



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>

Sitka Airport Lease Amendment DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2012-0033-DNA

Case File, AA-89346

DECISION RECORD

Decision

It is my decision to implement the proposed action described in the attached Determination of NEPA Adequacy, DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2012-0033-DNA, with the additional environmental protection measures defined below. My decision will authorize an additional 0.02 acre (8,907 square feet) to an existing airport lease (Lease) executed on October 28, 2010 between the Bureau of Land Management, Anchorage Field Office and the State of Alaska, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.

Amending the Airport Lease is contingent on implementing the following environmental protection measures:

- Transit vessels used for transporting fill materials and all vessels associated with the construction of this project will not travel within Whiting Harbor or any subsequently identified *Didemnum vixillum* locations.
- Implementation of monitoring plan to assess the rate of colonization and biological use of newly placed fill materials.
- Monitor for invasive plant species such as *Didemnum vixillum*.

Rationale for the Decision

The proposed action has been reviewed by Anchorage Field Office staff and appropriate project Design Features, as specified in the original Lease, will be incorporated into the project. Based on the EIS prepared for the original Lease, I have determined that the proposed action involves no significant impact to the human environment and no further analysis is required. A Notice of Realty Action was published in the Federal Register September 23, 2008 concerning the Lease (Vol. 73, No. 185 Page 54853) and no comments were received. The requested amendment will benefit air traffic safety at the Sitka airport by providing additional parking for grounded aircraft.

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/ Doug Ballou

11/30/2012

Doug Ballou
Acting Anchorage Field Manager

Date

Attachments

Determination of NEPA Adequacy
Finding of No Significant Impact



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DETERMINATION OF NEPA ADEQUACY (DNA) WORKSHEET

Proposed Action Title/Type: Existing Airport Lease Amendment

NEPA Register Number: DOI-BLM-AK-A010-0033-DNA

Case File Number: AA-89346

Location / Legal Description: Sitka Airport, CRM, T. 56 S., R. 63 E., Sec. 2 NW 1/4

Applicant (if any): State of Alaska
Department of Transportation & Public Facilities

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

In October 2010, the Bureau of Land Management's Anchorage Field Office (AFO) entered into an Airport Lease (Lease) containing 40.26 acres with the State of Alaska, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT/PF) to address improvements to the existing airport in Sitka, Alaska. After the Lease was executed, the DOT/PF submitted a request to AFO to amend the existing Lease to add an 8,907 square-foot (0.02 acre) addition for a float plane ramp to address the need for ramp parking for float planes at the Sitka Airport.

The Proposed Action is to amend the existing Sitka Airport Lease to include a float plane ramp encompassing an additional 0.02 acres (8,907 square feet). The seaplane haulout ramp would be constructed between March and May 2013. Construction of the haulout foundation is anticipated to take approximately nine days. Foundation construction would involve placing 900 cubic yards of borrow under the seaplane haulout ramp. Approximately 100 cubic yards of gravel at a depth of 6" to 8" of select fill (2" minus) would be placed on top of the borrow material and graded. A layer of geotextile would be placed on top of the select fill. Timber sills (4"x12") would be placed on top of the geotextile and bolted together at splices. Approximately 40 cubic yards of subbase would be placed on top of the geotextile, matching the top of the sills.

Armoring the seaplane haulout is anticipated to take approximately six days. Approximately 400 cubic yards of 50 pound-minus riprap would be placed on both sides of haulout ramp, not touching the edge of where the haulout ramp would be placed. Riprap would be keyed into the ground at an interval of approximately 3.5-feet. Approximately 700 cubic yards of 400 pound-minus riprap would be placed on top of 50 pound-minus riprap, which would also be on top of the key-in.

Construction of the seaplane haulout is anticipated to take approximately four days. Concrete planks would be placed on top of sills. Planks would then be attached together with steel connection plates and anchor bolts. Finally, the remaining riprap touching the haulout ramp would be set in place.

The seaplane haulout ramp would require minimal maintenance. The armor rock at the edges should be sufficient enough to protect it from the ocean. The concrete ramp may wear slowly over time, but should not require replacement for many years. The parts in this structure consist of bolts, metal plates, concrete, and protected lumber. All of these are designed to be stable in marine environments.

B. LAND USE PLAN CONFORMANCE

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable land use plan, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following land use plan decisions (objectives, terms, and conditions):

The Ring of Fire Approved RMP (March 2008) states under I. Lands and Realty,

I-1: Goal

2. Provide a balance between land use (Right-of-Way, permits, leases and sales) and resource protection which best serves the public at large.

and

I-2f: Airport and Airway Improvement Act of September 3, 1982

The BLM will continue to process conveyance requests by the Federal Aviation Administration for airport conveyances.

C. IDENTIFY APPLICABLE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) DOCUMENTS AND OTHER RELATED DOCUMENTS THAT COVER THE PROPOSED ACTION.

The Federal Aviation Administration prepared an EIS for the Sitka Airport Lease (AK-010-08-EIS-043). A Record of Decision was signed on September 28, 2009 by the State Director of BLM.

D. NEPA ADEQUACY CRITERIA

1. Is the new proposed action a feature of, or essentially similar to, an alternative analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? Is the project within the same analysis area, or if the project location is different, are the geographic and resource conditions sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? If there are differences, can you explain why they are not substantial?

The additional 0.02 acres (8,907 square feet) to the existing 40.26 acres under Lease is essentially similar to the alternative analyzed in the existing NEPA document (AK-010-08-EIS-043). The additional 0.02 acres is in the same analysis area as described in the May 2009 EIS.

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

The range of alternatives analyzed in AK-010-08-EIS-043 is appropriate given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values. The EIS addressed the environmental impacts of filling tidal areas of islands for airport use.

3. *Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as, rangeland health standard assessment, recent endangered species listings, updated lists of BLM-sensitive species)? Can you reasonably conclude that new information and new circumstances would not substantially change the analysis of the new proposed action?*

The existing analysis is still valid and no new information or circumstances would change the analysis. No rangeland health standard assessment, recent endangered species listings, updated lists of BLM-sensitive species are known or affected by the new proposed addition the existing airport lease.

4. *Are the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects that would result from implementation of the new proposed action similar (both quantitatively and qualitatively) to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document?*

The direct, indirect, and cumulative effects resulting from implementation of the new proposed action is similar to that analyzed in the EIS for the Sitka Airport.

5. *Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current proposed action?*

The EIS completed by the FAA for the Sitka Airport was extensively reviewed. The public was involved in the EIS by public meetings and announcements. A Notice of Realty Action (NORA) concerning the Lease was published in the Federal Register on September 23, 2008 (Vol. 73, No. 185 Page 54853) and no comments were received.

E. PERSONS, AGENCIES, AND BLM STAFF CONSULTED

Note: Refer to the EA/EIS for a complete list of the team members participating in the preparation of the original environmental analysis or planning documents.

Jenny Blanchard	Archaeologist, AFO
Jeff Kowalczyk	Visual Resources, AFO
Merlyn Schelske	Fisheries Biologist, AFO
Bruce Seppi	Wildlife Biologist (T&E Species) and Subsistence Resources, AFO
Tom Sparks	Lands and Realty Specialist, AFO

F. CONCLUSION

Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the applicable land use plan and that the NEPA documentation identified in Part C of this DNA Worksheet fully covers the proposed action and constitutes BLM's compliance with the requirements of the NEPA.

<u>/s/ Molly Cobbs for Tom Sparks</u>	<u>11/30/2012</u>
Signature of Project Lead	Date
<u>/s/ Molly Cobbs</u>	<u>11/30/2012</u>
Signature of NEPA Coordinator	Date
<u>/s/ Doug Ballou</u>	<u>11/30/2012</u>
Signature of the Responsible Official	Date

Note: The signed Conclusion on this worksheet is part of an interim step in the BLM's internal decision process and does not constitute an appealable decision. However, the lease, permit, or other authorization based on this DNA is subject to protest or appeal under 43 CFR § 4 and the program-specific regulations.



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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Background

In October 2010, the Bureau of Land Management's Anchorage Field Office (AFO) entered into an Airport Lease (Lease) containing 40.26 acres with the State of Alaska, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT/PF) to address improvements to the existing airport in Sitka, Alaska. After the Lease was executed, the DOT/PF submitted a request to AFO to amend the existing Lease to add an 8,907 square-foot (0.02 acre) addition for a float plane ramp to address the need for ramp parking for float planes at the Sitka Airport.

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 additional fill area, 0.02 acres is insignificant in terms of the total Sitka airport footprint. The Lease is 1,753,725.6 square feet and the additional area requested for a float plane ramp is less than one half of one percent increase.

Intensity

1. *Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.*

Adding the float plane ramp will allow float plane operators a safe area to park. The addition will fill 0.02 acres of tidal lands adjacent to the Sitka Airport.

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

The proposal by DOT/PF will add float plane parking and mooring and allow for safer airport operations.

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.*

The offshore island near Sitka at Whiting Harbor was used during WWII. The Sitka Airport is the only means of transportation other than by boat to access the historic town. Approximately 8,907 square feet of wetlands would be filled by the proposed addition to the Lease. No cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas are known in the proposed Lease addition.

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

The effects of the proposed project are not highly controversial. The small addition will allow for increased public aircraft safety.

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

The possible environmental effects on the human environment are known and have been analyzed in an EIS prepared for the original Lease. There are no highly uncertain, unique, or unknown risks associated with expanding the seaplane haulout area.

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.*

The proposed Lease amendment will not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration. Leases under 43 CFR § 2911 are discretionary actions by AFO.

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

The Lease amendment will add 0.02 acres making the total Lease footprint 40.28 acres and is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.

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.*

The proposed Lease amendment area will not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources.

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.*

The proposed Lease amendment will not adversely affect any endangered or threatened species or habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

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

The proposed Lease amendment does not threaten a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

Conclusion

Therefore, on the basis of the information contained in the 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 Resource Management Plan (March 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 an Environmental Impact Statement nor a supplement to the existing Environmental Impact Statement is necessary and neither will be prepared.

/s/ Doug Ballou

11/30/2012

Doug Ballou
Acting Anchorage Field Manager

Date

Attachments

Determination of NEPA Adequacy