

Categorical Exclusion

DOI-BLM-AKF010-2013-0036-CX

A. Background

BLM Office: Arctic Field Office LLAKF010

Lease/Serial/Case File No.: FF096613

Applicant: Wm. Randy Reed
Permits & Regulatory Compliance
CGG Veritas Land US, Inc.
2450 Cinnabar Loop
Anchorage, Alaska 99577

Proposed Action Title/Type: NPR-A Permit (298401)

Dates of Proposed Activity: July 18, 2013 – August 6, 2013

General Location of Proposed Action: Nuiqsut, Alaska Area

Description of Proposed Action: The applicant, Wm. Randy Reed with CGG Veritas Land US, Inc. (Veritas) has requested authorization for access and landing by a helicopter and fixed wing aircraft on lands within the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A) in support of an archaeological survey. The survey would be conducted as a precursor to the seismic survey Veritas is planning for winter 2014. The purpose of the survey is to accurately identify known and unknown cultural and historical sites that exist in the survey area in order to protect them from potential impacts during the anticipated winter seismic survey. The survey would also serve as a route-planning mission. Reanier and Associates, of Seattle, Washington has been contracted to conduct the survey. There would be 3 people (including pilot) using a Bristow L4 helicopter to conduct the activity. An estimated ten take-offs and landings may be required for this project.

The helicopter would be based out of Deadhorse, Alaska and no camping would occur on BLM managed lands. Refueling would occur twice per day at the Deadhorse airport. No remote fuel storage is planned, or required. Veritas and Bristow Alaska have detailed Emergency Operations Plans in place. They would keep in communication with the Deadhorse Airport using VHF radios, satellite telephones or emergency transponders. Detailed logs would be kept documenting departure and return times and locations, and flight plans would be filed with the Deadhorse air traffic control.

Veritas has requested the locations of cultural or historical sites that may be located within the survey area from the North Slope Borough (NSB), Inupiat Heritage and Language Commission (IHLC). They would use this information to verify the locations. Veritas has initiated contact with the NSB about this project and plans to apply for a NSB permit. Veritas consulted with the Native Village of Nuiqsut for this project.

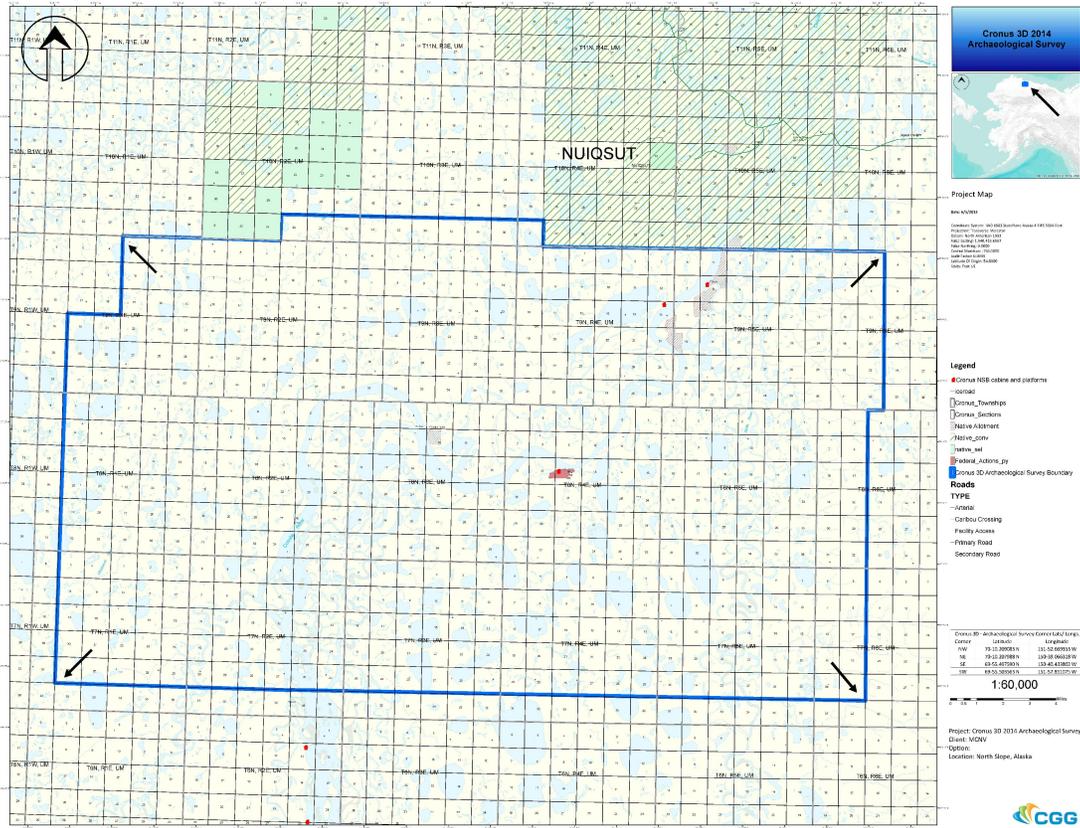


Figure 1. Applicant Submitted Map

Legal Description (All Umiat Meridian)

Township	Range	Sections	Ownership/Management
10 North	2 East	34-36	BLM
10 North	3 East	31-36	BLM
10 North	4 East	31	BLM
9 North	1 East	1-3, 10-15, 20-29, 32-36	BLM
9 North	2 East	1-36	1-36 BLM. Lot 1 of sec 35 & 36 State
9 North	3 East	1-36	1-36 BLM. Lot 1 of sec 31 & 32 State
9 North	4 East	1-36	Tract B BLM Land. Rest State Lands
9 North	5 East	1-36	Tract B BLM Land. Rest State/Private Lands.
9 North	6 East	5-8, 17-20, 29-32	State Lands
8 North	1 East	1-5, 8-17, 20-29, 32-36	BLM
8 North	2 East	1-36	2-11, 14-23, 26-34 BLM 1, 2, 11-14, 23-27, 34-36 State Lands.
8 North	3 East	1-36	1-4, 10-15 BLM Lands. 10 Private. 4-9, 15-36 State Lands
8 North	4 East	1-36	2-10, 18 BLM Lands. 1, 2, 10-36 State Lands
8 North	5 East	1-36	Tract A, B & C State Lands, Water Areas BLM
8 North	6 East	5-8, 17-20, 29-32	State Lands
7 North	1 East	1-5, 8-17, 20-29	BLM
7 North	2 East	1-30	3-9, 15-22, 27-35 BLM Lands. 1-4, 9-15, 22-27, 34-36 State Lands.
7 North	3 East	1-30	4-9, 16-21, 28-33 & Tract A, B, C & Bed of the Colville River - State Lands.

7 North	4 East	1-30	Tract A, B, C State Lands.
7 North	5 East	1-30	Tracts A, B, C, D, E - State Lands.
7 North	6 East	5-8, 17-20, 29, 30	State Lands.

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: “FF096613 CGG Veritas NPR-A Stipulations Summer 2013.”

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

/s/Lon Kelly
 Authorized Officer, Arctic Field Office

Date: July 1, 2013

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact:

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