

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Arctic Field Office
1150 University Avenue
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709-3844
<http://www.blm.gov/ak>

In reply refer to:
FF093060
2930.00 (AK012)

PLAN CONFORMANCE / NEPA COMPLIANCE RECORD

DOI-BLM-LLAKF010-2011-0006-CX

Arctic Field Office, Bureau of Land Management

Applicant: Wilderness Alaska
P.O. Box 113063
Anchorage, Alaska 99511

Proposed Action Title/Type: Special Recreation Permit

Description of Proposed Action: The applicant, Macgill Adams, doing business as Wilderness Alaska, proposes to conduct guided river trips for the purpose of providing clients the experience of hiking, camping, and viewing wildlife while floating the Utukok, Nigu and Etiluk Rivers. Wilderness Alaska anticipates 3 trips. The first Utukok trip would take place June 18 – 28, 2011. They would put in at the Driftwood Strip and take out downstream of Carbon Creek by Goose Point. The second Utukok trip would take place June 28 – July 7. The Nigu/Etiluk River trip would take place in mid August. The trip would start at the Headwaters Lake in Gates of the Arctic National Park floating to the pickup point at the Lower Lake on the Etiluk River (68° 38.554N 156° 11.595 W). This is the same trip that Wilderness Alaska was permitted to conduct by the Arctic Field Office last year. Access to and from the areas would be a float plane out of Bettles, Alaska.

Inflatable canoes would be used for floating. Most days they would move camp, but occasionally would spend more than one night in a location. The group size for the trips would be limited to 10 including staff. The food containers would be certified bear resistant. They would have bear spray and a shot gun available if needed. Wilderness Alaska practices leave no trace principles and pack their trash back to Fairbanks for disposal. Water is obtained from free flowing natural sources then either boiled or filtered before consumption. All guides are current with first aid training. Guides would have a satellite phone for emergencies. They do not propose to have any food or fuel caches along the way and would not stay at any one location for more than 2 nights.

Locations

Utukok Trip

Meridian	Township	Range	Section	Comment
Umiat	6 South	39 West	4,5,8,9,16,21	Private Land within
Umiat	5 South	39 West	25,26,32-35	
Umiat	5 South	38 West	3,4,8,9,17,18,19,20	
Umiat	4 South	37 West	1-5, 7, 8, 17, 18, 19, 20, 29,30,31,32	
Umiat	3 South	37 West	33-36	
Umiat	4 South	36 West	5,6	
Umiat	3 South	36 West	3,4,9,10,15,16,20,21,22, 28,29,31,32,33	
Umiat	2 South	36 West	25-27,33-36	
Umiat	2 South	35 West	25-36	
Umiat	2 South	34 West	13,14,15,21-24,27-32	
Umiat	2 South	33 West	1,2,3,10,11,14-18,20-22	
Umiat	1 South	33 West	5-9,14-17, 23, 25, 26, 35, 36	Private Land within
Umiat	1 South	34 West	1,2,12	
Umiat	1 North	33 West	8,9,17,18,19,20,28,29, 32,33	

Nigu Trip

Meridian	Township	Range	Section
Umiat	9 South	18 West	19,30,31
Umiat	9 South	19 West	24-26,35,36
Umiat	10 South	19 West	1,2,10-16,19-35
Umiat	10 South	20 West	36
Umiat	11 South	19 West	6,7,18,19,29-33
Umiat	11 South	20 West	1,12
Umiat	12 South	19 West	4-8,17-20,29,30
Kateel River	34 North	11 East	7,8,17-20,29-33
Kateel River	33 North	11 East	2-18,21-25
Kateel River	33 North	12 East	19,29-33
Kateel River	32 North	12 East	2-4,10-15,23-26,30
Kateel River	32 North	13 East	19,30 (State Selected) 31,32 (partial Noatak National Preserve)
Kateel River	31 North	13 East	Noatak National Preserve
Kateel River	31 North	14 East	Noatak National Preserve
Kateel River	30 North	14 East	Noatak National Preserve

The proposed action is subject to the following planning documents:

Western Arctic Resource Management Plan (RMP) evaluated 2/5/1990

Utility Corridor Resource Management Plan (RMP) approved 1/11/1991.

Final Environmental Impact Statement on Oil and Gas Leasing in The National

Petroleum Reserve in Alaska and Record of Decision approved 5/1983

The National Petroleum Reserves Production Act of 1976

The proposed action is not inconsistent with the purposes of the Naval Petroleum Reserve Production Act of 1976. The applicant will be provided with stipulations entitled “FF093060 Wilderness Alaska Stipulations 2011” and Required Conduct near Possible Nests of Raptors (Eagles, Hawks and Falcons) in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska.”

Date _____

Donna L. Wixon

Natural Resource Specialist, Arctic Field Office

Part II: NEPA Review and Decision

Categorical Exclusion Review

This proposed action meets the criteria for a Categorical Exclusion in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, H-1

This proposed action qualifies as a Categorical Exclusion 1.6 under 43 CFR 46.210 and 46.215

“Issuance of Special Recreation Permits for day use or overnight use up to 14 consecutive nights; that impacts no more than 3 staging area acres; and/or for recreational travel along roads, trails, or in areas authorized in a land use plan.”

The proposed action has been reviewed to determine if any of the exceptions described in 43 CFR 46.210 and 46.215, apply.

The proposed action will not meet any of the extraordinary circumstances listed below.

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

Wilderness Characteristics & Wild Lands further evaluation required	Yes	No
<p>The NPR-A was evaluated for wilderness characteristics in Section 105(c) studies during 1977 and 1978. Although activities such oil and gas leasing, subsistence practices, overland moves, excavation, recreation, aircraft use, site clean-ups, and scientific research or monitoring continue in NPR-A, most of the area remains in a natural state as it was during that study. Residents of the area do occupy seasonal dwellings or fish camps and people travel extensively by motorized vehicle over parts of NPR-A, but there are no roads outside the established communities. The overall character of NPR-A (excluding private lands) remains natural, and there are relatively few obvious signs of modern human influence or presence. A visitor to the area or an inhabitant from the settlements in or near the NPR-A can easily find opportunities for solitude (USDOI, BLM, 1978). Some areas within NPR-A contain excellent ecological, geological, scientific, educational, scenic, and historical values.</p>		X

Date March 31, 2011

/s/Donna L. Wixon
Natural Resource Specialist, Arctic Field Office