

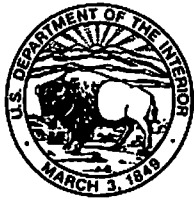
5 18 2012

3130-1R BOEM

RECEIVED

MAY 22 2012

Office of Environment, Alaska OES
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
Anchorage, Alaska



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF OCEAN ENERGY MANAGEMENT

Alaska OCS Region

3801 Centerpoint Drive, Suite 500

Anchorage, Alaska 99503-5823

MAY 14 2012

Ms. Judith Bittner
State Historic Preservation Officer
Department of Natural Resources
Office of History and Archaeology
530 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1310
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3365

No Historic Properties Affected

Alaska State Historic Preservation Officer

Date: 5 18 2012

File No. 3130-1R BOEM

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OHA

Dear Ms. Bittner:

The U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) is reviewing an exploration plan (EP) from ConocoPhillips (COP) to drill up to six exploratory wells over multiple years, starting in 2014, in the Devils Paw prospect, 120 miles west of Wainwright in the Chukchi Sea (please refer to attached maps). The Alaska Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Regional Preservation Officer reviewed COP's archaeological report and the geohazard report, subcontracted to Fugro, Inc., and has concluded that the exploratory wells would have no effect on historic properties.

The sea floor of the Devils Paw prospect is shallow, featureless, smooth, and level with a Holocene mantle comprised of silt ranging in depth from ~3 m to ~7 m thick (COPs Unit A). It should be noted that the seismic work was conducted during a period of high sea states that resulted in side-scan sonar data being of moderate quality, at best, with numerous motion artifacts present in the data. Despite this constraint, the archaeologist judged the data to be adequate for assessing seafloor features and debris. East-west lines were generally of better quality than north-south lines, and were used to produce a mosaic of the sea bed surface for analysis. The field survey maintained a grid running north-south and east-west 300 m apart with the gap narrowing near potential well locations.

The COP consultant archaeologist reviewed the BOEM shipwreck database for the Devils Paw prospect, and discovered that there was a low to non-existent likelihood of finding any shipwrecks there. Between 1861 and 1951, the historic period of interest, there were 83 shipwrecks in nearshore waters from Barrow to Point Hope, and all but two went down within 25 miles of the shore. One of the two ships sank immediately and the other drifted toward shore, but their distance from shore was not recorded.

The Pleistocene level sediments range in depth from ~18 m to ~140 m (COPs Unit B). This level is described as being deeply channelized and subject to periods of fluvial to nearshore depositional environments. The riverine systems were shallow, low gradient rivers that did not transport boulders and cobbles far downstream. Pea-sized gravel is a rarity. There is no permafrost. The stream margins appear to have been severely eroded and subjected to repeated re-working. These stream banks further appear to have been severely eroded by some combination of erosion in the last marine transgression and subsequent ice-gouging. The

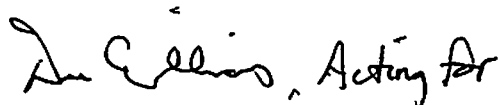
archaeological report concluded that in situ artifacts were unlikely to be present. No other geomorphological features were identified within the survey area that could be considered to be high probability areas for prehistoric occupation.

BOEM has found that the COP project at Devils Paw will have no effect on historic properties based on the following: (1) the area has low probability for locating shipwrecks, and the archaeologist did not identify any shipwrecks from examination of the seismic mosaic; and (2) the area has an absence of intact geomorphological features where archaeological sites would be found.

It should be noted that COP proposes an alternative staging location for the jack-up rig in the event that weather and ice conditions at the Devil's Paw Prospect are unfavorable for the jack-up rig to proceed to the drilling location. This alternative staging location would be situated ~20 mi offshore and south of Kivalina, possibly due west of Cape Krusenstern. COP has assured BOEM that they will obtain an archaeological assessment and report of the sector scans and coring of the locality to share with your office in a timely manner. At this point, there is insufficient information to make a finding, but we will coordinate with you upon receipt of the COP archaeological assessment of the alternative staging site.

BOEM has concluded that exploration in the Devils Paw Prospect will have no effect on historic properties, and is seeking your concurrence with the findings. If you have any questions or seek further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact Chris Campbell, Alaska OCS Region Preservation Officer (334-5264).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sharon E. Warren, Acting AR".

Sharon E. Warren
Regional Supervisor, Environment

cc: Regional Supervisor, Leasing and Plans

Mr. Mike Nelson, Senior Environmental Coordinator
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