

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Arctic Field Office
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Fairbanks, Alaska 99709-3844
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In reply refer to:
FF095370
2984.01 (AK012)

PLAN CONFORMANCE / NEPA COMPLIANCE RECORD

DOI-BLM-LLAKF012-2010-0031-CX

Arctic Field Office, Bureau of Land Management

Applicant: Ben Jones
USGS Alaska Science Center
4230 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. The applicant has had NPR-A permits for similar work in 2008 and 2009.

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 8 to 23, 2010 (see Table 1; Figure 1).

Table 1. Activity Schedule for Ben Jones and Colleagues During July 2010

08 July: Fly from Fairbanks to camp on NW Teshekpuk Lake
09 July: Shuttle gear and people from Prudhoe to camp
10 July: Visit shorebird camp on the Ikpikpuk River
11 July: Visit Inigok
12 July: Fly to Prudhoe Bay, drop off three visitors and pick up two USGS colleagues
13 July: Visit sites along coast near Drew Point and Cape Halkett
14 July: Visit sites between Southern Teshekpuk and Inigok
15 – 19 July: Collect depth data for bathymetry map of Teshekpuk by foot and small inflatable boat
20 July: Return two USGS colleagues to Prudhoe, and bring back two more
21 July: Visit rapid coastal erosion sites
22 July: Visit Inigok
23 July: Fly to Prudhoe, leave Teshekpuk Lake and return to Fairbanks with floatplane

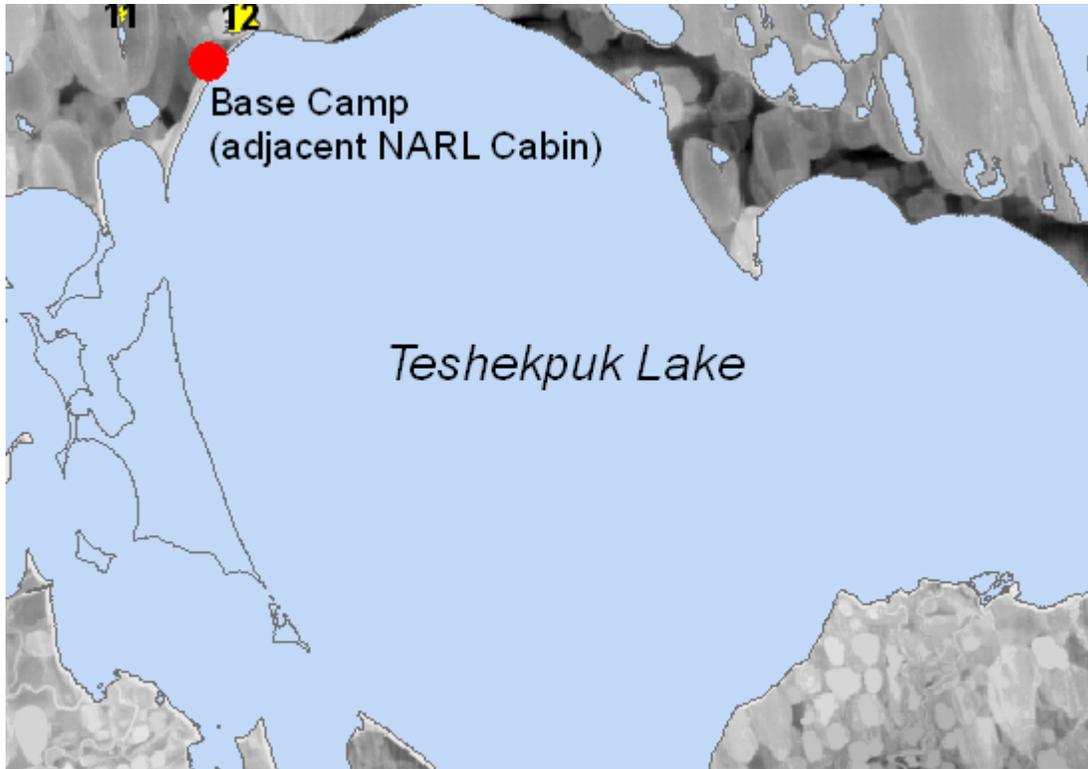


Figure 1. Location of Ben Jones Base Camp

The site visits would be accessed by float plane and field work would be conducted by two to five people on foot. Researchers plan to use a small inflatable boat on Teshekpuk Lake. They would camp on site at 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 and DOI-BLM-AKF012-2009-0041-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 2010 Stipulations."

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

Date June 30, 2010

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

Date June 30, 2010