



Categorical Exclusion Form

Project: Interim continuation of 2013 Environmental Assessment: Winter plowing of the Denali Park Road to Mountain Vista

PEPC Project Number: 80623

Description of Action (Project Description):

This project proposes to continue winter plowing of the Denali Park Road to the Mountain Vista trailhead while formal winter planning efforts are underway. The 2013 Winter Road Plowing in Denali National Park Environmental Assessment (EA) and associated Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) approved a three to five-year trial period of plowing the park road to Mountain Vista (near mile 12) beginning in mid-February each year. 2014 was the first year of this trial period, and 2018 is the final year of the five years initially authorized. This project would continue the winter road plowing to Mountain Vista for up to two years (2019 and 2020), during which time a plan guiding management of the winter and shoulder seasons, including use of the park road, is to be completed.

The intent of the original three to five-year trial period authorized in the 2013 Winter Road Plowing in Denali National Park FONSI was to study the impacts of winter plowing to Mountain Vista before committing to annual plowing on a permanent basis. Monitoring data collected during 2014 - 2018 have not shown that the authorized plowing negatively impacts the human environment to a greater extent than was anticipated in the 2013 EA. Continuing to plow the road to Mountain Vista as authorized in the 2013 FONSI for an additional one to two years is unlikely to change the impacts relative to those already observed.

An extension of one to two years also offers the opportunity to collect more data on resource impacts over a greater variety of annual conditions and as visitor use increases during winter and spring months. This additional information will be useful to the creation of a formalized winter and shoulder season plan, which will guide more permanent decisions regarding winter plowing of the Denali Park road to Mountain Vista.

During this interim continuation, winter plowing will continue to be managed per the 2013 Winter Road Plowing in Denali National Park FONSI.

Location

County: Denali Borough **State:** AK

Mitigation(s):

None specified for CE; many under discussions with respect to winter planning generally.

CE Citation: B.1 Changes or amendments to an approved plan, when such changes would cause no or only minimal environmental impact.

CE Justification:

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Continues early road opening as approved in 2013 EA while parkwide planning for winter and shoulder season management is underway.

Decision: I find that the action fits within the categorical exclusion above. Therefore, I am categorically excluding the described project from further NEPA analysis. No extraordinary circumstances apply.

Signature

Superintendent:


Denise Granke
Don Striker

Date:



Extraordinary Circumstances:

If implemented, would the proposal...	Yes/No	Notes
A. Have significant impacts on public health or safety?	No	
B. 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?	No	
C. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (NEPA section 102(2)(E))?	No	
D. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?	No	
E. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?	No	
F. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant, environmental effects?	No	
G. 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?	No	
H. 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?	No	
I. Violate a federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?	No	
J. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (EO 12898)?	No	
K. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 130007)?	No	
L. 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)?	No	

