



MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSION

28 May 2014

Mr. Timothy J. Van Norman
Chief, Branch of Permits
Division of Management Authority
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
4401 North Fairfax Drive
Arlington, VA 22203

Re: Permit Application No. 33758B
(Open Lens Productions)

Dear Mr. Van Norman:

The Marine Mammal Commission (the Commission), in consultation with its Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals, has reviewed the above-referenced permit application with regard to the goals, policies, and requirements of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (the MMPA). Open Lens Productions (OLP) proposes to film walrus in Alaska in 2014.

OLP is requesting authorization to film up to 1,000 adult walrus per day during a six-day period at Round Island in the Walrus Island Alaska State Game Sanctuary. OLP would use the footage for the “full-dome” planetarium show about conservation of walrus at the University of Alaska Anchorage’s planetarium and other licensed full-dome theaters.

Filmmakers would use high-definition video and still cameras to film and photograph the walrus. Photographs would be taken from the viewing points on the trail system within the Sanctuary, and video cameras would be set up near a haul-out site when unoccupied. All activities would be under the supervision of Alaska Department of Fish and Game personnel, and they would abide by the Sanctuary’s viewing guidelines. Filmmakers would approach the walrus slowly, quietly, and while keeping a low profile. Because of the cautious manner in which OLP would conduct the filming activities, the Commission recommends that the Fish and Wildlife Service issue the permit, as requested.

The Commission believes that the activities for which it has recommended approval are consistent with the purposes and policies of the MMPA.

The Commission appreciates the opportunity to comment on this permit application. Kindly contact me if you have any questions concerning the Commission’s recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rebecca J. Lent".

Rebecca J. Lent, Ph.D.
Executive Director