



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



In reply refer to:  
FF096404  
2984.01 (AK012)

## PLAN CONFORMANCE/NEPA COMPLIANCE RECORD

DOI-BLM-LLAKF010-2012-23-CX

### Arctic Field Office, Bureau of Land Management

**Applicant:** Tim Robertson, General Manger  
Nuka Research & Planning Group, LLC.  
P.O. Box 175  
Seldovia, Alaska 99663

**Proposed Action:** Scientific Sampling (2984.01)

**Description of Proposed Action:** The applicant Tim Robertson, with Nuka Research & Planning Group, LLC (NUKA) has requested authorization for access and landing by a helicopter on lands within the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A). They propose to conduct scientific sampling along the coastline of the NPR-A. The Bureau of Ocean and Energy Management (BOEM) contracted NUKA to conduct a coastal habitat mapping project entitled the North Slope ShoreZone Project. Information about ShoreZone is available at [www.shorezone.org](http://www.shorezone.org).

The goals of the project are:

- Use existing videographic and photographic imagery to create a GIS coastal habitat dataset following the ShoreZone format; and
- Collect field data to verify mapping interpretation, to identify species and community assemblages associated with various mapped habitat types, and to collect intertidal sediment samples for hydrocarbon baseline analysis.

The objects of the project are:

1. Collate and classify existing coastal video imagery for the Chukchi and Beaufort Sea coastlines.
2. Modify the existing Gulf of Alaska ShoreZone mapping protocol to accommodate morphologies and biotic assemblages that occur on the Chukchi and Beaufort coastlines.
3. Interpret existing coastal imagery following the North Slope ShoreZone protocol to build a searchable biophysical GIS dataset to characterize coastal morphologies, substrates and ecology of the North Slope shoreline.
4. Conduct a ground station survey to verify mapping interpretations and to add detail (e.g., species assemblages of biobands) to mapping units.

5. Collect sediments samples that can be added to an existing state-wide baseline dataset on intertidal hydrocarbons.

6. Make the mapping datasets widely available via the existing NOAA ShoreZone website.

NUKA proposes to conduct ShoreZone sampling and photography by helicopter on the North Slope, accessing up to 60 sites scattered along the Chukchi and Beaufort coastline from Point Hope to the Canadian border. However, only 23 sites would be visited on BLM managed lands. They plan to collect information about sediment and vegetation, gather samples for hydrocarbon analysis, and measure the slope and height of the beach. The field science team would include a biologist, a geologist and the helicopter pilot. At each site visited they would collect site-specific information including:

- elevation measurements along a transect across the shoreline,
- photographs from the ground and from helicopter
- intertidal plant specimen collection for identification
- intertidal fauna specimen collection for identification
- sediment sample for hydrocarbon testing

Time at each site would be 30 to 90 minutes. The activity is proposed to take place from August 1 – 16. No field camps are proposed. No fuel is proposed for storage on BLM managed land. NUKA has a polar bear avoidance plan.

They state that they will make every effort to avoid disruptions to North Slope residents and wildlife. Helicopter flights would be planned to avoid disturbances. Flights would be flown to avoid areas where marine mammals haul out or where hunting activities are occurring. They set up a website to assist with external communication about the project: <http://www.nukaresearch.com/projects/boemsz/index.html>. They also sent letters to government and tribal entities notifying them of their project.

**Location (All Umiat Meridian)**

Township	Range	Section		Station ID	Longitude	Latitude
<b>18 North</b>	<b>27 West</b>	<b>29</b>		Op 45	- 159.016834	70.886278
15 North	28 West	8		Rn 29	- 159.177560	70.672608
17 North	25 West	27	23 Private Land	Rn 25	- 158.428321	70.796881
<b>23 North</b>	<b>18 West</b>	<b>32</b>		Op 38	- 156.750350	71.307442
22 North	14 West	29	Cooper Island	Op 52	- 155.682052	71.234991
20 North	13 West	14		Rn 32	- 155.218096	71.091808
17 North	14 West	16		Rn 6	- 155.564404	70.827668
17 North	14 West	17		Rn 17	- 155.595673	70.829312
17 North	10 West	24		Rn 12	-	70.818575

					154.404880	
17 North	9 West	28		Rn 3	- 154.241628	70.792692
18 North	4 West	19		Rn 7	- 153.037015	70.892304
18 North	8 West	26		Op 54	- 153.891747	70.881980
18 North	22 West	1		Rn 18	- 157.546127	70.937062
17 North	2 West	10		Op 57	- 152.357002	70.844176
14 North	1 East	9	Eskimo Island	Op 58	- 151.899387	70.576735
12 North	31 West	30		Rn 19	- 159.844974	70.363278
11 North	39 West	17		Rn 27	- 161.827405	70.308631
11 North	36 West	22		Rn 21	- 161.010830	70.299714
11 North	31 West	31	Excluding Private Land	Rn 28	- 159.849154	70.257194
10 North	38 West	9		Rn 34	- 161.531582	70.240487
10 North	38 West	10	Excluding Private Land	Rn 35	- 161.511579	70.240707
10 North	39 West	16		Rn 22	- 161.801741	70.220835
9 North	33 West	14		Op 53	- 143.668165	70.133967

### Part I: Plan Conformance Review

The proposed action is subject to the following planning document: Northeast National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska Supplemental Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (IAP/EIS) dated July 2008, and Northwest National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska IAP/EIS dated 1/22/2004. The proposed action is not inconsistent with the purposes of the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act of 1976. The applicant would be provided with stipulations entitled "FF096404 Nuka Research & Planning Group Summer 2012 Stipulations."

Date June 8, 2012

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

## Part II: NEPA Review

### Categorical Exclusion Review.

This proposed action meets the criteria for a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11.9, BLM H-1790-1 national Environmental Policy Act Handbook Appendix 3- 1.6. BLM Categorical Exclusions.

**“Nondestructive data collection, inventory (including field, aerial, and satellite surveying and mapping), study, research, and monitoring activities.”**

The proposed action has been reviewed to determine if any extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR 46.210 and 46.215, 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.		<b>X</b>
2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		<b>X</b>
2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		<b>X</b>
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.		<b>X</b>
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.		<b>X</b>
2.9 Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		<b>X</b>
2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or		<b>X</b>

minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		
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).		<b>X</b>
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).		<b>X</b>

Date June 8, 2012

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