

# **Categorical Exclusion**

**Prepared by**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**  
**Bureau of Land Management**

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# **Chapter 1. PLAN CONFORMANCE/NEPA COMPLIANCE RECORD**

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## **A. Background**

### **BLM Office:**

Arctic Field Office, Bureau of Land Management  
1150 University Avenue  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709-3844  
<http://www.blm.gov/ak>

**Lease/Serial/Case File No.:** FF095699

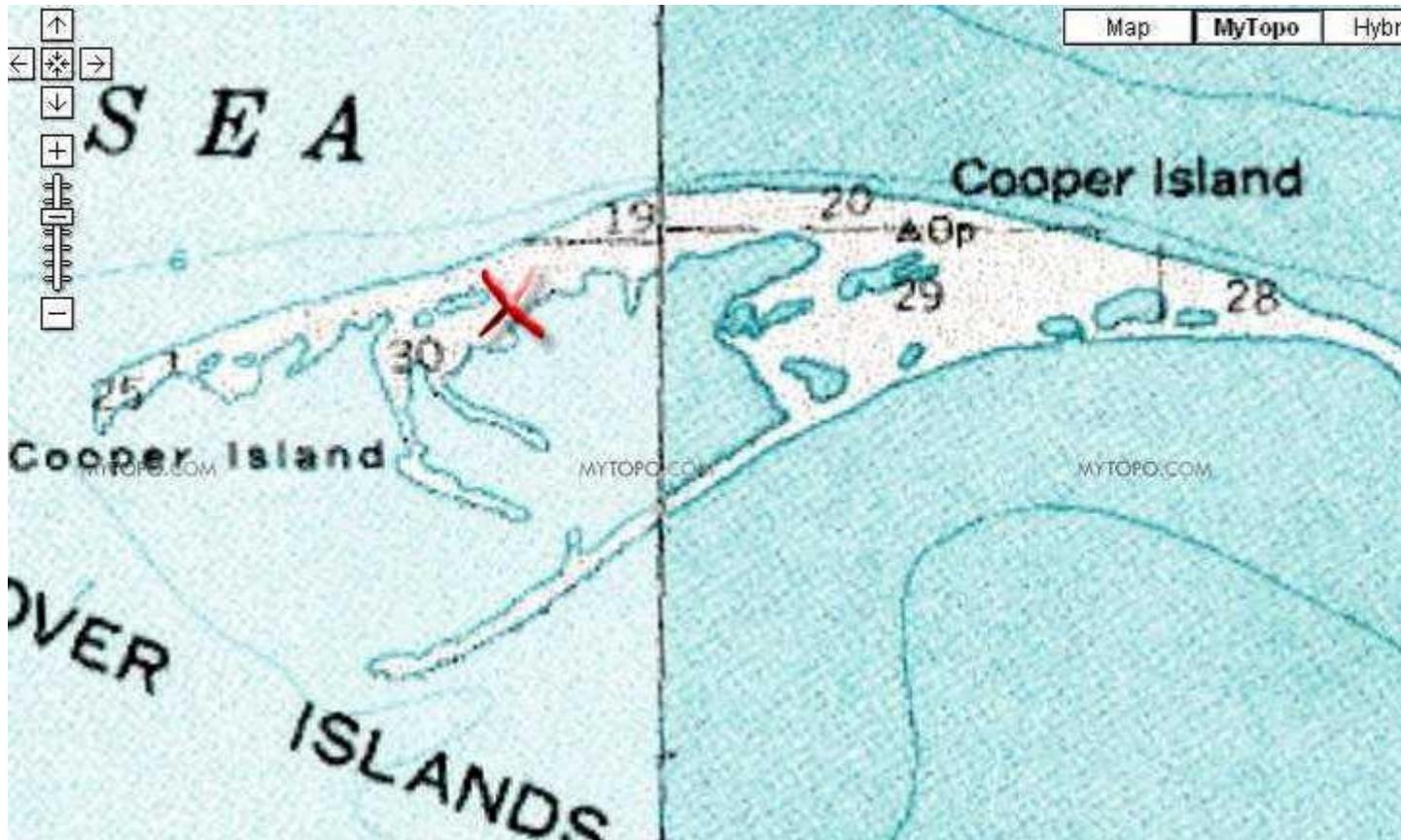
Proposed Action: Cooper Island Field Camp/NPRA Permit.

Date of Proposed Action: May 25th through September 10, 2013

Applicant: George J. Divoky  
Friends of Cooper Island  
652 32 Avenue East  
Seattle, WA 98112

General Location of Proposed Action: Most fieldwork would be conducted on the western end of Cooper Island where the Navy left abandoned boxes and wood in the 1950s that seabirds now use for breeding sites. Most of the human activity would occur within that area or adjacent to the camp. Location of camp is at 71° 14.1 N, 155° 43.0 W, shown by the red X on the map (see Map 1).

Map 1. Location of Cooper Island north of Barrow; red X indicates camp.



**Description of Proposed Action:** The applicant, George Divoky of Friends of Cooper Island, has requested authorization for field activity, access, and cabin occupancy on an established field camp on Cooper Island. Cooper Island, 25 miles east of Barrow, is within the National Petroleum Reserve Alaska (NPR-A). Occupancy/use would be from approximately May 25 to September 10, 2013. There will be one person full-time with a second person for approximately three weeks in June and 3-4 weeks in August. Activities include biological research of Black Guillemots.

Initial transportation to the island would be via sea ice with up to four helicopter take-offs and landings possible before breakup of the nearshore ice, which occurs between July 1st and July 20th. After breakup transportation would be by boat with approximately 3-4 boat charters from Barrow to transport gear or personnel and to break camp at the end of the season..

All access is from Barrow, approximately 25 miles west of Cooper Island. They plan to go out to the island over the ice in late May with the remote possibility of one or two helicopter trips before breakup of the near shore ice.

## B. Land Use Plan Conformance

The proposed action is in conformance with the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act which allows for the authorization of uses consistent with the purposes of the Act.

## C. Compliance with NEPA:

*Chapter 1 PLAN CONFORMANCE/NEPA  
COMPLIANCE RECORD  
B. Land Use Plan Conformance*

The IAP/EIS Record of Decision for the NPR-A developed stipulations and best management practices applicable to all activities in NPR-A. The stipulations and best management practices applicable to the proposed action will be provided, along with project-specific mitigation, to the applicant entitled: Arctic Field Office Non Oil and Gas Permit Stipulations.

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 2, Appendix 1, or 516 DM 11.9. Specifically the proposed action meets the criteria for a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11.9, BLM H-1790-1 National Environmental Policy Act Handbook Appendix 4(F-10) BLM Categorical Exclusions.

**“Nondestructive data collection, inventory (including field, aerial, and satellite surveying and mapping), study, research, and monitoring activities.”**

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply.

<b>Extraordinary Circumstances</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
2.1 Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
2.2 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.		X
2.3 Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2) (E)].		X
2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
2.7 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.		X
2.8 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.		X
2.9 Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		X
2.11 Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).		X
2.12 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).		X

## D. Approval and Contact Information

I considered the proposed action and have determined that there is no potential for significant impacts.

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/s/Lon Kelly  
Authorized Officer, Arctic Field Office

**Date:** May 10, 2013

**Contact Person**

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Fairbanks, Alaska 99709  
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