



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Notice of Permit Applications Received Under the Antarctic Conservation Act of 1978

AGENCY: National Science Foundation.

ACTION: Notice of permit applications received.

SUMMARY: The National Science Foundation (NSF) is required to publish a notice of permit applications received to conduct activities regulated under the Antarctic Conservation Act of 1978. NSF has published regulations under the Antarctic Conservation Act in the Code of Federal Regulations. This is the required notice of permit applications received.

DATES: Interested parties are invited to submit written data, comments, or views with respect to this permit application by **[INSERT 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

This application may be inspected by interested parties at the Permit Office, address below.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be addressed to Permit Office, Office of Polar Programs, National Science Foundation, 2415 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia 22314.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrew Titmus, ACA Permit Officer, at the above address, 703-292-4479, or ACAPERMITS@NSF.GOV.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The National Science Foundation, as directed by the Antarctic Conservation Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-541, 45 CFR 671), as amended by the Antarctic Science, Tourism and Conservation Act of 1996, has developed regulations for the establishment of a permit system for various activities in Antarctica and designation of certain animals and certain geographic areas requiring special protection. The regulations establish such a permit system to designate Antarctic Specially Protected Areas.

Application Details:

- Applicant Permit Application: 2024-012
Robin West, VP & GM Expeditions, Seabourn Quest, Seabourn Cruise Line Ltd., 450 Third Ave. W., Seattle, WA 98119.

Activity for Which Permit is Requested

Waste Management. The applicant proposes to operate small, battery-operated remotely piloted

aircraft systems (RPAS) consisting, in part, of a quadcopter equipped with cameras to collect commercial and educational footage of the Antarctic. The quadcopter would not be flown over concentrations of birds or mammals, or over Antarctic Specially Protected Areas or Historic Sites and Monuments. The RPAS would only be operated by pilots with extensive experience, who are pre-approved by the Expedition Leader. Several mitigation measures to reduce environmental impacts and prevent against loss of the quadcopter include painting the them a high-visibility color; only flying when the wind is less than 25 knots; flying for only 15 minutes at a time to preserve battery life; having prop guards on propeller tips, a flotation device if operated over water, and an “auto go home” feature in case of loss of control link or low battery; having an observer on the lookout for wildlife, people, and other hazards; ensuring that the separation between the operator and quadcopter does not exceed an operational range of 500 meters; and implementing biosecurity measures by using disinfecting agents before and after each flight. The applicant is seeking a Waste Permit to cover any accidental releases that may result from operating the RPAS.

Location

Antarctic Peninsula Region.

Dates of Permitted Activities

November 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024.

2. Applicant Permit Application: 2024-013

Daniel Villa, Sea Shepherd Global, 1217 S 9th St, Tacoma, WA 98405.

Activity for Which Permit is Requested

Waste Management. The applicant seeks an Antarctic Conservation Permit for waste management activities associated with use of remotely piloted aircrafts (RPAs) in Antarctica. Aircrafts will be used for documenting krill fishery activities only. RPAs will not be flown over any concentrations of wildlife, Antarctic Specially Protected or Managed Areas or Historic Sites and Monuments without appropriate authorization. Aircraft are only to be flown by experienced, pre-approved pilots in fair weather conditions and in the presence of an observer, who will always maintain visual line of sight with the aircraft during operation. Mitigating measures are in place to prevent

loss of the aircraft such as conducting site assessments in advance of deployment and having alternative landing sites.

Location

Antarctic Peninsula Region.

Dates of Permitted Activities

January 5, 2023– February 15, 2024.

Kimiko S. Bowens-Knox,

Program Analyst,

Office of Polar Programs.

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