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**Newly revealed seismic exploration plan threatens every inch of the Arctic Refuge coastal plain**

WASHINGTON – Today [the American public learned](#) the Bureau of Land Management has received and is considering a plan to conduct 3-D seismic exploration on the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge this winter. [The plan was submitted by SAExploration, Inc.](#), in conjunction with the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation and the Kaktovik Inupiat Corporation. The proposed survey permit area encompasses 2,602 square miles, or the entirety of the 1.5 million acre coastal plain.

The scars of the 2-D seismic testing completed on the coastal plain in 1984 and 1985 are [still visible 30 years later](#). Modern seismic exploration, however, is done using a 3-D technique that requires a much denser grid of trails – the 1984-85 trails on the coastal plain were approximately four miles apart, while the 3-D seismic trails envisioned here would be a mere 660 feet apart. Seismic activities would involve convoys of 30-ton thumper trucks and bulldozers traveling over extensive areas of fragile tundra. These intrusive surface exploration activities – typically employed year after year throughout the life of an oil field – would cause severe and long-lasting damage to the Arctic Refuge.

**Statement by Adam Kolton, Executive Director at Alaska Wilderness League:**

“This is the polar opposite of what was promised by drilling proponents. Instead of a small footprint and a careful process, they want to deploy a small army of industrial vehicles and equipment with a mandate to crisscross every square inch of the Refuge’s biological heart. This scheme will put denning polar bears at risk and leave lasting scars on the fragile tundra and its vegetation, and that’s before a single drill rig has been placed or length of pipeline installed.

We should no more allow this to happen in America’s largest and wildest refuge than in Yellowstone Park or the Grand Canyon. That’s why Americans and Alaskans continue to resist this morally bankrupt quest to exploit a national treasure for a speculative fix of oil.

The Trump Interior Department was met with hundreds of Alaskans speaking in opposition in hearings in [Anchorage](#) and [Fairbanks](#) this week, unified Gwich’in opposition in Arctic Village last week and [\\$1.5 trillion worth of investors](#) opposing drilling before that. And in Congress, [legislation has been introduced](#) to repeal the Arctic Refuge leasing provision, which only passed because it was buried in a larger tax package and not subject to full, fair and open debate.”



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### Additional takeaways from the SAExploration seismic plan:

- The survey permit area will encompass 2,602 square miles, or the entirety of the 1.5 million acre coastal plain.
- The seismic plan promises to mitigate conflicts with subsistence users but mentions coordination with only the village of Kaktovik – there is no mention of any consultation with the Gwich'in.
- The plan makes no mention of Endangered Species Act consultation – only incidental harassment authorization – related to polar bears. This despite the Southern Beaufort Sea population's status as [threatened](#), its [40% reduction in population](#) size over the first decade of the 2000s, and the [increasing presence](#) of mothers and cubs denning along the coastal plain due to loss of sea ice from climate change.
- The plan envisions potentially two separate camps moving every 2-5 days and housing crews of up to 150-160 persons each, and each crew would require loaders, dozers, tractors, Ice/Snow Cats, personnel carriers, trailers, incinerators, fueling stations and more, as well as runways.

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