

A. Background

BLM Office: Arctic Field Office LLAKF01000

Lease/Serial/Case File No. FF096746 and FF096761

Applicant: AECOM
1601 Prospect Parkway
Fort Collins, CO 80525 - 9769

Bureau of Land Management
1150 University Ave.
Fairbanks, AK 99709

Proposed Action Title/Type: Transport meteorological station to the Inigok airstrip and base camp in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A); set up the station and maintain it for an extended period of time (5 years). Issue two rights-of-way: one to AECOM for transport to Inigok; one to the BLM for the occupancy at Inigok for a period of five years.

Dates of Proposed Activity: Transport: March 2014. Set up and maintain: March 2014 through March 2019.

General Location of Proposed Action: Inigok, Alaska

Description of Proposed Action: This Categorical Exclusion (CX) addresses two connected actions, each requiring an individual Right of Way (ROW). AECOM, under contract to the BLM, proposes a one-time transport of a nonpermanent meteorological monitoring station from DS2P (T 8N, R 7E Sec.17 Umiat) to Inigok located in the NPR-A, a journey of approximately 75 miles. This transport will require an overland travel right-of-way to AECOM. The meteorological station is expected to be in service at the Inigok location for approximately 5 years under a ROW issued to the BLM. The BLM will be responsible for the removal of the meteorological station at the end of the 5-year period, unless the decision is made to renew the ROW.

The monitoring station will be self-contained and transported overland via Rolligon in March 2014, when the ground is frozen and there is significant snow and ice cover for transport. The route will begin at ConocoPhillips's DS2P to Inigok (see map). The route from DS2P to the Colville River crosses State lands. The route from the Colville River to Inigok is within the NPR-A and this is the area covered by this application and pending authorization. The route to be utilized is one that has been previously used by various companies to access Inigok (see map).

Peak Oil Field Services, the contractor being used for Rolligon transport, has existing state land use permits where travel across state lands is required. Two Rolligons are proposed for this

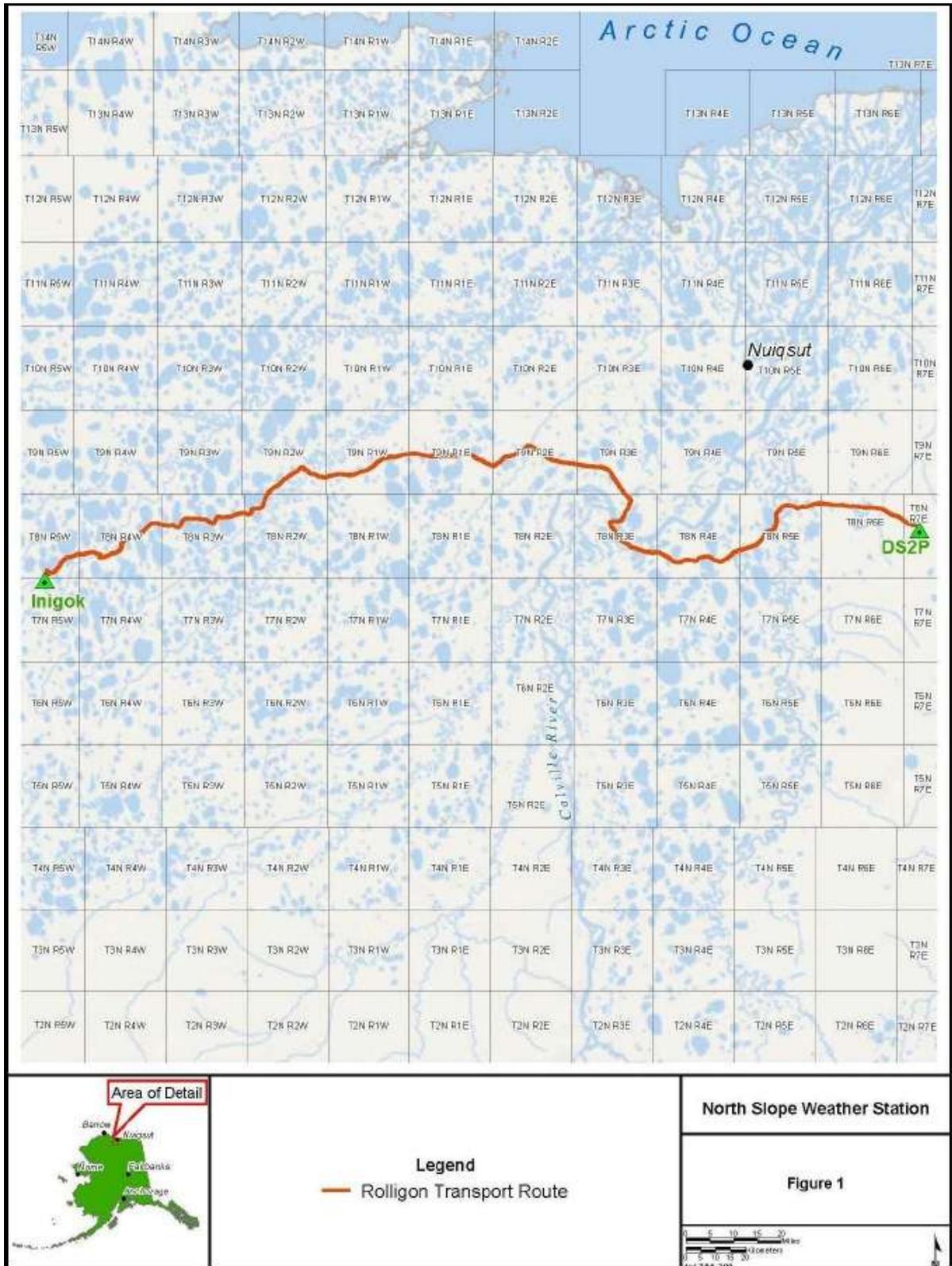
project, one to transport the station and the second to transport the associated sleeping facilities for the crew . The Rolligons are expected to take between 2-3 days to transport the station to Inigok and 2-3 days to return to Deadhorse, with contingencies for weather delays. Once the monitoring station reaches Inigok, establishing the station will take less than one day.

The monitoring station primarily consists of a modified shipping container, referred to as a Conex shelter. The Conex shelter will be placed on the existing gravel pad on top of four concrete traffic barriers. The monitoring tower, external equipment, and the wind towers will be assembled and mounted to the Conex shelter by AECOM employees who will travel with the meteorological station by Rolligon and return to Deadhorse the same way.

The Conex shelter measures approximately 20 feet long and 8 feet wide and 8 feet tall. It will consist of instruments that monitor horizontal wind speed and direction, vertical wind speed, temperature, barometric pressure and solar radiation. These instruments will be installed on a meteorological monitoring tower that will be attached the Conex shelter and will extend 10 meters above the ground (see photo, below). The Conex shelter will be mounted on and chained to a pipe rack anchored with large concrete traffic barriers.

The station will be powered by two windmill generators. Each windmill will be mounted on a tower which in turn will be attached to the top of the Conex shelter. Each wind mill consists of a 5-blade rotor, with a total rotor diameter of 1.6 m (5' 3"). Each rotor will be situated at a height of roughly 6-7 m above the ground. A back-up battery bank will be located within the Conex shelter. No fuel is requested to be used or stored by the applicant.

Maintenance on the meteorological station will be performed by the BLM during the summer field season as needed.



Map 1. Location of route to be taken to Inigok.



Photo of proposed meteorological station fully assembled.

Table 1. Legal Description of Lands Involved

Meridian	Township	Range	Sections
Umiat	8 N	7 E	Unsurveyed
Umiat	8 N	6 E	Unsurveyed
Umiat	8 N	5 E	Unsurveyed
Umiat	8 N	4 E	23, 24, 26-30
Umiat	8 N	3 E	3, 10, 16, 22, 23, 24
Umiat	9 N	3 E	19,20,21,27,28,34
Umiat	9 N	2 E	16,17,19,21,22,23,24
Umiat	9 N	1 E	19-24
Umiat	9 N	1 W	23, 24, 26, 27, 31-34
Umiat	9 N	2 W	22, 25-28, 32, 33, 36
Umiat	8 N	2 W	5, 6, 7
Umiat	8 N	3 W	8-12, 17, 18
Umiat	8 N	4 W	13-15, 22, 28, 29, 30
Umiat	8 N	5 W	25, 26, 34, 35

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 also 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 actions (i.e., issuance of a ROW to AECOM for transport and assemble of the met stations; and ROW to the BLM for the station to remain at Inigok for 5 years) will be provided, along with project-specific mitigation, to the applicants and are entitled: FF096746 BLM ROW Stipulations 2014 and FF096761 AE COM ROW Stipulations 2014.

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(E-16) BLM Categorical Exclusions.

“Acquisition of easements for an existing road or issuance of leases, permits, or rights-of-way for the use of existing facilities, improvements, or sites for the same or similar purposes.”

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.		
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

February 28, 2014
Date

Contact Person:

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact:

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