



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
ARCTIC FIELD OFFICE  
1150 University Avenue  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709-3899

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**EA#:** LLAKF010000-2009-0013

**Type of Action:** 2884.01, NPR-A right-of-way

**Serial Number:** F-81467 & F-81468

**Applicant:** United States Air Force  
611<sup>th</sup> CES/CC  
10471 20<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 302  
Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska 99506-2200

### **Lands Involved**

**Lonely** - Within Sections 8-9, 16-17 & 20-21 of Township 18 North, Range 5 West, 1801.045 acres.

**Wainwright** – Within Section 3-4 of Township 14 North, Range 31 West; Sections 17-18, 20-21, 26-28, & 33-35 of Township 15 North, Range 31 West; Section 13, Township 15 North, Range 32 West, totaling 1518.50 acres.

Both sites are within the Umiat Meridian

This Environmental Assessment is tiered to the following environmental documents which is available for review in the Fairbanks District Office, Bureau of Land Management, 1150 University Avenue, Fairbanks, Alaska, 99709, (907) 474-2200.

**Record of Decision, Northeast National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska, Supplemental Integrated Activity Plan, July 2008**

**Record of Decision, Northwest National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska, Integrated Activity Plan, January 2004**

**Date Prepared:** April, 2009

**Prepared By:** Bureau of Land Management, Fairbanks District Office  
Arctic Field Office 1150 University Avenue  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709  
(907) 474-2200

## I. INTRODUCTION

### (A) Purpose and Need

Distant Early Warning (DEW)-Line sites were established in the mid 1950s to provide radar and satellite monitoring for the U.S. military. Among the 14 sites in Alaska are facilities at Wainwright (1,519 acres) and Lonely (1,801 acres). Both were established as auxiliary stations, which included buildings and a 3,000 foot air strip at each. The DEW-Line program was discontinued in 1963 but the facilities were converted to Northern Warning System (NWS), which was established in 1985. The process of abandonment, conversion, and automation has left the stations with unused facilities

Wainwright has been managed as an automated Short Range Radar (SRR), which was established in the NWS in 1994. Facilities include an automated SRR site including support buildings, an airstrip, and pad. A Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) was conducted and identified six Installation Remedial Program sites at the Wainwright DEW-Line Station. The RI/FS determined the source and size of each of the Installation Remedial Program sites (BLM 2008).

The DEW-Line site at Lonely was closed in 1989 and an SRR site was activated there in 1993. The Point Lonely facility is has been used as an Unattended Radar site, which includes a radar structure, support building, fuel tanks, and a helicopter landing area. The inactive facilities include a gravel airstrip, one 25-module train, a hangar, a warehouse, a garage, a fuel storage tank, and four communications antennas (Denfeld 1994; BLM 2008).

Clean-up and restoration of the stations at Wainwright and Lonely occurred in the late 1990s and continues today. The sites have been reported to have contaminated soils or expected contamination consisting of petroleum, lubricants, PCBs, and insecticides, along with considerable volumes of debris and general refuse.

The U.S. Air Force (USAF) has been the agency responsible for managing these facilities, and they have indicated that the sites are in need of environmental clean-up and abandonment by the USAF. The current rights-of-way (ROW) for these sites were established in 1986 to manage for continued radar and defense monitoring. These activities have been downsized or abandoned, and the use of the lands in recent years not been as intended in the ROW documents.

The ROW for each site had 20-year terms, and scheduled to expire in 2006; however, the USAF made a timely application for renewal. The special stipulations attached to the grants stated that, “[u]pon termination of the grant, structures and buildings shall be removed and the land rehabilitated to the satisfaction of the Arctic Area Manager”, and “[a]ll trash and debris associated with operations under this grant must be removed to an approved solid waste disposal site.”

Plans for the removal of debris and for environmental clean-up have not been prepared. Nevertheless, renewed ROWs are needed to ensure that land maintenance continues until such clean-up plans are developed, reviewed, and implemented.

Rights-of-way are needed to allow time to maintain the sites and to prepare for clean-up. Failure to maintain and clean these sites would result in continued neglect and degradation of the facilities which would eventually cause environmental harm because chemicals and refuse from storage and waste sites

could migrate into the soils and water and into the surrounding ecosystem. The objectives of the proposed action are to provide renewed ROW for the USAF with new terms and conditions appropriate for maintenance, use a smaller footprint, recognize that the use of these sites to support SSR operations has ended, and to make preparations for the abandonment and restoration phase.

**(B) Issues and Decision to be Made**

Staff members within the Arctic Field Office, Fairbanks District, have raised issues and concerns after reviewing the proposal. Direct or indirect impacts to NPR-A resources or environmental elements due to providing new ROW at the former DEW-Line sites at Wainwright and Lonely are unlikely to result in adverse direct or indirect impacts to any resources or environmental elements of concern. If clean-up operations were to occur in the future (as expected) there could be short-term adverse effects or risks to fisheries, threatened and endangered wildlife, wetlands, and water resources. However, the environmental benefits of clean-up would outweigh the risks. If no action were taken, long-term adverse impacts to water resources, fisheries, wildlife, and hazardous materials-waste would increase over time.

There has been no public comment on this proposal thus far.

This EA will provide the information necessary to evaluate the impacts associated with the proposed action and no action alternatives, and to consider any additional alternatives. The decision-maker will take into account technical, economic, environmental, and social issues and the purpose and need of the proposed project. The BLM NEPA analysis will evaluate whether the proposed project should be approved, rejected, or modified, and if additional mitigation is needed.

**(C) Required Permits, Licenses, etc.**

A Right of Way Grant will be issued to the USAF

**(D) Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, Policies, Plans or other Environmental Analyses**

The area within which the proposed action would take place is covered by the following planning and environmental documents:

**Record of Decision, Northeast National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska, Supplemental Integrated Activity Plan, July 2008**

**Record of Decision, Northwest National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska, Integrated Activity Plan, January 2004**

The action, as proposed, is consistent with the objectives outlined in these documents and not in conflict with other resources in the area. The proposed use is in conformance with current policy of the Arctic Field Office, BLM.

**(E) Lands Status and Adjacent Land Uses**

The proposed actions are located on lands and waters that are in the National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska. Lands and waters in the NPR-A were originally set aside as the Naval Petroleum Reserve #4 by Wainwright and Lonely DEW-Line ROW EA & FONSI

Executive Order 3797 – A, dated February 27, 1923. Jurisdiction of the land was transferred to the Department of Interior from the Department of the Navy by the Naval Petroleum Reserve Production Act of April 5, 1976 (PL. 94-258, Stat. 303)(NPRPA). United States jurisdiction over coastal tidally influenced waters, and associated submerged lands, was affirmed in *United States v. Alaska*, (Dinkum Sands case) 117 S.Ct 1888(1997).

Ocean waters adjacent to the Lonely DEW-Line station and outside of the Wainwright Inlet are under the jurisdiction of the State of Alaska, Department of Natural Resources.

## II. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

### (A) Introduction

This section describes the Proposed Action in sufficient detail to analyze their impacts. The descriptions include all design features and discrete actions which have the potential to affect the environment, including those intended to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts. Under the “*no-action*” alternative, no ROW permit would be provided to the USAF, and the agency would be out of compliance. The potential for contamination would remain on site and the remaining structures and storage would degrade and corrode. The no-action alternative meets none of the clean-up criteria for the former DEW-Line sites; however, its evaluation is required by NEPA

Under the “*clean-up of all materials*” alternative the danger of contamination and health issues for human and wildlife at the former DEW-Line sites are eliminated. All remaining infrastructure and storage materials would be removed to a proper disposal site. And any debris discovered during this operation would be disposed of at appropriate landfills. Ultimately this will be the preferred alternative for remedial action at these sites. However, as of April 2009, there are no work plans available for review that would describe the clean-up operations in sufficient detail to provide the appropriate permits or a reasonable analysis of the potential environmental impacts. Therefore, this alternative will not be analyzed in this EA.

The “*provide a ROW permit*” is the interim preferred alternative. This would allow the USAF to stay in compliance with BLM ROW regulations and provide time for the agency to prepare a work plan that would describe future activities.

Applicable Arctic Field Office policy or program requirements and standard procedures are described as Standard Stipulations. These are not discretionary, and apply equally to the Proposed Action and any alternative to BLM as they would to any other land user. All activities shall conform to these and any Project Specific Stipulations attached to the Decision Record. In addition, all activities shall conform to the regulations contained within 43 Code of Federal Regulations 2800, and all written orders of the Authorized Officer.

### (B) Proposed Action and Access

#### Proposed Action

A single environmental assessment (EA) will be used to assess the impacts of rights-of-way for clean-up operations at the former DEW-Line stations at Lonely and Wainwright. The sites no longer have a military purpose and future military use is not anticipated. The USAF has expressed a need to clean-up Wainwright and Lonely DEW-Line ROW EA & FONSI

the sites and relinquish all interest in both.

On 3/31/2005, the USAF requested a renewal of their rights-of-way at Lonely, Wainwright and Barrow. The BLM will assess Lonely and Wainwright in this EA because the USAF wishes to relinquish both sites. Meanwhile, Barrow will continue to conduct some military missions on a land footprint that has not been determined. Due to the differences in the nature of the proposed actions the Barrow project will be analyzed in a separate NEPA document.

The original intent of the Reservation, granted in 1986, was “The right-of-way herein granted and reserved is for the full use of the above described property as a DEW Line Station by the Department of the Air Force.” However, these sites have not been used for the original intent for several years. The objectives of the proposed action are to provide a renewed ROW for the USAF with new terms and conditions appropriate to maintain the sites and prepare for clean-up operations; to utilize a smaller footprint; to recognize that the use of these sites to support SSR operations has ended; and to ensure that the management of sites proceeds to the abandonment and restoration phase.

With no future military purpose at Wainwright and Lonely, BLM will grant new ROW authorizations to conclude the military operations at the two sites and satisfy the terms/conditions and stipulations of those original reservations. Of significance is Stipulation #7, Exhibit B, which states that, “Upon termination of the grant, all structures and buildings shall be removed and the land rehabilitated to the satisfaction of the Arctic Area (Field) Manager.” This removal includes all of the facilities which constitute a DEW Line station (e.g. hangars, warehouses, living areas, tank farms, shops, landfills, etc.). Clean gravel pads and airstrips may remain.

The ROW would allow for the continued management of the ROW by the USAF at Wainwright and Lonely to provide time for the USAF to develop plans for future clean-up activities. The ROW permits and this EA do not involve ongoing CERCLA activities at these sites, nor do these permit future clean-up. The CERCLA actions have been reviewed under separate permits and documentation. There has not been any permitting or NEPA review of expected clean-up activities and before any clean-up occurs, the appropriate analysis and documentation must be completed.

Meanwhile, plans for future clean-up activities have not been presented by the USAF. In addition, this ROW is not indefinite. The BLM expects plans, permit review, future NEPA documentation, and possibly clean-up activities to occur within the five year renewal period.

Another important stipulation is #10 which states that, “Failure of the holder of the right-of-way grant to use the right-of-way for the purpose for which the authorization was issued for any continuous five-year period shall constitute a presumption of abandonment”. Issuance of a ROW to the USAF at this time would provide them with access to manage the lands and prepare for the necessary removals and rehabilitation as set forth in Stipulation #7.

### **III. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

#### **(A) Introduction**

This section provides the evaluation of direct, indirect and cumulative environmental impacts of the Proposed Action. Impacts may be to society, the economy, or the biological or physical environment.

Any issues or concerns raised by Bureau staff are discussed below. If these resulted in any measures to mitigate the environmental impacts, those measures are also discussed in this section. Finally, any residual impacts to the environment, despite applications of mitigation measures, are identified here.

The affected environment for the area of the proposed action is discussed in the following documents:

**Northeast National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska, Supplemental Integrated Activity Plan, 2008**

**Northwest National Petroleum Reserve – Alaska, Integrated Activity Plan, 2003**

This document also address impacts resulting from actions similar to the proposed action

**(B)** The following elements of the human environment are subject to requirements specified in statute, regulations or Executive Orders. These environmental elements have been analyzed for the proposed action:

Environmental Elements	Direct & Indirect Issues	Cumulative Issues
1. ACEC's	NO	NO
2. Air Quality	NO	NO
3. Cultural & Historic	NO	NO
4. Farmland, Prime or Unique	NO	NO
5. Fisheries Habitat	NO	YES
6. Flood Plains	NO	NO
7. Nat. Amer. Relig. Concerns	NO	NO
8. Paleontological	NO	NO
9. Threatened / Endangered	NO	YES
10. Visual Resources	NO	NO
11. Waste, Hazardous / Solid	NO	YES
12. Water Quality	NO	YES
13. Wetlands / Riparian Zones	NO	NO
14. Wild & Scenic Rivers	NO	NO
15. Wilderness Values	NO	NO
16. Wildlife Resources	NO	NO
17. Environmental Justice	NO	NO

**Fisheries Habitat**

*Essential Fish Habitat Assessment*

Proposed Action: The purpose of the proposed action is to permit the USAF to renew their ROW to the Wainwright and Lonely DEW-Line sites.

Essential Fish Habitat

On October 11, 1996, the Sustainable Fisheries Act (Public Law 104-297) became law which,

among other things, amended the habitat provisions of the Magnuson Act. The re-named Magnuson-Stevens Act calls for direct action to stop or reverse the continued loss of fish habitats. Toward this end, Congress mandated the identification of habitats essential to managed species and measures to conserve and enhance this habitat. The Act requires federal agencies to consult with the Secretary of Commerce regarding any activity, or proposed activity, authorized, funded, or undertaken by the agency that may adversely affect essential fish habitat (EFH).

For the purpose of this environmental assessment, EFH means those waters and substrate necessary for salmon spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity (Magnuson-Stevens Act, 16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq). The National Marine Fisheries Service recognizes salmon waters cataloged under AS 16.05.870 (Waters Important for the Spawning, Rearing or Migration of Anadromous Fishes) as EFH. The most current information on the distribution of anadromous fish, as approved by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, is available on the worldwide web (ADFG 2009; Johnson et al. 2004). There are no listed anadromous waters for salmon that are crossed or impinged upon by the proposed action.

Potential Effects: Routine travel along this long-standing ROW corridor will have no impacts to surface waters.

EFH Finding: The proposed action is not expected to impact salmon or their habitat and is assigned the EFH determination: *not likely to adversely affect*. No further EFH consultation is required.

#### *Affected Environment*

Details on fish species, distribution, and life histories can be found in the Northeast NPR-A Supplemental IAP/EIS (USDOI 2008) and Northwest NPR-A IAP/EIS (USDOI BLM and MMS 2004).

#### *Environmental Consequences*

Proposed Action - Routine travel and land management along this long-standing ROW corridor will have no impacts to surface waters.

No-Action – In the short term there would be no difference between the proposed action and no action alternatives, and there would be no impacts to surface waters.

### **Threatened / Endangered Species**

#### *Affected Environment*

The polar bear, listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in May 2008, could be present at or near the former DEW-Line sites at Wainwright and Lonely. Polar bears may be found all year along the Beaufort Sea coast or on off-shore ice. The ESA listed threatened spectacled and Steller's eiders may be migratory summer visitors to these areas. The eiders begin moving into the arctic coastal plain in late May to early June, and depart in late August.

#### *Environmental Consequences*

Proposed Action – Impacts to polar bears from human activities was described in the 2008 Northeast Wainwright and Lonely DEW-Line ROW EA & FONSI

NPR-A Supplemental IAP/EIS. Issuance of the ROW permit for continued management of the former DEW-Line sites would not increase impacts to polar bears. Likewise, there would be no direct or indirect impacts to the two threatened eider species.

No Action - Issuance of the ROW permit for continued management of the former DEW-Line sites would not increase impacts to polar bears. Likewise, there would be no direct impacts to the two threatened eider species.

#### *Mitigation and Monitoring*

No specific mitigation for endangered or threatened species have been identified, although the protections described for these concerns have been outlined in detail in the Northeast NPR-A Supplemental IAP/EIS (USDOI BLM 2008) and the Northwest NPR-A IAP/EIS (USDOI BLM and MMS 2003).

### **Flood Plains, Water Quality and Wetlands / Riparian Zones**

#### *Affected Environment*

The arctic coastal plain is covered with a network of small ponds, lakes, lagoons, and meandering streams. The arctic plain in general is underlain with continuous permafrost, which limits or prevents the drainage of surface water into the soil. Shallow channels carry snowmelt during the spring melt, but may be dry the rest of the year. Perched groundwater above permafrost is found during the summer months when the surface layer thaws. This zone above permafrost is called the active zone, as it freezes and thaws with seasonal temperature changes. Permafrost acts as a barrier to vertical movement of groundwater. Surface features impact the subsurface distribution of permafrost as they influence heat transfer. Permafrost may be present at greater depths near large waterbodies, such as rivers and deep lakes. Permafrost is absent under the ocean, except along the coastline and shallow shelf areas. The coastline is a transition zone at which the depth of permafrost gradually deepens and eventually becomes absent.

#### *Environmental Consequences*

Proposed Action – The proposed action would not result in direct or indirect impacts to wetlands, floodplains, or water quality.

No Action – The no action alternative would not result in direct or indirect impacts to wetlands, floodplains, or water quality.

#### *Mitigation and Monitoring*

No specific mitigation to protect wetlands have been identified, although the protections described for other environmental concerns (fisheries habitat, and hazardous waste) would also protect wetlands.

### **Waste, Hazardous / Solid**

#### *Affected Environment*

Documentation exists that indicates fuel, hazardous wastes spills, or contamination, have been identified within the former DEW-Line ROWs at Wainwright and Lonely (USDOI BLM 2008).

#### *Environmental Consequences*

Proposed Action – The proposed action would not likely have any direct impacts on the management of spills or contamination. A possible beneficial effect could result because with ongoing management and Wainwright and Lonely DEW-Line ROW EA & FONSI

site review, new spills could be detected and remediated before they spread into the environment.

No Action – There would not be direct or indirect impacts to hazardous wastes, spills, or contamination levels at the former DEW-Line sites if the no action alternative were selected. However, if the permits were not issued, and the sites abandoned by the USAF, then spills or contamination could occur, which could be undetected for indefinite periods of time.

#### *Mitigation and Monitoring*

No specific mitigation to prevent spills or contamination of hazardous materials or waste have been identified, although the stipulations and required operating procedures described in the Northeast NPR-A Supplemental IAP/EIS and Northwest NPR-A IAP/EIS would be applicable to management of the former DEW-Line sites at Wainwright and Lonely.

#### **Cumulative Effects**

The BLM has evaluated the cumulative effects of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable activities in and around the NPR-A in a series of recent NEPA analyses. This EA tiers to the most recent cumulative impact analysis in the Northeast NPR-A IAP/EIS (USDOI BLM 2008, Volume 3, Chapter 4, Section 4.7).

That analysis was based on a timeframe of approximately 1900 through 2100, and a geographic range incorporating the entire North Slope of Alaska and adjacent marine waters. Based on the requirements of 40 CFR 1508.7, and guidance in the Council on Environmental Quality handbook on cumulative effects (CEQ, 1997), this analysis considers a narrower temporal and spatial framework (i.e. approximately 30 years past and future and influences limited to a distance of approximately 10 miles from the access corridor and clean-up area).

The primary human activities in the current analysis include: oil and gas exploration and development; additional clean-up activities at other sites; and subsistence, research/inventory, recreation activities, as well as military activities, all of which were analyzed in the Northeast NPR-A IAP/EIS (USDOI BLM 2008). In addition, the causes and impacts of climate change are global in scope; an assessment of the state of knowledge of climate change impacts is described in Northeast NPR-A IAP/EIS (USDOI BLM 2008).

To date, no recent activities authorized by the BLM in the NPR-A, individually or in combination, have caused significant direct, indirect, or cumulative adverse impacts to the environment. There have been some minor, short-term, local adverse impacts as a direct result of activities associated with approved winter exploration programs. The small number and minimal severity of the impacts occurring from 1999 to 2008 demonstrates the overall effectiveness of the environmental protections that are applied to winter exploration activities in the NPR-A.

Results of previous analyses that have been incorporated by reference, and considerations of existing and proposed protective measures in the NPR-A, are key factors in limiting the cumulative impacts analysis to the issues listed below. Neither the proposed action nor the no action alternative would add substantially to the incremental past, present, and future impacts described below.

*Fisheries Habitat:* As discussed in the 2008 Northeast IAP/EIS (Section 4.7.7), restricted winter habitat for fish in the Arctic makes many species highly vulnerable to the impacts of surface activities. Some effects may accumulate, but based on federal and state protective measures, effects to fish at the

population level are not likely. No action could result in an increased cumulative risk to fisheries habitat, especially if no action were taken at other sites where erosion risks are high.

*Threatened / Endangered Species:* The proposed action would not result in cumulative impacts to Steller's and spectacled eiders. No impact to eider nesting habitat is expected as any activity will take place on a previously disturbed site so no additional eider habitat is at risk of being disturbed. Polar bears could be affected cumulatively from oil and gas exploration, subsistence activities, as well as research and monitoring activities from scientists, industry, and agency personnel. There would be no incremental increase in human activity with the no action alternative. The no action alternative could result in an increased risk of long term environmental contamination that could affect animals in the area.

*Flood Plains, Water Quality and Wetlands / Riparian Zones:* A large percentage of the defined area for evaluating cumulative impacts is comprised of wetlands and floodplains. Wetlands and floodplains have been impacted by past activities, and are susceptible to alteration from future activity and (possibly) from climate change. Federal and State protective measures include restrictions on development, winter tundra travel, and stream crossings, and as a result, cumulative effects on wetlands and floodplains are expected to be minimal, and there would be negligible differences in cumulative effects between the proposed action and the no action alternatives. In the future, water quality impacts could result from the no action alternative because neglect of the sites could result in environmental exposure of contaminants and waste.

*Waste, Hazardous / Solid:* Although no clean-up activities would be planned with this ROW permit, management of hazardous materials and wastes would be better with the proposed action because the USAF would be involved with preparation and review of clean-up plans and more likely to have people on site to evaluate risks and to take action if spills were expected to occur. With the no action alternative, such presence and preventative actions would be less likely.

### **Residual Impacts**

Despite the system of controls in place, and the modern technology and methods proposed, some minor impacts from the proposed action cannot be avoided. The impacts include:

Temporary, intermittent, increase in increased human activity at the sites.

Temporary disturbance, with possible displacement of some wildlife, in the area. Possible additive effect on winter wildlife mortality.

Residual effects have been broadly evaluated for activities in NPR-A subsequently explored (USDOI BLM 2008a, Vol. 3, Section 4.8). With the additional mitigation measures described in this document, the site-specific effects expected from the proposed action are consistent with those previously-discussed impacts, and none of the impacts are expected to be significant for the proposed action.

### **IV. Agencies, Organizations and Individuals Consulted**

No public notification of the Environmental Analysis preparation has been undertaken.

There has been no public comment on this proposal thus far. Consultation with other agencies or Wainwright and Lonely DEW-Line ROW EA & FONSI

individuals concerning this action included the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

## **REFERENCES**

### References

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG). 2009. Fish distribution database (reviewed 4/07/2009). Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish. Worldwide web address: <http://www.sf.adfg.state.ak.us/SARR/FishDistrib/anadcat.cfm>.

Johnson, J., E. Weiss, and S. Maclean. 2004. Catalog of waters important for spawning, rearing, or migration of anadromous fishes - Arctic region, effective January 15, 2005. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish, Research and Technical Services, Special Publication No. 04-03.

USDOI BLM and MMS 2004. Northwest NPR-A Integrated Activity Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

USDOI BLM. 2008. Northeast NPR-A Supplemental Integrated Activity Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

### List of Preparers

Susan Flora, Environmental Scientist  
Arctic Field Office, BLM

Richard Kemnitz, Hydrologist  
Arctic Field Office, BLM

Mike Kunz, Archaeologist  
Arctic Field Office, BLM

Stacie McIntosh, Anthropologist  
Arctic Field Office, BLM

Deb Nigro, Wildlife Biologist  
Arctic Field Office, BLM

Roger Sayre, Planning & Environmental Coordinator  
Arctic Field Office

Matt Whitman, Fisheries Biologist  
Arctic Field Office, BLM

Donna Wixon, Natural Resource Specialist  
Arctic Field Office, BLM

Mike Worley, Realty Specialist

Wainwright and Lonely DEW-Line ROW EA & FONSI

Arctic Field Office, BLM

Dave Yokel, Wildlife Biologist  
Arctic Field Office, BLM

**V. ANILCA Requirements**

Section 810 Subsistence Evaluation

This action is not likely to cause any significant restriction to the subsistence resources of the area (see attached ANILCA Section 810 Evaluation, dated 2/6/09).

## Finding of No Significant Impact

**EA#:** LLAKF010000-2009-0013

**Type of Action:** 2884.01, NPR-A right-of-way

**Serial Number:** F-81467 & F-81468

**Applicant:** United States Air Force

**Lands Involved:** Lonely DEW Line station (1,801 ac.)  
Wainwright DEW line station (1,519 ac.)

**Date Prepared:** April, 2009

**Prepared By:** Bureau of Land Management, Fairbanks District Office  
Arctic Field Office  
1150 University Avenue  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709  
(907) 474-2200

### *Context and Intensity of Environmental Impacts*

Based upon a review of the Environmental Assessment (EA) and the supporting documents, I have determined that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance as defined at 40 CFR 1508.27. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required. We reviewed the context of the proposed action and found that it would not result in any significant effects to resources and values in NPR-A, or surrounding lands. Meanwhile, the mitigation measures and environmental protections would ensure that the proposed action would not add significantly to incremental impacts to NPR-A, surrounding lands.

The following factors have been considered in evaluating significance for this proposal (40 CFR 1508.27):

**1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse:** The beneficial effects of the proposed action include continued permits for management of the former DEW-Line ROWs at Wainwright and Lonely. These sites vulnerable to erosion and would be eventually at risk for release of contaminants into the environment. There is little difference between the proposed action and not action alternatives in the short-term (i.e., duration of the permits), but future foreseeable impacts could occur to fisheries habitat, threatened / endangered species, wetlands, floodplains and riparian areas, and waste (hazardous and solid). Adverse impacts would be short-term and temporary during an expected (but methods and timing not yet determined) clean-up operation. However, such a clean-up in the future would result in long-term beneficial impacts.

**2. Degree of effect on public health and safety:** The proposed action would have no adverse effect on public health and safety.

**3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to cultural or ecologically critical areas:** The proposed action, which would be implemented with mitigation and existing protections, would not impact any

cultural or ecologically critical areas. In addition the proposed action would not impact park lands or prime farmlands. The foreseeable future effects of the clean-up to the environment are expected to be insignificant (minimal to negligible) in this area and would be mitigated to the greatest extent practicable.

**4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial:** There is no scientific controversy over the nature of the environmental impacts of the proposed action.

**5. Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk:** No highly uncertain or unknown risks to the human environment were identified.

**6. Degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effect:** The proposed action was considered within the context of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions and no significant cumulative effects are expected.

**7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts:** No individually or cumulatively significant impacts were identified for the proposed action. The cumulative effects are analyzed in the EA.

**8. Degree to which the action may adversely affect district, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed on the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historical resources.** The proposed action will not adversely affect any historic, cultural, or scientific resources in the Northeast NPR-A. There are no districts, sites, highways, structures or other objects listed on the National Register of Historic Places in the area where the project is proposed.

**9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat:** The proposed action will not adversely affect any endangered or threatened species, therefore no consultation with the USFWS is needed at this time. When the USAF produces a plan for clean-up operations, the BLM will consult with the USFWS for Section 7, and additional NEPA documentation will be prepared.

**10. Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, local or tribal law, regulation or policy imposed for the protection of the environment, where non-federal requirements are consistent with federal requirements:** The proposed action does not violate any known federal, state, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. The evaluation and finding completed to comply with Section 810 of ANILCA found "The proposed action will not significantly restrict subsistence uses. No reasonably foreseeable and significant decrease in the abundance of harvestable resources or in the distribution of harvestable resources, and no reasonably foreseeable limitations on harvester access will result from the proposed action.

### ***Monitoring and Mitigation***

**BLM will monitor** on the ground activities periodically. BLM will continue to monitor the former DEW-Line sites at Wainwright and Lonely through periodic on-site inspections to ensure that all standards have been met and that the sites are clean and free of debris.

**Mitigation measures.**

#### **APPROVED:**

Wainwright and Lonely DEW-Line ROW EA & FONSI

/s/ Lon Kelly

April 16, 2009

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Stacie McIntosh (acting) for  
Lon Kelly, Manager  
Arctic Field Office

Date