

# Categorical Exclusion

DOI-BLM-AKF010-2013-0026-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.:** FF096440

Proposed Action: The applicant is planning to survey 7 points in the NPR-A

Date of Proposed Action: From June 30th to July 17, 2013

Applicant: Nathan Wardwell  
JOA Surveys, LLC  
2000 E. Dowling Rd. #10  
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

Location: All in Umiat Meridian

Township	Range	Meridian	BLM Managed Sections
1 North	4 West	Umiat	All BLM Lands
11 South	19 West	Umiat	All BLM Lands
3 North	2 East	Umiat	All BLM Lands
8 South	19 West	Umiat	All BLM Lands
4 North	4 East	Umiat	All BLM Lands
6 South	14 West	Umiat	Arctic Slope Regional Corp.
13 North	20 East	KRM	All BLM Lands

### Description of Proposed Action:

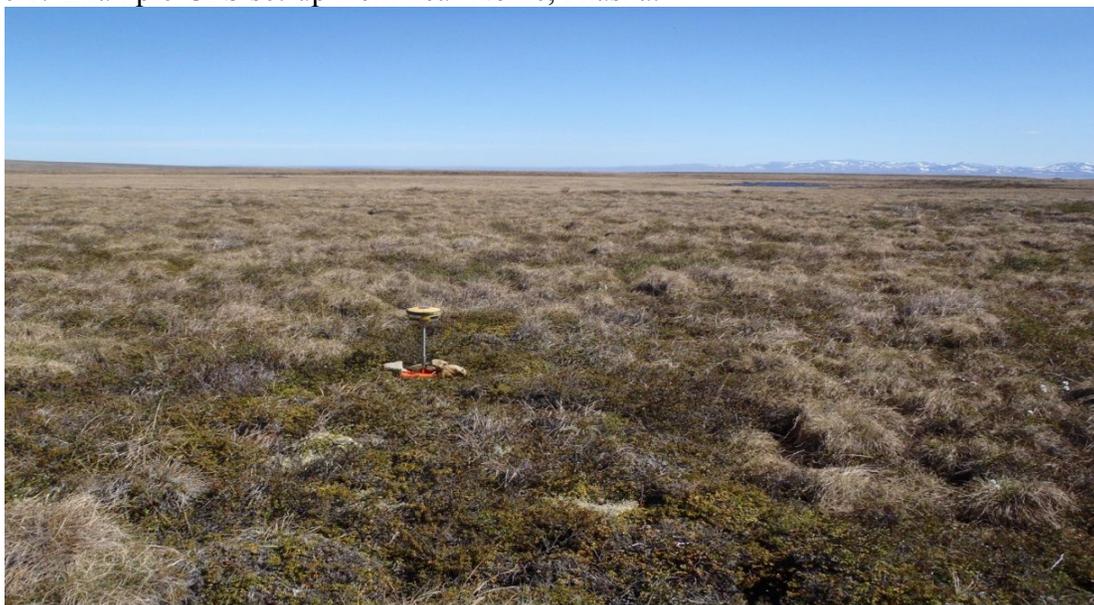
The applicant, Nathan Wardwell, with JOA Surveys, has requested authorization for field activity to access and land by helicopter on lands within the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A) in support of the SDMI (Statewide Digital Mapping Initiative).

They will be surveying 7 seven points in the eastern and southern portions of NPR-A. The survey at each point will consist of setting up one static GPS receiver to collect at least two hours of data. The set-up is completely temporary. The longest amount of time that the receiver will be deployed is overnight. Once the receiver has logged at least 2 two hours of data and the field crew can safely return to the site they will remove everything.

The applicant will not establish campsites in the field. They will store a 55 gallon drum of fuel at the airstrip in Umiat. The applicant expects at most two landings per site. The first landing will set up the GPS receiver, and the second landing pick up the receiver after they have collected at least two hours of data.

This project will require two people total for the site visits, the helicopter pilot and the JOA surveyor.

Figure 1. Example GPS set-up from near Nome, Alaska.



## **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.

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.

<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

**Recommendation:** I have found that the proposed action is compatible with the IAP, 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**

/s/Lon Kelly  
Authorized Officer, Arctic Field Office

June 10, 2013

### **Contact Person**

Linda Demientieff  
Arctic Field Office

1150 University Avenue  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709  
Phone: 907-474-2307  
Email: [ldemientieff@blm.gov](mailto:ldemientieff@blm.gov)