



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Glennallen Field Office
P.O. Box 147
Glennallen, Alaska 99588
<http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/fo/gdo.html>

**Environmental Assessment
Soule Lake Lease
Applicant: Ray Atkins, Guide and Outfitter
Case File Number: AA-092702
DOI-BLM-AK-A020-2011-0015-EA**



Location:
Section 4, T.20S, R.5W, Fairbanks Meridian

Prepared By:
Brenda Becker
Realty Specialist
April 11, 2011

1.0 Introduction

On August 21, 2010, an unauthorized use cabin on public lands was reported. An investigation was conducted on September 10, 2010 that found the site contained a small cabin and outhouse. In subsequent conversations it was determined that Ray Atkins had put the cabin up to enhance his commercial operations. Ray Atkins has maintained a Special Recreation Permit (SRP) for his Big Game Guiding business through the Glennallen Field Office since the early 1990's.

Mr. Atkins has since paid the fees associated with the unauthorized use and now is requesting authorization to have the cabin remain on site.

The request is two part. Part 1 would provide a short term authorization for the cabin. Part 2 would provide a lease for this site that includes the Notice Of Realty Action (NORA).

The site is accessed by plane in the summer and by snowmachine in the winter.

1.1 BLM's Purpose and Need

The purpose of the action is to authorize an existing cabin used by a BLM SRP holder for the benefit of his commercial activities. The need for the action is established by BLM's responsibility under Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) to respond to a request for a minimum impact permit for an existing cabin on public lands, which also helps to mitigate an unauthorized use case.

1.2 Decisions to be Made

The decision to be made is whether to permit a cabin for commercial guiding operations or not. A lease would be considered for a term of five years with an option to renew, for a one-acre site encompassing the existing improvements. No new construction will take place. The subject cabin will be used as a commercial rental cabin related to fly-in guiding and outfitting related activities. The cabin will be available for emergency use by the public.

1.3 Decision Framework and Policy

The East Alaska Resource Management Plan (EARMP) of September 2007 and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) provide the overall long term management direction for the BLM Glennallen Field Office. The EARMP and FLPMA are the decision documents and legal basis for the integrated long-term resource planning on BLM Glennallen Field Office managed lands. They establish the direction and goals for the BLM to follow for the management of these lands and resources. The proposed action and alternatives are consistent with the EARMP and FLPMA. Specifically, the proposed action is consistent with the following sections of the EARMP:

I. LANDS AND REALTY

I-1: Goals

- Provide a balance between land use (rights-of-way, land use permits, leases and sales) and resource protection that best serves the public at large.

The proposed action would be subject to an array of laws, regulations, and acts to include:

- Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA) Section 810
- National Historic Preservation Act as Amended 1992
- The Bald Eagle Protection Act of 1940 (as amended 1959, 1962, 1972, and 1978)
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (as amended 1936, 1960, 1969, 1974, 1978, 1986, and 1989)
- North America Wetlands Conservation Act of 1989 (as amended 1990 and 1994)
- Executive Order 11987 of May 1977 (Exotic Organisms)
- Executive 11990 of May 1977 (Protection of Wetlands)

1.4 Land Status

This cabin is located on public lands managed by the BLM. The land is currently selected by the State of Alaska.

There are no Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) selections on any lands affected by the proposed action.

1.5 Scoping and Issues

Public notice for this EA was posted on March 17, 2011, on the BLM Glennallen Field Office Website NEPA log: HTTP://WWW.BLM.GOV/AK/ST/EN/INFO/NEPA/GFO_NEPA_REGISTER.HTML. No comments have been received.

An interdisciplinary team was assembled and met on March 8, 2011. Internal scoping identified the following issues to be considered: subsistence and wildlife, vegetation and invasive weeds, travel management and recreation, riparian, and archaeology.

From the standpoint of the riparian vegetation there will be no meaningful impact from the proposed use and it will not be analyzed further in this EA.

No cultural resources were located when the cabin site was surveyed in 1992. Therefore no heritage resources are expected at the site, and Archaeology was eliminated as an issue.

Issues identified for further analysis in the EA were;

- Subsistence and Wildlife
- Vegetation and Invasive Weeds
- Travel Management and Recreation

2.0 Proposed Action and Alternatives

2.1 Applicant's Proposal

Mr. Atkins is requesting a lease for an existing cabin and outhouse. Mr. Atkins states that there has been a structure located on this site since 1962. This permit would authorize the use of the cabin. This cabin is to be used in conjunction with a guiding business, summertime fishing, winter snowmachining.

Access

Access to this site is by floatplane during the summertime and snowmachine during the winter. There are no established trails to this area.

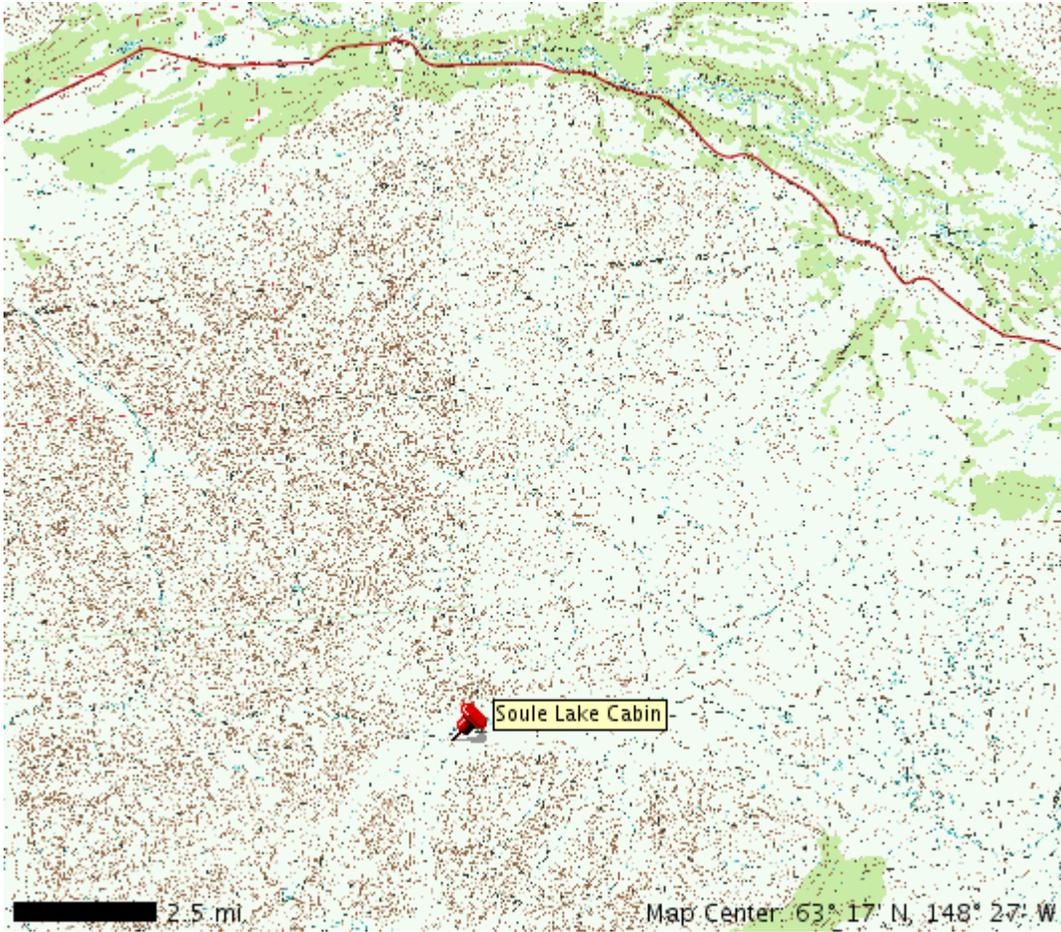


Figure 1: Map of location of cabin.

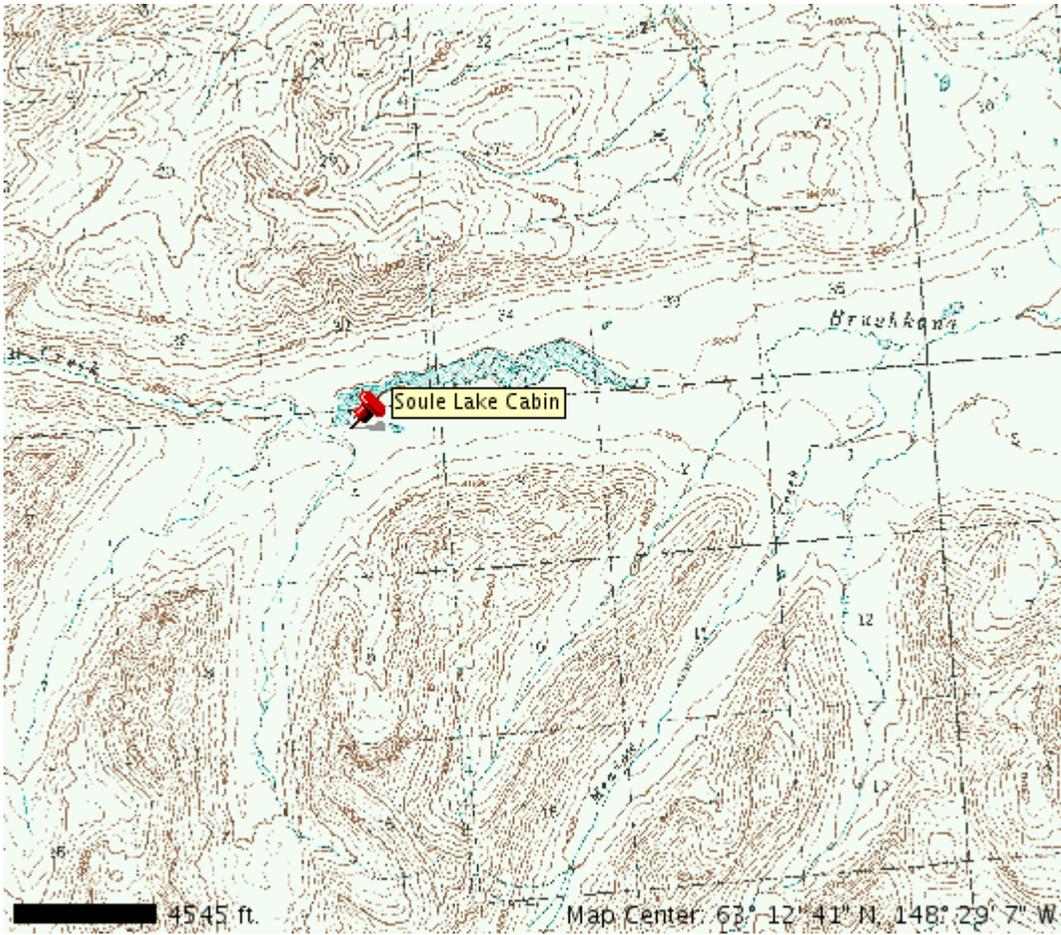


Figure 2. This map shows a better view of the location of the cabin.



Figure 3. Photo of cabin.

2.2 Alternatives being considered by the BLM

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that a reasonable range of alternatives to address the issues be developed for analysis. Based on the issues, there are two alternatives for consideration.

Alternative 1: Is the No Action alternative as required by NEPA.

Alternative 2: This alternative is the action as proposed by the applicant.

2.2.1 Alternative 1- No Action: Do not approve the minimum impact permit

The No Action Alternative would be to deny the applicant's request for a minimum impact permit and subsequent lease for this cabin site. This alternative would bring this cabin back into an unauthorized use of public lands status and require the applicant to remove the cabin and rehabilitate the site.

2.2.2 Alternative 2- The action as proposed by the applicant

The BLM Glennallen Field Office is considering authorization of the cabin with standard stipulations from the EARMP. This will allow the applicant to continue to utilize this cabin for his commercial guiding business and also allow the general public use of this cabin during the winter snowmachining season.

2.3 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated From Detailed Analysis

No alternatives were eliminated from detailed analysis.

3.0 Affected Environment

This section describes the existing environment and the current conditions of important resources in the area of the cabin that would be affected by any of the alternatives under consideration. Topics examined include:

- Subsistence and Wildlife
- Vegetation and Invasive Weeds
- Travel Management and Recreation
- Riparian

For more information on the affected environment, please refer to the East Alaska Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement.

3.1 Subsistence and Wildlife

The Soule Lake and surrounding areas are popular hunting areas during the fall. The site falls within Game Management Unit 13: Nelchina-Upper Susitna, Subunit 13E. The BLM manages the federal subsistence hunt in Unit 13. In Subunit 13E, federal lands open to subsistence hunting exist in Denali National Park. There are no federal lands open to federal subsistence hunting in the vicinity of the cabin. However, State Tier I subsistence hunts and community harvests occur in the vicinity of the cabin.

Between 2004 and 2009, there have been 2,337 caribou harvested in the State subsistence hunts in Subunit 13E, averaging 390 caribou harvested per year, with a high of 664 caribou harvested in 2006. For moose, there have been 829 moose harvested in the State hunts in Subunit 13E between 2004 and 2009, averaging 138 moose harvested per year, with a high of 165 moose harvested in 2008.

State caribou season is Aug 10 – Sept 20 and Oct. 21 – Mar 31. State moose season is Aug 20 – Sept 20 and Sept 1 – Sept 20.

In this area there are caribou, moose, and a variety of small mammals such as squirrels. The cabin is close to the Nelchina Caribou Herd (NCH) traditional migratory route and within range of recent calving events. To the west of the cabin site, in the Talkeetna Mountains, is the core NCH calving area. In 2010, a photo census of the NCH revealed approximately 40,000 caribou in the herd. Hunting interest in the herd is high, given the large caribou population and the accessibility of the area from the Denali Highway to the north.

With moose and caribou in the vicinity of the cabin site, predators are likely to be present. These predators include wolves, grizzly bears, and black bears. Small mammals and upland birds also inhabit the area. These include snowshoe hares, red squirrels, microtine rodents, mustellids, grouse, ptarmigan, and other passerines. There are no known trumpeter swan nests in the area of the proposed action.

3.2 Vegetation and Invasive Weeds

Vegetation around the cabin site generally consists of grasses, sedges, lichen and moss. The dominant shrubs in the area consist of willows and shrub birch. Other common species found at the site include: Labrador tea, blueberry and cranberry. The land is above the tree line and there is no forest over-story. The presence or

absence of rare and/or sensitive plants species in the area is presently unknown. It is assumed that the project area is void of the presence of non-native invasive plants.

3.4 Travel Management and Recreation

Recreational uses could include backpacking, hunting, fishing, and winter recreation. These activities are popular along the Denali Highway, but usage decreases with distance from the highway.

The project location lies within Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA) lands managed by the BLM. While recreation use is present and varied in nature, ERMA lands are not as intensely managed as other BLM lands for recreation purposes. Due to the State of Alaska selection on surrounding lands, travel management within this area is managed under State of Alaska Generally Allowed Uses, 11 AAC 96.020 (Appendix 1).

The predominant uses within the area are travel by aircraft with snowmachine and other uses limited to winter. Snowmachine use is also present in the winter months for recreational purposes.

3.5 Riparian,

Riparian vegetation communities in the proposed use area are dominated by low and tall shrub tundra, composed primarily of shrub birch (*Betula glandulosa*) and willows (*Salix* spp.), which occupies floodplains and sideslopes. In the vicinity of cabin and outhouse there has been some soil compaction and vegetation removal. The soil disturbance and vegetation removal can be attributed to the use of the cabin and outhouse; however, this impact is confined to a small portion of the overall lake watershed.

4.0 Environmental Impacts

4.1 Effects of Alternative 1: No Action

4.1.1 Subsistence and Wildlife

No direct effects to subsistence and wildlife are anticipated from the no action alternative. Subsistence hunters will continue to access the area for subsistence activities.

4.1.2 Vegetation and Invasive Weeds

Direct Effects: The No Action alternative would bring this cabin back into an unauthorized use status and require the applicant to remove the structures and rehabilitate the site. The vegetation impacted from past use of the cabin site would continue to recover and rehabilitate. Any rare or sensitive status species present would go undisturbed and there would be limited potential for the introduction and/or spread of non native plant species into the area.

Direct Effects: Vegetation has already been impacted by past use. The existing vegetation not impacted from the cabin site would continue to grow in the natural setting providing the benefits of the ecosystem. Any rare or sensitive status species present would go undisturbed and there would be no potential for introduction and/or spread of non native plant species into the area.

4.1.3 Travel Management and Recreation

No short term direct effects to travel management and recreation are anticipated from the no action alternative. There are no ATV trails in the vicinity of the cabin and the winter uses will continue. Aircraft may still land on the lake.

4.2 Effects of Alternative 2 (The Proposed Alternative): Limited overland travel alternative

4.2.1 Subsistence and Wildlife

Direct Effects: There has been a cabin and outhouse structure in existence at the site since 1962. Hunters, trappers, and recreationists have used these structures in the past four decades. No direct effects are anticipated from this alternative because moose and caribou hunts in the area are closely monitored by both ADF&G and BLM.

4.2.2 Vegetation and Invasive Weeds

Direct Effects: Continued use of the site by permittee will keep the soils compacted and hardened, and maintain/enlarge cleared areas and limit vegetation growth, recovery and rehabilitation. Continued use will also likely cause the introduction and/or spread of non-native plants, and could also disturb any existing rare or sensitive status species.

4.2.3 Travel Management and Recreation

Direct Effects: Aerial operations associated with summer access to the cabin will create short duration noise disturbances within the Soule Lake area. Winter snowmachine access will lead to a slight increase in overall recreational users, and may fulfill unmet recreational demands of some user groups

Indirect Effects: Foot traffic in the vicinity of the cabin and around Soule Lake will lead to the establishment of social trails within the area. These trails, if limited to foot traffic only, would create minimal impacts consisting of minor vegetation loss and soil compaction.

5.0 Coordination and Consultation

5.1 Interdisciplinary Team Members Participating on ID Team, March 8, 2011

John Jangala, Archaeologist, Bureau of Land Management
 Denton Hamby, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Bureau of Land Management
 Cory Larson, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Bureau of Land Management
 Merben Cebrian, Wildlife Biologist, Bureau of Land Management
 Ben Seifert, Forester/Vegetation Specialist, Bureau of Land Management
 Elijah Waters, Branch Chief, Bureau of Land Management
 Joseph Hart, Realty Specialist, Bureau of Land Management
 Tim Sundlov, Fisheries Biologist, Bureau of Land Management

5.2 Non Governmental Organizations, Native Entities, Private Parties

BLM NEPA guidance requires public involvement in the preparation of all Environmental Assessments. Public notice for this EA was posted on April 11, 2011, on the BLM Glennallen Field Office Website NEPA log:

[HTTP://WWW.BLM.GOV/AK/ST/EN/INFO/NEPA/GFO_NEPA_REGISTER.HTML](http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/info/NEPA/GFO_NEPA_REGISTER.HTML). No comments have been received.

The lands affected by the proposed action are not encumbered by ANCSA selections. The Native village of Cantwell (nearest federally recognized Tribe) is 53 road miles to the west, therefore no Native Entities were consulted.

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

GDO Document No. GFO-11-16

BLM Serial No. AA092702 Environmental Assessment No. DOI-BLM-AK-A020-2011-0015-EA

Class of Inventory: No Further Review

Dates of Inspection: 05/06/2011

Inspector: John Jangala

Maps: Healy (A-4)

Applicant: Ray Atkins

Location: The project will be conducted in the Talkeetna Mountains, south of the Denali Highway and southeast of the Parks Highway. More specifically the project will occur along the banks of Soule Lake in NE ¼ of the NE ¼ of Sec. 4 T.20S., R.5W, Fairbanks Meridian.

Project Description: The Bureau of Land Management proposes to permit Ray Atkins to utilize an existing cabin for his commercial guiding operation through a short term lease. This cabin was constructed at a location used by a previous hunting guide for a non-historic plywood cabin that was destroyed. Access to the site will be by float plane or by snow machine in the spring when snow cover and frozen ground allows. No additional ground disturbance is proposed as part of this lease.

Acreage: 1 Acre

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 project will involve less than one square meter of ground disturbance and will take place at a previously constructed cabin site. As long as the applicant adheres to the attached stipulations, the applicant may proceed as proposed in the application. However, if heritage or paleontological resources are encountered during implementation of the project, the project will cease and the Glennallen Field Office, cultural resource staff, shall be notified.

The following stipulation 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:

John W. Jangala

Glennallen Field Office Archaeologist (AK-020)

Stipulations for Short Term Authorization for Ray Atkins
June 20, 2011

1.0 Definitions

- 1.1 The Glennallen Field Manager or designated representative is the Authorized Officer (AO), as defined by 43 CFR 2920.0-5(c).
- 1.2 “Grantee” means Ray Atkins, and any and all assignees that may be of record, including all agents, contractors, subcontractors, and employees.
- 1.3 “Grant” means the license, lease, permit, or other permission granted by the United States to the grantee for the use of public lands and resources.

2.0 General

- 2.1 The grantee will address all matters to the Glennallen Field Manager, P.O. Box 147, Glennallen, Alaska 99588.
- 2.2 In case of change of address, the grantee shall immediately notify the AO.
- 2.3 Any modifications to the proposed activities must be approved in writing by the AO.
- 2.4 This grant is subject to all prior valid and existing rights, and the United States makes no representations or warranties whatever, either expressed or implied, as to the existence, or nature of such valid existing rights.
- 2.5 The right to grant additional rights-of-way or permits for compatible use on, over, under, or adjacent to the land involved in this grant is reserved to the AO.
- 2.6 It is the responsibility of the grantee to ensure that field party members are familiar with and adhere to these stipulations.
- 2.7 The holder, in exercising the privileges granted under this grant shall comply with the regulations of the Department of the Interior and all Federal, State, Borough and Municipal laws, ordinances, or regulations, which are applicable to the area or operations covered by this grant.
- 2.8 The grantee may be requested by the AO to furnish transportation and quarters for designated field representatives or observers while inspecting operations.
- 2.9 In the advent of a disagreement of the interpretation or implementation of these stipulations the grantee agrees that the AO shall have the final say in how these stipulations are interpreted and implemented.
- 2.10 Grantee shall defend and hold the United States, it’s assigns, agents, employees, representatives and successors in interest, harmless from and against any and all actions, fees, for injury to or death of any person, persons, or property arising in connections with and as a direct result of grantee’s activities, included but not limited to United States negligence, if any, in failing to recognize or remedy a hazardous condition existing on public lands.

- 2.11 This grant may not be encumbered, hypothecated, assigned, subleased, or transferred without prior written approval by the AO.
- 2.12 The AO may revoke or terminate this grant in whole, or in part, upon a determination by the AO that the terms, conditions, or stipulations of the grant have been violated, or by determination by the AO that the grantee's actions pose a threat to human health or safety, or irreparable harm to the surrounding environment.
- 2.13 The grantee shall not enclose or obstruct in any manner, or erect or maintain any signs or structures on roads or trails commonly used for public travel or access to public lands surrounding the grant.
- 2.14 This grant does not authorize the permittee to take from the public lands any mineral or vegetative material, including timber, without securing authorization under 30 USC 601 et seq.
- 2.15 This grant does not authorize any other use of the public lands or improvements belonging to the US Government.
- 2.16 Grantee shall comply with Title VI of Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000 et seq.) and the regulations of the Secretary of the Interior issued pursuant thereto.

3.0 Environmental

- 3.1 All operations will be conducted in such a manner as not to cause damage or disturbance to any fish or wildlife, or to impede rural residents from pursuing their traditional subsistence activities (ANILCA, P.L. 96-487).
- 3.2 Grantee will not intentionally harass or harm migratory birds or interfere with their nesting and brood rearing activities.
- 3.3 All activities shall be conducted so as to avoid or minimize disturbance to vegetation. If it becomes necessary to remove vegetation, prior approval by the AO is required.
- 3.4 All operations shall be conducted with due regard for good resource management and in such a manner as not to block any stream, or drainage system, or cause the pollution or siltation of any stream or lake.
- 3.5 Use of pesticides or herbicides shall comply with the applicable Federal and State laws. Pesticides or herbicides shall be used in accordance with their registered uses and within limitations imposed by the Secretary of the Interior. Prior to the use of pesticides or herbicides, the grantee shall obtain from the AO written approval of a plan showing the type and quantity of materials to be used, pest(s) to be controlled, method of application, location of storage and disposal of containers, and any other information deemed necessary by the AO. Emergency use of pesticides or herbicides shall be approved in writing by the AO prior to such use.
- 3.6 The grantee shall conduct all activities associated with the construction, operation, and termination of the right-of-way within the authorized limits of the right-of-way. If any scarring or damage occurs outside of approved areas as a result of the holder's operations, the

areas shall be repaired and reseeded, or otherwise corrected as necessary to the satisfaction of the Authorized Officer.

- 3.7 The grantee will do everything reasonable, both independently and/or upon request of the authorized officer to prevent and suppress fires on or near the lands occupied under the authorization.
- 3.8 Petroleum products or by-products shall not be used for dust suppression.
- 3.9 Any revegetation will be with native species only.

4.0 Operational

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 Any cultural and/or paleontological resource (historic or prehistoric site or object) discovered by the Grantee, or any person working on his behalf, on public or Federal lands shall be immediately reported to the Authorized Officer. Grantee shall suspend all operations in the immediate area of such discovery until written authorization to proceed is issued by the Authorized Officer. An evaluation of the discovery will be made by the AO to determine appropriate actions to prevent the loss of significant cultural or scientific values. The Grantee will be responsible for the cost of evaluation and the Authorized Officer will make any decision as to proper mitigation measures after consulting with the Grantee.
- 4.3 All waste generated during operation, maintenance, and termination activities under this authorization shall be removed or otherwise disposed of as required by state and federal law. In this case the waste must be dumped in a DEC approved landfill site. Waste in this subparagraph means all discarded matter, including but not limited to, human waste, trash garbage, refuse, and oil drums, petroleum products, ashes and discarded equipment.
- 4.4 Areas of operation shall be left clean of all unauthorized foreign objects. This shall include, but is not limited to, wires, pins, flags and reflectors.
- 4.5 All fuel or lubricant spills will be cleaned up immediately, taking precedence over all other matters, except the health and safety of personnel. Spills will be cleaned up utilizing absorbent pads or other Alaska State DEC approved methods. Any such spill sites will be documented so that they can be located during the compliance check.
- 4.6 Recovered spill fluids will be removed and incinerated in approved receptacles.
- 4.7 As soon as possible, but not later than 24 hours, notice of any such discharge as defined in Alaska Statute Title 18, Chapter 75, Article 2, will be given to the AO and any other Federal and State Officials as are required by law.
- 4.8 All State and Federal safety standards and regulations for fuel transportation and handling will be followed. Only fuel products and amounts specifically authorized shall be stored on site, and shall be located at least 100 feet away from any source of water. All fuel containers,

- including barrels and propane tanks, shall be marked with the grantees name, product type, and year filled.
- 4.9 The grantee shall protect all Survey Monuments. In the advent of obliteration or disturbance of a survey monument, the grantee shall immediately notify the AO. The grantee will be financially responsible to re-establish the survey monuments to the Bureau standards.
 - 4.10 No hazardous materials shall be transported or disposed within the area of authorized use.
 - 4.11 Prior to abandonment of any portion of the facilities authorized by this grant, the grantee shall contact the Authorized Officer, and if the situation warrants, to arrange a joint inspection of the right-of-way. The inspection will be held to agree on an acceptable rehabilitation plan. The Authorized Officer must approve the plan in writing prior to the grantee commencing any abandonment and/or rehabilitation activities.
 - 4.12 The grantee shall at his expense, perform all maintenance and repairs, including exterior painting, structural maintenance and repairs, and maintenance of the ground necessary to keep the premises in first class order, repair, and safe condition throughout the term of the lease. The grantee waives the right to make repairs at the expense of the United States Government.
 - 4.13 All construction, maintenance, painting, etc., shall be done utilizing natural earth tone colors/materials, approved by the AO.
 - 4.14 Any further ground disturbance will be done after approval by the Authorized Officer.
 - 4.15 The grantee shall maintain above the doorway to the structure a sign identifying the BLM lease number.
 - 4.16 Grantee shall inform and ensure compliance of the grant and its stipulations by his/her agents, contractors, subcontractors, employees, and guests.
 - 4.17 No new access trails or roads are authorized without written authorization from the Bureau of Land Management, or upon conveyance of the land to the State of Alaska.
 - 4.18 The site must be kept clean. All waste generated during the operation and termination activities of this lease shall be removed and disposed of as required by state and federal laws. As defined in this paragraph "waste" means all discarded matter, including but not limited to human waste, trash, garbage, litter, oil drums, petroleum, ashes, and discarded equipment.
 - 4.19 Fuel storage containers, including slow test holding tanks and hazardous substances, with a total combined capacity larger than 55 gallons shall not be placed within 100 feet of the ordinary high water mark of any water body. Containers which exceed a total combined capacity of 110 gallons must be stored within an impermeable diked area or portable impermeable containment structure capable of containing 110 percent capacity of the largest independent container. All containers must clearly be marked with the content's and the Lessee' name. Drip pans and materials, such as absorbent pads, must be on hand to contain and clean up spills from any transfer or handling of fuel.

4.20 This authorization does not relieve the lessee from securing any other permits, licenses, or other authorizations required by federal, state, or local law.

Permittee Signature

Date

ANILCA Section 810 Evaluations and Findings for All Alternatives

E.A. No.: DOI-BLM-AK-A020-2011-0015-EA

Applicant: Ray Atkins

Evaluation by: Merben R. Cebrian

1. Evaluation and Finding of Alternative 1: The No Action Alternative

1.A. Effect of Alternative 1 on subsistence uses and needs:

Fisheries: There is currently no federally regulated subsistence fishery in the vicinity of the proposed action. The no action alternative continues current management practices in the area. Therefore Alternative 1 has no significant effect on subsistence fishery uses and needs.

Wildlife: This alternative proposes to continue current management practices in the area where the proposed action is to occur. Current practices are considered adequate to meet subsistence needs. There is no regulated federal subsistence hunting in the area. However, state Tier 1 and community caribou hunting occur in the area. Access to the caribou is via existing trails. State general and community moose hunting also occur in the area. Both moose and caribou hunting are closely regulated by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the BLM Glennallen Field Office. I hunting success approaches pre-determined thresholds, then both the ADF&G and BLM can close the caribou hunts in Unit 13. Hunting pressure may increase this year, 2011, because the community hunts will be newly implemented. However, regulatory measures are in place to prevent overharvest. Small mammals and upland birds occur in the area but will not be significantly affected by the No Action alternative. Therefore, this alternative has no significant effect on subsistence uses and needs.

Other resources: The No Action Alternative will not significantly affect other harvestable resources such as berries, willows, firewood, and spruce roots. Current practices are considered adequate to meet subsistence needs. Therefore, this alternative will have no significant effect on subsistence uses and needs.

1.B. Availability of other lands, if any, for the purposes sought to be achieved:

Lands are available for the purposes of the applicant. However, the application is for an existing cabin. This application is sought so the cabin does not have to be moved.

1.C. Other alternatives, if any, which would reduce or eliminate the use, occupancy, or disposition of public lands needed for subsistence purposes:

The only 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.

1.D. Finding:

Under Alternative 1, management of the area would continue under the 2007 East Alaska Resource Management Plan. Management actions will not result in a significant reduction in subsistence uses. Access to subsistence resources will not be hampered. There is no reasonably foreseeable significant decrease in the abundance of harvestable resources and in the distribution of harvestable resources due to this alternative.

2. Evaluation and Finding of Alternative 2 (the Proposed Action)

2.A. Effect of Alternative 2 on subsistence uses and needs:

Fisheries: There is currently no federally regulated subsistence fishery in the vicinity of the proposed action. The no action alternative continues current management practices in the area. Therefore Alternative 1 has no significant effect on subsistence fishery uses and needs.

Wildlife: The proposed action intends to grant a short term minimum impact permit while a long term lease is being processed.

Subsistence hunting in Unit 13 starts on 01 August for moose and 10 August for caribou. Between 01 April and 30 July, the proposed action will not significantly affect subsistence hunting. During the hunting season, the area is popular with state Tier I subsistence caribou hunters as well as state drawing hunt permit holders. A community hunt for moose and caribou also occur in the area starting in 2011. Recent increases in caribou population have resulted in the Alaska Department of Fish and Game issuing more caribou permits. Although hunting pressure is likely to increase in the area, a harvest quota will be implemented, and the Tier I hunt closed when the quota is reached. Increased vigilance is needed, however, especially when the caribou harvest is approaching the quota. Other wildlife such as small mammals and upland birds may also avoid human contact during active cleanup and recovery operations. 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. Proposed actions that mitigate litter and human waste disposal, fire rings, and campsite impacts will likely be beneficial to the habitat by minimizing impact to vegetation. Therefore, the proposed action will not significantly affect subsistence uses and needs.

2.B. Availability of other lands, if any, for the purposes sought to be achieved:

Lands are available for the purposes of the applicant. However, the application is for an existing cabin. This application is sought so the cabin does not have to be moved.

2.C. 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.

2.D. Finding:

Under Alternative 2 (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

12 May 2011
Date

Case File Number: AA-92702
DOI-BLM-AK-A020-2011-0015-EA

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Glennallen Field Office
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DECISION RECORD

Ray Atkins, Guide and Outfitter, Soule Lake Lease
Case File Number: AA-92702
DOI-BLM-AK-A020-2011-0015-EA

I. Decision:

It is my decision to authorize a short term authorization for Ray Atkins cabin at Soule Lake located on State selected lands within Section 4, T. 20 S., R. 5 W., Fairbanks Meridian until the longer term lease is authorized. Stipulations and conditions are attached.

II. Proposed Action:

The proposed action is to authorize a short term authorization for Ray Atkins to continue using a cabin located on Soule Lake, while the longer term lease is being processed. The short term authorization would be authorized under the authority of the Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1761). The proposed action is in conformance with the East Alaska Resource Management Plan, Approved: September, 2007.

III. Rationale for the Decision:

The rationale for the decision is based on the need to authorize this cabin for a guiding and outfitting business that is operated in this area. This is also a resolution to unauthorized use.

The proposed action is in conformance with the East Alaska Resource Management Plan, Approved: September, 2007. The area of the proposed activity is not within a critical subsistence use area and no serious wildlife problems are anticipated.

IV. ANILCA Section 810 Compliance:

The proposed action will not significantly restrict subsistence uses. No reasonably foreseeable and significant decrease in the abundance of harvestable resources or in the distribution of harvestable resources, and nor reasonably foreseeable limitations on harvester access will result from the proposed action.

V. Adverse Energy Impact Compliance:

**Case File Number: AA-12479, AA-12918,
AA-12919, AA-41791, and AA-92888
DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2011-0014-CX**

This action has been analyzed as required by Washington Office Instruction Memorandum 2002-053 to determine if it will cause an adverse impact on energy development. The action will not have an adverse direct or indirect impact on energy development, production or distribution. The preparation of a Statement of Adverse Energy Impact is not required.

VI. Consultation and Coordination:

Public participation was accomplished through the development of the East Alaska Resource Management Plan which anticipated routine land authorizations in accordance with FLPMA. Adequate measures to protect public lands through stipulations and required operating procedures are in place. Internal scoping was conducted by GFO staff and included threatened and endangered species, cultural clearances and ANILCA 810 analysis.

VII. Compliance and Monitoring Plan:

Compliance and monitoring of this authorization will be conducted by the BLM Glennallen Field Office. Inspections will be made on a regular basis and after the applicant reclaims the land upon termination of the authorization.

s/s Elizabeth Maclean
Elizabeth Maclean
Glennallen Field Manager

6/27/11
Date

Attachments: Terms and Stipulations

Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Glennallen Field Office

NEPA Interdisciplinary Review

Project Name: Ray Atkins, Soule Lake Lease

Casefile Number: AA-92702

NEPA Document Number: DOI-BLM-AKA-020-2011-0015-EA

NEPA Preparer: Brenda Becker

Please return to preparer by: May 12, 2011

Staff Specialist	Resource Area	Comments Provided Yes / No	Date Reviewed
Brenda Becker	Lands and Realty		
Marcia Butorac	Recreation and Facilities	Yes	4/22/2011
Merben Cebrian	ANILCA, Section 810	Yes	5/12/2011
Merben Cebrian	T&E Animals	No	5/12/2011
Merben Cebrian	T&E Plants	No	5/12/2011
Merben Cebrian	Wildlife	Yes	5/12/2011
Heath Emmons	Wild and Scenic Rivers	No	5/1/2011
Marnie Graham	Public Affairs	Yes	5/5/2011
Denton Hamby	Special Recreation Use	Yes	4/25/2011
Denton Hamby	Visual Resources	No	4/25/2011
Brad Honerlaw	Law Enforcement	No	6/2/2011
Alysia White	Law Enforcement		
John Jangala	Cultural Heritage	Yes	5/5/2011
John Jangala	Paleontology	No	5/5/2011
Cory Larson	Travel Management	Yes	4/25/2011
James Whitlock	Minerals		
Ben Seifert	Fire Management	No	6/12/2011
Ben Seifert	Forestry	No	6/12/2011
Ben Seifert	Invasive Weeds	Yes	6/12/2011
Ben Seifert	Soils	Yes	6/12/2011
Tim Sundlov	Air Quality	N/A-EW	6/15/2011
Tim Sundlov	Riparian & Wetlands	Yes	4/25/2011
Mike Sondergaard	Water Quality	No	4/25/2011
Tim Sundlov	Fish Biology	No	4/25/2011
Joseph Hart	Hazardous Materials	No	5/17/2011
Elijah Waters	Branch Chief - Resources	Yes-made in EA	6/15/2011

Authorized Officer Review: s/s Elizabeth Maclean

Date: 6/27/11