

# **Categorical Exclusion**

## **DOI-BLM-LLAKF010-2013-30-CX**

### **A. Background**

Applicant: Pamela Groves/Daniel Mann  
University of Alaska  
910 Yukon Drive Ste. 106  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99775

Proposed Action Title/Type: NPRA Permit for Paleontological Research

Dates of Proposed Activity: June 14 thru July 4, 2013

General Location of Proposed Action: Along Ikpikpuk and Titaluk Rivers, in the northern portion of NPR-A

#### Description of Proposed Action:

The applicants will be conducting paleontological and quaternary stratigraphy surveys along the Ikpikpuk and Titaluk rivers. They will be dropped by helicopter on the upper Ikpikpuk River ("Ikpikpuk Start" on Map 1) and float downriver in an inflatable canoe to Cottonwood Bluff (see map). They will stop on river bars surveying them for old megafaunal bones, collecting specimens for identification and dating. These bones will be placed in the University of Alaska Museum of the North Earth Sciences collection. They will move by helicopter from the Ikpikpuk River to the Titaluk River ("Russian Section" on Map 1) where, in addition to bone collection, they will collect sediment samples from one large river bluff for isotope and carbon dating to better understand the chronology of the river through the Holocene.

Two researchers will conduct research on the Ikpikpuk River and will then be joined by two assistants for work on the Titaluk River.

They plan on flying by fixed wing aircraft from Fairbanks to Inigok on scheduled BLM flights. From Inigok they will fly by BLM helicopter to the upper Ikpikpuk. They will travel by canoe to the lower Ikpikpuk where they will be transported by helicopter to the Titaluk. Later in the season, their assistants will fly by fixed wing aircraft to Inigok and then be transported by helicopter to the Titaluk River site (Russian Section). All four researchers will be transported by helicopter from the Titaluk River site back to Inigok and then by fixed wing aircraft from Inigok back to Fairbanks.

On the Ikpikpuk River, they will be camping in a new location each night on gravel bars along the river. The camps are very small with one sleeping tent and one cooking tent. On the Titaluk River they will also camp on river bars though sometimes they will spend more than one night at the camps. With four people, these camps will be slightly larger with three sleeping tents and one cook tent.

They will be carrying less than two gallons of fuel for the camp stoves. They will not carry any other fuel with them.



Township	Range	Section	Latitude*	Longitude*	Managed by
4 North	12 West	All			BLM All
4 North	14 West	All			BLM All
3 North	12 West	All			BLM All
2 North	12 West	All			BLM All
1 North	12 West	All			BLM All
1 South	11 West	All			BLM All
1 South	12 West	All			BLM All
2 South	11 West	All			BLM All

## B. Land Use Plan Conformance

The proposed action is subject to the following planning document: National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (IAP/EIS) 2012 and Record of Decision (ROD) 2013.

The proposed action is not inconsistent with the purposes of the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act of 1976. The applicant will be required to abide by stipulations attached to their Summer Right of Way Grant BLM serial number FF096609.

## 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.”**

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

## D. Approval and Contact Information

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 4. I recommend that the Proposed Action be allowed and that an Environmental Assessment of Environmental Impact Statement is not needed.

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/s/Lon Kelly  
 Authorized Officer, Arctic Field Office

June 10, 2013

### Contact Person

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