

A. Background

BLM Office: Arctic Field Office LLAKF010

Lease/Serial/Case File No.: FF095699

Applicant: George J. Divoky
Friends of Cooper Island
652 32 Avenue East
Seattle, WA 98112

Dates of Proposed Activity: May 25, 2014 through September 10, 2014.

Proposed Action Title/Type: Cooper Island Bird Study and Field Camp (NPR-A Permit).

Description of Proposed Action:

The applicant, George Divoky of Friends of Cooper Island, has requested authorization for field activity, access, and cabin occupancy at an established field camp on Cooper Island. Cooper Island is 25 miles east of Barrow, in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A). Occupancy of the site would be from approximately May 25 to September 10, 2014. There will be one person full-time with a second person for approximately three weeks in June and for 3-4 weeks in August. Activities include biological research of Black Guillemots.

During the period of occupation of the field camp, seabirds breeding on the island are observed and monitored on a daily basis with information on population size, timing of breeding and breeding success obtained. The observations are conducted while walking around the island with no use of motorized vehicles. When not conducting ornithological observations or taking measurements, personnel will (typically one person) occupy the cabin. Power for the camp is supplied by solar panels and a small wind generator. Cooking is done on a propane stove. No gasoline engines are used on the island.

All access is from the village of Barrow, approximately 25 miles west of Cooper Island. Initial transportation to the island would be via snow-machine, over the sea ice in late May with the remote possibility of one or two helicopter trips before breakup of the nearshore ice, which occurs between 1 July and 20 July. After breakup all transportation is by boat, with approximately 3-4 boat charters from Barrow to transport gear or personnel and to break camp at the end of the season.

The Department of Wildlife Management of the North Slope Borough provides logistical support during staging in Barrow and during the summer the applicant is in contact with Borough personnel daily by VHF radio or satellite phone. A permit has been obtained from Ukepeagvik Inupiat Corporation to travel over Corporation lands. Boat transportation to and from the island is done with Barrow residents.

Location of Proposed Action:

Most fieldwork would be conducted on the western end of Cooper Island where the U.S. Navy left abandoned boxes and wood in the 1950s that seabirds now use for breeding sites. Most of the human activity would occur within that area or adjacent to the camp. Location of camp is at 71° 14.1' N, 155° 43.0' W (Figure 1).

Legal Description: Sections 28, 29 and 30 of Township 22N, Range 14W, and Section 25 of Township 22N, Range 15W of the Umiat meridian.

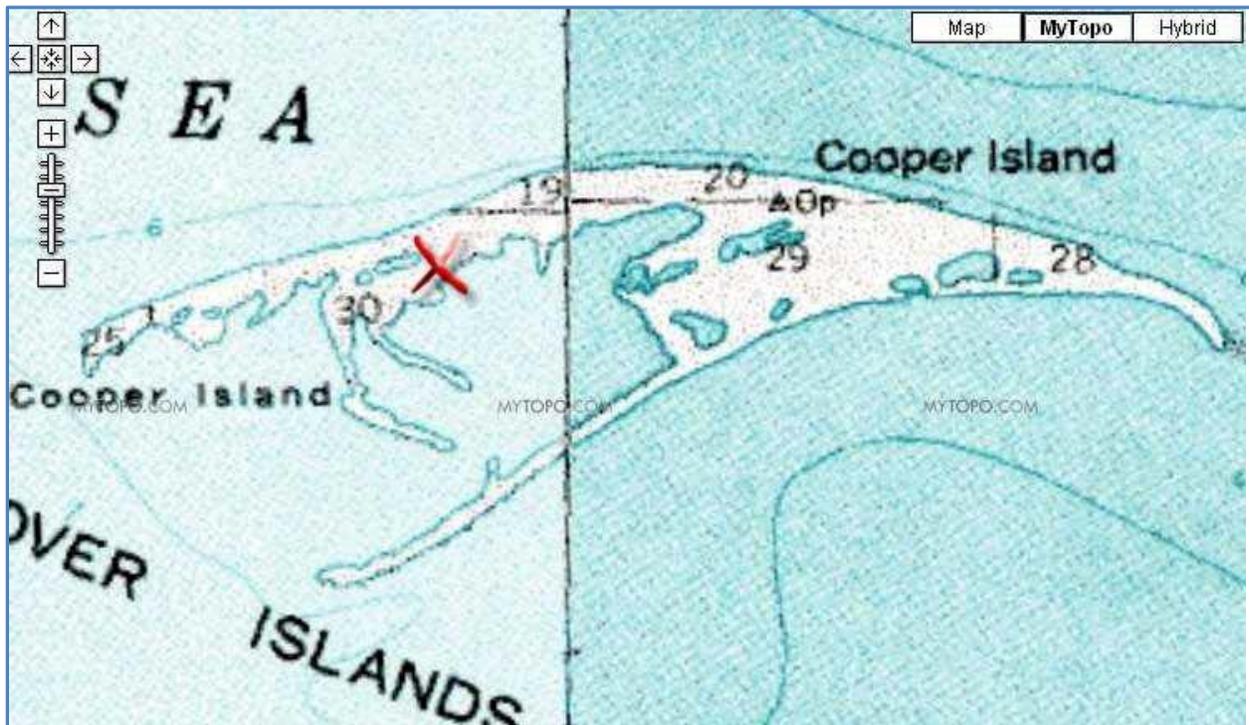


Figure 1. Location of Cooper Island north of Barrow: The red X indicates the camp site.

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 action will be provided, along with project-specific mitigation, to the applicant entitled: FF095699 Friends of Cooper Island Summer 2014 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.

“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.		
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.		
2.3 Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2) (E)].		
2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		
2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		
2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		
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.		
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.		
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).		
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 05/29/2014

Contact Person:

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact:

Robert Mikol
Arctic Field Office
1150 University Avenue
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709

Phone: 907-474-2306
Email: rmikol@blm.gov

FF095699 Friends of Cooper Island Summer 2014 Stipulations

Project Specific Stipulations:

This project falls within the constraints of the 2014 United States Fish & Wildlife Programmatic Biological Opinion for the Bureau of Land Management Summer Activities in 2014 in Undeveloped Areas of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. As such the permittee is required:

1. To maintain an aircraft log of the following information **for each take off and landing** (which shall be turned in to BLM in **electronic** format in an excel spreadsheet with each item below listed in a separate column No Later Than **1 November 2014**):

Type of Aircraft
Aircraft N number
Date
Time
Decimal Degree Format – latitude of takeoff location
Decimal Degree Format – longitude of takeoff location
Date
Time
Decimal Degree Format – latitude of landing location
Decimal Degree Format – longitude of landing location

2. Permittee must use “bear-resistant” containers that are approved and certified by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee as “bear-resistant.” Information about certified containers can be found at <http://www.igbconline.org/html/container.html>.
3. The permittee will abide by the following document: Polar Bear Interaction Guidelines.

ARCTIC FIELD OFFICE NON OIL AND GAS PERMIT STIPULATIONS

[This is a subset of the 2013 National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plan Record of Decision, Utility Corridor Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement, and the Colville River Special Area Management Plan. Stipulations and Best Management Practices from these documents along with frequently utilized resource-specific stipulations are incorporated. Special Recreation Permit holders meet most requirements by following the guidelines in Leave No Trace, Alaskan Tundra.]

I. AUTHORIZED OFFICER

The Authorized Officer (AO) is the Manager, Arctic Field Office.

II. AIR & WATER

- A. All operations shall comply with applicable Air and Water Quality Standards of the State of Alaska.
- B. Grey wash water and kitchen waste water may be filtered to remove the solids and the liquid discharged to the land surface, provided the disposal area is a minimum of 100 feet from any water body or stream.

III. AIRCRAFT

- A. Hazing of wildlife by aircraft is prohibited. Pursuit of running wildlife is hazing. If wildlife begins to run as an aircraft approaches, the aircraft is too close and must break away.
- B. Use of aircraft, near known subsistence camps and cabins, and along rivers or during sensitive subsistence hunting periods (spring goose hunting and fall caribou and moose hunting) should be kept to a minimum.
- C. Fixed wing aircraft used for permitted activities along the coast shall maintain a minimum altitude of 2,000 feet AGL when within a ½-mile of walrus haulouts, unless doing so would endanger human life or violate safe flying practices.
- D. Helicopters used for permitted activities along the coast shall maintain a minimum altitude of 3,000 feet and a 1-mile buffer from walrus haulouts, unless doing so would endanger human life or violate safe flying practices.
- E. Aircraft used for permitted activities along the coast and shore fast ice zone shall maintain a minimum altitude of 3,000 feet when within 1 mile from aggregations of seals, unless doing so would endanger human life or violate safe flying practices.

IV. CAMPS

- A. The Permittee accepts responsibility for their campsite conditions and will be liable for identified rehabilitation activities.

- B. Tent camps shall be situated on gravel bars, sand, or other durable substrates, if any exist in the vicinity of the desired location. If no such substrates exist nearby, tents may be pitched on tundra vegetation for up to two weeks.

V. CULTURAL/PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

- A. In accordance with the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 470aa), the removal or disturbance of archeological or historic artifacts is prohibited. The excavation, disturbance, collection, or purchase of historical, recent, ethnological, or archaeological specimens or artifacts is prohibited. Such items include both prehistoric stone tools and sites, as well as historic log cabins, remnants of such structures, refuse dumps, and other such features. The disturbance, excavation and collection of vertebrate paleontological (fossil) remains is also prohibited.
- B. Any cultural or Paleontological resource discovered by the holder, or any person working on his behalf, situated on lands owned or controlled by the United States shall be promptly reported to the AO. Discoveries must be left in place to allow for an examination by BLM cultural or paleontological specialists. GPS Coordinates of any discovered cultural resources should be obtained if possible and reported to the AO.

VI. FIRE

- A. The BLM, through the AO, reserves the right to impose closure of any area to operators in periods when fire danger or other dangers to natural resources are severe.
- B. The authorized user shall be financially responsible for any damage done by a wildfire caused by its operations. Costs associated with wildfires include but are not limited to, damage to natural resources and costs associated with any suppression action taken on the fire.

VII. OPERATIONS

- A. It is the responsibility of the authorized user to ensure that all individuals brought to the project area under its auspices adhere to these stipulations. Authorized users of the planning area shall provide all employees, contractors, subcontractors, and clients with a briefing regarding stipulations applicable to the lease and/or permit.
- B. A copy of applicable stipulations will be posted in a conspicuous place in each work site and campsite.
- C. The provisions of this permit do not relieve the Permittee of any responsibilities or obligations required by the laws or regulations of the State of Alaska Department of Fish and

Game or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or other applicable regulations related to this permit

- D. The authorized user shall protect all survey monuments and be responsible for survey costs if remonumentation is required as a result of the user's actions.
- E. Survey monuments include, but are not limited to, General Land Office and Bureau of Land Management Cadastral Survey Corners, reference corners, witness points, U.S. Coast and Geodetic benchmarks and triangulation stations, military control monuments, and recognizable civil (both public and private) survey monuments.
- F. In the event of obliteration or disturbance of any of the survey monuments above, the Permittee shall promptly report the incident, in writing, to the Authorized Officer and the respective installing agency, if known. Where General Land Office or Bureau of Land Management right-of-way monuments or references are obliterated during operations, the Permittee shall secure the services of a registered land surveyor or a Bureau Cadastral surveyor to restore the disturbed monuments and references using surveying procedures found in the Manual of Surveying Instructions for the Survey of Public Lands of the United States, latest edition. If the Bureau cadastral surveyors or other Federal surveyors are used to restore the disturbed survey monuments, the Permittee shall be responsible for survey costs.

VIII. STREAMS

- A. All operations shall be conducted with due regard for good resource management and in such a manner as not to block any stream, or drainage system, or change the character or course of a stream, or cause the pollution or siltation of any stream or lake.

IX. SUBSISTENCE

- A. The permittee will take no action that interferes with subsistence activities of rural users or restricts the reasonable access of subsistence users to public lands. This may include but is not limited to disturbance of wildlife and their movements near subsistence hunters, and damage to cabins, trails, traditional campsites or caches used by subsistence users. The permittee must familiarize themselves, their team, and their pilots with any subsistence camps and cabins located near their project site (map available upon request) and, when using aircraft, make all reasonable efforts to avoid disturbing hunters.
- B. The Arctic Field Office will determine on an application-by-application basis what level of consultation will be required in order to provide adequate notification to communities, including whether the project merits application of the complete H-1 (Subsistence) Best Management Practice from the 2013 NPR-A EIS/IAP Record of Decision. Determination will be based on Arctic Field Office experience and on communication with representatives of the BLM NPR-A Subsistence Advisory Panel. Permittee will respond to questions and any reasonable requests for consultation that tribes and/or communities may have.

Information on permits will be included on the NPR-A Permitted Projects spreadsheet that is distributed to tribal governments and North Slope communities. Permittee is encouraged to correspond with Arctic Field Office anthropologist/subsistence specialist if they have any questions or concerns: Stacey Fritz: (907) 474-2309, sfritz@blm.gov

X. VEGETATION

- A. All activities shall be conducted to avoid or minimize disturbance to vegetation. The clearing of vegetation for camps or aircraft landing areas is prohibited.

XI. WASTE

A. HUMAN WASTES

1. Toilet paper: Toilet paper must be packed out, or a natural alternative used. Natural options for toilet paper include snow, smooth stones or sticks, leaves and moss. Natural TP options should be disposed of the same as the human waste. Feminine hygiene products and diapers must also be packed out.
2. Urine: Urine can attract animals seeking salt: avoid urinating on plants that can be defoliated by animals attracted to the salt residue. Urinate 200 feet away from camps and trails on rock, bare ground, or water sources.
3. Recommended human excreta disposal in riparian areas: Packing out human excreta is the most eco-friendly means of waste disposal and the toilet can be located wherever is most appropriate. This method helps areas that receive high-levels of use retain their naturalness, and preserves pristine areas. Disadvantages include: it incurs cost and requires logistical considerations.

The WAG (Waste Alleviation and Gelling) Bag has become the overall term for any pack-it-out bag system. It generally involves one bag with which holds the excrement and another sturdier, sealable bag. Commercial vendors of waste bag kits, powders and supplies include ReStop, Biffy Bags, and Cleanwaste.

B. GARBAGE

1. Attracting wildlife to food and garbage is prohibited.
2. Burial of garbage is prohibited. Burial of human waste is prohibited except as authorized by the AO. [Special Recreation Permit holders meet all requirements by following the guidelines in Leave No Trace, Alaska Tundra.]
3. Areas of operation shall be left clean of all debris.

C. FUEL

1. Notice of any spill shall be given to the AO as soon as possible or to the BLM Arctic Field Office Hazmat Coordinator, Susan Flora (work/message 907-474-2303). Other Federal, State, and NSB entities shall be notified as required by law.
2. All spills shall be cleaned up immediately and to the satisfaction of the AO and all agencies with regulatory authority over spills, including the Alaska Department of Environmental Concerns (ADEC),(1800-478-9300) (Alaska Statute Title 18, Chapter 75, Article 2).
3. State and Federal safety standards for fuel handling will be followed.
4. Fuel and other petroleum products and other liquid chemicals shall be stored in proper containers at approved locations. All fuel containers, including barrels and propane tanks, shall be marked with Permittee's name, product type, and year filled or purchased (e.g. company Name, Fuel Type, 1993).
5. Sorbant pads will be stored and used at all fueling points and maintenance areas. Drip basins and/or sorbent pads will be placed under all non dry-disconnect-type fuel line couplings and valves.

D. PESTICIDES

Use of pesticides without the specific authority of the AO is prohibited.

XII. WILDLIFE

- A. The feeding of wildlife is prohibited and will be subject to non-compliance regulations.
- B. With the exception of authorized guide hunting trips, hunting and trapping by permittee's employees, agents, and contractors are prohibited when persons are on "work status." Work status is defined as the period during which an individual is under the control and supervision of an employer. Work status is terminated when the individual's shift ends and he/she returns to a public airport or community (e.g., Fairbanks, Barrow, Nuiqsut, or Deadhorse). Use of permittee facilities, equipment, or transport for personal access or aid in hunting and trapping is prohibited.
- C. Marine vessels used for permitted activities shall maintain a 1-mile buffer from the shore when transiting past an aggregation of seals (primarily spotted seals) using a terrestrial haulout unless doing so would endanger human life or violate safe boating practices.

Marine vessels shall not conduct ballast transfers or discharge any matter into the marine environment within 3 miles of the coast except when necessary for the safe operation of the vessel.

D. Marine vessels used for permitted activities shall maintain a ½-mile buffer from shore when transiting past an aggregation of walrus using a terrestrial haulout.