



# United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Washington, D.C. 20240

**AUG 11 2017**



In Reply Refer To:  
FWS/D/066321

## Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Alaska Region

From: Acting Director *James W. Keeth*

Subject: Update to Regulations at 50 CFR 37  
**(Response due date: September 30, 2017)**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has been asked by the U.S. Department of the Interior to update the regulations concerning geological and geophysical exploration of the coastal plain, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska. Specifically, we are to update the regulations found at 37 CFR 21 that restricts the dates when an application of an exploration plan may be submitted. Attached is a proposed draft change to that regulation. When finalized, the new regulation will allow for applicants to submitted requests for approval of new exploration plans.

You are directed to prepare an environmental assessment and a proposed rule to update these regulations.

§ 37.21 Application requirements.

(a) Prior to submitting an exploration plan, applicants may meet with the Regional Director to discuss their proposed plans and exploratory activities and the requirements of this part.

(b) Any person wanting to conduct exploratory activities may apply for a special use permit by submitting for approval one or more written exploration plans, in triplicate, to the Regional Director, Region 7, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99503. ~~To be considered, exploration plans covering the period from the inception of the program through May 31, 1986, or any portions thereof, must be received by the Regional Director during normal business hours on May 20, 1983; exploration plans covering exploratory activities other than seismic exploration for the period from June 1, 1984, through May 31, 1986, or any portions thereof, must be received by the Regional Director during normal business hours on April 2, 1984; and exploration plans covering, but not limited to, seismic exploration for the period from October 1, 1984, through May 31, 1986, or any portions thereof, must be received by the Regional Director during normal business hours on June 4, 1984.~~

(c) In addition to containing the information required in paragraph (d) of this section, any exploration plan submitted shall describe the applicant's plan for carrying out an integrated program of exploratory activities in such a manner as will satisfy the objective and limitations stated in § 37.1. If an applicant submits an exploration plan ~~on May 20, 1983 in any given year,~~ with the intention of submitting another exploration plan ~~on March 1, 1984 the following year,~~ the applicant shall describe in its initial plan how its future exploratory activities will be integrated with those proposed under its initial plan. ~~Any applicant submitting an exploration plan on May 20, 1983 which incorporates preliminary field investigations and/or surface geological exploration proposed to commence before August 1, 1983 may submit a written request to the Regional Director for an expedited review and approval of that portion of the exploration plan covering such preliminary investigations and/or exploration.~~ Each exploration plan submitted must be published and be the subject of a public hearing in accordance with requirements of § 37.22(b).

(d) An exploration plan shall set forth in general terms such information as is required by this part and by the Regional Director in determining whether the plan is consistent with this part, including, but not limited to:

(1) The name and address of any person who will conduct the proposed exploratory activities, i.e., the applicant/permittee, and, if that person is an agency, firm, corporation, organization, or association, the names and addresses of the responsible officials, or, if a partnership, the names and addresses of all partners;

- (2) The names and addresses of all persons planning at the time of plan submittal to participate in the proposed exploratory activities or share in the data and information resulting therefrom through a cost-sharing or any other arrangement;
- (3) Evidence of the applicant's technical and financial ability to conduct integrated and well designed exploratory activities in an arctic or subarctic environment and of the applicant's responsibility in complying with any exploration permits previously held by it;
- (4) A map at a scale of 1:250,000 of the geographic areas in which exploratory activities are proposed and of the approximate locations of the applicant's proposed geophysical survey lines, travel routes to and within the refuge, fuel caches, and major support facilities;
- (5) A general description of the type of exploratory activities planned, including alternate exploratory methods and techniques if proposed, and the manner and sequence in which such activities will be conducted;
- (6) A description of how various exploratory methods and techniques will be utilized in an integrated fashion to avoid unnecessary duplication of the applicant's own work;
- (7) A schedule for the [exploratory activities](#) proposed, including the approximate dates on which the various types of [exploratory activities](#) are proposed to be commenced and completed;
- (8) A description of the applicant's proposed communication techniques;
- (9) A description of the equipment, [support facilities](#), methods of access and personnel that will be used in carrying out [exploratory activities](#);
- (10) A [hazardous substances](#) control and contingency plan describing actions to be taken to use, store, control, clean up, and dispose of these materials in the event of a spill or accident;
- (11) A general description of the anticipated impacts that the proposed [exploratory activities](#) may have on the [refuge's wildlife](#), its habitat, the environment, subsistence uses and needs, and cultural resources, and a description of mitigating measures which will be implemented to minimize or avoid such impacts;
- (12) A description of the proposed procedures for monitoring the environmental impacts of its operation and its compliance with all regulatory and permit requirements;
- (13) A statement that, if authorized to conduct [exploratory activities](#), the applicant shall comply with this part, its [special use permit](#), its approved [exploration plan, plan of](#)

operation, and all reasonable stipulations, demands and orders issued by the Regional Director;

(14) A description of the applicant's proposed data quality assurance and control program; and

(15) Such other pertinent information as the Regional Director may reasonably require.

~~[ 48 FR 16858, Apr. 19, 1983, as amended at 49 FR 7570, Mar. 1, 1984] ¶~~