

A. Background

BLM Office: Arctic Field Office LLAKF010

Lease/Serial/Case File No.: FF096833:

Applicant: Jennifer Tobey
ASRC Energy Services, Alaska Inc.
3900 C Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Proposed Action Title/Type: Communications Corridor Exploration Flights /NPR A Permit.

Dates of Proposed Activity: Approximately August 4 through 9, 2014

General Location of Proposed Action: Oooguruk Island to Nuiqsut and Barrow to Atqasuk

Description of Proposed Action: ASRC Energy Services Alaska, Inc. (AES) plans a 2014 field recon of sections of the North Slope Borough's (NSB) planned Arctic National Broadband Network (ANBN). The 2014 field recon will consist of an aerial survey of two segments of the preliminary project area. The team will identify potential route alternatives for the ANBN and potential engineering, cultural, and environmental concerns. The field recon will aid in determining what additional baseline field surveys may be required by regulatory agencies prior to project construction. These more detailed subsistence, cultural, environmental, and wetlands studies will be conducted, as appropriate, once project parameters are more defined.

The NSB contracted Meridian Management, Inc. (Meridian) and its subcontractors – Alaska Growth Capital and (AES) – to provide initial project management, project planning and development services for ANBN. Part of the project planning entails selecting the ANBN route. Desktop and field environmental studies are crucial to effective route selection.

AES will conduct an aerial survey of selected portions of ANBN preliminary route via helicopter with limited landings at areas of environmental interest, including potential cultural resources sites. Specific landing areas will be determined during the field recon and dependent on what the team sees from the air.

The aerial survey is expected to take place between August 4-9, 2014 weather permitting. There will be six (6) persons involved in the survey crew, including the pilot. The crew will consist of: an archaeologist / cultural resource specialist; a biologist; a wetlands scientist; a design engineer; a subsistence advisor; and the helicopter pilot.

There are two sections or segments in the survey. The first part of the survey is the Oooguruk Island to Nuiqsut segment (Figure 1). Oooguruk Island is about 34 miles north –northeast of Nuiqsut and most of the route to be surveyed is outside of the NPR-A. The planned survey route crosses the Colville River, entering the NPR-A, approximately five miles south of the Nuiqsut airport. Mobilization for the survey is

expected to take one day, August 4th while the aerial survey is expected to take two days, August 5th and 6th.

The second segment of the survey extends from Barrow to Atqasut for a length of approximately 60 miles (Figure 2). This is a direct route and it is expected to take two days also, August 7th and 8th. Demobilization is expected to take one day and is planned for August 9th.

The helicopter involved in the survey will be contracted from Soloy Helicopters (Soloy). It is a Eurocopter A-Star. It is anticipated that there will be between one to ten helicopter landings per recon segment (up to 20 take-off and landing events per segment or up to 40 take-off and landing events for the entire project).

The primary activity at the landing spots will be taking photographs, GPS locations, and notes. No archaeological test pits will be dug and no samples collected. Small wetlands soil pits may be excavated, but no soil samples will be taken. These will be hand dug and less than 18 inches in diameter and in depth.

Whenever possible, fuel will be obtained from commercial vendors. Soloy will pre-station fuel, as needed, in locations not managed by the BLM: Barrow, Atqasuk, Nuiqsut, Deadhorse, or Oooguruk Island. Soloy will comply with all Federal, State, and Local regulations.

No field camps will be established. The crew will stay at commercial facilities in Barrow and Deadhorse. ASRC has a Human Waste Disposal Plan and AES practices a "Leave No Trace" policy for their fieldwork. Established restrooms or facilities are preferred; however, when necessary, AES crew members will take steps to reduce any impacts to the environment. AES crew members will dilute urine with water from a water bottle. Urine has a minor effect on vegetation and soil, and negative effects from salts in the urine can be minimized through dilution. Crew members will avoid lakes, ponds, or streams when urinating. Solid wastes – human, toilet paper, etc. – will be packed out and properly disposed of at approved facilities.

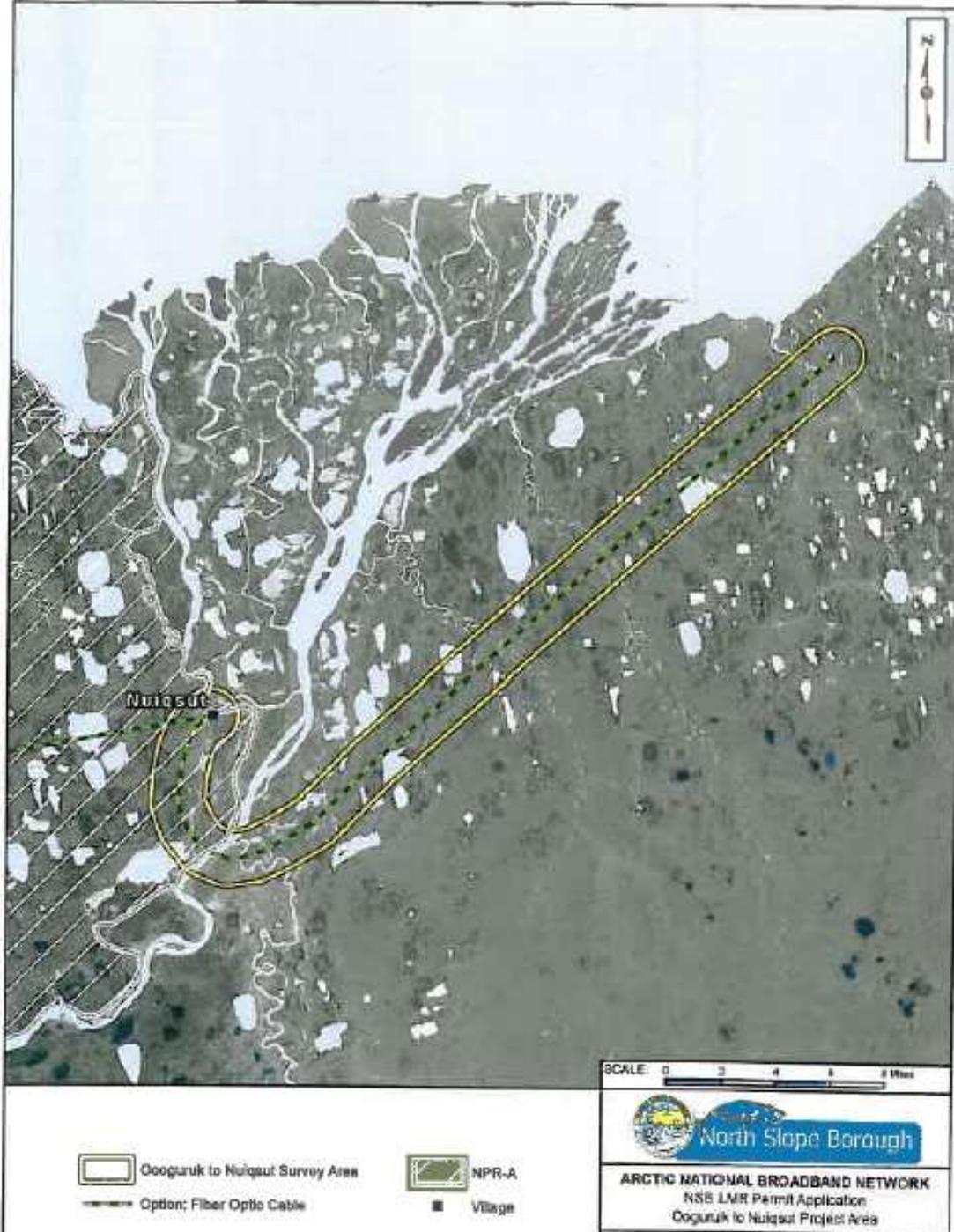


Figure 1. Location map of proposed activity from Ooguruk to Nuiqsut



Figure 2. Location map of proposed activity from Barrow to Atkasuk

Legal Description of Lands Involved:

Barrow to Atqasuk Route					
Meridian	Township	N/S	Range	W/E	Sections
Umiat	22	N	18	W	All sections excluding Private Lands
Umiat	22	N	19	W	All sections excluding Private Lands
Umiat	21	N	19	W	All sections excluding Private Lands
Umiat	20	N	19	W	All sections excluding Private Lands
Umiat	19	N	19	W	All sections excluding Private Lands
Umiat	19	N	20	W	All sections excluding Private Lands
Umiat	18	N	20	W	All sections excluding Private Lands
Umiat	17	N	20	W	All sections excluding Private Lands
Umiat	16	N	20	W	All sections excluding Private Lands
Umiat	16	N	21	W	All sections excluding Private Lands
Umiat	15	N	21	W	All sections excluding Private Lands
Umiat	14	N	21	W	All sections excluding Private Lands
Umiat	13	N	21	W	All sections excluding Private Lands
Oooguruk to Nuiqsut Route					
Meridian	Township	N/S	Range	W/E	Sections
Umiat	9	N	5	E	5, 6, 7 Excluding Private and State Lands
Umiat	9	N	4	E	1-3, 10-15, Excluding Private Lands
Umiat	10	N	4	E	All sections excluding Private Lands

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: (FF096833 ASRC Energy Services Permit 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.” [make sure to insert appropriate CX from the appendix for the activity that is proposed]

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

August 1, 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

FF096833 ASRC Energy Services Permit Stipulations 2014

Project Specific Stipulations:

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

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.

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.

IV. 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.

V. 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.

VI. 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.

VII. 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

VIII. 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.

IX. 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.

X. 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.