



Categorical Exclusion Documentation Form (CE Form)

Project: Access to Rainy Creek (ANILCA inholding): 2020-2021 SUP for Construction of Guest Facilities

PEPC Project Number: 94441

Description of Action (Project Description):

Denali National Park and Preserve is preparing to issue a one-year (May 1, 2020 - April 30, 2021) special use permit (SUP) for the activities requested by Hank Swan on behalf of the Kantishna Hills LLC owners who are initiating construction of 5-10 cabins and employee dorm, renovation of an existing cabin, and construction other structures as part of a lodge facility on their three private parcels (13 acres total) on Rainy Creek. The applicants are requesting use of national park lands to stage equipment and construction materials, an additional 60 road travel permits in 2020 to transport equipment and materials to Kantishna, permission to use a helicopter to sling-load construction materials from two of the requested staging areas on NPS land to their property, permission to use a helicopter to transport employees to the Kantishna airstrip if stranded by high water on Moose Creek, brushing of roads and staging areas, and use of a snowmachine and groomer to create a fixed-wing aircraft winter landing strip on NPS land near their property and a snow machine trail stretching between Glen airstrip and Rainy Creek inholding property.

The helicopter use is in support of construction only with constraints on daily operation timing. Sling-loads would allow transport of materials during the early season (June) period when the volume of water in Moose Creek is typically high making crossing the creek multiple times with high-clearance vehicles unsafe. Sling-load operation would also be allowed during the rest of the summer season with constraints on daily or weekly timing to minimize noise intrusions on Moose Creek area hikers. Use of the helicopter sling-loads will provide for more efficient delivery, facilitating summer construction, which would likely reduce the amount of and length of time materials are stored on NPS lands. The applicant will be encouraged to use the end of visitor season period (after Road Lottery) to use the road access to pre-stage materials for the following winter and spring prior to the start of visitor season.

See the attached SUP for a more detailed description of the staging areas, activities, proposed activity stipulations, and general special use permit conditions.

This permit is being issued while the SF-299 and Right of Way Certificate of Access (RWCA) discussions are occurring between the property owners and the NPS.

Project Locations:

Location

County:	Denali Borough	State:	AK
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Mitigation(s):

- Numerous. Please see conditions in SUP as executed.

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

CE Justification:

All actions have been approved or allowed in prior years, with and without documented compliance. This SUP combines all requested actions into one permit with conditions.

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: DENICE SWANKE Digitally signed by DENICE SWANKE
Date: 2020.04.02 16:52:01 -08'00' **Date:** _____

Denice Swanke

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	There are no impact to identified wetlands on FWS wetland mapper. Area of new impact is .09 acres and would be under .10 acre trigger for needed a Statement of Findings.
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	Expansion of Staging Area 2 is in support of operations related to ANILCA access. Permission does not include exclusive use.
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	