

A. Background

BLM Office: Arctic Field Office LLAKF010

Lease/Serial/Case File No.: FF097012

Applicant: Pamela Groves/Daniel Mann
University of Alaska
910 Yukon Drive Ste. 106
Fairbanks, Alaska 99775

Proposed Action Title/Type: NPRA Permit for access to conduct Paleontological Research.

Dates of Proposed Activity: July 1 thru July 25, 2015

General Location of Proposed Action: Along the Ikpikpuk River, in the northern portion of NPR-A.

Description of Proposed Action: The applicants propose to conduct paleontological and quaternary stratigraphy surveys along the banks of the Ikpikpuk River. The surveys would be authorized under a paleontological permit issued by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Alaska state office. The Arctic Field Office would authorize access and use of the land.

Ms. Groves and Mr. Mann would fly via fixed wing aircraft from Fairbanks to the North Slope. Their final transportation plans have not been finalized, but from the initial drop off point they would fly in a small fixed wing and be dropped in the vicinity of the Upper Ikpikpuk River/Maybe Creek. They would travel by canoe to the lower Ikpikpuk River, "Cottonwood Bluff" (Figure 1). At the conclusion of the survey they would be picked up by a floatplane on a lake close to "Cottonwood Bluff" and be flown to Teshekpuk Lake where they would be working with Ben Jones from US Geological Survey, under his BLM authorization. They expect a total of 2 landings 3 fixed-wing landing and 2 take-offs for their proposed activity.

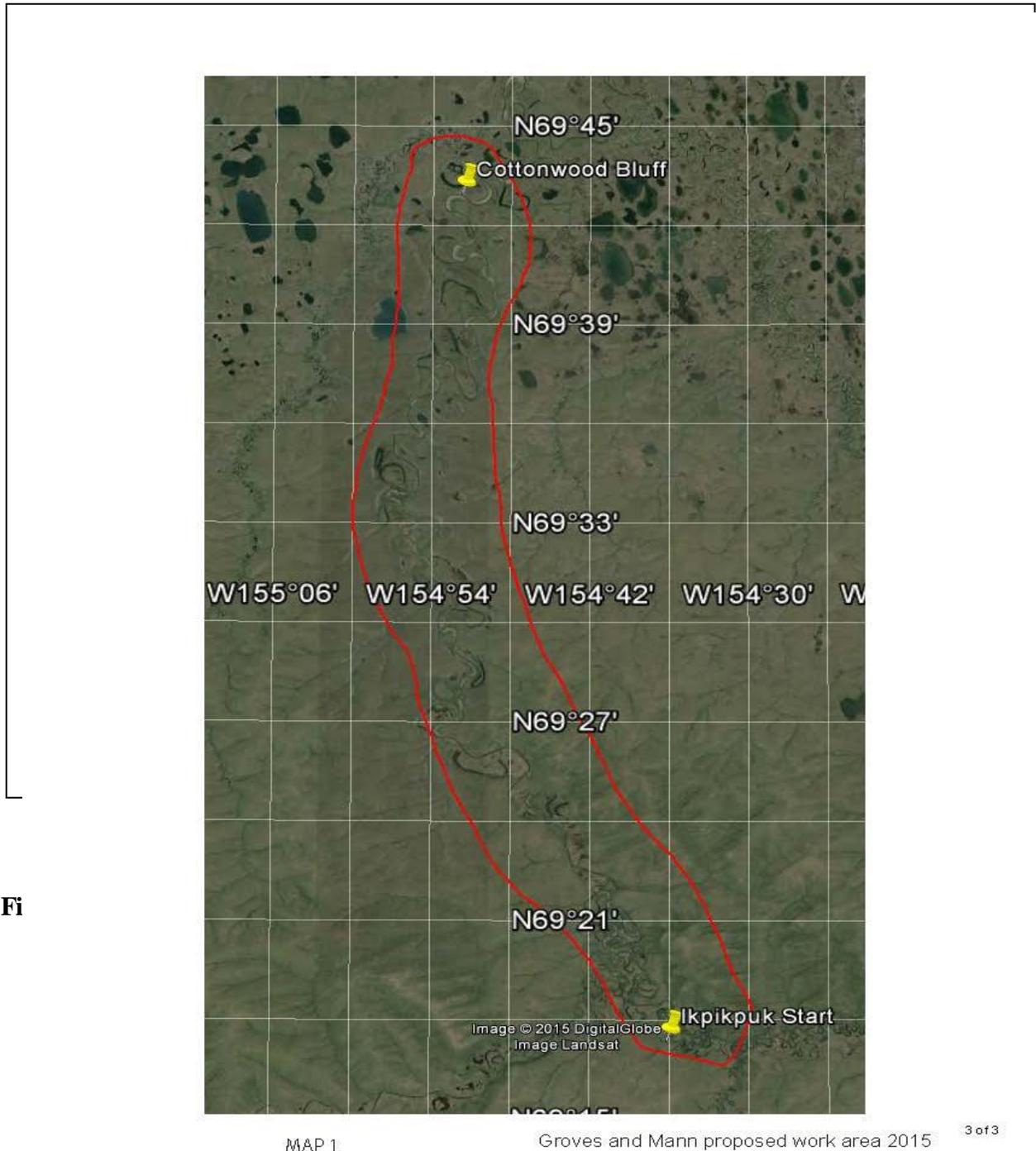
While their schedule is dependent on availability of aircraft, they plan to be in the NPR-A for a period of about 3 weeks sometime between 1 July and 25 July, 2015. Ms. Groves and Mr. Mann would camp in a new location each night on gravel bars along the river. The camps would be very small with one sleeping tent and one cooking tent.

No fuel for aircraft would be cached; the only fuel they would carry would be cooking fuel for a campstove which would be less than 1 gallon. Both Ms. Groves and Mr. Mann have received extensive first aid training. They would have 2 satellite phones and GPS units with them for emergencies and plan to leave a message stating their location, with the University of Alaska Fairbanks every 2 days.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

The proposed action is subject to the following planning document: National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (IAP/EIS) 2012 and Record of Decision (ROD) 2013.

The proposed action is not inconsistent with the purposes of the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act of 1976. The stipulations and best management practices applicable to the proposed action will be provided, along with project-specific mitigation, to the applicant entitled: "FF097012 Groves & Mann Land Use Summer 2015 Stipulations".



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Table 1. Legal Description of Lands Involved (all in Umiat Meridian)

Township	Range	Sections
4 North	13 West	1,2, 11-14, 23-26, 35-36
4 North	12 West	1-36
3 North	13 West	1-36
3 North	12 West	1-36
2 North	13 West	1-36
2 North	12 West	1-36
1 North	13 West	1-4, 9-16, 21-27, 34-36
1 North	12 West	1-36
1 North	11 West	5-9, 16-22, 26-35
1 South	12 West	1-5, 8-17, 20-29, 32-36
1 South	11 West	1-36
2 South	11 West	1-18

C. Compliance with NEPA

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		X

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.		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/
 Stacie McIntosh
 Authorized Officer, Arctic Field Office

Date 6/24/2015

Contact Person:

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact:

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