

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Arctic Field Office
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In reply refer to:
FF095385
2984.01 (AK012)

PLAN CONFORMANCE / NEPA COMPLIANCE RECORD

DOI-BLM-LLAKF012-2010-0023-CX

Arctic Field Office, Bureau of Land Management

Applicant: Joel Schmutz
Research Wildlife Biologist
USGS Alaska Science Center
4210 University Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

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

Description of Proposed Action: The applicant Joel Schmutz, with the USGS Alaska Science Center has requested authorization for field activity access and landing by a floatplane, on lands within the National Petroleum Reserve Alaska (NPR-A) in support of avian research. The applicant has had an NPR-A permit to conduct similar work in 2008 and 2009.

The proposed action would authorize the USGS to catch yellow-billed loons for transmitter deployment and to walk shorelines of lakes to evaluate nesting activity of loons. The applicant proposes to capture up to 18 yellow-billed loons to assess contaminants exposure, and to implant satellite transmitters into adults. There are 19 proposed use sites; 15 are the same as 2009, and four new sites (bold on page 2 listing).

Two methods are proposed. One would access the capture and camp sites with an amphibious plane. Six people would camp in tents on plot 50 at 70 23.637N, 155 24.792W, from June 15 -July 5, which would serve as the staging area. Researchers would make daily flights from the base site to other plots. The plane would be refueled in Atqasuk.

The second method would consist of three, two person crews, where each crew would stay for approximately one to three nights at a lake, before moving to another lake. This work would begin approximately on June 15 through July 28, using the same amphibious plane as the first method. After July 28, a BLM crew would use a helicopter to continue the study; this phase would last until August 11. Approximately 175 take off and landings are predicted for the entire project, with up to 60 helicopter landings and 115 with the amphibious plane

Location of Plots (new sites bolded and italicized)

Plot #	Township and Range			
4	T18R18	T18R17	T17R18	T17R17
5	T18R16	T17R16		
11	T17R14	T16R14	T16R15	
17	T16R12	T15R12		
20	T16R13	T15R13		
23.8	<i>T11R15</i>	<i>T11R16</i>		
24	<i>T15R21</i>	<i>T14R21</i>	<i>T15R20</i>	
26	<i>T15R18</i>	<i>T14R18</i>		
98	T9R11	T9R12	T10R12	
29	T14R17			
30	T15R10	T14R10		
32	T14R13	T13R13	T14R14	T13R14
33	T14R13	T14R12	T13R12	
39	T13R18	T13R19		
40	T13R10	T13R11		
50	T13R14	T13R13	T12R14	
58	T12R8	T12R7	T11R8	T11R7
60	T11R15	T12R15		
74	T11R10	T11T9		
76	T11R19	T11R20	T10R20	
77	T10R17	T11R17	T10R16	T11R16
80	T10R14	T11R14	T10R15	T11R15
84	T10R19	T10R18		
86	T10R19			
90	T10R17	T9R17	T9R17	
98	<i>T9R11</i>	<i>T9R12</i>	<i>T10R12</i>	
107	T8R17	T8R18		

Description of New Areas:

Area	Township (North)	Range (West)	Section
23.8	11	16	13,14,23,24,25,35,36
	11	15	19,20,29,30,32,33
	10	16	1,2,11,12
	10	15	4-6,8,9
24	14	21	1-4, 9-16
	14	20	6,7,17,18
	15	20	30,31
	15	21	28-28,33-36
26	15	18	19,20,29-33
	14	18	3-5,6-10,15-22
98	9	12	1,2,11-14,23,24
	10	12	36
	9	11	4,6,7-9,16-18,20,21

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 “FF095385 USGS Schmutz Summer 2010 Stipulations.”

Date June 7, 2010

/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 7, 2010

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