

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
Case File No.: AA-060567 (2801)  
AK-040-02-EA-001

Applicant: Ketchikan Public Utilities  
Electric Division Warehouse  
1065 Fair Street  
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

Type of Action: Right-of-Way Grant

Location: Copper River Meridian, Alaska  
T. 75 S., R. 90 E.,  
U.S. Survey No. 2990, Alaska, Lot 13.

Prepared By: Dorothy Bonds  
Realty Specialist

Preparing Office: Bureau of Land Management  
Anchorage Field Office  
6881 Abbott Loop Road  
Anchorage, Alaska 99507-2599

Date: October 26, 2001

I. INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) issued the Ketchikan Public Utilities (KPU) a right-of-way (ROW) grant for 7.2/12.47 KV overhead electrical/telephone distribution lines in August of 1987. KPU has established electrical/telephone services to residents of Pennock Island since the 1980's. The distribution lines cross a Native grave site that was withdrawn by Public Land Order (PLO) 5188, for use and benefit of Alaska Natives, described as Lot 13 of U.S. Survey 2990.

On November 2000, KPU was contacted by a representative of the Tongass Tribe concerning the distribution lines crossing a headstone on one of the grave sites. The Tongass Tribe requested that KPU move the distribution lines underground. The tribe contracted the trench digging, and had a tribal representative on-site to assure that the archeological sites were not disturbed. A 25-foot long trench was dug to install the underground electrical/telephone distribution lines. KPU received a non-objection letter from the Tongass Council for the ROW amendment.

A. Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action:

The purpose and need of the Proposed Action is to provide electrical/telephone services to a Pennock Island resident on Lot 12, of U.S. Survey 2990.

B. Conformance With Land Use Plan:

No land use plan exists for this area. However, the environmental analysis assesses the impacts of the Proposed Action and provides a basis for a decision on the proposal (43 CFR 1610.8(b)(1)).

II. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

A. Proposed Action:

The Proposed Action is to replace existing overhead electric and telephone lines with underground lines that provide services to Lot 12, U.S. Survey 2990. The lines will cross Federal land (Lot 13, U.S. Survey 2990) and terminate on private land (Lot 12, U.S. Survey 2990). The Federal land is described as Lot 13, U.S. Survey No. 2990 in T. 75 S., R. 90 E., Copper River Meridian, situated on the north end of Pennock Island across from the Tongass Narrows and the city of Ketchikan, Alaska.

The overhead lines will be replaced with underground lines buried in a 20" x 30" x 25' trench. The lines will be encased in a two inch, schedule 40 conduit and the trench will be backfilled.

Access to the island will be by barge from Lot 12 (private property). No vehicle traffic will be used in the construction of the underground distribution lines. Only hand clearing and stringing of wires through the conduit are proposed.

Lot 13, consists of 0.79 of an acre, of which 42 square feet of Federal land is involved with this ROW. The original grant and this amendment will expire in the year 2037.

- B. No Action Alternative:  
The No Action Alternative would be to deny KPU=s application for the ROW extension of the underground electrical and telephone distribution lines.

### III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

- A. Critical Elements:  
The following critical elements of the human environment were not present or would not be affected by the Proposed Action:

Air Quality  
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern  
Environmental Justice  
Farmlands (Prime or Unique)  
Floodplains  
Invasive, Non-native Species  
Native American Religious Concerns  
Wastes, Hazardous or Solid  
Water Quality Surface/Ground  
Wetlands/Riparian Zones  
Wild and Scenic Rivers  
Wilderness

1. Cultural Resources:  
No cultural resources are known or expected for this parcel. KPU and the Tongass Tribe have consulted with each other and have reached an agreement about the underground utility lines. It is determined that no further consultation is necessary under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

2. Threatened or Endangered Species:  
The impact of the Proposed Action will not affect any threatened or endangered species or their habitats. Therefore, no consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is considered necessary pursuant to Section 7 of the Act and none will be undertaken.
3. ANILCA Section 810:  
The Proposed Action occurs on Federal Public Lands as defined in ANILCA and falls under the regulatory authority of the Federal Subsistence Board. This action does not occupy a site of significant size or productivity to produce a sustainable surplus of any subsistence resources. Therefore, this action will not significantly restrict subsistence uses, decrease the abundance of subsistence resources, alter the distribution of subsistence resources, or limit subsistence users' access from currently existing conditions. No further analysis is necessary at this time.

- B. Vegetation:  
The southeast Alaskan forests are dominated by western hemlock and Sitka spruce. The under stories are sparse and consist of mosses, shrubs and forbs.

#### IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

- A. Impacts of the Proposed Action:
1. Critical Elements:  
  
Cultural Resources:  
The Proposed Action will not affect any grave sites in the area.
  2. Vegetation:  
The vegetation along the trench would be removed or destroyed by installation of the underground service lines. Trenching would disturb approximately 75 square feet of vegetation. The trenching would avoid any trees. Vegetation will be cleared only to the extent necessary within the ROW for construction.
- B. Impacts of the No Action Alternative:  
Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no impacts.

C. Residual and Cumulative Impacts:

No residual or cumulative impacts will occur from this action.

D. Mitigation Measures:

Natural woody debris should be scattered over the backfilled trench to reduce any erosion and improve natural revegetation.

V. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

A. List of Preparers:

Dorothy Bonds - Realty Specialist

Donna Redding - Archaeologist

Jeff Denton - Subsistence Coordinator

Bruce Seppi - Wildlife Biologist

Debbie Blank - Botanist