

## **A. Background**

**BLM Office:** Arctic Field Office LLAKF010

**Lease/Serial/Case File No.** FF096816:

**Applicant:** Robert Busby  
IRIS/ US Array  
1200 New York Avenue NW, Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20005

**Proposed Action Title/Type:** EarthScope Transportable Array Project/NPRA Permit.

**Dates of Proposed Activity:** June 30, 2014 - August 31, 2014

**General Location of Proposed Action:** Throughout the NPR-A

**Description of Proposed Action:** IRIS/US Array is seeking a permit for scouting out locations this summer for 15 seismic listening stations. The 15 site locations have been identified and the suitability of these locations needs to be confirmed by an onsite inspection. IRIS/US Array has contracted this project of site inspections out to Recon LLC. Their plan of operation is to investigate the 15 sites throughout the NPR-A at the locations identified in Figure 1. They plan on using a helicopter for transportation, making one, possibly two, landing and take-off per site for a maximum potential of 60 take-offs and landings throughout the summer.

The reconnaissance crew will consist of one engineer and one pilot. They will travel with one engineer and pilot to each site. The engineer will take notes and photographs and in some cases take a shallow soil sample with a 1" diameter bit and a cordless drill.

**Field Camps:** Recon LLC would like to camp outside of the NPR-A at: Eagle Creek (68.67986, -162.65209) for 1 to 3 nights; and at Iivotuk (68.475185, -155.768756) for another 1 to 3 nights. (Figure 2) Backcountry camping will not be allowed in restricted or regulated areas except in the event of an emergency. In an emergency situation, crewmembers would use backcountry survival gear as shelter and may supplement with natural materials if absolutely necessary. Any fires started would be for the expressed intent of promoting survival of the crew. Native vegetation may be used as fuel. However, if this situation did occur, then no fires would be left unattended and would be completely extinguished by the crew before leaving the area.

**Fuel Caches:** Recon LLC would like to cache three (3) 55-gallon drums of Jet-A fuel in two locations for a total of six drums. These locations are: Eagle Creek and Iivotuk Airstrip. Neither of these locations are in the NPR-A. IRIS/US Array is in the process of writing a letter to the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC) for their permission to use these airstrips and cache fuel there.

Recon LLC would also like to cache one (1) 55-gallon drum of Jet-A fuel at the Desperation Lake Airstrip. IRIS/US Array is in the process of researching land ownership and the possibility of storing fuel there. (Figure 3)

Waste Disposal: Waste will be disposed of in typical backcountry “cat holes” dug at least six-inches deep and 200 feet away from all water bodies. All waste and food scraps will be removed to a population center and disposed of in local public waste disposal systems.

Emergency Plan: Field crews will carry backcountry survival gear as well as satellite phones and air-to-ground transceiver radios. Aircraft will be equipped with Emergency Locator Beacons (ELB’s) and carry a secondary tracking device to automatically transmit a distress signal in the event of a hard landing.

Consultations: IRIS/US Array is in consultations with the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation concerning these operations and for permits to use their lands.

### Maps and townships:

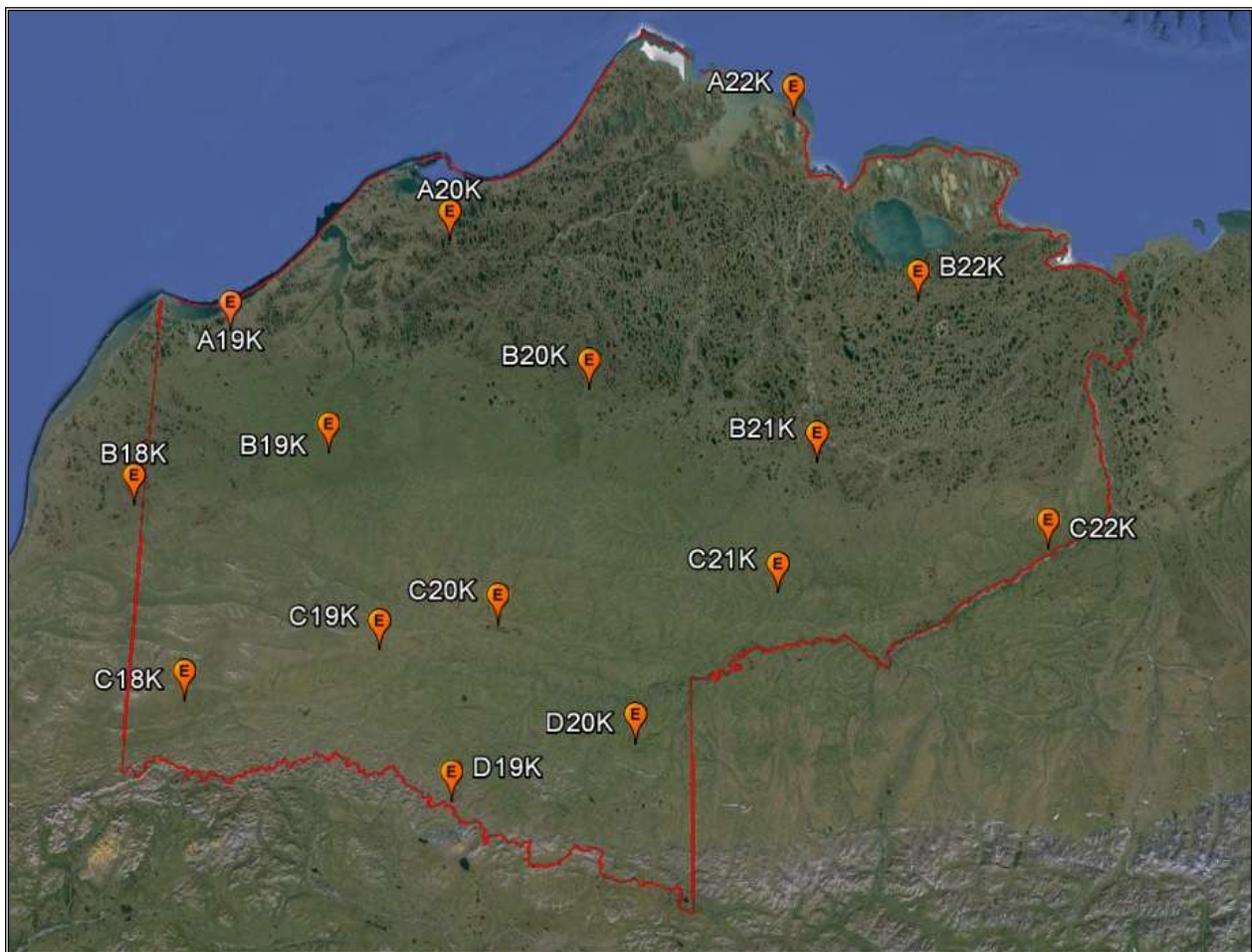


Figure 1. Location of proposed activity

**Legal Description of NPR-A Lands Involved:**

Site	Meridian	Township	Range	Section
A19K	Umiat	10 N	36 W	20
A20K	Umiat	14 N	26 W	8
A22K	Umiat	20 N	11 W	27
B18K	Umiat	2 N	41 W	16
B19K	Umiat	5 N	32 W	21
B20K	Umiat	8 N	21 W	23
B21K	Umiat	5 N	11 W	27
B22K	Umiat	12 N	6 W	4
C18K	Umiat	7 S	39 W	19
C19K	Umiat	5 S	31 W	3
C20K	Umiat	3 S	25 W	30
C21K	Umiat	2 S	13 W	17
C22K	Umiat	1 S	1 W	5
D19K	Umiat	11 S	28 W	16
D120	Umiat	8 S	21 W	34



Figure 2: Camp locations, 1 -3 nights per location (neither location BLM land)



Figure 3: Fuel locations, three 55-gallon drums in both Eagle Creek and Ivotuk (total of six drums); one 55-gallon drum at Desperation Lake (none on BLM land)

## **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 and are entitled: FF096816 IRIS/US Array Site Survey 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(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.

<b>Extraordinary Circumstances</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
2.1 Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		<b>X</b>
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.		<b>X</b>
2.3 Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2) (E)].		<b>X</b>
2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		<b>X</b>
2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		<b>X</b>
2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		<b>X</b>
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.		<b>X</b>
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.		<b>X</b>
2.9 Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		<b>X</b>
2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		<b>X</b>
2.11 Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands		<b>X</b>

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).		<b>X</b>

**D. Approval and Contact Information**

I considered the proposed action and have determined that there is no potential for significant impacts.

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/s/Lon Kelly  
Authorized Officer, Arctic Field Office

06/20/2014  
Date

**Contact Person:**

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact:

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

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