

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Fish and Wildlife Service****Issuance of Permit for Marine Mammals**

On July 8, 1999, a notice was published in the **Federal Register**, Vol. 64, No. 130, Page 36891, that an application had been filed with the Fish and Wildlife Service by Mike H. Boyd, Cartersville, GA for a permit (PRT-014003) to import one polar bear (*Ursus maritimus*) trophy taken from the Lancaster Sound population, Canada for personal use.

Notice is hereby given that on August 16, 1999, as authorized by the provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, *as amended* (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) the Fish and Wildlife Service authorized the requested permit subject to certain conditions set forth therein.

Documents and other information submitted for these applications are available for review by any party who submits a written request to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Management Authority, 4401 North Fairfax Drive, Room 700, Arlington, Virginia 22203. Phone (703) 358-2104, or Fax (703) 358-2281.

Dated: October 8, 1999.

Kristen Nelson,

Acting Chief, Branch of Permits, Office of Management Authority.

Documents and other information submitted with the application are available for review, *subject to the requirements of the Privacy Act and Freedom of Information Act*, by any party who submits a written request for a copy of such documents to the above address within 30 days of the date of publication of this notice.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Geological Survey****Notice of Availability of Information**

AGENCY: U.S. Geological Survey, Department of the Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability of information.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) is proposing to change a long-standing policy regarding access to documents compiled by the Defense Minerals Administration, the Defense Minerals Exploration Administration, and the Office of Minerals Exploration.

Previously, only the record title holder of the underlying property or a person with written permission from the record title holder had access to the documents. The USGS purposes to make this information available to any requester.

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 1, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Kathleen M. Johnson, U.S. Geological Survey, 913 National Center, Reston, VA 20192.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kathleen M. Johnson, 703-648-6110.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In 1950, Congress enacted the Defense Production Act, 50 U.S.C. App. § 2061 *et seq.* authorizing the President to "make provision * * * for the encouragement of exploration, development, and mining of critical and strategic minerals, metals, and materials." *Id.* § 2093. The President delegated his authority under the Act to various Federal agencies, including the Department of the Interior. Exec. Order No. 10,161, 15 FR 6105 (1950). Under this delegated authority, the Secretary of the Interior established the Defense Minerals Administration (DMA). Sec. Order No. 2605, 15 FR 8718 (1950). The DMA's purpose was to maintain production from existing mineral sources, to expand production from known but inactive sources, and to provide Government support for exploration of new mineral deposits. GEORGE F. HOWE, UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, HISTORY OF DEFENSE AGENCIES, Part IV (1953). To further the third stated purpose, the DMA started a program to provide funds for exploration projects for "unknown or undeveloped sources of strategic or critical metals and minerals." Mineral Order No. 5, 16 FR 3183 (1951). Before its termination on November 20, 1951, the DMA received 1,015 requests for assistance. *Id.* at 77. Of these, as of October 30, 1951, 153 had resulted in contracts, 324 had been denied, 40 had been withdrawn by the applicant, and 489 were pending. *Id.* at Appendix VI, Part IV.

Although the DMA had been terminated, the Department of the Interior continued the program for exploration assistance with the formulation of the Defense Minerals Exploration Administration (DMEA). Secretarial Order No. 2726, 18 FR 3804 (1953). The DMEA operated similarly to the DMA. See DMEA Order No. 1, 17 FR 2090 (1952). The DMEA was terminated on June 30, 1958. 23 FR 4003 (1958). Before its termination, the DMEA received 3,888 applications for assistance, and 1,159 applications were

approved and executed into contracts. H.R. Rep. No. 85-2276, 1958 U.S.C.C.A.N. 3701. Of the applications executed into contract, 337 were certified as having discovered a significant amount of ore. *Id.* At the time the DMEA was terminated, there were 170 contracts in force. *Id.*

In August of 1958, Congress enacted Public Law 85-701, 72 Stat. 700 (1958), authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to enter into exploration contracts providing for Government financial assistance for the discovery of domestic mineral reserves. 30 U.S.C. 641 *et seq.* Under this authority, the Secretary of the Interior established the Office of Minerals Exploration (OME). Secretarial Order No. 2834, 23 FR 7555 (1958). The program for exploration assistance under the OME was similar to that under the DMA and DMEA. See 30 CFR part 301 (1958).

In 1965, OME and its functions were transferred to the USGS. 30 FR 2865 (1965). After fiscal year 1974, USGS did not request appropriations for new contract funds, and in 1979, Congress discontinued funding for the OME program.

These programs produced a variety of technical information in the proposed work plans, monthly progress reports, inspection reports, final reports (final reports were prepared by both the Government and the contractor), and audits, among other routine correspondence between the application and the Government. The Government entered into contracts with entities in 44 States; the 6 States that did not have contracts are Delaware, Indiana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, and Rhode Island. The files from these contracts were stored in various Federal archival locations. However, in 1996, the USGS consolidated all of the DMA, DMEA, and OME files in its office in Spokane, Washington.

Access to the information contained in the files was limited to either the current property owner or to anyone with a letter of authorization from the current property owner. USGS had limited access to these documents because of the business-sensitive nature of some information contained within them. USGS recently reviewed both its authority to withhold the information contained in these files and the policy of withholding the information. As a result of this review, USGS believes that because the exploration assistance programs are no longer in existence, and the vast majority of the properties and companies described no longer exist in their original forms, release of this information will not harm the business interests of the companies or