

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
REMEDIAL ACTION/CLEANUP AND
BUILDING DEMOLITION/DEBRIS REMOVAL
POINT BARROW LONG RANGE RADAR SITE, ALASKA**

The attached environmental assessment (EA) discloses and analyzes the environmental consequences to the natural and social environment as a result of the proposed demolition and disposal of excess buildings, structures, and surface debris, and disposal of environmental contamination on the Point Barrow Long Range Radar Site (LRRS), Alaska. The EA was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 U.S. Code [U.S.C.] 4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA, 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 1500-1580, the Bureau of Land Management NEPA Handbook H-1790-1, and Air Force policy and procedures (32 CFR Part 989).

This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) summarizes the Proposed Action and No Action Alternative and the results of the evaluation of the remedial-action cleanup and building demolition/debris removal. This FONSI statement documents the reasons why implementation of the selected alternative would not result in significant environmental impacts (effects) beyond those already addressed in Northwest National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A), Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (IAP/EIS).

Description of Proposed Action and No Action Alternative

The United States Air Force (USAF) proposes to conduct removal actions on properties used by the USAF at the Point Barrow LRRS whose land interest is through a right-of-way (ROW) from the Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), who plays an active role in land management.

The alternatives considered were the proposed action and a no action alternative. The purpose of the proposed action is for building demolition, debris removal, and remedial action-cleanup of contaminants at Point Barrow LRRS. The need for the action is to remove wastes and materials in accordance with the BLM ROW grant stipulations and required operating procedures (ROPs) and to protect human health and the environment from exposure to contaminants. This project has several aspects including removal and off-site disposal of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and xylene contaminated soils, and demolition and disposal of tanks, antenna structures, buildings, miscellaneous debris, and utility lines and poles.

Under the no action alternative, contaminated soil would remain on site—negatively impacting human health and the environment, further creating navigational hazards and environmental liabilities. Ongoing responses/repairs would likely be needed in order to maintain compliance with state and federal regulations, resulting in increased costs to the USAF. Risks to human health and the environment would remain because exposure routes to contaminants would still exist, resulting in damaging effects to subsistence resources. Unnecessary buildings and related structures would not be demolished and disposed, surface debris would remain, and terms of BLM ROW grant stipulations would not be met.

Summary of Environmental Consequences

The proposed action is based upon and tiered to the BLM Record of Decision, Northwest NPR-A, IAP/EIS, January 22, 2004 and the Biological Opinion for BLM for the Northern Planning Areas of the NPR-A, dated July 2008. Resources or issues either not present or not affected to a degree requiring further analysis because either the expected impacts from the proposed action and alternative would be minimal, or standard protections (e.g., ROPs and stipulations from overriding BLM plans or other legal protections) would reduce impacts include air quality, water resources, floodplains/wetlands and riparian zones, native American religious concerns, recreation, public health, sociocultural systems, vegetation, visual resource management, wild and scenic rivers, wilderness, fish, and non-threatened or non-endangered birds or mammals.

The resources or issues potentially affected by the proposed action or no action alternative that were analyzed in more detail are cultural resources, subsistence, environmental justice, wastes (hazardous/solid) and threatened and endangered species (eiders and polar bears).

Cultural Resources

The USAF proposes to remove original material from historic properties determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Properties which constitutes an adverse effect. However, a 2005 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the USAF and the Alaska State Historic Preservation Officer mitigates the adverse effects of environmental restoration and demolition activities on Distant Early Warning System (DEW) facilities, including Point Barrow LRRS. The MOU satisfies the requirements of taking into account the effects of the Clean Sweep Environmental Restoration of former DEW sites on historic properties and compliance with Section 106 of the Nation Historic Preservation Act.

Subsistence

The Proposed Action Alternative over the long term will result in a positive effect to subsistence resources by reducing or eliminating exposure to contamination. Although the work will occur during active fishing, hunting, and trapping seasons, the work should not have a significant effect on these activities because there are hunting, trapping, or fishing harvest periods which extend outside of the fieldwork season for every species listed.

Environmental Justice

Short term, temporary effects to the local population would include temporary noise to users of the site (however, not be audible to the village), temporary air quality impacts in the vicinity of the site, and temporary visual effects. These impacts would not be disproportionate to minority, low income or tribal populations. The removal of contamination and debris and potential increase in local employment during implementation would benefit all populations.

Wastes (Hazardous/Solid)

Potential impacts to human health and the environment from hazardous and solid waste removal and transport activities would be minimized or eliminated through adherence to all applicable State of Alaska, Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) regulations and best management practices implemented by the USAF through contract stipulations. All waste materials would be collected and disposed in the Barrow landfill. Hazardous material containers will meet federal, state, and international shipping regulations. Only non-hazardous construction debris and ADEC approved hazardous materials will be disposed in the Barrow landfill.

Hazardous waste materials would be stored in appropriate and clearly marked containers and segregated from other non-hazardous waste materials. Secondary containment would be provided for all waste materials in the onsite materials storage area. Additionally, all hazardous waste materials will be transported to a regulated treatment, storage, and disposal facility out of state.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The spectacled and Steller's eider and the polar bear, listed threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, occur in the Point Barrow LRRS area. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined that the proposed activities are not likely to affect listed eiders or polar bears. The removal of overhead transmission lines and utility poles would be beneficial to eiders by reducing collision risks to birds flying in or through the area, including breeding, postbreeding, and migrating eiders. Polar bears could be subject to disturbance from removal activities however they are not known to regularly use the habitat immediately surrounding the project area and risks associated with polar bear encounters would be managed by following human-polar bear interaction plans and safety training.

Cumulative Impacts

The proposed action is not anticipated to result in increased, incremental cumulative effects to the identified issues in this EA due to the remoteness of the portion of the area where the activity would occur and the low impact levels associated with the activity. The sites have been previously disturbed by human activity and the proposed action would result in decreased long-term impacts to subsistence, environmental justice, wastes (hazardous/solid), polar bears, and eiders.

Best Management Practices

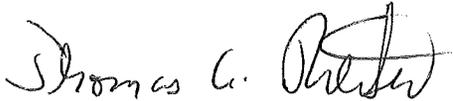
The EA determined that mitigation would not be required to avoid or compensate for significant impacts. However, the USAF has identified Best Management Practices (BMPs) to minimize the level of adverse effects to wildlife, and to reduce health and safety risks (see Appendix E of the EA). Additionally, the USAF follows standard construction BMPs to help minimize movement of materials and minimize the risks of spills and associated impacts.

Decision

The proposed action was selected by the USAF because it meets the purpose and need for the project and would remove wastes and materials and protect human health and the environment from exposure to contaminants resulting in minor impacts to natural and social environment. As a result of the analysis of impacts in the EA, it was concluded that the proposed activities would not have a significant effect on human health or the natural environment; therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

Name

Date



25 Feb 11

FOIR

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Public Comment

Public notification of this EA was posted on the BLM Arctic Field Office NEPA Register (www.blm.gov/ak/st/en/info/nepa/fdo_nepa_register/arctic_nepa_reg.html) on January 11, 2011. A summary of the USAF's public participation activities is provided in Section 1.6 of the EA.