLM would place soil and vegetation stockpiled from the new trail construction on the old trail to create a berm across the trail tread and to create a pile of local soil material that could be used for future revegetation efforts.
- 2) Once the new trail is open for public use, the BLM would block the old trail with wood lathe fence and signage directing trail users to the new route. Additionally, if there are standing dead trees nearby, they would be dropped on to the old trail to discourage use.
- 3) To prevent the public from accessing the airstrip via the mushing trail, physical barriers (wood lathe fencing) would be utilized at the "Four Corners" Activity Field Area. This would reinforce use of the new trail route.

- 4) If local BLM heavy equipment is capable of ripping up the old trail, that would be completed in July 2012. If not, this would occur as funding allows for equipment rental.
- 5) As funding allows, BLM would procure a few very large trees and smaller shrubs and brush would be planted to encourage re-growth of vegetation in the area.
- 6) As future funding allows, BLM would construct a vegetation enclosure to protect newly planted vegetation, if needed.

2.2 Alternatives Considered but not Analyzed in Detail

Use of the existing connector trail from the Campbell Creek Science Center Spur Trail to Old Rony was considered as an alternative to the new trail, but was eliminated from further consideration. The Spur Trail re-route was eliminated due to concerns about winter-trail grooming feasibility (deep gravel pits adjacent to trail) and excessive out-of-direction travel for recreational users traveling to/from the Campbell Airstrip Trailhead.

3. Affected Environment and Environmental Effects

3.1 Recreation

3.1.1 Affected Environment

The CTF trail network offers over 12 miles of year-round, non-motorized recreation trails. The Airstrip Trail is multiple use trail that is currently routed alongside a 5,000-foot gravel runway that is operational in the summer and actively used by the BLM and other agencies for government purposes. On the northeast end, the Airstrip Trail route is located on the actual airstrip. During the summer, this creates a safety concern related to aviation operations.

In the winter, when the airstrip is not operational, there are mushing trails located on the airstrip. The trail actually joins a winter-designated dogsled trail near a corner with poor visibility. It is not safe for multi-use trail users to be on the same trail as dogsledders, particularly when visibility is poor. This has been a long-term winter safety concern.

3.1.2 Effects from No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the current trail route would remain unchanged. Winter multi-use trail users would continue to use dogsled-only trails. Summer trail users would continue to recreate on the airstrip. Long-term, year-round safety concerns would continue.

3.1.3 Effects from Proposed Action Alternative

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, construction of the new trail would route both summer and winter multiple-use trail users in a safer direction. The new trail would decrease the likelihood that trail users would travel onto the airstrip. Obliteration and revegetation of the old trail would also decrease the likelihood that trail users would continue travel directly out onto the airstrip from the Campbell Airstrip Trailhead. This action would address the long-term concerns related to airstrip operations and trail user safety.

In the wintertime, there would be a decreased potential for collision between dog teams and multiple-use trail users. This alternative would effectively separate winter multi-use traffic from dogsled traffic and would ultimately remove one dogsled trail intersection from the CTF trail network. This alternative would address the long-term concerns related to incompatible uses sharing the same trail.

Because the new trail would be constructed before the old trail is obliterated, there would be no effect to recreation use during the construction period. Lastly, the new trail would offer the same accessibility options as the old trail.

3.1.4 Cumulative Effects

This project will add 475 feet of new trail and obliterate and revegetate 450 feet of existing trail, for a net change of approximately 25 feet of new trail. In context of the CTF overall, the incremental contribution of 25 feet of trail to the network is inconsequential. Over time, this proposed project, as well as others aimed at increasing trail user safety on CTF, will enhance the safety of the recreating public on the BLM Campbell Tract. The removal of the intersection and shared trail at the north of the airstrip and the recent Salmon Run trail re-route which addressed a dangerous dogsled trail intersection have cumulatively benefitted trail user and dogsledder safety in this heavily used portion of the CTF.

3.2 Visual Resources

3.2.1 Affected Environment

No visual resource inventory has been conducted for the CTF. However, the lands do fall under the direction of the Ring of Fire Resource Management Plan (RMP). Visual Resource Management (VRM) direction for the CTF lands fall under the VRM Class IV objective that, “provides for management activities that would make major modifications to the existing character of the landscape; [whereby] change may be very high and while reflecting the basic elements of the landscape, may dominate the view.”

3.2.2 Effects from No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no net change in the Visual Resource at CTF.

3.2.3 Effects from Proposed Action Alternative

Visual effects associated with the Proposed Action would include a new 475-foot long x 10-foot wide trail corridor as well as a restored 450-foot long x 12-foot wide corridor. An estimated 25 trees of various age classes would be removed for the new trail. Of the trees removed, some may be salvaged and replanted nearby. At least 25 shrubs, trees, and plants would be planted on the existing route to be revegetated.

The proposed obliteration and revegetation of existing trail would restore the existing trail to a more natural condition. The proposed new trail would occur in areas currently dominated by existing trail developments. The new trail would be in proximity to other trails cleared of vegetation, including the dogsled trail, Campbell Creek Science Center Spur Trail, Old Rondy

trail, and an active airstrip. To preserve the visual experience from the new trail, vegetation would be planted in areas previously denuded by former military airstrip improvements.

The Proposed Action is consistent with the VRM Class IV objective.

3.2.4 Cumulative Effects

This project would add a net difference of only 25 feet of new trail to the Campbell Tract trail system. Over time, however, additional signs, facility developments, and trails may have the potential to have an effect upon the visual resource if not considered holistically and guided by an updated Management Plan.

3.3 Cultural and Tribal Resources

3.3.1 Affected Environment

The Alaska Heritage Resources Survey was consulted for cultural resources that could be affected by this undertaking. The nearest resources are ANC-01385, the collection of World War Two artifacts and features on the CTF, which has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district, and ANC-00767, the Campbell Airstrip, which is part of ANC-01385. The BLM AFO archaeologist is familiar with the project area and conducted a reconnaissance survey of the proposed Area of Potential Effect (APE) to ensure that there are no World War Two related artifacts or features in the project footprint. The AFO Archaeologist visited the project area on June 11, 2012 and no cultural resources were found within the APE. A berm is located adjacent to the trail that may be a dozer berm or another type of historic feature.

3.3.2 Effects from No Action Alternative

Because no new ground disturbance would occur, the No Action Alternative has no potential to effect cultural resources.

3.3.3 Effects from Proposed Action Alternative

A berm is located adjacent to the trail that may be a dozer berm or another type of historic feature. The proposed trail would not impact this feature, which is visible from other existing trails. The AFO Archaeologist discussed this feature with the project manager to ensure that will be avoided during trail construction. Because most areas have been previously impacted by long-term recreation in these areas, the potential for unknown cultural resources is extremely low. As a low impact recreation project within a previously disturbed area, this project has no potential to affect historic properties. Under *the BLM, Alaska State Protocol Agreement*, based on the project description and conditions described above, it is the recommendation of the BLM AFO Archaeologist that this project will have no effect on cultural resources.

3.3.4 Cumulative Effects

While this project will add to the number of trails and to the amount of ground disturbance in the area, this is a small project with a very small APE (less than 0.5 acres) which will not impact any

cultural resources, and therefore has not potential to cumulatively affect cultural resources at the CTF.

3.4 Wildlife

3.4.1 Affected Environment

Shrub habitat in the vicinity of the proposed project provides habitat for migrating and nesting songbirds. Areas with a mature forest near to an area with shrubs is known as “edge habitat.” This particular edge habitat area has been utilized for a fall migration bird banding research project since 1997.

3.4.2 Effects from No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, there would no effect to wildlife.

3.4.3 Effects from Proposed Action Alternative

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, the existing bird banding station would have to be relocated; the proposed trail corridor uses the mist net locations for the banding study. The need to cut new net lanes and to establish a new nearby station location would be an indirect effect of the Proposed Action Alternative.

3.4.4 Cumulative Effects

Past and present uses and development of the CTF have considerably altered the natural habitat particularly in and around the Administrative Site and Campbell Creek Science Center, where numerous patches of early seral stage habitat exists. This project would ultimately result in a negligible net change of habitat (approximately 0.01 acres). The incremental contribution of this project to cumulative effects, 0.01 acres of habitat change, is negligible in comparison to the past changes and developments, for example, vegetation clearing to accommodate the airstrip runway and taxiways.

3.5 Vegetation Resources

3.5.1 Affected Environment

The existing habitat is composed of white birch, black cottonwood, willow, alder, cottonwood seedlings, and white spruce. Many areas are browsed heavily by moose.

Invasive species (noxious weeds) are present throughout the CTF, including in airstrip vicinity. Since the airstrip reconstruction in 2003, non-native invasive species have begun to colonize the this area.

3.5.2 Effects from No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no ground disturbance or removal of vegetation.

3.5.3 Effects from Proposed Action Alternative

Under the Proposed Action Alternative, 0.11 acre of habitat would be cleared to accommodate construction of the new trail. Although it is not possible to predict how many of the individual trees and shrubs could be salvaged, it is reasonable to assume that some existing vegetation would be replanted either in the new corridor or reclaimed trail corridor.

Additionally, 0.10 acre would be revegetated using native seed mix and vegetation.

Both areas, old and new, would be increasingly susceptible to new infestations of noxious weed species until revegetation successfully establishes.

3.5.4 Cumulative Effects

The cumulative effects analysis for vegetation resources is the same as described for Wildlife Resources.

3.6 Hazardous Materials

3.6.1 Affected Environment

Whenever machinery is used there is risk of release of oil or other hazardous substances. Spills of fuel can occur during refueling. Spills of fuel, oil/hydraulic oil, etc. can occur from mechanical break-down (hydraulic hose breaks, etc.). Oil leaking from engine gaskets can accumulate under parked or idling equipment.

Any digging/excavating may encounter buried drums or military munitions residual from the historic use of the CTF as a World War Two base and post World War Two Army training area. Drums encountered may still contain oil or other hazardous substances or be the source of previously undiscovered releases. Military munitions have been found on the CTF in the past. Military munitions may be encountered during digging/excavating that would otherwise have remained covered/concealed. Disturbance of munitions may cause detonation of any explosives or propellants that have not degraded over time. Residues from break-down of munitions can be toxic in soil and groundwater.

Oil spills have occurred within the CTF in the past, but there are no known spills that have not yet been cleaned-up. Munitions and empty drums dating to military use of the CTF have been found from time to time. The old trail to be obliterated is likely to date to construction of the WWII base. Unexploded or partially exploded munitions could be found, but the possibility is very remote – the US Army Corps of Engineers report for the Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) Military Munitions response Program (MMRP) indicates no live ordnance was stored at the Campbell Airstrip during WWII.

3.6.2 Effects from No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would have no effect on hazardous materials. Any buried materials would remain in place and undisturbed, so no spills would occur as a result of this alternative. Any buried artifacts would remain undiscovered and may present problems in the future.

3.6.3 Effects from Proposed Action Alternative

Spills of oil or hazardous substances that are not immediately and properly cleaned-up will make the affected lands and groundwater unfit for use and possibly cause serious damage to human health and the environment. Having on-hand spill response kits with properly trained response personnel and use of drip pans under parked equipment would mitigate damage caused by spills. Improper action regarding discovery of buried military munitions could result in serious injury or death. Artifacts of military use are known to occur within the project area. It is reasonable to expect that artifacts such as spent small arms ammunition and blanks along with residual pieces of training munitions will be found during the trails work. It is less likely that buried drums will be found under the old trail, but possible within the path of the new trail should any digging/excavating be done. Sweeping any area where earth is to be disturbed or where new trail would be created, followed by careful examination of positive metal detection(s) will mitigate the risk of striking buried drums or military munitions.

3.6.4 Cumulative Effects

Contamination caused by release of oil or other hazardous substances to the environment will degrade the value of the lands and possibly groundwater. These contaminants may cause serious harm to human health and the environment if not properly managed. However, there are no known spills at CTF that have not been cleaned up properly. With the proper precautions, this project is unlikely to result in the discharge of these substances into the environment. Given that no spills currently exist untreated and the potential for spills associated with project would be managed proactively, there is little potential for cumulative effects as a result of this project.

4. Consultation and Coordination

Public involvement opportunities are described in Section 1.6.

This Environmental Assessment was prepared by an interdisciplinary team of resource specialists. Two site visits, on June 11 and 18, 2012, were completed with specialists to walk and review the proposed new trail corridor and the area to be obliterated and revegetated.

Doug Ballou	Resources Branch Chief
Larry Beck	Hazardous Materials Specialist
Jenny Blanchard	Archaeologist
Molly Cobbs	Planning and Environmental Coordinator
Jena Daly	Outdoor Recreation Planner
Jon Gellings	Outdoor Recreation Technician
Kevin Keeler	Outdoor Recreation Planner
Teresa McPherson	Public Affairs Specialist
Bruce Seppi	Wildlife Biologist
Laurie Thorpe	Natural Resource Specialist

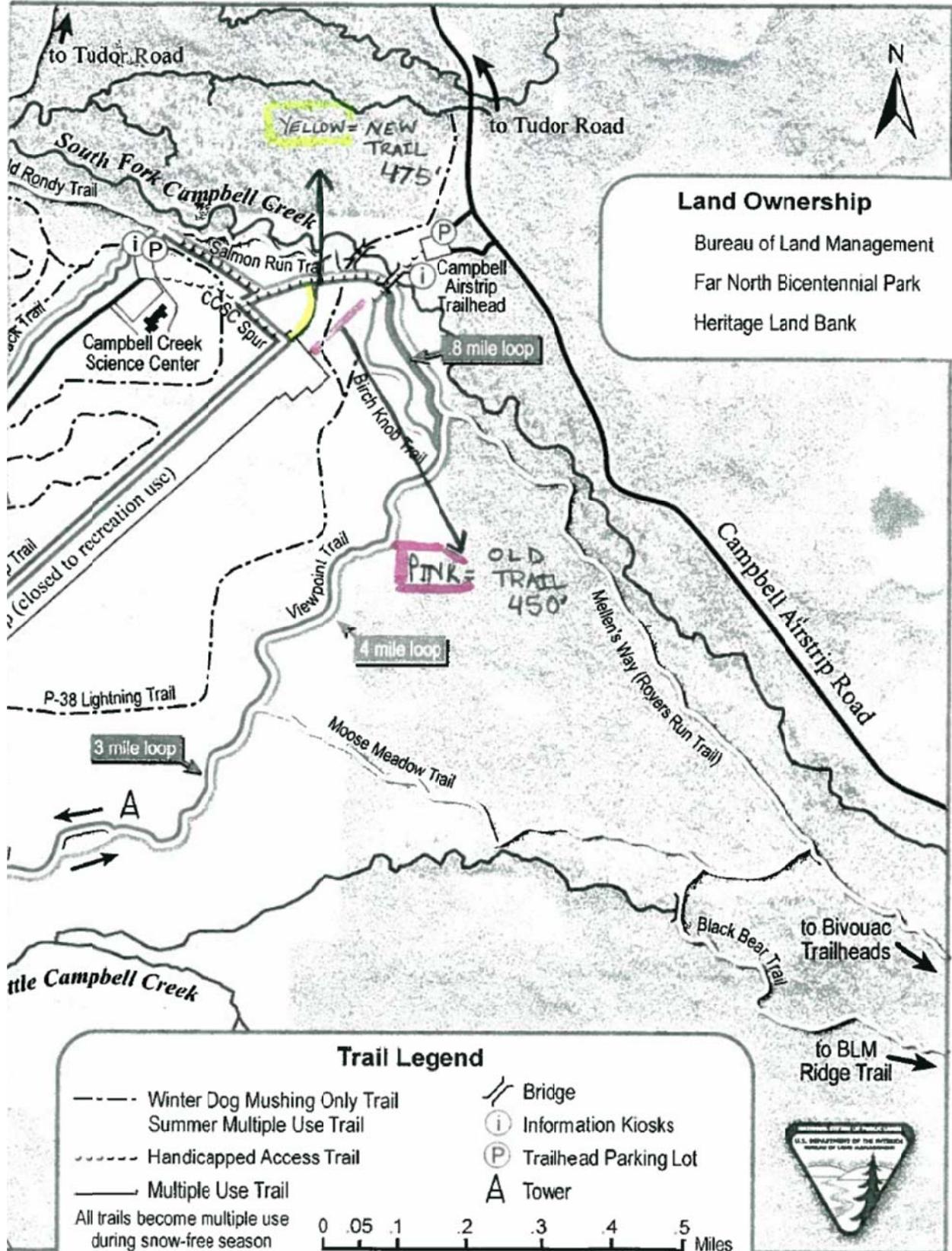
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Appendix A: Project Map



Appendix B: Public Scoping Comments

Scoping Comments Received:

1. The proposed plan sounds like a good plan especially with safety concerns regarding the mushing community and Campbell Airstrip usage. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.
2. These sound fabulous!
3. I think the proposed trail change solves two safety issues and is a good idea. Thanks for the opportunity to review.
4. Thanks for the information. I am always interested in trail developments in FNBP & BLM Tract.
5. Your project makes sense to me. Good luck with the work.
6. As a long time (almost 30 years) and frequent user of the Campbell Tract area I looked closely at the proposed change to the existing trails. I think that you have come up with a good solution to the concerns put forth in your email. It looks to me as the proposed trail connector will access the Old Rondy Trail at or near the new entrance to the Salmon Run trail that you have just opened. Both of these trail changes will make it better for the dog mushers in the winter as well as all of us other trail users. I am in agreement with your proposed changes, and I feel it will make that congested area move trail users of all types through the area in a safer and more hassle free manner.