

**Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Central Yukon Field Office  
1150 University Avenue  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709  
(907) 474-2200**

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**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
DOI-BLM-AK-03000-2012-0021-EA**

**Clean-up, Disposal and Removal of Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials  
from Melozi Hot Springs  
F-93358 (2064)**



**Location:**

Kateel River Meridian, Alaska,  
T. 4 S., R. 20 E.,  
Secs. 23 and 24.

**Prepared By:**

Central Yukon Field Office

September 2012

**A. Background**

A 20 year lease for this site was first granted on May 27, 1966 to Leonard Veerhausen. Over the years, the original lessee and subsequent lessees have accumulated a mass amount of various types of hazardous and solid waste. The lease expired on May 27, 1996, and the current lessee's walked away with no remediation of the site. In 1996, BLM completed removal of approximately 12,000 pounds of hazardous and solid waste.

**B. Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action**

The Bureau of Land Management proposes to begin clean-up of an expired lease at Melozi Hot Springs. The project will begin with hazardous material removal in 2012 and solid waste removal in subsequent years.

Decision to be Made

BLM would decide whether to authorize or reject the proposed action. If authorized, the decision would include necessary mitigation to protect the public resources and prevent unnecessary degradation to public lands.

**C. Scoping**

A scoping letter was sent to 34 parties on July 13, 2012, to parties of interest identified in the BLM case file. An article was published in the Fairbanks Daily News Miner on Sunday, July 15, 2012 and it was also discussed on KUAC radio. No comments regarding the cleanup project were received. Numerous people have contacted BLM to reminisce about their past history with the site.

**D. Conformance with Land Use Plan**

The proposed action is within the Central Yukon Planning Area approved September 26, 1986.

The proposed actions are in conformance with the plans because they are specifically provided for in the following planning decision (objectives, terms, and conditions):

Central Yukon Planning Area, Realty Actions

Page 2, Goal, Objective #10 states: Manage lands in conformance with visual quality standards in order to maintain scenic values. Mitigate visual impacts where surface disturbances occur.

**E. Relationship to Statutes, Regulations or Other Plans**

43 CFR 2920.9-3(d) provides for removal and remediation of termination or abandoned leases.

**F. Proposed Action and Alternatives**

Proposed Action

The BLM proposes to begin a multi-year clean-up of an expired lease at the Melozi Hot Springs located near Ruby. The following actions are not in any date order.

Utilizing a fire crew from AFS all household/building contents would be removed. Materials that can be burned onsite would be and materials that cannot would be palletized and hauled out with a helicopter to a staging area either at Ruby or Galena. A barge company would pick up the pallets and deliver to Nenana where the contractor would arrange for delivery and proper disposal of the materials. Additionally, scattered wooden debris would also be burned onsite. Fuel for the helicopter will be staged off site at either Ruby or Galena.

In coordination with a BLM hazmat employee a certified contractor would utilize a helicopter to sling load approximately 20-25 barrels to Galena. Leaking or compromised barrels would be placed in over packs for transportation. The intact barrels containing fuel would be transferred to new barrels and slung to Galena, stored in a secure area for use at the Galena Fire Zone. Additionally, propane bottles, old batteries, burned batteries with contaminated soil and other hazardous materials discovered would also be removed. Inventory and sampling would be completed on spills. In cooperation with DEC the compromised soils would either be spread out to evaporate or would be slung to Galena for proper treatment and disposal.

Heavy equipment would be drained of fluids leaving onsite or would be repaired and moved out during the winter over a cat trail to Tanana or Kokrines.

**No-Action Alternative**

The no action alternative would result in the BLM not cleaning up the Melozi Hot Springs. This alternative would affect public safety due to the hazardous materials onsite. The risk for resource damage is present due to the close proximity of fuel drums and other dangerous materials to the river.

**G. Affected Environment**

General Setting

Melozi Hot Springs has numerous buildings, some of which have fallen into disrepair due to lack of maintenance. Onsite is a lodge, five cabins, three sheds, outhouse, shower house, pool house, sawmill, water pipeline, tree house, dilapidated airstrip, and various types of hazardous materials (see photographs). This site is located on the following public lands: Secs. 23 and 24, T. 4 S., R. 20 E., Kateel River Meridian as depicted on USGS Quad Melozitna A-4.

**H. Environmental Effects**

Impacts of the Proposed Action

The impacts of the proposed action would only benefit public lands by removing the hazardous and solid waste onsite to protect the public from potential safety issues. Removal of the solid waste would allow the site to return to its original natural vegetative state.

Cultural Impacts

Several lodge buildings dating to the early 1970s were identified. These buildings do not meet the 50 year threshold for Section 106 Review. Public scoping did not reveal significance that would suggest modification of the 50 year rule for this collection of buildings. In addition to lodge buildings, a historic cabin likely related to early 20<sup>th</sup> century reindeer herding and two small building foundations were identified (Figures 3-8). Clean-up activities will focus on modern buildings and a cache of fuel drums located to the southeast of the historic site. While modern debris will be removed from the “Reindeer Cabin”, the cabin will not be impacted by this work. No work will be done upstream of the Reindeer Cabin. This will provide an adequate buffer for the protection of the ruins. Removal of modern debris from the reindeer cabin will be done in such a way as to not impact the building in any way.

Vicinity of Melozi Hot Springs Lodge – approximately 160 acres north of Veerheusen Creek on the left bank of Hot Springs Creek approximately 30 miles northeast of Ruby, Alaska.

Pedestrian reconnaissance conducted by BLM archeologist Bill Hedman on June 18, 2012.

Several lodge buildings were identified. BLM files indicate that the lodge was constructed between 1969 and 1974. The lodge is in disrepair and poses both physical and

environmental hazards. In addition to lodge buildings there is a two room log cabin that is likely associated with early 20<sup>th</sup> century reindeer herding activity. The cabin was utilized by the lodge operators perhaps as late as the late 1980s and contains an abundance of personal effects. To the east of the “Reindeer Cabin” (upstream on Hot Springs Creek) one cabin foundation and another depression of unknown use were excavated into the hillside just above the creek. No historic period artifacts were observed in association with the historic period archeological features. The Reindeer Cabin and associated archeological site will be entered into the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRs) database in the fall of 2012.

#### Mitigation Measures for Proposed Action

The following mitigation was identified during review:

Work will not impact the Reindeer Cabin and associated ruins. The Reindeer Cabin will not be modified in any way and any contents that appear to be in excess of 50 years of age will be left in place. An archeological exclusion zone has been established, no personnel will engage in work upstream (east) of the Reindeer Cabin. The modern wood-stave pool located within the archeological exclusion zone will not be removed due to the potential for disturbing intact cultural resources. Any intact modern materials in place to support the reindeer cabin or modern weather sealing material that is in place (plastic sheeting, plywood, cardboard, etc.) will remain in place but excess may be trimmed and removed. The barrel-type wood stove, not original to the cabin, may be removed. Stove pipe will be separated on the cabin interior and stove jack (where the pipe exits the building) will remain in place.

**\*All on-site personnel will be briefed as to the existence of the archeological exclusion zone and the content of this stipulation.**

Activities shall be conducted in such a manner as to not cause damage or disturbance to any historical or archaeological sites and artifacts. The Antiquities Act (1906), Archaeological Resources Protection Act (1979), Federal Land Policy and Management Act (1976), and general United States property laws and regulations, all prohibit the appropriation, excavation, damage, or destruction of any historic or prehistoric ruin or monument, or any other object of antiquity situated on lands owned or controlled by the United States (16 USC 470; 16 USC 432; 43 U.S. 1733(a); 18 U.S.C. 1361; 18 U.S.C. 641; 43 CFR 8365.1). Such items include both prehistoric stone tools and sites, as well as historic log cabins, remnants of such structures, refuse dumps, and other such features. Should any such site be discovered during the permitted activity, the permittee should avoid impacting such materials, and immediately notify the Authorized Officer.

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Impacts of No Action Alternative

The No Action alternative would require BLM to take no action to clean-up the site. Not cleaning up the site would cause additional degradation to the environment due to the leaking fuel drums; and introduction of other hazardous materials to both surface and subsurface areas.

Residual Impacts

No residual impacts have been identified.

**I. Consultation and Coordination**

A scoping letter was sent to the following interested parties on July 13, 2012:

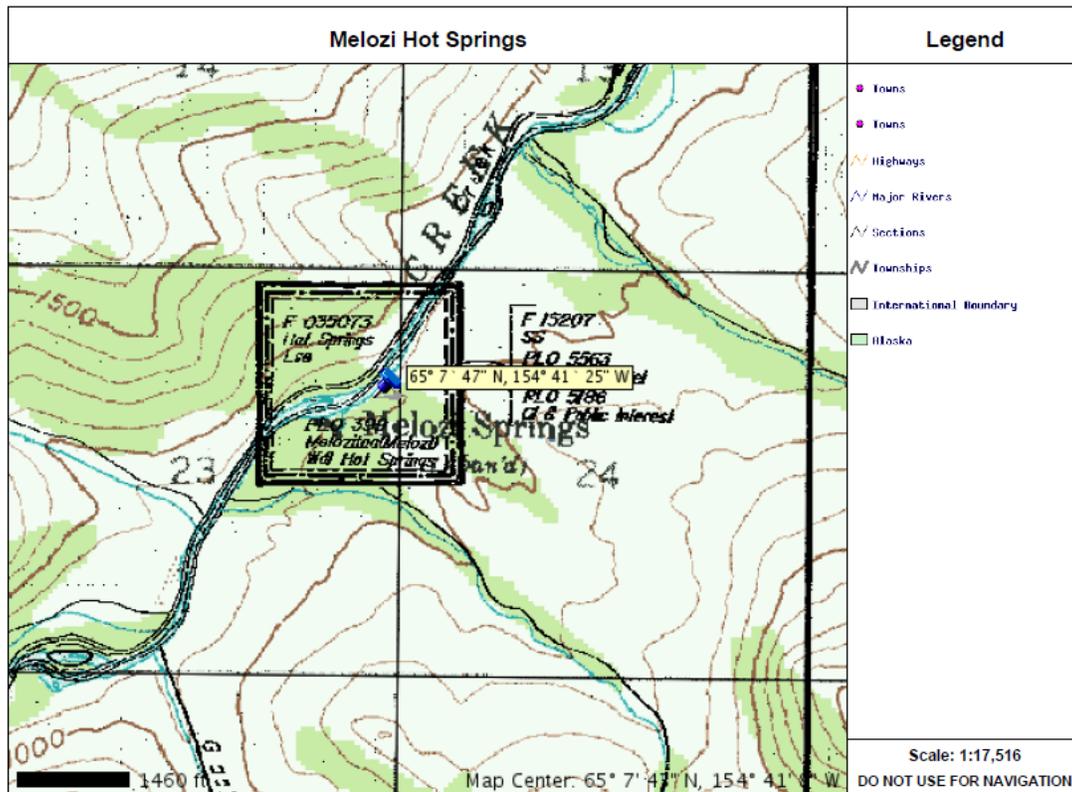
Ronald W. MacLaren	Frank Moss	Ed Plumb
Dave Adams	Mike Nichols	Rose Greenblatt
Tom Anderson	Camilla Spicer	Jerry Pitka
Bob Beach	Kirk Sweetsir	Wolf Hebel
Drew Dix	Henrik Wessel	Susan Shultz
Harold Esmailka	Ben Colbert	Dan Veerhusen
Jim Ehrhart	Jon Korta	Colleen Scott
Tom Gaddis	Andrew George	Rudee Scott
Tim Gervais	Native Village of Ruby	Tom Dome
Craig Kenmouth	Dineega Corporation	Fbks Daily News Miner
Tim Lohmer	Doyon, Limited	Nowitna NWR
Bruce & Judy Martin	Yukon River Lodge	U.S. Fish & Wildlife
James Moore	Ned Rozell	Service

List of Preparers

Merben Cebrian, Wildlife Biologist  
Jennifer McMillian, Ecologist  
Gary Foreman, Chief, Branch of Lands and Realty  
William Hedman, Archeologist  
Carl Kretsinger, Fish Biologist  
Robin Walthour, Realty Specialist  
Michael Schoder, Deputy State Director for Cadastral Survey  
Lisa Shon Jodwalis, Interpretive Park Ranger

**J. List of Attachments**

1. Assessment of Archeological, Historical and Paleontological Resources
2. Compliance with ANILCA Section 810 Evaluation and Findings
3. Boundary Risk Assessment
4. Wilderness Characteristics Assessment
5. Essential Fish Habitat



## FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

### **Finding of No Significant Impact:**

I have reviewed Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-AK03000-2012-0021 and have concluded that the impacts of the cleanup, disposal and removal of solid waste and hazardous material have been adequately addressed. There are no impacts that approached the threshold of significance. Therefore, I have determined that a Finding of No Significant Impact is appropriate and an environmental impact statement is not required.

Nichelle W. Jacobson  
Field Manager, Central Yukon Field Office

September 14, 2012  
Date

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

**Central Yukon Field Office**

**1150 University Avenue**

**Fairbanks, Alaska 99709**

**Phone: (907) 474-2304**

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**DECISION RECORD**

**Clean-Up, Disposal and Removal of Solid Waste and Hazardous Materials  
from Melozi Hot Springs**

**F-93358**

**DOI-BLM-AK-03000-2012-0021-EA**

**Decision:**

It is my decision to authorize the clean-up, disposal and removal of hazardous and solid waste materials at Melozi Hot Springs. This action is necessary to protect the public and to remediate damages and prevent further resource degradation.

Mitigation measures, stipulations and conditions are attached.

**Rationale for the Decision:**

1. The proposed action is consistent with the use of public lands under the authority of Title III of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and the regulations found in 43 CFR 2920.
2. There are no impacts to fish habitat, subsistence or floodplains. All cultural impacts have been appropriately addressed in the EA DOI-BLM-AK-03000-2012-0021.
3. The action is consistent with the Central Yukon RMP approved September 26, 1986.

The project has been considered in the context of public health and safety and consistency with regards to Federal, State, and local laws.

**Appeal Procedures**

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of Hearings and Appeals, in accordance with 43 CFR Part 4 and DOI Form 1842-1. The notice of appeal must be filed in the Bureau of Land Management Central Yukon Field Office (at the above address) within 30 days from receipt of this decision.

If you decide to file an appeal, you must carefully follow the procedure described on the enclosed form 1842-1. If you don't file your appeal at the locations specified on the form within 30 days, the Board may dismiss your appeal as untimely without considering its merits. Be sure to send a copy of your notice of appeal to each party named in this decision and to all of the addresses on the enclosed form 1842-1.

You may also ask the Board to stay or suspend the effect of this decision while your appeal is pending. If you desire a stay, you must enclose your request for a stay with your notice of appeal. You have the burden of showing a stay is justified.

The Board will grant a stay only if you provide sufficient justification based on the following standards:

- a. The relative harm to the parties if the Board grants or denies the stay,
- b. The likelihood of the success of your appeal on its merits,
- c. The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the Board does not grant the stay, and;
- d. Whether the public interest favors granting a stay.

Nichelle W. Jacobson  
Nichelle W. Jacobson  
Manager, Central Yukon Field Office

September 14, 2012  
Date

**Contact Person:**

For additional information concerning this decision, contact Robin Walthour, Realty Specialist, Central Yukon Field Office, 1150 University Avenue, Fairbanks, Alaska 99709 or by telephone at (907) 474-2304.