



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



In reply refer to:
FF095710
2984.01 (AK012)

PLAN CONFORMANCE/NEPA COMPLIANCE RECORD

DOI-BLM-LLAKF010-2012-19-CX

Arctic Field Office, Bureau of Land Management

Applicant: Adrian V. Rocha
The Ecosystems Center
Marine Biological Laboratory
7 MBL Street
Woods Hole, Massachusetts 02543

Proposed Action: Anaktuvuk River Wildfire Research (2984.01)

Description of Proposed Action: The applicant The Ecosystems Center, Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL) has requested authorization for a permit to conduct research of historical wildfire areas on lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to collect data for scientific research and effects of wildfire on arctic tundra ecosystems.

The proposed action would authorize the MBL to conduct visits to two separate fire sites within the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A) and collect data and samples for comparison with ongoing research on the 2007 Anaktuvuk River wildfire. The fire sites are a result of the 1993 fire known as DCKN 190. As part of the collection of data they would install temporary weather stations which would be powered by solar and installed in June and removed in August. Data and samples to be collected include photographs and other images, descriptions of soils and vegetation within the burned areas, and soil and plant samples for chemical and analyses. Equipment would consist of 2 meteorological tripod towers that are <3m in height. They anticipate minimal disturbance to the land and to leave their presence undetectable. The National Science Foundation is supporting the work with grants.

They would make 3 visits to the sites which would take place in early June, late July, and late August of 2012. Access would be by helicopter from Barrow (~100 nautical miles away). They plan to camp at the sites for 1 to 2 days during the late July trip, but would only make short visits (1 -2 hours) to the sites during the June and August trips. Camping equipment would be light, and human waste and trash would be stored and disposed of in Barrow. The field party for each trip would include 3 scientists plus a helicopter pilot; a field mechanic would be in Barrow.

Fuel for the helicopter would be stored in Barrow. The work would require a maximum of 1 to 2 helicopter landings in each of the sites. This is a continuation of the research conducted under BLM permit in 2010.

Figure 1 and 2 show maps of the burn areas for this research, which is southwest of Atqasuk. Figure 3 shows the general area of research.

Location (All Umiat Meridian): Fire Burn Area DCKN190

Township	Range	Section
7 North	30 West	25-26, 35-36
7 North	29 West	1-5, 12-26
7 North	28 West	4-7, 18-20, 28-33
6 North	30 West	1-3, 9-16, 21-28, 35-36
6 North	29 West	1 – 36
6 North	28 West	4-9, 16-21, 28-33
5 North	30 West	1-3
5 North	29 West	1-17
5 North	28 West	4-9, 16-18

Location (All Umiat Meridian): Fire Burn Area DCKN190

Township	Range	Section
6 North	27 West	24-25
6 North	26 West	19-20, 22, 26-35
5 North	26 West	2-5, 8-11, 14-17, 20-29, 34-36
5 North	25 West	29-32

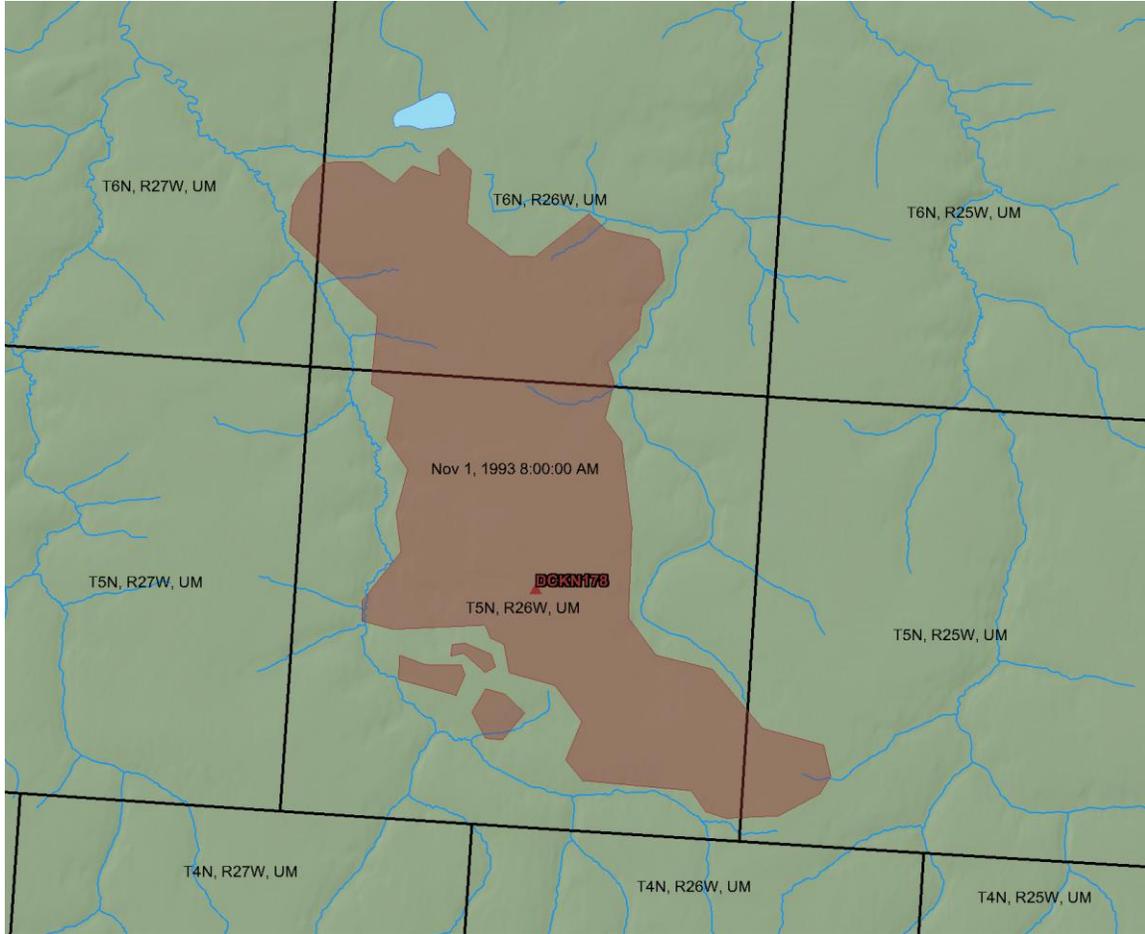


Figure 1. Map showing location of YY burn for proposed ecosystem research project.

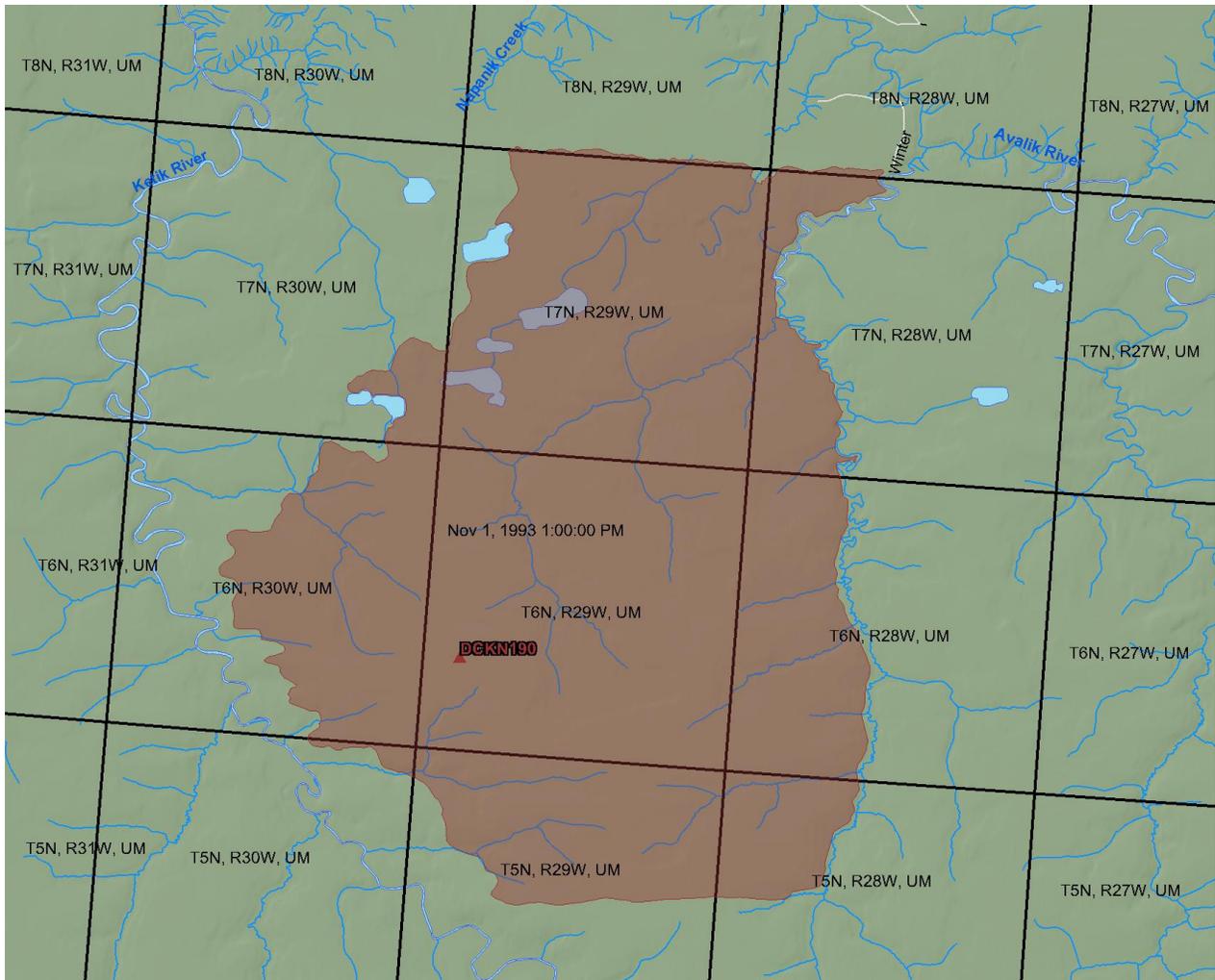


Figure 2. Map showing location of ZZ burn for proposed ecosystem research project.



Figure 3: General Area of Research

Part I: Plan Conformance Review

The proposed action is subject to the following planning documents The Utility Corridor Final Environmental Impact Statement approved 9/27/1989, Arctic Resource Management Plan (RMP) Management Situation Analysis evaluated 2/5/1990, Final Environmental Impact Statement on Oil and Gas Leasing in The National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska and Record of Decision approved 5/1983. The proposed action is not inconsistent with the purposes of the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act of 1976. The applicant will be provided with stipulations entitled “FF095710 Ecosystems Center Summer 2012 Stipulations.”

Date 5/25/2012

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.

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

Date 5/25/2012

 Donna L. Wixon
 Natural Resource Specialist, Arctic Field Office