

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:
FF095370
2984.01 (AK012)

PLAN CONFORMANCE / NEPA COMPLIANCE RECORD

DOI-BLM-LLAKF012-2011-0028-CX

Arctic Field Office, Bureau of Land Management

Applicant: Ben Jones
USGS Alaska Science Center
4210 University Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

Proposed Action: Non-intrusive Hydrologic Research in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A) (2984.01).

Description of Proposed Action: The applicant Ben Jones, with the USGS Alaska Science Center, has requested authorization for access and landing by a floatplane and access to lands and waterways within the National Petroleum Reserve Alaska (NPR-A) in support of hydrologic research. They propose to sample water quality, take hydrologic measurements, and map lake bathymetry in addition to making site visits. This year they also propose to capture lake trout. Mr. Jones has requested a permit from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for this activity. The applicant has had NPR-A permits for similar work in 2008, 2009 and 2010.

The proposed action would authorize the USGS to access NPR-A via float plane; establish a camp on Northwest (NW) Teshekpuk Lake; conduct site visits and research from July 10 to 22, 2011 (see Table 1; Figure 1).

Table 1. Activity Schedule for Ben Jones and Colleagues During July 2011

| |
|---|
| 10 July: Fly in from Deadhorse with floatplane to camp on NW Teshekpuk Lake |
| 11 July: Shuttle gear from Prudhoe to camp |
| 12 July: Work on central portion of Ikpikpuk River Delta |
| 13 July: Visit 1993 burn area south of Atq and southeast of Wainwright |
| 14 July: Fly to Prudhoe Bay, pick up three people |
| 15 July: Fly to Schmutz camp near Ikp to pick up Chris Z. |
| 16-20 July: Capture lake trout on Teshekpuk Lake for otolith analysis |
| 21 July: Return Chris Z. and others to Prudhoe |
| 22 July: Visit rapid coastal erosion sites near Drew Point and Cape Halkett |
| 23 July: Visit Inigok and Umiat |

24 July: Leave for Fairbanks



Figure 1. Location of Ben Jones Base Camp

Legal Description (All Umiat Meridian):

| Benjamin Jones- Summer work in NPR-A | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------|----------------------|--|
| Township | Range | Section | |
| 18 North | 7 West | 20-36 | |
| 17 North | 2 West | 3-10,14-23,26- 35,36 | Sec 36 contains private lands (Cape Halkett) |
| 17 North | 10 West | 6-8,13-36 | |
| 16 North | 7 West | 1-24 | |
| 16 North | 8 West | 1-36 | |
| 15 North | 8 West | 2-9,15-22,27-35 | |
| 10 North | 9 West | 1-36 | |
| 9 North | 9 West | 1-36 | |
| 8 North | 5 West | 1-36 | Inigok |
| 7 North | 29 West | 1-36 | |
| 1 South | 1 West | 1-10, 15-19 | Excluding Private Land (Umiat) |
| 1 South | 2 West | 1-24, 26-33 | Excluding Private Land |

The site visits would be accessed by float plane and field work would be conducted by two to six people on foot. Researchers plan to use a small inflatable boat on Teshekpuk Lake. They would camp near the Old NARL cabin on NW Teshekpuk Lake. The only fuel would be the small green propane containers used for cooking. Similar activities by the applicant were analyzed in DOI-BLM-LLAKF01200-2009-0025-CX, DOI-BLM-AKF012-2009-0041-CX, and DOI-BLM-AKF012-2009-0031-CX .

Part I: Plan Conformance Review

The proposed action is subject to the following planning document: Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Supplemental Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (IAP/EIS) dated July 2008, and Northwest National Petroleum Reserve-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 will be provided with stipulations entitled “FF095370 USGS Jones Summer 2011 Stipulations.”

Date June 27, 2011

/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 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 June 27, 2011

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