

A. Background

BLM Office: Arctic Field Office LLAKF01000

Lease/Serial/Case File No. FF094257

Applicant: Arctic Wild
P.O. Box 80562
Fairbanks, Alaska 99708

Proposed Action Title/Type: Special Recreation Permit Amendment

Dates of Proposed Activity: August 14 – August 20, 2014

General Location of Proposed Action: Etivluk River

Description of Proposed Action: The applicant, Arctic Wild, has requested an additional river area be added to their authorization for a special recreation permit to conduct guided rafting trips and wildlife viewing operations on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands within in the NPR-A. They have run similar trips on the Etivluk River under previous authorizations.

The proposed action would authorize an amendment to a Special Recreation Authorization to Arctic Wild to conduct commercial rafting and hiking trips on the Etivluk River. Arctic Wild has operated in the NPR-A under a SRP (expires 5/31/2015) since 2004. The current authorization allows them to conduct trips on the Utukok, Kukpowruk and Kokolik Rivers. The trip would be similar in nature to those permitted in the past by BLM.

Typically, Arctic Wild conducts small trips with six clients and two guides. The groups would fly a fixed wing charter with Wright Air to Ivotuk then be transported by Golden Eagle Outfitters, using fixed wing aircraft, and be dropped off and picked up on gravel bars. The sites of the exact camp locations would be determined depending on the field conditions. Figure 1 shows the expected locations and dates of occupation at each campsite. The group will remove all gear and equipment when they leave the campsites. Arctic Wild practices Leave No Trace guidelines. Their guides have many years of experience guiding remote wilderness trips in the Arctic and have received safety training.

The clients and guides would camp in portable three-season tents each night. The camp would include a kitchen tent and separate sleeping tents. Clients and guides would use a group latrine; following leave no trace guidelines. Use of campfires is not expected unless necessary. Fuel use would be limited to white gas for cooking. For the river trips, crews would float along the river by day viewing and photographing wildlife and scenery as opportunities arise.

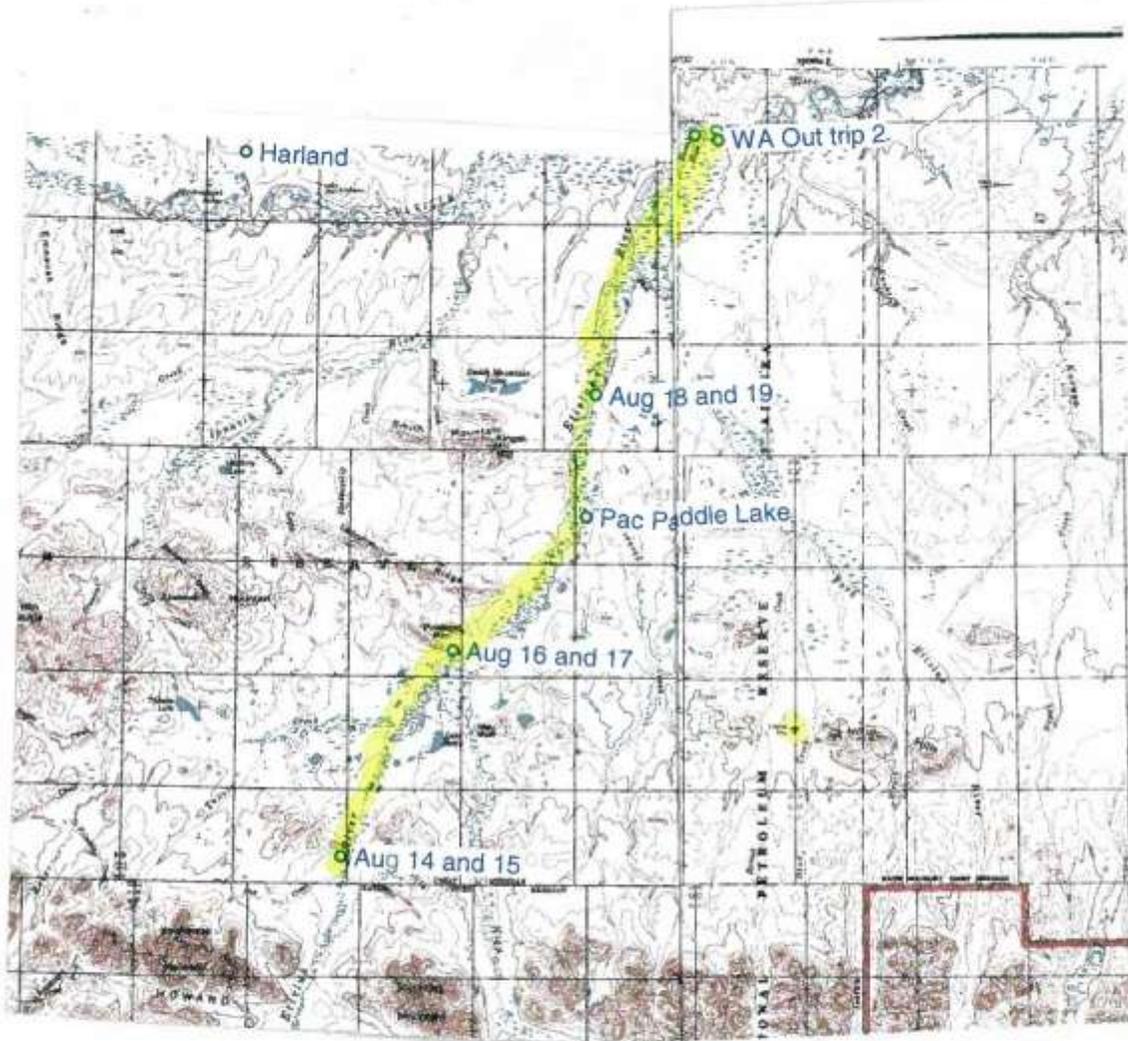


Figure 1: Camp Locations along the Etivluk River

Legal Description:

Meridian	Township	Range	River Section on BLM managed land	USGS TOPO QUADRANGLE
Umiat	12 South	21 West	24	Howard pass B-2
Umiat	12 South	20 West	5-8, 17-19	Howard pass B-2
Umiat	11 South	20 West	1-3, 10,11,14-17, 20-22, 28-33	Howard pass B-1 & B-2 & C-1
Umiat	10 South	19 West	1,2,10-16,19-23,27-31	Howard pass C-1
Umiat	10 South	20 West	25, 35,36	Howard pass C-1
Umiat	9 South	19 West	1,12,13,24-26,35,36	Howard pass C-1
Umiat	9 South	18 West	18,19,30,31	Howard pass C-1
Umiat	8 South	18 West	2-4,9-11,15-17,19-22,27-33	Howard pass C-1 & D-1
Umiat	7 South	18 West	1-3,10-16,21-23,26-28,32-35	Howard pass D-1
Umiat	6 South	18 West	23-27,34-36	Howard pass D-1
Umiat	6 South	17 West	17-20	Howard pass D-1
			3, 4,5,8,9,10,17 State Selected (These lands not expected to be used)	Killik River D-5

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

The proposed action is subject to the following planning documents:

National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (IAP/EIS) 2012

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 action will be provided, along with project-specific mitigation, to the applicant and are entitled: “FF094257 Arctic Wild Special Recreation Permit 2014 Amendment Stipulations” and “United States Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management Commercial Land Based Special Recreation Permit 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 4(F-10) BLM Categorical Exclusions.

“Issuance of Special Recreation Permits for day use or overnight use up to 14 consecutive nights; that impacts no more than 3 staging area acres; and/or for recreational travel along roads, trails, or in areas authorized in a land use plan.”

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

May 6, 2014

Date

Contact Person:

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact:

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