

Hunters from Nuiqsut typically may travel up to 40 miles away from shore to hunt seals when the ice breaks up. Seal hunting typically includes three to ten boats with one or two hunters in each boat. Hunting is a day-long activity (8-12 hours per day). Seal hunting activities tend to decrease in August as hunters begin to focus on the whale hunt. (SAExploration 2014)

Section 3.16 of the Liberty Development Project EIA (HAK 2015) describes the Nuiqsut whale hunt. Nuiqsut has conducted a fall bowhead whaling hunt since resettlement in 1973. Since Nuiqsut is located inland along the Colville River, they travel approximately 100 miles up the Colville River and across the Beaufort Sea to Cross Island to conduct the whale hunt. The route to Cross Island crosses between OPP and SID (Figure 3.16.2-3, HAK 2015). Cross Island is close to the normal fall whale migration route and is a traditional and historic whaling site. The fall whaling season is typically from late August to September; the end of the whaling season occurs when Nuiqsut's quota is met or when weather conditions become too marginal.

3.22.2 CURRENT ENI ACTIVITIES

Eni currently conducts year-round activities at its onshore facilities at OPP and SID, which requires transportation of goods and personnel between OPP and SID. The methods of transportation between June and September are crew boats (for personnel transportation) and barges (for transportation of large goods), as shown in Table 2-2.

Nuiqsut fall whaling typically occurs between late August and September at Cross Island. Nuiqsut whalers travel from Nuiqsut along the Colville River to Harrison Bay, then east to reach Cross Island. The route is typically within the barrier islands, which is a route that crosses between OPP and SID. Crew boats and barges are typically used during the times that subsistence activities occur. However, if the end of the bowhead whale hunt is delayed to late September or into October, and depending on weather conditions, it is possible that the hovercraft could be used at the same time as some subsistence activities.

3.22.3 EFFECT ON SUBSISTENCE ACTIVITIES

Effect of the Nikaichuq North Exploration Drilling Project on Subsistence Activities

Activities associated with the Nikaichuq North Exploration Drilling Project, including vessel traffic, are consistent with existing operations in the project area. Eni vessel traffic uses regular routes within a narrow corridor between OPP and SID, as shown in Figure 2-3. No impacts to subsistence activities are expected because of the mitigation measures outlined in Section 3.22.4. Eni will follow these mitigation measures, including consultation with subsistence users, to ensure their activities do not conflict with subsistence activities.

Effects of the No Action Alternative on Subsistence Activities

Activities associated with the No Action Alternative are similar to the Nikaichuq North Exploration Drilling Project and would be consistent with existing operations in the project area. Eni will follow these mitigation measures to ensure that their activities do not conflict with subsistence activities.