

## A. Background

**BLM Office:** Arctic Field Office LLAKF01000

**Lease/Serial/Case File No.** FF096985

**Applicant:** Christopher D. Arp  
Water and Environmental Research Center  
Institute of Northern Engineering  
University of Alaska Fairbanks  
467 Duckering, PO Box 5860  
Fairbanks, AK 99775-5860

**Proposed Action Title/Type:** Lake water level manipulation study (NPR-A Permit)

**Date of Proposed Action:** June 10 – June 17, 2015

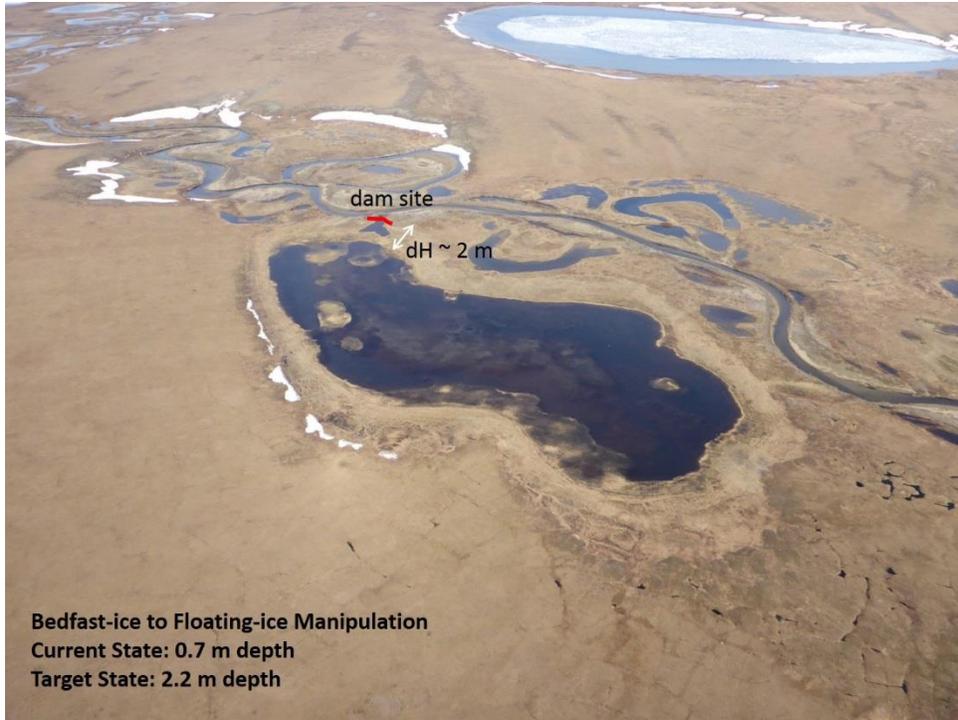
**Description of Proposed Action:** Christopher Arp (University of Alaska – Fairbanks) is proposing a project which would temporarily modify the water levels of two small lakes (ponds) near Inigok field camp within the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A). These ecosystem experiments are intended primarily to understand how lakes interact with permafrost due to changes in ice contact with the lake bed. A secondary aspect is to understand how this ecosystem change affects aquatic habitat and biota (sediment, chemistry, fish, invertebrates, and plants). The activity would take place on lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Due to the nature and timing of the project BLM does not have enough information at this time to evaluate the entirety of the project. Therefore, at this time will only consider the preliminary investigation of the project to take place near Inigok in June of this year. At such time that Mr. Arp has provided enough detail to BLM we will analyze the remainder of the project through an environmental assessment.

Mr. Arp has chosen 2 lakes near Inigok for this activity, Pond Ini-002 (Figure 1) and Lonely Wolf pond (Figure 2). Pond Ini-002 is located at 153.087° W, 69.999° N; Umiat sec. 36, T8N, R5W; ~ 1 mile south of Inigok field camp and Lonely Wolf pond is located at 152.948° W, 69.992° N; Umiat sec. 5, T7N, R4W; ~ 2 mile south of Inigok field camp. In June Mr. Arp would conduct a survey of each lake shoreline and obtain bathymetry information from both lakes. Access to each of the study sites would be either by foot or by helicopter. The survey will be conducted on foot and the bathymetry will be conducted either from a pack raft or from the lake shoreline depending on the ice conditions at the time of the survey. It is expected that 1 day would be spent by 1 or 2 researchers at each of the sites. The researcher(s) will be based at the Inigok field camp and will return to that location each night. Access to the Inigok field camp would be via fixed-wing aircraft. There would be no fuel used or stored at either 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 in conformance with the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act which allows for the authorization of uses consistent with the purposes of the Act.



**Figure 1. Oblique photo of Pond Ini-002.**



**Figure 2. Oblique photo of Lonely Wolf Pond.**

**Legal Description:** All in Umiat Meridian

ID	Township	Range	Section	Latitude & Longitude
Pond Ini-002	8 North	5 West	35	69.999° N 153.087° W
Lonely Wolf pond	7 North	4 West	5	69.992° N 152.948° W

**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: (FF096985 UAF Christopher Arp Summer 2015 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 3 (1.6) Departmental 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.		<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>

