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

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DOI-BLM-AKF010-2013-0020-CX

## 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.:** FF095710, 2984.01 (AK012)

Proposed Action: Monitor temperature, soil characteristics, and the phenology, biomass, and nutrient concentration of caribou forage within macroplots near Pt. Lay, Alaska.

Date of Proposed Action: May 6th thru September 30th, 2013 and May thru September of 2014 and May thru September of 2015.

Applicant: Adrian V. Rocha  
University of Notre Dame  
100 Galvin Life Sciences Room 138  
Notre Dame, IN 46617

Location: All in Umiat Meridian

Township	Range	BLM Managed Sections	
2 North	40 West	All	
2 North	41 West	All	
1 North	40 West	All	

Map:



### Description of Proposed Action:

The proposed action would authorize the MBL to conduct visits to two separate fire sites within the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A) to collect data and samples for comparison with ongoing research on the 2007 Anaktuvuk River wildfire. As part of the collection of data they would install temporary weather stations which would be powered by solar and installed in June and removed in August. Data and samples to be collected include photographs and other images, descriptions of soils and vegetation within the burned areas, and soil and plant samples for chemical and analyses. Equipment would consist of 2 meteorological tripod towers that are <3m in height. They anticipate minimal disturbance to the land and to leave their presence undetectable.

They would make three visits to the sites which would take place in late May, late July, and late August of 2013. Access will be by helicopter from Pt. Lay, and they will only make short visits (4-6 hours) to the sites during the three trips. The field party for each trip will include three scientists plus a helicopter pilot. Fuel for the helicopter will be out of Pt. Lay. The work will require a maximum of one to two helicopter landings in each of the sites indicated on the attached maps.

This year they will also be installing meteorological equipment inside and outside the large 1977 fire scar known as the Kokolik fire scar (See red area in map below). Equipment will consist of 2 meteorological tripod towers that are <3 m in height and will visit these sites with a helicopter three times during the summer to install, download data, and uninstall the towers. The towers will be powered by a single non-spillable battery enclosed in an industrial grade container and a solar panel. They expect that the towers or installation will cause no damage to the surrounding ecosystem. The sites will be located around the Kokolik fire scar, ~ 30 miles east of Pt. Lay at 69.75 oN and -163o W.

Fuel for the helicopter would be stored in Barrow. The work would require a maximum of 1 to 2 helicopter landings in each of the sites. This is a continuation of the research conducted under BLM permit in 2010.

## B. Land Use Plan Conformance

IAP: National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (IAP/EIS).

Date Approved/Amended: November 2012 and associated Record of Decision dated February 2013.

The proposed action is in conformance with the IAP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following IAP decision (including objectives, terms, and conditions): The stipulations and best management practices will regulate permitted activities to meet resources and use objectives and thereby mitigate impacts of those activities.

## C. Compliance with NEPA:

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.”**

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.

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.

Extraordinary Circumstances	Yes	No
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

**Recommendation:** I have found that the proposed action is compatible with the LUP, and is an action that can be categorically excluded. The Proposed Action does not trigger any of the Extraordinary Circumstances found in 516 DM Chapter 2, Appendix 2. I recommend that the Proposed Action be allowed and that an Environmental Assessment of Environmental Impact Statement is not needed.

## D. Approval and Contact Information

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/s/Linda Demientieff  
 Realty Specialist, Arctic Field Office

May 7, 2013

### Contact Person

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 Fairbanks, Alaska 99709  
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[Enter name here]  
 [Enter title here]

Date

### Contact Person

