



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:
FF095718
2984.01 (AK012)

PLAN CONFORMANCE / NEPA COMPLIANCE RECORD

DOI-BLM-LLAKF010-2012-0016-CX

Arctic Field Office, Bureau of Land Management

Applicant: John Pearce
USGS Alaska Science Center
4210 University Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

Proposed Action Title/Type: Avian Research in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A) (2984.01).

Description of Proposed Action: The applicant John Pearce, with the USGS Alaska Science Center has requested authorization for field activity access and landing by a floatplane and helicopter, on lands within the National Petroleum Reserve Alaska (NPR-A) in support of avian research.

From mid-May until September 1, 2012 the USGS Alaska Science Center will conduct research examining the potential effects of long term ecological change on avian and fish resources. The overall goal of the research is to assess the relationships between changes in physical processes (i.e., temperature and precipitation) and subsequent effects on animal populations including fish and birds.

Four camps were established last year under a Right of Way authorization (FF095789) in support of the research. The first camp research is near the Chipp River, about 18 km from the coast, to investigate aquatic invertebrates, least cisco, white-fronted geese, and loons for which a container van (Conex) and wooden weatherport floor will be left on site year-round for duration of study. Day use of areas within an 8 km radius of camp will occur from May 18 to September 1, 2012. Access to the camp will be by helicopter or floatplanes to get in and out of camp. At camp, transportation will primarily be foot travel, with some outboard motor use on a large lake by the camp.

The second research camp near the Chipp River, is about 48 km from the coast, to investigate aquatic invertebrates, least cisco, white-fronted geese, and loons for which a container van (Conex) and wooden weatherport floor will be left on site year-round for duration of study. Day use of areas within an 8 km radius of camp will occur from May 20 to September 1. Access to the camp would be by helicopter or floatplanes to get in and out of camp. At camp, transportation would primarily be foot travel, with some outboard motor use on a large lake by the camp.

Camp structures at each site of the above sites have a 8×20 ft Conex storage container, one temporary weatherport and up to eight small tents. No more than eight people would occupy the camps at any one time. The camps will be accessed by fixed-wing aircraft (skis or floats) and helicopter. Fuel storage at camps would consist of 300 gallons of diesel fuel and gasoline housed within secondary containment.

A third camp is at the Lonely (Distant Early Warning) DEW Line site to investigate the effects of climate change on goose forage plant nutrient composition along the Smith River. This camp will be in use from May 18 until August 20, 2012 and access will be by fixed wing aircraft and helicopter operating off the Lonely airstrip.

A fourth camp was established at East Long Lake to replicate the plant study on different species of forage plants along Garry Creek. This camp would be in use from July 15 until July 21, 2012, and access would be by boat. This camp was not utilized last year.

In addition to the above camps, white fronted geese will be captured to apply GPS transmitters and assess habitat selection and movements during and post molt. This activity would take place from July 5 until July 8, 2012. Access to these sites would be by helicopter, floatplane or boat.

The fuel for use at all but the Lonely camp site will be flown in under the Right of Way authorization this winter. Fuel for use at the Lonely camp site (500 gallons) would be flown in by fixed wing aircraft. Waste at all sites would be burned.

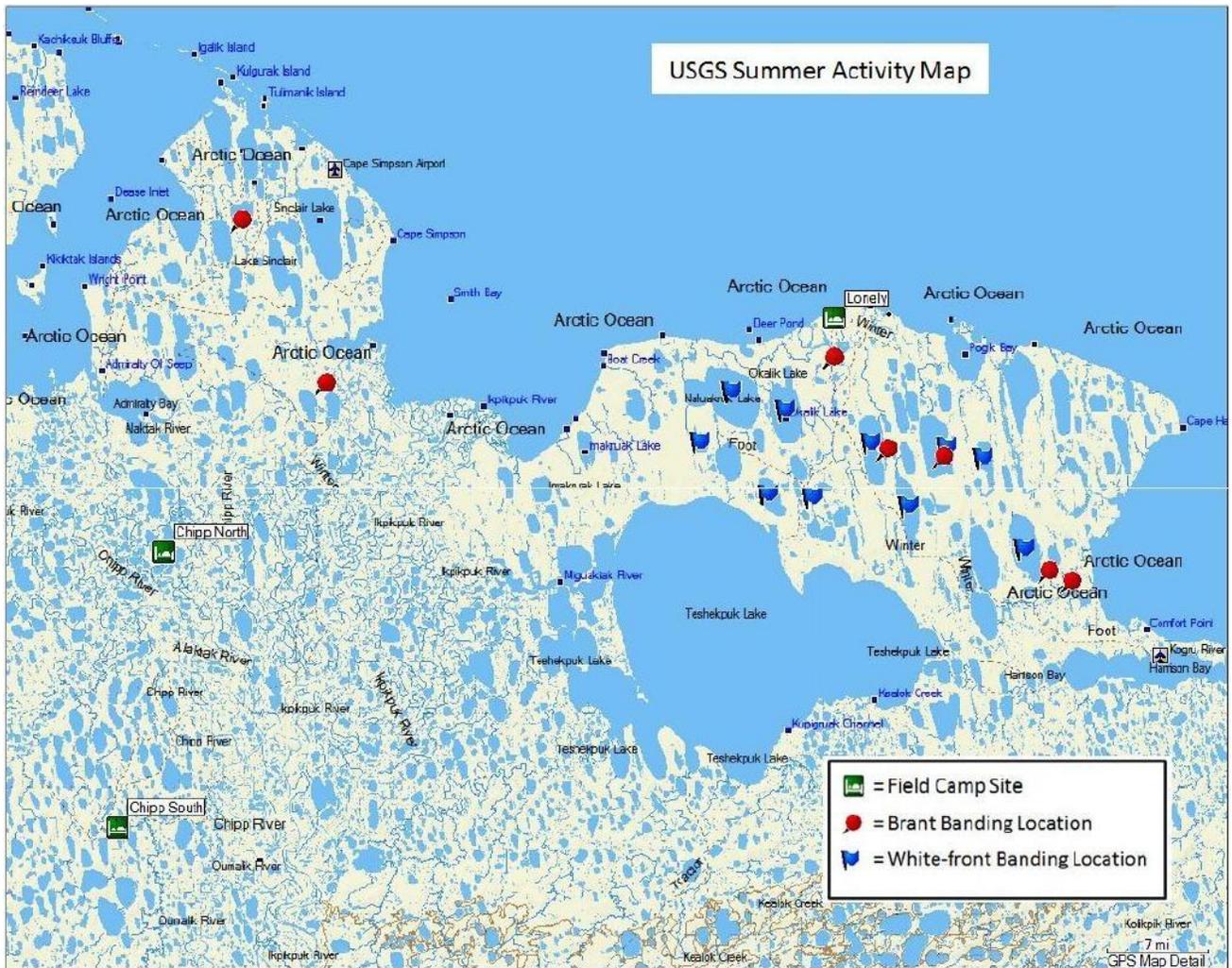


Figure 1 (Applicant Supplied Map)

Legal Description(All Umiat Meridian) :

Field Camp Locations

Township	Range	Section	Latitude	Longitude	Site as named by USGS
16 North	13 West	5	N70.685900	W155.304417	Chipp North
12 North	14 West	15	N70.395033	W155.408217	Chipp South
18 North	5 West	17	N70.909600	W153.242233	Lonely
15 North	3 West	2	N70.679000	W152.562417	Garry Creek

Research Locations

Township	Range	Section	Latitude	Longitude	Site as named by USGS
15 North	3 West	2	N 70.67900	W152.56242	East Long Lake
18 North	5 West	28	N.70.889666	W153.188140	Smith River
17 North	5 West	35	N70.782206	W153.128065	Island Lake
17 North	4 West	33	N70.779863	W152.929010	Un-named Lake
18 North	11 West	36	N70.864263	W154.660750	Piasik River
20 North	12 West	26	N71.054406	W154.975534	Cape Simpson

Lands to be used per site

Township	Range	Sections	
Chipp North			
15 North	13 West	1-11, 14-23,27-30	Excluding Private Lands
16 North	14 West	1-24,26-34	Excluding Private Lands
16 North	13 West	15-36	
15 North	14 West	1-3,10-15,23-25	Excluding Private Lands
Chipp South			
12 North	14 West	1-36	
13 North	14 West	25-36	
12 North	13 West	5-8, 17-20, 29-32	
13 North	13 West	29-32	
East Long Lake & Garry Creek			
15 North	3 West	1-24, 26-29, 34	Excluding Private Lands
15 North	2 West	5-8,17-20	
16 North	2 West	19-21,28-33	
16 North	3 West	20-23,25-29,32-36	
Lonely & Smith River			
18 North	5 West	15-22,27-30,32	
18 North	6 West	24,25	Excluding Private Lands
18 North	4 West	19-36	
Island Lake			
17 North	5 West	7-36	
17 North	4 West	7-9, 16-21, 28-33	
16 North	4 West	1, 4-9, 16-21	
16 North	5 West	1-24	
Un-named Lake			
17 North	4 West	7-36	

16 North	5 West	1-2,11-14, 23-24	
16 North	4 West	1-24	
16 North	3 West	6,7,18,19	
17 North	3 West	7,18,19,30,31	
17 North	5 West	11-14, 23-26, 35, 36	
18 North	7 West	24-36	
17 North	7 West	1-36	
17 North	6 West	1-36	Excluding Private Lands
16 North	7 West	1-36	
16 North	6 West	1-36	
Piasik River			
18 North	11 West	8-17, 20-29, 32-36	
17 North	11 West	2-5,9	
17 North	10 West	6,7	
18 North	10 West	7,18	
Cape Simpson			
20 North	12 West	1-36	
20 North	13 West	12-15, 22-27, 35-36	
20 North	11 West	7,18-20,30-31	Excluding Private Lands
19 North	13 West	1,12,13,24	
19 North	11 West	6,7, 17, 18, 20	
19 North	12 West	1-24	

Part I: Plan Conformance Review

The proposed action is subject to the following planning documents: Northwest National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (IAP/EIS) 2004 and Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Supplemental Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (IAP/EIS) 2008. 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 “FF095718 USGS Avian Research NPR-A Permit Stipulations Summer 2012.”

Date May 16, 2012

/s/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 2, Appendix 1

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

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

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.		
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		X

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).		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

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

Date May 16, 2012