



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Glennallen Field Office
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<http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/fo/gdo.html>

Administrative Determination (AD)/Documentation of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)
United States Army Training Courses on Public Lands

NEPA Number: DOI-BLM-AK-A0200-2011-0014-DNA



Prepared By:
Denton Hamby
Recreation Planner
May 25, 2011

Document No.: DOI-BLM-AK-A020-2011-0014-DNA

Administrative Determination (AD)
Documentation of Land Use Plan Conformance and NEPA Adequacy (DNA)
U.S. Department of the Interior - Bureau of Land Management
Glennallen Field Office

BLM Office: Glennallen Field Office
Serial Case Files No: AA-092469
United States Army (Black Rapids Training Site)

A. Proposed Action

Proposed Action Title/Type: Issue an organized group authorization under the Glennallen Field Office Special Recreation Permitting Program for the US Army Black Rapids Training (BRTS) in conjunction with the Northern Warfare Training Center (NWTC) to utilize BLM lands adjacent to the Black Rapids military reservation. The use period would run from June 9th through August 7th 2011.

- June 9-11
- July 7-9
- August 5-7

Location of proposed Action: Fairbanks Meridian, Sections 22-25, 35-36, T. 16 S., R. 10 E., Sections 1-4, T.17 S., R. 10 E

Description of Proposed Action: The US Army has requested use of BLM managed lands for training activities that is beyond traditional and casual use of the area. The purpose of the action is to provide the US Army with a training area that suits their training needs while minimizing conflicts with other users, and to evaluate the impacts of these activities on resources and user groups.

Applicant(s): United States Army Alaska

B). Conformance with Land Use Plan (LUP) and Consistency with Related Subordinate Implementation Plans

The Glennallen Field Office operates under the East Alaska Resource Management Plan, July 2007. The proposed action has been reviewed and determined to be consistent with the land use plan terms and conditions as required by 43 CFR 1610.5-3. This action is in conformance with the East Alaska Resource Management Plan July 2007 (excerpted below).

M. RECREATION

M-1: Goal

| Manage recreation to maintain a diversity of recreational opportunities.

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The proposed action would take place with a Special Recreation Management Area as designated by the EARMP (EARMP, page 75, Map 13). The objectives for the area would be to maintain the existing ROS classes, which include primitive, semi-primitive non-motorized, semi-primitive motorized, and roaded natural. The area would be designated as “limited” to OHVs, with implementation-level consideration given to designated trails and maintenance of some non-motorized trails. No helicopter-supported commercial activities would be permitted in areas managed for a primitive recreation experience. The area would be managed under VRM Classes II and III. Most of this SRMA is within the transportation and utility corridor; this would remain the area’s primary purpose.

C). Identify applicable NEPA documents and other related documents that cover the Proposed Action.

- East Alaska Resource Management Plan 2007
- DOI-BLM-AK-A020-2010-0032-EA United States Army Training Courses Crossing BLM Lands

D). NEPA Adequacy Criteria

1. Is the current Proposed Action substantially the same action (or is a part of that action) as previously analyzed? Is the current Proposed Action located at a site specifically analyzed in an existing document?

The proposed actions are identical to those addressed by the NEPA documents above. Originally permitted in 2010 the Black Rapids Training site would like to continue to utilize BLM lands as an important part of their training.

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

3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances? There have been no new circumstances or information regarding the project, nor the general area concerned.

4. Does the methodology and analytical approach used in the existing NEPA document(s) continue to be appropriate for the current Proposed Action? The existing NEPA documentation stipulations and mitigation measures identified has covered the Proposed Action appropriately for the safety of visitors and the protection of federally administered resources.

5. Are the direct and indirect impacts of the current proposed action substantially unchanged from those identified in the existing NEPA document(s)? Does the existing NEPA document analyze site-specific impacts related to the current proposed actions?

The Impacts of the Proposed Action identified remain unchanged to those that were identified in the existing NEPA. Site specific impacts are addressed in the existing NEPA document.

6. Are the cumulative impacts that would result from the implementation of the current Proposed Action substantially unchanged from those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)?

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The cumulative impacts that would result from implementation of the current proposed action are substantially unchanged from those analyzed within the environmental assessment being tiered to.

7. Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current Proposed Action? Public involvement was sufficient and no feedback or complaints were received throughout the course of the 2010 training sessions.

E). Interdisciplinary Analysis: The proposal was evaluated by the Glennallen Field Office Interdisciplinary team:

John Jangala, Archaeologist, Bureau of Land Management
Cory Larson, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Bureau of Land Management
Merben Cebrian, Wildlife Biologist, Bureau of Land Management
Elijah Waters, Branch Chief, Bureau of Land Management
Marcia Butorac, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Bureau of Land Management
Brenda Becker, Realty Specialist, Bureau of Land Management

F). Mitigation Measures: All mitigation is included in the stipulations (see attached).

G). Conclusion: The proposed action does not result in any undue or unnecessary environmental degradation and is in conformance with the East Alaska Resource Management Plan 2007.

s/s Elizabeth Maclean
Glennallen Field Manager

5/25/11
Date

Assessment of Undertakings Not Subject to Further Section 106 Review Glennallen Field Office

GDO Document No. GFO-11-18

BLM Serial No. AA-92469

Environmental Assessment No. DOI-BLM-AK-A020-2011-0014-DNA

Class of Inventory: No Further Section 106 Review

Dates of Inspection: 05/10/2011

Inspector: John Jangala

Maps: Mt Hayes (B-4, C-4)

Applicant: U.S. Army Black Rapids Training Center

Location: The project will be located in the alpine areas of the Delta River Valley east of the Richardson Highway near Black Rapids. Specifically, the project will be located in Fairbanks Meridian T16S, R10E, Sects. 22-25, 35-36; T17S, R10E, Sects. 1-4.

Project Description: The Bureau of Land Management proposes to authorize the U.S. Army to conduct readiness exercises in alpine areas near their Black Rapids Training Center. The project will involve only military route finding and patrol exercises with pedestrian travel through these alpine areas. No ground disturbance is planned as part of the exercises.

Acreage: Unknown

Recommendations: According to the Protocol for Managing Cultural Resources on Lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management in Alaska, between the Bureau of Land Management and the State Historic Preservation Officer, signed April 17, 1998, this undertaking is not subject to further Section 106 review (Appendix 2: Category One). The proposed activity will not involve ground disturbance affecting more than a square meter cumulatively.

The following stipulations should be attached to the permit: "There shall be no disturbance of any archaeological or historical sites, including graves and remains of cabins, and no collection of any artifacts whatsoever. Also, collection of vertebrate fossils, including mammoths and mastodon bones, tusks etc., is strictly prohibited. If historic resources are encountered then all artifacts will be respectfully left in place and the Glennallen Field Office's cultural resources staff will be notified immediately."

Signed:

s/s John W. Jangala

John W. Jangala

Glennallen Field Office Archaeologist (AKA-020)

Compliance with ANILCA Section 810

E.A No.: DOI-BLM-AK-A020-2011-0014-DNA

Applicant(s): United States Army Alaska

Proposed Action: The BLM proposes to authorize the United States Army Alaska the use of BLM administered lands adjacent to the Black Rapids military reservation for the purpose of conducting seven Mountain Warfare Orientation Courses from 09 June 2011 to 20 August 2011.

Location: BLM administered lands east and south of Black Rapids military reservation, Alaska.

Township/Range: Fairbanks Meridian, T. 16S, R. 10E, Secs. 22-25, 35-36, T. 17S, R. 10E, Secs. 1-4.

Map: please see application

Evaluation by: Merben R. Cebrian

Discretionary Action?: Yes

Categorical Exclusion?: No

Type of Assessment / Sources: Review of application materials, subsistence database, scientific literature, local knowledge, and interviews with staff knowledgeable of the area and the proposed action.

Effect of the proposal on subsistence uses and needs:

Fisheries: There are no regulated subsistence fisheries in the area. Therefore the proposed action has no significant effect on subsistence fishery uses and needs.

Wildlife: The proposed action intends to allow the US Army to conduct the Mountain Warfare Orientation Course (MWOC) on foot along a route originating from the Black Rapids Training Site (BRTS), through Falls Creek heading east, then up to the ridgeline just south of Falls Creek, continuing east to the icefield at the headwaters of Boulder Creek, then around the lip of the icefield at the saddle between hilltop # 5775. Soldiers will bivouac in the vicinity of the saddle then continue the following day along the ridgeline from hilltop #5775 then down to Whistler Creek, then following Whistler Creek west to the end of the route at the Richardson Highway. The total length of the route is approximately 10 miles. The timeline for the MWOC is from 09 June through 20 August 2011.

The proposed action is on federal land in its entirety and is also within the Delta Controlled Use Area (DCUA). However, the proposed action occurs in both Game Management Units (GMU)

13B and 20D. Although federal subsistence rules apply to federal lands in both Units, there is no federal open season for sheep in the DCUA. Furthermore, there are no federal open season for moose and caribou in Unit 20D; on federal lands in Unit 20D that is within the planning area, a hunter can hunt moose and caribou under state regulations. On federal lands in Unit 13B that is within the planning area, a hunter can have a federal subsistence permit to hunt moose and caribou. Subsistence permittees access wildlife resources in Unit 13B of the planning area via off-highway-vehicles (OHVs) or on foot. However, during 05-25 August, the use of motorized vehicles or pack animals for hunting in the DCUA is prohibited.

Subsistence hunting in Unit 13 starts on 01 August for moose and 10 August for caribou. Between 09 June and 30 July, the proposed action will not significantly affect subsistence hunting. During the hunting season, subsistence hunters access the area for moose and caribou. Between 2007 and 2009, an average of 3.3 moose and 5.3 caribou were harvested using subsistence permits between Boulder Creek and Eureka Creek. Localized avoidance by moose and caribou may occur not only for approximately two days out of the week when soldiers are in the field, but also when other hunters are in the area looking for sheep, moose, and caribou. Small game and upland birds typically avoid disturbance when humans are in the area. However, the long-term existence of the BRTS and the proximity of the hunting area from the Richardson Highway increase accessibility and use of the area by hunters, hikers, naturalists, and other recreationists. Several OHV trails originate from a communications tower adjacent to the Richardson Highway within the area affected by the proposed action. Local wildlife may already be habituated to human presence or simply avoid the area. Therefore, the proposed action will not significantly affect subsistence uses and needs.

Other resources: The proposed action will not significantly affect other harvestable resources such as berries, willows, firewood, and spruce roots. The proposed action follows a route along rocky creekbeds, scree slopes, low alpine vegetation, rocky outcrops and ridges, snow, and water. Proposed actions that mitigate litter and human waste disposal, and campsite impacts will likely be beneficial to the habitat by minimizing impacts to vegetation. Effects on local vegetation are expected to be minimal. Therefore, the proposed action will not significantly affect subsistence uses and needs.

Expected reduction, if any, in the availability of resources due to alteration in resource distribution, migration, or location: None. The proposed action will not significantly alter the distribution, migration, or location of subsistence resources. However, temporary localized avoidance by big game may result from the proposed action. During hunting season, dall sheep, moose and caribou may be found in the vicinity surrounding the BRTS. MWOC activity for two days in the week, with stipulations against disturbance to fish and wildlife, is likely no different from other recreational activity in the vicinity such as hiking, hunting, berry picking, or bird watching.

Expected limitation, if any, in the access of subsistence users resulting from the proposal:

None. Access to resources by subsistence users will not be limited by the proposed action.

Availability of other lands, if any, for the purpose sought to be achieved: Other lands are available for the purposes sought by the applicant. Terrain features that provide high relief and topography can be found on other federal lands and on state lands. However, proximity to the Black Rapids Training Site provides access to existing training facilities and resident experts in military mountaineering who train in the area and have been doing so since 1978.

Other alternatives, if any, which would reduce or eliminate the use, occupancy, or disposition of public lands needed for subsistence purposes: The only other alternative that would reduce or eliminate the use, occupancy, or disposition of public lands needed for subsistence purposes is to not allow or permit any activities that conflict with subsistence uses. However, such an alternative is not viable because the BLM manages public lands for multiple uses.

Finding: Under the proposed action, access to subsistence resources will not be hampered by the proposed activity. The proposed action will not significantly restrict subsistence uses and needs in or near the proposed activity area. There is no reasonably foreseeable significant decrease in the abundance of harvestable resources and in the distribution of harvestable resources due to the proposed action.

s/s Merben R. Cebrian
Merben R. Cebrian
Wildlife Biologist
BLM, Glennallen Field Office

10 May 2011
Date

Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Glennallen Field Office

NEPA Interdisciplinary Review

Project Name: Military Training Exercises utilizing BLM

Casefile Number: AA-92469

NEPA Document Number: DOI-BLM-AKA-020-2011-0014-DNA

NEPA Preparer: Denton Hamby

Please return to preparer by: May 13, 2011

Staff Specialist	Resource Area	Comments Provided Yes / No	Date Reviewed
Brenda Becker	Lands and Realty	No	5/23/2011
Marcia Butorac	Recreation and Facilities	No	5/2/2011
Merben Cebrian	ANILCA, Section 810	Yes	5/10/2011
Merben Cebrian	T&E Animals	No	5/10/2011
Merben Cebrian	T&E Plants	No	5/10/2011
Wildlife Specialist	Wildlife	Yes	5/10/2011
Heath Emmons	Wild and Scenic Rivers	No	5/1/2011
Marnie Graham	Public Affairs	Yes	4/28/2011
Denton Hamby	Special Recreation Use	Preparer	
Denton Hamby	Visual Resources	No	5/10/2011
Brad Honerlaw	Law Enforcement		
Alysia White	Law Enforcement		
John Jangala	Cultural Heritage	No	5/10/2011
John Jangala	Paleontology	No	5/10/2011
Cory Larson	Travel Management	No	4/25/11
James Whitlock	Minerals		
Ben Seifert	Fire Management		
Ben Seifert	Forestry		
Ben Seifert	Invasive Weeds		
Ben Seifert	Soils		
Tim Sundlov	Air Quality		
Tim Sundlov	Riparian & Wetlands		
Tim Sundlov	Water Quality		
Tim Sundlov	Fish Biology		
Joseph Hart	Hazardous Materials		
Elijah Waters	Branch Chief - Resources		

Authorized Officer Review: _____ Date: _____