



# United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Eastern Interior Field Office  
1150 University Avenue  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709-3844  
<http://www.blm.gov/ak>

In Reply Refer To:  
FF-095632

## **CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION /PLAN CONFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION AND DECISION FOR ENDURANCE NORTH, INC. NONMOTORIZED COMPETITIVE RACE HELD IN THE WHITE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA #**

**FF095633 (293000)**

**DOI-BLM-AK-02000-2011-0003-CX**

Proposed Action: Conduct a nonmotorized competitive race utilizing 3 public use cabins and 100 miles of winter trails located in the White Mountains National Recreation Area.

Date of Proposed Action: March 27, 2011 through March 29, 2011

Location: The proposed action would take place within the White Mountains National Recreation Area. The specific race route would be from the Wickersham Dome Trailhead via Trail Creek Trail, Cache Mt. Loop, Fossil Creek, Wickersham Creek Trails, and return to Wickersham Dome Trailhead. The race route would cross through the Beaver Creek Wild and Scenic River (WSR) corridor in two locations, both on the Trail Creek trail between Crowberry cabin and Cache Mt. Cabin and on the Wickersham Creek trail near Borealis LeFevre Cabin.

Applicant: Endurance North, Inc.

Serial Number: FF095633

### **Description of Proposed Action:**

The proposed action will be to conduct a three day (60 hour), 100-mile winter endurance race in the White Mountains NRA starting from March 27, through March 29, 2011. The race will begin and end at the Wickersham Dome Trailhead. The race route will utilize the Wickersham Creek, Trail Creek, Cache Mt. Loop, and the Fossil Creek trails. (See figure 1, race route map.) The race will begin Sunday morning at 8:00 AM and will have three categories of competitors including skiers, runners, and bicyclist. The race will be limited to 65 racers. Less than 25 spectators are expected due to the remote location of the race. Approximately 15 volunteers will be at various points along the race. A lead pace snowmobile will precede the race for the first 20 miles alerting public users of the race and activity.

Trails: Directional signs will be established one day prior to the race at all trail junctions and areas in question to assist race participants with staying on course. Signs will consist mainly of arrows stapled to

lathe. Shortly after the last racer has passed, a “trail sweep” will be conducted. Race volunteers on snowmobile will remove all signs and litter found along the trail and help to ensure all race participants are safe.

Public Notice: Two weeks in advance of the race, notices will be placed at all four trailheads leading into the White Mountains NRA, informing the public of the race. The notices will include dates and times of the race and a map of the race route. During the race, all participants will be required to yield trail right-of-way to all other users or be disqualified.

Checkpoints (Cabins): Along with utilizing the developed and maintained winter trails in the White Mountains NRA, the applicant proposes to use up to three public use cabins as checkpoints. These cabins include: Cache Mt. (two nights), Windy Gap (two nights), and Borealis LeFevre (two nights). A fourth checkpoint would be established near the Moose Creek Cabin using a wall tent. The Wickersham Creek Trail Shelter would also be staffed by race volunteers but not serve as an official checkpoint. Each checkpoint will be staffed by two race officials who will have a satellite phone to call in race results and provide for safety. Food and water will be available at each of the checkpoints for participants. A portable waste collection bucket will be provided at each checkpoint to be used by participants and race officials to minimize the potential over-use of the outhouses. At the end of the race all checkpoints will be left clean and at pre-race conditions, if not better. At the cabins, all stoves and lanterns will be left in working order and an ample amount of firewood left remaining. When away from checkpoints, participants will be required to defecate well off the trail or be disqualified.

Start/Finish (Wickersham Dome Trailhead): The Wickersham Dome Trailhead will serve as the race start and finish. Carpooling or shuttle services will be provided to transport most race participants to the Wickersham Dome Trailhead. Racers, volunteers, and spectators will park across the Elliott Highway at the Alaska State DOT pull-out. The applicant will provide highway caution signs and a crossing guard near the trailhead on the Elliott Highway to provide for safety during the start of the race. A small RV will be parked at the DOT pull-out at the start of the race and later moved to the trailhead parking area. This RV will serve as race headquarters and will be occupied 24 hours a day for the duration of the race. The race headquarters will also be in regular communication with the checkpoints via satellite phone.

## **Land Use Plan Conformance**

Resource Management Plan/Record of Decision for the White Mountains NRA, February 1986. Goal 3: Provide for multiple-use where compatible with primitive and semi-primitive recreation. Objective 2: Where compatible with recreation goals, permit multiple-use of resources on land classified as semi-primitive.

Recreation Activity Management Plan for the White Mountains NRA, February 1988. Section IV.B.1 d. Commercial use: Public recreation cabins are established primarily for non-commercial recreation use. Commercial guides and outfitters may use the cabins only when the client has reserved the cabin and the guide or outfitter has the necessary commercial recreation permit. Public-use cabins will not be available for use by commercial trappers except as a shelter in life-threatening situations.

Section IV.G.1.k. Competitive Events: Competitive events require a permit and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis to insure compatibility with the objectives of this plan.

## **Compliance with NEPA:**

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11. 9(E-9). Which states, “Renewals

and assignments of leases, permits or rights-of-way where no additional rights are conveyed beyond those granted by the original authorization.”

The proposed action must be screened against the extraordinary circumstances found in 516 DM 2 and listed below. Any “yes” finding requires that an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement be prepared for the Proposed Action.

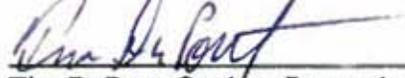
**EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES**

	YES	NO
1) May have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
2) May 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.		X
3) May have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.		X
4) May have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
5) Might establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
6) May have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
7) May 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.		X
8) May 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.		X
9) Might violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
10) May have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		X
11) Might 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).		X
12) Could contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the 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).		X

**Recommendation**

I have found that the Proposed Action is compatible with the Resource Management Plan/Record of Decision for the White Mountains NRA, February 1986, and is an action that can be categorically excluded. The Proposed Action does not trigger any of the Extraordinary Circumstances found

in 516 DM Chapter 2, Appendix 2. I recommend that the Proposed Action be allowed and that an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement is not needed.

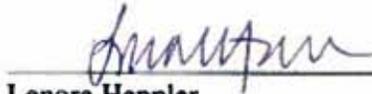


Tim DuPont, Outdoor Recreation Planner  
Eastern Interior Field Office

12/20/2010  
Date

### Concurrence

I concur that the above action is in conformance with the Resource Management Plan/Record of Decision for the White Mountains NRA, February 1986, does not meet any of the extraordinary circumstances, and qualifies as a Categorical Exclusion.



Lenore Heppler  
Field Manager  
Eastern Interior Field Office

12/20/10  
Date

### Contact Person

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact Tim DuPont, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Eastern Interior Field Office, at 907-474-2370.

**Decision for Categorical Exclusion DOI-BLM-AK-02000-2011-0003-CX  
(White Mountains NRA Nonmotorized Competitive Race)**

**Decision**

It is my decision to reauthorize the 100 mile non-motorized competitive race to be held in the White Mountains National Recreation Area by Endurance North, Inc. Associated with this permit the BLM authorizes Endurance North, Inc. the use of the winter trail system and exclusive reservation for the following three public use cabins—Cache Mountain Cabin, Windy Gap Cabin, and Borealis LeFevre Cabin, which will be used as checkpoints for the race. The Special Recreation permit for the race is for one year. The following stipulations were developed to mitigate the concerns for the race and must be adhered to.

**Stipulations**

1. The race start will be required to occur by 8 AM to reduce the impacts on other users.
2. Only one vehicle will be allowed to park at the Wickersham Dome Trailhead, the headquarter RV, all others will be required to be parked across the Elliott Highway at the DOT pull-out. A crossing guard and appropriate signs will be used to provide for safety.
3. A sign including map and brief description of the race will be posted at the Wickersham Dome, Colorado Creek, and McKay Creek Trailheads two weeks in advance to inform other users of the race and specifically where and when race participants are expected to be to avoid unwanted encounters. Contact BLM on where at the trailhead to post.
4. A lead pace snowmobile will precede the racers out of the trailhead for the first 20 miles to make other trail users aware of the oncoming event.
5. All race participants and officials will yield trail right-of way to all other users.
6. The use of the Cache Mt., Windy Gap, and Borealis Cabins along with the Wickersham Trail Shelter will be allowed. Use of any other cabins or associated outhouses by race participants or volunteers is not permitted unless in an emergency situation.
7. All cabins and shelters used by the race will be left neat and clean. All trash will be packed out. At least one full bottle of propane will be left, all cabin amenities will be left operational, and an ample amount of firewood left for the next user.
8. BLM will provide locations for firewood to be gathered at the three cabin and one shelter sites.
9. An appropriate human waste receptacle will be required at each checkpoint. All human waste gathered at these sites will be backhauled and properly disposed of. No use of pit toilets at the checkpoints is allowed.
10. The applicant will be responsible for any cabin or trail damages incurred by the race.

11. A designated "trail sweep" crew will follow the race by no greater than 12 hours and will remove all temporary signs, markings, and trash found along the trail.
12. The Authorized Official reserves the right to impose closure of any area to permittee in periods when dangers to natural resources are severe.
13. No fuel or other hazardous material will be stored within 100 feet of any water body.
14. All hazardous materials storage containers shall be permanently marked with Permittee's name, product type, and year filled or purchased (e.g., White Mountains 100, Unleaded Gasoline, 2010).
15. All spills shall be contained and cleaned up as soon as possible. The Permittee will report any spill or release of petroleum products to the ADEC as soon as possible (in Fairbanks 457-2121 or 1-800-478-9300 outside normal business hours). In addition, the Authorized Officer (Lenore Heppler) shall be notified at 907-474-2320.
16. Transfer of petroleum products to equipment shall be completed in a secure manner to minimize the possibility of contamination to the surrounding environment.

**Rationale:**

- 1) Concerns regarding trash, wilderness characteristic and wildlife impacts have been mitigated.
- 2) The White Mountains is managed for multiple use recreational activities. All actions proposed, such as skiing, biking, running, and cabin usage, are considered standard and common practices during this time of season.
- 3) This authorization is only for one year. No multiple year permits will be issued at this time.
- 4) The proposed action is consistent with the approved White Mountains National Recreation Area Resource Management Plan.
- 5) This proposed action will not significantly restrict subsistence uses (See attached ANILCA Sec. 810 evaluation and findings).
- 6) With the attached stipulations there will be no adverse affects to historic values (See attached NHPA Sec. 106 documentation).
- 7) There will be no affect on Essential Fish Habitat (See attached EFH determination)

**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 Eastern Interior Field Office (at the above address) within 30 days from receipt of this decision.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lenore Heppler, Manager  
Eastern Interior Field Office

12/20/10  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Contact Person**

For additional information concerning this CX review and decision, contact Tim DuPont, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Eastern Interior Field Office, at 907-474-2370.