

A. Background

BLM Office: Arctic Field Office LLAKF010

Lease/Serial/Case File No.: FF096667

Applicant: Steve Holtzman
Voyager Pictures, LLC
1800 Vine Street, 2nd Floor
Los Angeles, California 90028

Proposed Action Title/Type: Film Permit (292009)

Dates of Proposed Activity: August 12 – August 30, 2013

General Location of Proposed Action: Drew Point Area

Description of Proposed Action: The applicant, Steve Holtzman with Voyager Pictures, LLC (Voyager), has requested authorization for access and landing by a fixed wing aircraft on lands within the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A) to conduct a film project. The project is part of a television documentary series, COSMOS: A Spacetime Odyssey and would show the erosion and thermokarsting at Drew Point as a result of the melting permafrost.

Voyager anticipates 2 days of filming, but due to weather, constraints are requesting their permit be issued for the period of August 12 – August 30, 2013. Access to the site would be via a fixed wing single engine Cessna or Helio Courier with tundra ties, four take offs and landings are anticipated. They are contracting with 70 North for the flights. The pilot would land 2 miles east of Drew Point and they would set up camp at the site (Figure 1). The crew would consist of a director, 1st Camera Assistant, and Visual Effects Supervisory carrying 2 cameras to capture the footage. Along with the crew there would be the pilot and a bear guard. Each day they would walk from the campsite to Drew Point to shoot their footage then walk back to the camp. No fuel caches are proposed. Their human waste disposal plan is to use a bucket and bag that they carry out with them upon departure. The crew would have a satellite phone while on location should there be an emergency. Voyager has been working closely with Mike McCrary of 70 North who has local knowledge to accomplish this shoot while leaving a minimal footprint at Drew Point.



Figure 1: Applicant Supplied Google Earth Image

Legal Description:

Sections 25 & 26, Township 18 North, Range 8 West, Umiat Meridian

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: “FF09667 Voyager Pictures, LLC Film Permit Stipulations 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		X

species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).		
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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

August 8, 2013
Date

Contact Person:
For additional information concerning this CX review, contact:

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