

## A. Background

**BLM Office:** Arctic Field Office LLAKF010

**Lease/Serial/Case File No.:** FF095588

**Applicant:** Brian Person, Ph.D.  
Wildlife Biologist  
North Slope Borough  
Department of Wildlife Management  
P.O. Box 69  
Barrow, Alaska 99723

**Proposed Action Title/Type:** NPR-A Permit (298401)

**Dates of Proposed Activity:** July 11, 2015 – August 31, 2015

**General Location of Proposed Action:** Ikpikpuk River Delta, Lonely, Kogru River Area

**Description of Proposed Action:** The applicant, Brian Person with the North Slope Borough, has requested authorization for access and landing by a helicopter and fixed wing aircraft on lands within the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A) in support of vegetation and Lesser Snow Goose research. The applicant has had NPR-A permits for similar work since 2009. This year Dr. Person is requesting authorization to land at the Kogru and Lonely landing strips as needed to eat lunch while they are out conducting their work, and they anticipate 4 take off and 4 landings at these landing strips.

The vegetation work would examine the impacts of goose grazing to vegetation and soils within the Ikpikpuk River Delta Lesser Snow Goose colony. The three geo-referenced transects that were established in 2012 would be visited to measure elevation, soil characteristics and vegetation. The work would occur between approximately July 11 – 15 and July 31 – August 9. Transportation would take place using a R44 helicopter and require up to 30 take off and 30 landings. Fifty-five gallons of aviation gas would be stored within fuel berms designed to hold over 110% of the fuel being stored. Fuel will be transported by snow machine from Barrow prior to spring break-up. There would be 3 people conducting the research who would camp on the Ikpikpuk River Delta using light weight back-packing gear. Some of the vegetation work could be based out of the North Slope Borough Cabin located on the north shore of Teshekpuk Lake (70 43.4N 153 43.8 W) requiring up to an additional 10 take offs and 10 landings.

The second project requested is to conduct nest success surveys on the Ikpikpuk River Delta from approximately July 11-15. Transportation support would be provided by a Cessna 206 (2 landings and 2 take offs). Three people would camp on the Delta using light weight back-packing gear. The nests would be accessed by foot and an R44 helicopter. Thirty take off and 30 landings are anticipated. Fuel (110 gallons of av gas) would be stored within fuel berms designed to hold over 110% of the fuel being stored. Fuel would be delivered using a Beaver on approximately July 1<sup>st</sup> (1 flight to drop off drums and 1 flight to drop off 2 more full drums in support of project 3 at the time they pick up empty drums from project 2).

The third project is banding Lesser Snow Goose on the Ikpikpuk and Piasuk river deltas in the Smith Bay region from approximately July 31 – August 4. Transportation support would be provided by a Cessna 206 (10 landings and 10 take offs) and an R44 helicopter (up to 30 take off and 30 landings). Fuel (170 gallons of av gas) would be stored within fuel berms designed to hold over 110% of the fuel being stored. Eight to nine people would camp on the Ikpikpuk Delta using light weight back-packing gear.

Projects 2 and 3 would be carried out in collaboration with ABR, Inc. See Figure 1 for a map of the general study area for all 3 projects.

Solid human waste would be transported back to Barrow and disposed at the waste treatment plant. The emergency plan is to bring both a satellite phone and personal locator beacon (PLB) to the field. The PLB is registered with the North Slope Borough (NSB) Department of Search and Rescue and they would file a plan of operations with them prior to departing to the field. The projects have been vetted through the NSB Fish and Game Management Committee and flyers will be posted in Barrow (the most impacted community) allowing time to address any concerns the public may have.

#### **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.

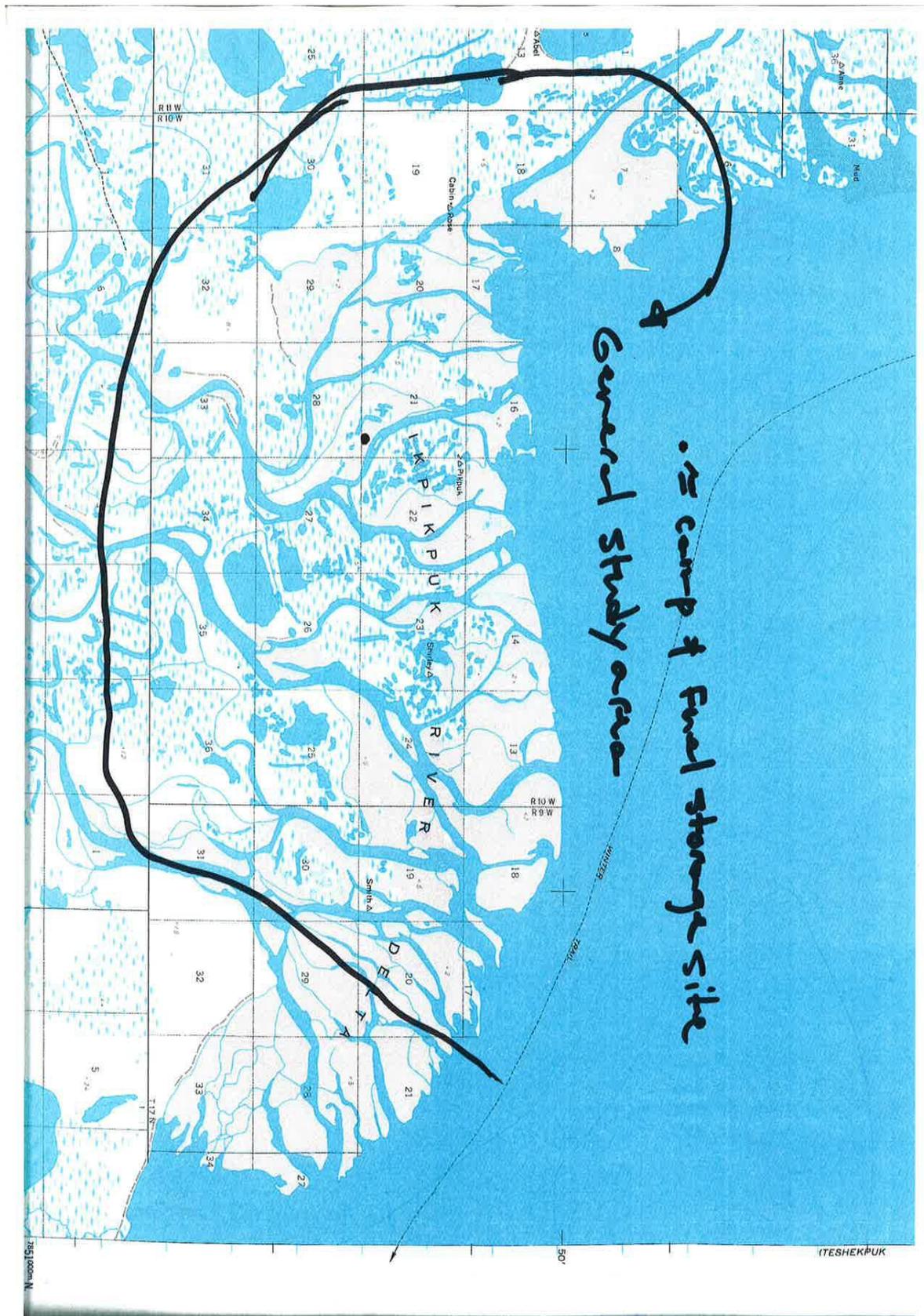


Figure 1. Applicant Submitted Map

**Legal Description (All Umiat Meridian)**

<b>Township</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Sections</b>
General Work Area		
17 North	11 West	1,12,13,24,25,36
17 North	10 West	6-8, 13-36
17 North	9 West	19-21, 27-34
16 North	10 West	1-6
NSB Cabin		
16 North	7 West	20
Kogru Landing Strip		
14 North	1 West	7,18
14 North	2 West	12,13
Lonely Landing Strip		
18 North	5 West	17

**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: “FF095588 NSB Brian Person Summer 2015 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 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.		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/  
 Stacie McIntosh  
 Authorized Officer, Arctic Field Office

7/2/2015  
 Date

#### Contact Person:

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact:

Donna Wixon  
 Natural Resource Specialist  
 Bureau of Land Management  
 Arctic Field Office  
 1150 University Avenue  
 Fairbanks, Alaska 99709

Phone: 907-474-2301  
 Email: [dwixon@blm.gov](mailto:dwixon@blm.gov)