

A. Background

BLM Office: Arctic Field Office LLAKF01000

Lease/Serial/Case File No. FF095842

Applicant: Brad Wendling
Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game
1300 College Road
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Proposed Action Title/Type: Fish and Fish Habitat Studies (NPR-A Permit)

Date of Proposed Action: June 15th through October 31st, 2014

General Location of Proposed Action: There are two locations identified for the fisheries surveys: the Kuk River and the confluence of the Meade and Inaru Rivers. The Kuk river camp is approximately 40 miles south of Wainwright, Alaska and the Meade/Inaru River camp site is approximate 36 miles south southeast of Barrow, Alaska. It is at these two camp sites that the applicant, Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game (ADFG), has requested authorization for a permit to conduct fish studies and aquatic habitat monitoring on lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to collect data on basic fish life history and population structure.

Description of Proposed Action: The proposed action would authorize Brad Wendling of Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) to conduct studies within the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A) on basic fish life history and population structure.

Weather permitting, the team will work these sites on the following dates: The Kuk River would be sampled from June through August with a concentration of effort between June 12-27, 2014, while the Meade/Inaru rivers would be sampled in June and July with a concentration of effort taking place between July 7-17, 2014. Some sampling could occur at both sites through October.

On the Kuk: The Kuk River camp will be located at: N70.115595°, W-159.602992° (Decimal Degrees/WGS84). Two to four people will occupy the camp at any time. Transportation to and from the camp will take place by helicopter. No more than 30 takeoffs and landings are expected. Helicopter refueling will occur at Wainwright, Barrow, Umiat, and possibly Inigok. No at-camp helicopter refueling is currently proposed or planned.

Up to 250 gallons of motor gas for boat motors and generators will be stored at the camp location. Fuel will be hauled and stored in 15 gallon poly drums and ~~2-two~~ to ~~3-three~~ 5 gallon gas cans will also be used. Fuel containment equipment will be the same style used at BLM remote camps and will be able to hold at least ~~2-two~~ times the fuel stored at any given time. Absorbent material will be on site and all refueling of boat fuel tanks (max 6 gallon cruise-a-day tanks) and generators will occur within the containment.

All fresh foods will be stored within coolers and freezers and will be located within UDAP food storage approved electric fences.

All human waste and garbage will be stored within UDAP food storage approved electric bear fences and hauled out when each field event is completed (approximately every 10 to 15 days).

All biological waste produced through scientific sampling (fish carcasses) will be stored similar to above but will be disposed of in nearby rivers daily.

Fish sampling will be conducted by using fyke nets, hoop nets, seine nets, gill nets, and/or angling. Basic fish data will be collected including relative abundance by species, age/weight, age structure and age at maturity data for non-salmon species encountered in large enough numbers to produce reliable data. It is expected that these may consist of least cisco, rainbow smelt, broad whitefish, humpback whitefish, Arctic cisco, Bering cisco, burbot, Arctic cod, Saffron cod, Arctic flounder, Arctic grayling, Pacific herring, Fourhorn sculpin, ninespine stickleback, and threespine stickleback. A small component of this project will involve surgically implanting a maximum of 50 total fish with radio transmitters to help determine seasonal migration patterns and identify important seasonal habitats (spawning, wintering) used by the dominant fish species encountered. Transmitter implantation will follow the procedures outlined in Morris et al. (2006). It is anticipated that Arctic grayling, least cisco and burbot will be the species most frequently encountered and hence, implanted with radio transmitters, however, others species may dominate and may be radio tagged.

On the Meade/Inaru: Meade/Inaru camp will be located at N70.909069°, W-156.342378° (Decimal Degrees/WGS84). Two to four people will occupy the camp at any time. Transportation to and from the camp will be by boat from Barrow.

Up to 250 gallons of motor gas for boat motors and generators will be stored at the camp location. Fuel will be hauled and stored in 15 gallon poly drums and 2 to 3; 5 gallon gas cans will also be used. Fuel containment equipment will be the same style used at BLM remote camps and will be able to hold at least 2 times the fuel stored at any given time. Absorbent material will be on site and all refueling of boat fuel tanks (max 6 gallon cruise-a-day tanks) and generators will occur within the containment.

All fresh foods will be stored within coolers and freezers and will be located within UDAP food storage approved electric fences.

All human waste and garbage will be stored within UDAP food storage approved electric bear fences and hauled out when each field event is completed (approximately every 10 to 15 days).

All biological waste produced through scientific sampling (fish carcasses) will be stored similar to above but will be disposed of in nearby rivers daily.

Sampling will be conducted from field camps during open water season for periods of 7 to 15 days, focusing on one main sampling area within the drainage. Fish sampling will be conducted by using fyke nets, hoop nets, seine nets, gill nets, and/or angling. An emphasis will be placed on capturing and radio tagging up to 75 broad whitefish with surgically implanted VHF transmitters. Some burbot could be radio tagged also. No more than 100 fish total will be radio tagged with surgically implanted transmitters during 2014. Here too, basic fish data will be collected including relative abundance by species, age, length, weight, population size and age structure, and age at maturity for all non-salmon species encountered in large enough numbers to produce reliable data. It is expected that these may consist of least cisco, rainbow smelt, broad whitefish, humpback whitefish, Arctic cisco, Bering cisco, burbot, Arctic char, Dolly Varden, northern pike, and threespine stickleback. Basic ASL data, genetic and scale samples will be collected from all salmon captured. All fish captured will be identified, measured and released with the exception of samples retained for additional data collection.

This project and both camp locations have been discussed with the North Slope Borough Department of Wildlife Management, as well as the BLM Arctic Field Office. Both organizations are cooperators on these studies. Additionally radio tracking and camp flights have been scheduled to avoid periods of high use by subsistence hunters and fishers to the maximum extent possible for all sampling areas.

Map Locations: All in Umiat Meridian

Township	Range	BLM Managed Sections	
9 North	30 West	All	Kuk River Site
9 North	31 West	All	
10 North	31 West	All	
11 North	31 West	All	
32 North	32 West	All	
18 North	16 West	All	Meade/Inaru Rvs. Site
18 North	17 West	All	
18 North	18 West	All	



Figure 1. Kuk River site: Umiat meridian, T9n/R30w; geographic position 70.115595°, -159.062992° in decimal degrees.



Figure 2. Meade/Inaru confluence of rivers site: Umiat meridian, T18n/R16w; geographic position 70.909069°, -156.342378° in decimal degrees.

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: (FF095842 Wendling/ADFG Fish Study Permit Stipulations Summer 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 (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		X

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

June 11, 2014
Date

Contact Person:

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

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

FF095695 Parrett/ADFG Survey Permit Stipulations Summer 2014

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 documents: Required Conduct near Possible Nests of Raptors (Eagles, Hawks and Falcons) in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska and Polar Bear Interaction Guidelines.

Permit Specific Recommendations for Minimizing Impacts to Subsistence Use

Consultation with the Native Village of Nuiqsut and community residents has indicated that the general timeframe of July 7 through August 7 is a particularly sensitive period for local caribou hunters in an area bounded by the Colville River Delta to the east to the to the western edge of the Bear Tooth Unit to the Beaufort Sea coast. BLM Arctic Field Office is determining whether, in the future, it will be feasible to impose a moratorium on all non-essential flights in the area for that month. The following are recommendations from the community of Nuiqsut on ways to minimize the impacts resulting from aircraft use to local hunters during this timeframe:

- Schedule all helicopter use permitted by this authorization prior to July 7. If these helicopter flights cannot be completed before July 7, then they should be scheduled after August 7 if possible.

- Consider having one or two days per week, preferably weekends, during this time period as “no fly” days; the days can be determined through consultation calls with the community.
- Be willing to adjust or postpone scheduled activity for 1 or 2 days should reports be made that groups of caribou are near the community and are actively being pursued by local hunters.
- Have defined routes to and from areas to be studied, and relatively consistent schedules of flight time that are communicated to local residents.
- Be flexible in terms of the end date of the sensitive period (August 7) and willing to continue to implement measures that you have taken beyond this date should the on-the-ground situation warrant it.

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. Aircraft shall maintain an altitude of at least 1,500 above ground level (AGL) when within ½ mile of cliffs identified as raptor nesting sites from April 15 through August 15 and

within ½ mile of known gyrfalcon nest sites from March 15 to August 15, unless doing so would endanger human life or violate safe flying practices. Permittees shall obtain information from BLM necessary to plan flight routes when routes may go near falcon nests.

- C. 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.
- D. Aircraft used for permitted activities shall maintain a altitude of at least 2,000 feet AGL (except for takeoffs and landings) over the Teshekpuk Lake Caribou Habitat Area (Map 2) from May 20 through August 20, unless doing so would endanger human life or violate safe flying practices. Aircraft use (including fixed wing and helicopter) in the Goose Molting Area (Map 2) should be minimized from May 20 through August 20, unless doing so would endanger human life or violate safe flying practices.
- E. 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. 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.
- F. 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. Permittee shall provide BLM with a detailed map of all camp locations located accurately on a USGS quadrangle map of the 1:63,360 scale. Please include the dates of the trip, the number of people who camped at each site, and GPS location (with datum noted).
- C. 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.
- C. Prior to any ground-disturbing activity the permittee shall conduct a cultural and paleontological resources survey.

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.
- G. Removal of greater than 100 cubic yards of bedrock outcrops, sand and/or gravel from cliffs shall be prohibited and any extraction of sand and/or gravel from an active river or stream channel shall be prohibited unless preceded by a hydrological study that indicates no potential impact by the action to the integrity of the river bluffs.

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.
6. Fuels shall not be stored on the active floodplain of any waterbody. Although fuels may be off-loaded from aircraft on ice, fuels shall not be stored on lake or river ice.
7. Refueling of equipment within 500 feet of the active floodplain of any waterbody is prohibited. Fuel storage stations shall be located at least 500 feet from any water body with the exception that small caches (up to 210 gallons) for motorboats float planes, ski planes, and small equipment, e.g. portable generators and water pumps, will be permitted.
8. Fuel, other petroleum products, and other liquid chemicals designated by the AO in **excess of 1,320 gallons** in storage capacity, shall be stored within an impermeable lined and diked area or within approved alternate storage containers such as overpacks, capable of containing 110 percent of the stored volume. The liner material shall be compatible with the stored product and capable of remaining impermeable during typical weather extremes expected throughout the storage period.

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. Camp sites shall be located at least 500 meters from any known arctic peregrine falcon nest site.
- C. 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.