

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:
FF095731
2984.01 (AK012)

PLAN CONFORMANCE / NEPA COMPLIANCE RECORD

DOI-BLM-LLAKF012-2010-0045-CX

Arctic Field Office, Bureau of Land Management

Applicant: Shell Gulf of Mexico Inc.
3601 C Street, Suite 1000
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Proposed Action Title/Type: Summer Studies in NPR-A

Description of Proposed Action: Shell Gulf of Mexico Inc. (Shell) plans to conduct coastal and onshore environmental baseline studies to gather new data, or to augment knowledge of existing environmental conditions at selected areas of the Chukchi Sea coastline. Additional details of the proposed action are described in the *2010 Chukchi Sea Coastal and Onshore Environmental Baseline Studies Work Plan* (Work Plan) submitted to the US Department of Interior – Bureau of Land Management (BLM) July 2010.

Olgoonik Fairweather LLC would conduct the fieldwork and secure the appropriate permits from the North Slope Borough for the proposed activities that would occur on lands outside of BLM jurisdiction.

The general objective is to gather data to establish further understanding of the baseline or existing conditions of the physical, biological, and social environment in areas where potential onshore infrastructure may be needed in the future for development of oil and gas resources in the Chukchi Sea. Characterizing the baseline conditions is necessary to support impact assessment, development planning, and permitting. The 2010 program is the first phase of a multi-year effort.

These studies would be conducted on Chukchi Sea coast from Kukpowruk River, south of Point Lay, to Pt. Franklin, north of Wainwright (see Figure 1). Data collection would occur for approximately two weeks, beginning in early September of 2010.

Studies would involve stream hydrology and hydraulics, habitat assessment, fish and wildlife, and cultural resources. A field crew up to seven personnel that includes biologists, hydrologists, cultural resources specialists, and other environmental scientists will conduct the studies. One helicopter would be used to access approximately 20-30 sites within the area delineated as the “10 mile inland coastline buffer” (Figure 1). Crews would not visit any single site more than once or twice. The field

crew and helicopter will be based out of Barrow. This project would not involve field camps or fuel caches.

Hydrology and Hydraulics

Hydrologists would use manual measuring tools and GPS instrumentation to collect information on stream width/depth ratios, stream slope/cross sections, and to document stream bank stability. The applicant also plans an aerial reconnaissance of the late fall hydrologic conditions.

Habitat Assessment

Habitat value, would be sampled at 100-m intervals along transects. Transects would be selected to sample variation within ecologically distinct physiographic districts: for example, in barrier island sand/mudflat, and arctic salt marsh habitats. Habitat evaluations would include habitat measurements for special status species and wildlife of subsistence importance.

Wildlife and Fisheries

Data collection efforts will be based on an intensive reconnaissance level effort that focuses on gathering information needed to develop scientifically-defensible field studies in future years. Workers would identify potential lakes, streams, rivers or other areas where future fish and wildlife research needs to occur. Field efforts will focus on evaluating overall fish species richness and distribution, the identification of special areas important to critical life history phases, and the spatial distribution.

Cultural Resources

Reconnaissance-level field methods for cultural resources will be conducted using a combination of helicopter flights and on-the-ground inspection. Aerial review will be used to identify landforms and geographical settings that are known to hold a high probability of containing cultural resources. On-the-ground inspection is done to document the nature of the site and to delimit its boundaries. Site locations will be recorded by GPS.

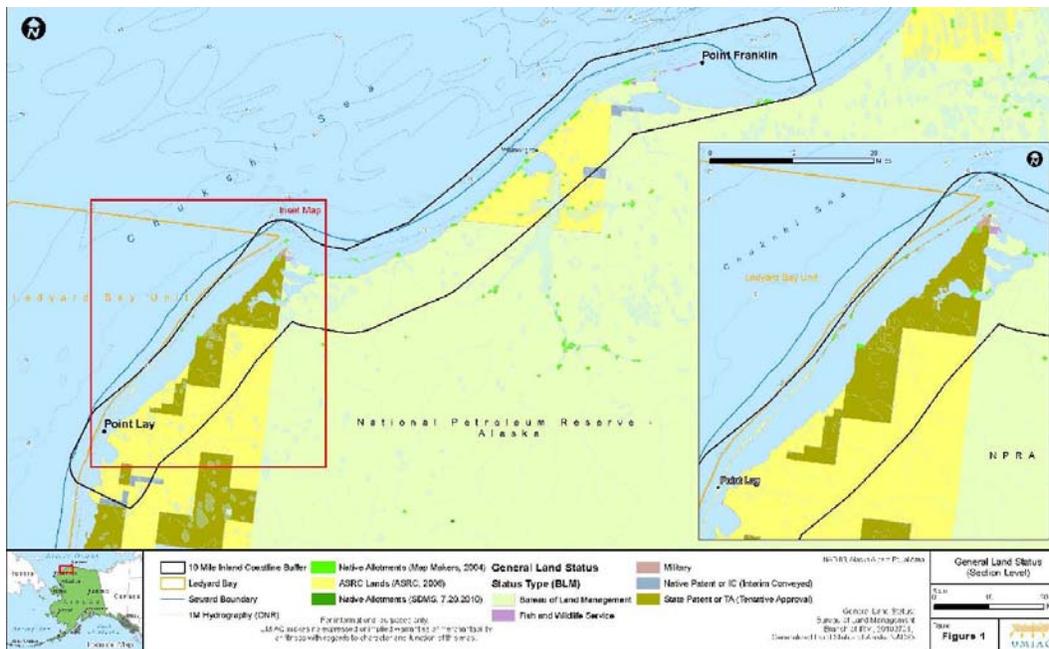


Figure 1. Location of Shell Summer Field Studies, 2010.

Location (All Umiat Meridian)

Township	Range	Section	Comments
10 North	39 West	1-36	Excluding Private Lands
11 North	39 West	1-36	Excluding Private Lands
10 North	38 West	1-36	Excluding Private Lands
9 North	39 West	1-36	Excluding Private Lands
9 North	38 West	1-36	
10 North	37 West	1-36	Excluding Private Lands
9 North	37 West	1-36	
11 North	37 West	12-26,33-36	Excluding Private Lands
11 North	36 West	1-36	Excluding Private Lands
10 North	36 West	1-36	
12 North	35 West	1-36	Excluding Private Lands
11 North	35 West	1-36	
12 North	34 West	1-36	Excluding Private Lands
12 North	33 West	1-36	
15 North	31 West	26-28, 33-35	Excluding Private Lands
16 North	29 West	8-36	
17 North	29 West	11-16, 19-36	Excluding Private Lands
17 North	28 West	1-24, 30,31	Excluding Private Lands
16 North	28 West	1-36	
15 North	28 West	1-36	
17 North	27 West	19-21,25-30,33-36	
15 North	29 West	1-36	
16 North	27 West	1-36	
15 North	27 West	1-36	
17 North	26 West	25, 30-36	
16 North	26 West	1-36	
17 North	25 West	8,9,13-16.21, 23-36	Excluding Private Lands
16 North	25 West	1-36	
17 North	24 West	13-36	Excluding Private Lands

16 North	24 West	1-36	Excluding Private Lands
17 North	23 West	1-4,7-36	
16 North	23 West	1-36	Excluding Private Lands
17 North	22 West	1-36	
16 North	22 West	1-36	
18 North	23 West	35,36	
18 North	22 West	1-36	
18 North	21 West	1-36	
18 North	20 West	1-36	
17 North	21 West	1-36	
19 North	21 West	1-36	

Part I: Plan Conformance Review

The proposed action is subject to the following planning document: Northwest National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (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 “FF095731 Shell Summer Studies 2010 Permit Stipulations.”

Date **August 31, 2010**

//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

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

Date August 31, 2010