



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Anchorage District Office
4700 East 72nd Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

IN REPLY REFER TO

6128 (014)

March 22, 1983

Memorandum

To: Area Manager, McGrath (018)

From: Trespass Investigator

Subject: Trip Report to Rohn River Roadhouse

I left Anchorage at 7:55 p.m., March 6, 1983 via Wien Airlines and arrived McGrath at 8:45 p.m. I remained over night (R.O.Ned) at the BLM McGrath Station.

On Monday, March 7, 1983 at 10:00 a.m., Mark Phillips and I traveled to Rohn Roadhouse via USF&WS Aircraft, arriving approximately 11:00 a.m. We set up camp adjacent to the airstrip.

Our purpose for the trip was to twofold. The first purpose was to monitor the activities in the area in relationship to the Iditarod sled dog race. The second purpose was to try to determine land marks of the original (1939) landing strip survey and to measure the distance from Einar Carlson's cabin to the river bank.

Our original plans were to stay at Rohn Roadhouse until Thursday, March 10 but the USF&WS pilot returned for us on Wednesday evening, fearing bad weather the next day.

I R.O.Ned at the McGrath station on Wednesday evening and returned to Anchorage via North Pacific Airlines at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 10.

The following are suggestions or recommendations for the management of the Rohn Roadhouse area:

CABIN

The cabin is fully adequate for the use it receives. The only concern I had was that without some maintenance it could deteriorate. My main recommendation would be to finish putting metal on the roof. This could be done using the same material that is on the rest of the roof (flattened out blazo cans).

Another concern I would have is that anything that is added to the cabin should be done with the same type of construction. That is, hand hewn or natural logs. An unacceptable extreme would be to helicopter in an ATCO building.

OUT HOUSE

There is presently a "one holer" out back of the cabin. This was constructed by the local trapper, Scot Mileur. It seems to be inadequate for the large numbers of people that arrive during the Iditarod (approximately 50 at one time).

My suggestion would be to construct, out of local logs, a "two holer." This could be done by a couple of people in a few days and would alleviate one problem.

AIRSTRIP

For 51 weeks out of the year the strip is more than adequate. For the one week that the mushers are in the strip is inadequate. Any improvements that are made should be balanced with relative small amount of use.

My suggestions are to widen the present strip to allow for more correction during cross-wind landings and take offs. The strip should also be lengthened for landings on ice slick conditions by ski planes.

At one time there were nine aircraft on the strip with three planes on the river. There is not an adequate place to park these planes. My suggestion is to brush out an area on the side of the strip away from the cabin for parking.

All this airstrip work could be done with chain saws and axes in a few days with a few people. Relatively, little expense would be incurred and will most likely prevent an accident in the future.

DOG RESTING AREA

There were approximately 30 mushers at one time with about 450 dogs. The mushers all were able to find areas that were adequate to camp and take care of their dogs.

Because the mushers generally heat their water on coleman stones, the area is not being denuded of wood.

My suggestion is to do nothing in this regard. Although there are many people and dogs, there appears to be no undo environmental damage.

LITTER

With this many people camping in one place there is bound to be some litter around. However, I did not find this to be a problem. The race checkers established an area where the mushers could put their garbage and this was complied with.

There was an excess of dog food but the local trapper will use this to feed his dogs. Even if he did not use it, it would be consumed rather quickly by wildlife.

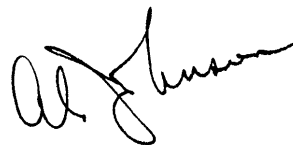
GENERAL

All-in-all the Rohn Roadhouse check point is well run. The race checkers do an outstanding job of organizing and keeping things in order. They expressed many times that they were concerned with keeping the area as primitive and as natural as possible.

Mr. Scott Mileur is living and trapping in the South Fork of the Kuskokwim River. He uses the Rohn cabin as a line shack for his trapline. Because of this and also his interest in the area, he has maintained the cabin in excellent condition. He should be commended for this effort.

LAND MARK SURVEY INFORMATION

Mr. Mark Phillips and I were able to measure the distance from the middle of Einar Carlson's cabin to the bluff of the river. This measurement was 50 feet 60 inches in a magnetic north direction. We were not able to find any other survey corners as described in the 1939 plat.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Al. Johnson".