



**Environmental Assessment
National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska
Special Recreation Permit
2010**

DOI-BLM-LLAKF010-2010-0036-EA

Mountain Monarchs of Alaska

Preparing Office: Arctic Field Office

Project Title/Type of Action: **National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A)
Special Recreation Permit**

Case File Number: **FF095708**

Land Use Plans: **Northwest National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (IAP/EIS) 2004.
The Utility Corridor Final Environmental Impact Statement
approved 9/27/1989.
Central Arctic Management Area Wilderness Recommendations
Final Environmental Impact Statement approved September 14, 1988.**

Applicant: **Dave Leonard
DBA - Mountain Monarchs of Alaska**

Address: **35555 Kenai Spur Highway
Soldotna, Alaska 99669**

Date: **Aug 2, 2010**

Lands Involved:

Land Description (BLM Managed Lands)

Legal Description (All Umiat Meridian)

Township	Range	Section	
5 South	22 West	1-36	
5 South	21 West	1-36	
5 South	20 West	1-36	
5 South	19 West	1-36	
5 South	18 West	1-36	
5 South	17 West	1-36	
5 South	15 West	3-7,9,10,16-21,28-30 (Excluding Private Lands)	Contains Regional Selection (Not available for use)
6 South	22 West	1-36	
6 South	21 West	1-36	
6 South	20 West	1-36	
6 South	19 West	1-36	
6 South	18 West	1-36	
6 South	17 West	1-27,29-32,34-36 (Excluding Private Lands)	Contains State Selection
6 South	16 West	4-6,9,16,18-21,28-33 (Excluding Private Lands)	Contains State Selection & Regional Selection (Reg/Sel not available for use)
7 South	21 West	1-36	
7 South	20 West	1-36	

7 South	19 West	1-36	
7 South	18 West	1-36	
7 South	17 West	5-8,17-20,29-32 (Excluding Private Lands)	
8 South	22 West	1-36	
8 South	21 West	1-36	
8 South	20 West	1-36	
8 South	19 West	1-36	
8 South	18 West	1-36	
8 South	17 West	5-8,17-20,29-32 (Excluding Private Lands)	
9 South	22 West	1-36	
9 South	21 West	1-36	
9 South	20 West	1-36	
9 South	19 West	1-36	
9 South	18 West	1-36 (Excluding Private Lands)	
10 South	22 West	1-36	
10 South	21 West	1-36	
10 South	20 West	1-36	
10 South	19 West	1-36	
10 South	18 West	1-36 (Excluding Private Lands)	
11 South	22 West	1-36	

11 South	21 West	1-36	
11 South	20 West	1-36	
11 South	19 West	1-36	
11 South	18 West	1-36 (Excluding Private Lands)	
12 South	22 West	1-36	
12 South	21 West	1-36	
12 South	20 West	1-36	
12 South	19 West	1-36	
12 South	18 West	1-36 (Excluding Private Lands)	Contains State Selection

Environmental Assessment
for a Special Recreation Permit
DOI-BLM-LLAK010-2010-0036-EA

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to meet requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and to support U.S. Department of Interior (USDOI) Bureau of Land Management (BLM) decision-making on permits required to construct and implement the proposed project. The scope of this EA includes analysis of the effects of the proposed activity and alternatives.

Impacts of this type of activity have been evaluated in the referenced planning document.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Dave Leonard, doing business as (DBA) Mountain Monarchs of Alaska (MMA) has requested authorization to conduct guided hunting operations on BLM managed lands within the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPR-A). The proposed action would involve trips to the Pac Paddle Lake area near the Etivluk River (figure 1).

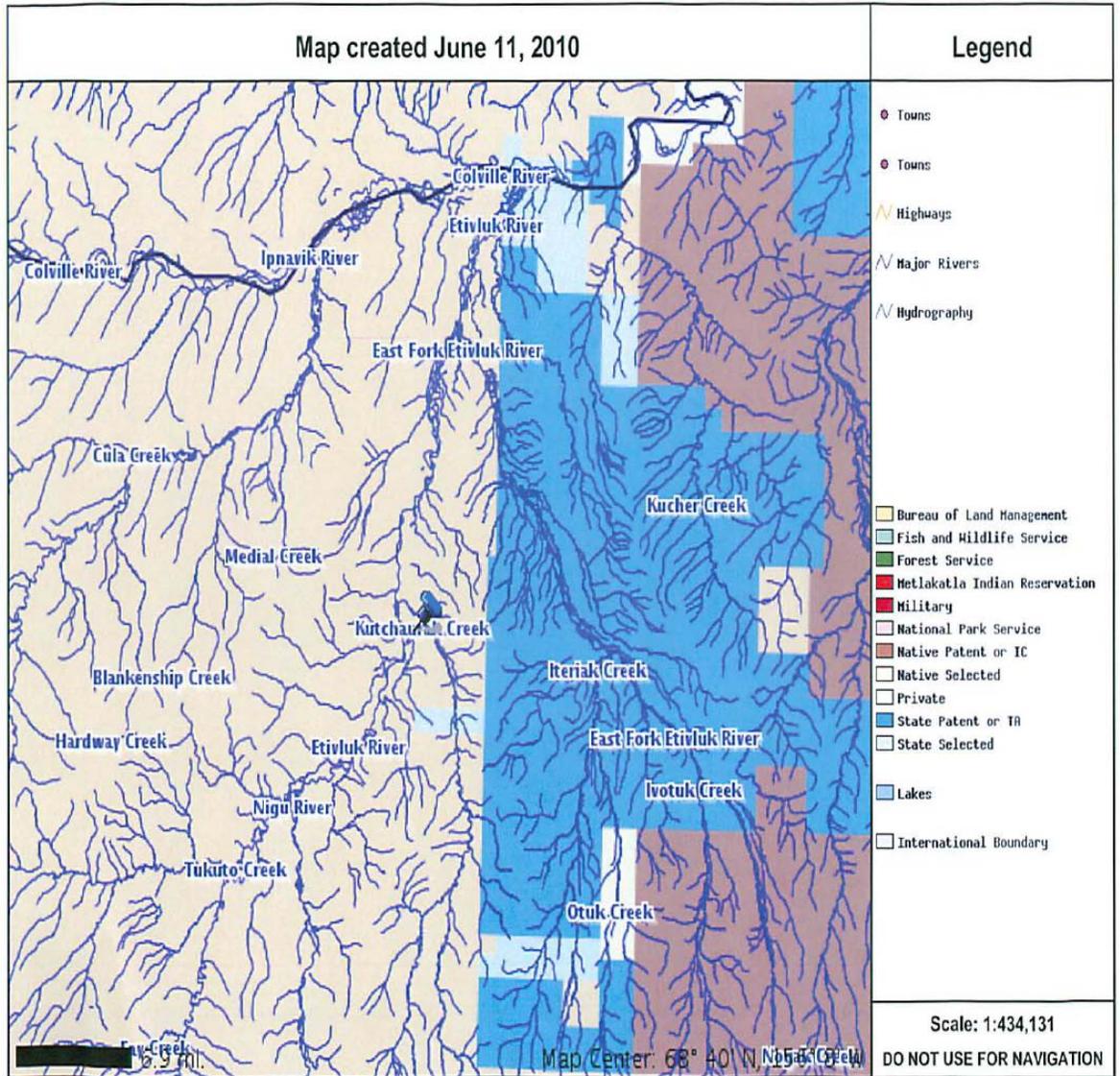


Figure 1 Map submitted by applicant

1.1 Purpose and Need

The BLM's organic act, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLMPA) (43 USC 1701), requires that the agency provide for multiple uses of the public lands. A permit issued by the BLM is needed to provide guidelines to ensure that the resources on BLM managed lands are conserved and to minimize environmental impacts from the proposed action. The purpose of the proposed action is to allow MMA a permit to conduct guided hunting trips on BLM managed lands in the NPR-A.

1.2 Laws, regulations, other EAs that influence this EA

This EA will be based on the findings, management controls, and protective measures of the 2004 Northwest NPR-A Integrated Activity Plan (IAP)/EIS Record of Decision (ROD); Utility Corridor Final Environmental Impact Statement approved 9/27/1989; Central Arctic Management Area Wilderness Recommendations Final Environmental Impact Statement approved September 14, 1988, as well as other laws and regulations. The action, as proposed, is consistent and in conformance with the objectives outlined in these documents and not in conflict with other land uses or resources in the area. The proposed use is in conformance with current policy of the BLM Arctic Field Office. The proposed action is in conformance the Colville River Special Area Management Plan (CRSAMP), and the National Petroleum Reserve Product Act (NPRPA), FLPMA, Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), Endangered Species Act, Executive Orders (EO) 11988, and EO 11990.

1.3 The Decision to be Made

The BLM must conduct a project-specific NEPA analysis and determine whether the proposed project should be approved, rejected, or approved with modifications, and if additional mitigation is needed. This EA will be based on the findings, management controls, and protective measures of the Northwest National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (IAP/EIS) 2004, The Utility Corridor Final Environmental Impact Statement approved 9/27/1989. Central Arctic Management Area Wilderness Recommendations Final Environmental Impact Statement approved September 14, 1988, Final Environmental Impact Statement on Oil and Gas Leasing in The National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska and Record of Decision, as well as other laws and regulations. The scope of this EA includes analysis that enables the BLM to select among alternatives that meet the purpose and need, and are within the BLM's jurisdiction (40 Code of Federal Regulations 1506.1(a) (2)).

1.4 Scoping and Issues

The proposed action has been announced on the BLM Arctic Field Office website NEPA register July 16, 2010. To date no comments have been received.

BLM guidelines define environmental issues as points of disagreement, debate, or dispute resulting from the proposed action (BLM NEPA Handbook, H-1790-1, 2008). Issues are identified through internal and external scoping through a process of considering environmental

effects of the proposed action. Some elements are not present in the project area and are, therefore, not discussed further. A summary listing of related issues considered by AFO Field Staff is provided in **Table 1.1**.

Table 1.1 Issues Considered in Evaluating Impacts

Resources/Environmental Considerations for Issues and Analysis	Determination	Basis of Determination (See Note)
ACEC's	Not Present	Protection provided by:
Air Quality	Minimally Impacted	Protection provided by: State of Alaska Air Non-Point and Mobile Program and regulations (18 AAC 50)
Cultural and Paleontological Resources	Minimally Impacted	Protection provided by: Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act,
Environmental Justice	Minimally Impacted	Protection provided by: EO 12898
Fish	Minimally Impacted	Protection provided by: Non Oil & Gas Permit Stipulations IIA, IIB, and VIIIA, and XI. EFH finding "not likely to adversely affect".
Flood Plains/Wetlands and Riparian Zones	Minimally Impacted	Protections provided by: EO 11988 and EO 11990
Invasive, Non-native species	Not Present	Protections provided by: not applicable to this action
Native American Religious Concerns	Not Present	
Recreation	Not Present	
Socialcultural Systems	Minimally Impacted	Protection provided by: Non Oil & Gas Permit Stipulations section IX.A and IX.B
Subsistence	Minimally Impacted	Protection provided by section 810 of ANILCA and section IX.A of Non Oil & Gas Permit Stipulations
Threatened & Endangered Species Spectacled and Steller's eider	Not Present	Protection provided by Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. (J),
Threatened & Endangered Species Polar Bear	Not Present	In accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA)
non-T&E birds	Minimally Impacted	Protection provided Non Oil and Gas Permit Stipulations, III.A, III.B, XII.C. Raptor code of conduct.
non-T&E mammals	Minimally Impacted	Protection provided by Non Oil and Gas Permit Stipulations III. A, III. C, III.E, III.F, XI.B.1, XII.A, XII.B and XII.G.
Vegetation	Minimally Impacted	Protections provided by: Non Oil and Gas Permit Stipulation X.A.
Visual Resource Management	Minimally Impacted	Protection provided by: IV, VIIA, VIII.A, XIA,B
Water Resources	Minimally Impacted	Protections provided by: Non Oil and Gas Permit Stipulation II.

Waste (Hazardous/Solid)	Minimally Impacted	Protections provided by State of Alaska 18 AAC 30, 60, 62, 63, 72, and 75; and Permit Stipulations II B; and XI A, B, C, and D.
Wild & Scenic Rivers	Not Present	:
Wilderness	Minimally Impacted	Protection provided by: Permit Specific Stipulation #1, IV, VIIA, VIII.A, XIA,B

Key to Table 1.2:

BLM – Bureau of Land Management

EFH – Essential Fish Habitat

Potentially Affected: The proposed action or alternative could result in potential impacts to resource or issues to the level that additional mitigation may be required, or there is a need to evaluate potentially significant issues.

Minimally Impacted: Resources or issues would not be 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. Minimally impacted resources or issues will not be analyzed further in this EA.

Not Present: Resources or issues are not expected to be affected by the proposed action or alternatives because activities would occur at a different time or place. Resource or issues not present will not be analyzed further in the EA.

In summary, BLM resource specialists have reviewed the proposed action and found no issues for further evaluation in this EA. Existing protective measures would ensure that any resources would be at most minimally impacted from the proposed action. The effects of activities by hunting guides and their clients were also analyzed in previous EAs for Special Recreation Permits: *DOI-BLM-LLAK01000-2010-0037-EA*, *DOI-BLM-LLAK01000-2010-0006-EA*. The activities proposed for the current proposed action in Game Management Area 26 are sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the 2010 EAs. This EA will be tiered to the 2010 EAs. Therefore, this EA will only introduce the alternatives, but no additional analysis will be carried forth.

1.5 Public Involvement

Public notification of the Environmental analysis was announced in the NEPA register on file at the Arctic Field Office Environmental Assessment web site beginning July 16, 2010. No public comments or inquiries were received through, August 2, 2010.

Chapter 2 Alternatives Including the Proposed Action**2.1 Introduction**

This section describes the alternatives considered, including the no action, proposed action, and alternatives considered and eliminated.

2.2 Description of Alternatives**2.2.1 Alternative A: No Action**

Under no action, the BLM would not grant a special recreation permit to MMA to conduct guided hunting trips in the NPR-A. Current land management situation and activities would

continue but access and activities related to those requested by the proponents would not occur. Such activities include research and monitoring, recreation, subsistence, and travel.

2.2.2 Alternative B: Proposed Action

Mountain Monarchs of Alaska proposes to guide hunting trips on BLM managed lands in the vicinity of the Etivluk River on the North Slope of Alaska. The hunts would take place in August and September. Mountain Monarchs would guide between 5 and 20 hunters per year. Hunters would fly commercially to Bettles and from there they would fly with Brooks Range Aviation to Pac Paddle Lake to MMA's base camp. Mr. Leonard is a commercial pilot and would have a supercub on site to fly clients for hunting purposes or in the case of an emergency. Clients would hunt either in the vicinity of the lake or fly to an area nearby. See Figure 1 for the area of proposed use.

During the late April and May timeframe MMA would conduct guided bear hunting trips. This activity would take place mainly in the Noatak Preserve but might infrequently include spike camps and travel by snow machine or supercub from Kotzebue to BLM managed lands.

Mr. Leonard has two reregistered guides that assist with the guided trips. All guides and pilots have satellite phones, EPIRBS, and aircraft handheld radios. MMA's operating plan includes the use of a 1955 Piper Supercub and four 2001 Skidoo Tundras. A pit toilet is proposed for human waste. While this would be Mr. Leonard's first BLM permit he has been guiding hunting trips in Alaska since 1985. Both Mr. Leonard and his employees have years of experience and have attended safety training.

Chapter 3 Affected Environment

The affected environment for the area of the Proposed Action is discussed in the following document: Northwest National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (IAP/EIS) 2004.

Chapter 4 Environmental Impacts

Because the proposed activities are not substantially different from those previously evaluated, and because no significant new scientific information or analyses have been developed since the most recent related evaluation (i.e., May 2008), this NEPA analysis will focus on impacts due to the project-specific/site-specific differences of the proposed action.

4.1 Direct and Indirect Effects

Analysis of impacts from the proposed action and no action alternative is based on observations and scientific information gained from decades of similar operations on the North Slope and other Arctic regions. The proposed activities are not substantially different from those previously evaluated in the Northwest National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (IAP/EIS) 2004 and analyses from this document are incorporated by reference.

4.2 Cumulative Effects

Cumulative impacts result from the incremental addition of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions. Each action may be individually minor by itself, but when added to others could become significant over a period of time.

The time frame for the proposed action for the NPR-A portion of the project area is 1977 (designation of NPR-A) to 10 years into the future, assuming that the relatively low level of activity and management would remain at about the same level as present. Due to the limited scope and intensity of the proposed action the geographic area would be limited within 10 miles of the proposed river travel corridor, camps, and staging areas.

Due to the remoteness of the areas, the activity levels are limited by available transportation. There is minimal recreation, research and subsistence use in the area. The proposed action is anticipated to have very little if any impact as all the applicants will be using leave no trace principles.

The proposed action is not anticipated to result in cumulative impacts due to the remoteness of the portion of the NPR-A where the activity would occur, the low impact levels associated with the activity, and the short-term time frame of the proposed action.

4.4 MITIGATION AND MONITORING

The stipulations for the proposed action are a subset of *Northeast National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Supplemental Integrated Activity Plan/ Final Environmental Impact Statement Record of Decision Required Operating Procedures*, *the Northwest National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plan/ Final Environmental Impact Statement Record of Decision Required Operating Procedures*, *Utility Corridor Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement*, *The Colville River Special Area Management Plan*, and *the Final Environmental Impact Statement on Oil and Gas Leasing in The National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska and*

Record of Decision approved 5/ Special Recreation holders meet most requirements by following the guidelines in Leave No Trace, Alaskan Tundra.

4.5 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

No issues were identified in the evaluation of the proposed action for this EA.

Chapter 5 Consultation and Coordination

5.1 Agencies, Organization, Persons Consulted

Public notification of the Environmental analysis will be on file at the Arctic Field Office and available on the Arctic Field Office Environmental Assessment web site.

5.3 List of Preparers

BLM

Arctic Field Office:

Dave Yokel, Wildlife Biologist
Susan Flora, Environmental Scientist
Richard Kemnitz, Hydrologist
Donna Wixon, Natural Resource Specialist
Stacie McIntosh, Supervisor Arctic Field Office
Debbie Nigro, Wildlife Biologist
Matthew Whitman, Fisheries Biologist
Stacey Fritz, Anthropologist/Subsistence Specialist
Roger Sayre, NEPA Specialist

FF095708
2930.00

Finding of No Significant Impact

Type of Action: Special Recreation Permit

Serial Number: FF095708

Environmental Assessment Number: DOI-BLM-LLAKF010-2010-0036-EA

Applicant: Dave Leonard
DBA: Mountain Monarchs of Alaska

Address: 35555 Kenai Spur Highway
Soldotna, Alaska 99669

District: Arctic Field Office

Planning Unit: Northwest National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (IAP/EIS) 2004.
The Utility Corridor Final Environmental Impact Statement approved
9/27/1989.
Central Arctic Management Area Wilderness Recommendations Final
Environmental Impact Statement approved September 14, 1988.

Lands Involved: See Case File for Specific Description, lands are in the vicinity of the Pac
Paddle Lake near the Etivluk River.

Context and Intensity of Environmental Impacts

Based upon a review of the EA prepared by the Arctic Field Office 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. The effects of activities by Mountain Monarchs of Alaska, and its clients, on Game Management Area 26 were also analyzed in a previous EA, *National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Special Recreation Permit 2010(DOI-BLM-LLAK01000-2010-0006-EA) and*

DOI-BLM-LLAK01000-2010-0037-EA,. The activities proposed for the current proposed action are sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the 2010 EA (*DOI-BLM-LLAK01000-2010-0006-EA*) and *DOI-BLM-LLAK01000-2010-0037-EA*.

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. The mitigation measures and environmental protections would ensure that the Proposed Action would not add significantly to incremental impacts.

The following factors were considered in the EA to evaluate the significance of this proposal (40 CFR 1508.27): Beneficial and adverse impacts; effects on public health and safety; unique cultural or ecological areas within or near the project area: potentially controversial or uncertain effects; whether the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effect; cumulative effects; adverse impacts to important scientific, cultural or historical resources; effects to endangered or threatened species or habitat; or 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:

Monitoring and Mitigation

BLM will monitor on the ground activities periodically. Mitigation measures will be implemented as described in the attached authorization stipulations.

APPROVED:

/s/Lon Kelly
Arctic Field Office Manager

August 2, 2010

Date