



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Arctic Field Office
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In reply refer to:
FF095888
2984.01 (AK012)

PLAN CONFORMANCE / NEPA COMPLIANCE RECORD

DOI-BLM-LLAKF012-2011-0035-CX

Arctic Field Office, Bureau of Land Management

Applicant:

Alan D. Howard, Professor
Department of Environmental Sciences
University of Virginia
205 Clark Hall – 291 McCormick Road
P.O. Box 400123 – Charlottesville, VA 22904-412

Proposed Action Title/Type: Study of Meandering Rivers near Barrow

Description of Proposed Action: The applicant, Professor Adam. D Howard of the University of Virginia, has requested authorization for field activity and access to study meandering rivers approximately 46-56 miles southeast of Barrow Alaska during August 2011 (Maps 1 and 2). The purpose of the research is to evaluate the role of ice in the development of river banks.

For the work to be conducted this summer a team of two or three researchers would access the meandering Topagoruk River (approximately 70° 40'N and 155° 38' W) (further south now) with a helicopter. This would be a one-day investigation that would involve a short overflight, and one to three hours of ground time at one or two sites along the river. While on the ground researchers would collect small samples of soil with an auger, measure the depth to permafrost, and use two small probes less than an inch in diameter (a shear vane and a penetrometer) to characterize the strength of the soil.

Researchers would be in the field for one day on or about August 4 using a Robinson R44 helicopter, flown from Barrow.

Map 1. Area inside of red box shows approximate location of river survey.



Map 2 Closer view of Topagoruk River and Chipp River, where proposed sampling would occur.

Possible Research Locations on BLM Lands*

Township	Range	Section	Description
15 North	15 West	4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 17, 18, 19, 20, 30	Topagoruk River
16 North	15 West	7, 8, 9, 16, 21, 28, 29, 32	Topagoruk River
14 North	15 West	6, 7, 18, 19, 30, 29, 31, 32	Topagoruk River
14 North	14 West	12, 24	Topagoruk River
13 North	15 West	5, 6, 8, 17, 20, 21, 28, 29, 32	Topagoruk River
16 North	14 West	2, 11, 12, 13,14, 22, 23, 26, 27, 34	Chipp River
15 North	14 West	2, 3, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 23, 25, 26	Chipp River
15 North	13 West	27, 28, 29, 30, 34	Chipp River
14 North	13 West	30, 29, 28, 27, 34	Chipp River

*All areas Umiat Meridian

Part I: Plan Conformance Review

The proposed action is subject to the following planning document: Northwest National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (IAP/EIS) 2004. 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 “FFXXXXX University of Virginia Research Permit Stipulations 2011.”

Date: August 1, 2011

/s/Roger W. Sayre
Planning and Environmental Coordinator, 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 11.9, D.10,

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 has been reviewed to determine if any of the exceptions described in 43 CFR 46.210 and 46.215, apply.

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.		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: August 1, 2011

/s/Roger W. Sayre
Planning and Environmental Coordinator, Arctic Field Office