

# Bear Avoidance, Interaction, Mitigation, and Monitoring Plan North Slope, Alaska

Great Bear Pantheon, LLC 3705 Arctic Blvd, Suite 2324 Anchorage, AK 99503

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#### **ABBREVIATIONS**

ADF&G Alaska Department of Fish and Game

AES ASRC Energy Services

ADNR Alaska Department of Natural Resources

Great Bear Pantheon LLC

GBP Program Great Bear Pantheon drilling Program

HSE Health, Safety, and Environment

km kilometer(s)

LOA Letter of Authorization

MMPA Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972

NSB North Slope Borough

Plan Bear Avoidance, Interaction, Mitigation, and Monitoring Plan

TAPS Trans Alaska Pipeline System

USC U.S. Code

USFWS U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

#### 1 Introduction

Great Bear Pantheon LLC (Great Bear) presents this Bear Avoidance, Interaction, Mitigation, and Monitoring Plan (Plan). This Plan has been developed for the Great Bear Pantheon drilling Program (GBP Program) to accomplish the following purposes:

- Guide GBP Program personnel, including Great Bear employees and contractors to:
  - o Prevent bears from associating humans and facilities with food;
  - o Prevent or minimize the potential for human-bear interactions;
  - o Understand controls to prevent interaction;
  - o Protect workers and bears; and
  - o Implement observation and reporting procedures.
- Fulfill requirements of Mitigation Measure 2(d)(i) for North Slope Areawide Oil and Gas Lease Sales; and
- Fulfill requirements for obtaining, if necessary, a Letter of Authorization (LOA) from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for incidental and intentional (hazing) takes of polar bears in the northernmost portion of the GBP Program area.

#### 1.1 Mitigation Measures and Regulatory Requirements

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) applies mandatory mitigation measures to all leases acquired during the North Slope Areawide Oil and Gas Lease Sale. Great Bear will comply with all the following mitigation measures related to grizzly and polar bears:

- Lessees are required to prepare and implement a human-bear interaction plan designed to minimize conflicts between bears and humans. The plan should include measures to:
  - Minimize the attraction of bears to facility sites, including containing garbage and food waste;
  - Organize the layout of buildings and work areas to minimize interactions between humans and bears;
  - o Warn personnel of bears near or on facilities and the proper actions to take;
  - o Deter bears from the drill site (if lessees are authorized to do so);
  - o Provide contingencies in the event bears do not leave the site;
  - o Discuss proper storage and disposal of materials that may be toxic to bears; and
  - o Provide a systematic record of bears on site and in the immediate area.
- Before commencement of any activities, lessees shall consult with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) to identify the locations of any known brown bear den sites that are occupied in the season of proposed activities. Exploration and development activities started between September 20 and May 15 may not be conducted within one-half mile of known occupied brown bear dens, unless alternative mitigation measures are approved by the ADF&G. A lessee who encounters an occupied brown bear den not previously identified by the ADF&G must report it to the Division of Wildlife

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Conservation, ADF&G, within 24 hours. Mobile activities shall avoid such discovered occupied dens by one-half mile unless alternative mitigation measures are approved by DO&G with concurrence from ADF&G. Nonmobile facilities will not be required to relocate.

In addition to the mitigation measures above, Great Bear will comply with the all applicable local, state, and federal codes, statutes, and regulations including the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (MMPA) (16 U.S. Code [USC] 1361-1407) and the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 USC 1531-1544). Great Bear is coordinating with the ADF&G and USFWS to identify the locations of known grizzly bear and polar bear dens near Great Bear's drill sites and develop additional mitigation measures, if necessary, to protect bears and humans.

If necessary, Great Bear will request a LOA from the USFWS for coverage under the current Beaufort Sea Incidental Take Regulations as per the MMPA for the incidental (50 CFR Part 18) and intentional (hazing) (Sections 109(h) and 112(c) of the MMPA) take of polar bears.

# 2 Bears and Exploration/Development Activities: Impacts of Human Activity

Human activity may attract wildlife. The biggest attractant for wildlife is associated with food and waste-handling practices. Bears will generally avoid human activities if they are not attracted by food and wastes. Bears can learn to associate humans and facilities with a food source. This association can be passed down from generation to generation. Food, associated by-products, and dumpsters are major attractants for bears.

Proper food and waste management are critical to prevent bears from becoming conditioned to associate human activity as a food source. When female bears and their cubs emerge from dens (April/May), they start looking for food. Extra care is necessary to properly store and dispose of food waste to prevent bear attraction and their entry into work areas at these times.

## 3 General Policies and Mitigation

GBP Program personnel will be trained and required to adhere to several general procedures to deter all wildlife species from entering, and remaining in, work areas for the safety of personnel and wildlife. Also, the Drill Site Manager or Shift Supervisor will maintain a file of wildlife observation forms that will be submitted to the appropriate agency (ADF&G or USFWS).

## 3.1 Food Handling and Food Waste Management

Nothing attracts wildlife like food; therefore, proper food handling and food waste management is imperative. The following measures will be implemented to minimize bear attraction:

- GBP Program personnel will NOT feed wildlife. Any personnel observed doing so will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the project.
- GBP Program personnel will NOT eat outside of buildings or vehicles.
- GBP Program personnel will segregate food waste from non-food waste and discard the food waste only in designated receptacles.

- Food waste will not be placed in dumpsters or other receptacles that are not secure from wildlife access.
- Food in vehicles is discouraged, but if GBP Program personnel must take food into vehicles, the food will be stored in containers that minimize odors, such as plastic bags or plastic containers with lids.
- GBP Program personnel will remove all garbage, including used food containers, from vehicles at the end of each shift, or more frequently if appropriate disposal receptacles are available.
- Kitchen grease will not be discarded in receptacles marked for food waste.
- GBP Program personnel will contact the Drill Site Manager or Shift Supervisor if any improperly managed food waste is observed or for answers to questions on refuse management.

#### 3.2 Handling Non-Food Materials and Non-Food Waste

Non-food materials (e.g., plastic, sanitary waste from rooms and restrooms, rubber, motor oil, and chemicals such as antifreeze) can be attractive to some wildlife species, and if these materials are not handled properly, they can increase the likelihood of wildlife encounters. Proper waste handling procedures will include the following:

- Potentially harmful materials will be stored in secure containers (e.g., 55-gallon steel drums) or inside a secure building.
- Storage containers will be inspected periodically to ensure that they are secure, in good condition, and no spills have occurred.
- All waste will be properly disposed of.
- GBP Program personnel will contact the Drill Site Manager or Shift Supervisor if any improperly managed non-food materials or waste is observed or for answers to questions on waste management.

## 3.3 Infrastructure Design and Maintenance

Infrastructure can potentially provide nesting or denning cover for wildlife. Listed below are some examples of infrastructure design and maintenance activities that can help minimize the attraction of wildlife. Great Bear will implement these where practicable.

- The design of the infrastructure of any site should incorporate modifications to reduce the attractiveness of the site to wildlife (e.g., installation of skirting under elevated buildings where practicable, proper lighting, capping of all pipes, blocking culverts in the winter, and the placement of gates or other barriers on stairwells).
- Elevated structures, including roads and pads, can collect drifting snow that can serve as
  artificial denning habitat if not properly managed. The prevailing wind is from the
  northeast, and the direction of drifting should be taken into account when placing barriers
  or storing materials.

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- If materials must be stored outdoors, they should be arranged in a way to minimize the space where bears could be concealed.
- Personnel areas, including all entrance areas, should be illuminated during working hours of darkness.

#### 3.4 Injured Bears

If a bear that is injured or stressed is observed, GBP Program personnel will maintain a safe distance from the bear and will not approach it to provide assistance in any form. Injured bears can be aggressive. GBP Program personnel must instead immediately notify the Drill Site Manager or Shift Supervisor to provide observation details, such as the species, the location of the bear, and the type of injury or problem.

The Drill Site Manager or Shift Supervisor will contact the appropriate agency immediately, either the ADF&G or the USFWS, and work with that agency to take the necessary action. The presence of a potentially dangerous predatory species may require actual agency supervision before any action can be taken. Figure 2 (at the end of this section) provides agency contact information.

If an animal is severely injured, it may be dispatched (i.e., killed), with permission from either the ADF&G or USFWS. A firearm will be kept on the GBP Program site in the control of the Drill Site Manager or the Shift Supervisor for this purpose, but only authorized GBP Program personnel will be allowed to use the firearm. Authorized GBP Program personnel include only those individuals who have completed an 8-hour firearm safety course and have been identified for dispatch tasks by the Drill Site Manager or Shift Supervisor.

#### 3.5 Grizzly Bears

Brown bears (*Ursus arctos*), commonly referred to as grizzly bears, occur throughout northern Alaska from the Brooks Range to the Arctic Ocean. They are present in small populations in and around the GBP Program area; therefore, there exists a possibility that GBP Program personnel may encounter a grizzly bear.

Typically, grizzly bears are active in the summer and occupy dens during the late fall (October or November), throughout winter, and into early spring (April) (Craighead and Craighead 1972). All occupy winter dens, with pregnant females entering earlier and emerging later with their cubs, as compared to males and non-pregnant females, whose hibernation duration is somewhat shorter (Craighead and Craighead 1972).

Construction of GBP pads, driveways, infrastructure sites, and facilities will take place between May and October and therefore are unlikely to result in den disturbance and/or destruction. All practicable measures will be taken in order to avoid den disturbance.

### 3.5.1 Early Detection and Avoidance

To minimize the potential for human-grizzly bear interactions, early detection and avoidance procedures will be followed. Great Bear has contacted the ADF&G to identify known den locations in and around the GBP Program area.

GBP Program-related attractants for grizzly bears will be food and waste; however, even when garbage and other nonnatural foods are not available, grizzly bears are curious about their

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surroundings and will investigate camps, vehicles, and buildings. Darkness, vegetation cover, blind corners, noise, wind, precipitation, fog, and other conditions may make it difficult to see or hear a bear. GBP Program personnel should remain alert for the presence of grizzly bears in and near GBP Program facilities. The following are general precautions to be taken during GBP Program operations:

- Manage all potential bear attractants, particularly food, waste, and chemicals, in accordance with Great Bear waste management and chemical storage policies. Refer to sections 3.1 and 3.2 for associated guidance.
- Inspect the work site for bear or bear sign from the safety of a vehicle or building before entering the work site. Check stairs and access areas, as well as below structures, to avoid a surprise encounter. Be aware that bears can also be concealed behind dumpsters, conexes, and stacked materials.
- Be especially alert when beyond illuminated areas or when weather prevents good visibility. Make lots of noise before walking into an area with poor visibility.
- Use the buddy system when working outdoors and, if necessary, designate a "Bear Guard" to regularly inspect the work area and scan for bears.
- Work with other operations being conducted simultaneously on pad to assure each other's actions are compatible with providing protection from and avoidance of bears.
- Check with the Drill Site Manager or Shift Supervisor before working outside in areas not secure from grizzly bears for the latest information on bear sightings in the area.
- Maintain visual or radio contact with the Drill Site Manager or the Shift Supervisor when working outdoors to receive any grizzly bear sighting alerts.
- Report all grizzly bear sightings to the Drill Site Manager or Shift Supervisor.

#### 3.5.2 Interaction and Response

If a bear is observed in the GBP Program area, the following precautions should be taken:

- Depending on the distance between the bear and the activities, retreating to vehicles, emergency shelter, or temporary buildings for safety may be necessary.
- Personnel must never approach or crowd a bear. Each bear is unique in its comfort level
  with humans; the more distance between personnel and the bear, the better for conflict
  avoidance.
- If a bear is encountered at a close distance, remain calm. Attacks are rare. Most bears are interested only in protecting food, cubs, or their "personal space." Once the threat is removed, they will move on. Remember the following:
  - o *Identify Yourself*: Let the bear know you are human. Talk to the bear in a normal voice. Wave your arms. Help the bear recognize you. If a bear cannot tell what you are, it may come closer or stand on its hind legs to get a better look or smell. A standing bear is usually curious, not threatening. You may try to back away slowly diagonally, but if the bear follows, stop and hold your ground.

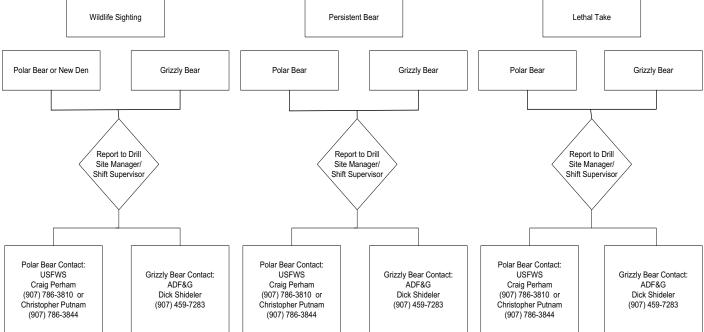
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- Onn't Run: You can't outrun a bear. They have been clocked at speeds up to 35 mph, and like dogs, they will chase fleeing animals. Bears often make bluff charges, sometimes to within 10 feet of their adversary, without making contact. Continue waving your arms and talking to the bear. If the bear gets too close, raise your voice and be more aggressive. Make noise, but never imitate bear sounds or make a high-pitched squeal.
- o If Attacked: If a bear actually makes contact, surrender! Fall to the ground and play dead. Lie flat on your stomach, or curl up in a ball with your hands behind your neck. Typically, a bear will break off its attack once it feels the threat has been eliminated. Remain motionless for as long as possible. If you move, and the bear sees or hears you, it may return and renew its attack. In rare instances, an attacking bear may perceive a person as food. If the bear continues biting long after you assume a defensive posture, it likely is a predatory attack. Fight back vigorously.

Grizzly bear hazing will be done or approved by the Drill Site Manager or Shift Supervisor after consultation with the ADF&G. Designated bear hazers will be properly trained and authorized to haze bears. Personnel other than the designated bear hazer will not attempt to haze a bear. Vehicles may be used to herd bears away from work locations. In addition, noisemakers such as horns and sirens may be used to cause the bear to avoid the work locations. Firearms will not be used to haze bears.

**Figure 1 Bear Notification Chart** 

Wildlife Sighting Persistent Bear



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#### 3.5.3 Monitoring and Reporting

GBP Program personnel will likely be the primary source of grizzly bear sighting information. If a bear or bear sign (e.g., tracks or scat) is observed in or near work areas, camp buildings, or storage locations, the observer must first ensure his/her own safety by returning to a secure location, if necessary, and then immediately report the sighting to the Drill Site Manager or Shift Supervisor. Personnel should never remain in an exposed position in order to view or photograph a bear.

When a bear sighting is reported to the Drill Site Manager or Shift Supervisor, he/she will initiate the alert system. Workers in the area will be contacted immediately and directed to move to a secure location. Secure areas may include buildings (but not light structures) or the cab of either a large work vehicle or heavy machinery. If only a pickup or other similarly sized vehicle is available, personnel should drive at least 50 yards from the bear and observe the bear with the vehicle engine running.

The alert will consist of voice communication that provides specific information on the location of the bear, instructions on where to move to for safety, and other evacuation instructions. Only when the Drill Site Manager or Shift Supervisor determines that the bear is no longer present in the work area will the alert be lifted.

The Drill Site Manager or Shift Supervisor will verify the grizzly bear sighting and complete an *Oilfield Grizzly Observation Form* (Exhibit A). A copy of the completed report will be retained on site, and a copy will be faxed to Dick Shideler with the ADF&G (refer to Figure 2 for contact information).

#### 3.6 Polar Bears

Polar bears (*Ursus maritimus*) are considered arctic marine mammals and are protected from hunting or harassment under the MMPA. They are also designated a threatened species under the Endangered Species act of 1973. Polar bears are excellent swimmers and can run up to 25 miles per hour. Because of their size, speed, and curious nature, any encounter with a polar bear is potentially dangerous. During the summer months, the timeframe for the GBP Program, polar bears normally hunt seals for food far out on the pack ice. As winter approaches, newly formed ice bridges may bring them closer to land. Only pregnant females use dens during the winter months, and they emerge with their cubs in March. Given the location and timing of the GBP Program, interaction with Polar Bear is extremely unlikely.

In their natural setting, polar bears eat only meat, mostly seals. However, in areas with human activity, they may be attracted to plastic, rubber, motor oil, and chemicals such as antifreeze. Bears may visit work sites because of curiosity or food odor, but their visits will be transitory if they are not rewarded with food.

The likelihood of a polar bear encounter in the GBP Program area is very low. Polar bears are coastal animals, and the GBP Program's northernmost exploratory well location is more than 25 miles from the coast. Polar bears have been documented far inland, but this is a rare occurrence. The most likely case of a polar bear occurring near the GBP Program area would be a bear traveling up the Sagavanirktok River bed.

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#### 3.6.1 Early Detection and Avoidance

Polar bear early detection and avoidance procedures are similar to those for grizzly bears. Polar bears, like grizzly bears, are attracted to food and waste. They are also curious creatures that may investigate camp sites, vehicles, and buildings simply because of their curiosity. The polar bear's white fur makes it exceptionally difficult to be seen when there is snow cover. Darkness, blind corners, noise, wind, precipitation, and fog will also add to the difficulty to see or hear a polar bear. GBP Program personnel must be alert to the possibility that a polar bear may enter the GBP Program area, and all personnel shall follow the general early detection and avoidance precautions presented for grizzly bears in Section 3.5.1.

#### 3.6.2 Interaction and Response

Refer to Section 3.5.2 for guidance on interaction and response in the event a polar bear is sighted. Polar bear hazing will be done or approved by Drill Site Manager or Shift Supervisor only after consultation with the USFWS. Designated bear hazers will be properly trained and authorized to haze bears. Personnel other than the designated bear hazer will not attempt to haze a bear. Vehicles may be used to herd bears away from work locations. In addition, noisemakers such as horns and sirens may be used to cause the bear to avoid the work locations. Firearms will not be used to haze bears.

#### 3.6.3 Monitoring and Reporting

Refer to Section 3.5.3 for the alert system that will be implemented if a bear (grizzly or polar) or bear sign is sighted.

#### 4 TRAINING AND MEETINGS

All Great Bear and contractor personnel working on the GBP Program will receive an environmental orientation before beginning work. This orientation will cover the information included in this Plan and will reinforce the importance of proper waste-handling and food management to minimize the potential for human-wildlife interactions. Additionally, information specific to human-wildlife interactions will be disseminated to GBP Program personnel in the form of environmental alerts and updates, safety bulletins, and safety meeting briefings for the duration of the GBP Program. The Drill Site Manager or Shift Supervisor will oversee the dissemination of this information. The Drill Site Manager or Shift Supervisor will also be responsible for maintaining completed copies of GBP Program-specific human-wildlife interaction forms on site and routing the forms as necessary to the ADF&G or the USFWS. Blank copies of all applicable forms are provided as appendices.

#### 5 AT-RISK LOCATIONS AND SITUATIONS

The following are lists of locations, situations, and activities where bear encounter risks may be higher and where attention to mitigating risks is essential.

Possible bear encounter locations include:

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- drill pad and drill rig;
- access roads;
- camp facilities;
- food consumption areas; and
- "blind" areas that are obscured by facilities, equipment, or other obstacles.

At-risk bear encounter situations and activities include:

- survey work;
- site cleanup;
- solid waste handling and disposal;
- construction;
- drilling support;
- maintenance;
- inexperienced crews; and
- dark/unlighted and visually obscured areas.

#### 6 SUBSISTENCE PLAN OF COOPERATION

Native subsistence hunters sometimes kill polar bears near the Beaufort Sea coast and brown bears further inland. Caribou are also hunted by local community residents. The portion of the Dalton Highway Corridor Management Area where GBP Program activities are proposed already has hunting restrictions. The area is open for the taking of big game, small game, and fur animals by bow and arrow only.

Great Bear is committed to minimizing the potential for GBP Program activities to interfere with subsistence activity. It is not anticipated that subsistence hunters will be active near Great Bear's proposed GBP Program activities. However, in the event that subsistence hunters are present, Great Bear's Drill Site Manager will be responsible for mitigating potential subsistence hunting conflicts. Drill Site Manager duties will include the following:

- Accompany staff during fall activities in the Program area.
- Provide guidance on avoiding potential impacts to subsistence users, areas, and resources.
- Observe and document wildlife including caribou and bears.
- Act as a liaison between Great Bear staff and local residents; relay concerns and information from residents to Great Bear staff.

The following mitigation measures will be implemented in order to protect subsistence harvest by local community residents:

- Comply with North Slope Areawide Lease Sale Mitigation Measures and Lessee Advisories.
- Conduct exploration, development, and production activities in a manner that prevents unreasonable conflicts between lease-related activities and subsistence activities.

Great Bear demonstrates its commitment to establishing stakeholder trust and respect by conducting community meetings and community leadership meetings in potentially affected subsistence communities. During these meetings, comments and concerns about Great Bear activities in the Transportation Corridor were shared by community members and leadership. Great Bear has conducted several meetings in the past and has plans to continue engagement with the North Slope Borough.

To supplement community input collected during leadership and community meetings, and to fulfill community cooperation requirements under the Beaufort Sea Incidental Take Regulations, AES, on behalf of Great Bear, contacted community leadership representatives to identify any potential impacts from Great Bear activities on polar bear subsistence hunting. The feedback received by community representatives from Utquagvik, Nuiqsut, and Anaktuvuk Pass, such as the Alaska Nanuuq Commission, the Native village of Barrow Wildlife Director, and the Mayor of Anaktuvuk Pass indicated that subsistence hunting for polar bears does not occur near Great Bear's potential drill sites.

Great Bear will continue to gather feedback from community representatives from potentially-affected subsistence communities. If a concern regarding the subsistence hunting of polar bears arises, Great Bear will engage in open communication to identify and evaluate potential measures to mitigate and minimize identified conflicts between the GBP Program and polar bear subsistence activities.

#### 7 REFERENCES

Craighead, F.C., Jr., and J.J. Craighead. 1972. "Grizzly bear prehibernation and denning activities as determined by radio tracking." *Wildl. Monogr.* 32. 35 pp.

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# Exhibit A Grizzly Bear Reporting Form

# Oilfield Grizzly Bear Reporting Form

Bear ID# (ADF&G use) 10/2020 rev.						
OBSERVER COMPANY/AGENCY						
OBSERVATION DATE         TIME: Start         Stop						
OBSERVATION FROM: Vehicle Ground Building Other						
OBSERVER DISTANCE FROM BEAR meters						
GENERAL LOCATION: Deadhorse Deadhorse MOA Kuparuk Endicott						
☐ Milne ☐ Badami ☐ Alpine ☐ Pt. Thomson ☐ TAPS (MP #)						
Other (latitude/longitude if known)						
SPECIFIC LOCATION [Example: 500 meters N of DS 14]: meters						
[direction] of[facility name]						
DUMPSTER PRESENT? Yes No Unknown						
WEATHER: PF Wind direction atmph						
☐ Clear/partly cloudy ☐ rain ☐ fog ☐ snow						
BEAR IDENTIFICATION: EAR FLAG COLOR [Note: right & left of bear, not observer]						
Color right Color left NATURAL MARKINGS [scars, torn ears, ETC.]						
OTHER BEARS PRESENT? No. of new cubs No. of yearlings						
No. of 2 year olds Number of other adults No. unknown						
BEAR ACTIVITY WHEN FIRST SEEN: Resting Feeding (natural food)						
Feeding (garbage) Traveling Traveling/feeding						
Other [describe]:						
BEAR REACTION TO OBSERVER:						
Were other people in area (not with observer)?  Yes  No  Unknown						
BEAR REACTION TO OTHER PEOPLE:						
REACTION COMMENTS						
DETERRENCE ACTION TAKEN? Yes No						
If yes, did you use:						
Cracker shell Other [describe]						
BEAR'S REACTION TO DETERRENT:						
ADDITIONAL REMARKS						
Dick Shideler, Alaska Dept. Fish & Game; FAX 907-459-7332, or email dick.shideler@alaska.gov						

# **Exhibit B Polar Bear Reporting Form**

#### **United States Department of the Interior**

Fish and Wildlife Service 1011 E. Tudor Road Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199

#### **Polar Bear Sighting Report**

Company:	Location:
Date:	
Date:am / pm / 24	<u></u>
LOA #:	
Observer Name:	
Phone/Email:	
Latitude: Longitude	:Datum:
Weather Conditions: Fog Snow	RainClearTemperature°F/°C
Wind Speed mph / kts Wind Direction (	(from) N NE E SE S SW W NW
Visibility: Poor Fair Good	Excellent
Number of Bears: (total number of bears & h adult sub-adult 2 year-old Male Female Unknown	yearling cub of year
Closest Distance of Bear(s): from personnel_	facility m / yd / ft
Bear Behavior (Initial Contact): curious ign other	
Bear Behavior (After Contact): curious igno other	
Description of Encounter:	
Duration of Encounter:Pos	ssible Attractants Present: Y / N
Describe Attractants:	
Deterrents Used & Distance: Y / N m / yd/ ft	
Vehicle	Rubber Bullet
Horn/Siren/Noise	Bean Bag
Spotlight/Headlight Crackershell	Other (describe)
Agency/Contacts:	
USFWS Craig Perham (786-3810) (Fax 786-3	
ADF&G Dick Shideler (459-7283) (Fax 459-7	
Other	Time Date