

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Anchorage Field Office
4700 BLM Road
Anchorage, AK 99507
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DECISION RECORD

**Ungalik Airstrip Hazmat Removal
Applicant: Bureau of Land Management
Case File Number: FF-090986
DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2012-0008-CX**

1. Decision:

It is my decision to authorize removal of petroleum contamination from the Ungalik Airstrip Drum Spills (UADS) Site. Cleanup of the site will allow BLM to convey the land to the Shaktoolik Native Corporation (surface estate) and Bering Straits Native Corporation (subsurface estate) under authority of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Field work for this action will begin during the summer/fall 2012.

2. Proposed Action:

Project is to clean-up the Ungalik Airstrip, an abandoned unauthorized 5,300 foot airstrip, so that BLM can convey the land to the Shaktoolik Native Corp. To complete cleanup of the site BLM needs to remove petroleum contamination from four small areas at the south end of the airstrip. These spill areas are collectively named the Ungalik Airstrip Drum Spills (UADS). The UADS site is remote; no road or trails lead there from the nearest community, (Shaktoolik, 18 miles SW by air). The airstrip was created by bull-doing the natural surface down to bare mineral earth and creating berms around the airstrip with the spoil. Today the entire airstrip is covered by a thin top soil layer supporting tussocks of grass and moss, and alder brush. The south end is heavy overgrown by alder while the north end is covered only by grass and moss.

Four small distinct spill areas have been delineated as result of site characterizations in 2007 and 2008. The fuel spills are residual from approximately 140 drums removed in 2000. Estimate that collectively 50-100 cubic yards of soil will need to be cleaned-up to achieve Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation standards. Cleanup will require excavation of four small areas: approx. 3'x6', 15'x'6', 10'x20' and 20'x20', to depth of 3-10 feet. Depending on treatment technology employed, same soil may be placed back into the excavations after contamination is removed, or clean fill material may be taken from the

man-made berms along the edges of the airstrip. The existing alder brush vegetation that has overgrown the airstrip will be removed from the spill areas in a manner that preserves most of the root structure, and will be part of the backfill to promote regrowth. The end-state for the site will leave little or no evidence of surface disturbance.

BLM's contractor will mobilize to the UADS for approximately 5-7 days. Equipment and supplies for the project will be brought to the project site by helicopter external load and/or procured from a nearby placer mining operation on the Ungalik River. It is anticipated that the excavation will be done using a medium size tracked excavator that was brought to the nearby mining claims this past winter. The excavator will be walked to the site using an existing trail from the mine camp to the airstrip. Other on-site equipment used will likely be 2-3 ATVs and maybe a small wheeled tractor with loader bucket.

The 4-6 person (including BLM Project Inspector) field crew will either lodge at the nearby mine camp and commute approx. 1.5 miles each way to the work site daily via ATVs, or establish a temporary field camp on-site. The camp will be minimal – sleep tent, work/dinning tent, with freeze-dried/MREs for food, port-a-can, and several drums of fuel in secondary containment. At demobilization all equipment, materials, and waste generated during the work (including trash and containerized grey and black water) will be backhauled for proper disposal.

It is standard practice and included in the contract statement of work that all equipment and materials be properly cleaned/decontaminated before mob and at demob to prevent spread of noxious and invasive weeds. Any grass seed used to promote revegetation will be of the appropriate type for the location and certified weed-free, as per standard practice for hazmat projects.

3. Rationale for the Decision:

The rationale for the decision is based on the requirement for BLM to convey lands that are not contaminated by oil or hazardous substances; BLM is prohibited from conveying the land until cleanup is complete.

The proposed action is in conformance with the Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Resource Management Plan, Approved: September, 2008. The area of the proposed activity is not within a critical subsistence use area and no serious wildlife problems are anticipated.

4. ANILCA Section 810 Compliance:

The proposed action will not significantly restrict subsistence uses. No reasonably foreseeable and significant decrease in the abundance of harvestable resources or in the distribution of harvestable resources, and nor reasonably foreseeable limitations on harvester access will result from the proposed action.

5. Adverse Energy Impact Compliance:

This action has been analyzed as required by Washington Office Instruction Memorandum 2002-053 to determine if it will cause an adverse impact on energy development. The action will not have an adverse direct or indirect impact on energy development, production or distribution. The preparation of a Statement of Adverse Energy Impact is not required.

6. Lands with Wilderness Characteristics:

The proposed action has been reviewed for the following Wilderness Characteristics and found to contain one or more of the characteristics:

- 1) Size-roadless areas of over 5000 acres of contiguous BLM lands.
- 2) Naturalness-affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the works of humans substantially unnoticeable to the average visitor
- 3) Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.
- 4) Supplemental values-if size, naturalness, and solitude/outstanding opportunities are met, then consider if the area contains ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. Supplemental values are not required to be present in order to classify an area as Lands with Wilderness Characteristics.

The proposed action is located in Game Management Unit 22A within a 557.48 acre parcel of BLM administered lands surrounded by AK Native Corp lands and patented placer mine claims. The UADS is on an abandoned airstrip that has been substantially overgrown, but is still visually noticeable due to the brush covered berm edging the rectangular shape of the airstrip. Most of the nearby placer mine claims have not been worked in many years and are also overgrown with vegetation. The UADS is remote and not easily accessed from Norton Sound or the nearest community; Shaktoolik. The land outside the UADS and the nearby placer mine claims is largely untouched by man. Due to the natural reclamation that has taken place during the past several decades the area offers outstanding opportunities for primitive outdoor recreation. The Visual Resource Management classification within the land use plan (Kobuk-Seward Peninsula, September 2008) is Class III. The proposed activity would not alter the scenic or recreational nature of the area or affect the wilderness characteristics of the area.

7. Consultation and Coordination:

Public participation was accomplished through the development of the Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Area Management Plan which anticipated routine land authorizations in accordance with Title III, Section 302 of FLPMA. Adequate measures to protect public lands through stipulations and required operating procedures are in place. Internal scoping was conducted by AFO staff and included threatened and endangered species, cultural clearances and ANILCA 810 analysis.



**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

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<http://www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/fo/ado.html>

**Categorical Exclusion
Ungalik Airstrip Hazmat Removal**

**Applicant: Bureau of Land Management
Case File Numbers: FF-090986
DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2012-0008-CX**



Location:

Kateel River Meridian, Alaska
T. 11 S., R. 11 W., NW ¼ SW ¼ Sec. 12;

Prepared By:

Anchorage Field Office

February 2012

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

A. Background

BLM Office: Anchorage Field Office Lease/Serial/Case File No: FF-090986

Environmental Document No: DOI-BLM-AK-A010-2012-0008-CX

Proposed Action Title/Types: Petroleum Contamination Removal

Location of Proposed Action:

Kateel River Meridian, Alaska, T. 11 S., R. 11 W., NW ¼ SW ¼ Sec. 12

Description of Proposed Action:

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Applicant (if any): Bureau of Land Management

B. Land Use Plan Conformance 43 CFR 1610.5-3(a)

1. Land Use Plan Name:
Kobuk-Seward Peninsula Record of Decision and Approved Management Plan
Date Approved: September 2008
2. The proposed action is in conformance with plan because it is provided for in several of the Goals and Management Actions under RMP-8 Abandoned Mine Lands and Hazardous Materials Management. Specifically:

“Conduct remediation actions on identified sites in accordance with applicable laws and policy.”

C. NEPA Compliance

The proposed action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with United States Department of the Interior 43 CFR 46.210 or United States Department of the Interior 516 DM 11.9, which provides:

“J. Other

- (4). Use of small sites for temporary field work camps where the sites will be restored to their natural or original condition within the same work season. And*

(10). *Removal of structures and materials of no historic value, such as abandoned automobiles, fences, and buildings, including those built in trespass and reclamation of the site when little or no surface disturbance is involved.*

D. Extraordinary Circumstances

The following Departmental List of Extraordinary Circumstances applies to individual actions. Departmental instructions mandate that environmental documents must be prepared for actions which may:

1. Have significant adverse impacts on public health or safety.
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.
3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.
5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.
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.
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.
9. Violate Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).
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).
12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or 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).

This categorical exclusion is appropriate because there are no extraordinary circumstances that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances in 43 CFR §46.215 are pertinent.

E. Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

The proposed action has been reviewed for the following Wilderness Characteristics and found to contain one or more of the characteristics:

- 1) Size: Roadless areas of over 5000 acres of contiguous BLM lands.
- 2) Naturalness: Affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the works of humans substantially unnoticeable to the average visitor
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F Adverse Energy Impact Compliance:

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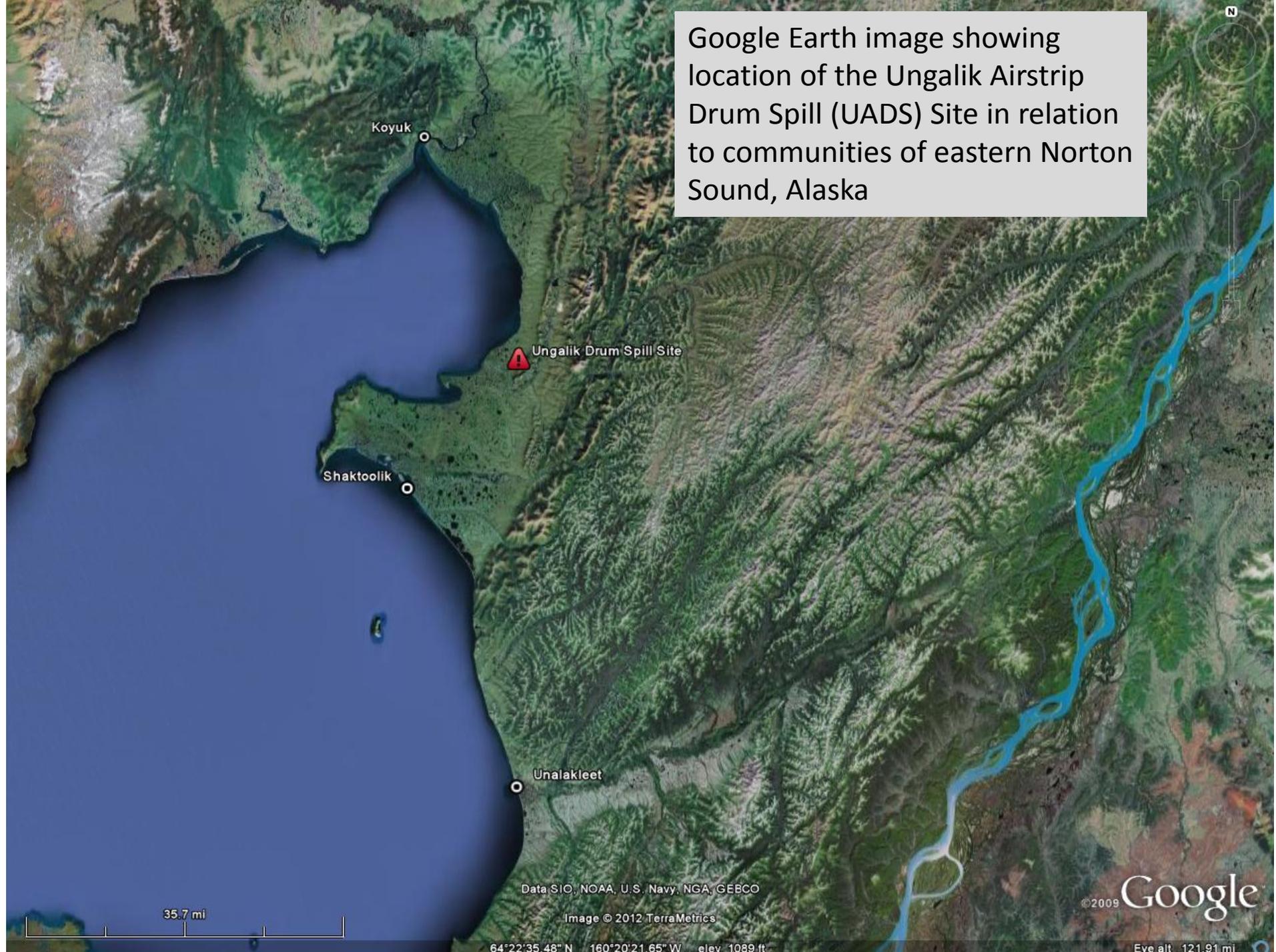
G. Signature

The proposed action is in conformance with a management framework plan or a resource management plan, 43 C.F.R. § 1610.8(a) (3) (2006). The Department of the Interior has determined and found that the proposed action is within a category of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment and that neither an environmental assessment nor an environmental impact statement is required, 40 C.F.R. §1508.4 (2006).

Authorized Official: /s/James M. Fincher Date: 3/1/2012

Attached: Map and Site Photos

Google Earth image showing location of the Ungalik Airstrip Drum Spill (UADS) Site in relation to communities of eastern Norton Sound, Alaska



Koyuk

Ungalik Drum Spill Site

Shaktoolik

Unalakleet

Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

Image © 2012 TerraMetrics

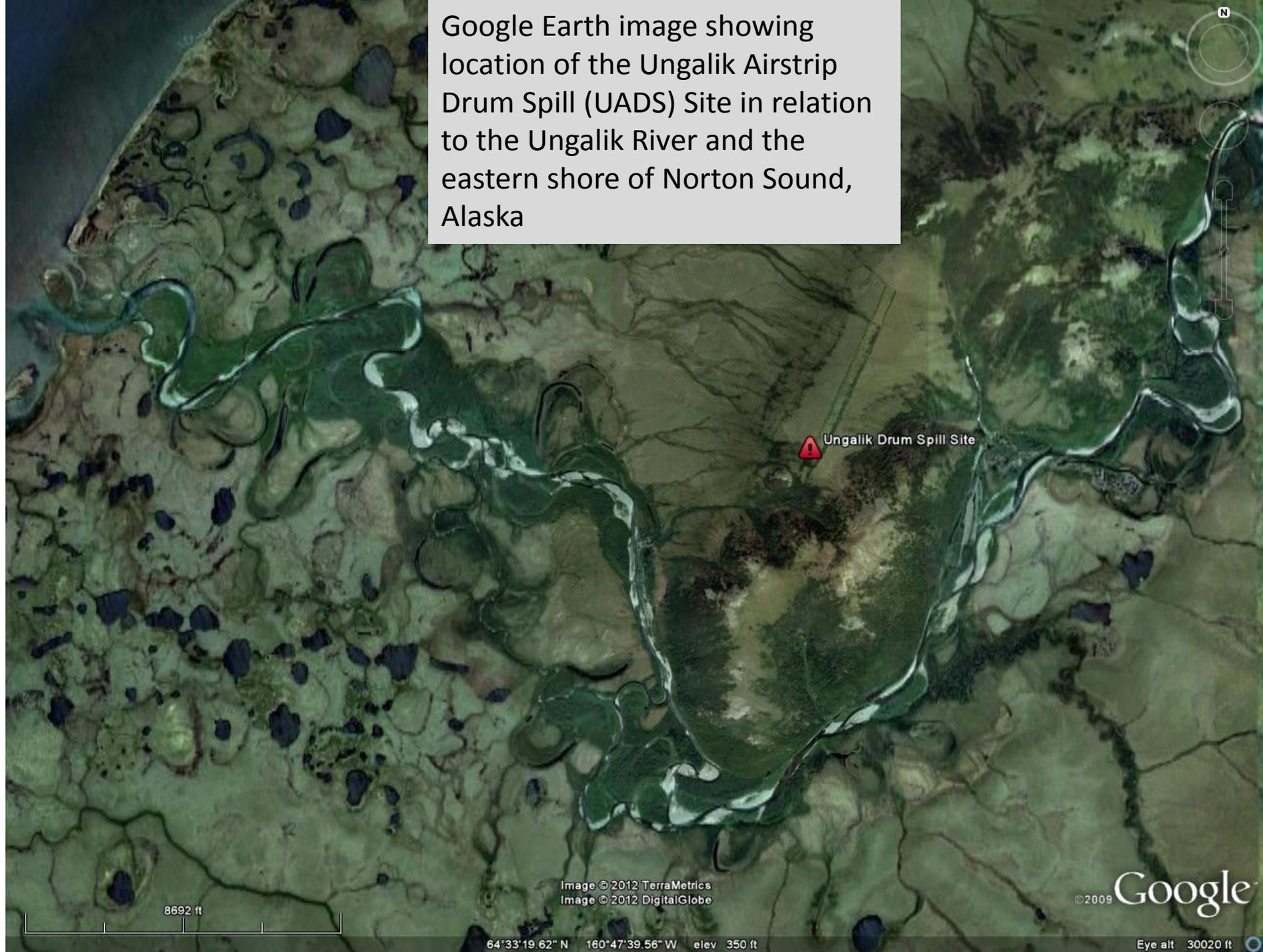
64°22'35.48" N 160°20'21.65" W elev 1089 ft

35.7 mi

©2009 Google

Eve alt 121.91 mi

Google Earth image showing location of the Ungalik Airstrip Drum Spill (UADS) Site in relation to the Ungalik River and the eastern shore of Norton Sound, Alaska



Ungalik Drum Spill Site

Image © 2012 TerraMetrics
Image © 2012 DigitalGlobe

©2009 Google

8692 ft

64°33'19.62" N 160°47'39.56" W elev 350 ft

Eye alt 30020 ft

Photograph of the Ungalik Airstrip
Drum Spill areas looking down
from a helicopter at altitude of
about 200 feet on August 4, 2008.
The spill areas are the bare
ground areas in photo center.

