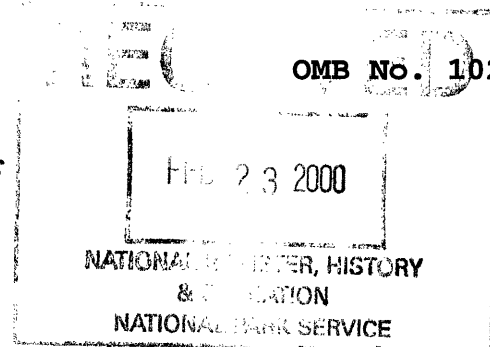


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM



264

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

=====
1. Name of Property
=====

historic name Prudhoe Bay Oil Field Discovery Well Site

other names/site number ARCO-Humble Prudhoe Bay State #1

AHRS Site No. XBP-00056

=====
2. Location
=====

street & number n/a

not for publication n/a

city or town n/a vicinity n/a

state Alaska code AK county North Slope code 185

zip code 99734

=====
3. State/Federal Agency Certification
=====

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant X nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Judith E. Bettner
Signature of certifying official

Feb 16, 2000
Date

Alaska
State or Federal agency and bureau

=====
In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

=====
4. National Park Service Certification
=====

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register Carol Ashwell 3/23/00
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register _____
- See continuation sheet.
determined not eligible for the National Register _____
- removed from the National Register _____
- other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Prudhoe Bay Oil Field Discovery Well Site
North Slope, Alaska

=====

5. Classification

=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> </u>	<u> </u> buildings
<u> 1 </u>	<u> </u> sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u> objects
<u> 1 </u>	<u> 0 </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) n/a

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Prudhoe Bay Oil Field Discovery Well Site

North Slope, Alaska

=====
6. Function or Use
=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Industry/Processing/ Sub: extractive facility
Extraction

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Vacant/not in use Sub: _____

=====
7. Description
=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

n/a

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation n/a
roof n/a
walls n/a
other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

The Prudhoe Bay Oil Field Discovery Well Site is north of the Brooks Range on the tundra characteristic of Alaska's North Slope. It is 200 miles southeast of Barrow, and 10 miles northwest of the Deadhorse airport. The ground has a layer of permanently frozen subsoil known as permafrost that extends in places to depths of 2,000 feet. In the summer, the tundra surface thaws three to five feet, but remains frozen year round below this depth. Frozen ground and flat terrain impede water drainage, forming ponds and bogs. In the better-drained locations, periodic freezing and thawing of the soil causes cracks in the ground resulting in regularly patterned polygons. Some of the more poorly drained areas produce irregular landforms such as hummocks or knolls, locally known as pingos. No rock outcroppings on the surface hinted at oil deposits, but geologists detected similarities in the underground rock structures with the oil-bearing regions of the Rocky Mountains.

In 1966, explorers for Atlantic Richfield Corporation, including Harry Jamieson, a geologist and Alaska district manager, chose the drill site location within Prudhoe Bay State #1 lease based on the data provided by geologists and geophysicists including Leo Fay, Ben Ryan, Charlie Selman, Paul Bollheimer, Pete Clara, and Marvin Mangus. Mo Benson, an Atlantic Richfield Corporation vice president in charge of exploration, engineering and production, with the support of Atlantic Richfield Corporation president Robert O. Anderson, and a partnership with Humble Oil Company (later Exxon), procured funding for the exploration.

=====
8. Statement of Significance
=====

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.) n/a

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Industry

Period of Significance 1967-1968

Significant Dates 1967
1968

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
n/a

Cultural Affiliation n/a

Architect/Builder Atlantic Richfield Corporation, Humble Oil Company

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Prudhoe Bay Oil Field Discovery Well Site
North Slope, Alaska

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9. Major Bibliographical References
=====

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Alaska Journal of Commerce. ARCO: 40 Years in Alaska. (Summer 1995).

Anchorage Daily Times. Prudhoe Well: 1,152 Barrels. (March 13, 1968).

ARCO Alaska, Inc. Prudhoe Bay Field Discovery Well Fact Sheet. n.d.

Roderick, Jack. *Crude Dreams: A Personal History of Oil and Politics in Alaska.* Fairbanks and Seattle: Epicenter Press, 1997.

Rutledge, Gene. *Prudhoe Bay...Discovery to Recovery!* Anchorage: Wolfe Business Services, 1998.

Previous documentation on file (NPS) n/a

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: _____

=====
10. Geographical Data
=====

Acreege of Property less than one

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>04</u>	<u>442080</u>	<u>7802546</u>	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
	<u>See continuation sheet.</u>					

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Prudhoe Bay Oil Field Discovery Well Site is 2,136 feet from the north line and 1,190 feet from the east line (WSENE), of Section 10, Township 11N, Range 14E, Umiat Meridian.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary encompasses the site where the well was drilled.

=====
11. Form Prepared By
=====

name/title Christopher B. Wooley

organization Chumis Cultural Resource Services for ARCO Alaska, Inc.

date July 19, 1999

street & number 2073 Dimond Drive

telephone 907-563-3202

city or town Anchorage **state** AK **zip code** 99507

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Prudhoe Bay Oil Field Discovery Well Site
North Slope, Alaska

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Four Caterpillar tracked machines pulled a convoy of exploration units and a drill rig 65 miles from the "Susie" drill site, a dry hole. Workers spudded the well on April 22, 1967, and on December 27, 1967, they encountered the first significant gas deposit at roughly 8,500 feet. On February 1, 1968, they hit a layer of oil and sand about forty feet thick at roughly 8,600 feet, the first solid indication of a major oil discovery. The total depth of the well was 12,005 feet.

Atlantic Richfield Corporation workers drilled a second well, Sag River State #1, in May 1968 at a site eight miles to the southeast of the Discovery Well. With the Sag River State #1 well, Atlantic Richfield Corporation confirmed the discovery of a very large oil deposit.

From discovery until 1985, Atlantic Richfield Corporation had a well at the discovery site. Plugged and abandoned, the equipment has been removed and the site is gradually returning to its natural state. The remnants of a gravel pad and a well pipe just below the ground are all of the evidence of oil drilling at the site. ARCO Alaska, Inc. is erecting a sculpture of their corporate logo (the "spark") at the site to recognize the discovery location.

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NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 8

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Criteria consideration G: property less than fifty years old

Although the discovery of the Prudhoe Bay Oil Field occurred in 1967, less than fifty years ago, it is of exceptional importance to the nation, the state, and the local area. The Prudhoe Bay Oil Field is the largest oil field discovered in the United States and the fourth largest in the world. It brought unexpected and almost unimaginable prosperity to the financially strapped new State of Alaska (admitted to the union January 3, 1959). It brought rapid change to the Inupiat people on the North Slope. There were job opportunities in construction of oil field facilities and many more for support activities. It also brought a tax base for the area that allowed for massive infrastructure development. A federal study completed in the mid-1960s found that over half of Alaska Natives, among them the people on the North Slope, lived in conditions worse than those found in Third World countries. For the Inupiat people and other Alaska Natives, the discovery led to a landmark land claims settlement with the federal and state governments in 1971. Shortly after the Prudhoe Bay discovery, the Oil Petroleum Exporting Countries significantly reduced their supply of oil to the world market and the domestic prices of gasoline and home heating oil skyrocketed. The United States turned its attention to the new field and passed a law that required all North Slope oil to be shipped to U.S. refineries. North Slope oil reached American markets in 1977, and slowed the country's rapidly growing dependence on foreign oil. For all of these reasons, the Prudhoe Bay Oil Field Discovery Site can be judged at this time to be historically significant. It is clearly of more than just passing contemporary interest.

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Prudhoe Bay Oil Field Discovery Well Site
North Slope, Alaska

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Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

On March 12, 1968, the Atlantic Richfield Corporation and Humble Oil Company announced discovery of a huge oil field on Alaska's North Slope that became known as the Prudhoe Bay Oil Field. A drilling rig had been moved to the site, 65 miles from the "Susie" drill site, in spring 1967. The Prudhoe Bay Oil Field was estimated to contain 10 billion barrels of oil. It is the largest oil field discovered in the United States, and the fourth largest oil field in the world. The discovery led to rapid change on the North Slope and throughout Alaska as extensive development occurred. It brought great prosperity to a financially strapped young state. In 1985, ARCO Alaska, Inc. stopped operations at the discovery well site and moved the oil drilling equipment from the site. The site is returning to its appearance at the time of discovery.

Historic background

Inupiat Eskimos traditionally used the land known as the North Slope for hunting and gathering. The northern people used oil-saturated sod to heat their houses for many years before commercial oil development in the area. In 1959, the federal government granted the new State of Alaska 103.5 million acres of what was considered public domain land. Among the early land selections, the State chose acreage east of the Naval Petroleum Reserve (also known as PET-4) that encompassed the western half of the North Slope. State geologist Tom Marshall, who recognized the geological indications of potential hydrocarbons in the area, recommended the area for selection. The federal government approved the selections and transferred the land to the State.

At the time, competing interests over the land required consideration. In 1966, the Arctic Slope Native Association filed a lawsuit on behalf of the Inupiat people of the North Slope to stop the new State of Alaska from selecting additional land or leasing the land the State had received on the North Slope. As the original inhabitants, the Inupiat claimed the land.

Although the Discovery Well Site lease (Prudhoe Bay State #1) had been sold in the fourteenth Alaska Competitive Lease Sale held in July 1965, Governor Bill Egan postponed additional North Slope lease sales planned for 1966 until more companies showed bidding interest. In late 1966, new Governor Walter Hickel broke a political logjam by announcing that a lease sale would take place. He promised Native leaders state assistance with land claims in exchange for an agreement not to protest the sale.¹ At the sale, partners Atlantic Richfield Corporation and Humble Oil Company spent more than a million dollars for seven leases.

In 1966, explorers for Atlantic Richfield Corporation selected a drill site. ARCO moved a drill rig (Loffland Brothers Drilling Rig No. 162) to the site in 1967. The well was spudded on April 22, 1967, and on December

¹Jack Roderick, *Crude Dreams: A Personal History of Oil and Politics in Alaska* (Fairbanks and Seattle: Epicenter Press, 1997), p. 204.

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Prudhoe Bay Oil Field Discovery Well Site

North Slope, Alaska

Page 8

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27, 1967, the drillers encountered the first significant hydrocarbons at roughly 8,500 feet.

The total depth of the well was 12,005 feet. On March 12, 1968, Atlantic Richfield Corporation and Humble Oil Company issued a joint press release announcing the discovery. They drilled a second well, Sag River State #1, in May 1968 on a nearby lease to confirm the discovery and size of the field. Analysis showed that the oil field the two wells tapped was huge. It was estimated to contain 10 billion barrels of oil (a barrel holding 42 U.S. gallons). It was the largest oil field discovered in the United States, and the fourth largest oil field in the world. Geologist Gill Mull wrote that the massive oil deposit "resulted for a one-in-a-million chance of a fortuitous combination of geological attributes that took at least 360 million years to form."

Prior to the announcement, four drilling rigs were on the North Slope. By the end of the year there were more than a dozen drilling rigs, and at least a dozen oil companies were actively exploring. A September 1969 lease sale of North Slope tracts brought the State of Alaska over \$900 million. The discovery launched a series of adjacent field discoveries from the Colville to the Canning rivers on the North Slope.

The Prudhoe Bay oil field discovery ushered in a major economic boom in Alaska. There were job opportunities in construction of oil field facilities, and many more for support activities. Tradesmen could earn two to three thousand dollars per week laboring seven days a week, ten to twelve hours a day. Engineers developed solutions to overcome major geographic and climactic challenges. Material and equipment funneled through West Coast ports heading to Alaska. Revenue generated from oil production on the North Slope resulted in economic change, demographic shifts, and new institutional structures throughout the North Slope and Alaska.

The discovery of the oil field in 1968 altered the Inupiat people's use of the land in the Prudhoe Bay area. Development of the field changed their lives. There were job opportunities and, after the establishment of the North Slope Borough, a tax base to fund basic village infrastructure. For the Inupiat, and other Alaska Natives, it led to a landmark land claims settlement with the federal and state governments in 1971.

In 1977, a consortium of oil companies completed the Trans-Alaska Pipeline to bring the oil from the North Slope to the port of Valdez for shipment to U.S. refineries. North Slope oil slowed the country's rapidly growing dependence on foreign oil. Production from the Prudhoe Bay Oil Field reached 10 billion barrels on January 9, 1999.

In 1985, ARCO plugged the discovery site well and removed all equipment and facilities at the site. Production figures during its years of operation are not available because the well was used often for testing and not continuous pumping of oil. Its test flow rate was 1,152 barrels of oil a day. ARCO Alaska, Inc. is placing a sculpture at the site to commemorate the discovery.

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Prudhoe Bay Oil Field Discovery Well Site
North Slope, Alaska

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Additional Documentation
=====

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====
Property Owner
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name ARCO Alaska, Inc. (Lease ADL 28303)

street & number P.O. Box 100360

telephone 907-265-1550

city or town Anchorage state AK zip code 99510-0360

name State of Alaska, Division of Land

street & number 550 West 7th Ave.

telephone 907-269-8600

city or town Anchorage state AK zip code 99501

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Prudhoe Bay Oil Field Discovery Well Site

North Slope, Alaska

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(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Photograph identification
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1. Prudhoe Bay Oil Field Discovery Site
North Slope, Alaska
Photographer unknown (courtesy Anchorage Petroleum Club)
1968
3301 C St., Anchorage, AK 99503
Aerial view of Loffland Brothers Drilling Rig No. 162 at Prudhoe Bay
State #1

2. Prudhoe Bay Oil Field Discovery Site
North Slope, Alaska
Chris Wooley
June 23, 1999
Chumis Cultural Resource Services, 2073 Dimond Dr., Anchorage, AK
99507
Looking northeast at the discovery well site. ARCO plans to erect a
sculpture at the plugged and abandoned well site marked in the center
of the photograph.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 00000264

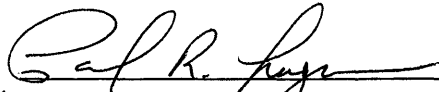
Date Listed: 3/23/2000

Prudhoe Bay Oil Field
Discovery Well Site
Property Name

North Slope AK
County State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.


Signature of the Keeper

3/23/00
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Location:

The location is amended to add:
"200 miles southeast of Barrow; approximately 2 miles north of the mouth of Putuligayuk River along the western shore of Prudhoe Bay."

Vicinity: Prudhoe Bay
[Information derived from nomination and USGS map.]

These revisions were confirmed with Jo Antonson of the AK SHPO.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)