



**Environmental Assessment  
National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska  
Special Recreation Permit  
2010  
DOI-BLM-LLAKF010-2010-0037-EA  
Alaska Statewide Guides, Inc.  
Preparing Office: Arctic Field Office**

Project Title/Type of Action: **Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) Special Recreation Permit**

Case File Number: **FF095709**

Land Use Plans: **Utility Corridor Resource Management Plan (RMP), January 1991**

Applicant: **Joseph Miller  
Krystal Miller  
DBA: Alaska Statewide Guides, Inc.**

Address: **P.O. Box 71687  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99707**

Date: **July 23, 2010**

Lands Involved:

Land Description (All Umiat Meridian)

<b>Township</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Section</b>
14 South	4 West	11,13,14 (Excluding Private Lands)
14 South	3 West	8,19,28-33(Excluding Private Lands)
10 South	9 West	1-18
10 South	2 East	1-36 (State Selected)

10 South	1 East	1-36 (State Selected)
10 South	1 West	1-36 (State Selected)
10 South	2 West	1-36 (State Selected)
9 South	3 West	4-6
9 South	2 West	1-3, 10-15
9 South	1 West	7-9, 13-27
9 South	1 East	16-21, 28-30
8 South	5 West	7-9,16-21,25-30 (State Selected)
8 South	4 West	16-30, 34-36
8 South	3 West	28-33
6 South	6 West	10-15 (State Selected)
7 South	6 West	1,12,13,24-28,33-36 (Reg Sel)
7 South	9 West	1-18 (Reg Sel)
2 South	3 East	4-9, 16-21, 28-30 (Reg Sel)
2 South	2 East	1-30 (Reg Sel)
2 North	3 East	19,20,30 (Excluding Private Lands)

**Environmental Assessment  
for a Special Recreation Permit  
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## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

Mr. Joseph Miller and Ms. Krysal Miller, doing business as Alaska Statewide Guides, Inc. (ASG), have requested authorization to conduct guiding operations on BLM lands managed by the Arctic Field Office. The area of proposed use is within the Central Arctic Management Area (Figure 1). The applicant proposes to conduct trips in August 2010 in the drainages of the Ayiyak and Chandler rivers and Natvatruak Creek.



## 1.1 Purpose and Need

The proposed action would authorize a Special Recreation Permit to ASG, who proposes to conduct commercial guided hunting on the North Slope. The BLM's organic act, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLMPA) (43 USC 1701), requires that the agency provide for multiple uses of the public lands. The proposed action is an allowable activity consistent with the existing land use plan for the area of effect. A permit is needed to provide guidelines to ensure that resources on BLM managed lands are conserved and to minimize impacts to the environment from the proposed action.

## 1.2 Laws, Regulations, Other EAs that Influence this EA

This EA will be based on the findings, management controls, and protective measures of the 1991 Utility Corridor Resource Management Plan (RMP) Record of Decision, as well as the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA), Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), Endangered Species Act, Executive Order (EO) 11988, and EO 11990. The action, as proposed, is consistent with the objectives outlined in these documents and not in conflict with other resources in the area. The proposed use is in conformance with current policy of the BLM Arctic Field Office.

## 1.4 The Decision To Be Made

The BLM must conduct a project-specific NEPA analysis and determine whether the proposed action should be approved, rejected, or approved with modifications, and if additional mitigation is needed. This EA will be based on the findings, management controls, and protective measures within the 1991 Utility Corridor Resource Management Plan (RMP) Record of Decision. The scope of this EA includes analysis that enables the BLM to select among alternatives that meet the purpose and need, and are within the BLM's jurisdiction (40 Code of Federal Regulations 1506.1(a)(2)).

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to meet requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and to support U.S. Department of Interior (USDO I) Bureau of Land Management (BLM) decision-making on permits required for the proposed action. The scope of this EA includes analysis of the effects of the proposed activity and alternatives.

## 1.5 Scoping and Issues

The proposed action has been announced on the BLM Arctic Field Office website NEPA register July 16, 2010. To date no comments have been received.

BLM guidelines include a list of issues that are addressed, where applicable, in NEPA assessments as described in BLM Handbook H-1790-1 (National Environmental Policy Act). Some elements are not present in the project area and are, therefore, not discussed further. A summary listing of related issues considered by AFO Staff is provided in **Table 1.1**.

**Table 1.1 issues Considered in Evaluating Impacts**

<b>Resources/Environmental Considerations for Issues and Analysis</b>	<b>Determination</b>	<b>Basis of Determination (See Note )</b>
ACEC's	Not Present	
Air Quality	Minimally Impacted	Protection provided by: Protection provided by: Non Oil & Gas Permit Stipulations IIA; and State of Alaska Air Non-Point and Mobile Program and regulations (18 AAC 50)
Cultural and Paleontological Resources	Minimally Impacted	Protection provided by: Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, Non Oil and Gas Permit Stipulations VA, & VB.
Environmental Justice	Not Present	
Fish	Minimally Impacted	Protection provided by: Protection provided by: Non Oil & Gas Permit Stipulations IIA, IIB, and VIIIA, and XI. EFH finding "not likely to adversely affect".
Flood Plains/Wetlands and Riparian Zones	Minimally Impacted	Protections provided by: EO 11988 and EO 11990
Invasive, Non-native species	Not Present	Protection provided by: not applicable to this action.
Native American Religious Concerns	Not Present	Protection provided by: not applicable to this action.
Recreation	Not Present	Protection provided by: not applicable to this action.
Social/cultural Systems	Not Present	Protection provided by: not applicable to this action.
Subsistence	Minimally Impacted	Protection provided by: Protection provided by: ANILCA
Threatened & Endangered Species Spectacled and Steller's eider	Not Present	In accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA)
Threatened & Endangered Species Polar Bear	Not Present	In accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA)
non-T&E birds	Minimally Impacted	Protection provided Non Oil and Gas Permit Stipulations, III.A, III.B, XII.C. Raptor code of conduct.
non-T&E mammals	Minimally Impacted	Protection provided by Non Oil and Gas Permit Stipulations III. A, III.F (as per S NPRA), XI.B.1, XII.A, XII.B and XII.G.
Vegetation	Minimally Impacted	Protection provided by: Non Oil and Gas Permit Stipulation X.A.
Visual Resource Management	Minimally Impacted	Protection provided by: VIIA, XIA,XIB, IV, VII.A
Water Resources	Minimally Impacted	: Protections provided by: Non Oil and Gas Permit Stipulation II.
Waste (Hazardous/Solid)	Minimally Impacted	Protection provided by: Protections provided by State of Alaska 18 AAC 30, 60, 62, 63, 72, and 75; and Permit Stipulations II B; and XI A, B, C, and D.
Wild & Scenic Rivers	Not Present	Protection provided by:
Wilderness	Not Present	Protection provided by:

**Key to Table 1.1:**

BLM – Bureau of Land Management

EFH – Essential Fish Habitat

**Potentially Affected:** The proposed action or alternative could result in potential impacts to resource or issues to the level that additional mitigation may be required, or there is a need to evaluate potentially significant issues.

**Minimally Impacted:** Resources or issues would not be affected to a degree requiring further analysis because the expected impacts from the proposed action and alternative would be minimal and standard protections (e.g., Stipulations from overriding BLM plans or other legal protections) would reduce impacts, and/or the resource/issue has been sufficiently analyzed in NEPA documents that this analysis is tiered to, and, therefore, do not require additional analysis. Minimally impacted resources or issues will not be analyzed further in this EA.

**Not Present:** Resources or issues are not expected to be affected by the proposed action or alternatives because activities would occur at a different time or place. Resource or issues not present will not be analyzed further in the EA.

In summary, BLM resource specialists have reviewed the proposed action and found no issues for further evaluation in this EA. Existing protective measures would ensure that any resources would be at most minimally impacted from the proposed action. The effects of activities by ASG, and its clients, on Game Management Area 26-09 were also analyzed in a previous EA, *National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Special Recreation Permit 2010* ( DOI-BLM-LLAK01000-2010-0006-EA). The activities proposed for the current proposed action are sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the 2010 EA ( DOI-BLM-LLAK01000-2010-0006-EA), and the activities are within the same general area. This EA will be tiered to the 2010 EA. Therefore, this EA will only introduce the alternatives, but no additional analysis will be carried forth.

## 1.6 Public Involvement

Public notification of the Environmental analysis was announced in the NEPA register on file at the Arctic Field Office Environmental Assessment web site beginning July 16, 2010. No public comments or inquiries were received through July 23, 2010.

## Chapter 2 Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

### 2.1 Introduction

This section describes the alternatives considered, including the no action, proposed action, and alternatives considered and eliminated.

### 2.2 Description of Alternatives

#### 2.2.1 Alternative A: No Action

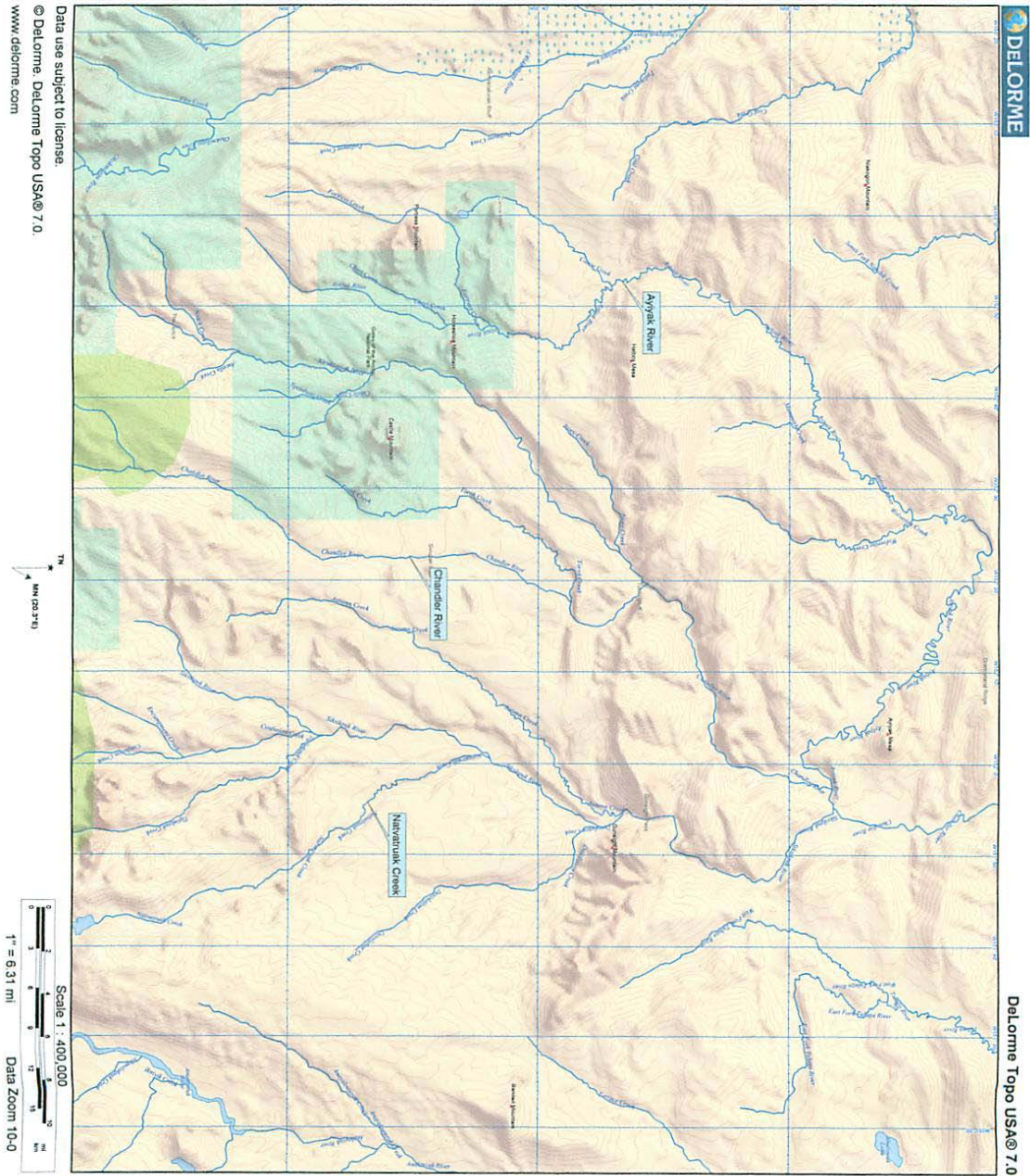
Under no action, the BLM would not grant a special recreation permit to ASG. The current land management situation would continue. Chapter III (Affected Environment) of the 1991 Utility Corridor Resource Management Plan (RMP) provides a detailed profile of the environmental conditions in the region. The types of activities that occur in the area are described in Chapter IV of the document. Common ongoing activities include oil and gas exploration, recreation, subsistence use, and travel. These activities would continue under the no action alternative, but the special recreation permit for ASG would not be issued.

### **2.2.2 Alternative B: Proposed Action**

The proposed action is to authorize a permit that would allow ASG to camp on BLM managed lands in order to conduct commercial guided hunts in Game Management Unit 26A. Guides and clients will either travel by raft or by fixed-wing aircraft to camps that will be located along three waterways: the Aiyiak and Chandler rivers or Natvatuak Creek. Each of these waterways crosses through BLM lands in the Central Arctic Management Area. Activities that may occur on the BLM lands include camping in temporary “spike camps,” hiking, and hunting.

**Figure 2.** Close-up of three rivers along which ASG propose to camp and conduct guided hunting.

Appendix **M**



The proposed period of activity by ASG is from August 1, 2010 until September 10, 2010. Access will either be by small, fixed wing aircraft that will land on gravel bars or by raft. The spike camps will be established in close proximity to the gravel bar landing area. Spike camps will be constructed using Leave No Trace procedures and if the camps appear to be impacting vegetation, then they will be moved. There will be no more than two people per spike camp (1 hunter, 1 guide). Latrines will consist of small cat-holes 1 to 18 inches in depth, and located at least 150 feet from any water body.

The guided hunting will be targeting grizzly bear, caribou, wolf, and moose. During the course of their proposed activity, ASG anticipates a maximum of 12 clients for caribou, 12 clients for wolf, 2 clients for moose, and 6 clients for bear, totaling 32 camp occupations if the maximum number of clients is achieved. Cooking propane is the only fuel proposed to be stored on BLM managed lands. All trash will be removed from the field at the end of each hunt.

## **Chapter 3 Affected Environment**

Environmental characteristics of the general project area have been extensively described in Chapter III Affected Environment of the 1991 Utility Corridor RMP, to which this analysis is tiered.

The Northwest National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (November 2003) and The Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Supplemental Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (IAP/EIS) 2008, while outside the proposed area, analyzed an area similar in nature.

## **Chapter 4 Environmental Impacts**

The following analysis will focus on impacts due to the proposed action and no action alternatives. Additional details on related impacts are discussed in the 1991 Utility Corridor RMP. This EA will focus on project specific and site specific impacts of the proposed action and no action alternatives.

### **4.1 Direct and Indirect Effects**

Analysis of impacts from the proposed action and no action alternative is based on observations and information gained from decades of similar operations on the North Slope. This EA is tiered to the 1991 Utility Corridor RMP and Record of Decision and *DOI-BLM-LLAK01000-2010-0006-EA*. The proposed activities are not substantially different from those previously evaluated in the 1991 Utility Corridor RMP and Record of Decision *DOI-BLM-LLAK01000-2010-0006-EA* and these documents are incorporated by reference.

### **4.2 Cumulative Effects**

Cumulative impacts result from the incremental addition of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions. Each action may be individually minor by itself, but when added to others could become significant over a period of time. The time frame for the analysis of cumulative effects for the proposed action is from 1991 (the publication of the Utility Corridor RMP) to 10

years into the future, assuming that the relatively low level of activity and management would remain at about the same level as present. Due to the limited scope and intensity of the proposed action the geographic area would be limited within 1 mile of the proposed river travel corridors and camps. Due to the remoteness of the area, the activity levels are limited by available transportation. There is minimal recreation, research and subsistence use in the area. The proposed action is anticipated to have very little if any impact as all the applicants will be using leave no trace principles.

The proposed action is not anticipated to result in cumulative impacts due to the remoteness of the BLM Central Arctic Management Unit where the activity would occur, the low impact levels associated with the activity, and the short-term time frame of the proposed action.

#### **4.4 MITIGATION AND MONITORING**

The stipulations for the proposed action are a subset of the Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Supplemental Integrated Activity Plan/ Final Environmental Impact Statement Record of Decision Required Operating Procedures, the Northwest National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plan/ Final Environmental Impact Statement Record of Decision Required Operating Procedures, Utility Corridor Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement, The Colville River Special Area Management Plan, and the Final Environmental Impact Statement on Oil and Gas Leasing in The National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska and Record of Decision approved 5/1983. *Special Recreation Permit holders meet most requirements by following the guidelines in Leave No Trace, Alaskan Tundra ]*

#### **4.5 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

No issues were identified in the evaluation of the proposed action for this EA.

### **Chapter 5 Consultation and Coordination**

Public notification of the Environmental Assessment will be on file at the Arctic Field Office and available on the Arctic Field Office Environmental Assessment web site.

#### **5.1 List of Preparers**

##### **BLM**

##### **Arctic Field Office:**

Dave Yokel, Wildlife Biologist

Michael Kunz, Archaeologist

Susan Flora, Environmental Scientist

Richard Kemnitz, Hydrologist

Donna Wixon, Natural Resource Specialist

Debbie Nigro, Wildlife Biologist

Matthew Whitman, Fisheries Biologist

Stacie McIntosh, Supervisor

Stacey Fritz, Anthropologist/Subsistence Specialist

Roger Sayre, NEPA Specialist

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### ***Finding of No Significant Impact***

Type of Action: Special Recreation Permit Renewal

Serial Number: FF095709

Environmental Assessment Number: DOI-BLM-LLAKF010-2010-0037-EA

Applicant: Joseph Miller  
Krystal Miller  
DBA: Alaska Statewide Guides, Inc.

Address: P.O. Box 71687  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99707

District: Arctic Field Office

Planning Unit: Utility Corridor Resource Management Plan (RMP), January 1991

Lands Involved: See Case File for Specific Description, lands are in the vicinity of the drainages of the Ayiyak and Chandler rivers and Natvatruak Creek.

### ***Context and Intensity of Environmental Impacts***

Based upon a review of the EA prepared by the Arctic Field Office and the supporting documents, I have determined that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. The effects of activities by ASG, and its clients, on Game Management Area 26-09 were also analyzed in a previous EA, *National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Special Recreation Permit 2010* (DOI-BLM-LLAK01000-2010-0006-EA). The activities proposed for the current proposed action are sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the 2010 EA (DOI-BLM-LLAK01000-2010-0006-EA).

No environmental effects meet the definition of significance as defined at 40 CFR 1508.27. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required. We reviewed the context of the proposed action and found that it would not result in any significant effects to resources and values. The mitigation measures and environmental protections would ensure that the Proposed Action would not add significantly to incremental impacts.

The following factors were considered in the EA to evaluate the significance of this proposal (40 CFR 1508.27): Beneficial and adverse impacts; effects on public health and safety; unique cultural or ecological areas within or near the project area; potentially controversial or uncertain effects; whether the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effect; cumulative effects; adverse impacts to important scientific, cultural or historical resources; effects to endangered or threatened species or habitat; or whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, local or tribal law, regulation or policy imposed for the protection of the environment, where non-federal requirements are consistent with federal requirements:

### ***Monitoring and Mitigation***

BLM will monitor on the ground activities periodically. Mitigation measures will be implemented as described in the attached authorization stipulations.

#### **APPROVED:**

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/s/Lon Kelly  
Arctic Field Office Manager

July 23, 2010

Date