

A. Background

BLM Office: Arctic Field Office LLAKF010

Lease/Serial/Case File No.: FF095373

Applicant: Benjamin Jones
USGS Alaska Science Center
14230 University Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

Dates of Proposed Activity: Current – December 2019

Proposed Action Title/Type: ROW Renewal for Maintenance of 7 Meteorological Stations and access (Towards a Circum-Arctic Lakes Observation Network [CALON])/(288401)

Description of Proposed Action: On December March 27, 2008, the Bureau of Land Management issued a Right-of-Way (ROW) Grant (FF095373) to Ben Jones of the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to install and maintain meteorological stations on federal land. The ROW expired on December 31, 2013. Mr. Jones has applied to renew the ROW.

The CALON project is a National Science Foundation – Arctic Observation Network project that began in 2012 and is initially funded through 2016. Previously the USGS established lake-monitoring programs in northern Alaska to collect baseline data on lake temperature, bathymetry, water and energy balance, biogeochemistry, and lake ice dynamics. The USGS is proposing to continue making two trips each year to the sites, a spring trip usually in April and a summer trip usually in August. During these trips, they would perform any necessary maintenance and collect point measurements to supplement the continuous monitoring.

Access for the spring trips would be via snow machine. Each crewmember would have a snow machine that would haul two plastic siglin sleds. There would be two crews of three or four people each. One crew would visit the Eastern Transect and the other crew would visit the Western Transect (Figure 1). The western transect would begin in Barrow and run south to the foothills, a distance of roughly 90 miles. The eastern transect would begin around the Ikpikpuk Delta and Teshekpuk lake region and runs south to Umiat, a distance of roughly 110 miles. Along each transect there are four hubs where a meteorological station is positioned and six lakes within a radius of 5-10 miles are instrumented with small buoys that measure various water quality and quantity variables.

The crews would camp at Umiat, Inigok, Fish Creek, NARL cabin, Barrow, Atqasuk and Reindeer Camp. The Reindeer Camp is a located about 40 miles south of Atqasuk to the east of the Meade River. It is not a camp, this is just the nickname that the location has been called. They would stay at each camp for approximately three to five nights. At Fish Creek and the

Reindeer Camp they would camp in a tent. At the other sites there is a shelter either hut/cabin or facility.

Access for the summer trips to maintain the sites would be by floatplane. Mr. Jones reported 196 take offs and landings for August 2013.

The USGS currently has one drum of fuel cached at both Umiat and Inigok in BLM fuel containment areas, this fuel would be used to refuel snowmachines. Solid human waste would be packed out. The crews would file a field emergency plan with the USGS Alaska Science Center, CH2MHill Polar Services, University of Alaska Fairbanks, and Umiat. They would use Yeti coolers to transport their food.

The USGS has a North Star Borough Permit for this project and has consulted with the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources. They also have permits from UIC and have been granted access to? Arctic Slope Regional Corporation lands south of Umiat.

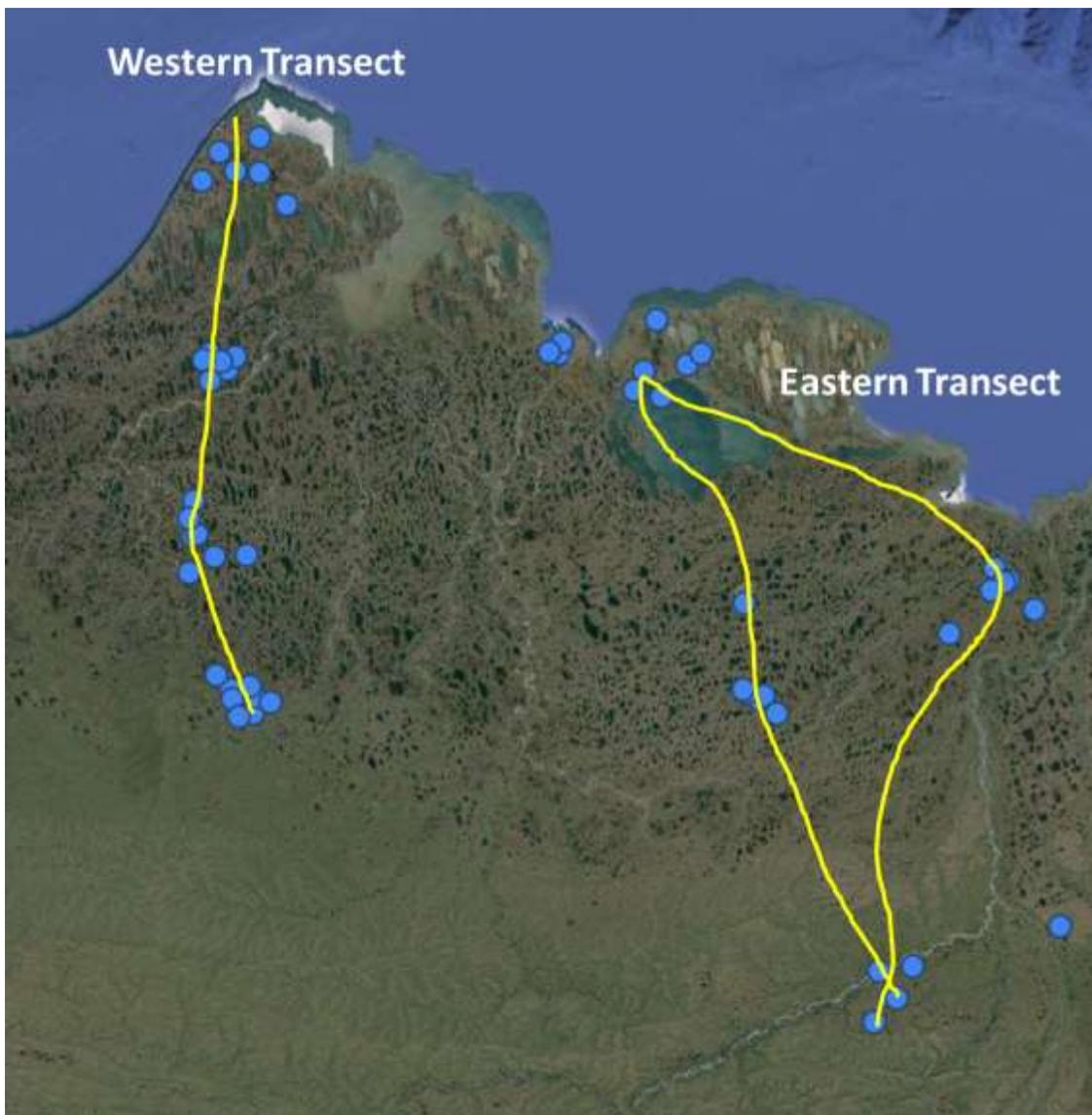


Figure 1: Applicant map

Legal Description Eastern Transect (All Umiat Meridian):

Site Type	Site Name	Lat(Dd)	Lon(Dd)	Township	Range	Section
Lake	IKP 001	70.790	-154.451	17N	10W	35
Lake	IKP 002	70.794	-154.518	17N	10W	28
Lake	IKP 003	70.812	-154.360	17N	09W	19
Lake	INI 001	69.998	-153.070	08N	05W	35
Lake	INI 002	69.976	-152.876	07N	04W	10
Lake	INI 003	69.964	-152.949	07N	04W	17
Lake	INI 004	70.011	-153.154	08N	05W	33
Lake	INI 005	70.019	-153.188	08N	05W	29
Lake	INI 006	70.219	-153.172	10N	05W	16
Lake	TES 001	70.761	-153.561	16N	07W	12
Lake	TES 002	70.790	-153.472	17N	06W	33
Lake	TES 003	70.770	-153.022	16N	04W	6
Lake	TES 004	70.642	-153.668	15N	07W	22
Lake	TES 005	70.752	-153.866	16N	08W	11
Lake	TES 006	70.786	-153.646	17N	07W	35
Lake	UMI 001	69.285	-152.162	02S	01W	9
Lake	UMI 002	69.225	-152.271	02S	02W	36
Lake	UMI 003	69.356	-152.018	01S	01W	13
Lake	UMI 004	69.350	-152.291	01S	02W	14
Lake	UMI 005	69.347	-152.253	01S	02W	24
Lake	UMI 006	69.281	-152.121	02S	01W	10
Terrestrial	INI MET	69.995	-153.079	07N	05W	2
Terrestrial	TES MET	70.722	-153.838	16N	08W	24
Terrestrial	UMI MET	69.251	-152.204	02S	01W	20

Legal Description Western Transect (All Umiat Meridian):

Site Type	Site Name	Lat(Dd)	Lon(Dd)	Township	Range	Section
Lake	BRW 100	71.24163	-156.77391	T22N	R18W	20
Lake	BRW 103	71.12312	-156.31664	T21N	R17W	36
Lake	BRW 104	71.19358	-156.50224	T21N	R17W	8
Lake	BRW 106	71.17556	-156.89731	T21N	R19W	14
Lake	BRW 107	71.27396	-156.49700	T22N	R17W	8
Lake	BRW 130	71.19909	-156.66536	T21N	R18W	3
Lake	ATQ 200	70.45475	-156.94790	T13N	R20W	26

Lake	ATQ 201	70.32723	-156.80655	T11N	R19W	7
Lake	ATQ 204	70.37249	-156.96270	T12N	R20W	21
Lake	ATQ 205	70.37770	-156.92665	T12N	R20W	22
Lake	ATQ 206	70.41557	-156.98128	T12N	R20W	4
Lake	ATQ 207	70.32911	-156.59154	T11N	R19W	1
Lake	RDC 300	69.96079	-156.54585	T7N	R19W	14
Lake	RDC 306	69.99649	-156.52992	T7N	R19W	1
Lake	RDC 308	69.98635	-156.42445	T7N	R18W	5
Lake	RDC 309	70.02459	-156.56652	T8N	R19W	26
Lake	RDC 311	69.99614	-156.68912	T7N	R19W	5
Lake	RDC 312	69.95348	-156.63817	T7N	R19W	21
Lake	LMR 400	70.75409	-156.72044	T16N	R19W	11
Lake	LMR 401	70.79102	-156.83670	T17N	R19W	27
Lake	LMR 402	70.72825	-156.84290	T16N	R19W	20
Lake	LMR 403	70.78256	-156.66823	T17N	R18W	32
Lake	LMR 404	70.77181	-156.76813	T16N	R19W	3
Lake	LMR 405	70.77628	-156.88597	T17N	R19W	33

Terrestrial	BRW Met	71.22198	-156.78336	T22N	R18W	30
Terrestrial	ATQ Met	70.46677	-156.93893	T13N	R20W	24
Terrestrial	RDC Met	69.99841	-156.55043	T8N	R19W	35
Terrestrial	LMR Met	70.76425	-156.73246	T16N	R19W	2

B. Land Use Plan Conformance Review

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 Decisions 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: “FF095373 USGS Ben Jones CALON Project ROW Stipulations”.

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 3 Departmental Categorical Exclusions.

“Nondestructive data collection, inventory (including field, aerial, and satellite surveying and mapping), study, research, and monitoring activities.”

“Renewals and assignments of leases, permits, or rights-of-way where no additional rights are conveyed beyond those granted by the original authorizations.”

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.

The proposed action has been reviewed to determine if any of the exceptions described in 43 CFR 46.210 and 46.215, apply.

The proposed action will not meet any of the extraordinary circumstances listed below.

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		X

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).		
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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

March 27, 2014
Date

Contact Person:

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact:

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