



Categorical Exclusion Form

Project: Upgrade Oxbow Trail to Meet Accessibility Guidelines

PEPC Project Number: 55153

Project Description:

This project will upgrade the existing Oxbow Loop trail to meet ADA standards. This work will include brush clearing, tread widening, minor reroutes, grading and resurfacing to meet guidelines developed by the US Access Board, as described in the Summary of Accessibility Standards for Federal Outdoor Developed Areas. Following completion, the Oxbow Trail will be maintained as a Class 3 trail as described in the Denali National Park Trails Program Routine Maintenance, Repair, and Operating Standards.

Upon completion, average trail grade will be 5% or less, and sections that exceed 5% no longer than 200 feet and never exceed 8%. It will be 42 inches wide with a compacted gravel surface. Steep grades will be mitigated using a combination of cut and fill, and excavated material that can be incorporated as sub-grade will be used on site. Sub-standard and organic materials will be used to close re-vegetate abandoned trail segments. Cross slope on the tread will be 5% or less, whether it is out-sloped or crowned.

Tundra that is cut from reroutes and tread widening will be salvaged and used to close abandoned trail segments. A bench will be installed at the first Nenana River overlook.

The two existing access trails to the Nenana River gravel bar will be maintained, but they will not be upgraded to meet accessibility standards. Rock cairns will be installed at the end of each access trail to insure hikers that choose to travel along the gravel bar find the maintained trail.

Upgrades will be completed with a combination of hand tools and heavy equipment such as; skid steer loaders, powered wheelbarrows, plate compactors and a 4 foot double drum asphalt roller. Tread material will be imported using wheelbarrows, power wheelbarrows, and helicopters.

Project Locations:

Location

County: Denali Borough

State: AK

District:

Section:

Geo. Marker:

Other:

Mitigation(s):

- Contact local users of the trail (DEC, McKinley Village Lodges, etc.) to notify them that construction will be occurring on the trail.
- Imported gravel will be used and checked for weed and seeds by vegetation specialist prior to bringing into the park.
- Vegetation -Vegetation mats that need to be removed from the trail surface would be saved and relocated to abandoned trail segments. -Periodic surveys would be conducted to determine the presence of exotic plants. If found, the Vegetation Specialist will be consulted to determine the best course of action. -Trails Supervisor would work with Vegetation Specialist to determine best course of action for revegetation efforts. ~~Wildlife and Habitat -The NPS would follow established guidelines in the park's bear-human~~ conflict management plan. The plan requires staff to use bear-proof containers for food and refuse, and sets up guidelines for temporary closures. -To avoid destroying and/or disturbing occupied bird nests and cavity trees within the project area in accordance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), park staff will take several measures including: 1. not cutting or removing vegetation during the nesting season for most species of birds (May 1 to August 1); 2. conduct a site-specific survey in April before the project begins to locate occupied nests of species that begin nesting before May 1 (i.e., owls, corvids) and implement appropriate protective measures to protect occupied nests; 3. conduct a site specific survey in May to locate occupied nests of waterfowl, shorebirds and kingfishers and provide recommendations for protecting occupied nests; 4. provide recommendations for protecting nest trees for cavity nesting species such as Barrow's Goldeneye, American Kestrel, Boreal Owl, and Northern Flicker; and 5. implement appropriate protective measures to protect any occupied bird nest discovered within the project area during the construction phase. -Construction area will be kept free of debris and will be checked at the end of each day for small objects that could be ingested by wildlife. -Trail route will not go through large soapberry patches to avoid bear-hiker conflicts. Cultural Resources -Park archaeologist will determine if periodic monitoring of ground disturbance for the trail will be needed. -The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires that if newly discovered cultural resources are identified during project implementation, work in that area must stop and the Superintendent notified immediately (36 CFR 800.13). The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), requires that if inadvertent discovery of Native American Remains or Objects occurs, activity must cease in the area of discovery, a reasonable effort made to protect the item(s) discovered, and immediate notice made to the Superintendent, as well as the appropriate Native American group(s) and State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). Further actions also require compliance under the provisions of NHPA and the Archaeological Resource Protection Act Visitor Experience and Opportunity -Visitors would be advised in park announcements, programs, and publications that there would be temporary inconveniences from construction work on the trail. -If helicopters are used to transport materials, efforts will be made to complete flights prior to peak visitor season.

Describe the category used to exclude action from further NEPA analysis and indicate the number of the category (see Section 3-4 of DO-12):

C.11 Minor trail relocation, development of compatible trail networks on logging roads or other established routes, and trail maintenance and repair.

Explanation:

Making the trail accessible where it is not now, because the terrain allows.

On the basis of the environmental impact information in the statutory compliance file, with which I am familiar, I am categorically excluding the described project from further NEPA analysis. No

exceptional circumstances (e.g. all boxes in the ESF are marked "no") or conditions in Section 3-6 apply, and the action is fully described in Section 3-4 of DO-12.

Signature

Superintendent:


Don Striker

Date:

10/26/14

NPS Contact:

Date: