

# CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

## A. Background

DOI-BLM-AKF010-2013-0023-CX

### **Arctic Field Office, Bureau of Land Management**

1150 University Avenue  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709-3844  
<http://www.blm.gov/ak>  
907-474-2200

**Lease/Serial/Case File No.:** FF094257

**Applicant:** Arctic Wild  
P.O. Box 80562  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99708

Proposed Action Title/Type: Special Recreation Permit to conduct wildlife viewing in the National Petroleum Reserve Alaska (NPR-A)

Dates of Proposed Activity: June 4- June 10, 2013

General Location of Proposed Action: Teshekpuk Lake - Nuiqsut

### **Description of Proposed Action:**

The applicant, Arctic Wild, has a current Special Recreation Permit (SRP) for activity in the vicinity of the Kokolik, Utukok, Kukpowruk and Pitmegea rivers, which expires May 31, 2015. They have proposed to add a hiking trip from Teshekpuk Lake to Ocean Point to their planned activity. Even though the request is for this year, since their permit expires in 2015 their amended permit would allow them to conduct this same trip in future years

The proposed action would amend a Special Recreation Authorization to Arctic Wild for wildlife viewing in the National Petroleum Reserve Alaska (NPR-A). The proposed trip would take place from June 4 – June 10. One guide and one client would fly via a fixed wing wheeled aircraft to Teshekpuk Lake for the start of their hiking trip. They anticipate spending 6 nights camping along the route to Ocean Point (Figure 1). Arctic Wild practice “Leave No Trace Principles” for their trips. No fuel use other than for cooking is proposed for the trip. They would fly from Ocean Point via fixed wing wheeled aircraft.



**Figure 1:** Applicant supplied map

**Table 1:** Legal Description (All Umiat Meridian):

Township	Range	Sections	Sec - Selected Lands	Sec - Not BLM Managed Land	Site Name
14 North	5 West	35, 36			Landing Section
13 North	5 West	1,2			Landing Section 2
13 North	4 West	6,7,8,9, 15-17,21-23, 25,26			Camp June 4 Section 16
13 North	3 West	36			
12 North	3 West	5, 8-10, 14-16, 23,24			Camp June 5 Section 9
12 North	2 West	19,20,28- 30,32-34			Camp June 6 Section 34
11 North	2 West	3,10,11,13,14			
11 North	1 West	18-21, 27-28, 34-35			Camp June 7 Section 28
10 North	1 West	1			
10 North	1 East	6,7,8,17,20,21,2 6-27,35-36			Camp June 8 Section 17
9 North	2 East	6-8, 15-17,22,23 ,25,26,36			Camp June 9 Section 16
9 North	3 East	31			Take Out

## B. Land Use Plan Conformance

The proposed action is in conformance with the following planning document: National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (IAP/EIS) dated November 2012 and associated Record of Decision dated February 2013.

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:

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 and are entitled: “FF094257 Arctic Wild Teshekpuk – Ocean Point Trip 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.

“Issuance of Special Recreation Permits for day use or overnight use up to 14 consecutive nights; that impacts no more than 3 staging area acres; and/or for recreational travel along roads, trails, or in areas authorized in a land use plan.”

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.

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<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 28, 2013

### Contact Person

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