

PUBLIC COMMENT ISSUANCE DATE: OCTOBER 10, 2019

PUBLIC COMMENT EXPIRATION DATE: NOVEMBER 13, 2019

TECHNICAL CONTACT:

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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to <u>modify</u> a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit <u>for</u> the following facility pursuant to the provisions of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. §1251 <u>et seq</u>:

U.S. NAVY ARCTIC ICE CAMP AK0053783

EPA PROPOSES TO MODIFY A NPDES PERMIT

The EPA proposes to modify the NPDES permit issued to the facility referenced above. The proposed modification includes the following:

 Expand the area of the potential camp location to account for increased ice movement during the six-week operational period;

This Fact Sheet includes:

- Information on public comment, public hearing, and appeal procedures;
- A description of the operations and discharge location; and
- Technical information supporting the proposed expansion of the area of camp operations.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The EPA is only accepting comments on the proposed modification to the Permit. The EPA will consider all substantive comments on the proposed modification to the NPDES permit before taking final action on the modification. Persons wishing to comment on, or request a public hearing for, the proposed permit action may do so in writing by the expiration date of the public notice period. A request for a public hearing must state the nature of the issues to be raised as well as the requester's name, address, and telephone number. All comments should include name, address, phone number, a concise statement of basis of comment and relevant facts upon which it is based. All written comments should be addressed to:

Ms. ERIN SEYFRIED
U.S. EPA, Region 10
1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 155 (19-C04)
Seattle, WA 98101
Fax: (206) 553-0165
E-mail: seyfried.erin@epa.gov

After the Public Notice period has ended and the public comments have been considered, the EPA Region 10 Director of the Water Division will make a final decision regarding the permit modification. If no substantive comments are received, the conditions in the proposed permit modification will become final and the permit modification will become effective upon issuance. If substantive comments are received, the EPA will respond to the comments and the permit will become effective 30 days after its issuance date, unless an appeal is submitted to the Environmental Appeals Board within 30 days.

401 CERTIFICATION FOR FACILITIES THAT DISCHARGE TO STATE WATERS

The area of coverage of the Arctic Ice Camp Permit is located within federal waters of the Beaufort Sea. As the permit does not authorize discharges to Alaska State waters, it is not subject to CWA Section 401 certification.

DOCUMENTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

The draft NPDES permit, fact sheet and related documents can be reviewed or obtained by contacting the EPA's Regional Office in Seattle or the Alaska Operations Office between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday (see address below). The draft permit, fact sheet, and other information can also be found by visiting the Region 10 website at "www.epa.gov/R10earth/waterpermits.htm".

U.S. EPA REGION 10 1200 6th Avenue, Suite 155 (19-C04) Seattle, WA 98101 (206) 553–0523 U.S. EPA ANCHORAGE OPERATIONS OFFICE 222 West 7th Avenue, Suite 19 (Room 537) Anchorage, AK 99513 (907) 271–5083

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I. FACILITY OVERVIEW

The United States Navy ("U.S. Navy") is the operator of the temporary Arctic Ice Camp ("the facility"), located approximately 100 - 200 nautical miles north of Deadhorse, Alaska. The facility provides support for a variety of submarine training and testing, and research activities. The U.S. Navy constructs the facility on multiyear ice, which is structurally more stable than first-year ice. The exact location of the facility cannot be predicted in advance as it will depend upon ice conditions at the start of the exercise. The location will also change over the course of the exercise as the ice floe on which the camp is built drifts due to wind and ocean currents.

The Navy expects to operate the facility during a six (6) week period, from approximately late February to early April timeframe, every other year. Once constructed, the facility consists of approximately 15 to 20 buildings (housing, dining facility, and command hut), a runway, and a heliport. The completed facility, including the runway, is approximately one mile in diameter. The camp population hosts an average of 48 people with a maximum population of 65 people over two separate two-day periods. During facility construction and demobilization, the camp population will consist of about 15 people.

All materials, fuel, and food for the facility are transported from Deadhorse, Alaska by aircraft that range in size from small, twin-engine aircraft, to large LC-130 military transport aircraft. Upon completion of activities at the facility, the facility will be demobilized and removed from the ice floe, including all construction materials, solid waste, hazardous waste, and sanitary waste.

The EPA issued an NPDES permit for the Arctic Ice Camp on December 14, 2015 and issued a permit modification on December 21, 2017 to authorized wastewater discharges from the facility within an expanded area of operations to account for increased ice movement during the operational period. The permit authorizes the U.S. Navy to discharge graywater (Outfall 001) and reverse osmosis reject water (Outfall 002) from the ice camp to the Beaufort Sea. This was the first NPDES permit for the facility.

On May 13, 2019, the U.S. Navy submitted a Request for Modification of the Arctic Ice Camp Permit (AK-005378-3). In this letter (see Appendix A), the U.S. Navy requested modification of the area of potential camp operations.

II. PROPOSED MAJOR MODIFICATIONS

A. CAUSE FOR MODIFICATION

The regulations at 40 CFR §122.62 allow for NPDES permits to be modified for cause. The cause for modification of the current Arctic Ice Camp NPDES permit is consistent with 40 CFR §122.62(a)(2) which allows permits to be modified during their term due to the submission of new information that was not available at the time of the current permit's issuance and would have justified the application of different permit conditions at the time of permit issuance.

B. MODIFICATION TO THE AREA OF CAMP OPERATIONS

The EPA is proposing to expand the area of potential camp operations. The area is the specified geographic location in which the U.S. Navy is authorized to discharge graywater (Outfall 001) and reverse osmosis reject water (Outfall 002). The Arctic Ice Camp will still be established on multi-year ice approximately 100 - 200 nautical miles north of Deadhorse, Alaska.

The U.S. Navy operated the Arctic Ice Camp in February 2016 and 2018 at locations approximately 197 nautical miles north of Deadhorse, Alaska. During both seasons, ice floe drift was observed to be greater than anticipated and the Arctic Ice Camp moved close to the boundary authorized by the Permit. To ensure the camp operates within the permitted area, the U.S. Navy requested to expand the area of potential operation where the discharge could occur to the south and east (Appendix A). Figure 1 depicts the current permitted area of operation and the requested expansion, which is included on Page 6 of the Draft Permit.

III. MINOR MODIFICATION: UPDATED EPA REGION 10 CONTACT INFORMATION

The EPA Region 10 underwent an organizational realignment in early 2019. As a result, the EPA has updated the Permit to include the new mailing address and revised contact information to reflect this organizational change. Pursuant to 40 CFR 122.63, these edits are considered minor modifications and are not subject to public comment.

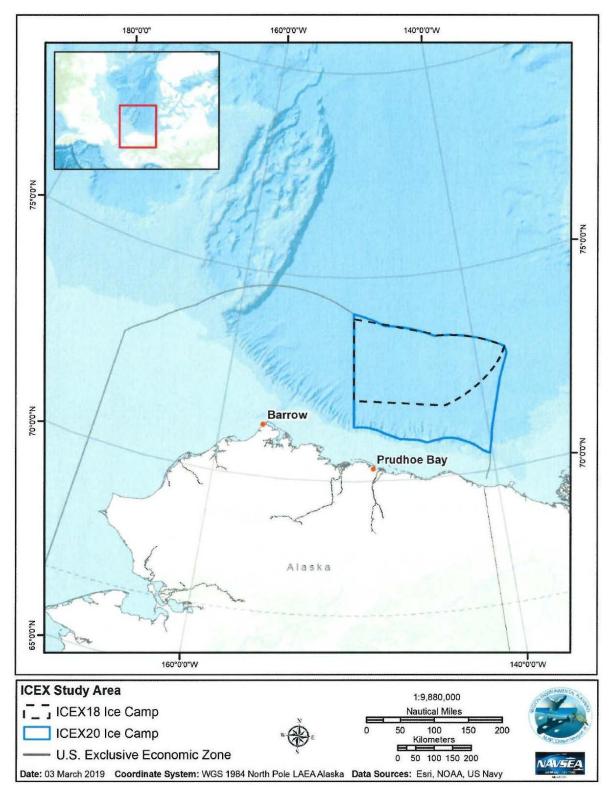


FIGURE 1. Proposed expansion of the area of operations for the Arctic Ice Camp. The dashed line represents the current permitted operational area, while the solid blue line represents the requested expansion.

IV. OCEAN DISCHARGE CRITERIA EVALUATION

The EPA's Ocean Discharge Criteria (40 CFR Part 125, Subpart M) set forth factors the Regional Administrator must consider when determining whether the discharges will cause unreasonable degradation of the marine environment. Unreasonable degradation is defined as follows (40 CFR § 125.121(e)):

- Significant adverse changes in ecosystem diversity, productivity, and stability of the biological community within the area of discharge and surrounding biological communities;
- Threat to human health through direct exposure to pollutants or through consumption of exposed aquatic organisms; or
- Loss of aesthetic, recreational, scientific, or economic values that are unreasonable in relation to the benefit derived from the discharge.

The EPA regulations set out ten criteria to consider when conducting an Ocean Discharge Criteria Evaluation (ODCE) (40 CFR 125.122). The original ODCE developed by the EPA during the 2015 NPDES permit issuance process concluded that there would be no unreasonable degradation of the marine environment as a result of the authorized wastewater discharges (US EPA, 2015). The EPA has reviewed the original analysis and determined that the proposed NPDES permit modification does not change the conclusion based on the following factors:

- (1) There is no change in the quantities, composition, or potential for bioaccumulation or persistence of the pollutants to be discharged.
- (2) The proposed permit modification does not change the composition of the discharges, therefore there is no risk of increased potential transport of such pollutants by biological, physical, or chemical processes.
- (3) The composition and vulnerability of the biological communities, which may be exposed to such pollutants has not changed (i.e. all listed species and critical habitats) were previously considered.
- (4) The proposed expanded area of camp operation does not change the importance of the receiving water area to the surrounding biological community.
- (5) There are no new special aquatic sites not previously considered.
- (6) Since the composition, duration, and frequency of discharge has not changed, the potential impacts on human health through direct and indirect pathways does not change.
- (7) All impacts to existing or potential recreational and commercial fishing, including finfishing and shellfishing, were previously considered.
- (8) The CZMA consistency provisions do not apply to Alaska.
- (9) The proposed permit modification does not change the other factors relating to the effects of the discharge that were previously considered.
- (10) The proposed permit modification does not change the applicable marine water quality criteria developed pursuant to CWA section 304(a)(1).

V. ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT CONSULTATION

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 regulations at 50 CFR §402.16 outline four general conditions for reinitiating formal consultation: (1) the amount or extent of incidental take is exceeded; (2) new information reveals effects of the action that may affect listed species or critical habitat in a manner or to an extent not previously considered; (3) the action is modified in a manner causing effects to listed species or critical habitat not previously considered; (4) a new species is listed or critical habitat designated that may be affected by the action.

The EPA has determined that the proposed permit modification does not require reinitiating consultation under the ESA. The EPA reached this conclusion based on the following factors: (1) The proposed permit modification does not change the composition, duration, and frequency of the two authorized wastewater discharges; and (2) While the operational area of the Arctic Ice Camp would expand, no new species or critical habitat areas would be affected, i.e. all listed species and critical habitats have been previously considered. As such, the Biological Evaluation and consultation process conducted during the original permit issuance process is valid and reinitiation of ESA consultation is not necessary for the Permit modification.

VI. REFERENCES

- US EPA. 2015. Final National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit for the US Navy Arctic Ice Camp (AK-005378-3). December 2015.
- US EPA. 2015. Final Ocean Discharge Criteria Evaluation (ODCE) for the US Navy Arctic Ice Camp NPDES Permit. December 2015.
- US Navy. 2019. Request for NPDES Permit Modification of US Navy Arctic Ice Camp NPDES Permit. May 2019.

VII. DEFINITIONS

- 1. § means section or subsection.
- **2.** Act means the Clean Water Act.
- **3.** Best Management Practices ("BMPs") means schedules of activities, prohibitions of practices, maintenance procedures, and other management practices to prevent or reduce the pollution of "waters of the United States." BMPs also include treatment requirements, operating procedures, and practices to control plant site runoff, spillage or leaks, sludge or waste disposal, or drainage from raw material storage.
- **4.** CFR means the Code of Federal Regulations.
- **5.** CWA, or the Act, means the Clean Water Act.
- **6.** Director means the Director of the Office of Water and Watersheds, or Director of the Office of Compliance and Enforcement, EPA, or authorized representatives.
- 7. Discharge, when used without qualification, means the discharge of a pollutant.
- **8.** Discharge of a pollutant means any addition of any "pollutant" or combination of pollutants to "waters of the United States" from any "point source".
- **9.** EPA means the United States Environmental Protection Agency.
- 10. NPDES means National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System.
- 11. Permittee means a company, organization, association, entity, or person who is issued a wastewater permit and is responsible for ensuring compliance, monitoring, and reporting as required by the permit.

APPENDIX A. U.S. NAVY REQUEST FOR NPDES PERMIT MODIFICATION







DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

COMMANDER UNDERSEA WARFIGHTING DEVELOPMENT CENTER
DETACHMENT ARCTIC SUBMARINE LABORATORY
140 SYLVESTER ROAD
SAN DIEGO, CA 92106-3521

5090 Ser 00/014 10 May 19

From: Director, Undersea Warfighting Development Center Detachment Arctic Submarine

Laboratory

To: Mr. Michael Lidgard, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10 NPDES Permits

Unit, OWW-19 11200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900 Seattle, Washington 98101

Subj: ICEX 2020 NPDES PERMIT UPDATE COVER LETTER

Encl: (a) NPDES Permit Updated Narrative

(b) EPA Form 3510-1

(c) EPA Form 3510-2E

(d) ICEX Study Area Map

- 1. This submission is a request to modify the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit No. AK0053783 that was issued to the United States Navy on 14 December 2015 and then modified and reissued effective 1 February 2018. This permit covers discharges from the operation of a Navy Arctic ice camp that is constructed approximately every two years on the ice floes of the Beaufort Sea.
- 2. The only modification requested is an expansion of the ice camp's activity area as detailed in in enclosure (d), Ice Exercise (ICEX) Study Area Map. This expanded activity area is required to support the establishment of the ice camp on ice floes suitable and safe enough to meet the Navy's mission. As evidenced by the previous two ICEXs (ICEX'16 and ICEX'18), finding a suitable ice floe to support the establishment of the camp is becoming more difficult, resulting in the need to expand the search area. Providing mission planners with larger geographic area from which to choose potential camp locations is essential to the continued success of Navy Ice Exercises.
- 3. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Ms. Laura Busch at (757) 836-8471 or laura.busch@navy.mil.

T. E. GODA By Direction

Navy Arctic Ice Camp NPDES Permit Update (NPDES Permit No. AK0053783) April 2019

Fresh Water Production and Reverse Osmosis System Discharge (Outfall 002)

The description of fresh water production and the reverse osmosis system discharge remains unchanged from EPA Form 3510-2E in the original permit application submitted in April 2015.

Food Preparation and Dishwashing Discharge (Outfall 001)

The description of the discharges from food preparation and dishwashing remains unchanged from the description submitted with the April 2017 permit modification application.

Sanitary and Personal Hygiene Waste

Sanitary/human waste (i.e. blackwater) generated at the camp will be containerized and brought back to Deadhorse, AK for disposition. Most personal hygiene is achieved via the use of baby wipes, waterless shampoo, waterless soap, hand sanitizers, and electric razors. Camp personnel are allowed to melt ice to use for personal hygiene (EX- to brush their teeth) using the heaters in their berthing areas. Waste generated from these activities will be placed in a solid waste container available in each berthing area and brought back to Deadhorse, AK for disposition.

Fresh water will be available for hand washing at a hygiene station located in the camp's dining facility. The hygiene station will utilize a biodegradable, chlorine and phosphate-free detergent that meets EPA's Safer Choice standards. It will be collocated with the sink used for dishwashing, and it will share the same drain pipe for discharge to the Beaufort Sea (Outfall 001).

Enclosure (b) -

Form Approved, OMB No. 2040-0086,

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^{*}If noncontact cooling water is discharged

٧.	Except for leaks or spills, will the discharge described in this form be intermittent or seasonal?	_		_	
	If we strictly describe the frequency of flow and duration	IV.	Y e s	\Box	No

The discharge from the ice camp's dining facility will occur for a six week period between February and April. The flow will occur during periods of food preparation and dishwashing The average daily flow will be 100 gallons/day with a maximum daily flow of 195 gallons/day.

The discharge of reject water from the camp's portable reverse osmosis system will occur for a four week period during the ice camp's six weeks of operation. The average daily flow will be 288 gallons/day with a maximum daily flow of 576 gallons/day.

VI. TREATMENT SYSTEM (Describe briefly any treatment system(s) used or to be used)

A 1/16 inch mesh screen will be used to strain solids from the wastewater prior to discharge. When the screen becomes loaded with solids, the discharge to the drain will be stopped prior to removal and cleaning of the mesh screen. As a best management practice, camp personnel will be directed to scrape dishes clean of any solids prior to turning them in for washing.

VII. OTHER INFORMATION (Optional)

Use the space below to expand upon any of the above questions or to bring to the attention of the reviewer any other information you feel should be considered in establishing permit limitations. Attach additional sheets, if necessary.

This application is for the modification of NPDES Permit AK0053783. The only change requested is to extend the activity area of the ice camp. There are no changes to the discharges already permitted under NPDES Permit AK0053783 and no new discharges being added to camp operations. A map of the expanded camp activity area is attached to this application package.

VIII. CERTIFICATION

I certify under penalty of law that this document and all attachments were prepared under my direction or supervision in accordance with a system designed to assure that qualified personnel property gather and evaluate the information submitted. Based on my inquiry of the person of persons who manage the system, or those persons directly responsible for gathering the information, the information submitted is to the best of my knowledge and belief, true; accurate, and complete. I am aware that there are significant penalties for submitting false information, including the possibility of fine and imprisonment for knowing violations.

A. Name & Official Title

Theodore Goda, ICEX Program Manager

C. Signature

B. Phone No. (area code & no.)

(619) 553-7446

D. Date Signed

5-13-2019

Enclosure (d) -

