WCR22–02 Executive Summary	
Closure Location and Species	Unit 5A – Moose
Current Regulation	**Unit 5A—Moose** *Unit 5A, except Nunatak Bench, west of the Dangerous River—1 bull by joint State/Federal registration permit only. From Oct. 8-Oct. 21, Federal public lands will be closed to taking of moose, except by residents of Unit 5A.* — *Oct. 8–Nov. 15* *Unit 5A, except Nunatak Bench, east of the Dangerous River—1 bull by joint State/Federal registration permit only. From Sept. 16-Sept. 30, Federal public lands will be closed to taking of moose, except by residents of Unit 5A.* — *Sept. 16–Nov. 15*
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	**Maintain status quo**
Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	**None**

Federal Wildlife Closure Review
WCR22-02

Closure Location: Unit 5A-Moose

Current Federal Regulation

Unit 5A—Moose

Unit 5A, except Nunatak Bench, west of the Dangerous River—1 bull by joint State/Federal registration permit only. From Oct. 8-Oct. 21, Federal public lands will be closed to taking of moose, except by residents of Unit 5A.	*Oct. 8–Nov. 15*

Closure Dates: October 8– 21

Unit 5A, except Nunatak Bench, east of the Dangerous River—1 bull by joint State/Federal registration permit only. From Sept. 16-Sept. 30, Federal public lands will be closed to taking of moose, except by residents of Unit 5A.	*Sept. 16–Nov. 15*

Closure Dates: September 16-30

Current State Regulations:

Unit 5A – Moose

Unit 5A west of Dangerous River and Harlequin Lake, and southwest of Russell And Nunatak fiords and the East Nunatak Glacier - One bull by permit, available online, in person in Douglas and Yakutat beginning Aug 15	*RM061*	*Oct. 15-Nov. 15*
Unit 5A east of Dangerous River and Harlequin Lake - One bull by permit, available online, in person in Douglas and Yakutat beginning Aug 15	*RM061*	*Oct. 1-Nov. 15*

Regulatory Year Initiated: 1991

Extent of Federal Public Lands/Waters

Federal public lands comprise approximately 98% of Unit 5A and consist of 31% National Park Service (NPS) managed lands and 67% U.S. Forest Service (USFS) managed lands (see **Unit 5 Map**). The area east of the Dangerous River is comprised almost entirely of Federal public lands, with the exception of two Native allotments and a Sealaska Corporation site, all near Cannery Creek west of the Alsek River.

Regulatory History

Moose hunting in Unit 5A, except Nunatak Bench has been managed using a registration permit system since 1978. In 1990, the Federal government began managing subsistence hunting, fishing, and trapping on Alaska's Federal public lands. In 1990, the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) approved Special Action S90-25, which closed Federal lands in Unit 5A to moose hunting from Oct. 15–21, except for Yakutat residents. The Federal Register notice states that the action was taken to "assure a preferential subsistence opportunity of rural Alaska residents with a Customary and Traditional Use determination (C&T). Additionally, the harvest quota for Unit 5A, except Nunatak Bench was set at a total of 60 bulls, with no more than 30 bulls to be taken west of the Dangerous River (Western Yakutat Forelands, 5A West− **Figure 1**).

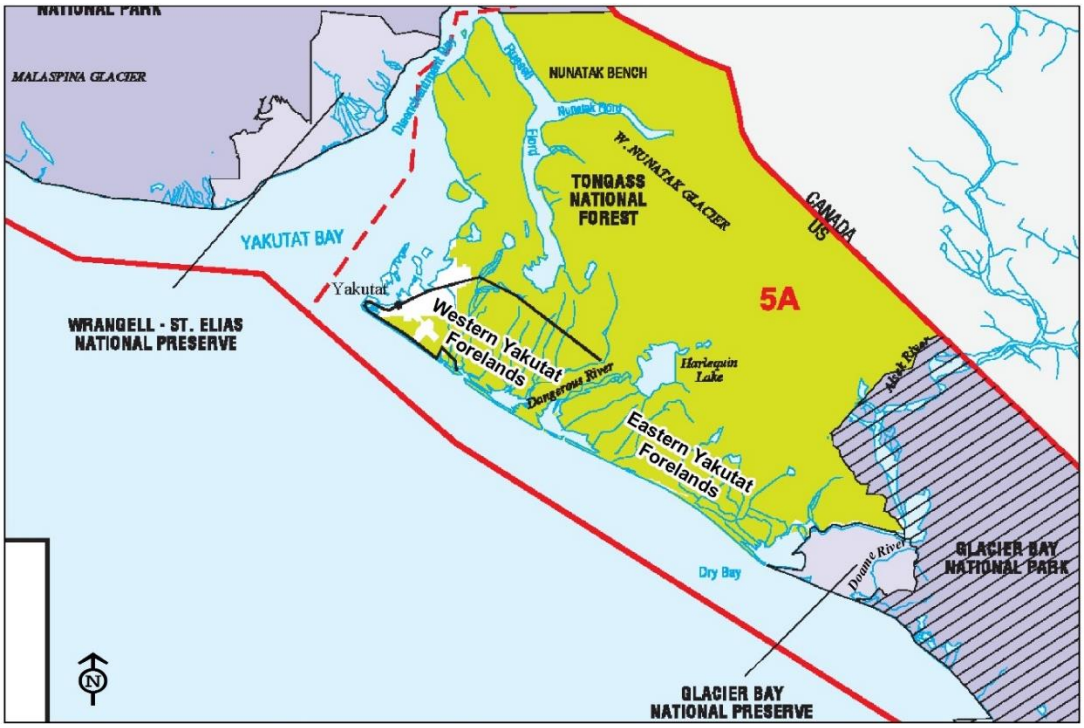

Figure 1. Unit 5A including Western Forelands (5A West) and Eastern Forelands (5A East) harvest and population survey areas on either side of the Dangerous River.

In 1992, the list of communities with a C&T was expanded to include all the residents of Unit 5 and not just the residents of Yakutat (P92-012A). The Board used an emergency special action (S92-10) to close the moose season in Unit 5A West in 1992 because the harvest quota had been reached. In 1994, the Board adopted proposal P94-17 for Unit 5A, which allowed a community-based harvest of 10 additional moose for community potlatches and ceremonial uses from Aug. 1 to Dec. 31.

In 1996, to allow for increased opportunity by Federally qualified subsistence users, the Board adopted proposal P96-014, which extended the Federal season by one week, from Oct. 15 to Oct. 8.

In 2000, the dates for the closure of Federal public lands to non-Federally qualified subsistence users in Unit 5A were changed from Oct. 15 – Oct. 21 to October 8 – October 21 (P00-010), to reflect the change in the Federal moose season start date of October 8.

In 2004, the Board adopted proposal WP04-20, which established a joint State/Federal registration permit for subsistence hunting of moose in Unit 5A (RM061) that allowed for more efficient management and harvest monitoring of the hunt. The State issued Emergency Orders in 2004 (01-02-04) and 2007 (01-08-07) to close Unit 5A West when the number of moose harvested reached 28 to prevent the harvest from exceeding the quota of 30 bulls.

In October 2008, the State issued an Emergency Order (01-07-08) closing Unit 5A West when the harvest reached 20 bull moose. Also in 2008, in response to continued low bull:cow ratios in Unit 5A and to align with the State action, the Board adopted Special Action WSA08-05, which reduced the total harvest quota from 60 to 50 bulls for Unit 5A, except the Nunatak Bench and from 30 to 20 bulls for Unit 5A West. The Federal subsistence priority was maintained through the early season authorized for Federally qualified subsistence users and the closure period. In 2009, the State raised the harvest quota from 50 to 55 bull moose in Unit 5A, except the Nunatak Bench, and from 20 to 25 bull moose in Unit 5A West. This change was based on surveys conducted during the winter of 2008, which indicated improved bull:cow ratios.

In 2009, the Board set the harvest quota for moose in Unit 5A, except the Nunatak Bench at 55 bulls and for Unit 5A West at 25 bulls. In 2010, the Board adopted Special Action WSA09-04, which delegated the U.S. Forest Service Yakutat District Ranger temporary authority to establish a quota and close the moose season for Unit 5A. In 2010, the Board adopted proposal WP10-22, which delegated authority to the Yakutat District Ranger to set Federal subsistence harvest quotas, close, reopen or adjust seasons, and adjust harvest and possession limits for moose (as well as deer and mountain goats) via delegation of authority letter.

From 2010-2016, the Yakutat District Ranger, via delegated authority, and ADF&G established the moose harvest quota in the fall for Unit 5A, except the Nunatak Bench at 55 bulls, with no more than 25 bulls to be taken in Unit 5A West from October 8 to November 15.

In 2017, in response to the recent survey findings including an increased bull:cow ratio observed in 2016, the Yakutat District Ranger, via delegated authority, and ADF&G established the moose harvest quota in the fall for Unit 5A except the Nunatak Bench at 60 bulls, with no more than 30 bulls to be taken in 5A West. From 2018-2020, the Yakutat District Ranger, via delegated authority, and ADF&G established the moose harvest quota in the fall for Unit 5A except the Nunatak Bench at 30 bulls west of the Dangerous River (5A West) and 30 bulls east of the Dangerous River (5A East).

Since 2012, Unit 5A West has been closed by Federal Special Action (WSAs: 13-MO-07-12; 13-MO-12-13; 12-MO-06-14; 12-MO-05-15; 13-MO-05-1; 13-MO-05-17; 12-MO-03-18; 12-MO-03-19; and 12-MO-04-20) and State Emergency Order (EOs: 01-07-12' 01-10-13' 01-11-14' 01-14-15' 01-15-16' 01-14-17' 01-17-18' 01-16-19' and 01-19-20') annually before the season end date of November 15 in order to not exceed the joint quota. From 2014-18, and again in 2020, there was no State season in Unit 5A West since the quota was met prior to the State season opening date. In 2019, the Federal and State seasons in Unit 5A West were closed on October 19. In 2020, Unit 5A East was also closed by Special Action (WSA 12-MO-05-20) and Emergency Order (01-21-20) effective October 28.

In 2012, Federal public lands remained closed to hunting moose from Oct. 8 – Oct. 21 (WCR12-02), except for residents of Unit 5A. The moose population was below the recommended State management goals for the population and the minimum bull:cow ratio. This closure was reviewed again most recently in 2015 (WCR15-02), and the continued closure was supported by the Southeast Alaska Regional Advisory Council (Council) during their winter 2017 meeting.

In 2012, Sealaska Corporation lands near Yakutat (known as "the nine townships") reverted from State to Federal land management as final land selections were made under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, increasing the amount of Federal public land available for Unit 5A (Yakutat) residents to hunt between Oct. 8 and Oct. 21. Consequently, in Unit 5A West, minimal land is available for non-Federally qualified users to hunt until Federal lands open under State regulations on October 22nd. This land status change also effectively opened up popular hunting areas closer to town for local residents (Federally qualified subsistence users) a week earlier, helping to distribute hunting pressure during the Federal season. However, likely in addition to perceived moose population increases since the previously mild winters, it has also significantly reduced the season length in Unit 5A West since the quota is quickly reached.

In response to the rapid harvest and exceeding the quota in 2014, managers reduced the reporting period for the joint State and Federal moose registration permit for RM061 (Unit 5A, except Nunatak Bench) from 5 days to 3 days, effective in the 2015 season. In the 2018 season, managers reduced the reporting period for the joint State and Federal moose registration permit for RM061 to 24 hours for Unit 5A West.

In 2015, the Council submitted Proposal WP16-06, requesting that a definition of "Nunatak Bench" be added to the Federal subsistence regulations for Unit 5. The Board supported the proposal and the definition of Nunatak Bench was added to the 2016-2018 Federal Subsistence Regulations. The definition is as follows: "In Unit 5A, Nunatak Bench is defined as that area east of the Hubbard Glacier, north of Nunatak Fiord, and north and east of the East Nunatak Glacier to the Canadian Border."

In 2017, the Yakutat Fish and Game Advisory Committee (Yakutat AC) submitted Proposal WP18-10, requesting that the Federal season for moose in Unit 5A East open from Sept. 1 – Nov. 15, with Federal public lands closed to the harvest of moose except by residents of Unit 5A from

Sept. 1 – Sept. 14 rather than Oct. 8-21. During the 2018 April (10-13) meeting, the Board passed this proposal with modification, based on the recommendation of the Council, to season dates of Sept. 16-Nov. 15 for 5A East, with Federal public lands closed to the harvest of moose except by residents of Unit 5A from Sept. 16 – 30, effective in the 2018 season (2018/2019 regulatory year). In 2018, the Yakutat AC submitted a parallel proposal to the Alaska Board of Game (BOG) (proposal #25), requesting that the State season in Unit 5A East be open Sept. 16-Nov. 15, with Federal public lands closed to harvest of moose except by residents of Unit 5A from Sept. 16-30. The BOG adopted Proposal 25 during their January (11-15) 2019 meeting, with modification to align with the Board action on Proposal WP18-10, to the current State season of Oct. 1-Nov. 15 in Unit 5A East.

In 2018, the Board issued a delegation of authority letter to the Yakutat District Ranger for the management of deer, moose, and mountain goats on Federal lands within the Yakutat Ranger District of the Tongass National Forest. The scope of delegation includes establishing quotas, closing, reopening, or adjusting seasons, and adjusting harvest and possession limits. The delegation of authority also allows the closing of Federal public lands to the take of these species by all users, and to close and reopen Federal public lands to nonsubsistence hunting, when necessary, to conserve deer, moose, and mountain goat populations, continue subsistence uses, for reasons of public safety, or to assure the continued viability of wildlife populations.

In August 2020, the Board approved a revised closure policy, which stipulated all closures will be reviewed every four years (FSB 2020). The policy also specified that closures, similar to regulatory proposals, will be presented to the Councils for a recommendation and then to the Board for a final decision. Previously, closure reviews were presented to Councils who then decided whether to maintain the closure, submit a regulatory proposal to modify, or eliminate the closure (FSB 2007).

Closure last reviewed: 2015 - WCR15-02

Justification for original closure (Section 815(3) criteria)

Section §815(3) of ANILCA states:

> *Nothing in this title shall be construed as – (3) authorizing a restriction on the taking of fish and wildlife for nonsubsistence uses on the public lands (other than national parks and monuments) unless necessary for the conservation of healthy populations of fish and wildlife, for the reasons set forth in 816, to continue subsistence uses of such populations, or pursuant to other applicable law; or*

The Board closed Federal public lands in Unit 5A, except Nunatak Bench from Oct. 15– Oct. 21, to taking of moose, except by residents of Unit 5A to assure a preferential subsistence opportunity of rural Alaska residents with C&T, effective 1991. The regulatory dates for the closure of Federal public lands to non-Federally qualified subsistence users were changed in 2000 from Oct.

15 – 21 to October 8 – 21 (P00-010), to reflect the change in the Federal moose season start date of October 8. Closure dates were again changed to Sept. 16-30 east of the Dangerous River effective during the 2018/2019 regulatory season to reflect the change in the Federal moose season start date of September 16.

Council recommendation for original closure

The Council had not been established prior to the original closure, and thus there was no recommendation at that time. Since the establishment of the Council, the Council has supported the closure because it has provided opportunity for Federally qualified subsistence users to harvest moose in an area that typically receives relatively high hunting pressure.

State recommendation for original closure

The State recommendation for the original closure was not found in the 1990 Federal Subsistence Board Meeting Book or in the archives.

Biological Background

Population trends

Moose were first sighted along the lower Alsek River drainage in Unit 5A East in the late 1920s and early 1930s. By the 1950s, the moose population had expanded its range westward to the Malaspina Forelands west of Yakutat Bay (**Figure 1**). The population grew rapidly and by the 1960s was estimated to be over 2,000 animals, which was likely above the carrying capacity of the range (Sell 2017). During the 1960s and early 1970s, the population declined due to both liberal harvest seasons, including cow hunts designed to protect the moose habitat, and severe winters in 1970 and 1972 that reduced survival and recruitment (Scott 2010).

In 1974, the moose population in Unit 5A was estimated to be approximately 300 animals (FWS 1996). Concern over low population numbers resulted in a hunting closure in Unit 5A from 1974–1977. After the hunting closures in the 1970s, the population slowly increased to about 600-800 animals, which appears to be carrying capacity of the area. In 1989, the State developed a management plan for Unit 5A Yakutat Forelands, which included the following objectives: 1) maintain a moose population of 850 animals post-hunt; 2) sustain an annual harvest of 70 moose; 3) provide a hunter success rate of 28%, and 4) maintain a post-hunt bull:cow ratio of 20:100 (ADF&G 1990). Regionwide goals for moose management include managing for the greatest hunter participation possible consistent with maintaining viable populations, sustained yield, subsistence priority, and the interests and desires of the public. The plan has not been formally updated, but the management objectives and harvest management strategies are updated in the management reports based on existing biological data and public input. The Board of Game has made a positive finding for customary and traditional use of moose in Game Management Unit 5 and set 50 moose as the Amount Necessary for Subsistence (ANS-Sell 2017).

The current State management objectives (Sell 2017) are:

- Post-hunt moose numbers (estimated): 600-800
- Annual hunter kill (average): 55
- Post hunt bull:cow ratio: 25:100
- Number of hunters (annual average): 250
- Hunter-days of effort (annual average): 1,025
- Hunter success (annual average): 28%

Population counts conducted in the 1970s and 1980s were based on annual winter moose surveys that had been adjusted using a 50% sightability correction factor to account for animals not seen during the survey (Smith and Franzmann 1979). However, more recent data from a sightability study on the Yakutat Forelands suggest that a 70% sightability correction factor was more appropriate (Oehlers 2007). The 70% correction factor, however, reflects good snow cover, which does not always occur during the population surveys. Ideally, a sightability logistic regression model would include covariates such as snow coverage, habitat type, and group size in addition to population data so that more accurate annual estimates can be obtained. However, due to variation in survey conditions such as timing, survey routes, number of trained personnel and variable snow conditions, these criteria have not been consistently recorded and thus only the raw survey data are used for abundance trend information (Barten 2006, Barten 2008a, Scott 2010). Consequently, results of aerial surveys should be considered a minimum population estimate and used primarily as an index for trend analysis.

Between 2000 and 2020, surveys of the Unit 5A Yakutat Forelands have been conducted as conditions permitted (**Table 1, Figure 1**). Some surveys have been limited to subsections of the forelands with a focus to obtain herd composition data rather than a total population estimate. Reliable herd composition surveys are not always feasible due to insufficient snowfall and aircraft availability relative to when bulls begin to shed their antlers (Sell 2017). Prior to 2005, surveys were conducted in open areas where concentrations of moose were known to occur. The distribution and movements of moose in addition to the observer's ability to detect moose during aerial surveys are highly variable and dependent on the weather conditions, timing, and amount of snow cover in the late fall. Thus, population counts prior to 2005 may have missed large segments of the moose population and are probably not very reliable for detecting population trends (Barten 2008a). In 2005, a more rigorous systematic survey design was developed using line transects which allowed for increased survey coverage, increased reliability of population estimates, reduced bias in the areas selected, and consistency between years.

Table 1. Moose survey results for Unit 5A, 2002-16 (Barten 2002, 2005, 2006, 2008b; Converse and Rice 2003; Churchwell 2020; Oehlers 2008a, b, c; Oehlers 2012; Scott 2010, 2011a,b; 2013a,b; Sell 2016a, b). Composition surveys emphasize sex and age ratio, rather than a total population estimate.

Survey Area	Month	Year	Composition Survey (Y/N)	# Bulls	# Cows	# Calves	# Unk.	Total	Bull:Cow
Yakutat Forelands	March	2002	Y	28	146	21	0	195	19:100
	March	2010	Y	28	146	21	0	195	19:100
Western Forelands (5A West)	Dec.	2003	N	3	23	23	140	189	[1]
	Dec.	2005	N	10	46	47	224	328	37:100[3]
	Nov.	2006	Y	12	119	11	0	142	10:100
	Dec.	2007	N	24	21	21	200	266	11:100[3]
	Nov.	2008	Y	23	67	4	0	94	34:100
	Dec.	2008	Y	24	166	31	0	221	14:100[3]
	Nov.	2011	Y	28	141	60	0	229	20:100
	Dec.	2012	N	3	12	14	168	197	[1]
	Oct.	2013	Y	13	35	4	2	54[5]	37:100
	Dec.	2013	N	18	36[4]	41	117	212	12:100[3,]
	Dec.	2015	N	33	43	51	166	293	16:100[3]
	Dec.	2016	N	68	39	43	140	290	38:100[3]
	Jan.	2020	N	4	5	5	216	230[5]	[1]
Eastern Forelands (5A East)	Dec.	2003	N	7	23	25	118	173[2]	[1]
	Nov.	2005	Y	33	166	17	0	216	20:100
	Dec.	2005	N	31	25	28	221	305	12.6:100[3]
	Dec.	2007	N	55	49	53	262	419	18:100[3]
	Oct.	2013	Y	12	26	6	0	44[5]	46:100
	Dec.	2015	N	76	85	100	274	535	21:100[3]
	Dec.	2016	N	54	38	44	117	253[5]	35:100[3]
	Jan.	2020	N	2	9	11	93	115[5]	[1]

[1]survey conducted after bulls started to drop antlers, no bull:cow ratio estimated

[2] area between Italio and Akwe rivers not surveyed due to poor conditions

[3] minimum estimate

[4] cows with calves only

[5] poor survey conditions=some areas not surveyed and/or high winds and flight speeds, thus total number of moose should be considered a minimum estimate. October 2013 survey conducted shortly after harvest season with no snow resulting in low detectability rates.

Following the hunting closures in the mid 1970s and the 1989 management plan, the Yakutat Forelands moose population slowly recovered to a total of approximately 632 and 685 moose in 2005 and 2007, respectively (**Table 1, Fig. 2**). Low bull:cow ratios were observed starting in 2006, particularly in Unit 5A West (**Table 1**). Following the 2007 survey, there were several severe winters, which likely reduced survival and recruitment and caused a decline in the moose population (Barten 2012). Complete population surveys, however, were not conducted between 2007 and 2014 (surveys during this period focused on sex and age composition). The age composition of bulls in the harvest from 2003-2012 suggested that the range of age classes were well represented in the population and that calf survival was high enough to provide continued harvest of bull moose at previous levels (Sell 2014).

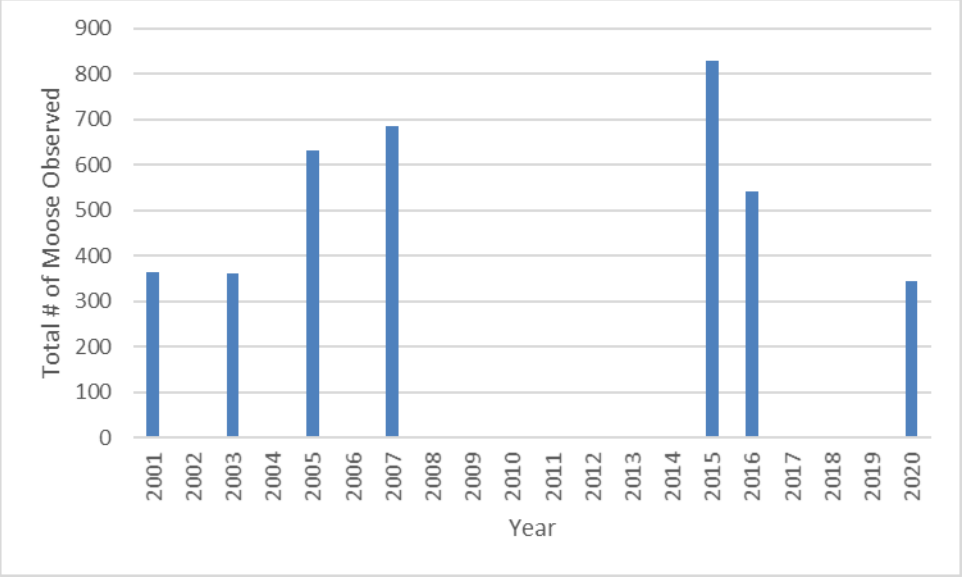

Figure 2. Population estimates for moose in Unit 5A, 2001-2020 (Barten 2004, 2005, 2008b; Converse and Rice 2003; Sell, 2016a, b; Churchwell 2020)

The mild winters of 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 are thought to have resulted in improved over-winter survival for ungulate populations region wide (Scott 2017). In 2015 and 2016, a total of 828 and 543 moose, respectively, were observed on the Yakutat Forelands (**Figure 2**). Although the total number observed was lower in 2016 than 2015, those estimates may be more reflective of survey conditions than actual numbers. Percentage of calves was similar in 2015 and 2016 (18% and 17%, respectively), indicating healthy recruitment. Bull:cow ratios were higher in 2016 (36:100) than 2015 (19:100), meeting the State's management objective of 25 bulls:100 cows in 2016. The 2015 and 2016 survey results, considered as minimum estimates (not accounting for sightability), meet the State management objectives of 600-800 post-hunt numbers. The yearling and 2-3 year old component of the harvest suggests good recruitment

during the most recent reporting period (2010-2014; Sell 2017). In Unit 5A West, where harvest is predominantly by Federally qualified subsistence users, total numbers have remained relatively steady throughout the reporting period, with a bull:cow ratio ranging from 10:100 in 2006 to 38:100 in 2016.

Most recently, ADF&G conducted a population survey on January 17, 2020. Due to the late season timing, along with survey conditions (high wind and flight speeds), identification of sex and age (calves) was difficult. A total of 230 and 115 moose were observed in Unit 5A West and East, respectively for a total Unit 5A population estimate of 345 moose, which, even considering survey conditions, is below State management objectives. The observation rate of 43-66 moose/hour (average=55.6 moose/hr.) was slightly lower than the previous (2016) survey that had 59-72 moose/hour (average=64.5 moose/hr.), however this was likely in part related to the survey conditions (Churchwell 2020). Recent heavy snow years (2019-20 and 2020-21) may have impacted the population; given continued rapid harvest rates, however, the population is likely continuing to recover from previous (2011-12) harsh winters.

Habitat

There have been no recent habitat studies conducted to assess the quality of the moose habitat in Unit 5A. Good body condition and high pregnancy and twinning rates indicate that the quality and quantity of forage habitat was good in the early to mid-2000s (ADF&G 2005, Oehlers 2007). A relatively stable low density population also indicates good quality habitat.

Breeding

Breeding strategies of moose differ between the tundra (Alaska/Yukon-*Alces alces gigas*) and taiga (Eastern, northwestern, and Shira's subspecies-*Alces alces americana, Alces alces andersoni, Alces alces shirasi*) moose, and there are likely gradations between these 2 strategies (Schwartz 1997). Tundra moose tend to be relatively polygamous breeders and form assemblages during the rut, where dominant males can monopolize females. Consequently, one male can breed with many cows during one breeding season. In forest dwelling taiga moose, one bull will remain with a single female or small group of females for one or several days, likely breeding with only a few females during rutting season. Moose in Yakutat are likely in a mixing zone between *Alces alces gigas* and *Alces alces andersoni* (Schmidt et al. 2009). If females are not bred during their first estrous cycle, they may experience a recurrent estrous cycle and breed later in the season (Schwartz 1997). However, one study in Alaska (Schwartz and Hundertmark 1993) reported that an estimated 88% of calves were conceived during the first estrus cycle within a season.

The breeding season in interior Alaska ranges from September 28-October 12, with calving season approximately mid-May to mid-June, peaking the last 2 weeks of May (Schwartz 1997). Moose in Yakutat have been observed congregating from August-October, coinciding with the rutting season (Oehlers 2021). Older prime bulls come into rut earlier than younger bulls and

because rutting bulls are more vulnerable to harvest, hunting seasons held during the peak of rut may increase the harvest of prime bulls (Timmerman and Buss 1997). However, in a 1992 survey of 19 moose management jurisdictions, Wilton (1992) found that 74% of 136 moose hunting seasons coincided with the rutting period (September 16-October 15). Currently within Alaska, Federal fall seasons for moose in many units open in September, or even earlier, including in Unit 5A.

Cultural Knowledge and Traditional Practices

The Unit 5A moose population is a relatively recent subsistence resource, having presumably emigrated into the area along the Alsek River beginning in late 1920s and early 1930s. Previously, mountain goat, bears, and seals were the primary sources of meat for Yakutat residents (Sill 2015). The most recent data indicate that during 2015, 75% of households used moose while 20% reported harvesting (Sill 2015). Sixty-four % of households reported receiving moose and 20% reported harvesting moose. Forty-nine % of households reported that they hunted moose, of which 20% were successful.

Moose was the fourth ranked resource used by Yakutat households in 2015. Only halibut, Sockeye, and Chinook Salmon were used by a greater percentage of households. Further, moose accounted for 90% of the land mammal harvest in 2015 (Sill 2015).

Harvest History

The annual moose harvest in Unit 5A ranged from 30-48 moose during 2002-11, with an average of 38 moose (Barten 2004, Sell 2014). Total harvest has ranged from 33-64 moose from 2012-20 (**Table 2**). An average of 19 and 29 moose were harvested annually in Unit 5A East and West, respectively, from 2012-20. The harvest has met or exceeded the quota guideline in Unit 5A West annually since 2012 (**Table 2**). Harvest in Unit 5A East, however, which is less accessible than 5A West, has not met the quota during this same time period, with the exception of 2020. Since 2012, total harvest has met the states ANS in 2015, 2017, 2019, and 2020.

Federally qualified subsistence users account for the majority of the harvest in Unit 5A West, accounting for 100% of the harvest annually from 2014-20 (**Table 2).** Although the State season was open in Unit 5A West for 8 days in 2019, with the Federal land closure in place very little non-Federal land is available for non-Federally qualified subsistence users to hunt, and all of the harvest was by Federally qualified subsistence users. In Unit 5A East, Federally qualified users accounted for an average of 50% of the harvest from 2012-20. Overall, Federally qualified subsistence users accounted for an average of 79% of the moose harvested in Unit 5A (except Nunatak Bench) from 2012-20. The lower percentage of the harvest from Federally qualified users in Unit 5A East is primarily due to the limited and costlier access relative to the west side. Unit 5A West receives more pressure in terms of number of hunters, averaging 74 hunters (all users) annually from 2012-20 versus 51 in Unit 5A East. Total number of days hunted is also higher in Unit 5A West, averaging 216 days annually versus 183 days in Unit 5A East during that

same time period (**Table 3**). Total effort (number of hunters and hunter-days) remains below the State management objectives for hunter participation. Particularly in recent years, the hunting effort is concentrated during a shorter season in Unit 5A West than East. Success rate is similar in both areas; 37% and 39%, respectively, in Unit 5A East and West from 2012-20, exceeding the State management objective of 28%.

Table 2. Total reported harvest of bull moose in Unit 5A 2012-2020 (Schumacher 2017 and Burch 2021). Designation of Federally qualified subsistence user is based on harvester's community of residence.

Year	Quota West	Total Harvest West (% Federally qualified users)	Quota east	Total Harvest East (% Federally qualified users)	Total
2012	25	27(89%)	30	13 (23%)	40
2013	25	25 (92%)	30	8 (50%)	33
2014	25	28 (100%)	30	16 (81%)	44
2015	25	29 (100%)	30	21 (48%)	51
2016	25	27 (100%)	30	17 (59%)	44
2017	30	35 (100%)	30	22 (46%)	57
2018	30	30 (100%)	30	17 (71%)	47
2019	30	30 (100%)	30	22 (46%)	52
2020	30	32 (100%)	30	32 (34%)	64

Table 3. Hunting effort by all users for moose in Unit 5A 2012-16 (Schumacher 2017 and Burch 2021). Numbers are reflective of all hunters who reported at least 1 day of hunting.

Area	Year	Total Number of Hunters	Total Number of Days Hunted	Success Rate	Average # of Days Hunted by Successful hunters	Average # of Days Hunted by all Hunters
5A West	2012	81	271	33%	2.9	3.3
	2013	89	328	28%	2.2	3.7
	2014	69	171	41%	2.0	2.5
	2015	80	233	36%	2.0	2.9
	2016	72	178	38%	1.3	2.5
	2017	68	190	37%	2.1	2.8
	2018	64	161	43%	1.9	2.5
	2019	63	204	35%	2.4	3.2
	2020	82	209	44%	2.0	2.5
5A East	2012	42	175	31%	2.8	4.2
	2013	30	154	27%	2.6	2.9
	2014	54	200	30%	3.0	3.7
	2015	48	180	44%	3.4	3.8
	2016	47	183	36%	1.8	3.9
	2017	59	182	26%	2.3	3.1
	2018	40	129	23%	3.1	3.2
	2019	62	210	24%	2.3	3.4
	2020	73	234	20%	2.3	3.2

Effects

If the closure is rescinded, there would be increased opportunity for non-Federally qualified users to harvest moose in Unit 5A. Without the closure, it is very likely that non-Federally qualified users would hunt earlier in the State season as Yakutat is easily accessible by daily commercial airlines services. Currently, Federally qualified subsistence users account for the majority of the moose harvested in Unit 5A, except Nunatak Bench and 100% of the moose harvested in Unit 5A West since 2014. The harvest quota has been met and the Federal season has been closed in Unit 5A West prior to the State season opening annually from 2014-2020, with the exception of 2019. If this closure is rescinded, non-Federally qualified users would be able to hunt Federal lands a week earlier west of the Dangerous River, resulting in increased competition between Federally qualified and non-Federally qualified users and thereby decreasing harvest opportunity of a limited resource for Federally qualified subsistence users.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

X maintain status quo
__ modify or eliminate the closure

Justification

The Federal closure for Unit 5A moose remains important to the residents of Unit 5A as it provides for the continued subsistence use of the population as mandated by Title VIII of ANILCA. While the State's population and composition objectives were met in 2015 and 2016, slightly lower numbers during the January 2020 survey and recent heavy winters warrant caution and will be considered when establishing future quotas. Federally qualified subsistence users account for the majority of the moose harvested in Unit 5A, except Nunatak Bench and 100% of the moose harvested in Unit 5A West since 2014. The annual hunt by Federally qualified subsistence users takes place primarily in Unit 5A West where accessibility by boat or vehicle is much greater, and hunting expenses generally lower, than in Unit 5A East. The majority of the moose harvested are taken by Federally qualified users during the first two weeks of the season in Unit 5A West. The Federal season in Unit 5A West was closed prior to the State season opening annually from 2014-18 and again in 2020.

The number of moose available for harvest is limited as moose numbers remain at a relatively low density. Without the closure, non-Federally qualified users would be able to hunt Federal lands a week earlier in Unit 5A West, resulting in increased competition between Federally qualified and non-Federally qualified users and thereby decreasing harvest opportunity of a limited resource for Federally qualified subsistence users.. The status quo is necessary to continue subsistence uses of the moose population under Section 815(3) of ANILCA and does not violate the prohibitions (public safety, administration, and the continued viability of a particular fish and wildlife population) outlined in ANILCA Section 816(b). The closure to moose harvest on Federal public lands in the affected area will continue to be reviewed at least every four years as per the Federal Subsistence Board Closure Policy (FSB 2007, 2020).

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WP22-14 Executive Summary	
General Description	Proposal WP22-14 requests that the black bear harvest limit in Unit 6 be increased from one to two black bears per year, and that the Unit 6D season would close if the harvest quota was met. *Submitted by: Dan Schmalzer and Nick Docken of Cordova*
Proposed Regulation	**Unit 6—Black Bear** *Unit 6 —~~1 bear~~ **2 bears**. In Unit 6D a State registration permit is required. Sept, 1 – June 30* ***§_____.26(n)(6)(ii) Unit-specific regulations:*** *(A) You may use bait to hunt black bear between April 15 and June 15. In addition, you may use bait in Unit 6D between June 16 and June 30. The harvest quota in Unit 6D is 20 bears taken with bait between June 16 and June 30.* ***If the State harvest quota in Unit 6D (RL065) is met, the Federal season in Unit 6D will close at the same time as the State season.***
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	**Support**
Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	**None**

DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS
WP22-14

ISSUES

Proposal WP22-14, submitted by Dan Schmalzer and Nick Docken of Cordova, Alaska, requests that the black bear harvest limit in Unit 6 be increased from one to two black bears per year, and that the Unit 6D season would close if the harvest quota was met.

DISCUSSION

The proponents request the ability to harvest 2 black bears in a regulatory year. This would allow Federally qualified subsistence users additional opportunity to harvest red meat. Currently, if a hunter harvests a black bear in the fall, they cannot harvest another in the spring. They cite the cost of living, reduced ferry service, and COVID-19 restrictions as factors making Prince William Sound residents more dependent on wild renewable resources. Additionally, many local residents do not have access to moose and deer because boats or airboats are often necessary to harvest these species. Black bear hunting opportunity is easily accessed from the Copper River Highway and does not require a boat.

Existing Federal Regulation

Unit 6—Black Bear

Unit 6 —1 bear. In Unit 6D a State registration permit is required.	*Sept. 1 – June 30*

§_____.26(n)(6)(ii) Unit-specific regulations:

(A) You may use bait to hunt black bear between April 15 and June 15. In addition, you may use bait in Unit 6D between June 16 and June 30. The harvest quota in Unit 6D is 20 bears taken with bait between June 16 and June 30.

Proposed Federal Regulation

Unit 6—Black Bear

*Unit 6 —~~1 bear~~ **2 bears**. In Unit 6D a State registration permit is required.*	*Sept. 1 – June 30*

Unit 6—Black Bear

§_____.26(n)(6)(ii) Unit-specific regulations:

(A) You may use bait to hunt black bear between April 15 and June 15. In addition, you may use bait in Unit 6D between June 16 and June 30. The harvest quota in Unit 6D is 20 bears taken with bait between June 16 and June 30. ***If the State harvest quota in Unit 6D (RL065) is met, the Federal season in Unit 6D will close at the same time as the State season.***

Existing State Regulation

Unit 6—Black Bear

Unit 6A, 6B — One bear (Residents and nonresidents)	*HT*	*Aug. 20 – June 30*
Unit 6C — One bear (Residents and nonresidents)	*HT*	*Sept. 1 – June 30*
Unit 6D — One bear every regulatory year by permit available online at http://hunt.alaska.gov or in person in Anchorage, Cordova, Fairbanks, Glenallen, Palmer, and Soldotna beginning Aug 25 (Residents and nonresidents)	*RL065*	*Sept. 10 – Jun. 10*

Extent of Federal Public Lands

Unit 6 is comprised of approximately 71% Federal public lands, and consist of 49% U.S. Forest Service (USFS) managed lands, 14% Bureau of Land Management (BLM) managed lands, and 8% National Park Service (NPS) managed lands **(Figure 1**).

Customary and Traditional Use Determinations

Rural residents of Yakutat and residents of Units 6C and 6D (excluding residents of Whittier) have a customary and traditional use determination for black bear in Unit 6A. Rural residents of Units 6C and 6D (excluding residents of Whittier) have a customary and traditional use determination for black bear in Unit 6 remainder.

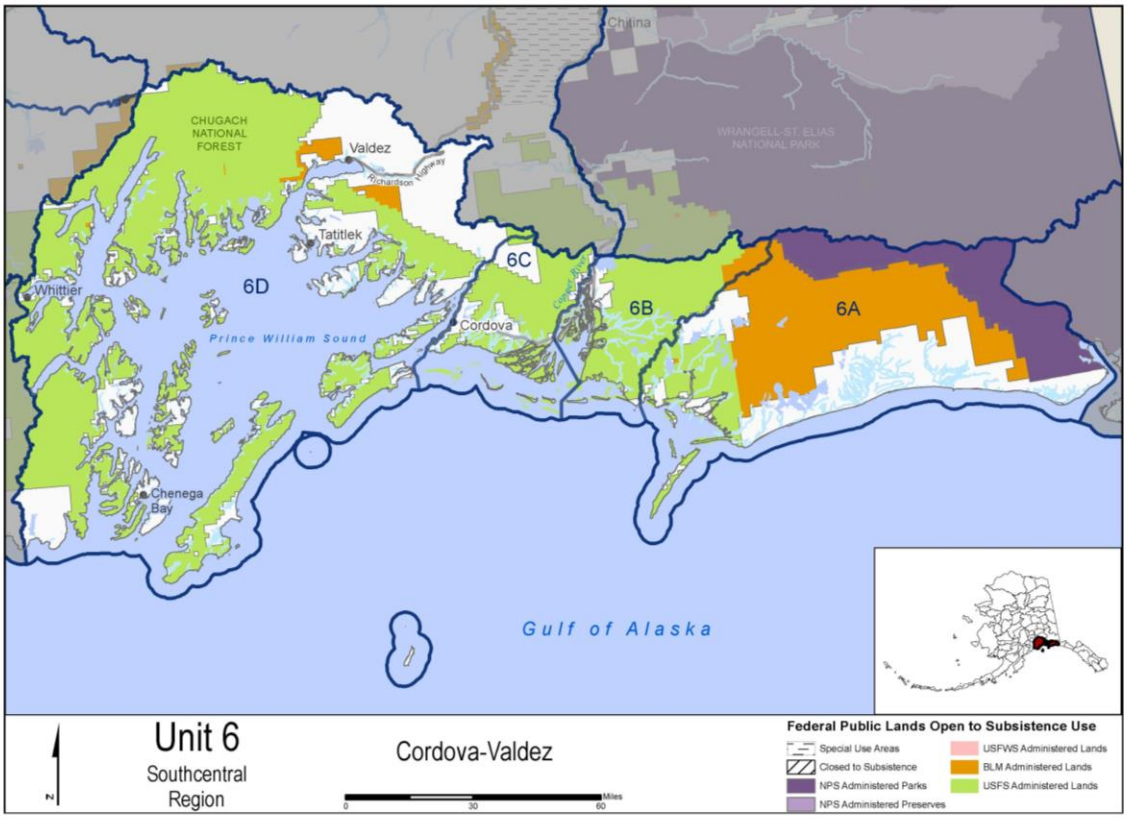

Figure 1. Unit 6 hunt area

Regulatory History

In 1990, the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) adopted interim subsistence regulations for black bear hunting at bait stations that aligned with State regulations. The Federal and State bear baiting season in Units 6A, 6B, and 6C has been Apr. 15 – June 15 and, since regulatory year 2005/06, the State baiting season in Unit 6D has been Apr. 15– June 30.

The Alaska Board of Game (BOG) has taken several incremental measures to reduce black bear harvest in Unit 6D over the past 15 years. In 2003, Unit 6D was closed to the shooting of black bears from a boat. Completing a bear baiting clinic to establish a bear bait station was required in 2005. Also, in 2005 the BOG changed the season dates for Unit 6D from Sept. 1 – June 30 to Sept. 1 – June 10 to reduce harvest of black bears. Beginning in regulatory year 2009/10, the start of the Unit 6D black bear season was changed from Sept. 1 to Sept. 10 to further reduce harvest. The intent of shifting the start of the season 10 days later was to reduce the harvest of black bears as they move from salmon streams to the high country during the fall. Also, in 2009, the BOG approved the use of a harvest reporting system for Unit 6 to better track hunting effort for black bears.

In 2014, the Board adopted Proposal WP14-09 with modification to lengthen the season for hunting black bears with bait in Unit 6D by 2 weeks to run through June 30, to require the use of a Federal registration

permit, and to set a quota of 20 black bears to be taken over bait during the extended Federal baiting season. Requiring the use of a Federal registration permit was seen as a way to better track harvest of black bears at a time when there was a growing conservation concern for the species but use of the State baiting permit was allowed in 2016.

In February 2015, the BOG adopted Proposal 210 to change the black bear hunt in Unit 6D to a registration hunt. The BOG concluded that bears in the area were being overharvested and that a better management tool was needed to assess and control harvest. This new regulation became effective July 1, 2015.

On February 27, 2015, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) issued an Emergency Order closing the State black bear season in Unit 6D, effective May 27, 2015. This was in response to a steady decline in the black bear population and a tripling of the harvest between the 1990s and 2007, along with a marked decrease in harvest in 2012 and 2013. In addition, the percentage of females in the harvest had exceeded management goals since 2006.

Additionally, on May 19, 2015 wildlife special action request WSA15-09, submitted by ADF&G requested that the Federal subsistence black bear season close on May 27, the same effective date as the Emergency Order issued by the State. They also requested that the Federal Unit 6D black bear permit required from June 11 through June 30 be extended to begin on May 27, so that Federal subsistence users are in compliance with both State and Federal permit requirements. This special action request was unanimously approved by the Board with modification, temporarily extending the dates of the Unit 6D Federal subsistence black bear season from May 27, 2015 through June 30, 2015, because of the small number of black bears harvested by Federally qualified rural residents.

Biological Background

Black bears are common throughout Unit 6, with the exception of Kayak and Middleton Islands along the North Gulf Coast of Alaska, and Montague, Hinchinbrook, Hawkins, and several smaller islands in Prince William Sound (Crowley 2011). The State management goal for black bear in Unit 6 is to maintain a black bear population that will sustain a 3-year average annual harvest of 200 bears composed of at least 75% males with a minimum average skull size of 17 inches (Crowley 2011). The proportion of females taken exceeded the recommended management objective of 25% in 2006, 2007, and 2009 (Crowley 2011).

While there are no accurate population data for black bears in Unit 6, black bear densities tend to be highest in western Prince William Sound (Unit 6D) and lowest along the North Gulf Coast and eastern Prince William Sound (Units 6A, 6B, and 6C) (McIIroy 1970; Modafferi 1978, 1982). Black bear populations in Unit 6 fluctuate due to the severity of winter weather, food abundance, hunting pressure and in some areas, competition with and predation by brown bears (Mcllroy 1970, Schwartz et al. 1986).

Harvest monitoring and assessment has been the primary method used to assess the status of the black bear population in Unit 6. In 2009, the BOG approved the use of a harvest reporting system that incorporated an assessment of effort in addition to the harvest (Crowley 2011). Since the late 1980s,

ADF&G has been using the skull size as a biological objective because it is thought that these changes may indicate changes in population size, harvest composition, and the sustainability of harvest levels. A decreasing skull size may indicate a decline in older bears in the population, which may be indicative of a population decline (Lowell 2011). To assess the population age structure, which is a measure of population health, skull size and harvest densities are compared between 8 geographic areas that correspond to well-defined watersheds within Unit 6 (Crowley 2011). The decline in skull size of male black bears, along with high annual harvest during the 5-year period from 2005– 2009, when compared to the previous two 5-year periods, suggested that harvest may be impacting the age structure of the Unit 6 black bear population. A similar trend was not found for female harvested bears.

A sharp decline in black bear harvest was observed in the years following the severe winter of 2011-2012, which may have resulted in low recruitment of young for the following years. This information and the reports of fewer black bear sightings by many user groups prompted the U.S. Forest Service and ADF&G to begin a collaborative research project on Prince William Sound black bears. Fifty-three bears were fitted with satellite/GPS collars during the summers of 2016, 2017, and 2018. That project is ongoing.

Harvest History

Historical and ethnographic accounts of the Alutiiq of Prince William Sound and the Eyak Indians of the Copper River Delta, the traditional inhabitants of the Chugach, indicate that black bears were an important subsistence food source (Simeone 2008). Although black bears were once a major subsistence staple for residents in Prince William Sound communities, Sitka black-tailed deer have replaced black bears in importance according to local residents (Simeone 2008). Between 1986 and 2006, residents of Unit 6, resident hunters living outside of Unit 6, and nonresidents accounted for 11%, 58%, and 31% of the black bear harvest in Unit 6, respectively. A majority of the harvest (85%) occurred in Unit 6D (Simeone 2008). From 2005 – 2010, the hunting pressure and take of black bears in Unit 6 was greatest in Unit 6D (83– 86%), which coincides with the greatest densities of black bears and ease of access by Anchorage hunters through the Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel (Whittier Tunnel) (Simeone 2008, Crowley 2011). An average of 427 black bears were taken per regulatory year between 2004 and 2013, which exceeds the State management goal to average 200 black bears over a 3-year period.

Without accurate population estimates it is difficult to determine if current harvest levels are sustainable. Although it is difficult to determine the status of black bear populations using harvest data (Garshelis 1993), the decrease in age of harvested male bears during the high harvest from 2005 – 2009 suggested that the harvest was having a population level effect (reducing the overall size of the population) (Crowley 2011). More compelling was the sharp drop in total Unit 6D harvest during 2012 and 2013 (**Table 1**). Additionally, the number of bears taken over bait in Unit 6D, where bear baiting is most prevalent, almost doubled between 2005 (50 bears) and 2009 (97 bears) but declined again in 2011 (**Table 2**).

The total reported harvest of black bears taken in Unit 6D by Federally qualified users, from 2010 to 2019 was 24 black bears (Westing 2021). Between 2010 and 2019, Federally qualified subsistence users harvested 0-7 bears in Unit 6D, accounting for just 1.0% of the total Unit 6D black bear harvest on

average. The percentage of black bears taken over bait by all hunters in Unit 6D ranged from 7% to 35% between 2010 and 2020.

Table 1. Black Bear harvest in Unit 6D from 2010-2019 (Westing 2021, pers. comm.).

Year	Chenega Bay	Cordova	Tatitlek	Total by Federally qualified subsistence users	Total 6D Harvest	% harvested by Rural Residents
2010	1	0	0	1	453	0.2%
2011	3	3	1	7	467	1.5%
2012	2	0	0	2	357	0.6%
2013	1	1	1	3	188	1.6%
2014	0	0	0	0	105	0
2015	0	1	0	1	91	1.1%
2016	0	4	0	4	140	2.3%
2017	1	1	0	2	212	0.9%
2018	1	2	0	3	201	1.5%
2019	0	1	0	1	221	0.5%
Average	0.9	1.3	0.2	2.4	243.5	1.0

Table 2. Black Bear harvest over bait in Unit 6D from 2005-2020 (Westing 2021, pers. comm.).

Year	Harvested over bait	Not harvested over bait	% of harvest baited
2010/2011	67	386	15%
2011/2012	33	434	7%
2012/2013	27	331	8%
2013/2014	31	157	16%
2014/2015	26	79	25%
2015/2016	32	59	35%
2016/2017	37	103	26%
2017/2018	47	166	22%
2018/2019	28	178	14%
2019/2020	33	188	15%

Effects of the Proposal

If adopted, this proposal would allow Federally qualified subsistence users to harvest 2 black bears in Unit 6. This would allow additional harvest opportunity for rural residents of Unit 6 that would help offset increases in the cost of living, reductions in ferry service, and restrictions imposed to mitigate the COVID pandemic.

In Unit 6D, where conservation concerns have existed, Federally qualified subsistence users have harvested less than 8 bears/year, from a total harvest that has ranged from 91-453 bears/year between 2010 and 2020. While some conservation concerns still exist for black bears in Unit 6D, concern would be mitigated if the Federal season closed when the State closes its season, if the black bear harvest quota is reached in Unit 6D (RL065).

Current Federal regulations in Unit 6D require a State registration permit. Permission from ADF&G would be needed to use a State permit with a different harvest limit under Federal regulations. Alternatively, Federal users may be able to obtain two State registration permits, or a Federal permit could be established.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Support Proposal WP22-14.

Justification

Increasing the Federal subsistence harvest limit from 1 to 2 black bears in a regulatory year would increase subsistence harvest opportunity and allow Federally qualified rural residents of Unit 6 to harvest an additional bear, providing an additional source of red meat. The small number of black bears harvested by Federally qualified subsistence users in Unit 6D and closing the Federal subsistence season in Unit 6D if the State quota is met, mitigate conservation concerns.

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WP22-12 Executive Summary	
General Description	Proposal WP22-12 requests that the deer season in Unit 6 be extended through January 31. *Submitted by: Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council*
Proposed Regulation	**Unit 6—Deer** *5 deer; however antlerless deer may be taken only from Oct. 1–~~Dec. 31~~* ***Jan. 31***. — *Aug. 1–~~Dec. 31~~ –**Jan. 31*** *~~Unit 6D 1 buck~~* — *~~Jan. 1 Jan. 31~~*
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	**Support** Proposal WP22–12 **with modification** to restrict the harvest limit during the January season to two deer. The modified regulation should read: **Unit 6—Deer** *5 deer; however antlerless deer may be taken only from Oct. 1–Dec. 31.* ***Up to 2 of the 5 deer harvest limit may be taken between Jan. 1 and Jan. 31.*** — *Aug. 1–~~Dec. 31~~ **Jan. 31*** *~~Unit 6D 1 buck~~* — *~~Jan. 1 Jan. 31~~*
Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	**2 oppose**

DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS
WP22-12

ISSUES

Proposal WP22-12, submitted by Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, requests that the deer season in Unit 6 be extended through January 31.

DISCUSSION

The proponents believe that lengthening the deer season in Unit 6 through January 31 should be authorized because many subsistence users have not been able to harvest enough deer to feed their families due to mild winters, which decreases hunter success. Early in the season, deer are often found in rugged, mountainous terrain and hunting them can be physically demanding, and deer can be difficult to spot in dense brush. Winter snowpacks that push deer to the beaches where they are more easily accessed by hunters have occurred later in recent winters. Hunters that cannot participate in early-season hunts must wait until later in the season when reduced foliage allows deer to be more easily seen and heavy snowpack forces deer down near the coast where they are more accessible.

Existing Federal Regulation

Unit 6—Deer

5 deer; however, antlerless deer may be taken only from Oct. 1–Dec. 31	*Aug. 1–Dec. 31*
Unit 6D – 1 buck	*Jan. 1- Jan. 31*

Proposed Federal Regulation

Unit 6—Deer

5 deer; however antlerless deer may be taken only from Oct. 1~~–Dec. 31~~ ***Jan. 31***.	*Aug. 1~~–Dec. 31~~ –**Jan. 31***
~~Unit 6D- 1 buck~~	*~~Jan. 1- Jan. 31~~*

Existing State Regulation

Unit 6 – Deer

Residents–5 deer total	*Bucks*	*Aug. 1–Sept. 30*
	Any deer	*Oct.1–Dec. 31*
Nonresidents–4 deer total	*Bucks*	*Aug. 1–Sept. 30*
	Any deer	*Oct. 1–Dec. 31*

Extent of Federal Public Lands

Federal public lands comprise approximately 71% of Unit 6 and consist of 49.2% U.S. Forest Service managed lands, 13.8% Bureau of Land Management managed lands, and 7.6% National Park Service managed lands (**Figure 1**).

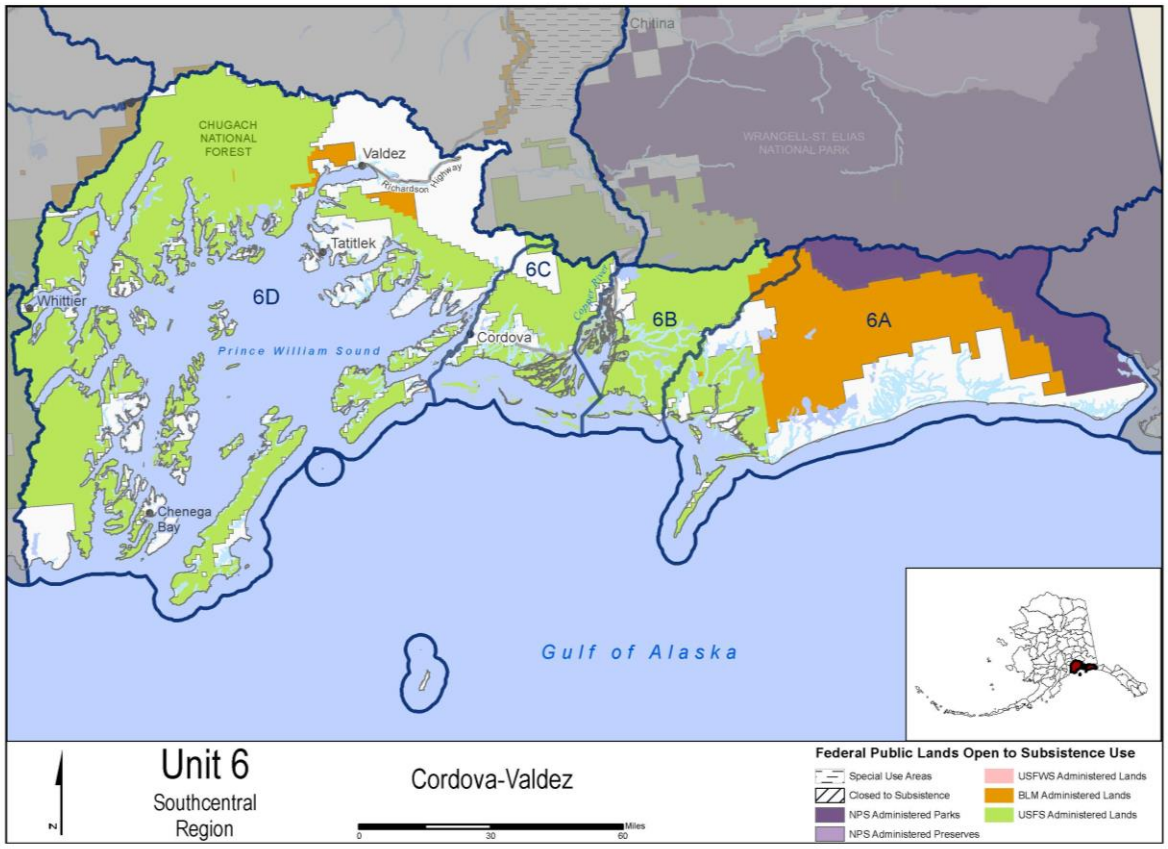

Figure 1. Unit 6 hunt area

Customary and Traditional Use Determinations

The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) has not made a customary and traditional use determination for deer in Unit 6; therefore, all rural residents of Alaska may harvest deer in Unit 6.

Regulatory History

In 1990, the Board adopted subsistence regulations for deer hunting from State regulations. The initial Federal deer season was Aug. 1–Dec. 31 with a limit of 5 deer, but antlerless deer could only be taken from Sept. 15–Dec. 31.

In 1991, Proposal P91-118 was submitted by the Chugach National Forest, Forest Supervisor to reduce the harvest limit from 5 to 4 deer and shorten the antlerless deer season from Sept. 15–Dec. 31 to Nov. 1–Dec. 31 in Units 6C and 6D. The proposal was submitted due to concerns about a population decline following heavy snow years. The Board adopted the proposal with modification to extend the regulatory changes to all of Unit 6 to match recent changes to State regulations (FWS 1991).

In 1996, the Board adopted Proposal P96-21, which extended the antlerless season from Nov. 1–Dec. 31 to Oct. 1–Dec. 31 (FWS 1996).

In 2012, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) closed the State deer season to residents and nonresidents on December 7, 2012 via Emergency Order. The closure was due to heavy snowfall that concentrated deer on and near beaches, which likely increased the population's vulnerability to harvest. The Copper River/Prince William Sound Fish and Game Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) and ADF&G agreed the deer population in Unit 6 should be protected from overharvest following the winter of 2011/12, when the population experienced an estimated overwinter mortality of 50%–70% (Westing 2014). The Advisory Committee recommended that both the State and Federal deer seasons be closed on December 7 and that the Cordova District Ranger be delegated the authority to close the season when there are conservation concerns (Copper River/Prince William Sound Fish and Game Advisory Committee, 2012).

In 2012, the Board approved Emergency Special Action (WSA12-10) with modification, shortening the antlerless deer season from Oct. 1–Dec. 31 to Oct.1–Dec. 7 (FWS 2012). The modification gave the Cordova District Ranger the ability to close the season for all hunting if further conservation concerns arose. Federally qualified subsistence users were still able to harvest antlered deer until December 31, 2012.

In 2013, the State issued an Emergency Order to close the resident and nonresident antlerless deer season in Unit 6 at 11:59 p.m. on October 31, 2013. Subsequently, the Board closed Federal public lands in Unit 6 (WSA13-07) to the harvest of antlerless deer by Federally qualified subsistence users, effective at 11:59 p.m. on Nov. 1, 2013 (FWS 2013). These actions were taken to reduce the hunting mortality of female deer and aid in population recovery following the severe winter of 2011/12.

In 2016, the Board adopted Proposals WP16-11 and WP16-12, addressing season length and harvest limits for deer in Unit 6. Proposal WP16-11 lengthened the season in Unit 6D through January 31 with a harvest limit of 1 buck, citing increased difficulty harvesting deer early in the season because of later onset of winter snows due to climate change. The extended season was limited to just bucks to minimize impacts to the population that could result from harvesting females. Proposal WP16-12 increased the Federal harvest limit from 4 to 5 deer in Unit 6, recognizing that the Federal harvest limit had been lower than the State harvest limit.

Biological Background

Sitka black-tailed deer were introduced to Unit 6 between 1916 and 1923 (Paul 2009). The deer population rapidly increased and expanded throughout Prince William Sound (Reynolds 1979). Sitka black-tailed deer are at the northern limit of their range in Unit 6; however, the population has thrived due to the mild, maritime climate conditions in Prince William Sound, which are similar to their natural range in coastal southeast Alaska (Shishido 1986 *referenced in* Crowley 2011).

Sitka black-tailed deer occupy a variety of habitats throughout the year, from low elevation forests and beaches to alpine habitats (Schoen and Kirchhoff 2007). Deer are more dispersed during summer, but snow depth restricts their winter distribution to lower elevations (Schoen and Kirchhoff 2007). The breeding season begins in late October and peaks in late November (Schoen and Kirchhoff 2007). Throughout the species' range, bucks generally shed their antlers between mid-December and mid-April (Anderson and Wallmo 1984), but in a British Columbia study most antlers were dropped between January and March (British Columbia Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks 2000). In southcentral Alaska, hunters commonly observe the beginning of antler shed during the latter part of the hunting season in December.

The deer population in Prince William Sound is limited by snow depth and duration. Heavy snow events have caused multiple major winter mortality events in the area (Reynolds 1979, Crowley 2011). Populations typically increase and then disperse after a series of mild winters, but decline following severe winters (Reynolds 1979, Crowley 2011). Deep snow and high harvest during the winter of 2011/2012 resulted in an estimated mortality of 50%–70% of the deer population in Prince William Sound (Westing 2014). Deep snow concentrates deer along beach fringes, which can be overgrazed if deer are forced to remain there for an extended period of time, and can result in starvation (Reynolds 1979). Deer are also more vulnerable to harvest while concentrated on the beaches and harvesting under these circumstances could become additive to total mortality, rather than compensatory, and result in higher total winter mortality. Predation is not considered a significant mortality factor for deer in Prince William Sound (Reynolds 1979).

The State has set a population objective of 24,000–28,000 deer with an annual harvest objective of 2,200–3,000 deer in Unit 6; however, currently there are no means of estimating the abundance of deer in the unit (Crowley 2011, Westing 2013). Instead, ADF&G and the Chugach National Forest use deer-pellet surveys in Unit 6D, which encompasses Prince William Sound, as an index of the relative density of deer. The mean number of deer pellet groups observed declined overall between 1996 to 2019 (**Figure 1**), but

showed a marked increase from 2017-2019, approximating 1996 levels (Westing 2013). However, deer pellet surveys are not sensitive to previous year winter mortality events, because deer deposit pellets through most of the winter until succumbing to starvation in the spring (Crowley 2012, pers. comm.).

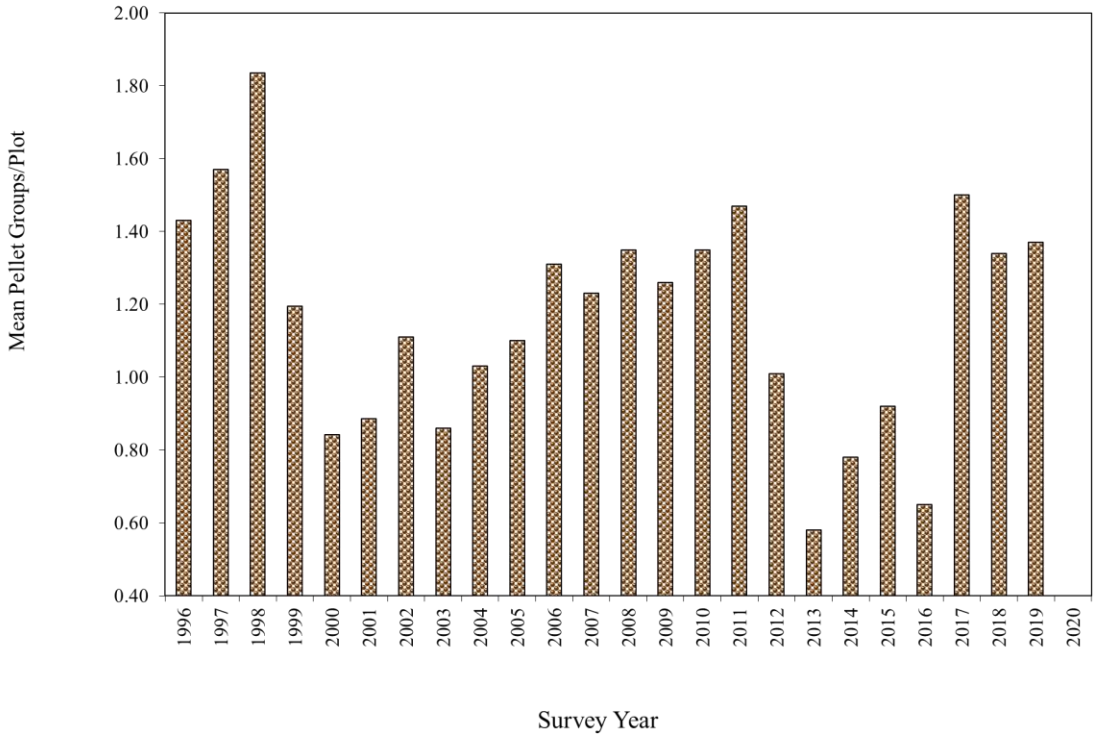

Figure 2. Deer pellet density observed along transects in Unit 6. Deer pellet density provides an index of the relative density of deer in the unit (Crowley 2011, Crowley 2012, pers. comm., Westing 2013, 2014, Westing 2021, pers. comm.).

Thus, there is a one year lag between mortality events and decrease in deer pellet density. Deer pellet counts conducted in 2012 and 2013 by ADF&G and the U.S. Forest Service corroborated the 50-70% mortality rate during the severe winter in 2011/2012 (Crowley 2011, Westing 2013). The 2012/2013 mean number of pellet groups per plot (0.58) was the lowest recorded by ADF&G since 1995 and represented a 61% decline from 2010/2011. Biologists also found evidence of the mortality event during the deer pellet surveys conducted in June 2012. Ten deer carcasses were encountered during transects, whereas zero to one are encountered during normal years. Although differences in topography and snow retention among the islands In Prince William Sound can result in local variation in deer densities, declines in deer pellet densities were observed on all islands and in nearly every location during the 2013 survey, but have largely recovered since then (**Figure 1**, Westing 2021).

Harvest History

Prior to 2011, deer harvest in Unit 6 was estimated from harvest questionnaires mailed to a sample of hunters who were issued State harvest tickets. It is difficult to identify deer harvested by Federally qualified subsistence users, as results are categorized by residents of Unit 6 (local residents), residents outside of Unit 6 (nonlocal residents), and nonresidents (**Table 1**). Thus, the local and nonlocal resident categories include both Federally qualified subsistence users and non-Federally qualified subsistence users. However, beginning in 2011/2012, harvest reports were given to each user issued a State harvest ticket, improving reporting by connecting each user to a community. The interim harvest report showed that approximately 45% of the reported resident harvest was by local Federally qualified subsistence users (residents of Cordova, Chenega Bay, Tatitlek, and Whittier), 50% by non-Federally qualified Alaska residents, and 5% by nonlocal Federally qualified subsistence users (ADF&G 2012). Approximately 98% of the reported harvest by local Federally qualified subsistence users was from Cordova residents (ADF&G 2012), which was similar to the results of the household survey conducted in 2003 (95% of reported harvest). The majority of harvest by non-Federally qualified subsistence users was from Anchorage residents (approximately 38% of reported harvest), and 5% of the reported harvest was associated with Valdez residents, which is a nonrural community in Unit 6 (ADF&G 2012). Local and nonlocal residents were the primary users (29% and 66% of the estimated hunters, respectively) and accounted for 39% and 59% of the estimated harvest between 2010/2011 and 2019/2020, respectively (**Table 1**). McLaughlin (2015) reported a decline in hunter success during the winter of 2014-2015. This may be due in part to the relatively warm winter which allowed the deer to remain more dispersed at higher elevations where they are less available to Federally qualified subsistence users (Westing 2014). Local residents have the highest success rates of the deer hunters in Unit 6, averaging 1.6 deer per year between 2010/11 and 2019/20 (**Table 1**).

From 2006 to 2012, the sex ratio of the harvest was approximately 62% male and 38% female (Crowley 2011, Westing 2013). Harvest reports between 2005/2006 and 2009/2010 showed that most of the annual deer harvest occurred during October (19%–35%), November (25%–35%), and December (18%–24%) (Crowley 2011, Westing 2013). Few deer have been harvested during the extended January season since the season was lengthened in 2016. Harvest chronology is similar to previous years, as users often prefer hunting after snow has pushed deer to lower elevations and because the rut, which occurs in November, increases the harvest vulnerability of bucks (Crowley 2011, Westing 2013). Deer were primarily harvested by hunters using boats (76%–86%) as their primary transportation method (Crowley 2011, Westing 2013). A large proportion of the yearly take of deer by the residents of Cordova, the largest of the three communities, occurs on Hawkins Island, which is in relatively close proximity to town.

Cultural and Traditional Use

Deer are an important resource for the subsistence way of life for residents of Unit 6. The most recent data from compressive household subsistence surveys in Unit 6, which were conducted by ADF&G in 2014 in Chenega Bay, Cordova, and Tatitlek, demonstrate the importance of deer. In Chenega Bay, 8 of the 12 participating households (75% of the sample; there was an estimate of 17 total households in the community) reported using deer on a deer in a 2014 comprehensive household subsistence survey

(ADF&G 2021a). More households in the survey used deer than any other large land mammal. Residents in the survey reported harvesting a total of 6 deer for a total weight of 259.2 lbs. It is estimated that the community harvested 9 deer for a total weight of 367.2 lbs.

More residents of Tatitlek also used deer than any large land mammal. In the 2014 comprehensive household survey, 17 of the 21 participating households (81% of the sample; there was an estimated 27 households in the community) reported that they used deer (ADF&G 2021c). Residents claimed that they harvested 28 deer, and it is estimated that the community harvested a total of 38 deer. In Cordova, 83 of the 184 participating households (45% of the same; there was an estimate of 950 households in the community) reported using deer (ADF&G 2021b). Residents reported harvesting 91 deer, and it is estimated that the whole community harvested 472 deer. In terms of large land mammals, only moose was used by more residents than deer in the sample.

Deer has also been one of the most important resources for the culture and traditions of those living in Unit 6, including food sharing. In all three of the communities surveyed, more households shared deer with others than any other large land mammal (ADF&G 2021a, 2021b, and 2021c). In Chenega Bay, 8 households said that they received deer from others (67% of the sample), and 4 households (25% of the sample) claimed that they gave it to others. One-hundred and twenty-one of the surveyed households (66% of the household) reported receiving deer from others, and 64 households (35% of the sample) gave it to others. In Tatitlek, 10 households in (48% of the sample) claimed that they received deer from others, and 9 households (43% of the sample) said that they gave it to others. These findings demonstrate that deer is one of the most important wild resources used for resource redistribution and maintaining social networks in the region.

According to locals, the capacity to harvest deer is variable and depends on winter weather. A large proportion of the yearly take of deer by the residents of Unit 6 is in within the unit (Fall 2006). Local hunters have the most success hunting deer when there is snow. At the February 2021 Southcentral Regional Advisory Council (Council) meeting, the proponent explained: “Deer hunting is very challenging earlier in the season, it's only very late in the season when a lot of people are able to participate, and the deer are sort of pushed down [by snow] and not on the peaks. And that season is getting later and later” (SCRAC 2021b). Supporting this theory that it is more difficult to harvest deer when there isn’t snow, another resident at the meeting reported “I hunted four times this year and I didn't connect once, so that's not too common, although I didn't get a chance to hunt when the snow flew” (SCRAC 2021a). The association between snowfall and harvest rates as been mentioned at past Council meetings. In the March 2019 meeting, a resident said, “[It was] a mild winter. Good for the deer population assuming, but that also correlates to probably lower harvest rates because of less snow conditions concentrating the deer in the places where they are harvested” (SCRAC 2019). Local knowledge posits that it is easier to harvest deer during snowy winter months.

Table 1. Unit 6 deer harvest 2010-2020 (Crowley 2012, pers. comm., Westing 2013, 2014, FWS 2015, Westing 2021, pers. comm.).

	Local resident		Nonlocal resident		Nonresident		
Year	Hunters	Deer harvested (deer/hunter)	Hunters	Deer harvested (deer/hunter)	Hunters	Deer harvested (deer/hunter)	Total deer harvested
2010/2011	352	805(2.2)	775	778(1.0)	60	60(1.0)	1643
2011/2012	455	1202(2.6)	888	1426(1.6)	51	48(0.9)	2676
2012/2013	196	156(0.8)	606	367(0.6)	50	13(0.3)	536
2013/2014	212	228(1.1)	490	303(0.6)	41	3(0.1)	534
2014/2015	360	434(1.2)	793	858(1.1)	37	6(0.2)	1298
2015/2016	443	655(1.5)	936	977(1.0)	52	54(1.0)	1686
2016/2017	508	907(1.8)	1216	1601(1.3)	74	46(0.6)	2554
2017/2018	412	558(1.4)	943	849(1.3)	85	48(0.6)	1455
2018/2019	461	773(1.7)	888	916(1.0)	56	16(0.3)	1705
2019/2020	444	773(1.7)	1102	1319(1.2)	63	49(0.8)	2141

Other Alternatives Considered

In addition to the proposal submitted by the proponent, and the modification suggested by OSM in the preliminary conclusion, another modification considered would be to allow two of the five deer harvest limit to be either-sex, while the remainder must be antlered bucks. This would allow additional opportunity, by allowing all five deer to be taken in the extended season. It would address conservation concerns by limiting the harvest of females to two, and conserve bucks by only allowing those retaining antlers to be harvested. This regulation would also be more complicated and could be difficult to enforce as antlers readily fall off of bucks after or during harvest late in the season.

Effects of the Proposal

If this proposal is adopted, it would lengthen the deer season by one month through January 31 in Unit 6. A longer season would provide increased opportunity for Federally qualified subsistence users to harvest deer during the winter when they are more accessible because snow often pushes deer to lower elevations and onto the beaches in Prince William Sound. By allowing the harvest of either sex deer during the

extended season, hunters would not have to discriminate between does, and bucks that have already shed their antlers.

Although the deer population in Unit 6 has largely recovered from the decline after the severe winter of 2011-12, deer are more vulnerable to harvest when pushed to beaches where they are easily accessed by hunters on boats. It is thought that when winter conditions are severe, hunter harvest can become an additive source of mortality to winter kill. Additionally, heavy harvest of does can slow recovery of the deer population after severe winter events.

Federally qualified subsistence users, especially residents of Cordova, harvest a significant portion of the deer taken in Prince William Sound, and are responsible for most of the harvest from Hawkins and Hinchinbrook Islands. While, few bucks have been harvested from Unit 6D during the January season since 2016, increasing the harvest limit and allowing the harvest of does late in the season would likely increase participation in the late season hunt.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Support Proposal WP22–12 **with modification** to restrict the harvest limit during the January season to two deer.

The modified regulation should read:

Unit 6—Deer

5 deer; however antlerless deer may be taken only from Oct. 1–Dec. 31. ***Up to 2 of the 5 deer harvest limit may be taken between Jan. 1 and Jan. 31.***	*Aug. 1–~~Dec. 31~~* ***Jan. 31***
~~*Unit 6D–1 buck*~~	~~*Jan. 1–Jan. 31*~~

Justification

While lengthening the deer season by one month through January 31 and allowing the harvest of does would provide additional opportunity to harvest red meat, it also increases harvest pressure at a time when deer can be pushed to beaches by deep snow where they are most vulnerable. Qualified rural residents already have a long and liberal season for deer in Unit 6, extending 5 months from 1 August through 31 December for up to 5 deer, and an additional month through 31 January for up to one buck. The proposed modification would reduce the impact to deer populations by limiting harvest during the time when they are most vulnerable, but still provide additional opportunity for qualified rural residents. This would also reduce additive mortality during more severe winters and speed recovery of the deer populations following these events.

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WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS

[EXTERNAL] opposition to all federal deer subsistance proposals. WP2207 -- Wp2212

RICHARD HARRIS <RHDevelopment@gci.net>

Thu 7/15/2021 12:38 PM

To: AK Subsistence, FW7 <subsistence@fws.gov>
Cc: deanna.perry@usda.gov <deanna.perry@usda.gov>

Attn: Theo Matuskowitz,
Office of Subsistence Management
Regarding : Federal deer subsistence proposals Region-1 Southeast Alaska
Proposal Numbers: WP2207, WP2208, WP2209, WP2210, WP2212

As a lifelong deer hunter of Southeast Alaska I am writing to oppose the federal subsistence proposals for deer harvesting in Southeast Alaska. I have hunted some of these areas my entire life, access to the areas listed is very difficult, needing good weather and much planning, I believe the weather controls much of the hunting pressure from non-federally qualified users in these areas(somewhat self regulating). I could understand supporting a lower per hunter harvest number in some areas, but shutting these areas down entirely during the period of Oct. 15 – Dec. 31, to non-federally qualified hunters is not acceptable. limiting hunting to any months other than Oct. 15 – Dec. 31 should be considered a complete shut down as this is the only period a hunter can actually hunt and experience the calling of a deer, during the rutting season. Any regulation changes made should include some changes to the federally qualified user as well, not all but some are doing as much damage to the resource with immediate access and extended hunt seasons as the non-federally qualified user who has limited access and shorter harvest seasons. Also as I understand these proposals have no basis, there is no evidence of a resource shortage or that non-federally qualified users on federal lands are having an actual impact on federally qualified user's ability to harvest adequate supplies of deer in the specified areas. I hope you will take these comments into consideration and reject these proposals.

Thank you,

Richard Harris
P.O. Box 32403
Juneau, Alaska 99803

Richard Harris

[EXTERNAL] Opposition of Federal subsistence proposals Southeast Alaska for deer WP 2207, wp2208, wp2209, wp2210, wp 2212

CHARLES SCHULTZ <cjs16@me.com>
Sun 7/18/2021 3:53 PM
To: AK Subsistence, FW7 <subsistence@fws.gov>
Cc: deanna.perry@usda.gov <deanna.perry@usda.gov>

Attention Theo Matuskowitz,
Office of Subsistence Management

I am writing to oppose the federal subsistence proposals that affect Southeast Alaska Deer hunting. I oppose WP2207, WP22-08, WP22-09, WP22-10, and WP22-12.
Proposals WP22-07, WP 22-08, WP22-09 and prevents non-qualified subsistence users from access to deer hunting on public lands. As an Alaskan resident I also rely on deer meat as a primary source of red meat that is locally available. Limiting non-qualified subsistence users from access to hunt deer in areas around Angoon, Hoonah and Pelican is entirely unfair to those who live in other areas of the state, who are non-qualified Subsistence hunters. There is no science to suggest that the over harvest of deer is related to non-qualified subsistence users, in fact I would suggest that the over harvest in the areas around Hoohah, Angoon, and Pelican may actually be from the subsistence users who may be killing every available deer seen in late season, on the beach and uncaring if the deer is antlerless and uncaring of size. Preservation of breeding antlerless deer may prove to allow fawn bearing deer an opportunity to give birth in the spring. Also education of subsistence hunters to harvest mature deer would improve the size of deer and thereby increase the available pounds of edible meat.

Extending the season in unit 6 is exactly a dichotomy of what the Subsistence Board may be wanting to achieve. The complaint of less harvestable deer will only be compounded if deer seasons are extended during their most vulnerable times. Then the subsistence deer harvest will continue to over extend the available deer to breed for next year, and likely they will complain that non-subsistence harvest is the blame.

Hunters of deer need equal access to public lands. We are all Alaskans trying to provide natural, local deer meat.

Please take the comments of non-subsistence hunters into consideration.
Also consider making all Alaskans subsistence users. We all live here. We all have subsistence needs, not based on size of community we live in.

Thanks for your consideration ,
Charles Schultz
Juneau, Alaska

WP22-13 Executive Summary	
General Description	Proposal WP22-13 requests that deer be removed from the Unit 6 specific designated hunter regulation, allowing any Federally qualified subsistence user to designate another qualified user to harvest deer on their behalf in Unit 6, as is allowed for large mammals in most of the rest of Alaska. *Submitted by: Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council*
Proposed Regulation	**§_____.26(n)(6)(ii) Unit-specific regulations:** *(D) A Federally qualified subsistence user (recipient) who is either blind, 65 years of age or older, at least 70 percent disabled, or temporarily disabled, may designate another Federally qualified subsistence user (designated hunter) to take any moose, ~~deer,~~ black bear and beaver on their behalf in Unit 6, and goat in Unit 6D, unless the recipient is a member of a community operating under a community harvest system. The designated hunter must get a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report. The designated hunter may hunt for any number of recipients, but may have no more than one harvest limit in their possession at any one time.*
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	**Support**
Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	**None**

DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS
WP22-13

ISSUES

Proposal WP22-13, submitted by the Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, requests that deer be removed from the Unit 6 specific designated hunter regulation, allowing any Federally qualified subsistence user to designate another qualified user to harvest deer on their behalf in Unit 6, as is allowed for large mammals in most of the rest of Alaska. Currently, only elderly or disabled hunters may designate another to harvest deer on their behalf in Unit 6.

DISCUSSION

The proponents would like to change the current designated hunter regulation, specific to Unit 6, so that any Federally qualified subsistence user could designate another qualified user to harvest deer on their behalf. Hunting deer can be physically demanding, especially early in the season, before snow pushes deer to lower elevations. This would allow one member of a family, who is capable of harvesting deer early in the season, to fill the permits of other family members or other individuals later in the season. Currently, a hunter must be blind, at least 65 years of age, 70% disabled, or temporarily disabled to designate another hunter to harvest deer on their behalf.

This analysis, in consultation with the proponent, addresses the original intent of the proponent by just removing "deer" from the existing Unit 6 designated hunter provision. The additional text contained in the proposal as submitted, stating that qualified rural residents may designate others to harvest deer on their behalf, is unnecessary, as it is addressed in existing Federal regulation.

Existing Federal Regulation

§_____.26(n)(6)(ii) Unit-specific regulations:

(D) A Federally qualified subsistence user (recipient) who is either blind, 65 years of age or older, at least 70 percent disabled, or temporarily disabled, may designate another Federally qualified subsistence user (designated hunter) to take any moose, deer, black bear and beaver on their behalf in Unit 6, and goat in Unit 6D, unless the recipient is a member of a community operating under a community harvest system. The designated hunter must get a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report. The designated hunter may hunt for any number of recipients, but may have no more than one harvest limit in their possession at any one time.

Proposed Federal Regulation

§_____.26(n)(6)(ii) Unit-specific regulations:

(D) A Federally qualified subsistence user (recipient) who is either blind, 65 years of age or older, at least 70 percent disabled, or temporarily disabled, may designate another Federally qualified subsistence user (designated hunter) to take any moose, ~~deer,~~ black bear and beaver on their behalf in Unit 6, and goat in Unit 6D, unless the recipient is a member of a community operating under a community harvest system. The designated hunter must get a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report. The designated hunter may hunt for any number of recipients, but may have no more than one harvest limit in their possession at any one time.

Existing State Regulation

An Alaska resident (the beneficiary) may obtain an authorization allowing another Alaska resident (the proxy) to hunt moose, caribou, or deer for them if they are blind, 70-percent physically disabled, 65 years of age or older, or are developmentally disabled. A person may not proxy for more than one beneficiary at a time.

Relevant Federal Regulation

§_____.25(e) *Hunting by designated harvest permit.*

If you are a Federally qualified subsistence user (recipient), you may designate another Federally qualified subsistence user to take deer, moose, and caribou, and in Units 1-5, goats, on your behalf unless you are a member of a community operating under a community harvest system or unless unit-specific regulations in §100.26 preclude or modify the use of the designated hunter system or allow the harvest of additional species by a designated hunter. The designated hunter must obtain a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report. The designated hunter may hunt for any number of recipients but may have no more than two harvest limits in his/her possession at any one time except for goats, where designated hunters may have no more than one harvest limit in possession at any one time, and unless otherwise specified in unit-specific regulations in §100.26.

Extent of Federal Public Lands

Federal public lands comprise approximately 71% of Unit 6 and consist of 49.2% U.S. Forest Service managed lands, 13.8% Bureau of Land Management managed lands, and 7.6% National Park Service managed lands (**Figure 1**).

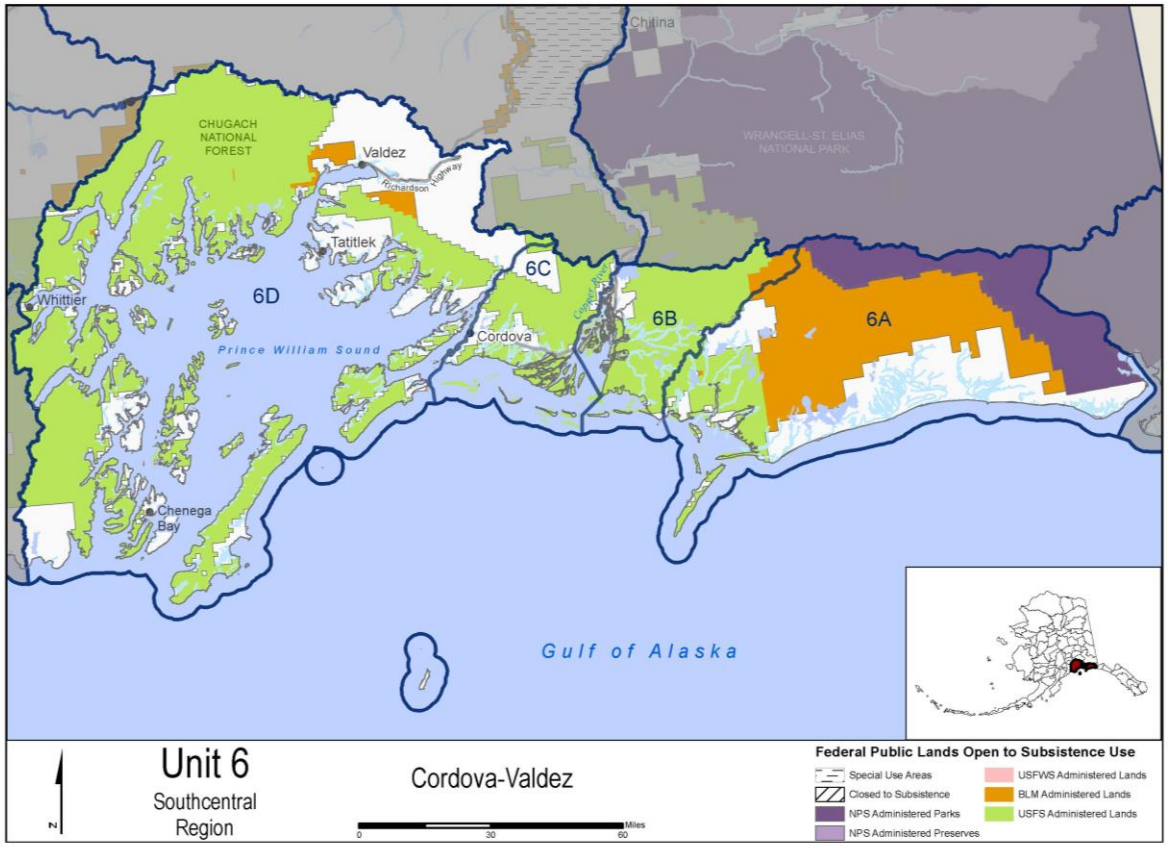

Figure 1. Unit 6 hunt area .

Customary and Traditional Use Determinations

The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) has not made a customary and traditional use determination for deer in Unit 6; therefore, all rural residents of Alaska may harvest deer in Unit 6.

Regulatory History

Prior to 2002, there was no designated hunting provision for Unit 6. Three requests for a designated hunter provision in Unit 6 were submitted to the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) in 2002, including: Proposal WP03-15, which proposed that no designated hunter could be used for Unit 6C moose; Proposal WP03-16, which proposed a designated hunter could be used to harvest Unit 6C moose or deer; and Proposal WP03-55, which proposed a designated hunter could be used for any wildlife in Unit 6.

Proposal WP03-15 was submitted because it was thought by some residents that "the limited numbers of available permits continue to be highly coveted and that the drawing method of permit allocation was regarded as the most equitable and appropriate for local circumstances," and that designated hunting provisions can lead to abuses of the drawing system, such as those with large extended families or those willing to sponsor proxies as a way of increasing their chances of being drawn for a permit. The proponent went on to state that sharing is a fundamental part of life in

Cordova and "designated hunter privileges are simply not necessary to further the goals of sharing or resource distribution and serve only to confound the fairness of permit drawing and distribution." He also acknowledged that "proxy or designated hunter provisions are an appropriate and sometimes necessary accommodation in other hunt circumstances but not in the Unit 6(C) moose hunt where a very limited number of permits are available only by drawing."

The proponents of Proposals WP03-16 and WP03-55 expressed the opposite view. They supported designated hunter provisions in Unit 6. They expressed the view that a Federally qualified subsistence user should be allowed to have a designated hunter to harvest subsistence foods without being limited or restricted by physical disabilities. In Proposal WP03-16, the proponents stated that the two elderly successful drawing permit holders had used the State proxy hunting system in the past to obtain their subsistence fish and game. The Native Village of Eyak also pointed out that there are designated hunting provisions in neighboring Units 5, 11, and 13.

The proposal submitted by the Native Village of Eyak, WP03-55, is the only one of the three that placed the specific conditions on the designation to another Federally qualified subsistence user to be "in their family." In conversations with representatives of the proponent, this condition was requested as a way of recognizing traditional practices of their tribal organization. The application of designated hunting provisions to any wildlife was also seen as a way to recognize traditional practices, as the Native Village of Eyak Council members stated that when hunters go out, they hunt for whoever needs the resource and do not limit this practice to certain species (Lambert 2003).

These proposals were largely in response to the Federal subsistence moose drawing hunt in Unit 6C. After deliberation, the Board adopted the current designated hunting provision unique to Unit 6, allowing Federally qualified subsistence users who are blind, 65 years of age or older, 70% disabled, or temporarily disabled, to harvest any moose, deer, black bear, or beaver on their behalf in Unit 6, and goat in Unit 6D, unless the recipient is a member of a community harvest system. The resulting designated hunter provision adopted by the Board was a compromise, recognizing the coveted nature of draw permits for Unit 6C moose, and allowed for the designation of another hunter to harvest deer, moose, caribou, black bear, beaver and goats by hunters who are blind, over 65 years of age, 70% disabled, or temporarily disabled. The only designated hunter permits that have been issued since that time have been for Unit 6C moose.

In 2003, the Board adopted Wildlife Proposal WP03-02 with modification to standardize the designated hunter regulations. The Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) submitted the proposal to provide equal harvest opportunity for subsistence users across the State. Previously, designated hunter regulations had been adopted on a unit by unit basis resulting in certain hunts and units being overlooked. This proposal established a statewide designated hunter program for subsistence harvest of moose, deer and caribou, subject to unit-specific regulations.

Current Events

Wildlife Proposal WP22-02, submitted by OSM, requests removing language from general and unit specific regulations prohibiting the use of a designated hunter if the recipient is a member of a community operating under a community harvest system.

Cultural Knowledge and Traditional Practices

Designated hunting provisions provide recognition of the customary and traditional practices throughout the state. On a statewide basis, findings from a comparison of household harvests in a community documented that "it is not uncommon for about 30 percent of the households in a community to produce about 70 percent or more of the community's wild food harvest (Wolfe 1987: 16-17)." One of the factors proposed as an explanation for the highly productive households is the developmental cycle in multi-household kinship groups; where the mature household (higher producers) is characterized by the largest pool of labor and equipment and the largest set of social obligations to produce food. A conclusion of this study was that individual bag or harvest limits do not allow for these practices and a recommendation for alternative management tools, "such as the transferable bag and the community bag [limits], are identified as being more compatible with the customary harvest patterns of particular rural Alaskan areas" (Wolfe 1987: 17).

Harvest History

Deer are an important subsistence resource for residents of Unit 6. A community survey in 2003 showed that deer were used by more households in Chenega Bay, Cordova, and Tatitlek than any other large mammal species, with a minimum of 65% of households estimated using deer in each community (**Table 1**). In addition, deer were the primary large mammal harvested by households in each community, whereas other large mammal resources were more likely shared from individuals within or outside of the communities (Fall 2006) (**Table 1**). A large proportion of the yearly take of deer by the residents of Cordova, the largest of the three communities, occurs on Hawkins Island, which is in relatively close proximity to town.

Prior to 2011, deer harvest in Unit 6 was estimated from harvest questionnaires mailed to a sample of hunters who were issued State harvest tickets. It was difficult to identify deer harvested by Federally qualified subsistence users, as results were categorized as residents of Unit 6 (local residents), residents outside of Unit 6 (nonlocal residents), and nonresidents (**Table 2**). Thus, the local and nonlocal resident categories included both Federally qualified subsistence users and non-Federally qualified subsistence users. However, beginning in 2011/2012, harvest reports were given to each user issued a State harvest ticket, improving reporting and connected each user to a community. The interim harvest report showed that approximately 45% of the reported resident harvest was by local Federally qualified subsistence users (residents of Cordova, Chenega Bay, Tatitlek, and Whittier), 50% by non-Federally qualified Alaska residents, and 5% by nonlocal Federally qualified subsistence users (ADF&G 2012). Approximately 98% of the reported harvest by local Federally qualified subsistence users was from Cordova residents (ADF&G 2012), which was similar to the results of the household survey conducted in 2003 (95% of reported harvest) (**Table 1**). The majority of harvest by non-Federally qualified subsistence users was from Anchorage residents (approximately 38% of reported harvest), and 5% of the reported harvest was associated with Valdez residents, which is a nonrural community in Unit 6 (ADF&G 2012). Local and nonlocal residents were the primary users (29% and 66% of the estimated hunters, respectively) and accounted for 39% and 59% of the estimated harvest between 2010/2011 and 2019/2020, respectively (**Table 2**). McLaughlin (2015) reported a decline in hunter success during the winter of 2014-2015.

This may be due in part to the relatively warm winter which allowed the deer to remain more dispersed at higher elevations where they are less available to Federally qualified subsistence users (Westing 2014). Local residents have the highest success rates of the deer hunters in Unit 6, averaging 1.6 deer per year between 2010/11 and 2019/20 (**Table 2**).

From 2006 to 2012, the sex ratio of the harvest was approximately 62% male and 38% female (Crowley 2011, Westing 2013). Harvest reports between 2005/2006 and 2009/2010 showed that most of the annual deer harvest occurred during October (19%–35%), November (25%–35%), and December (18%–24%) (Crowley 2011, Westing 2013). Few deer have been harvested during the extended January season since the season was lengthened in 2016. Harvest chronology is similar to previous years, as users often prefer hunting after snow has pushed deer to lower elevations and because the rut, which occurs in November, increases the harvest vulnerability of bucks (Crowley 2011, Westing 2013). Deer were primarily harvested by hunters using boats (76%–86%) as their primary transportation method (Crowley 2011, Westing 2013).

Table 1. Household harvest survey data from communities in Prince William Sound, Alaska in 2003. Households were classified as having used, attempted to harvest, or harvested resources if any member of that household participated in that category. The percentage of households that used a resource included those that harvested and gave it away or acquired the resource from another user, and included all non-commercial uses of the resource (Fall 2006).

		Percentage (%) of households			
Community	**Species**	**Used**	**Attempted**	**Harvested**	**Total animals harvested**
Chenega Bay	Deer	81	75	56	50
	Moose	44	6	6	1
	Goat	25	13	6	1
	Sheep	13	6	0	0
	Black bear	13	0	0	0
Cordova	Deer	65	44	39	1354
	Moose	51	14	12	111
	Goat	11	3	1	16
	Sheep	1	1	1	8
	Black bear	10	8	3	35
Tatitlek	Deer	100	56	28	30
	Moose	32	0	0	0
	Goat	40	12	4	1
	Sheep	4	0	0	0
	Black bear	20	8	4	1

Table 2. Unit 6 deer harvest 2010-2020 (Crowley 2012, pers. comm., Westing 2013, 2014, FWS 2015, Westing 2021, pers. comm.). Harvest data was recorded via the State's deer hunter questionnaire survey until 2010/2011 and via a harvest ticket starting in 2011/2012 (Westing 2021, pers. comm.).

	Local resident		Nonlocal resident		Nonresident		
Year	Hunters	Deer harvested (deer/hunter)	Hunters	Deer harvested (deer/hunter)	Hunters	Deer harvested (deer/hunter)	Total deer harvested
2010/2011	352	805(2.2)	775	778(1.0)	60	60(1.0)	1643
2011/2012	455	1202(2.6)	888	1426(1.6)	51	48(0.9)	2676
2012/2013	196	156(0.8)	606	367(0.6)	50	13(0.3)	536
2013/2014	212	228(1.1)	490	303(0.6)	41	3(0.1)	534
2014/2015	360	434(1.2)	793	858(1.1)	37	6(0.2)	1298
2015/2016	443	655(1.5)	936	977(1.0)	52	54(1.0)	1686
2016/2017	508	907(1.8)	1216	1601(1.3)	74	46(0.6)	2554
2017/2018	412	558(1.4)	943	849(1.3)	85	48(0.6)	1455
2018/2019	461	773(1.7)	888	916(1.0)	56	16(0.3)	1705
2019/2020	444	773(1.7)	1102	1319(1.2)	63	49(0.8)	2141

Effects of the Proposal

Removal of deer from the Unit 6 designated hunting provision would allow any Federally qualified subsistence user to harvest deer in Unit 6 on the behalf of other qualified users. This would allow additional access to deer by families or individuals that are unable to hunt themselves, as Federal regulation allows for designated hunters in the remainder of Alaska for deer, moose, and caribou. Biological effects on the Unit 6 deer population would be minimal because winter severity has as great an effect on Prince William Sound deer populations as does hunting pressure. In-season management authority could be used to mitigate conservation concerns if they develop.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Support Proposal WP22–13.

Justification

Allowing any Federally qualified subsistence user to designate another qualified user to harvest deer on their behalf in Unit 6 would provide additional access to deer for individuals and families unable to harvest deer themselves, whether as a result of physical limitations, lack of boat access, or other reasons. This would also make the Unit 6 designated hunter regulation more consistent with the statewide regulation for designated hunters.

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WP22–01 Executive Summary	
General Description	Proposal WP22-01 requests clarification of who is and who is not a participant in a community harvest system and how that affects community and individual harvest limits. *Submitted by: the Office of Subsistence Management*
Proposed Regulation	***§_____.25 Subsistence taking of fish, wildlife, and shellfish: general regulations*** *(c) Harvest limits* . . . ***(5) Fish, wildlife, or shellfish taken by a participant in a community harvest system counts toward the community harvest limit or quota for that species as well as individual harvest limits, Federal or State, for each participant in that community harvest system, however, the take does not count toward individual harvest limits, Federal or State, of any non-participant. Fish, wildlife, or shellfish taken by someone who is not a participant in a community harvest system does not count toward any community harvest limit or quota.*** ***(i) For the purposes of this provision, all residents of the community are deemed participants in the community harvest unless the Board-approved framework requires registration as a prerequisite to harvesting or receiving any fish, wildlife, or shellfish pursuant to that community harvest, in which case only those who register are deemed participants in that community harvest.*** ***§_____.26 Subsistence taking of wildlife*** *(e) Possession and transportation of wildlife.* . . . ~~*(2) An animal taken under Federal or State regulations by any member of a community with an established community harvest limit for that species counts toward the community harvest limit for that species. Except for wildlife taken pursuant to §____.10(d)(5)(iii) or as otherwise provided for by this part, an animal taken as part of a community harvest limit counts toward every community member's*~~

WP22–01 Executive Summary	
	~~*harvest limit for that species taken under Federal or State of Alaska regulations.*~~
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	**Support**
Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	

WP22–01 Executive Summary	
Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	**None**

DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS
WP22-01

ISSUES

Wildlife Proposal WP22-01, submitted by the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM), requests clarification of who is and who is not a participant in a community harvest system and how that affects community and individual harvest limits.

Discussion

The proponent requests specific language clarifying who is and who is not a participant in a community harvest system and how this relates to individual and community harvest limits. While developing the framework for a community harvest system in summer 2020, Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission (AITRC) representatives and Federal agency staff realized that current Federal regulations stipulate that any animals harvested under a community harvest limit count toward the harvest limits of every community member whether or not they choose to participate in the community harvest system. This provision is perceived as unfair to community members who are not interested in participating in a community harvest system because their individual harvest limits are met involuntarily by participants in the community harvest system.

This proposal would affect community and individual harvest limits as well as define who is and who is not a participant in a community harvest system for wildlife, fish, and shellfish, statewide. In addition to clarifying who is and who is not a participant in a community harvest system, the intent of this proposal is to allow community members who opt out of a community harvest system to retain their individual harvest limits.

Note: While the proposal as submitted listed the proposed regulations under §100.25(c)(2), the proponent clarified their intention was to create a separate section for these regulations as §100.25(c)(5).

Existing Federal Regulation

> **36 CFR 242.25 and 50 CFR 100.25 Subsistence taking of fish, wildlife, and shellfish: general regulations**
>
> *(c) Harvest limits*
>
> **§_____.26 Subsistence taking of wildlife**
>
> *(e) Possession and transportation of wildlife.*
>
> . . .
>
> *(2) An animal taken under Federal or State regulations by any member of a community with an established community harvest limit for that species counts towards the community harvest*

limit for that species. Except for wildlife taken pursuant to §____.10(d)(5)(iii)[1] or as otherwise provided for by this part, an animal taken as part of a community harvest limit counts toward every community member's harvest limit for that species taken under Federal or State of Alaska regulations.

Proposed Federal Regulation

§_____.25 Subsistence taking of fish, wildlife, and shellfish: general regulations

(c) Harvest limits

. . .

(5) Fish, wildlife, or shellfish taken by a participant in a community harvest system counts toward the community harvest limit or quota for that species as well as individual harvest limits, Federal or State, for each participant in that community harvest system, however, the take does not count toward individual harvest limits, Federal or State, of any non-participant. Fish, wildlife, or shellfish taken by someone who is not a participant in a community harvest system does not count toward any community harvest limit or quota.

(i) For the purposes of this provision, all residents of the community are deemed participants in the community harvest unless the Board-approved framework requires registration as a prerequisite to harvesting or receiving any fish, wildlife, or shellfish pursuant to that community harvest, in which case only those who register are deemed participants in that community harvest.

§_____.26 Subsistence taking of wildlife

(e) Possession and transportation of wildlife.

. . .

~~*(2) An animal taken under Federal or State regulations by any member of a community with an established community harvest limit for that species counts toward the community harvest limit for that species. Except for wildlife taken pursuant to §____.10(d)(5)(iii) or as otherwise provided for by this part, an animal taken as part of a community harvest limit counts toward every community member's harvest limit for that species taken under Federal or State of Alaska regulations.*~~

State of Alaska Regulations

State general regulations describing its community harvest program are in **Appendix 1**.

[1] *§____.10(d)(5)(iii) The fish and wildlife is taken by individuals or community representatives permitted a one-time or annual harvest for special purposes including ceremonies and potlatches;*

Federal Public Lands

Federal public lands comprise approximately 54% of Alaska statewide and consist of 36% U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service managed lands, 28% Bureau of Land Management managed lands, 25% National Park Service managed lands, and 11% U.S. Forest Service managed lands.

Customary and Traditional Use Determination

This is a statewide proposal for wildlife, fish, and shellfish.

Regulatory History

In 1991, after extensive public comment on the Federal Subsistence Management Program's first Temporary Rule, the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) committed to addressing community harvest limits and alternative permitting processes (56 Fed. Reg. 123, 29311 [June 26, 1991]).

In 1992, responding to approximately 40 proposals requesting community harvest systems and numerous public comments requesting alternative permitting systems, the Board supported the concept of adjusting seasons and harvest limits based on customs and traditions of a community (57 Fed. Reg. 103, 22531–2 [May 28, 1992]). The Board said specific conditions for the use of a particular harvest reporting system may be applied on a case-by-case basis and further development and refinement of guidelines for alternative permitting systems would occur as the Federal Subsistence Management Program evolved (57 Fed. Reg. 104, 22948 [May 29, 1992]. These regulations at ____.6 were modified to state that intent more clearly:

> §_____.6 Licenses, permits, harvest tickets, tags, and reports[2]
>
> *(f) The Board may implement harvest reporting systems or permit systems where:*
>
> *(1) The fish and wildlife is taken by an individual who is required to obtain and possess pertinent State harvest permits, tickets, or tags, or Federal permits, harvest tickets, or tags;*
>
> *(2) A qualified subsistence user may designate another qualified subsistence user to take fish and wildlife on his or her behalf;*
>
> *(3) The fish and wildlife is taken by individuals or community representatives permitted a one-time or annual harvest for special purposes including ceremonies and potlatches;*
>
> *(4) The fish and wildlife is taken by representatives of a community permitted to do so in a manner consistent with the community's customary and traditional practices.*

In 1993, the Board adopted Proposal P93-12, which clarified that community harvest limits and individual harvest limits may not be accumulated, community harvest systems will be adopted on a

[2] Subsequently moved to *§___.10(d)(5) Federal Subsistence Board—Power and Duties*.

case-by-case basis and defined under unit-specific regulations, and wildlife taken by a designated hunter for another person, counts toward the individual harvest limit of the person for whom the wildlife is taken. These new regulations specified that for wildlife, after taking your individual harvest limit, you may not continue to harvest in areas outside of your community harvest area (58 Fed. Reg. 103, 31255 [June 1, 1993]). These new regulations were the following:

> §____.25 Subsistence taking of wildlife[3]
>
> *(c) Possession and transportation of wildlife*
>
> *(1) Except as specified in §___.25(c)(3)(ii)* [below] *or (c)(4)* [trapping regulations], *or as otherwise provided, no person may take a species of wildlife in any Unit, or portion of a Unit, if that person's total statewide take of that species has already been obtained under Federal and State regulations in other Units, or portions of other Units.*
>
> *(2) An animal taken under Federal or State regulations by any member of a community with an established community harvest limit for that species counts toward the community harvest for that species. Except for wildlife taken pursuant to §____.6(f)(3)* [above], *an animal taken by an individual as part of a community harvest limit counts toward that individual's bag limit for that species taken under Federal or State regulations for areas outside of the community harvest area.*
>
> *(3) Individual bag limits (i) bag limits authorized by §____.25 and in State regulations may not be accumulated; (ii) Wildlife taken by a designated hunter for another person pursuant to §____6(f)(2)* [above], *counts toward the individual bag limit of the person for whom the wildlife is taken.*

In 1993, "community harvest systems" were adopted by the Board simply by adding the use of designated hunters to unit-specific regulations for Unit 25 West moose and Unit 26A sheep (58 FR 103, 31252–3 [June 1, 1993]). In this way, designated harvesters and resource quotas became a common method for allocating harvests communally.

In 1996, administrative clarification was made at §____.25(c)(2) to better represent the Board's intent (61 Fed. Reg. 147, 39711 [July 30, 1996]). Before this clarification was made, a member of a community with a community harvest limit who had not taken an individual harvest limit could take an individual harvest limit after the community had met its harvest limit. The effect of the clarification was that members of community in a community harvest system can harvest only as part of the community harvest system:

[3] Subsequently moved to *§____.26 Taking of wildlife*.

§____.25 Subsistence taking of wildlife

(c) Possession and transportation of wildlife

. . .

(2) An animal taken under Federal or State regulations by any member of a community with an established community harvest limit for that species counts toward the community harvest for that species. Except for wildlife taken pursuant to §____.6(f)(3) [above]*, an animal taken ~~by an individual~~ as part of a community harvest limit counts toward ~~that individual's bag limit~~* ***every community member's harvest limit*** *for that species taken under Federal or State regulations ~~for areas outside of the community harvest area~~.*

Later, the language "or as otherwise provided for by this part" was added to the provision. The effect was to allow an exceptions to the provision if the exception was placed in regulation:

(2) An animal taken under Federal or State regulations by any member of a community with an established community harvest limit for that species counts towards the community harvest limit for that species. Except for wildlife taken pursuant to §____.10(d)(5)(iii) ***or as otherwise provided for by this part****, an animal taken as part of a community harvest limit counts toward every community member's harvest limit for that species taken under Federal or State of Alaska regulations.*

In April 2020, the Board adopted deferred Proposal WP18-19 with modification, which added a community harvest system for moose in Unit 11 and caribou and moose in Unit 13 to unit-specific regulations. The modification was to name individual communities within the Ahtna traditional use territory authorized to harvest moose in Units 11 and caribou and moose in Unit 13 as part of a community harvest system, subject to a framework established by the Board under unit-specific regulations (see Existing Federal Regulation section in Proposal WP22-36 analysis).

In July 2020, the Board approved Wildlife Special Action Request WSA20-02 with modification to: (1) name individual communities authorized to participate in the community harvest system on Federal public lands in Units 11, 12, and 13, specifically, the eight Ahtna traditional communities of Cantwell, Chistochina, Chitina, Copper Center, Gakona, Gulkana, Mentasta Lake, and Tazlina; (2) define the geographic boundaries of eligible communities as the most recent Census Designated Places established by the U.S. Census Bureau; (3) extend these actions through the end of the wildlife regulatory cycle (June 30, 2022); (4) specify that harvest reporting will take the form of reports collected from hunters by AITRC and be submitted directly to the land managers and OSM, rather than through Federal registration permits, joint State/Federal registration permits, or State harvest tickets; and (5) set the harvest quota for the species and units authorized in the community harvest system as the sum of individual harvest limits for those opting to participate in the system (OSM 2020).

In January 2021, the Board approved Wildlife Special Action WSA20-07 temporarily adding the following language to unit-specific regulations for moose and caribou in Units 11, 12, and 13:

"Animals taken by those opting to participate in this community harvest system do not count toward the harvest limits of any individuals who do not opt to participate in this community harvest system." At this meeting, the Board also approved a community harvest system framework that describes additional details about implementation of the system (see analysis of Proposal WP22-36 Appendix 1) (OSM 2021).

Currently, the following community harvest systems are codified in Federal regulations: Lime Village for Unit 19 caribou and moose; Nikolai for Unit 19 sheep; the community of Wales for Unit 22 muskoxen; Anaktuvuk Pass for Units 24 and 26 sheep; Unit 25 black bear with a State community harvest permit; Ninilchik for Kasilof River and Kenai River community gillnets for salmon; and Cantwell, Chistochina, Chitina, Copper Center, Gakona, Gulkana, Mentasta Lake, and Tazlina for moose in Unit 11 and caribou and moose in Unit 13.

Current Events Involving the Species

Proposal WP22-36, submitted by AITRC, requests the Board adopt existing temporary regulations for regarding the community harvest system for moose and caribou in Unit 11, 12, and 13.

Cultural Knowledge and Traditional Practices

Community harvest and designated harvester provisions provide recognition of the customary and traditional practices of sharing and redistribution of harvests. A host of research supports a need for these alternative permitting systems in Federal subsistence regulations to harmonize fundamental harvesting characteristics of rural Alaskan communities with the Federal Subsistence Management Program. Family-based production is the foundation of the mixed subsistence-cash economy found in rural Alaskan communities (cf. Wolfe 1981, 1987; Wolfe and Walker 1987; Wolfe et al. 1984). Family-based production is when two or more individual households linked by kinship distribute the responsibility to harvest, process, and store wild resources based on factors such as skills and abilities, availability of able workers, sufficient income to purchase harvesting and processing technology, and other factors. Units of family-based production typically contain at least one "super-household" that produces surpluses of wild foods (Wolfe 1987). On a statewide basis, about 30% of households in a community are super-households that produce about 70% or more of the community's wild food harvest (Sahlins 1972; Andrews 1988; Magdanz, Utermohle, and Wolfe 2002; Sumida 1989; Sumida and Andersen 1990). Conversely, 20% to 30% of households in units of family-based production did not produce enough food to feed members of that household (Sahlins 1972). Inequalities in individual and household production levels are equalized via processes of distribution (sharing and feasting) and exchange (trade and barter).

Recent studies on disparities in household food production demonstrate that super-households participate heavily in food-sharing. Wolfe et al. (2007) looked at household food production in 67 rural Alaska communities representing Aleut, Athabascan, Inupiat, Tlingit-Haida, and Yup'ik cultural groups. The majority of these communities were comprised of mostly Alaska Native households with at least one Native head of household, although communities in Southeast Alaska were ethnically mixed. The researchers found that there were household variables commonly associated with levels of

food production throughout these communities. Household variables including higher levels of income, participation in commercial fishing, and households with three or more adult males over 15 years of age were associated with higher levels of food production. Households in which there was a single or elder head of household were associated with lower levels of food production. Most remarkably, the study also demonstrated that high-producing households gave the most food to others and giving to other households may be a primary motivation for over-production. Wolfe et al. (2007) further recommended that policy and management regulations account for food production and sharing practices within Alaskan mixed subsistence-cash communities. They wrote:

> The findings about the concentration of subsistence harvests also have social policy implications for the management of hunts and fisheries. Annual and daily bag limits that require that individuals or households harvest at equal levels, as is common for sport fishing and sport hunting, operate from different principles from those operating in subsistence systems. In the subsistence system, individuals and households commonly are not equivalent producers. Instead, a relatively small segment of high-producers harvest most of the fish or game. The average harvests among community households may be in line with bag and harvest limits required for conservation reasons, but the actual production is concentrated in a small number of households. Flexible regulations that allow for this type of concentrated harvest would be most compatible with the actual patterns of subsistence production (Wolfe et al. 2007:29).

Community harvest and designated harvester systems in use in the Federal Subsistence Management Program are intended to provide some flexibility in harvest regulations to make legal the activities of super-households in rural communities. Supporting the distribution of wild foods in villages allows people to continue their subsistence way of life.

Effects of the Proposal

If this proposal is adopted, then Federal regulations will recognize that the Board, when approving the framework for a community harvest system, may allow community members to choose whether they want to participate in the community harvest system or retain their individual harvest limits. The Federal regulations will specify that fish, wildlife, or shellfish harvested under a community harvest system will not count against the individual harvest limits of non-participants. Similarly, fish, wildlife, or shellfish harvested by non-participants will not count against the harvest limit set for the community harvest system. Effects to nonsubsistence uses, wildlife, fish, and shellfish, statewide, are not anticipated.

If this proposal is not adopted, then Federal regulations will continue to stipulate that any harvest within a community harvest system also counts toward the individual harvest limit of every community member regardless of whether they participate in the community harvest system. Additionally, the Board's authority to approve community harvest frameworks, and to allow community members to opt in or opt out of a community harvest, will not be clearly stated. Effects to nonsubsistence uses, wildlife, fish, and shellfish, statewide, are not anticipated.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Support Proposal WP22-01.

Justification

Subsistence users and others will find these regulations less confusing and easier to use. In this way, the proposed regulatory changes provide more equitable harvest options and opportunities for subsistence users. They also prevent unintentional and unnecessary restrictions from being placed on any community members who choose not to participate in a community harvest system, and clarifies a current oversight in Federal regulation.

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APPENDIX 1

STATE OF ALASKA COMMUNITY HARVEST PROGRAM

5 AAC 92.074. Community subsistence harvest hunt areas

(a) The commissioner or the commissioner's designee may, under this section and 5 AAC 92.052, issue community-based subsistence harvest permits and harvest reports for big game species where the Board of Game (board) has established a community harvest hunt area under (b) of this section and 5 AAC 92.074.

(b) The board will consider proposals to establish community harvest hunt areas during regularly scheduled meetings to consider seasons and bag limits for affected species in a hunt area. Information considered by the board in evaluating the proposed action will include

(1) a geographic description of the hunt area;

(2) the sustainable harvest and current subsistence regulations and findings for the big game population to be harvested;

(3) a custom of community-based harvest and sharing of the wildlife resources harvested in the hunt area by any group; and

(4) other characteristics of harvest practices in the hunt area, including characteristics of the customary and traditional pattern of use found under 5 AAC 99.010(b).

(c) If the board has established a community harvest hunt area for a big game population, residents of the community or members of a group may elect to participate in a community harvest permit hunt in accordance with the following conditions:

(1) a person representing a group of 25 or more residents or members may apply to the department for a community harvest permit by identifying the community harvest hunt area and the species to be hunted, and by requesting that the department distribute community harvest reports to the individuals who subscribe to the community harvest permit; the community or group representative must

(A) provide to the department the names of residents or members subscribing to the community harvest permit and the residents' or members' hunting license numbers, permanent hunting identification card numbers, or customer service identification numbers, or for those residents or members under 18 years of age, the resident or member's birth date;

(B) ensure delivery to the department of validated harvest reports from hunters following the take of individual game animals, records of harvest information for

individual animals taken, and collected biological samples or other information as required by the department for management;

(C) provide the department with harvest information, including federal subsistence harvest information, within a specified period of time when requested, and a final report of all game taken under the community harvest permit within 15 days of the close of the hunting season or as directed in the permit; and

(D) make efforts to ensure that the applicable customary and traditional use pattern described by the board and included by the department as a permit condition, if any, is observed by subscribers including meat sharing; the applicable board finding and conditions will be identified on the permit; this provision does not authorize the community or group administrator to deny subscription to any community resident or group member;

(E) from July 1, 2014 until June 30, 2018, in the community harvest hunt area described in 5 AAC 92.074(d) , permits for the harvest of bull moose that do not meet the antler restrictions for other resident hunts in the area will be limited to one permit for every three households in the community or group. Beginning July 1, 2018, in the community harvest hunt area described in 5 AAC 92.074(d) , permits for the harvest of bull moose that do not meet the antler restrictions for other resident hunts in the area will be distributed to participants using the scoring criteria described in 5 AAC 92.070.

(2) a resident of the community or member of the group who elects to subscribe to a community harvest permit

(A) may not hold a harvest ticket or other state hunt permit for the same species where the bag limit is the same or for fewer animals during the same regulatory year; however, a person may hold harvest tickets or permits for same-species hunts in areas with a larger bag limit following the close of the season for the community harvest permit, except that in Unit 13, prior to July 1, 2018, only one caribou may be retained per household, and on or after July 1, 2018, up to two caribou may be retained per household;

(B) may not subscribe to more than one community harvest permit for a species during a regulatory year;

(C) must have in possession when hunting and taking game a community harvest report issued by the hunt administrator for each animal taken;

(D) must validate a community harvest report immediately upon taking an animal; and

(E) must report harvest and surrender validated harvest reports within five days, or sooner as directed by the department, of taking an animal and transporting it to the place of final processing for preparation for human use and provide information and biological samples required under terms of the permit;

(F) must, if the community harvest hunt area is under a Tier II permit requirement for the species to be hunted, have received a Tier II permit for that area, species, and regulatory year.

(G) participants in the community harvest hunt area described in 5 AAC 92.074(d)must commit to participation for two consecutive years. This does not apply to participants that applied in 2016 for the 2018 regulatory year.

(3) in addition to the requirements of (1) of this subsection, the community or group representative must submit a complete written report, on a form provided by the department, for the community or group participating in the community harvest hunt area described in 5 AAC 92.074(d), that describes efforts by the community or group to observe the customary and traditional use pattern described by board findings for the game populations hunted under the conditions of this community harvest permit; in completing the report, the representative must make efforts to collect a complete report from each household that is a member of the community or group that describes efforts by the household to observe the customary and traditional use pattern using the eight elements described in this paragraph; a copy of all household reports collected by the community or group representative shall be submitted to the department as a part of the representative's written report; complete reports must include information about efforts to observe the customary and traditional use pattern of the game population, as follows:

(A) Element 1: participation in a long-term, consistent pattern of noncommercial taking, use, and reliance on the game population: the number of years of taking and use of the game population; and involvement of multiple generations in the taking and use of the game population; and use of areas other than the community subsistence hunt area for harvest activities;

(B) Element 2: participation in the pattern of taking or use of the game population that follows a seasonal use pattern of harvest effort in the hunt area: the months and seasons in which noncommercial harvest activities occur in the hunt area;

(C) Element 3: participation in a pattern of taking or use of wild resources in the hunt area that includes methods and means of harvest characterized by efficiency and economy of effort and cost: costs associated with harvests; and methods used to reduce costs and improve efficiency of harvest; and number of species harvested during hunting activities;

(D) Element 4: participation in a pattern of taking or use of wild resources that occurs in the hunt area due to close ties to the area: number of years of taking and use of the game population; and involvement of multiple generations in the taking and use of the game population; and variety of harvesting activities that take place in the hunt area; and evidence of other areas used for harvest activities;

(E) Element 5: use of means of processing and preserving wild resources from the hunt area that have been traditionally used by past generations: complete listing of the parts of the harvested game that are used; and preservation methods of that game; and types of foods and other products produced from that harvest;

(F) Element 6: participation in a pattern of taking or use of wild resources from the hunt area that includes the handing down of knowledge of hunting skills, values, and lore about the hunt area from generation to generation: involvement of multiple generations in the taking and use of the game population; and evidence of instruction and training;

(G) Element 7: participation in a pattern of taking of wild resources from the hunt area in which the harvest is shared throughout the community: amount of harvest of the game population that is shared; and evidence of a communal sharing event; and support of those in need through sharing of the harvest of the game population; and

(H) Element 8: participation in a pattern that includes taking, use, and reliance on a wide variety of wild resources from the hunt area: the variety of resource harvest activities engaged in within the hunt area; and evidence of other areas used for harvest activities.

(d) Seasons for community harvest permits will be the same as those established for other subsistence harvests for that species in the geographic area included in a community harvest hunt area, unless separate community harvest hunt seasons are established. The total bag limit for a community harvest permit will be equal to the sum of the individual participants' bag limits, established for other subsistence harvests for that species in the hunt area or otherwise by the board. Seasons and bag limits may vary within a hunt area according to established

subsistence regulations for different game management units or other geographic delineations in a hunt area.

(e) Establishment of a community harvest hunt area will not constrain nonsubscribing residents of the community or members of the group from participating in subsistence harvest activities for a species in that hunt area using individual harvest tickets or other state permits authorized by regulation, nor will it require any resident of the community or member of the group eligible to hunt under existing subsistence regulations to subscribe to a community harvest permit.

(f) The department may disapprove an application for a community subsistence harvest permit from a community or group that has previously failed to comply with requirements in (c)(1) and (3) of this section. The failure to report by the community or group representative under (c)(1) and (3) of this section may result in denial of a community subsistence harvest permit during the following regulatory year. The department must allow a representative the opportunity to request a hearing if the representative fails to submit a complete report as required under (c)(1) and (3) of this section. A community or group aggrieved by a decision under this subsection will be granted a hearing before the commissioner or the commissioner's designee, if the community or group representative makes a request for a hearing in writing to the commissioner within 60 days after the conclusion of the hunt for which the person failed to provide a report. The commissioner may determine that the penalty provided under this subsection will not be applied if the community or group representative provides the information required on the report and if the commissioner determines that

(1) the failure to provide the report was the result of unavoidable circumstance; or

(2) extreme hardship would result to the community or group.

(g) A person may not give or receive a fee for the taking of game or receipt of meat under a community subsistence harvest permit.

(h) Nothing in this section authorizes the department to delegate to a community or group representative determination of the lawful criteria for selecting who may hunt, for establishing any special restrictions for the hunt and for the handling of game, and for establishing the terms and conditions for a meaningful communal sharing of game taken under a community harvest permit.

(i) In this section,

(1) "fee" means a payment, wage, gift, or other remuneration for services provided while engaged in hunting under a community harvest permit; and does not include reimbursement for actual expenses incurred during the hunting activity within the scope of the community harvest permit, or a non-cash exchange of subsistence-harvested resources.

(2) a "community" or "group" is a mutual support network of people who routinely (at least several times each year) provide each other with physical, emotional, and nutritional assistance in a multi-generational and inter/intra familial manner to assure the long-term welfare of individuals, the group, and natural resources they depend on; for purposes of this regulation, a "community" or "group" shares a common interest in, and participation in uses of, an identified area and the wildlife populations in that area, that is consistent with the customary and traditional use pattern of that wildlife population and area as defined by the board.

WP22–02 Executive Summary	
General Description	Proposal WP22-02 requests to remove language from designated hunting regulations prohibiting the use of a designated hunter permit by a member of community operating under a community harvest system. *Submitted by the Office of Subsistence Management.*
Proposed Regulation	See page 460
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	**Support**
Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	

WP22–02 Executive Summary	
Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	**None**

DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS
WP22-02

ISSUES

Wildlife Proposal WP22-02, submitted by the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM), requests to remove language from designated hunting regulations prohibiting the use of a designated hunter permit by a member of community operating under a community harvest system.

DISCUSSION

While developing the framework for a community harvest system in summer 2020, Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission (AITRC) representatives realized that residents of communities in a community harvest system cannot designate another person to harvest on their behalf, pursuant to Federal designated hunter regulations. AITRC and Federal agency staff perceived this provision as unfair to community members who choose not to participate in a community harvest system because their options for acquiring their individual harvest limits are curtailed involuntarily.

The proponent clarified that the intent of this proposal is to allow members of a community with a community harvest system to designate a hunter to harvest on their behalf to fulfill either their individual harvest limit or to count toward the community harvest limit depending on whether or not they choose to participate in the community harvest system.

Existing Federal Regulation

36 CFR 242 and 50 CFR 100.25(e) Hunting by designated harvest permit

If you are a Federally qualified subsistence user (recipient), you may designate another Federally qualified subsistence user to take deer, moose, and caribou, and in Units 1-5, goats, on your behalf unless you are a member of a community operating under a community harvest system or unless unit-specific regulations in §____.26 preclude or modify the use of the designated hunter system or allow the harvest of additional species by a designated hunter. The designated hunter must obtain a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report. The designated hunter may hunt for any number of recipients but may have no more than two harvest limits in his/her possession at any one time except for goats, where designated hunters may have no more than one harvest limit in possession at any one time, and unless otherwise specified in unit-specific regulations in §____.26.

§_____.26(n)(6)(ii) Unit 6 specific regulations

(D) A federally qualified subsistence user (recipient) who is either blind, 65 years of age or older, at least 70 percent disabled, or temporarily disabled may designate another federally qualified subsistence user to take any moose, deer, black bear, and beaver on his or her behalf in Unit 6, and goat in Unit 6D, unless the recipient is a member of a community operating

under a community harvest system. The designated hunter must obtain a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report. The designated hunter may hunt for any number of recipients, but may have no more than one harvest limit in his or her possession at any one time.

§_____.26(n)(9)(iii) Unit 9 specific regulations

(E) For Units 9C and 9E only, a federally qualified subsistence user (recipient) of Units 9C and 9E may designate another federally qualified subsistence user of Units 9C and 9E to take bull caribou on his or her behalf unless the recipient is a member of a community operating under a community harvest system. The designated hunter must obtain a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report and turn over all meat to the recipient. There is no restriction on the number of possession limits the designated hunter may have in his/her possession at any one time.

(F) For Unit 9D, a federally qualified subsistence user (recipient) may designate another federally qualified subsistence user to take caribou on his or her behalf unless the recipient is a member of a community operating under a community harvest system. The designated hunter must obtain a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report. The designated hunter may hunt for any number of recipients but may have no more than four harvest limits in his/her possession at any one time.

§_____.26(n)(10) Unit 10 specific regulations

(iii) In Unit 10—Unimak Island only, a federally qualified subsistence user (recipient) may designate another federally qualified subsistence user to take caribou on his or her behalf unless the recipient is a member of a community operating under a community harvest system. The designated hunter must obtain a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report. The designated hunter may hunt for any number of recipients but may have no more than four harvest limits in his/her possession at any one time.

§_____.26(n)(22)(iii) Unit 22 specific regulations

(E) A federally qualified subsistence user (recipient) may designate another federally qualified subsistence user to take musk oxen on his or her behalf unless the recipient is a member of a community operating under a community harvest system. The designated hunter must get a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report. The designated hunter may hunt for any number of recipients in the course of a season, but have no more than two harvest limits in his/her possession at any one time, except in Unit 22E where a resident of Wales or Shishmaref acting as a designated hunter may hunt for any number of recipients, but have no more than four harvest limits in his/her possession at any one time.

§_____.26(n)(23)(iv) Unit 23 specific regulations

(D) For the Baird and DeLong Mountain sheep hunts—A federally qualified subsistence user (recipient) may designate another federally qualified subsistence user to take sheep on his or her behalf unless the recipient is a member of a community operating under a community harvest system. The designated hunter must obtain a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report. The designated hunter may hunt for only one recipient in the course of a season and may have both his and the recipients' harvest limits in his/her possession at the same time.

(F) A federally qualified subsistence user (recipient) may designate another federally qualified subsistence user to take musk oxen on his or her behalf unless the recipient is a member of a community operating under a community harvest system. The designated hunter must get a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report. The designated hunter may hunt for any number of recipients, but have no more than two harvest limits in his/her possession at any one time.

§_____.26(n)(26)(iv) Unit 26 specific regulations

(C) In Kaktovik, a federally qualified subsistence user (recipient) may designate another federally qualified subsistence user to take sheep or musk ox on his or her behalf unless the recipient is a member of a community operating under a community harvest system. The designated hunter must obtain a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report. The designated hunter may hunt for any number of recipients but may have no more than two harvest limits in his/her possession at any one time.

(D) For the DeLong Mountain sheep hunts—A federally qualified subsistence user (recipient) may designate another federally qualified subsistence user to take sheep on his or her behalf unless the recipient is a member of a community operating under a community harvest system. The designated hunter must obtain a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report. The designated hunter may hunt for only one recipient in the course of a season and may have both his and the recipient's harvest limits in his/her possession at the same time.

Proposed Federal Regulation

§_____.25(e) Hunting by designated harvest permit

If you are a Federally qualified subsistence user (recipient), you may designate another Federally qualified subsistence user to take deer, moose, and caribou, and in Units 1-5, goats, on your behalf ~~unless you are a member of a community operating under a community harvest system or~~ unless unit-specific regulations in §100.26 preclude or modify the use of the designated hunter system or allow the harvest of additional species by a designated hunter. The designated hunter must obtain a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report. The designated hunter may hunt for any number of recipients but may have no

more than two harvest limits in his/her possession at any one time except for goats, where designated hunters may have no more than one harvest limit in possession at any one time, and unless otherwise specified in unit-specific regulations in §100.26.

§_____.26(n)(6)(ii) Unit 6 specific regulations

(D) A federally qualified subsistence user (recipient) who is either blind, 65 years of age or older, at least 70 percent disabled, or temporarily disabled may designate another federally qualified subsistence user to take any moose, deer, black bear, and beaver on his or her behalf in Unit 6, and goat in Unit 6D, ~~unless the recipient is a member of a community operating under a community harvest system~~. The designated hunter must obtain a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report. The designated hunter may hunt for any number of recipients, but may have no more than one harvest limit in his or her possession at any one time.

§_____.26(n)(9)(iii) Unit 9 specific regulations

(E) For Units 9C and 9E only, a federally qualified subsistence user (recipient) of Units 9C and 9E may designate another federally qualified subsistence user of Units 9C and 9E to take bull caribou on his or her behalf ~~unless the recipient is a member of a community operating under a community harvest system~~. The designated hunter must obtain a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report and turn over all meat to the recipient. There is no restriction on the number of possession limits the designated hunter may have in his/her possession at any one time.

(F) For Unit 9D, a federally qualified subsistence user (recipient) may designate another federally qualified subsistence user to take caribou on his or her behalf ~~unless the recipient is a member of a community operating under a community harvest system~~. The designated hunter must obtain a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report. The designated hunter may hunt for any number of recipients but may have no more than four harvest limits in his/her possession at any one time.

§_____.26(n)(10) Unit 10 specific regulations

(iii) In Unit 10—Unimak Island only, a federally qualified subsistence user (recipient) may designate another federally qualified subsistence user to take caribou on his or her behalf ~~unless the recipient is a member of a community operating under a community harvest system~~. The designated hunter must obtain a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report. The designated hunter may hunt for any number of recipients but may have no more than four harvest limits in his/her possession at any one time.

§_____.26(n)(22)(iii) Unit 22 specific regulations

(E) A federally qualified subsistence user (recipient) may designate another federally qualified subsistence user to take musk oxen on his or her behalf ~~unless the recipient is a member of a community operating under a community harvest system~~. The designated hunter must get a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report. The designated hunter may hunt for any number of recipients in the course of a season, but have no more than two harvest limits in his/her possession at any one time, except in Unit 22E where a resident of Wales or Shishmaref acting as a designated hunter may hunt for any number of recipients, but have no more than four harvest limits in his/her possession at any one time.

§_____.26(n)(23)(iv) Unit 23 specific regulations

(D) For the Baird and DeLong Mountain sheep hunts—A federally qualified subsistence user (recipient) may designate another federally qualified subsistence user to take sheep on his or her behalf ~~unless the recipient is a member of a community operating under a community harvest system~~. The designated hunter must obtain a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report. The designated hunter may hunt for only one recipient in the course of a season and may have both his and the recipients' harvest limits in his/her possession at the same time.

(F) A federally qualified subsistence user (recipient) may designate another federally qualified subsistence user to take musk oxen on his or her behalf ~~unless the recipient is a member of a community operating under a community harvest system~~. The designated hunter must get a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report. The designated hunter may hunt for any number of recipients, but have no more than two harvest limits in his/her possession at any one time.

§_____.26(n)(26)(iv) Unit 26 specific regulations

(C) In Kaktovik, a federally qualified subsistence user (recipient) may designate another federally qualified subsistence user to take sheep or musk ox on his or her behalf ~~unless the recipient is a member of a community operating under a community harvest system~~. The designated hunter must obtain a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report. The designated hunter may hunt for any number of recipients but may have no more than two harvest limits in his/her possession at any one time.

(D) For the DeLong Mountain sheep hunts—A federally qualified subsistence user (recipient) may designate another federally qualified subsistence user to take sheep on his or her behalf ~~unless the recipient is a member of a community operating under a community harvest system~~. The designated hunter must obtain a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report. The designated hunter may hunt for only one recipient in the course of a season and may have both his and the recipient's harvest limits in his/her possession at the same time.

Existing State Regulation

The State of Alaska provides for the transfer of harvest limits from one person to another through its proxy hunting program (5 AAC 92.011; see **Appendix 1**). **Table 1** is a side-by-side comparison of the State's proxy system to the Federal designated hunter system.

Table 1. State of Alaska Proxy System compared to Federal Designated Hunter System.

State of Alaska Proxy System	Federal Subsistence Management Program Designated Hunter System
Applies where there is an open State harvest season.	Applies to Federal public lands when there is an open Federal harvest season.
Applies to caribou, deer, and moose.	Applies to caribou, deer, moose, and in Units 1–5, goats, as well as other species identified in unit-specific regulations.
Available to a hunter who is blind, physically or developmentally disabled (requires physician's affidavit), or 65 years of age or older	Available to Federally qualified subsistence users.
Either the recipient or the hunter may apply for the authorization.	Recipient obtains a permit or harvest ticket and designates another Federally qualified subsistence user to harvest on his/her behalf. Designated hunter obtains a Federal designated hunter permit.
No person may be a proxy for more than one recipient at a time.	A person may hunt for any number of recipients, but may have no more than two harvest limits in his/her possession at any one time.
Antler destruction is required.	No antler destruction is required.

Federal Public Lands

Federal public lands comprise approximately 54% of Alaska statewide and consist of 36% U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service managed lands, 28% Bureau of Land Management managed lands, 25% National Park Service managed lands, and 11% U.S. Forest Service managed lands.

Customary and Traditional Use Determination

This is a statewide proposal regarding wildlife.

Regulatory History

In 1991, after extensive public comment on the Federal Subsistence Management Program's first Temporary Rule, the Federal Subsistence Board committed to addressing community harvest limits and alternative permitting processes (56 Fed. Reg. 123, 29411 [June 26, 1991]).

In 1992, responding to approximately 40 proposals requesting community harvest systems and numerous public comments requesting alternative permitting systems, the Board supported the concept of adjusting seasons and harvest limits based on customs and traditions of a community (57 Fed. Reg. 103, 22531–2 [May 28, 1992]). The Board said specific conditions for the use of a particular harvest reporting system may be applied on a case-by-case basis and further development and refinement of guidelines for alternative permitting systems would occur as the Federal Subsistence Management Program evolved (57 Fed. Reg. 104, 22948 [May 29, 1992]. These regulations at ____.6 were modified to state that intent more clearly:

> §_____.6 Licenses, permits, harvest tickets, tags, and reports[1]
>
> *(f) The Board may implement harvest reporting systems or permit systems where:*
>
> *(1) The fish and wildlife is taken by an individual who is required to obtain and possess pertinent State harvest permits, tickets, or tags, or Federal permits, harvest tickets, or tags;*
>
> *(2) A qualified subsistence user may designate another qualified subsistence user to take fish and wildlife on his or her behalf;*
>
> *(3) The fish and wildlife is taken by individuals or community representatives permitted a one-time or annual harvest for special purposes including ceremonies and potlatches;*
>
> *(4) The fish and wildlife is taken by representatives of a community permitted to do so in a manner consistent with the community's customary and traditional practices.*

In 1993, the Board adopted Proposal P93-12, which clarified that community harvest limits and individual harvest limits may not be accumulated, community harvest systems will be adopted on a case-by-case basis and defined under unit-specific regulations, and wildlife taken by a designated hunter for another person, counts toward the individual harvest limit of the person for whom the wildlife is taken. These new regulations specified that for wildlife, after taking your individual harvest limit, you may not continue to harvest in areas outside of your community harvest area (58 Fed. Reg. 103, 31255 [June 1, 1993]). These new regulations were the following:

> §____.25 Subsistence taking of wildlife[2]
>
> *(c) Possession and transportation of wildlife*
>
> *(1) Except as specified in §___.25(c)(3)(ii)* [below] *or (c)(4)* [trapping regulations], *or as otherwise provided, no person may take a species of wildlife in any Unit, or portion of a Unit, if that person's total statewide take of that species has already been obtained under Federal and State regulations in other Units, or portions of other Units.*

[1] Subsequently moved to *§___.10(d) Federal Subsistence Board—Power and Duties*.
[2] Subsequently moved to *§____.26 Taking of wildlife*.

> *(2) An animal taken under Federal or State regulations by any member of a community with an established community harvest limit for that species counts toward the community harvest for that species. Except for wildlife taken pursuant to §____.6(f)(3)* [above], *an animal taken by an individual as part of a community harvest limit counts toward that individual's bag limit for that species taken under Federal or State regulations for areas outside of the community harvest area.*
>
> *(3) Individual bag limits (i) bag limits authorized by §____.25 and in State regulations may not be accumulated; (ii) Wildlife taken by a designated hunter for another person pursuant to §____6(f)(2)* [above], *counts toward the individual bag limit of the person for whom the wildlife is taken.*

In 1993, community harvest strategies were adopted by the Board simply by adding the use of designated hunters into unit-specific regulations for Unit 25 West moose and Unit 26C sheep (58 Fed. Reg. 103, 31252–3 [June 1, 1993]). In this way, designated harvesters and resource quotas became a common method for allocating harvests communally.

> *Unit 25(D)(West)—. . .1 antlered moose by a Federal registration permit. Alternate permits allowing for designated hunters are available to qualified applicants who reside in Beaver, Birch Creek, or Stevens Village. Moose hunting on public land in this portion of Unit 25(D)(West) is closed at all times except for residents of Beaver, Birch Creek and Stevens Village during seasons identified above. The moose season will be closed when 30 antlered moose have been harvested in the entirety of Unit 25D West* (58 Fed. Reg. 103, 31287 [June 1, 1993]).
>
> *Unit 26(C)—3 sheep per year; the Aug. 10–Sept 20 season is restricted to 1 ram with 7/8 cur1 horn or larger. A State registration permit is required for the Oct. 1–Apr. 30 season, except for residents of the City of Kaktovik. Kaktovik residents may harvest sheep in accordance with a Federal community harvest strategy for Unit 26(C) which provides for the take of up to two bag limits of 3 sheep by designated hunter. Procedures for Federal permit issuance and community reporting will be mutually developed by Kaktovik and Federal representatives prior to the season opening. Open season: Aug. 10–Sept. 30 and Oct. 1–Apr. 30* (58 Fed. Reg. 103, 31289 [June 1, 1993]).

In 1994, the Board rejected four proposals concerning the use of designated hunters to harvest wildlife for others and redirected staff to work with Regional Advisory Councils and develop regulations for the 1995/96 regulatory year that address designated harvesters on a state-wide basis (59 Fed. Reg. 29033, June 3, 1994).

In October 1994, a Designated Hunter Task Force published its report describing four options for alternative permitting systems (OSM 1994).

In 1996, administrative clarification was made at §____.25(c)(2) to better represent the Board's intent (61 Fed. Reg. 147, 39711 [July 30, 1996]). Before this clarification was made, a member of a community with a community harvest limit who had not taken an individual harvest limit could take an individual harvest limit after the community had met its harvest limit. The effect of the clarification was that members of community in a community harvest system can harvest only as part of the community harvest system:

> §____.25 Subsistence taking of wildlife
>
> *(c) Possession and transportation of wildlife*
>
> . . .
>
> *(2) An animal taken under Federal or State regulations by any member of a community with an established community harvest limit for that species counts toward the community harvest for that species. Except for wildlife taken pursuant to §____.6(f)(3)* [above], *an animal taken ~~by an individual~~ as part of a community harvest limit counts toward ~~that individual's bag limit~~* ***every community member's harvest limit*** *for that species taken under Federal or State regulations ~~for areas outside of the community harvest area~~.*

Later, the language "or as otherwise provided for by this part" was added to the provision. The effect was to allow an exception to the provision if the exception was placed in regulation:

> *(2) An animal taken under Federal or State regulations by any member of a community with an established community harvest limit for that species counts towards the community harvest limit for that species. Except for wildlife taken pursuant to §____.10(d)(5)(iii)* ***or as otherwise provided for by this part****, an animal taken as part of a community harvest limit counts toward every community member's harvest limit for that species taken under Federal or State of Alaska regulations.*

In 2001, administrative clarifications were added to regulations at §____.25(e) *Hunting by designated harvest permit*. New provisions stipulated that a designated hunter recipient may not be a member of a community operating under a community harvest system, reflecting §____.25(c)(2), above (66 Fed. Reg. 122, 33758 [June 25, 2001]). These new provisions were the following:

> §____.25 Subsistence taking of fish, wildlife, and shellfish: general regulations[3]
>
> *(e) Hunting by designated harvest permit*
>
> *(1) As allowed by §____.26* [Subsistence taking of wildlife], *if you are a Federally-qualified subsistence user, you (beneficiary) may designate another Federally-qualified*

[3] §____.25 was formerly *Subsistence taking of wildlife* that was moved to §____.26 to make room for these *general regulations*.

subsistence user to take wildlife on your behalf ***unless you are a member of a community operating under a community harvest system.***

(2) The designated hunter must obtain a designated hunter permit and must return a completed harvest report.

(3) You may not designate more than one person to take or attempt to take fish on your behalf at one time.

(4) The designated hunter may hunt for any number of recipients but may have no more than two harvest limits in his/her possession at any one time, unless otherwise specified in §____.26.

After 1994, the Board recommenced adopting designated harvester provisions in unit-specific regulations through 2002.

Prior to 2003, the Board adopted designated hunter regulations for 21 unit-specific hunts. In 2003, the Board established the statewide designated hunter system, based on Regional Advisory Council recommendations, providing opportunities for subsistence users to receive deer, caribou, and moose from designated hunters, subject to unit-specific regulations to include other species and special provisions (68 Fed. Reg. 38466 [June 27, 2003]). Where Councils agreed with these general statewide provisions, then unit-specific regulations were rescinded unless they included other species or special provisions.

In April 2020, the Board adopted deferred Proposal WP18-19 with modification to establish a community harvest system moose in Units 11 and caribou and moose in Unit 13 that will be administered by the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission (AITRC). The modification was to name individual communities within the Ahtna traditional use territory authorized to harvest caribou and moose in Unit 13 and moose in Unit 11 as part of a community harvest system, subject to a framework established by the Board under unit specific regulations. While developing the framework for the community harvest system over the summer of 2020, AITRC representatives and Federal agency staff realized that current Federal regulations prevent the use of designated hunters by any community member whether or not they choose to participate in the community harvest system (OSM 2020). In January 2021, the Board approved the community harvest system framework that describes additional details about implementation of the system (OSM 2021a).

Harvest History

The Designated Hunter Permit database is maintained at the Office of Subsistence Management. **Table 2** describes the use of the designated hunter system since 2002 when the permit system was implemented. Designated hunters have reported harvesting caribou, deer, moose, sheep, goats, and muskoxen. Most of the reported harvest by designated hunters is for deer (84%, or 4,717, ,), and most of those are taken from Southeast Alaska (Units 1–5). Designated hunter harvests of caribou account for 12% (658 caribou), and moose 4% (212 moose).

Table 2. Use of Federal designated hunter system based on completed harvest reports 2002-2020 cumulative, by species and management unit (OSM 2021b).

Management Unit	Number of Animals Harvested by Designated Hunters 2002-2020
Caribou	
9	4
12	109
13	477
17	8
18	6
20	31
Unknown	23
Total	658
Dall Sheep	
23	3
Deer	
1	57
2	146
3	1,178
4	22
6	0
8	10
2	727
4	1,836
5	11
6	3
8	672
Unknown	55
Total	4,717
Moose	
1	9
3	9
5	34
6	36
11	7
12	1
13	67
15	18
18	3
19	12
21	2
24	5
25	1
26	2
Unknown	6
Total	212

Continued on next page.

Management Unit	Number of Animals Harvested by Designated Hunters 2002-2020
Continued from previous page.	
Management Unit	**Number of Animals Harvested by Designated Hunters 2002-2020**
Mountain Goats	
1	1
4	5
Total	6
Muskoxen	
22	3

Cultural Knowledge and Traditional Practices

See the Cultural Knowledge and Traditional Practices section in the Proposal WP22-01 analysis.

Effects of the Proposal

If this proposal is adopted, then Federal designated hunter regulations will no longer preclude members of communities with a community harvest system from designating another person to take wildlife on their behalf to fulfill either their individual harvest limit or count toward the community harvest limit, pursuant to Federal designated hunter regulations. Effects to nonsubsistence uses or wildlife are not anticipated.

If this proposal is not adopted, then Federal designated hunting regulations will continue to preclude residents of communities in a community harvest system from designating another person to take wildlife on their behalf, even though some residents may choose not to participate in the community harvest system. Effects to nonsubsistence uses or wildlife are not anticipated.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Support Proposal WP22-02.

Justification

The intent of the proposed regulation change is to allow members of a community with a community harvest system to designate another person to harvest on their behalf to meet either their individual harvest limit or count toward the community harvest limit, pursuant to Federal designated harvester regulations. Therefore, the statements in general and unit-specific regulations addressed by this proposal, WP22-02, will no longer be relevant and should be removed. Additionally, these regulatory changes will provide more equitable harvest options and opportunities for subsistence users.

LITERATURE CITED

OSM. 1994. Report of the designated hunter task force. Office of Subsistence Management, USFWS. Anchorage, AK. 34 pages.

OSM. 2020. Federal Subsistence Board News Release, April 29, 2020: Federal Subsistence Board approves changes to subsistence hunting and trapping regulations. https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/news/general/federal-subsistence-board-approves-changes-subsistence-hunting-and-0. Retrieved, July 14, 2020. Office of Subsistence, USFWS, Anchorage, AK.

OSM. 2021a. Federal Subsistence Board News Release, February 3, 2021: Federal Subsistence Board approves changes to subsistence fishing regulations. https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/news/general/federal-subsistence-board-approves-changes-subsistence-fishing-0. Retrieved July 14, 2021. Office of Subsistence Management, USFWS, Anchorage, AK.

OSM 2021b. Federal permit system. Electronic database. Office of Subsistence Management, USFWS, Anchorage, AK.

APPENDIX 1

STATE PROXY HUNTING REGULATIONS

5 AAC 92.011. Taking of game by proxy

(a) A resident hunter (the proxy) holding a valid resident hunting license may take specified game for another resident (the beneficiary) who is blind, physically or developmentally disabled, or 65 years of age or older, as authorized by AS 16.05.405and this section.

(b) Both the beneficiary and the proxy must possess copies of a completed proxy authorization form issued by the department. The completed authorization must include

(1) names, addresses, hunting license numbers, and signatures of the proxy and the beneficiary;

(2) number of the required harvest ticket report or permit harvest report;

(3) effective dates of the authorization; and

(4) signature of the issuing agent.

(c) A proxy authorization may not be used to take a species of game for a beneficiary for more than the length of the permit hunt season listed on the proxy authorization or for the maximum length of the species general season listed on the proxy authorization.

(d) A person may not be a proxy

(1) for more than one beneficiary at a time;

(2) more than once per season per species in Unit 13;

(3) for Tier II Caribou in Unit 13, unless the proxy is a Tier II permittee;

(4) for more than one person per regulatory year for moose in Units 20(A) and 20(B).

(e) Repealed 7/26/97.

(f) A proxy who takes game for a beneficiary shall, as soon as practicable, but not later than 30 days after taking game, personally deliver all parts of the game removed from the field to the beneficiary.

(g) Except for reporting requirements required by (h) of this section, a proxy who hunts or kills game for a beneficiary is subject to all the conditions and requirements that would apply to the beneficiary if the beneficiary personally hunted or killed the game.

(h) Reporting requirements for proxy and beneficiary are as follows:

(1) if the proxy takes the bag limit for the beneficiary, the proxy shall provide the beneficiary with all the information necessary for the beneficiary to complete and return the harvest ticket report or permit harvest report, as required by regulation, to the department within the time periods specified for such reports; the beneficiary is responsible for the timely return of the harvest ticket and permit harvest reports;

(2) if the proxy is unsuccessful or does not take the bag limit for the beneficiary, the proxy shall provide the beneficiary with any information necessary for the beneficiary to complete and return the harvest ticket report or permit harvest report, as required by regulation, to the department within the time periods specified for such reports; the beneficiary is responsible for the timely return of the harvest ticket and permit harvest reports;

(3) the department may require the proxy to complete a proxy hunter report issued with the authorization form and mail it to the department within 15 days after the effective period of the authorization.

(i) A person may not give or receive remuneration in order to obtain, grant, or influence the granting of a proxy authorization.

(j) A proxy participating in a proxy hunt must remove at least one antler from the skull plate or cut the skull plate in half, on an antlered animal, for both the proxy's animal and the beneficiary's animal before leaving the kill site, unless the department has established a requirement that complete antlers and skull plates must be submitted to the department.

(k) Proxy hunting under this section is only allowed for

(1) caribou;

(2) deer;

(3) moose in Tier II hunts, any-bull hunts, and antlerless moose hunts; and

(4) emperor geese.

(l) Notwithstanding (k) of this section, proxy hunting is prohibited in the following hunts where the board has determined that the use of the proxy would allow circumvention of harvest restrictions specified by the board, or where the board has otherwise directed:

(1) Unit 20(E) moose registration hunts and Units 20(B), 20(D), 20(E), 20(F), and 25(C) Fortymile and White Mountains caribou registration hunts;

(2) Units 21(B), 21(C), 21(D), and 24 moose hunts if either the proxy or the beneficiary holds a drawing permit for Units 21(B), 21(C), 21(D), or 24 moose hunts;

(3) Units 9(A) and 9(B), unit 9(C), that portion within the Alagnak River drainage, and units 17(B), 17(C), 18, 19(A), and 19(B) caribou hunts from August 1 through October 31;

(4) Unit 5(A) deer hunts from October 15 through October 31;

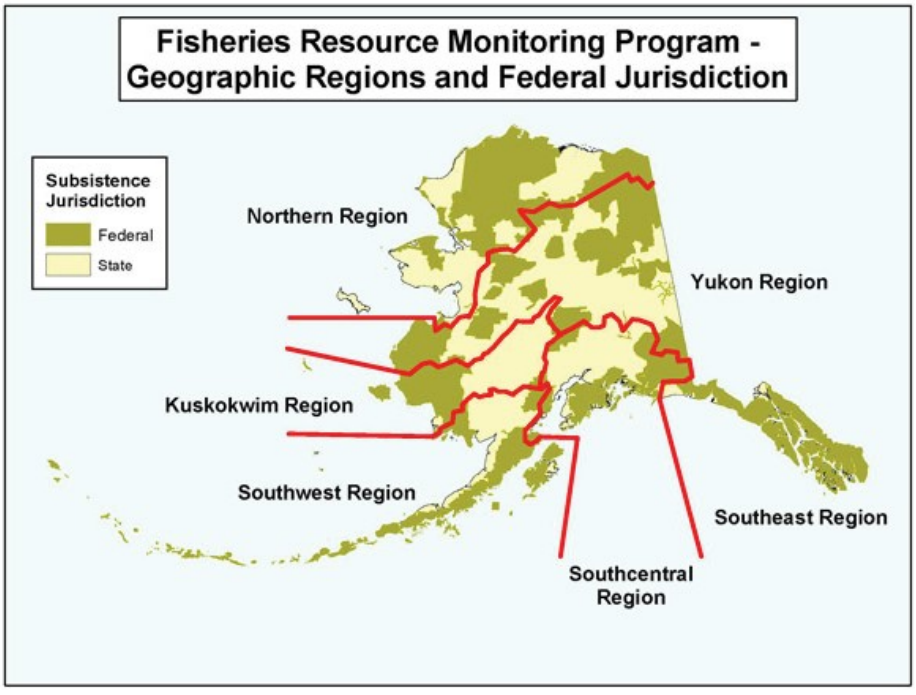
(5) Unit 20(D), within the Delta Junction Management Area, the moose drawing hunt for qualified disabled veterans.

FISHERIES RESOURCE MONITORING PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

Section 812 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) directs the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture, cooperating with other Federal agencies, the State of Alaska, and Alaska Native and other rural organizations, to research fish and wildlife subsistence uses on Federal public lands and to seek data from, consult with, and make use of the knowledge of local residents engaged in subsistence. When the Federal government assumed responsibility for management of subsistence fisheries on Federal public lands and waters in Alaska in 1999, the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture made a commitment to increase the quantity and quality of information available to manage subsistence fisheries, to increase quality and quantity of meaningful involvement by Alaska Native and other rural organizations, and to increase collaboration among Federal, State, Alaska Native, and rural organizations. The Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (Monitoring Program) is a collaborative, interagency, interdisciplinary approach to enhance fisheries research and data in Alaska and effectively communicate information needed for subsistence fisheries management on Federal public lands and waters.

Every two years, the Office of Subsistence Management announces a funding opportunity for investigation plans addressing subsistence fisheries on Federal public lands. The 2022 Notice of Funding Opportunity focused on priority information needs developed by the Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils with input from strategic plans and subject matter specialists. The Monitoring Program is administered through regions to align with stock, harvest, and community issues common to a geographic area. The six Monitoring Program regions are shown below.



Strategic plans sponsored by the Monitoring Program have been developed by workgroups of fisheries managers, researchers, Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils, and by other stakeholders for three of the six regions: Southeast, Southcentral (excluding Cook Inlet Area), and Southwest Alaska, and for Yukon and Kuskokwim drainages whitefish (available for viewing at the Monitoring Program webpage at https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/frmp/plans). These plans identify prioritized information needs for each major subsistence fishery. Individual copies of plans are available from the Office of Subsistence Management by calling (907) 786-3888 or toll Free: (800) 478-1456 or by email subsistence@fws.gov. An independent strategic plan was completed for the Kuskokwim Region for salmon in 2006 and can be viewed at the Alaska-Yukon-Kuskokwim Sustainable Salmon Initiative website at https://www.aykssi.org/salmon-research-plans/.

Investigation plans are reviewed and evaluated by Office of Subsistence Management and U.S. Forest Service staff, and then scored by the Technical Review Committee. The Technical Review Committee's function is to provide evaluation, technical oversight, and strategic direction to the Monitoring Program. Each investigation plan is scored on the following five criteria: strategic priority, technical and scientific merit, investigator ability and resources, partnership and capacity building, and cost/benefit.

Project executive summaries are assembled into a draft 2022 Fisheries Resources Monitoring Plan. The draft plan is distributed for public review and comment through Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meetings, beginning in September 2021. The Federal Subsistence Board will review the draft plan and will accept written and oral comments at its January 2022 meeting. The Federal Subsistence Board forwards its comments to the Assistant Regional Director of the Office of Subsistence Management. Final funding approval lies with the Assistant Regional Director of the Office of Subsistence Management. Investigators are subsequently notified in writing of the status of their proposals.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Monitoring Program was first implemented in 2000 with an initial allocation of $5 million. Since 2000, a total of $127 million has been allocated for the Monitoring Program to fund a total of 494 projects (**Figure 1** and **Figure 2**).

During each two-year funding cycle, the Monitoring Program budget funds ongoing multi-year projects (2, 3, or 4 years) as well as new projects. Budget guidelines are established by geographic region (**Table 1**). The regional guidelines were developed using six criteria that included level of risk to species, level of threat to conservation units, amount of subsistence needs not being met, amount of information available to support subsistence management, importance of a species to subsistence harvest, and level of user concerns regarding subsistence harvest. Budget guidelines provide an initial target for planning; however, they are not final allocations and are adjusted annually as needed (**Figure 3)**.

Figure 1. Monitoring Program Funds Distributed, by Organization Type, Since 2000

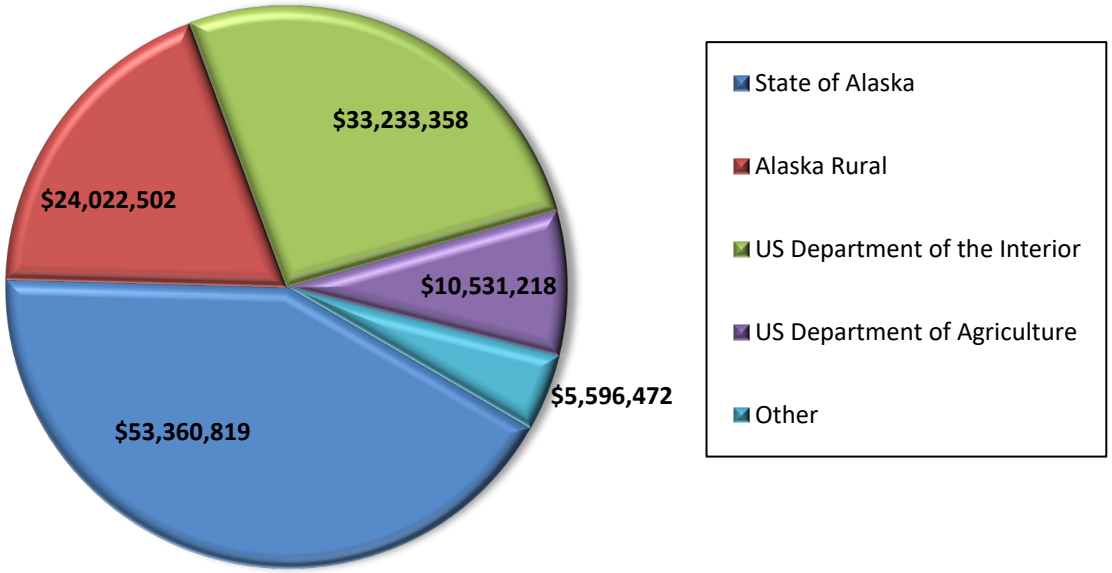


Figure 2. Number of Monitoring Program Projects Funded, by Organization Type, since 2000

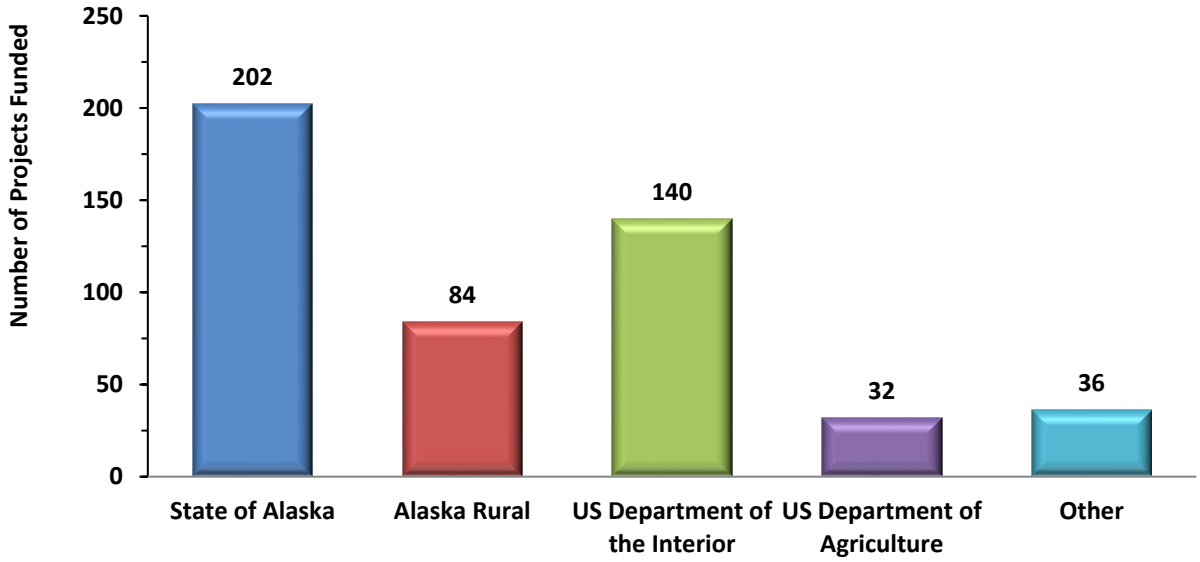
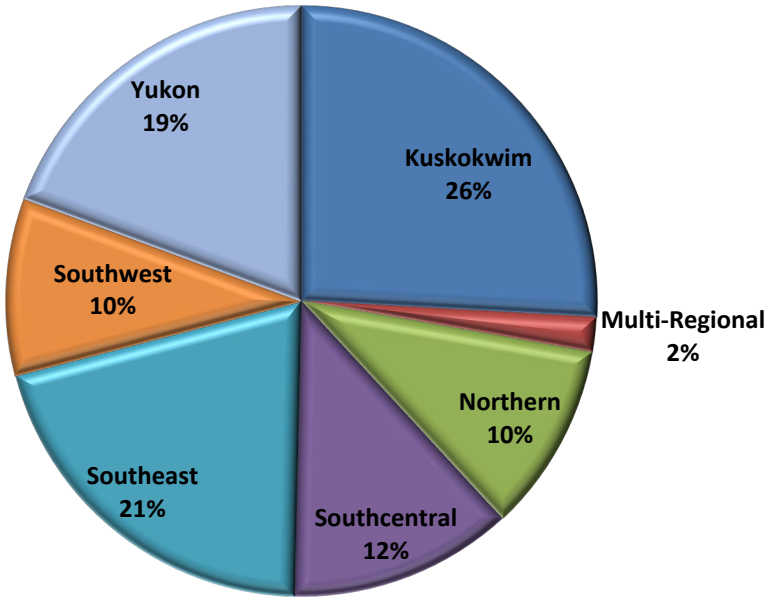


Table 1. Regional allocation guideline for Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program Funds.

Region	U.S. Department of the Interior Funds	U.S. Department of Agriculture Funds
Northern Alaska	17%	0%
Yukon Drainage	29%	0%
Kuskokwim Drainage	29%	0%
Southwest Alaska	15%	0%
Southcentral Alaska	5%	33%
Southeast Alaska	0%	67%
Multi-Regional	5%	0%

Figure 3. Percentage of Monitoring Program Funding Distributed to Each Region since 2000



The following three broad categories of information that are solicited for the Monitoring Program: (1) harvest monitoring, (2) traditional ecological knowledge, and (3) stock status and trends. Projects that combine these approaches are encouraged. Definitions of these three categories of information are listed below.

Harvest monitoring studies provide information on numbers and species of fish harvested, locations of harvests, and gear types used. Methods used to gather information on subsistence harvest patterns may include harvest calendars, mail-in questionnaires, household interviews, subsistence permit reports, and telephone interviews.

Traditional ecological knowledge studies are investigations of local knowledge directed at collecting and analyzing information on a variety of topics such as the sociocultural aspects of subsistence, fish ecology, species identification, local names, life history, taxonomy, seasonal movements, harvests, spawning and rearing areas, population trends, environmental observations, and traditional management systems. Methods used to document traditional ecological knowledge include ethnographic fieldwork, key respondent interviews with local experts, place name mapping, and open-ended surveys.

Stock status and trends studies provide information on abundance and run timing; age, size, and sex composition; migration and geographic distribution; survival of juveniles or adults; stock production; genetic stock identification; and mixed stock analyses. Methods used to gather information on stock status and trends include aerial and ground surveys, test fishing, towers, weirs, sonar, video, genetics, mark-recapture, and telemetry.

PROJECT EVALUATION PROCESS

The Monitoring Program prioritizes high quality projects that address critical subsistence and conservation concerns. Projects are selected for funding through an evaluation and review process that is designed to advance projects that are strategically important for the Federal Subsistence Management Program, technically sound, administratively competent, promoting partnerships and capacity building, and are cost effective. Projects are first evaluated by a panel called the Technical Review Committee. This committee is a standing interagency committee of senior technical experts. The Technical Review Committee reviews, evaluates, and makes recommendations about proposed projects that are consistent with the mission of the Monitoring Program. Fisheries and Anthropology staff from the Office of Subsistence Management provide support for the Technical Review Committee. Recommendations from the Technical Review Committee provide the basis for further comments from Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils, the public, the Interagency Staff Committee, and the Federal Subsistence Board, with final approval of the Monitoring Plan by the Assistant Regional Director of the Office of Subsistence Management.

To be considered for funding under the Monitoring Program, a proposed project must have a nexus to Federal subsistence fishery management. Proposed projects must have a direct association to a Federal subsistence fishery, and the subsistence fishery or fish stocks in question must occur in or pass-through waters within or adjacent to Federal public lands in Alaska (National Wildlife Refuges, National Forests, National Parks and Preserves, National Conservation Areas, National Wild and Scenic River Systems, National Petroleum Reserves, and National Recreation Areas). A complete project package must be submitted on time and must address the following five specific criteria to be considered a high-quality project.

1. ***Strategic Priorities***—Studies should be responsive to information needs identified in the 2022 Priority Information Needs available at the Monitoring Program webpage at https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/frmp/funding. All projects must have a direct linkage to Federal public lands and/or waters to be eligible for funding under the Monitoring Program. To assist in evaluation of submittals for projects previously funded under the Monitoring Program, investigators must summarize project findings in their investigation plans. This summary should clearly and concisely document project performance, key findings, and uses of collected information for Federal subsistence management. Projects should address the following topics to demonstrate links to strategic priorities:

    - Federal jurisdiction—The extent of Federal public waters in or nearby the project area
    - Direct subsistence fisheries management implications
    - Conservation mandate—Threat or risk to conservation of species and populations that support subsistence fisheries
    - Potential impacts on the subsistence priority—Risk that subsistence harvest users' goals will not be met
    - Data gaps—Amount of information available to support subsistence management and how a project answers specific questions related to these gaps
    - Role of the resource—Contribution of a species to a subsistence harvest (number of villages affected, pounds of fish harvested, miles of river) and qualitative significance (cultural value, unique seasonal role)
    - Local concern—Level of user concerns over subsistence harvests (upstream vs. downstream allocation, effects of recreational use, changes in fish abundance and population characteristics)

2. ***Technical-Scientific Merit***—Technical quality of the study design must meet accepted standards for information collection, compilation, analysis, and reporting. To demonstrate technical and scientific merit, applicants should describe how projects will:

    - Advance science
    - Answer immediate subsistence management or conservation concerns
    - Have rigorous sampling and/or research designs
    - Have specific, measurable, realistic, clearly stated, and achievable (attainable within the proposed project period) objectives
    - Incorporate traditional knowledge and methods

    Data collection, compilation, analysis, and reporting procedures should be clearly stated. Analytical procedures should be understandable to the non-scientific community. To assist in evaluation of submittals for continuing projects previously funded under the Monitoring

Program, summarize project findings and justify continuation of the project, placing the proposed work in context with the ongoing work being accomplished.

3. ***Investigator Ability and Resources***—Investigators must show they are capable of successfully completing the proposed project by providing information on the ability (training, education, experience, and letters of support) and resources (technical and administrative) they possess to conduct the work. Investigators that have received funding in the past, via the Monitoring Program or other sources, are evaluated and scored on their past performance, including fulfillment of meeting deliverable and financial accountability deadlines. A record of failure to submit reports or delinquent submittal of reports will be taken into account when rating investigator ability and resources.

4. ***Partnership and Capacity Building***—Investigators must demonstrate that capacity building has already reached the communication or partnership development stage during proposal development and, ideally, include a strategy to develop capacity building to higher levels, recognizing, however, that in some situations higher level involvement may not be desired or feasible by local organizations.

   Investigators are requested to include a strategy for integrating local capacity development in their study plans or research designs. Investigators should inform communities and regional organizations in the area where work is to be conducted about their project plans. They should also consult and communicate with local communities to ensure that local knowledge is utilized and concerns are addressed. Investigators and their organizations should demonstrate their ability to maintain effective local relationships and commitment to capacity building. This includes a plan to facilitate and develop partnerships so that investigators, communities, and regional organizations can pursue and achieve the most meaningful level of involvement. Proposals demonstrating multiple, highly collaborative efforts with rural community members or Alaska Native Organizations are encouraged.

   Successful capacity building requires developing trust and dialogue among investigators, local communities, and regional organizations. Investigators need to be flexible in modifying their work plan in response to local knowledge, issues, and concerns, and must also understand that capacity building is a reciprocal process in which all participants share and gain valuable knowledge. The reciprocal nature of the capacity building component(s) should be clearly demonstrated in proposals. Investigators are encouraged to develop the highest level of community and regional collaboration that is practical including joining as co-investigators.

   Capacity can be built by increasing the technical capabilities of rural communities and Alaska Native organizations. This can be accomplished via several methods, including increased technical experience for individuals and the acquisition of necessary gear and equipment. Increased technical experience would include all areas of project management including logistics, financial accountability, implementation, and administration. Other examples may include internships or providing opportunities within the project for outreach, modeling, sampling design,

or project specific training. Another would be the acquisition of equipment that could be transferred to rural communities and tribal organizations upon the conclusion of the project.

A "meaningful partner" is a partner that is actively engaged in one or more aspects of project design, logistics, implementation and reporting requirements. Someone who simply agrees with the concept or provides a cursory look at the proposal is not a meaningful partner.

5. ***Cost/Benefit*—**This criterion evaluates the reasonableness (what a prudent person would pay) of the funding requested to provide benefits to the Federal Subsistence Management Program. Benefits could be tangible or intangible. Examples of tangible outcomes include data sets that directly inform management decisions or fill knowledge gaps and opportunities for youth or local resident involvement in monitoring, research and/or resource management efforts. Examples of possible intangible goals and objectives include enhanced relationships and communications between managers and communities, partnerships and collaborations on critical resource issues, and potential for increased capacity within both communities and agencies.

   Applicants should be aware that the Government shall perform a "best value analysis" and the selection for award shall be made to the applicant whose proposal is most advantageous to the Government. The Office of Subsistence Management strives to maximize program efficiency by encouraging cost sharing, partnerships, and collaboration.

POLICY AND FUNDING GUIDELINES

Several policies have been developed to aid in implementing funding. These policies include:

- Projects of up to four years in duration may be considered
- Proposals requesting Monitoring Program funding that exceeds $215,000 in any one year are not eligible for funding
- Studies must not duplicate existing projects
- Long term projects will be considered on a case-by-case basis

Activities that are not eligible for funding include:

- Habitat protection, mitigation, restoration, and enhancement
- Hatchery propagation, restoration, enhancement, and supplementation
- Contaminant assessment, evaluation, and monitoring
- Projects where the primary or only objective is outreach and education (for example, science camps, technician training, and intern programs), rather than information collection

The rationale behind these policy and funding guidelines is to ensure that existing responsibilities and efforts by government agencies are not duplicated under the Monitoring Program. Land management or regulatory agencies already have direct responsibility, as well as specific programs, to address these activities. However, the Monitoring Program may fund research to determine how these activities affect Federal subsistence fisheries or fishery resources.

The Monitoring Program may fund assessments of key Federal subsistence fishery stocks in decline or that may decline due to climatological, environmental, habitat displacement, or other drivers; however, applicants must show how this knowledge would contribute to Federal subsistence fisheries management. Similarly, the Monitoring Program may legitimately fund projects that assess whether migratory barriers (e.g., falls, beaver dams) significantly affect spawning success or distribution; however, it would be inappropriate to fund projects to build fish passes, remove beaver dams, or otherwise alter or enhance habitat.

2022 FISHERIES RESOURCE MONITORING PLAN

For 2022, a total of 42 investigation plans were received and all are considered eligible for funding. For 2022, the Department of the Interior, through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will provide an anticipated $1.5 million in funding for new projects. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, through the U.S. Forest Service, will provide an anticipated $750,000 in funding.

FISHERIES RESOURCE MONITORING PROGRAM
SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGION OVERVIEW

Since the inception of the Monitoring Program in 2000, 79 projects have been undertaken in the Southeast Alaska Region costing 26.3 million (**Figure 1**). Of these, the State of Alaska received funds to conduct 29 projects, Alaska rural organizations conducted 23 projects, the U.S. Department of Agriculture conducted 27 projects, and the Department of the Interior conducted one project (**Figure 2**). See **Appendix 1** for more information on Southeast Alaska Region projects completed since 2000.

Figure 1. Monitoring Program Funds Distributed, by Organization Type, in the Southeast Alaska Region since 2000

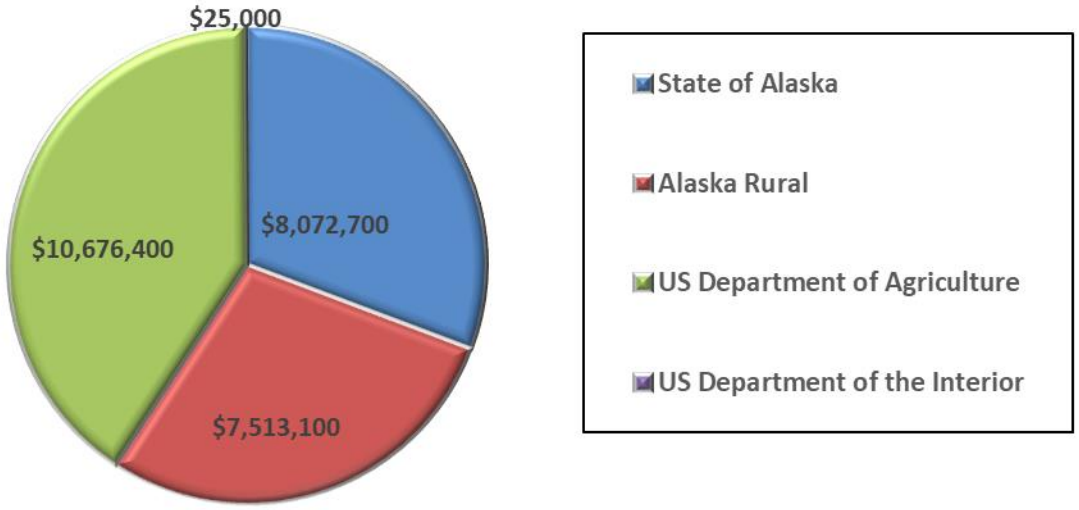
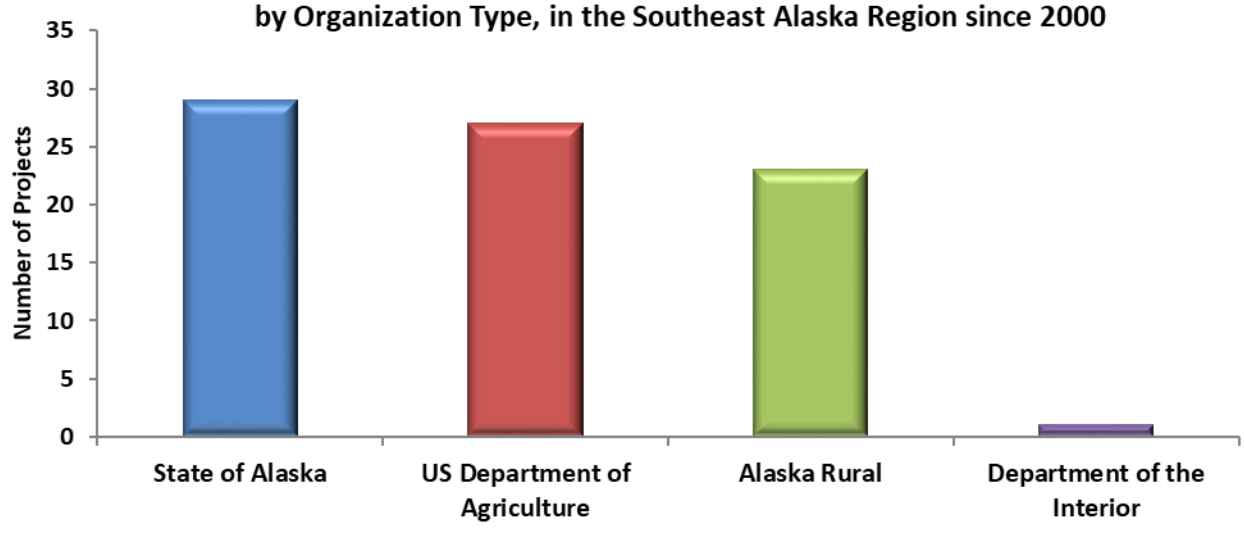


Figure 2. The Number of Monitoring Program Projects Funded, by Organization Type, in the Southeast Alaska Region since 2000



PRIORITY INFORMATION NEEDS

The 2022 Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Southeast Alaska Region identified the following nine priority information needs:

- Reliable estimates of Sockeye Salmon escapement and in-season estimates of harvest and stream discharge information at the following systems: Kanalku, Klawock, Hetta, Falls Lake, Sarkar, Kook, Neva, Karta, Hatchery, Eek, Kah Sheets, Klag, Gut, Kutlaku, Salmon Bay, Sitkoh, Hoktaheen, Alecks Creek, Lake Eva and Lake Leo.
- Escapement indexes for Eulachon at the Unuk River and Yakutat Forelands.
- Population assessment for Eulachon for northern Southeast Alaska.
- Traditional ecological knowledge of how each community distributes harvest between Sockeye Salmon systems available to them.
- Reliable estimates of salmon populations and harvests in the sport and subsistence fisheries at Kah Sheets and Alecks Creek.
- Ethnographic study of the Yakutat subsistence salmon fishery.
- Reliable estimate of subsistence Sockeye harvest in the Klawock drainage.
- Development of escapement goals for sockeye systems with long term escapement data sets.
- Update community household fish harvest surveys.

AVAILABLE FUNDS

Federal Subsistence Board guidelines direct initial distribution of funds among regions. Regional budget guidelines provide an initial target for planning. For 2022, the U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Department of Agriculture, through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Forest Service, will provide an anticipated $2.25 million in funding statewide for new projects.

ROLE OF THE TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

The mission of the Monitoring Program is to identify and provide information needed to sustain subsistence fisheries on Federal public lands for rural Alaskans through a multidisciplinary and collaborative program. It is the responsibility of the Technical Review Committee to develop the strongest possible Monitoring Plan for each region and across the entire state.

For the 2022 Monitoring Program, 15 proposals were submitted for the Southeast Alaska Region. The Technical Review Committee evaluated and scored each proposal on Strategic Priority, Technical and Scientific Merit, Investigator Ability and Resources, Partnership and Capacity Building, and Cost/Benefit (**Table 1**). These scores remain confidential. An executive summary for each proposal submitted to the 2022 Monitoring Program for the Southeast Alaska Region is in **Appendix 2**.

Table 1. Projects submitted for the Southeast Alaska Region 2022 Monitoring Program, including total funds requested and average annual funding requests.

Project Number	Title	Total Project Request	Average Annual Request
22-600	Yakutat Eulachon at the Landscape and Local Scale	$117,780	$29,445
22-601	Stikine River Inseason Subsistence Salmon Harvest	$178,311	$44,577
22-602	Falls Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock and Subsistence Harvest Assessment	$583,232	$145,808
22-603	Gut Bay Sockeye Salmon Stock and Subsistence Harvest Assessment	$589,997	$147,499
22-604	Hetta Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	$641,518	$160,379
22-605	Eva Lake Sockeye Salmon and Subsistence Harvest Assessment	$609,971	$152,492
22-607	Neva Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	$487,401	$121,850
22-608	Kanalku Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	$195,047	$48,761
22-609	Sitkoh Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	$362,742	$90,685
22-610	Klag Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	$758,511	$189,627
22-611	Sockeye Salmon Quantitative DNA (eDNA) Stock Monitoring	$216,959	$54,239
22-612	Northern Southeast Alaska Eulachon Population Dynamics Monitoring	$840,523	$210,130
22-613	Unuk River Eulachon Population Assessment	$185,356	$46,339
22-650	Updating Icy Straight Community Household Subsistence Harvest Surveys and Documenting Subsistence Harvest Patters	$377,961	$125,987
22-651	Estimating Inseason Harvests of Klawock River Salmon Subsistence Fishery	$177,667	$44,416
Total		**$6,322,976**	**$1,580,737**

TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE JUSTIFICATION FOR PROPOSAL SCORES

Project Number: 22-600
Project Title: Yakutat Eulachon at the landscape and local scale

Technical Review Committee Justification: This project addresses the Council's Priority Information Need identified in the 2022 Notice of Funding Opportunity. Investigators will assess Eulachon stocks occurring in the Yakutat Forelands using a variety of methods including aerial, foot, and float surveys, and eDNA sampling. This project will incorporate an eDNA component that may allow investigators to relate eDNA of Eulachon to visual abundance estimates obtained through float surveys in the Situk River, the main Eulachon fishery for Federally qualified subsistence users of the Yakutat community. This project will provide updated baseline Eulachon stock assessment information for the Yakutat Forelands.

Assessment of the species in the Yakutat Forelands is both timely and important. On March 18, 2010 the southern distinct population segment of Eulachon was listed as threatened under the U.S Endangered Species Act. Given observed trends in Eulachon declines elsewhere in Alaska, this work has wide geographic management implications. The methods proposed for completion of the stated objectives use proven science and logistics. The co-investigator includes the Tribal organization in the community that traditionally uses Eulachon. The project builds capacity within the Yakutat Tlingit Tribe with the expectation that fieldwork will transition to the Tribal organization, with the U.S. Forest Service retaining project oversight, aerial surveys, and reporting responsibilities. This project would continue and enhance the meaningful role that local residents play in management of local Monitoring Fund projects. The costs of the project are realistic and in line with similar projects in the area.

Project Number: 22-601
Project Title: Stikine River Inseason Subsistence Salmon Harvest

Technical Review Committee Justification: This project does not address a Priority Information Need identified in the 2022 Notice of Funding Opportunity but does provide some justification for the need for this research. Salmon subsistence harvests within the Alaska portion of the Stikine River drainage primarily occurs within the Tongass National Forest. The Federal nexus is clear. Aspects of the Project Design could be more clearly stated. The project represents a partnership between the U.S. Forest Service and Wrangell Cooperative Association. The addition of social science expertise and methodology and more commitment to training and oversight of field staff would strengthen the project. The budget is reasonable for the work planned. One letter of support was provided.

Project Number: 22-602
Project Title: Falls Lake Subsistence Sockeye Salmon Stock and Harvest Assessment

Technical Review Committee Justification: This project addresses the Council's Priority Information Need identified in the 2022 Notice of Funding Opportunity. The project proposes to collect Sockeye Salmon age, sex, and length data, estimate the subsistence harvest of Sockeye Salmon from the system, and use mark-recapture with a video net weir to estimate the escapement into Falls Lake. Falls Lake is the primary Sockeye Salmon stock used by residents of Kake. In previous years of the study, investigators found that returns to the terminal area are highly variable, and that a substantial portion of the run can be harvested in the subsistence fishery. The methods proposed have been used successfully on this project for a number of years, and the investigators have a track record of successfully meeting the project's objectives. The mark-recapture component would provide for validated weir counts and scale

sample sizes should provide enough samples to meet precision goals. Harvest monitoring will provide a much better estimate of harvest than permit data. The investigators includes the Tribal organization in the community that traditionally uses Falls Lake Sockeye Salmon and the project would continue and enhance the meaningful role that local residents play in management of local Monitoring Program projects. The costs of the project are realistic and in line with similar projects in the area.

Project Number: 22-603
Project Title: Gut Bay Subsistence Sockeye Salmon Stock and Harvest Assessment

Technical Review Committee Justification: This project addresses the Council's Priority Information Need identified in the 2022 Notice of Funding Opportunity. The project proposes to collect baseline information on run timing, strength, and stock characteristics of Sockeye Salmon returns to Gut Bay, in the Southern Baranof Wilderness Area of Baranof Island. The project's objectives are clear, measurable, and achievable. Two weirs and mark-recapture techniques will be used in this project design. The methodology will provide a minimum escapement number from video counts, which may be validated by the mark-recapture estimate. Subsistence harvest will be estimated using an onsite interview survey of subsistence fishers. Stream temperature and discharge will be determined following standard protocols. The investigators include the local village organization, and the project would continue and enhance the meaningful role that local residents play in management of local Monitoring Program projects. The project costs are realistic and commensurate with similar projects in the region.

Project Number: 22-604
Project Title: Hetta Lake Subsistence Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment Project

Technical Review Committee Justification: This project addresses the Council's Priority Information Need identified in the 2022 Notice of Funding Opportunity. This project proposes to continue assessment of Sockeye Salmon returns to Hetta Lake on Prince of Wales Island. Sockeye Salmon escapement and harvest data collected from Hetta Lake has been useful in documenting trends and aiding in-season management. The investigation plan for this project has not changed substantially from past Monitoring Program funding cycles and aside from a few suggestions, the objectives and methods are clear measurable, and achievable. The investigators have a good record of satisfactorily completing multiple Monitoring Program projects and timely completion of deliverables and products. The project would continue and enhance the meaningful role that Hydaburg residents play in management of local Monitoring Program projects. The principal investigator is a local Alaska Native resident of Hydaburg and is the acting tribal administrator for the Hydaburg Cooperative Association. He is responsible for overseeing the entire project with technical assistance from the co-investigator. Local residents will be hired to run the field portion of the project. Technical capacity will be built through training local residents while sampling capacity will be built through project equipment purchases, replacement and upkeep. The budget is above average for similar projects in Southeast Alaska but reasonable considering the work to be completed and products delivered. Letters of support from the Organized Village of Kasaan, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and the U.S. Forest Service are included for this project.

Project Number: 22-605

Project Title: Lake Eva Subsistence Sockeye Salmon Stock and Harvest Assessment

Technical Review Committee Justification: This project addresses the Council's Priority Information Need identified in the 2022 Notice of Funding Opportunity. This project proposes to use a mark-recapture study and a picket weir to estimate the escapement of Sockeye Salmon into Lake Eva; collect age-sex-length data; estimate stream discharge, and estimate the subsistence harvest of Sockeye Salmon from the system. This is a primary stock used by residents of Angoon, but also by residents of Sitka and Juneau. There is no history of Monitoring Program funded projects occurring at this location. The methods proposed have been used successfully with other Monitoring Program funded projects in Southeast Alaska, and the investigators have a track record of successfully meeting project objectives. The mark-recapture component would provide for a validated weir count, which is ideal, but using swim-through redundant video weirs would likely be more fish-friendly without compromising data integrity. Throughout Year 1 of the project, investigators will reconnaissance the area to assess feasibility of installing a video net weir during all subsequent years of the funding cycle. The investigators include the local village organization, and the project would continue and enhance the meaningful role that local residents play in management of local Monitoring Fund projects. The Angoon Community Association is a partner on this project.

Project Number: 22-607
Project Title: Neva Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment

Technical Review Committee Justification: This project addresses the Council's Priority Information Need identified in the 2022 Notice of Funding Opportunity. The Neva Lake Sockeye Salmon stock assessment is a cooperative project between the U.S. Forest Service and the Hoonah Indian Association which has been funded through the Monitoring Program since 2002. The community of Hoonah is a co-investigator and has direct dependence on Neva Lake for their subsistence Sockeye Salmon needs. Information from the first few years of the project led to higher subsistence harvest limits. Subsequent information generated by the project led to harvest limits being lowered in response to decreasing annual escapements coupled with increasing subsistence effort. This project would provide additional annual escapement counts and biological information about the population that is useful for management of the fishery. The objectives are clear, measurable, and achievable and the investigators have a proven ability to complete Monitoring Program projects on time with satisfactory deliverables. The Hoonah Indian Association would continue and enhance their meaningful role in accomplishing the objectives of this project and several local fisheries technicians would be employed.

Project Number: 22-608
Project Title: Kanalku Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment

Technical Review Committee Justification: This project addresses the Council's Priority Information Need identified in the 2022 Notice of Funding Opportunity. The project will reinstate monitoring of Kanalku Lake Sockeye Salmon, Angoon's preferred source for Sockeye Salmon. This project will use mark-recapture to estimate the escapement of Sockeye Salmon into Kanalku Lake; collect age, sex, length data; and estimate discharge and temperature of the Kanalku Lake outlet stream. The investigators include the local village organization, the Angoon Community Association, and the project would continue and enhance the meaningful role that local residents play in management of local Monitoring

Fund projects. The Angoon Community Association provided a letter of support for this project. The costs of the project are realistic.

Project Number: 22-609
Project Title: Sitkoh Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Escapement

Technical Review Committee Justification: This project addresses the Council's Priority Information Need identified in the 2022 Notice of Funding Opportunity. This would be a continuation of a project funded in some form through the Monitoring Program from 2001-2006 and since 2010. The investigation plan for this project has not changed substantially from past Monitoring Program funding cycles. The investigators have a good record of completing Monitoring Program projects and submitting timely deliverables. The co-investigator is a local community organization responsible for contract administration and overseeing the field component of the project with technical assistance from U.S. Forest Service partners. Local residents will be hired and receive training from U.S. Forest Service staff on project implementation and safety. The budget is reasonable considering the work to be completed and products delivered. The Angoon Community Association is a partner on this project and provided a letter of support.

Project Number: 22-610
Project Title: Klag Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment

Technical Review Committee Justification: This project addresses the Council's Priority Information Need identified in the 2022 Notice of Funding Opportunity. The Sitka Tribe of Alaska is the sole investigator for this project. This project has been funded through the Monitoring Program since 2001 and has provided valuable information for the management of the resource. The objectives and methods outlined in the investigation plan are clear, measurable and achievable and have been used successfully at other Monitoring Program projects. Local Natives will be targeted to fill seasonal fisheries technician positions. Four letters of support were provided for this project.

Project Number: 22-611
Project Title: Tongass National Forest Sockeye Salmon Quantitative eDNA Stock Monitoring

Technical Review Committee Justification: This project does not address a Priority Information Need identified by the Council. However, if proven successful, this technique may provide a less labor intensive and more cost-effective method for determining reliable estimates of Sockeye Salmon escapement. This project will use environmental DNA (eDNA) to assess the relationship between known estimates of Sockeye Salmon and eDNA concentrations as a means to gather escapement trends on a greater number of systems across the forest. The sole investigator agency is the U.S. Forest Service although fieldwork will be completed by local hires through other Monitoring Program funded weir projects at Falls Lake, Hetta Lake and Gut Bay. The project is designed to develop the capacity of existing partners to conduct eDNA sampling and provide resource managers the ability to monitor Sockeye Salmon escapement in systems without current monitoring projects in place.

Project Number: 22-612
Project Title: Northern Southeast Alaska Eulachon Population Dynamics Monitoring

Technical Review Committee Justification: The goal of this proposal is to develop a monitoring strategy for Eulachon populations in northern Southeast Alaska. The Southeast Subsistence Regional Advisory Council identified that a *population assessment for Eulachon for northern Southeast Alaska* is a Priority Information Need. The spawning biomass of Eulachon will be assessed using both mark-recapture methods and quantitative eDNA in the Chilkoot River, and eDNA alone at ten other locations in the Lynn Canal area. The use of quantitative eDNA to assess fish abundance is an emerging science, but the project partners have been using it for several years with some encouraging results. The plan would be improved by addition of a mechanism to calibrate the eDNA results at the other 10 sites. The project partners include a number of tribal agencies, non-profit agencies, a university and the development of capacity in those agencies is a goal of the project. The expenses for the project are considerable, due to its ambitious scope. If the use of eDNA proves to be an effective way to monitor Eulachon populations, it could provide future advancement that could be used at other locations, and greatly improve the cost effectiveness of future monitoring efforts.

Project Number: 22-613
Project Title: Unuk River Eulachon Population Assessment

Technical Review Committee Justification: This project addresses the Council's Priority Information Need identified in the 2022 Notice of Funding Opportunity. Returns and harvest of Unuk River Eulachon have declined severely since 1999. The Eulachon commercial fishery was closed in 2001, and from 2004-2010, virtually no Eulachon returned to the Unuk River. The Federal fishery has been closed pre-season by the Federal in-season managers annually since 2006. This project would use a combination of aerial surveys, video surveillance, and foot, boat, and field surveys to provide a qualitative index and biomass estimate of Eulachon returning to the Unuk River. In the event of an opener, Eulachon harvest and effort will be sampled during open Eulachon seasons in the Unuk River. This project develops partnerships and builds capacity with multiple agencies and groups including the U.S. Forest Service, Ketchikan Indian Community, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the Organized Village of Saxman and the Metlakatla Indian Community.

Project Number: 22-650
Project Title: Providing updated community harvest information and documenting subsistence harvest patterns in three northern Southeast Alaska communities.

Technical Review Committee Justification: The proposed research addresses a Priority Information Need in the 2022 Notice of Funding Opportunity. In 2019, the Federal Subsistence Board closed the Neva Lake system, used by residents of Gustavus, to non-Federally qualified users due to low salmon abundance resulting in reduced harvest limits. The proposed project will investigate this fishery. While the salmon fishery occurs mostly in marine waters outside of Federal jurisdiction, salmon are migrating to natal streams within the Tongass National Forest. This project will enable evaluating reliability and validity of harvest monitoring methods used to estimate salmon harvest by the Alaska Department of Fish Game. The investigator will study the harvest and use of all wild resources, including fish. This allows the investigation of fish use within the context of overall wild resource uses and can provide valuable information to management but also increases the budget by adding data collecting and analysis of resources not part of the Priority Information Need, which was to update information on harvest and use of fish.

Project Number: 22-651
Project Title: Estimating inseason harvests of the Klawock River subsistence salmon fishery

Technical Review Committee Justification: This project addresses a priority information need identified in the 2022 Notice of Funding Opportunity. Objectives are clearly stated, and the investigation plan is well-written. Investigators seek to evaluate the recent change in State subsistence permit system to an online delivery and harvest reporting system. More in-depth discussion of methods would strengthen the merit of this project. The project is a partnership between Division of Subsistence and Klawock Heenya Corporation; however, the Corporation does not appear to have a significant role in the project. Two letters of support were provided.

APPENDIX 1
PROJECTS FUNDED IN THE SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGION SINCE 2000

Project Number	Project Title	Investigators
	Estimation of Sockeye Salmon Escapement	
00-043	Klawock Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	ADF&G, KCA
00-044	Falls Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	ADF&G, OVK
01-125	Gut Bay, Kook, and Hoktaheen L Sockeye Salmon Escapement Index	ADF&G, OVK
01-126	Kanalku, Hasselborg, and Sitkoh Lakes Sockeye Stock Assessment	ADF&G
01-127	Thoms, Salmon Bay, Luck Lakes Sockeye Salmon Escapement Index	ADF&G, WCA
01-128	Klag Bay Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	ADF&G, STA, USFS
01-130	Hetta Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	ADF&G, HCA
01-175	Salmon Lake Sockeye and Coho Salmon Stock Assessment	ADF&G, STA, NSRAA, USFS
01-179	Virginia Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	USFS
02-012	Neva and Pavlof Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	USFS, HIA
02-017	Redfish Bay Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	STA, ADF&G, USFS
03-007	Eek Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	HCA, ADF&G
04-604	Klawock Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	ADF&G, KCA
04-605	Kanalku & Sitkoh Lakes Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	ADF&G, ACA
04-606	Hetta Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessments	ADF&G, HCA
04-607	Falls, Gut, & Katlaku Subsistence Sockeye Stock Assessment	ADF&G, ACA
04-608	Salmon Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	STA

Project Number	Project Title	Investigators
04-609	Klag Bay Sockeye Salmon Assessment	STA, ADF&G, USFS
05-601	Kook Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	ADF&G, ACA, USFS
05-603	Klawock Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	ADF&G, USFS
06-601	Neva Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	USFS
06-602	Katlaku Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	ADF&G, OVK
07-601	Hatchery Creek Sockeye Salmon Assessment	OVK, USFS
07-606	Hetta Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	ADF&G
07-607	Kanalku Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	ADF&G, ACA
07-608	Klawock Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	ADF&G, KCA
07-609	Falls Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	ADF&G, OVK
08-600	Karta River Sockeye Salmon Assessment	OVKa, ADF&G, USFS, BIA
10-600	Karta River Sockeye Salmon Assessment	OVKa, BIA, USFS, ADF&G
10-601	Hatchery Creek Sockeye Salmon Assessment	USFS, OVKa, BIA
10-604	Klag Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	STA, USFS
10-605	Sitkoh Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	USFS, ACA, ADF&G
10-606	Hetta Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	HCA, KECS
10-607	Kanalku Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	ADF&G, ACA
10-609	Falls Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	USFS, OVK
10-610	Kook Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	USFS, ACA
10-611	Redoubt Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	USFS, ADF&G
10-612	Neva Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	USFS, HIA
14-601	Redoubt Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	USFS, ADF&G
14-602	Falls Lake Subsistence Salmon Stock & Harvest Assessment	USFS, OVK
14-603	Hetta Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	HCA, KECS
14-605	Hatchery Creek Sockeye Salmon Assessment	USFS, OVKa
14-606	Klawock Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	USFA, KCA, POWHA
14-608	Kanalku Lake Subsistence Sockeye Salmon Assessment	ADF&G, ACA, USFS
14-609	Klag Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	STA
14-610	Kook Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	USFS, ACA
14-611	Sitkoh Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	USFS, ACA
14-612	Neva Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	USFS, HIA
16-604	Eek Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	USFS, HIA
18-602	Falls Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	USFS, OVK
18-603	Gut Bay Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	USFS, OVK
18-604	Hetta Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	HCA, KECS

Project Number	Project Title	Investigators
18-607	Neva Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	USFS, HIA, ADF&G
18-609	Sitkoh Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	USFS, ACA, ADF&G
18-610	Klag Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	STA
20-600	Eek/Kasook Lakes Sub. Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	HCA
	Documentation of Subsistence Use Patterns for Salmon	
00-015	SE Alaska Subsistence Fisheries Database Development	ADF&G
00-045	SE Tribes Traditional Subsistence Territory Mapping	USFS, OVK, ACA, HIA
01-091	East Alsek River Salmon Historical Use and TEK	YTT
01-103	SE Subsistence Fisheries GIS Database	ADF&G
01-104	Kake Sockeye Salmon Subsistence Harvest Use Pattern	ADF&G, OVK
02-038	SE Subsistence Fisheries GIS Database Development	ADF&G, CCTHITA, TST
02-049	Wrangell Salmon Subsistence Harvest Use Patterns	ADF&G, WCA, USFS
02-104	Hoonah and Klawock Salmon Survey	ADF&G, CCTHITA, TST
03-651	Klawock River Subsistence Steelhead Harvest & Use Patterns	ADF&G
04-651	SE Alaska Salmon TEK and Subsistence Monitoring	STA, ADF&G
04-652	Subsistence TEK Database	ADF&G, STA
06-651	Southeast Alaska Survey of Customary Trade	CCTHITA
07-651	Hydaburg Sockeye Salmon Customary & Traditional System	HCA, UAA
08-615	Maknahti Island Subsistence Herring Fishery Assessment	STA, PSU
	Prince of Wales Island Steelhead	
01-105	POW Island Steelhead/Rainbow Trout Harvest Use Patterns	ADF&G
05-604	Prince of Wales Steelhead Assessment	ADF&G, OVK
08-650	POW Island Steelhead Trout Subsistence Harvest Survey	OVKa, HCA, BIA, USFS
	Estimation of Non-salmon Species	
07-610	Behm Canal Eulachon Genetics	USFWS
08-607	Unuk River Eulachon	USFS
10-603	Yakutat Eulachon Surveys	USFS, YSB, ADF&G
14-607	Unuk River Eulachon	USFS

Abbreviations: **ACA** = Angoon Community Association, **ADF&G** = Alaska Department of Fish and Game, **BIA** = Bureau of Indian Affairs, **CCTHITA** = Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, **HCA** = Hydaburg Cooperative Association, **HIA** = Hoonah Indian Association, **KCA** = Klawock Cooperative Association, **KECS** = Kai Environmental Consulting Services, **NSRAA** = Northern Southeast Aquaculture Association, **OVK** = Organized Village of Kake, **OVKa** = Organized Village of Kasaan, **POWHA** = Prince of Wales Hatchery Association, **PSU** = Portland State University, **STA** = Sitka Tribe of Alaska, **TST** = Third Sector Technologies, **UAA** = University of Alaska Anchorage, **USFS** = USDA Forest Service, **USFWS** = USDOI Fish and Wildlife Service, **WCA** = Wrangell Cooperative Association, **YSB** = Yakutat Salmon Board, and **YTT** = Yakutat Tlingit Tribe.

APPENDIX 2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

The following executive summaries were written by principal investigators and were submitted to the Office of Subsistence Management as part of proposal packages. They may not reflect the opinions of the Office of Subsistence Management or the Technical Review Committee. Executive summaries may have been altered for length.

Project Number:	22-600			
Title:	Yakutat Eulachon at the landscape and local scale			
Geographic Region:	Southeast Alaska Region			
Data Type:	Stock Status and Trends			
Principal Investigator:	Susan Oehlers, USDA Forest Service			
	Nathaniel Catterson , USDA Forest Service (USFS)			
Co-investigator:	Havaleh Rohloff**,** Yakutat Tlingit Tribe (YTT)			
Project Cost:	**2022:** $21,916	**2023:** $30,475	**2024:** $31,474	**2025:** $33,915
Total Cost:	$117,780			

Issue Addressed: Eulachon (*Thaelicthys pacificus),* an anadromous smelt, are an important subsistence resource for rural residents of the southeast Alaska. Many Eulachon stocks in the southern part of their range have declined significantly. Some stocks in southeast Alaska have exhibited this trend in recent years.

Historically, little was documented about Eulachon along the Yakutat Forelands. More recently, however, a 2010-2013 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP) funded study (10-603) documented baseline information on the consistency, timing, and relative abundance of spawning along major river systems on the Yakutat Forelands, indicating the significance of the Forelands as Eulachon spawning habitat. Observations from local subsistence users indicate a potential decline in recent years.

Goal and Objectives: The goal of this project is to provide updated baseline stock assessment for Eulachon on the Yakutat Forelands. This project will improve our understanding of the status of these stocks in order to maximize subsistence opportunity for Federally qualified subsistence users in Yakutat, as well as build fisheries monitoring and management capacity at the Yakutat Tlingit Tribe (YTT). This goal will be achieved through the following objectives:

Objective 1: Compare the current status of Eulachon stocks on the Yakutat Forelands to observations compiled during a previous survey effort (2010-2013).

Objective 2: Verify aerial presence/absence observations with on the ground sampling.

Objective 3: Document Eulachon abundance in the lower Situk River.

Objective 4: Evaluate Environmental DNA (eDNA) sampling as a method to quantify Eulachon abundance in the Situk-Ahrnklin System.

Objective 5: Document harvest and harvest methods and compile local Eulachon observations.

Partnership and Capacity Building: Developing conservation concerns about local salmon stocks have highlighted the need for building fisheries monitoring and management capacity at the Yakutat Tlingit Tribe (YTT). This effort began in 2020 with the recruitment of a Tribal fisheries biologist under the USFWS Partners in Fisheries Monitoring grant

In addition to collecting important information about a significant set of Eulachon stocks, this project will give Tribal personnel hands-on exposure to variety of fisheries techniques: aerial survey, float survey, beach seining, harvest interviews, and eDNA sampling. This experience will build capacity for YTT to design additional monitoring projects and better evaluate agency studies and management decisions. Developing indigenous management capacity will help the community remain resilient in the face of challenges like climate change and shifting agency initiatives or personnel.

Anticipated outcomes: This project will build on information collected during the previous FRMP funded project to provide updated baseline stock assessment information for the Yakutat Forelands. The project will compare the status of Eulachon stocks across the Forelands to the previous study, and gather information about Eulachon abundance and harvest in the Situk River subsistence fishery. This information is needed to better understand the status of these stocks to maximize subsistence opportunity for Federally qualified subsistence users in Yakutat.

The funding request in this proposal represents a framework on which additional projects can be built. The eDNA methods described here will be coordinated with ongoing and planned studies by the Chilkoot Indian Association. The long-term goal is not only to evaluate local eulachon stocks, but to build regional capacity to monitor eulachon using repeatable quantitative methods.

Project Number:	22-601			
Title:	In-Season Harvest Monitoring of the Stikine River Federal Subsistence Salmon Fishery			
Geographic Region:	Southeast Alaska Region			
Data Type:	Harvest Monitoring, Traditional Ecological Knowledge			
Principal Investigator:	Robert Cross, USDA Forest Service, Tongass National Forest			
Co-investigators:	Esther Ashton, Wrangell Cooperative Association (WCA)			
Project Cost:	**2022:** $67,786	**2023:** $35,948	**2024:** $36,834	**2025:** $37,743
Total Cost:	$178,311			

Issue: The Stikine River Federal subsistence fishery provides an important source of salmon for the residents of Petersburg and Wrangell. The Federal subsistence Sockeye Salmon fishery was established in 2004 with an average annual harvest of 1,226 fish. All U.S. fisheries share an allowable catch dictated by the U.S.-Canada Pacific Salmon Treaty and the Transboundary River Panel. However, Stikine River Sockeye Salmon escapement and harvest has been decreasing since a peak in 2016. Recent low returns of Chinook and Sockeye Salmon have resulted in pre-season and in-season closures, respectively. Standardized in-season harvest monitoring is necessary to inform State and Federal fisheries management. Without standardized estimates of harvest and effort, managers will be forced to manage the fishery more conservatively, which could result in lost harvest opportunity for users.

Objectives:

1. Conduct weekly on-site subsistence fishery surveys recording number and location of active fishing nets and, when present, collecting harvest and fishing effort data from harvesters;
2. Sample 10 percent of participating households through phone surveys during each week of the Chinook and Sockeye Salmon fishery recording current harvest, effort, and qualitative assessments of their progress toward achieving their annual subsistence needs for salmon;
3. Test the efficacy of in-season harvest and fishing effort monitoring by comparing cumulative weekly estimated harvest to the post season total harvest reported on subsistence salmon permits;
4. Build capacity of Wrangell Cooperative Association to participate in fisheries management.

Methods:

Objective 1: Weekly estimates of salmon harvest and effort will be calculated using net count surveys and harvester interviews. During the salmon season, the crew will conduct weekly net counting surveys and conduct harvest and effort surveys opportunistically when harvesters are present on the river. Surveys will consist of an interview instrument designed to collect both quantitative data (e.g. total harvest, trip harvest, hours fished during trip) and qualitative data (e.g. perceived effort, quality of fish, access to fish). The quantitative section of the survey will be used to determine Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE). The CPUE calculation along with the net count survey will provide an estimate of harvest, an index of effort, and information about run timing.

In addition to collecting information from harvesters, surveyors will use the opportunity to share relevant information from State and Federal fishery managers. Surveyors will carry the lasted news releases and be informed of the latest run estimates, forecasts, and harvest reports. A priority of the project is to promote two-way information sharing and allow harvesters an opportunity to easily voice concerns or questions throughout the season.

Objective 2: Phone surveys will use the same survey instrument as the on-site harvester interviews. Consent will be obtained prior to conducting an interview and a updated list of consenting harvesters will be maintained. Names will not be recorded as part of any survey. The contact list will be randomized by permit number to avoid contacting the same harvesters every time. Key respondents may volunteer to be contacted regularly for updated environmental and fishy conditions.

Objective 3: Effort and CPUE will be sampled each week and expanded to estimate weekly harvest. At the end of the season the sum of weekly harvest estimates will be used as an estimate of total harvest and compared to the total post season harvest reported on permits. The accuracy of harvest estimates is unknown and may simply be useful as an index if the accuracy is poor. Estimates of effort and CPUE are important in informing in-season management action and validating ADF&G run estimates.

Objective 4: Through the funding of this project WCA will purchase equipment such as a jet boat, safety gear, and handheld tablets that will allow them to further develop independent capability. Wrangell Cooperative Association will hire local personnel to participate in the survey program. New surveyors will receive boat training specific to the Stikine River, 1st Aid and CPR training, and will be encouraged to participate in available USFS safety trainings. The WCA staff will receive training from the USFS staff on the Esri ® (ArcGIS Online®, Collector®, and Survey123®) and Microsoft® suite of software for use during data collection and reduction. The WCA will develop general and project specific trainings over

the funding period of the project. Training and equipment associated with this project will build the institutional knowledge and the capacity of WCA to develop an independent environmental program.

Partnerships/Capacity Building: This proposal was developed in partnership between the USFS and WCA with consultation from ADF&G. A primary objective of the project is to build the capacity of WCA to participate in in-season fisheries management. Currently, WCA lacks the capacity to fully implement a fishery monitoring project due to a lack of equipment and trained fisheries personnel. Through a partnership with the USFS and funding associated with this project, WCA will receive the equipment, training, and experience necessary to conduct fisheries monitoring and develop an autonomous environmental program.

Project Number:	22-602			
Title:	Falls Lake Subsistence Sockeye Salmon Stock and Harvest Assessment			
Geographic Region:	Southeast Alaska Region			
Data Type:	Stock Status and Trends an Harvest Monitoring			
Principal Investigator:	Kyle Rosendale, Fish Biologist**,** USDA Forest Service			
	Justin Koller, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, USDA Forest Service			
Co-investigators:	Dawn Jackson**,** Organized Village of Kake (OVK)			
Project Cost:	**2022:** $142,950	**2023:** $143,023	**2024:** $146,724	**2025:** $150,535
Total Cost:	$583,232			

Issue: Sockeye Salmon (*gaat, Oncorhynchus nerka*) returning to Falls Lake are heavily utilized by residents of Kake, Alaska in a subsistence fishery occurring as early as mid-June and lasting through mid-August. In the years 2001-2020 an average of 4,144 (SD = 2,353; range = 1,053 - 10,307) Sockeye Salmon returned to the marine terminal area. Exploitation rate is highly variable and, in some years, up to 70% of the terminal run has been harvested. The average exploitation rate for 2001-2020 was 33% (SD = 16%; range = 14 - 70%). Subsistence harvest has declined substantially from its peak in the early 2000s. Annual stock assessments are essential due to the high variability of annual terminal abundance coupled with the potential for a high exploitation. It should be noted that 2020 was the lowest terminal run on record for Falls Lake, demonstrating the need for continued monitoring. In-season data generated by the project supports management decisions to conserve the population and maximize subsistence harvest opportunities. Without an assessment of Sockeye Salmon abundance and subsistence harvest, managers would be forced to manage the fishery more conservatively (e.g., lower harvest limits and a shorter season), which could result in lost harvest opportunity for users.

Objectives:

1. Estimate the escapement of Sockeye Salmon into Falls Lake with a coefficient of variation less than 15%.
2. Estimate the age, sex and length distribution of Sockeye in the Falls Lake escapement with a coefficient of variation less than 10%.
3. Estimate the subsistence harvest of Sockeye Salmon in the marine area around Falls Lake Creek with a coefficient of variation less than 15%.

4. Collect daily stream temperature data and estimate daily stream discharge at Falls Lake according to standard USGS protocols.

Methods: Objective 1: The abundance of Sockeye Salmon entering the lake will be estimated by standard mark-recapture methods. A fish trap will be constructed just above the Falls Lake fish ladder to capture a sample of the population migrating into Falls Lake. All fish in the trap will be marked with an adipose fin clip and will be released immediately below a net weir equipped with an underwater video chute. The motion detected video footage will be used to sample Sockeye Salmon for marks as part of a mark recapture estimate.

Objective 2: Standard methods will be used to collect age, sex, and length data. A subset of Sockeye Salmon in the trap will have three scales removed and sent to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Mark, Tag, and Aging Laboratory in Douglas, AK. Length will be measured from mid-eye to tail fork and sex determined by standard morphological characteristics.

Objective 3: Harvesters observed in the marine terminal area will be interviewed using a standard single-staged sampling design. All interviews will be confidential and harvest and effort data will be stratified by gear type.

Objective 4: Stream temperature and discharge data will be collected by following standard US Geological Survey protocols. Data loggers will collect temperature and water level data every thirty minutes. Streamflow estimates will follow the Midsection Method, with weir personnel using a flow meter, wading rod, and stream tape to estimate flow at many points across the stream.

Partnerships/Capacity Building: The USFS staff will provide general project oversight, sample design and analysis, reporting, budget management, and proposal development. The OVK staff will provide input on community issues, natural resource issues, and future direction of the project, employ field technicians, and manage a budget for personnel, supplies, and logistical support (e.g., transportation). The partnership between OVK and the USFS has led to the ongoing success of other Sockeye Salmon monitoring projects in the area. OVK staff will gain skills and knowledge that can be used in combination with Traditional Ecological Knowledge to help OVK manage its traditional resources.

Project Number:	22-603			
Title:	Gut Bay Subsistence Sockeye Salmon Stock and Harvest Assessment			
Geographic Region:	Southeast Alaska Region			
Data Type:	Stock Status and Trends (SST) and Harvest Monitoring (HM)			
Principal Investigator:	Kyle Rosendale, Fish Biologist**,** USDA Forest Service			
Co-investigators:	Justin Koller**,** Fish and Wildlife Biologist, USDA Forest Service Dawn Jackson**,** Organized Village of Kake (OVK)			
Project Cost:	**2022:** $144,172	**2023:** $144,817	**2024:** $148,571	**2025:** $152,437
Total Cost:	$589,997			

Issue: Sockeye Salmon is one of the most important traditional foods for the community of Kake. Gut Bay is currently one of three primary systems used for subsistence harvest of Sockeye Salmon (*gaat*, *Oncorhynchus nerka*) by residents of Kake. Sockeye escapement, biological structure, and harvest intensity at Gut Bay are not well understood. Permits returned to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game show that the number of Sockeye harvested at Gut Bay can vary by an order of magnitude. Escapement estimates are needed to ensure sustainable management of Gut Bay Sockeye Salmon. Previous studies were unsuccessful at using beach seine surveys on the spawning grounds to estimate escapement into Gut Bay Lake and ultimately recommended that a weir project be implemented to address concerns about annual harvest and the methods used to harvest Sockeye. Reliable escapement and in-season subsistence harvest estimates at Gut Bay were identified as Priority Information Needs by the Fisheries Resources Monitoring Program (FRMP), Southeast Region. Escapement and harvest data will allow managers to better conserve the population and maximize subsistence harvest.

Objectives:

1. Estimate the escapement of Sockeye Salmon into Gut Bay with a coefficient of variation less than 15%.
2. Estimate the age, sex and length distribution of Sockeye in the Gut Bay escapement with a coefficient of variation less than 10%.
3. Estimate the subsistence harvest of Sockeye Salmon in the marine area around Gut Bay with a coefficient of variation less than 15%.
4. Collect daily stream temperature data and estimate daily stream discharge at Gut Bay according to standard USGS protocols.

Methods: Objective 1: A rigid picket weir will be installed above the high tide line. Salmon will be identified to species and enumerated. The weir count will be validated by standard mark-recapture methods. A net weir equipped with an underwater video chute will be installed upstream of the picket weir. The motion detected video footage will be used to sample Sockeye Salmon for marks.

Objective 2: Standard methods will be used to collect age, sex, and length data. A subset of Sockeye Salmon in the trap will have three scales removed and sent to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Mark, Tag, and Aging Laboratory in Douglas, AK. Length will be measured from mid-eye to tail fork and sex determined by standard morphological characteristics.

Objective 3: Harvesters observed in the marine terminal area will be interviewed using a standard single-staged sampling design. All interviews will be confidential and harvest and effort data will be stratified by gear type.

Objective 4: Stream temperature and discharge data will be collected by following standard US Geological Survey protocols. Data loggers will collect temperature and water level data every thirty minutes. Streamflow estimates will follow the Midsection Method, with weir personnel using a flow meter, wading rod, and stream tape to estimate flow at many points across the stream.

Partnerships/Capacity Building: The USFS staff will provide general project oversight, sample design and analysis, reporting, budget management, and proposal development. The OVK staff will provide input on community issues, natural resource issues, and future direction of the project, employ field

technicians, and manage a budget for personnel, supplies, and logistical support (e.g., transportation). The partnership between OVK and the USFS has led to the ongoing success of other Sockeye Salmon monitoring projects in the area. OVK staff will gain skills and knowledge that can be used in combination with Traditional Ecological Knowledge to help OVK manage its traditional resources.

Project Number:	22-604			
Title:	Hetta Lake Subsistence Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment Project			
Geographic Region:	Southeast Alaska Region			
Data Type:	Stock Status and Trends			
Principal Investigator:	Anthony Christianson, Hydaburg Cooperative Association			
Co-investigators:	Cathy Needham, Kai Environmental Consulting Services			
Project Cost:	**2022:** $165,829	**2023:** $158,563	**2024:** $158,563	**2025:** $158,563
Total Cost:	$641,518			

Issue: The Hydaburg Cooperative Association (HCA) is proposing to continue work on documenting subsistence harvest of sockeye salmon in traditionally and culturally important sockeye systems in their traditional territory, as well as continue to estimate escapement of sockeye salmon into their number one important subsistence systems, Hetta Lakee. This information will continue to allow HCA and resource management agencies to monitor sockeye salmon returns in order to make in-season management decision for subsistence harvest and commercial fisheries. In addition, data will be used in the long term management of sockeye salmon in order to continue to provide for a subsistence priority for federally qualified subsistence users.

Objectives:

1) Census the sockeye salmon harvest by subsistence fishers in the terminal areas of Hetta, Eek, Kasook, and Hunter Bay using completed-trip interviews of all fishers on the fishing grounds or immediately upon returning to Hydaburg from the fishing grounds.
2) Count the number of sockeye salmon and other salmon species returning to Hetta Lake through a bipod weir.
3) Estimate the age composition of the sockeye salmon escapement so that the coefficient of variation is 10% or less for the two major age classes and describe the size distribution of each age class by sex.

Methods: Each year, crew members and the project manager will monitor the subsistence grounds, and interview all fishers once their harvest for the day is complete. Information collected during each interview will include date, area fished, interview location, time of interview, gear used, number of hours fished, number of net sets, catch by species, and comments.

A channel spanning bipod weir will be constructed on the outlet stream of Hetta Lake, with a trap constructed to capture fish migrating upstream to spawn. The weir will operate from June through September of each year, and all fish crossing the weir will be identified and counted. Approximately 600 fish will be sampled for age, sex and length data. Fish will be measured and sexed on site. Scales will be removed and sent to ADFG to be read to determine age. Data will be analyzed to estimate the spawning population of sockeye. Weekly in-season reports of harvest and weir counts will be shared with state and federal agencies. Annual reports will be produced after each field season, and a final report including all four seasons will be produced at the end of the project.

Partnership/Capacity Building: Since 2001, HCA has worked with Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Forest Service to build capacity on Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program projects with a goal of becoming the principle investigator. In 2010, HCA became the principle investigator for the Hetta Lake Subsistence Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment Project and in 2015 began stock assessment work at Eek Lake as a principle investigator. ADFG will continue to offer scale reading services to the project and remain involved through permitting of the project, as well as using in-season data for managing a commercial fishery for all of Cordova Bay. The HCA also continues to work with and build trust with Hydaburg residents, and others on Prince of Wales Island, through education and outreach and asking for continued support for in-season management decision on sockeye salmon harvest.

Project Number:	22-605			
Title:	Lake Eva Subsistence Sockeye Salmon Stock and Harvest Assessment			
Geographic Region:	Southeast Alaska Region			
Data Type:	Stock Status and Trends			
Principal Investigator:	Kyle Rosendale, Fish Biologist, USDA Forest Service			
Co-investigators:	Justin Koller, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, USDA Forest Service Jacob Musslewhite, Fish Biologist, USDA Forest Service Raynelle Jack,Angoon Community Association (ACA)			
Project Cost:	**2022:** $210,839	**2023:** $127,215	**2024:** $130,348	**2025:** $141,568
Total Cost:	$609,971			

Issue: Lake Eva is located on northeast Baranof Island, approximately 32 km from the community of Angoon. Sockeye Salmon have long been a highly prized and key resource for Tlingit people in Southeast Alaska. Traditional Ecological Knowledge and archeological findings at a *Teikweidí* settlement suggest that Lake Eva has been an important Sockeye Salmon (*gaat*, *Oncorhynchus nerka)* and berry harvest site for over five thousand years. Kanalku Lake, Angoon's primary subsistence Sockeye Salmon site, has seen severe declines in abundance, forcing the community to harvest from other systems. Residents of both Angoon and Sitka have dramatically increased their harvest of Lake Eva Sockeye Salmon since 2017 and little is known about the population's abundance, run timing, or structure, warranting a monitoring project to ensure the population is sustainably harvested.

Objectives:

1. Estimate the escapement of Sockeye Salmon into Lake Eva with a coefficient of variation less than 15%.
2. Estimate the age, sex and length distribution of Sockeye in the Lake Eva escapement with a coefficient of variation less than 10%.
3. Estimate the subsistence harvest of Sockeye Salmon in the marine area around Lake Eva with a coefficient of variation less than 15%.
4. Collect daily stream temperature data and estimate daily stream discharge at Lake Eva according to standard USGS protocols.

Methods: Objective 1: A rigid picket weir will be installed approximately halfway between the lake outlet and salt water. Salmon will be identified to species and enumerated. The Sockeye Salmon weir count will be validated by standard mark-recapture methods. Sockeye Salmon staging in the lake near the spawning stream will be captured by beach seine and sampled for marks. All Sockeye Salmon captured in a beach seine will be given a secondary mark to sample without replacement.

Objective 2: Standard methods will be used to collect age, sex, and length data. A subset of Sockeye Salmon in the trap will have three scales removed and sent to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Mark, Tag, and Aging Laboratory in Douglas, AK. Length will be measured from mid-eye to tail fork and sex determined by examining morphological characteristics.

Objective 3: Harvesters observed in the marine terminal area will be interviewed using a standard single-staged sampling design. All interviews will be confidential and harvest and effort data will be stratified by gear type.

Objective 4: Stream temperature and discharge data will be collected following standard US Geological Survey protocols. Data loggers will collect temperature and water level data every thirty minutes. Streamflow estimates will follow the Midsection Method, with weir personnel using a flow meter, wading rod, and stream tape to estimate flow at many points across the stream.

Partnerships/Capacity Building: The USFS staff will provide general project oversight, sample design and analysis, reporting, budget management, and proposal development. The ACA staff will provide input on community issues, natural resource issues, and future direction of the project, employ field technicians, and manage a budget for personnel, supplies, and logistical support (e.g., transportation). The partnership between ACA and the USFS has led to the ongoing success of other Sockeye Salmon monitoring projects in the area. ACA staff will gain skills and knowledge that can be used in combination with Traditional Ecological Knowledge to help ACA manage its traditional resources.

Project Number:	22-607			
Title:	Neva Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment			
Geographic Region:	Southeast Alaska Region			
Data Type:	Stock Status and Trends			
Principal Investigator:	Jacob Musslewhite, Fisheries Biologist, USDA Forest Service (USFS)			
Co-investigators:	Robert Starbard, Executive Director, Hoonah Indian Association (HIA)			
Project Cost:	**2022:** $118,122	**2023:** $120,447	**2024:** $122,828	**2025:** $126,004
Total Cost:	$487,401			

Issue Addressed: This project addresses the priority information need for reliable estimates of Sockeye Salmon escapement and in-season harvest and estimates of stream discharge in a list of Southeast Alaska systems including Neva Lake. Sockeye Salmon returns to Neva Lake (**Error! Reference source not found.**) have long been an important subsistence resource for Tlingit families living in Excursion Inlet, Hoonah, and other areas of northern Southeast Alaska (de Laguna 1960; Schroeder and Kookesh 1990; Goldschmidt and Haas 1998; Ratner and Dizard 2005; Langdon 2006). The lake is the most convenient

source of Sockeye Salmon for rural communities in Icy Strait, including Hoonah, Gustavus, and Excursion Inlet.

Neva Lake has also been the focus of recent management actions to protect the health of the stock. In 2016, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game reduced the annual Sockeye Salmon bag limit from 40 fish to 10 fish, in response to declining escapements. In 2019, the Federal Subsistence Board restricted the harvest of Sockeye Salmon in the Federal waters of Neva Lake, Neva Creek and South Creek to qualified rural residents (OSM 2019; 84 Fed. Reg. 39744-39754 [August 12, 2019]). Since then, the escapements to the lake have improved, while the reported subsistence harvest has declined. The escapement estimates obtained by this project will be critically important to State and Federal biologists evaluating the effectiveness of these actions, assuring the health of this resource, and maintaining the availability of Neva Lake Sockeye Salmon to local subsistence users.

Objectives:

1. Count (census) the annual escapement of adult and jack Sockeye Salmon into Neva Lake using video weirs.
2. Determine, with 90% certainty, if at least 90% of the Sockeye Salmon spawners in Neva Lake are freshwater age-1.
3. Measure and record the temperature and discharge of Neva Creek during the Sockeye Salmon spawning migration.

Project Activities and Methods:

Escapement Count. This proposal is to continue operation of remotely monitored video weirs at the outlet of Neva Lake. Video from the weirs will be transmitted to a recording station in Excursion Inlet, where project personnel will use a computer with Blue Iris surveillance software to count Sockeye Salmon and other species entering the lake as we have since 2016.

Video from the underwater cameras will be transmitted to a remote recording station in a crew cabin in Excursion Inlet. In the cabin, a computer running Blue Iris surveillance software records motion-triggered video clips which can be reviewed by the crew to count fish passing through the weirs. A high-speed wireless connection between Excursion Inlet and Hoonah connects the monitoring network to the internet. Each morning, project personnel will review the motion-triggered video files to count the escapement of Sockeye Salmon into the lake.

Age, Sex, and Length Sampling. A seasonal goal of 60 to 120 adult Sockeye Salmon will be captured in the Neva system using beach seine or dip net gear, sampled for age (scales), sex, and length (ASL) data, and released. A sample of 60 fish will allow us to determine, with 90% certainty, if at least 90% of the fish are ≤ freshwater age-1. The freshwater ages can be used to determine if there are any appreciable numbers of fish ≥ freshwater age-2, which might indicate if and when parent year escapements are high enough to fill (or exceed) the lake's rearing capacity.

Temperature and discharge. A permanent stream gage station will be established downstream of the lake outlet. As often as practical, we will measure the stage and stream discharge at the gage station, so that we can establish a stage-discharge curve for the stream. We will also install a Hobo U-20 water level and temperature logger at the station, which will record continuously throughout the year.

Partnerships and Capacity Building: The Hoonah Indian Association, ADF&G, and Forest Service began cooperating on Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program, Stock Status and Trend, projects at Neva Lake in 2002. Field personnel are all hired and employed by HIA and HIA has successfully filled these positions with local hires. HIA employees will participate in USFS safety training and have on-the-job training in how to sample fish and how to operate video weir, computer, networking, and solar power systems.

Project Number:	22-608			
Title:	Kanalku Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment			
Geographic Region:	Southeast Alaska Region			
Data Type:	Stock Status and Trends			
Principal Investigator:	Jacob Musslewhite, Fisheries Biologist, USDA Forest Service (USFS)			
Co-investigators:	Raynelle Jack, Tribal Administrator, Angoon Community Association (ACA)			
Project Cost:	**2022:** $52,853	**2023:** $46,694	**2024:** $47,395	**2025:** $48,105
Total Cost:	$195,047			

Issue Addressed: This project addresses the priority information need for reliable estimates of Sockeye Salmon escapement and in-season harvest and estimates of stream discharge in a list of Southeast Alaska systems including Kanalku Lake. Kanalku Lake is Angoon's preferred source for Sockeye Salmon, and has a documented history of use dating back for at least 1,000 years. Kanalku' s accessibility and popularity have made it one of the most vulnerable and politically sensitive subsistence resources in Southeast Alaska.

Over the past few decades, the Sockeye Salmon run and subsistence fishery at Kanalku has been the focus of many management actions and political controversies. These include a voluntary closure of subsistence harvest; a request for extraterritorial Federal jurisdiction over local salmon fisheries; an effort by the Forest Service to improve fish passage by blasting a partial barrier falls; and multiple changes in bag and possession limits, to name a few. The importance of this stock to Angoon's food security and culture, its small size and susceptibility to harvest pressure, and the potential vulnerability to climate change make it a top priority for stock assessment and monitoring. Since the end of the most recent stock assessment project in 2017, the only indication of run strength at Kanalku has been the reported harvest on returned permits.

The proposed project will reinstate timely monitoring of Sockeye Salmon escapement to Kanalku Lake, providing managers the information needed to preserve the resource for the people of Angoon. It uses the most cost effective means possible, avoiding the expense and impact of a weir and staffed camp in a wilderness area.

Objectives:

1. Estimate the number of Sockeye Salmon spawning in Kanalku Lake, so the estimated coefficient of variation is less than 15%.
2. Determine, with 90% certainty, if at least 90% of the Sockeye Salmon spawners in Sitkoh Lake are ≤ freshwater age-1.
3. Measure and record the discharge and temperature of the Kanalku Lake outlet stream during the Sockeye Salmon spawning migration.

Project Activities and Methods:

Escapement count. The study design for the escapement estimate will adopt the methods used by Conitz and in their work in Kanalku Lake. These projects used standard mark-recapture techniques to estimate the spawning population in a defined study area multiple times over the course of the spawning season. These estimates were then used to estimate the total number of fish spawning in the lake over the entire season.

Each sampling event will consist of two days of sampling. On the first day, the crew will capture fish on the study area spawning grounds with a beach seine. All fish captured will be given a left opercular punch with a shape assigned to that sampling event. On the second day of sampling, the crew will repeat the beach seining, inspect each captured fish for marks, and mark them with a right opercular punch to indicate the fish has been sampled. A Petersen estimate for the day will be generated from the number of fish marked and the subsequent recaptures. Marks recovered from prior sampling events will be used to generate the super population estimate for the season.

Age, Sex, and Length Sampling. A seasonal goal of 60 to 120 adult Sockeye Salmon will be captured in the Kanalku system using beach seine or dip net gear, sampled for age (scales), sex, and length (ASL) data, and released. A sample of 60 fish will allow us to determine, with 90% certainty, if at least 90% of the fish are ≤ freshwater age-1. The freshwater ages can be used to determine if there are any appreciable numbers of fish ≥ freshwater age-2, which might indicate if and when parent year escapements are high enough to fill (or exceed) the lake's rearing capacity.

Temperature and discharge. A permanent stream gage station will be established downstream of the lake outlet. As often as practical, we will measure the stage and stream discharge at the gage station, so that we can establish a stage-discharge curve for the stream. We will also install a Hobo U-20 water level and temperature logger at the station, which will record continuously throughout the year.

Partnerships and Capacity Building: Field personnel are all hired and employed by ACA, which has successfully filled these positions with local hires. Projects funded by FRMP have provided employment opportunities in Angoon throughout the years of partnership. ACA employees participate in USFS safety training and have on-the-job training in how to sample fish and how to operate video weir, computer, networking, and solar power systems.

Project Number:	22-609			
Title:	Sitkoh Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Escapement			
Geographic Region:	Southeast Alaska Region			
Data Type:	Stock Status and Trends			
Principal Investigator:	Jacob Musslewhite, Fisheries Biologist, USDA Forest Service (USFS)			
Co-investigators:	Raynelle Jack, Tribal Administrator, Angoon Community Association (ACA)			
Project Cost:	**2022:** $92,749	**2023:** $88,679	**2024:** $89,991	**2025:** $91,323
Total Cost:	$362,742			

Issue Addressed: This project addresses the priority information need for reliable estimates of Sockeye Salmon escapement and in-season harvest and estimates of stream discharge in a list of Southeast Alaska systems including Sitkoh Lake. Sockeye Salmon runs to Sitkoh Lake have long been an important subsistence resource for residents of Angoon and other rural communities in northern Southeast Alaska. Stock assessment projects monitoring the escapement of Sockeye Salmon to Sitkoh Lake have occurred since the 1990s. Between 2000 and 2010, escapements to Sitkoh Lake were typically 8,000 – 12,000 fish, but have declined steeply since then. From 2017 through 2019, 2,000 fish or fewer were estimated to be spawning in the lake. The most recent estimate of almost 10,000 fish in 2020 shows promise of a rebound from the past few years.

The recent years with low escapements coincided with dryer than normal summers and low streamflow, which appeared to hamper the spawning migration for Sockeye Salmon. A better understanding of the relationship between stream discharge and fish passage during the spawning migration will be crucial to successful management, especially in the face of ongoing climate change.

This project is important to assure that escapements are adequate to provide sustainable subsistence opportunity and to assess consequences of management actions related to both fishing and land use activities. This monitoring project should continue given the intensity of commercial and subsistence fishing on this stock, the importance of this subsistence resource to the community of Angoon, and the cost effectiveness of this project.

Objectives:

1. Count (census) the daily and annual escapement of Sockeye Salmon into Sitkoh Lake using a remotely monitored video weir.
2. Determine, with 90% certainty, if at least 90% of the Sockeye Salmon spawners in Sitkoh Lake are ≤ freshwater age-1.
3. Measure and record the temperature and discharge of Sitkoh Lake Creek during the Sockeye Salmon spawning migration.

Methods:

Escapement count. Sockeye Salmon entering Sitkoh Lake will be counted using a remotely monitored video weir. The weir will be equipped with a video chute that allows free passage of fish and other animals through the weir. Multiple video cameras will be mounted in the video chute, providing different views of passing fish.

Live video from the underwater cameras, and from surveillance cameras at the Sitkoh weir site, will be wirelessly linked to computers at the ACA office in Angoon. Project personnel will use the Blue Iris surveillance software to save and review motion-triggered video clips and get hourly and daily counts of fish, by species, entering Sitkoh Lake. We will remotely monitor the project site and electronics over the internet to make sure that the weirs are functioning properly

The remote monitoring technology planned for use at Sitkoh has been developed and refined at the Sitkoh Lake and Neva Lake projects over the past few years. The video cameras, surveillance cameras, and networking equipment used have also been tested and used reliably over the past few years. Most importantly, it greatly improved the efficiency and reliability of counting fish by allowing simultaneous review of two or more cameras.

Age, sex, and length sampling. A seasonal goal of 60 to 120 adult Sockeye Salmon will be captured in the Sitkoh system using beach seine or dip net gear, sampled for age (scales), sex, and length (ASL) data, and released. A sample of 60 fish will allow us to determine, with 90% certainty, if at least 90% of the fish are ≤ freshwater age-1. The freshwater ages can be used to determine if there are any appreciable numbers of fish ≥ freshwater age-2, which might indicate if and when parent year escapements are high enough to fill (or exceed) the lake's rearing capacity.

Temperature and discharge. A permanent stream gage station will be established downstream of the lake outlet. As often as practical, we will measure the stage and stream discharge at the gage station, so that we can establish a stage-discharge curve for the stream. We will also install a Hobo U-20 water level and temperature logger at the station, which will record continuously throughout the year.

Partnerships and Capacity Building: The ACA and USDA Forest Service have been cooperating on stock assessment projects for many years. Field personnel are all hired and employed by ACA, which has successfully filled these positions with local hires. Projects funded by FRMP have provided employment opportunities in Angoon throughout the years of partnership. ACA employees participate in USFS safety training and have on-the-job training in how to sample fish and how to operate video weir, computer, networking, and solar power systems.

Project Number:	22-610			
Title:	Klag Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment			
Geographic Region:	Southeast Alaska Region			
Data Type:	Stock Status and Trends, Harvest Monitoring			
Principal Investigator:	Leigh Engel, Fisheries Biologist, Sitka Tribe of Alaska			
Co-investigators:	None			
Project Cost:	**2022:** $202,039	**2023:** $179,537	**2024:** $185,415	**2025:** $191,520
Total Cost:	$758,511			

Issue: Klag Lake is one of the most important sources of sockeye salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*) for the community of Sitka. However, escapement has been steadily declining in the last 10 years at Klag Lake. The past six years (2015-2020) have seen six of the seven lowest escapements on record, with 2018 having the lowest escapement of 2,444 sockeye salmon. Despite declining escapement and a reduction in subsistence harvests since monitoring was implemented in 2001, Klag Bay has a higher exploitation rate than other systems. The sockeye Klag Lake are extremely dependent upon high flows to escape into freshwater and the bathymetry of the bay and current harvest methods and limits allow for substantial numbers of sockeye to be efficiently harvested without any appreciable escapement. The Klag Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment Project will provide managers with daily escapement and harvest data to allow for in-season management decisions critical to sustainable management of the Klag Lake sockeye stock.

Objectives:

1. Enumerate the escapement of sockeye salmon at Klag Bay.
2. Describe the run timing, or proportional daily passage, of sockeye salmon through the weir.
3. Estimate the sex and age composition of sockeye salmon such that the coefficient of variation is 7.5% or less.

4. Estimate harvest by subsistence and sport fishermen at Klag Bay so that the coefficient of variation is 15% or less.

Methods: A rigid weir will be installed in the outlet stream of Klag Lake and escapement data will be recorded for all salmonids passing through the weir. A minimum of 462 sockeye salmon will be sampled for age, length, and sex data. Crew personnel will sample a running total of 10% to ensure sample goals are met and representative of the run despite low flow events. Mark-recapture methods will be used to validate the weir estimate for sockeye. A running total of approximately 20% of all sockeye at the weir will receive an adipose fin clip. Dead or spawned out fish will be sampled for marks on the spawning grounds; all sampled fish will receive a pelvic fin clip to ensure sampling without replacement. Creel surveys will be conducted with all fishing parties observed in Klag Lake. Escapement and harvest data will be reported to managers on a daily basis via satellite device to ADFG biologists.

Partnerships/Capacity Building: The Sitka Tribe of Alaska is the principal investigator for the project and has worked closely and successfully with the Alaska Department of Fish & Game and the US Forest Service. Most previously funded Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program projects were not led by Alaska Native organizations, so tribal leadership of the Klag Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment Project is noteworthy.

Project Number:	22-611			
Title:	Tongass National Forest Sockeye Salmon Quantitative eDNA Stock Monitoring			
Geographic Region:	Southeast Alaska Region			
Data Type:	Stock Status and Trends			
Principal Investigator:	Robert Cross, USDA Forest Service			
Co-investigators:	None			
Project Cost:	**2022:** $68,315	**2023:** $49,249	**2024:** $49,546	**2025:** $49,849
Total Cost:	$216,959			

Issue: The Tongass National Forest has over 100 Sockeye Salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*) producing systems. Collecting up to date stock assessments on each of these systems is impossible since Sockeye Salmon monitoring projects are logistically challenging, labor intensive, and expensive. It is becoming increasingly necessary to implement cost effective methods of monitoring Sockeye Salmon. Quantitative eDNA sampling could allow managers to monitor more systems for less money if properly tested at established monitoring sites and validated with traditional enumeration techniques. The use of existing FRMP weir sites provides cost saving infrastructure from which to measure the value of eDNA as a monitoring tool within the Tongass National Forest. The Organized Village of Kake (OVK) and Hydaburg Cooperative Association (HCA) have expressed support testing this technology at their existing monitoring sites.

Objectives:

1. Test the relationship between estimated Sockeye Salmon escapement and eDNA concentrations within three systems;

2. Determine the efficacy of quantitative eDNA as an estimate or index for annual Sockeye Salmon escapement;

3. Compare the relationship between estimated Sockeye Salmon escapement and eDNA concentrations between systems.

Methods:

Objective 1: Concentrations of eDNA will be sampled daily at each selected weir site for the duration of the Sockeye Salmon season. Samples will be taken from the same sampling location prior to weir operations each morning to avoid contaminating samples with upstream activities. Duplicate 1-L stream water samples will be collected at each site and filtered through a 0.45µm cellulose nitrate filter using a battery-powered peristaltic pump. If flow ceased due to clogging, filtered water will be measured to the nearest 5 ml using a 1-L graduated cylinder and eDNA concentration will be corrected for volume. Filters will be preserved in silicone desiccant beads and sent to the USFS Rocky Mountain Research Station (RMRS) in Missoula, Montana, for processing. The sum of daily peak concentration and the total eDNA area under the curve concentrations will be compared to the daily and total Sockeye Salmon weir counts, respectively. Concentrations of eDNA will be modeled with flow and stream temperature to determine the best fit.

Objective 2: Models of flow corrected eDNA concentration and Sockeye Salmon escapement will be developed for each of the selected Sockeye Salmon systems each year of the project. Annual models will be combined in each system to identify any interaction effect between year and flow corrected eDNA concentration. If there is no significant interaction, then it would suggest that eDNA concentrations are consistent across years and may be used to compare Sockeye Salmon abundance between years within a single system.

Objective 3: Models developed for each Sockeye Salmon system will be combined to test for interaction effects between system and flow corrected eDNA concentration. Models from neighboring systems may have the highest likelihood of consistent eDNA concentrations. However, all iterations will be run to determine if eDNA concentrations in one system has any predictive value in another system.

Partnerships/Capacity Building: All of the staffed FRMP Sockeye Salmon weirs on the forest are operated by or have partnerships with Native organizations. The proposed project is designed to develop the capacity of existing partners to conduct eDNA monitoring. A quantitative eDNA monitoring program has the potential to increase the participation of new and existing partners in the Tongass FRMP. Cost effective monitoring techniques, such as eDNA sampling, have the potential to increase the number of monitoring sites and capacity of partners across the forest. The Forest uses eDNA to monitor amphibians, function of fish pass/fish barriers, invasive species, and rare species. Developing the capacity for these partners to complete both presence-absence and quantitative eDNA sampling greatly increases the available monitoring funding and workload.

Project Number:	22-612
Title:	Northern Southeast Alaska Eulachon Population Dynamics Monitoring
Geographic Region:	Southeast Alaska Region
Data Type:	Stock Status and Trends
Principal Investigator:	Meredith Pochardt, Chilkoot Indian Association Ted Hart, Chilkoot Indian Association Derek Poinsette, Takshanuk Watershed Council Reuben Cash, Skagway Traditional Council

Project Number:	22-612			
	Taal Levi, Oregon State University			
Project Cost:	**2022:** $207,062	**2023:** $210,844	**2024:** $208,358	**2025:** $214,259
Total Cost:	$840,523			

A subsistence lifestyle is the backbone of Alaskan native culture. A key component of that subsistence lifestyle for many coastal tribes has been the eulachon (*Thaleichthys pacificus)*. Eulachon are a small anadromous smelt with a highly nutritious fat content (20%) that represent an important nutritional resource at the base of the food web (Moody, 2008), producing an important oil for medicine, food, and fuel and a high value trade due to its relative scarcity and desirability (Betts 1994).

The majority of eulachon populations have been declining since the 1990s (Hay et al. 2000). In 2010 the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) listed the southern distinct population segment (DPS) in Washington, Oregon, and California as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (NOAA, 2010). While some of the declines have been well documented, most populations of eulachon are either unknown or anecdotal (Betts, 1994). Eulachon abundance throughout southeast Alaska has unexpectedly and precipitously declined in key subsistence fisheries in recent years (Southeast Region Planning Workgroup, 2006).

To complicate eulachon population monitoring, unlike salmonids, they do not necessarily return to their natal river to spawn, but rather select a river within a region (Flannery, et al. 2009). Thus a decline in spawning biomass in any one river system does not necessarily represent a decline in the eulachon population. This lack of knowledge combined with variable spawning biomass and low fidelity to natal rivers complicates management decisions and necessitates population monitoring techniques that can be implemented regionally.

The lack of eulachon population information and the cultural and subsistence value of the species led the Chilkoot Indian Association (CIA) to partner with the Takshanuk Watershed Council (TWC) to begin a eulachon mark-recapture population estimate on the Chilkoot River in 2010 (Figure 1). This population estimate was expanded in 2014 with the addition of environmental DNA (eDNA) data collection through a partnership with Dr. Taal Levi and Oregon State University (OSU). Due to the regional population structure of eulachon this study was expanded in 2016 to the Taiya and Skagway Rivers through a partnership with Skagway Traditional Council (STC). Through funding from the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 2017 this study was further expanded to collect eDNA data at 10 rivers in northern Southeast Alaska as well as the continuation of the Chilkoot mark-recapture population. Development and testing of low-cost long-term monitoring methods, such as environmental DNA (eDNA), is needed to facilitate long-term monitoring of this critical subsistence resource in order to enable detection of changes in population or phenology.

The overall goal of this proposal is to build the capacity of tribal governments to develop a regional tribally-based eulachon population monitoring network to analyze annual spawning biomass and run timing of eulachon. This will be accomplished through addressing the following objectives.

Objective 1: Determine eulachon spawning biomass at a region-wide scale in northern Southeast Alaska utilizing mark-recapture methods and environmental DNA (eDNA)

A. eDNA (Chilkoot, Chilkat, Ferebee, Taiya, Skagway, Katzehin, Lace, Antler, Mendenhall, and Eagle). Investigators: CIA, TWC, OSU, STC
B. Mark-recapture (Chilkoot) Investigators: CIA, TWC

Objective 2: Conduct a comprehensive subsistence harvest survey within the communities of Haines, Klukwan, and Skagway to estimate annual harvest amount and number of households harvesting eulachon.

Objective 3: Determine the spatial and temporal dynamics of eulachon spawning including run timing and environmental covariate

Objective 4: Present research findings to the Southeast Subsistence Advisory Committee, the Southeast Form on the Environment, and the North Pacific Research Board annual Marine Science Symposium.

Objective 5: Develop a regional eulachon working group to 1) establish a long-term monitoring plan, 2) produce a region-wide eulachon status report.

Project Number:	22-613			
Title:	Unuk River Eulachon Population Assessment			
Geographic Region:	Southeast Alaska Region			
Data Type:	Stock Status Trends			
Principal Investigator:	Robert Cross, USDA Forest Service			
Co-investigators:	Jon Hyde**,** USDA Forest Service			
	Keenan Sanderson**,** Ketchikan Indian Community (KIC)			
Project Cost:	**2022:** $65,541	**2023:** $39,376	**2024:** $40,269	**2025:** $40,170
Total Cost:	$185,356			

Issue: Eulachon (*Thaelicthys pacificus)* systems in Southeast Alaska are typically large glacial rivers located on the mainland. The Unuk River has been a primary commercial/subsistence fishing location for Eulachon in Southeast Alaska. The Unuk River, which drains into Burroughs Bay in Behm Canal, is located approximately 55 nautical miles northeast of Ketchikan on the Tongass National Forest. Other drainages in the Ketchikan area where Eulachon have been noted and harvested include: Klahini River, Chickamin River, Wilson & Blossom Rivers, and Carroll Inlet/Creek. Most of these drainages, except for Carroll Inlet/Creek, are located in the Misty Fjords National Monument Wilderness and can only be access by air or boat.

The spring Eulachon run provides food for congregating marine mammals, fish, and birds. Eulachon also provide the first subsistence opportunity of the year for many people. The Unuk River supported subsistence, personal use, and commercial fisheries for many years. The first documented commercial harvest of Unuk River Eulachon occurred in 1940 and continued sporadically until 2001 when the State managed commercial fishery was shut down. The Federal subsistence fishery continued until 2005. Since 2005, the fishery has been closed by both State and Federal managers due to poor Eulachon returns.

The majority of the harvest in District 1 has occurred in the lower stretches of the Unuk River with very little documentation of harvest from the other listed locations. Although prior to 2001, historical Eulachon harvest had taken place under commercial regulations, the subsistence fishery under Federal management

is just as important in the eyes of the subsistence user as provisions allow for customary trade of the resource. The primary purpose of this harvest has been to distribute Eulachon to the communities of Saxman, Metlakatla, Ketchikan and other outlying areas. Due to the great distance of the Unuk River from these communities, local users depended on the commercial harvesters for their yearly Eulachon. The ADFG Division of Subsistence documented in 1987 that 27% of residents in the rural community of Metlakatla utilize Eulachon.

Objectives:

1. Document run timing and spawning locations, and estimate biomass of Eulachon in the Unuk River, Chickamin, Klahini, Wilson, Blossom Rivers and in Carroll Inlet/Carroll Creek;
2. Estimate age-sex-length (ASL) distribution of the Eulachon escapement with a coefficient of variation less than 10%;
3. Document harvest methods, harvest levels, and run timing by on-site observations;
4. Expand the capacity of KIC to conduct future Eulachon monitoring.

Methods:

Objective 1: The project will deploy two satellite network cameras in the project area prior to the Eulachon run with the goal of focusing ground crew and aerial survey efforts. The cameras will be monitored remotely from the Ketchikan Ranger District office to identify Eulechon predator abundance. Crew transport flights will also be used for aerial surveys whenever possible. Aerial surveys will be recorded using duplicate downward facing mounted video cameras (GoPro®) for review and analysis. A ground crew will live on site and survey all six areas one or more times a day. Surveys will consist of at least two crew members walking, boating, or snorkeling the river to estimate Eulachon biomass.

Objective 2: Age, sex, and length will be obtained from sampled Eulachon using standard methods. Age will be determined from otoliths at the ADF&G Mark, Tag, and Aging Laboratory and sex will be determined from established morphological characteristics. Fish lengths will be measured from the tip-of-the-snout to the fork-of-the-tail to the nearest mm and weight will be measured to the nearest 0.01g. Weight will vary with spawning condition and will pooled by condition and sex.

Objective 3: Harvest and effort will be sampled during open Eulachon seasons on the Unuk River. The ground crew will document harvest location, total harvest, and catch per unit effort, and any harvester observations. Total harvest will be recorded on all Federal subsistence Eulachon harvest permits and returned post-season.

Objective 4: The USFS will provide pre-season training during the four-year funding cycle. The KIC surveyor training will focus on field safety, knowledge and comprehension of the survey and sampling techniques, standardized estimates of school size and density, development of logistical and organizational skills for survey implementation and data management in the field.

Partnership and Capacity Building: This project proposal is the result of a partnership between the USFS and KIC and consultations with Metlakatla Indian Community and Organized Village of Saxman. The goal of developing training, survey protocols, and partnerships will be to increase the capacity of all agencies and organizations involved in future Unuk River Eulachon monitoring. This project aims to increase KIC's capacity to perform biological monitoring through equipment and institutional knowledge gained throughout the project timeline.

Project Number:	22-650			
Title:	Providing updated community harvest information and documenting subsistence harvest patterns in three northern Southeast Alaska communities.			
Geographic Region:	Southeast Alaska Region			
Data Type:	Harvest Monitoring/Traditional Ecological Knowledge			
Principal Investigator:	Lauren Sill, ADF&G Division of Subsistence, Douglas			
Co-investigators:	None			
Project Cost:	**2022:** $9,610	**2023:** $195,334	**2024:** $156,603	**2025:** $16,414
Total Cost:	$377,961			

Issue Addressed: The project proposes to update subsistence harvest and use information for the communities of Pelican, Gustavus, and Tenakee Springs in direct fulfillment of the priority information need articulated for the Southeast Region in the OSM document, which was to "Update community household fish harvest surveys." All three communities are fishing communities with historically high participation and dependence on commercial fisheries and subsistence resources. The most recent comprehensive noncommercial harvest and use information available for these three communities dates to 1987. Nearly all the residents of these three communities use salmon or nonsalmon fish.

ADF&G requires mandatory harvest reporting for most species that require a permit or harvest tickets, such as salmon or large game. Additionally, ADF&G conducts biannual voluntary halibut harvest surveys and occasional marine mammal harvest surveys. The methods used to collect these permit data provide only harvest numbers; estimates are not always accurate, and they decouple harvest from the broader context in which the resources are harvested. For example, permits do not document information about household demographics, sharing practices, or qualitative assessments about the harvests, all of which provide important explanatory context. Moreover, permits cover only a small subset of the variety of wild resources that are used by communities. The full context for subsistence harvests is necessary to adequately evaluate changes in the harvest of any particular species.

Over the 30 years since the last comprehensive harvest survey, these communities have experienced significant demographic, economic, and regulatory changes which have likely affected their subsistence harvest and use patterns. Pelican has lost more than half of its population while Tenakee Springs and Gustavus have grown, by one-third and 200%, respectively. Economic opportunities in the communities have shifted. Local participation in the timber industry and in commercial fisheries has declined while tourism (especially in Glacier Bay National Park, established in 1980) has grown. Additionally, the federal government established a federal subsistence halibut fishery in Alaska in 2003. To date, there has been no investigation into how this new regulation has modified household use of salmon or other kinds of fish, but recent surveys in other Southeast Alaska communities suggest that halibut harvests may have replaced some salmon harvests. A lack of information on the use of subsistence resources in the proposed study communities creates obstacles for communities, managers, and regulatory boards to advocate for or make informed decisions that are in the best interests of the communities and that continue to provide a subsistence priority.

Objectives: The objectives of this project are to: 1) Produce reliable estimates of the harvests and uses of wild resources for study year 2023 by residents of Gustavus, Tenakee Springs, and Pelican; 2) Record the geographic extent of search and harvest areas for wild resources by residents of Gustavus, Tenakee Springs, and Pelican during the study year; and 3) Document observations of subsistence harvesting practices, harvest trends, and areas used for subsistence activities over time.

Methods: At the outset of the project, the PI will hold scoping meetings in each of the proposed study communities to discuss the project's goals, objectives, methods, and how the collected data can be used.

Researchers will conduct field work employing two integrated social science data gathering methods: household harvest surveys and key respondent interviews.

Researchers will use voluntary household harvest surveys with a mapping component to address objectives 1 and 2. The Division of Subsistence has used harvest surveys for over 40 years to collect information about the use and harvest of resources by Alaska residents that has been the foundation of accurate subsistence harvest data useful to the Federal Subsistence Board and the Alaska Board of Fisheries. Based on standard Division of Subsistence sampling strategies, researchers will attempt a census of Tenakee Springs (72 households) and Pelican (41 households) and a 40% sample of the 212 households in Gustavus. Project staff will hire local research assistants (LRAs) and train them in survey administration; ADF&G staff and LRAs will conduct the surveys in teams. The PI, working with Division of Subsistence Information Management staff, will design the household survey to collect information about a household's participation in subsistence activities, the harvest and use of wild resources, demographics and economic information, as well as questions about the food security of the households. During the household surveys, researchers will document the geographic extent of the search and harvest activities for the study year for each resource category. Researchers will record the points, lines and polygons reported by the respondent along with related information such as the species sought, the season of harvest, methods of access to the site, and gear used.

Through recommendations of the local government, LRAs, and others in the community, the PI will attempt to interview knowledgeable residents from each study community. Respondents will be a mix of ages and genders, will have current or past experience with subsistence activities, and ideally will be long-time residents of the area. The PI will develop a list of topics and questions to prompt discussion following the community scoping meeting and consultation with the ADF&G area biologist and local city councils. General topics likely to be discussed include local traditional knowledge (LTK) concerning salmon runs, populations, habitat, and harvest. Interviewers will also use maps to encourage discussion and to record temporal changes in harvest locations since the previous comprehensive survey. Interviewers will attempt 2–10 interviews in each community, depending on population size.

When draft project results are available, researchers will return to the communities to hold a review session with residents to present the preliminary data, address any concerns residents have with the data, and resolve any discrepancies noted. The data presented will include tables and figures created from the household survey analysis, maps of harvest areas for different resource categories for the study year, and composite maps of harvest areas resulting from the key respondent interviews.

Partnerships and Capacity Building: Individuals, communities, and local and regional councils can use information collected through this project to advocate for subsistence practices before the Federal Subsistence Board, Alaska Board of Fisheries or Board of Game. During the planning and implementation phase of the project, researchers will stay in contact with local government councils, asking for assistance with survey development, interview protocols, and logistics. During the project, if researchers become aware of issues in any of the communities that could be addressed through the state or federal regulatory processes, researchers can assist the local tribal council, regional association, Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils and ADF&G Fish and Game Advisory Committees or residents in navigating that process. In addition, during the scoping and review meetings, examples of subsistence harvest data being used by communities to improve regulations will be shared. The regulatory process can be a confusing and difficult one to navigate; partnerships developed through intensive survey efforts in communities have proven to be beneficial to all parties involved, both during the survey but also years after.

Local research assistants (LRAs) will be hired in each community—3 in Pelican, 4 in Tenakee Springs, and 5 in Gustavus. Researchers will train the LRAs in survey administration and mapping, as well as more broadly in the role of ADF&G and the US Forest Service in managing the land and natural resources used

by community residents. The PI will identify key respondents in consultation with the local government and residents.

Project Number:	22-651
Title:	Estimating inseason harvests of the Klawock River subsistence salmon fishery
Geographic Region:	Southeast Alaska Region
Data Type:	Harvest Monitoring/Traditional Ecological Knowledge
Principal Investigator:	Lauren Sill, ADF&G Division of Subsistence
Co-investigators:	Mary Edenshaw, Klawock Heenya Corporation
Project Cost:	**2022:** $12,256 **2023:** $46,142 **2024:** $33,955 **2025:** $57,675 **2026:** $27,639
Total Cost:	$177,667

Issue Addressed: This project responds to the Priority Information Need of "Reliable estimates of subsistence Sockeye Salmon harvest in the Klawock River drainage." The Klawock Lake stakeholder group recommended a project to estimate inseason subsistence harvests as one of its priorities in its action plan to promote healthy and sustainable sockeye salmon populations in Klawock Lake.

Salmon are one of the most widely used subsistence species on Prince of Wales Island and the Klawock River is a major source of subsistence sockeye salmon. The Klawock River runs through the Tongass National Forest and supports both a state and federal subsistence salmon fishery. The Klawock River sockeye salmon subsistence fishery has significant participation by subsistence users, mostly from the communities of Klawock and Craig, but also from throughout Southeast Alaska. However, the sockeye salmon run in the Klawock River has declined over the past few decades and is significantly smaller than it was historically; the 2013 run had the lowest documented escapement in the last two decades. Based on permit returns, recent subsistence harvests have also declined. Unfortunately, the reasons for the decline are not well understood but could be due to a combination of anthropomorphic and natural causes, such as human population growth of nearby communities and associated infrastructure, logging, and road construction around the lake, as well as hatcheries, all of which have likely made the system particularly vulnerable.

Managers glean information about stock health and abundance through harvest data. Fishing permits are required for both the state and federal fisheries. Fishers must document amounts and locations of fish harvested. Harvest reporting is mandatory; however, the current system has several drawbacks. First, reported harvests on permits are likely low. Concern that the subsistence permit program may underestimate harvests has long been acknowledged, and comparisons of permit data to other sources of harvest data, such as household harvest survey programs, have shown sometimes substantial discrepancies. ADF&G conducted inseason monitoring of the Klawock River fishery such as is being proposed here from 2001 through 2008. During these studies, researchers found that harvests reported on subsistence permits averaged 71% (ranging from 47% to 80%) of the harvest estimated from the inseason monitoring program. Also, harvest amounts from permits are not available to managers until the year following a fishing season; as a result, managers cannot monitor sustainable harvests in season and risk overharvests which may threaten the health of the stock.

Objectives: The goal of this project is to provide improved and timely subsistence salmon harvest estimates for the Klawock Lake system and to increase participation in the subsistence salmon permit program. The objectives in pursuit of this goal are to 1) Estimate the subsistence harvest of sockeye and other salmon in the subsistence fishery in Klawock Inlet and the Klawock River estuary in the summers of 2022, 2023, and 2024; 2) Conduct a comparison of permit returns with inseason harvest estimates for each year of the study and compare those results with comparisons made during the previous inseason monitoring project from 2001-2008; and 3) Administer a user survey to measure fishers' experience and perspective on the new on-line system of obtaining subsistence salmon permits and reporting harvest data.

Methods: This project will be guided by the research principles adopted by the Alaska Federation of Natives in its Guidelines for Research and by the National Science Foundation, Office of Polar Programs in its Principles for the Conduct of Research in the Arctic, as well as the Alaska confidentiality statute (AS 16.05.815). These principles stress community approval of research designs, informed consent, anonymity of study participants, community review of draft study findings, and the provision of study findings to each study community upon completion of the research.

To meet the goals of the project, researchers will employ inseason creel surveys during the Klawock River subsistence salmon fishery for three consecutive years and a one-time mail-out survey. Researchers will maintain communication with subsistence fishers and the community more broadly throughout the duration of the project through formal meetings and through informal channels.

Objective 1: Researchers will employ voluntary on-site creel surveys of all Klawock River fishers, following the methods and analysis used successfully to estimate subsistence harvests in the Klawock sockeye salmon fishery from 2001-2008. Researchers will hire and train two local residents to conduct the surveys with all fishing parties participating in the subsistence fishery. Survey participation will be voluntary. No identifying information will be recorded during the survey. Researchers will share summarized weekly data with fisheries managers and seasonal summaries with the community.

Objective 2: ADF&G researchers will compare harvest estimates from the creel surveys with estimates from returned permits. Independent sample t-tests will be performed to evaluate whether these two approaches resulted in a statistically significant estimate. The data will also be compared at the household level with Gini coefficients and box and whisker plots to illustrate similarities or differences in the two populations. Researchers will evaluate the results of the permit comparison to the results of the permit comparison done as part of the prior ADF&G inseason harvest monitoring project.

Objective 3: PI Sill will develop a brief survey instrument to address Objective 3. The survey will ask about the respondent's permit status, methods of obtaining a permit, use of the permit, evaluation of the ease of the current permit system, and other comments or concerns about the system. During the first year of the project, ADF&G will mail the survey to all Klawock households (approximately 297 households) and Craig households who have fished the Klawock River in the past 4 years (approximately 40 households), along with an explanatory letter. Klawock Heenya Corporation will post announcements about the survey on the community Facebook page and the survey technicians will have copies of the survey to distribute to active fishers. There will also be an option to fill out the survey online.

Partnerships and Capacity Building: Multiple partnerships and the active involvement of community members will strengthen the proposed research. The Division of Subsistence will partner with Klawock Heenya Corporation and Cathy Needham. These partnerships will greatly enhance the research capacity of the project by adding a deeper understanding of Klawock River issues, seeking to integrate tribal members into the research, and providing logistical support. Hiring and training local residents as the inseason surveyors will increase the success of the project as well as help maintain community ownership of the project, develop local capacity, and provide local economic benefits. When all project field work is complete, a review meeting of the project results and a discussion of permit comparisons will occur with fishers.

Local and regional councils can use the information collected through this project to advocate for subsistence practices before the Alaska state Board of Fisheries or Board of Game, or the Federal Subsistence Board. During the planning and implementation phase of the project, researchers will stay in contact with the local councils, and work cooperatively with project partners. During the project, if researchers become aware of issues that could be addressed through the state or federal regulatory processes, researchers can assist the local council, regional association, Advisory Committees, or residents in navigating that process. In addition, during the scoping and review meetings, examples of subsistence harvest data being used by communities to improve regulations will be shared. The regulatory process can be a confusing and difficult one to navigate; partnerships developed through intensive survey efforts in communities have proven to be beneficial to all parties involved, both during the survey but also years after.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Background

ANILCA established the Annual Reports as the way to bring regional subsistence uses and needs to the Secretaries' attention. The Secretaries delegated this responsibility to the Board. Section 805(c) deference includes matters brought forward in the Annual Report.

The Annual Report provides the Councils an opportunity to address the directors of each of the four Department of Interior agencies and the Department of Agriculture Forest Service in their capacity as members of the Federal Subsistence Board. The Board is required to discuss and reply to each issue in every Annual Report and to take action when within the Board's authority. In many cases, if the issue is outside of the Board's authority, the Board will provide information to the Council on how to contact personnel at the correct agency. As agency directors, the Board members have authority to implement most of the actions which would effect the changes recommended by the Councils, even those not covered in Section 805(c). The Councils are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity.

Report Content

Both Title VIII Section 805 and 50 CFR §100.11 (Subpart B of the regulations) describe what may be contained in an Annual Report from the councils to the Board. This description includes issues that are not generally addressed by the normal regulatory process:

- an identification of current and anticipated subsistence uses of fish and wildlife populations within the region;
- an evaluation of current and anticipated subsistence needs for fish and wildlife populations from the public lands within the region;
- a recommended strategy for the management of fish and wildlife populations within the region to accommodate such subsistence uses and needs related to the public lands; and
- recommendations concerning policies, standards, guidelines, and regulations to implement the strategy.

Please avoid filler or fluff language that does not specifically raise an issue of concern or information to the Board.

Report Clarity

In order for the Board to adequately respond to each Council's annual report, it is important for the annual report itself to state issues clearly.

- If addressing an existing Board policy, Councils should please state whether there is something unclear about the policy, if there is uncertainty about the reason for the policy, or if the Council needs information on how the policy is applied.
- Council members should discuss in detail at Council meetings the issues for the annual report and assist the Council Coordinator in understanding and stating the issues clearly.

- Council Coordinators and OSM staff should assist the Council members during the meeting in ensuring that the issue is stated clearly.

Thus, if the Councils can be clear about their issues of concern and ensure that the Council Coordinator is relaying them sufficiently, then the Board and OSM staff will endeavor to provide as concise and responsive of a reply as is possible.

Report Format

While no particular format is necessary for the Annual Reports, the report must clearly state the following for each item the Council wants the Board to address:

1. Numbering of the issues,
2. A description of each issue,
3. Whether the Council seeks Board action on the matter and, if so, what action the Council recommends, and
4. As much evidence or explanation as necessary to support the Council's request or statements relating to the item of interest.

Federal Subsistence Board
1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Land Management
National Park Service
Bureau of Indian Affairs

Forest Service

AUGUST 04 2021

OSM 21035.KW

Donald Hernandez, Chair
Southeast Alaska Subsistence
Regional Advisory Council
c/o Office of Subsistence Management
1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199

Dear Chairman Hernandez:

This letter responds to the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council's (Council) fiscal year 2020 Annual Report. The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture have delegated to the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) the responsibility to respond to these reports. The Board appreciates your effort in developing the Annual Report. Annual Reports allow the Board to become aware of the issues outside of the regulatory process that affect subsistence users in your region. We value this opportunity to review the issues concerning your region.

1. Information Sharing

a. Public participation provided for in ANILCA

The Council has been concerned with certain public processes over the last few years. Specifically, during the Alaska Roadless Rulemaking (AKRR), the Council has spent a substantial amount of time advocating for the requirements set forth in the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) process and ANILCA and requesting that they be followed. The Council wrote several letters to the USDA Forest Service (Forest Service) providing public comment on various stages of AKRR (with copies sent to Board members) and would like to take this opportunity to remind the Board of its attempts to ensure opportunities for public participation during this rulemaking process. The Council addressed these concerns:

- *Timing of public comment periods*
- *The conduct of subsistence (810) hearings*
- *The obstacles during the rulemaking process that prevent optimum public*

participation

- *Participation by local Tribes offering expertise and knowledge of impacts within their traditional territories being disregarded*

The Council appreciates that the Board helped convey these concerns to the Secretary of Agriculture. In addition to letters, three Council members also requested a hearing on this matter before the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget (OMB). At this hearing they provided testimony and presented copies of the Council's public comment letters as supporting materials. A copy of that testimony to OMB is attached for the Board's reference. The Council is dedicated to supporting subsistence users in Southeast by expressing concerns when appropriate and helping the public voice be heard.

b. Restrictions on Federally Qualified Subsistence Users

The Council is concerned about Federal fishing proposals that suggest more restrictions than those that exist under State regulations. The Council appreciates this Board follows the requirements in ANILCA that provide a preference for harvest opportunity to the Federally qualified subsistence user and that the Board acknowledges that subsistence regulations cannot be more restrictive than other regulated uses of the resource.
The Council continues to support the Board in its decisions on the taking of fish and wildlife and is confident that the Board will continue to preserve the Federally qualified subsistence user's priority and protect those users in the future from being the sole group burdened with sacrificing any harvest to conserve fish or wildlife species.

c. Lack of Current Data

The Council must receive relevant and current information to make appropriate recommendations to the Board. Without current data, the Council is handicapped in making educated decisions. The Council is concerned that some recent analyses feature years-old data and it would like reassurance that the most up-to-date research is being explored for these analyses. The Council requests that all agencies involved in preparing analyses for proposals ensure that the latest scientific data and studies available are being used.

d. Individual National Park Service (NPS) Customary and Traditional Use Process

The Council appreciated that the Board deferred its action on the proposed delegation of authority to NPS in determining Individual Customary and Traditional (C&T) uses to allow the Regional Advisory Council the opportunity to provide input on this matter. The Council received the information on this proposed process at its fall 2020 meeting.

The Council felt that the existing process for determining Individual C&T use is working and does not need to be changed. The area available for individual C&T permits in the Southeast is limited; however, the Council is concerned that the initial proposed changes may enable the NPS to take land use out of the jurisdiction of the Board. Under the existing process, the Regional Advisory Councils and the Board play a role for the approval of C&T use in national parks. If the delegation of authority is granted to the NPS Alaska Regional Director, the Council is concerned that this would narrow authority and reduce advisory capacity. The Council does not wish to see access to subsistence areas denied and subsistence activities further limited or eliminated in national park areas for Federally qualified subsistence users.

The Council is pleased to learn that the Board considered the comments received from the Regional Advisory Councils and took action to retain final decision making authority on these determinations and to include a formal recommendation from both the affected Regional Advisory Councils and the affected Subsistence Resource Commissions in this process.

Response:

a. Members of the Board uniformly appreciate and thank Council members for their tremendous work to support subsistence users throughout Southeast Alaska. The Board believes the Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils have contributed significantly towards protection of the cultural and traditional uses of subsistence resources for Federally qualified subsistence users since ANILCA was implemented in 1980. The Council's work on the Alaska Roadless Rule Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was especially thorough, insightful, and well researched. We recognize the importance and significance of the efforts by all Councils and their members and congratulate you with heartfelt sincerity.

b. Thank you for your confidence in the Board and for supporting our decisions. We do the best we can to protect and conserve the fish and wildlife resources in Alaska and to support the ANILCA-mandated subsistence priority for Federally qualified subsistence users who depend on these resources. The Board is committed to continuing to follow ANILCA and to prioritize the needs of Federally qualified subsistence users.

c. The Board agrees that up-to-date research, and inventory and monitoring information are essential to managing fish and wildlife resources in Alaska. The Board encourages its members to direct their agencies' staff to conduct essential studies, surveys and monitoring activities, partner whenever and wherever possible, and for staff to use the most up to date information

when analyzing proposals that affect subsistence uses and Federally qualified subsistence users.

d. The Board appreciates the Council's comments regarding the individual customary and traditional use determination (individual C&T) process and the complexity of this issue. The goal in proposing modifications to the policy on individual C&T was to provide transparency, expediency, and continuity in making determinations for those with existing patterns of use.

The Board adopted a revised version of the proposed individual C&T process at its January 2021 meeting, after carefully considering feedback that was offered by several Councils and incorporating the recommended modifications. The revised process includes two critical recommendations made by the Councils and Subsistence Resource Commissions (SRC). First, as your Council supported, there is no delegation of authority to the National Park Service (NPS) to make individual C&T determinations. The Board will retain the final decision-making authority. Second, the process now includes a formal recommendation from both the affected Councils and the affected SRC. We are happy to hear your Council is in support of this decision. Perhaps the biggest change is the process is no longer tied to the lengthy biennial regulatory proposal cycle. Instead, the application window is open continuously and once the Councils and SRC have weighed in, the Board will act on the request at its next public meeting. We do not believe there will be more requests resulting from these changes, only that those who do apply will have their requests addressed in a more timely fashion and be able to navigate the intricacies of the application process more easily.

Enclosed are two documents that we hope will better inform your Council on the individual C&T process, and how it has been modified. The first is a one-page overview that compares the former and the newly modified process. The second is the longer Standard Operating Procedure that will be used in making all subsequent individual C&T determinations, until such time that the policy is further modified. Also included in the second document are the procedures that NPS will use in responding to requests for 13.440 subsistence eligibility permits. That process is fully within the purview of NPS, not the Board, though NPS thought that it would be useful to simultaneously clarify and streamline it as well. Though tangentially related, 13.440 permits are not germane to this reply. We invite you to reach out to NPS staff if you have clarifying questions.

In conclusion, the Board believes that it has taken strides to improve the individual C&T process to be transparent, responsive, and consistent. We have incorporated the valuable recommendations and insights of the Councils and SRCs. We hope that the Councils, yours included, will continue to provide recommendations to further improve the policy over time.

2. <u>Council supports the community of Hoonah's ability to access Glacier Bay</u>

During the Council's discussion on the proposed delegation of authority to NPS (Individual C&T uses) issue, additional discussion took place on the concerns for land management in Glacier Bay. Access to the Glacier Bay National Park (NP) resources for subsistence purposes has been prevented. The local residents are denied the ability to individually harvest gull eggs or gumboots in Glacier Bay NP. In addition, there are no longer any goat or seal subsistence harvests allowed. Many cannot partake in these activities because they cannot produce the required documents showing their historical use of the land, even though many have done so for their entire lives. These activities are a cultural and traditional use of the resources and the Council would like to explore options available to provide access to subsistence users so that they may continue these practices. The Council would like to know what mechanisms are in place or that could be initiated to provide a subsistence opportunity to harvest resources in Glacier Bay NP.

Additionally, some subsistence gathering opportunities are prevented by the current regulations that restrict firearms in the NP. Firearms are necessary for subsistence users to harvest and gather in bear-dense areas. Subsistence users no longer utilize some of the most productive areas in Glacier Bay because they are prohibited from carrying firearms for their safety and protection.

The Council supports the community of Hoonah's ability to access Glacier Bay NP to harvest subsistence resources. Denying the Huna Tlingit people the ability to practice customary and traditional activities in their traditional territory diminishes or removes their identity. The Council would like to assist the Hoonah community in retaining their cultural identity and asks the Board to identify options for the Council to pursue or share with the Hoonah community. The Council would also like a comprehensive presentation on the permitted subsistence activities in Glacier Bay NP at a future meeting.

Response:

The Board appreciates the opportunity to respond to the concerns expressed by the Council about the management of resources in Glacier Bay National Park, the traditional Homeland of the Huna Tlingit.

We recognize that Glacier Bay National Park is encompassed by the traditional territory of the clans now represented by the Hoonah Indian Association (HIA, a Federally recognized tribe) and the area's rich abundance supported the Huna Tlingit for generations. Although certain laws and

regulations do not allow for all traditional harvest activities to occur, the NPS and HIA are committed to working collaboratively to explore options that support a range of traditional uses.

Glacier Bay National Monument was established in 1925 under the Antiquities Act and later expanded in 1980 under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). ANILCA's Title VIII provisions for subsistence do not apply to those parks, or portions of parks, established prior to the Act's passage. Thus, subsistence is not authorized in Glacier Bay National Park, although it is allowed in the Preserve, Dry Bay. The NPS does not have the prerogative of allowing subsistence activities in pre-ANILCA parks, including Glacier Bay; an Act of Congress would be required to alter ANILCA regulations. Of note, the Hoonah Indian Association submitted written opposition to congressional efforts in 1999 and 2000 aimed at authorizing subsistence in Glacier Bay, expressing concerns that it would diminish the Tribe's exclusive rights to traditional resources in Homeland. To our knowledge, the Hoonah Indian Association has not altered their position regarding subsistence.

Given that subsistence is not authorized in Glacier Bay, the HIA has worked collaboratively with the NPS to identify and address a wide range of traditional needs using other mechanisms. Beginning in 1997, following a meeting with Tribal elders, NPS and HIA agreed to prioritize critical traditional resource harvest needs and seek creative solutions where feasible.

For example, elders prioritized the harvest of glaucous-winged gull eggs as a critical traditional food source. The Tribe and NPS partnered to collect biological and ethnographic information which informed planning efforts. Tribal members now harvest gull eggs in the park through a Tribal harvest plan following legislation (Public Law 113-142, The Huna Tlingit Traditional Gull Egg Use Act) and required NEPA analysis. Similarly, NPS conducted an ethnographic study of traditional seal harvest in the park to document the practice and inform any future discussions about potential seal harvest.

Berry picking[1], an important cultural tradition for Huna Tlingit, occurs throughout the park during the summer months, often jointly sponsored through NPS and HIA Journey to Homeland trips. Families also harvest berries and other resources on their own. Tribal members continue to harvest intertidal species (primarily chiton), seaweed, and some species of salmon under State of

1 36 CFR § 13.35 Preservation of natural features.
(c) Gathering or collecting, by hand and for personal use only, of the following renewable resources is permitted -
(1) Natural plant food items, including fruits, berries and mushrooms, but not including threatened or endangered species;
(2) Driftwood and uninhabited seashells;
(3) Such plant materials and minerals as are essential to the conduct of traditional ceremonies by Native Americans; and
(4) Dead wood on the ground for use as fuel for campfires within the park area.

Alaska sport fishing regulations. Tribal members also harvest salmon and halibut under personal use fishery permits issued by the State of Alaska. To facilitate these activities, the NPS issues local vessel entry permits to Hoonah residents. NPS and HIA are also currently pursuing cultural fisheries options for various traditional fishing locations including Chookanhéeni (Berg Bay), where partners are planning a culture camp. Importantly, the NPS and HIA are also consulting on vegetation gathering needs, now permitted under the 2016 authorized rule (Gathering of Certain Plants or Plant Parts by Federally Recognized Indian Tribes for Traditional Purposes).

NPS does not require that Tribal members visiting Homeland or participating in traditional activities within the Park provide documentation of historical use. The only instance where historical documentation was required was for those individuals applying for lifetime access permits for commercial fishing within Park waters.

Since 2010, Individuals have been authorized to possess firearms in NPS areas in accordance with applicable State and Federal law although the laws regarding discharge of firearms remain unchanged. The NPS understands that many Tlingit prefer to carry firearms for protection against bears while harvesting; they are free to do so. Should a firearm be discharged in the Park, the incident would be investigated, but if the discharge was associated with protecting life, no legal action would be taken. There is no exemption for protection of property. Importantly, studies by the NPS and others have shown that bear spray is often more effective in preventing bear attacks than firearms. All Glacier Bay field employees utilize bear spray or tasers rather than firearms and many younger Hoonah residents appear to be comfortable doing the same. The NPS understands that the enduring connection between the Huna Tlingit and their Homeland in Glacier Bay is vital not only to the cultural identity of the Huna Tlingit, but also to the resources and values of the Park. The NPS incorporates Homeland concepts in all its planning efforts including the recently completed Frontcountry Management Plan and the pending Backcountry Management Plan. The NPS must manage the Park in accordance with ANILCA, and an array of other Federal laws, regulations, and policy, but remains committed to partnering with the Tribal government and other Tribal entities to develop creative approaches which provide meaningful opportunities for Homeland connections. The NPS would be pleased to present more detailed information about the traditional activities that occur in the Park and would be happy to answer any questions the Council might have.

3. <u>Council Vacancies</u>

The Council remains extremely disappointed that there are vacant seats on the Council in recent years. These vacancies have detracted from the Council's ability to perform its work effectively.

During the 2020 appointment cycle, the Council received appointments approximately one week

before its winter 2021 meeting (these appointments should have been made prior to the expiration of terms on December 2, 2020). By the time appointments were received a substantial amount of preparatory work and effort had already gone into mitigating the difficulties created by the lack of Council appointments. An Acting Chair needed to be acclimated to leading a meeting with complex and sensitive issues. A lot of strategizing needed to be done to ensure that a group of five Council members could do the work of a 13-member Council.

The Council is now almost fully seated (12 of 13 seats filled); however, based on the last few years' appointment process experiences, the Council is concerned that this vacancy trend could continue. The Council also continues to be concerned with the June 14, 2019 Executive Order Evaluating and Improving the Utility of Federal Advisory Committees, and its impacts on the Federal Subsistence Management Program (Program) and Regional Advisory Councils. For these reasons, the Council reiterates its concern for the loss of crucial representation in past years across the Southeast Alaska Region as noted in its FY 2019 Annual Report. The lack of appropriate diversity on the Council created significant challenges for the Council members who were asked to make decisions affecting areas and groups in the absence of a local member who can best represent the citizenry of their community.

All vacant seats must be filled, every year, for the Council to function properly and efficiently. Applicants to Regional Advisory Councils are screened and vetted with specific criteria to ensure that well-informed residents of the regions are appointed. Individuals selected have significant knowledge of ANILCA, regional experiences with a wide range of subsistence resources, and share their traditional ecological knowledge about fish and wildlife resources. Experienced members have institutional knowledge of subsistence uses in their local area, which is vital to fully comprehend issues that arise. The lack of Council member appointments and the resulting loss of useful and historical knowledge have detrimentally affected the Program and vacant seats on any Regional Advisory Council are contrary to the Program's objectives.

In the Board's FY 2019 Annual Report reply regarding Council vacancies subject, the Board encouraged the Council to "expand its outreach effort in its communities and throughout the Region to attract a wider pool of applicants, if the Council wishes to see all seats filled." The Council does not believe that outreach is the issue. Twelve applications were received to fill 7 vacancies for the December 2019 appointments, yet four seats remained unfilled. Ten applications were received to fill 8 vacant seats for the December 2020 appointments, yet no appointments were made for months, leaving only four members and an Acting Chair to cover the Council's business (including the January 2021 Board regulatory meeting).

The Council respectfully makes a second request that the Board send a letter to the newly appointed Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture advising them of the substantial impacts these

Council membership reductions have had on the work of the Councils; that these Councils are provided for under ANILCA; and that a lack of representation on the Councils is detrimental to the intent of ANILCA.

Lastly, the Council requests a legal analysis of the failure to appoint Council members to the Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils for the last three years and whether provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act or ANILCA have been violated. The Council wants to be prepared. It appreciates the recent appointments to its Council; however, the Council does not want to be complacent and assume that this issue will not be suffered for yet another appointment cycle.

Response:

The Board fully understands the Council's concerns regarding the need to have diverse and wide regional representation on the Council, and to have all of the vacant seats filled in as timely a manner as possible. The Board wants to point out to the Council that the current administration already is aware of the significance and magnitude of the appointment issues. When in 2021 the lack of appointments was brought to this administration's attention, it acted promptly to resolve the issue by appointing additional members to the Councils out-of-cycle. The Board believes that since the issue was resolved so expeditiously it is not necessary at this point to write a letter to the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture on the Councils' appointments concerns.

Additionally, the Board wants to alleviate the Council's concerns regarding Executive Order #13875 on *Evaluating and Improving the Utility of Federal Advisory Committees*, dated June 14, 2019. On January 20, 2021, President Biden revoked Executive Order #13875 by issuing new Executive Order #13992. The following is a link to the new Executive Order #13992: https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/01/25/2021-01767/revocation-of-certain-executive-orders-concerning-federal-regulation. Specifically, Executive Order #13992 states, "It is the policy of my Administration to use available tools to confront the urgent challenges facing the Nation, including the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, economic recovery, racial justice, and climate change. To tackle these challenges effectively, executive departments and agencies (agencies) must be equipped with the flexibility to use robust regulatory action to address national priorities. This order revokes harmful policies and directives that threaten to frustrate the Federal Government's ability to confront these problems, and empowers agencies to use appropriate regulatory tools to achieve these goals."

The Board continues to encourage the Council to assist the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) with outreach efforts in its communities and throughout the Region to attract a wider pool of applicants for the future appointment cycles. Having a wider pool of applicants allows

the Board to choose the most qualified individuals for appointment recommendations and to ensure that most or all seats are filled. However, it is important to remind the Council that the Board does not have final authority over which recommended applicants are appointed to the Councils. After the Board submits its annual appointment recommendations, the final appointment authority rests with the Secretary of the Interior.

The Board wants to assure the Council that OSM will continue working with the Department of the Interior to ensure that the 2021 cycle appointments stay on schedule and that the work is done in the most efficient manner possible. The Board has a high level of confidence that in the future the Council's appointments will be made in a timely manner.

4. Staff Support for Regional Advisory Council Meetings

This Council has expressed its concern regarding the limited participation by staff in its annual report to the Board for the last two years. The Council has routinely experienced negative impacts on its ability to effectively conduct its business because of the absence of in-person participation by staff (pre-COVID-19). The Council would like a commitment to have its previous level of staff support restored. Due to the complexity of land management in Southeast, especially given the amount of Forest Service projects that have the propensity to substantially impact subsistence resources, it is imperative that the biologists situated in these geographic areas of interest, be permitted to attend meetings and fully engage with Council members.

The Council understands the need for virtual meetings at present, due to COVID-19, but would like to express its frustration for the lack of in-person support these past few years. Some area biologists have not been able to participate or even listen to the Council meetings. The Council has customarily relied on local biologists in the past for their insight and knowledge of fish and wildlife species and land uses. During the meetings and through individual conversations with these biologists, Council members receive important, detailed information. The Council finds this expert information invaluable when recommending effective solutions to problems facing subsistence users. The strength of the program's support is how the staff understand the people, places, and animals of their local areas and share that knowledge with the Council.

*This Council tackles a large volume of information at each meeting and the Council was most effective when it received **in-person** assistance. When all staff are in the room, they can quickly delegate crucial tasks to one another while the Council discusses issues. For instance, it is key to have someone help navigate regulations while another staff member presents information to the Council and another staff member is capturing notes and follow-up requests, and maybe yet another is looking at State regulations for comparison purposes. This coordination of real-time support is invaluable to the Council and this level of service is very important to efficiently*

conduct business. Therefore, when conditions allow, the Council respectfully asks that the quantity of in-person staff support at its meetings be restored to at or near a level experienced prior to 2017 to ensure that the Council timely meets its obligations to provide well-informed recommendations.

Response:

The Board recognizes that in-person meetings are preferred by and are more effective for everyone involved in the management of subsistence resources and for providing a priority to Federally qualified subsistence users to be able to continue to practice a subsistence way of life. We will encourage leadership and field staff alike to participate in the Council meetings as much as possible. Specifically, in reference to the Southeast Region, Alaska Regional Forester Dave Schmid understands the Council's desire for additional staff support to be present at future Council meetings. All Board members hope the pandemic will be under control by this fall and that it will be possible for everyone to meet together again in person.

5. <u>Reasonable Access to Resources in an Emergency</u>

The Council would like to be advised on the status of the current 'food security special action request' protocol which was developed in 2020 to process requests from communities attempting to secure local food resources in difficult times. It is understood that the steps previously used to process these requests are, or have been, modified. It is important to know what options are available for relief, should another food security emergency take place in the future.

In addition, the Council would like to receive the information on the following:

a. ***What options are available for allowing access to resources in a reasonable manner in times of emergency?*** *When an emergency is declared, reasonable access should be granted to local subsistence resources to make food security a priority. Needs must be met during a time where the availability of food is uncertain.*
b. ***Is there a mechanism available or that can be created that would be implemented when an emergency is declared for subsistence users who do not have access to substantial food resources?*** *A defined method should be in place that would provide timely access to resources in rural communities where the population does not have access to grocery store food sources. In Southeast Alaska, if ferries stop running between islands, the communities are plunged into a dire situation to obtain food. There should be a quicker procedure than the current special action request process to provide emergency nourishment relief.*

Response:

In 2020, the Interagency Staff Committee began developing a draft white paper on Food Security as a Threat to Public Safety and a draft Framework to Evaluate Special Action Requests Related to Public Safety/Food Security. Once these drafts are finalized, they will be presented to the Board for further discussion and direction. If the framework is approved by the Board, it could serve as a mechanism available to allow access to subsistence food resources during emergencies in the future.

The Federal Subsistence Management Program can support adaptation to changing conditions by using the various tools available that enable the program to be responsive to subsistence users' needs as conditions change. For example, the Special Action process enables the Board to respond quickly to out-of-cycle needs for regulatory actions. The Board has also used its authority to delegate authority to local land managers to enable managers to respond quickly to unforeseen circumstances such as unpredictable seasons and fluctuations in resource availability.

More persistent changes to the availability and seasonality of resources due to climate change can be accommodated through the regulatory process. When species become less abundant due to climate change, closures to non-Federally qualified subsistence users, or ANILCA section 804 prioritizations among Federally qualified subsistence users, may become necessary.[2] Other species may become more abundant with shifts in environmental conditions, or new species may expand into the Southeast Alaska region. In this case, the Federal Subsistence Management Program can assist communities in delineating seasons, harvest limits, and methods and means for these newly available resources.

As you may know, the Board's decision in 2020 to delegate its authority to local land managers so as to allow them to respond quickly to Covid-19 related food security issues is currently the subject of a legal challenge in Federal District Court. The case, which is entitled *State of Alaska v. Federal Subsistence Board et al*., 3:20-cv-00195-SLG (D. Alaska), remains unresolved at this time. Briefing will be complete later this summer, which means that we expect a decision sometime in the fall. If the Board ultimately prevails in the litigation, then its authority to issue such delegations and the Federal program's ability to respond quickly during crises that potentially impact the health and safety of rural Alaskans will remain unchanged.

2 "Such priority shall be implemented through appropriate limitations based on the application of the following criteria: (1) customary and direct dependence upon the populations as the mainstay of livelihood; (2) local residency; and (3) the availability of alternative resources." (ANILCA, Section 804).

6. <u>Status of Fish and Wildlife Resources in Southeast</u>

Pursuant to ANILCA Title VIII Section 805, this Council recognizes the importance of providing the Board with regional information so that it can make informed regulatory decisions. This Council hereby continues to routinely report on the status of fish and wildlife populations and the harvests within the region by enclosing the reported harvest of subsistence resources in southeast Alaska. (Please see attached population and harvest information on fish and wildlife resources.)

Response:

Thank you very much for providing us with the most current demographic information on fish and wildlife populations and subsistence harvest in Southeast Alaska. As your Council indicated in topic number 4 of your FY-20 Annual Report, having up-to-date research, and inventory and monitoring information is crucial for successful fish and wildlife conservation and management, as well as to continue meeting the ANILCA-mandated priority for subsistence uses by Federally qualified subsistence users on Federal public lands and waters of Alaska.

In closing, I want to thank you and your Council for your continued involvement and diligence dedication in matters regarding the Federal Subsistence Management Program. I speak for the entire Board in expressing our appreciation for your efforts and am confident that the Federally qualified subsistence users of the Southeast Alaska Region are well represented through your work.

Sincerely,

Anthony Christianson
Chair

Enclosures

cc: Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Federal Subsistence Board
Sue Detwiler, Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management
Amee Howard, Deputy Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management
Robbin La Vine, Subsistence Policy Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management
Katerina Wessels, Council Coordination Division Supervisor
Office of Subsistence Management

Lisa Grediagin, Wildlife Division Supervisor, Office of Subsistence Management
George Pappas, State Subsistence Liaison and Acting Fisheries Division Supervisor
Office of Subsistence Management
Jonathan Vickers, Anthropology Division Supervisor, Office of Subsistence Management
DeAnna Perry, Council Coordinator, United States Forest Service
Interagency Staff Committee
Benjamin Mulligan, Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Mark Burch, Special Project Coordinator, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Administrative Record

Standard Operating Procedures for Issuance of Subsistence Eligibility Permits and Individual Customary and Traditional Use Determinations[1]

The Alaska Region of the National Park Service (NPS) issues National Park/Monument Subsistence Eligibility Permits (sometimes referred to as 13.440 Permits) and Individual Customary and Traditional Use Determinations using the protocol established in this document. A Subsistence Eligibility Permit may be requested for use in conjunction with an existing community or area customary and traditional (C&T) use determination within the relevant park unit, or in combination with a new request for one or more individual C&T use determinations.

National Park/Monument Subsistence Eligibility Permits are issued pursuant to 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 13.440:

> Any rural resident whose primary, permanent home is outside the boundaries of a resident zone of a national park or monument may apply to the appropriate Superintendent pursuant to the procedures set forth in §13.495 for a subsistence permit authorizing the permit applicant to engage in subsistence uses within the national park or monument.

Application procedures for Subsistence Eligibility Permits are specified in 36 CFR 13.495:

> (a) Any person applying for the subsistence permit required by §13.440(a), or the exception to the prohibition on aircraft use provided by §13.450(b)(2), shall submit his/her application to the Superintendent of the appropriate national park or monument. If the applicant is unable or does not wish to submit the application in written form, the Superintendent shall provide the applicant an opportunity to present the application orally and shall keep a record of such oral application. Each application must include a statement which acknowledges that providing false information in support of the application is a violation of Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and additional statements or documentation which demonstrates that the applicant satisfies the criteria set forth in §13.440(a) for a subsistence permit or §13.450(b)(2) for the aircraft exception, as appropriate. Except in extraordinary cases for good cause shown, the Superintendent shall decide whether to grant or deny the application in a timely manner not to exceed forty-five (45) days following the receipt of the completed application. Should the Superintendent deny the application, he/she shall include in the decision a statement of the reasons for the denial and shall promptly forward a copy to the applicant.
>
> (b) An applicant whose application has been denied by the Superintendent has the right to have his/her application reconsidered by the Alaska Regional Director by contacting the Regional Director within 180 days of the issuance of the denial. The Regional Director may extend the

[1] To comply with requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), parks should consider covering the federal action of determining individual eligibility for subsistence activities with categorical exclusion 3.2(N): Issuance of individual hunting and/or fishing licenses in accordance with state and federal regulations. This CE does not require documentation.

180-day time limit to initiate a reconsideration for good cause shown by the applicant. For purposes of reconsideration, the applicant shall present the following information:

(1) Any statement or documentation, in addition to that included in the initial application, which demonstrates that the applicant satisfies the criteria set forth in paragraph (a) of this section;

(2) The basis for the applicant's disagreement with the Superintendent's findings and conclusions; and

(3) Whether or not the applicant requests an informal hearing before the Regional Director.

(c) The Regional Director shall provide a hearing if requested by the applicant. After consideration of the written materials and oral hearing, if any, and within a reasonable period of time, the Regional Director shall affirm, reverse, or modify the denial of the Superintendent and shall set forth in writing the basis for the decision. A copy of the decision shall be forwarded promptly to the applicant and shall constitute final agency action.

Individual Customary and Traditional Use Determinations are made pursuant to 50 CFR 100.16:

(a) The Board shall determine which fish stocks and wildlife populations have been customarily and traditionally used for subsistence. These determinations shall identify the specific community's or area's use of specific fish stocks and wildlife populations. For areas managed by the National Park Service, where subsistence uses are allowed, the determinations may be made on an individual basis.

and 50 CFR 100. 24:

The Federal Subsistence Board has determined that rural Alaska residents of the listed communities, areas, and individuals have customary and traditional use of the specified species on Federal public land in the specified areas. Persons granted individual customary and traditional use determinations will be notified in writing by the Board. The Fish & Wildlife Service and the local NPS Superintendent will maintain the list of individuals having customary and traditional use on National Parks and Monuments. A copy of the list is available upon request. When there is a determination for specific communities or areas of residence in a Unit, all other communities not listed for that species in that Unit have no Federal subsistence priority for that species in that Unit. If no determination has been made for a species in a Unit, all rural Alaska residents are eligible to harvest fish or wildlife under this part.

Request for a National Park/Monument Subsistence Eligibility Permit

1. Applicants may request applications from the relevant park Subsistence Coordinator verbally, in-person, or in writing. The applicant may choose to complete the application with the assistance of the Subsistence Coordinator. Applicants shall acknowledge to the Subsistence Coordinator, either by signing and returning the application, verbally, or both, that he/she understands that providing false information in support of the application is a violation of Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code.
2. The Subsistence Coordinator shall forward a copy of completed applications to the Alaska Region Subsistence Program Manager for archival purposes and entry in the Subsistence Eligibility Permit / Individual C&T tracking log.
3. Upon receiving the completed application, the relevant park Subsistence Coordinator shall schedule an interview with the applicant, either in-person or by phone, to obtain additional information regarding applicant eligibility and existing patterns of subsistence use.
4. Upon completing the interview, the relevant Subsistence Coordinator shall produce a brief written analysis (see attached form) and formulate a recommendation on the request, with justification.
5. The application, analysis, and recommendation shall be forwarded by the relevant Subsistence Coordinator to the Superintendent for review and decision. The Superintendent shall complete the decision form (see attached).
6. A signed copy of the decision form shall be sent to the applicant within 45 days of the receipt of the application[2] (36 CFR 13.495). The Subsistence Coordinator will coordinate with the applicant and the Superintendent to issue an approved permit with requisite signatures and he/she shall retain a copy. Permits shall follow the standard format for NPS Special Use Permits. The following permit stipulations are recommended, as applicable to the specific park unit, in addition to the standard Special Use Permit stipulations:
    a. This permit establishes eligibility only for subsistence uses within (National Park or Monument Name). Specific subsistence activities (i.e. house logs, green firewood, cabins, subsistence registration hunts, caches, etc.) may require separate authorization or permits.
    b. The Permittee must contact the Superintendent if permittee changes his/her permanent residence. The permit may need to be amended to show the current physical address of the permanent residence.
    c. This permit is void if the Permittee's permanent residence is determined to be "non-rural" by federal regulation.
    d. The Permittee is subject to other regulatory requirements including, but not limited to, seasons and harvest limits, community and individual customary and traditional determinations, methods and means, etc.
    e. Only those family members living within the Permittee's household are authorized by this permit for subsistence uses in (National Park or Monument Name). It is the responsibility of the Permittee to notify the Superintendent of changes in the

[2] Except in extraordinary cases for good cause shown (36 CFR 13.495), including the need to collect additional information.

composition of the household, including additions (through birth, adoption or marriage) or deletions (a family member moving out of the household).

f. The Permittee is prohibited by federal regulations (36 CFR 13.450) from using aircraft to access the park for the purpose of engaging in subsistence activities. Aircraft access is prohibited for any portion of the access. The regulatory prohibition on aircraft access for subsistence uses in the park does not apply to aircraft access to the Permittee's primary permanent residence.

7. The recommendation, Superintendent decision, and a digital copy of the signed permit (when applicable) shall be forwarded to the Alaska Region Subsistence Program Manager for entry into the Subsistence Eligibility Permit / Individual C&T tracking log.
8. Pursuant to 36 CFR 13.495 (b) an applicant whose application has been denied by the Superintendent has the right to have his/her application reconsidered by the Alaska Regional Director by contacting the Regional Director within 180 days of the issuance of the denial. The Regional Director may extend the 180-day time limit to initiate a reconsideration for good cause shown by the applicant.

Note: Permits will be issued for the lifetime of the applicant so long as they retain their eligibility as a Federally qualified subsistence user. Reviews of permit eligibility shall be made periodically by the Subsistence Coordinator, at least every five years.

Request for an Individual C&T Use Determination

1. Applicants may request applications from the relevant park Subsistence Coordinator verbally, in-person, or in writing. The applicant may choose to complete the application with the assistance of the Subsistence Coordinator. Applicants shall acknowledge to the Subsistence Coordinator, either by signing and returning the application, verbally, or both, that he/she understands that providing false information in support of the application is a violation of Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code.
2. The Subsistence Coordinator shall forward a copy of completed applications to the Alaska Region Subsistence Program Manager for archival purposes and entry in the Subsistence Eligibility Permit / Individual C&T tracking log.
3. Upon receiving the completed application, the relevant park Subsistence Coordinator shall schedule an interview, either in-person or by phone, to obtain additional information regarding applicant eligibility and existing patterns of subsistence use.
4. The relevant Subsistence Coordinator will analyze responses on the application and in the interview to assess eligibility and to formulate a recommendation on an existing pattern of use of species requested for an individual C&T use determination.
5. The written analysis and recommendation, with justification (see attached form), shall be sent to the Alaska Region Subsistence Program Manager for archival purposes and entry in the Subsistence Eligibility Permit / individual C&T tracking log. Analyses shall follow the guidance for C&T use determination analyses in the most recent revision of the Federal Subsistence Management Program's Technical Writing Guide, as applicable to individual C&T use determinations.
6. A summary of the request and analysis will be provided by the relevant NPS Subsistence Coordinator to the affected Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (RAC) or Councils and the affected Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) at their first meeting following completion of the interview. The RAC(s) and SRC will make recommendations, with justification, on issuance of the individual C&T use determination (see attached decision form).
7. The Regional Council Coordinator(s) and park Subsistence Coordinator shall forward the RAC and SRC recommendations and justifications to the Alaska Region Subsistence Program Manager for archival purposes and entry into the Subsistence Eligibility Permit / Individual C&T tracking log.
8. The Alaska Region Subsistence Program Manager will provide the individual C&T use determination application, analysis, and recommendations to the Office of Subsistence Management to facilitate Board deliberation at the Board's next public meeting.
9. The Office of Subsistence Management will draft a decision letter on behalf of the Federal Subsistence Board. The Board Chair will review and sign the letter, which will be digitized, archived, and forwarded to the applicant, with copies to the NPS Alaska Region Subsistence Program Manager, the relevant park Subsistence Coordinator, and the park Superintendent.
10. The Office of Subsistence Management will forward the decision letter to the chairs of the affected Regional Advisory Councils. Councils will be informed of any changes to individual C&Ts at the council's next regularly scheduled public meeting. The park Subsistence Coordinator will inform the SRC of the decision.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
ALASKA REGION

NATIONAL PARK/MONUMENT SUBSISTENCE ELIGIBILITY PERMIT* & INDIVIDUAL CUSTOMARY AND TRADITIONAL USE DETERMINATION APPLICATION

*(*For determination of subsistence eligibility under the provisions of 36 CFR 13.440.)*

I am requesting (Choose One):

- ○ National Park/Monument Subsistence Eligibility Permit ONLY
- ○ Individual Customary and Traditional Use Determination ONLY[3]
- ○ National Park/Monument Subsistence Eligibility Permit AND Individual Customary and Traditional Use Determination

If requesting a National Park/Monument Subsistence Eligibility Permit, my eligibility is based on:

- ○ A pattern of subsistence use in the park unit for which I am seeking a permit
- ○ A pattern of subsistence use in a park OTHER THAN the park unit for which I am seeking a permit
  - Please explain: _____

If requesting an individual customary and traditional use determination, for what species and areas (units or subunits)?

_____

Name of National Park or Monument: _____

1. Name of applicant (First, Middle, Last):

   _____

[3] The Federal Subsistence Board (FSB) policy requires applicants for Individual Customary and Traditional Use Determinations to either reside in a resident zone community or hold a 13.440 Subsistence Eligibility Permit. This permit can be applied for concurrently.

2. Mailing address:

_____

_____

_____

3. Location/physical address of primary permanent residence:

_____

_____

_____

- Phone number: _____

-Email address: _____

- What month and year did your residence at this location start?

Month_____ Year _____

- During what part of the year do you reside at this residence (give dates)? _____

_____

4. Location/physical address of other residences, if any:

_____

_____

_____

- During what part of the year do you reside at these residences (give dates)?

_____

5. What physical address is currently indicated on your:

- Alaska hunting and/or fishing license

_____

- Driver's license

_____

- Tax returns

_____

- Voter registration

_____

- Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend application

_____

6. Have you, or any persons living in your household on a permanent basis, engaged in subsistence within this park or monument? Yes ____ No ____

- Specific location of use? _____

_____

- Was aircraft used as a means of access to conduct such activities? Yes ____ No ____

- Type of subsistence use (hunting, trapping, fishing, gathering, etc.)? _____

_____

_____

- Specific resources harvested (caribou, moose, salmon, furbearers, timber, etc.)? _____

_____

_____

- Name of permanent member(s) of household who has hunted, trapped, fished, gathered, etc. in the park or monument? _____

- Relationship of permanent member(s) of household noted above to you (self, father, mother, brother, etc.)? _____

- Earliest year in which use took place? _____

- Most recent year in which use took place? _____

- Frequency of use (yearly, every other year, etc.)? _____

7. Other comments/additional pertinent information in support of your permit application:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING ONLY IF REQUESTING INDIVIDUAL CUSTOMARY AND TRADITIONAL USE DETERMINATION(S)

1. For what species are you requesting an individual customary and traditional use determination?

_____

_____

_____

2. Please describe your pattern of subsistence use of the species listed above. What years have you harvested or attempted to harvest them? In which months or seasons do you harvest them?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. What methods and means of harvest do you use for these species?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Where do you harvest these resources? Please provide locations, as specifically as possible, including identifiable landmarks or geographic descriptions. How do you access these harvest locations? What means of transportation do you use?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. How do you process these resources and preserve them for future use?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. How have you learned about hunting, trapping and fishing – both skills and the values associated with the uses?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. Do you share what you know about hunting, trapping and fishing with others? If so, how?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. Do you share the resources that you harvest with others in your community or family? Please describe any sharing networks in which you are involved.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. Please describe your pattern of subsistence use more generally – which resources to you harvest or seek to harvest on a regular basis? What role do these resources and activities play in your way of life – economically, nutritionally, culturally, socially?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

TO BE COMPLETED BY ALL APPLICANTS

1. Please provide the name, address and telephone number of another person, other than a member of your household, who can verify this information:
   Name: _____

   Address: _____

   Telephone Number: _____

I certify that the statements made herein are true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and are made in good faith. I also understand that Title 18 U.S.C § 1001 makes it a crime for any person knowingly and willfully to make to any department or agency of the United States any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements as to any matter within its jurisdiction.

Signature of applicant: _____

Date: _____

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
ALASKA REGION

NATIONAL PARK/MONUMENT SUBSISTENCE ELIGIBILITY PERMIT* & INDIVIDUAL CUSTOMARY AND TRADITIONAL USE DETERMINATION ANALYSIS

*(*For determination of subsistence eligibility under the provisions of 36 CFR 13.440.)*

To be completed by the relevant Subsistence Coordinator:

Date:

Applicant Name:

Analyst Name:

This analysis is in response to the following request (Choose One):

- ○ Subsistence Eligibility Permit ONLY
- ○ Individual Customary and Traditional Use Determination ONLY
- ○ Subsistence Eligibility Permit AND Individual Customary and Traditional Use Determination

Please type a brief summary of the applicant's reported subsistence use pertaining to the request, as determined from information provided on the application and during the interview:

For a National Park/Monument Subsistence Eligibility Permit, the analysis should address the following topics:

1. Synopsis of the applicant's pattern of use[4] specifically in the national park or monument for which the permit is requested, including the following:
    a. Species harvested,
    b. Specific locations where the use occurred,
    c. Years during which the subsistence uses took place, and
    d. Whether aircraft was used for access.
2. Does the pattern of use begin prior to the signing of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA)?

[4] There may be variation by region and/or park on what constitutes a "pattern of use." Generally, there should exist evidence of repeated past attempts to access and harvest subsistence resources within the boundaries of the park or monument. SRCs may be consulted in defining a "pattern of use" for their region.

3. Does the applicant have a pattern of use established while as a resident of a resident zone community after the passage of ANILCA?

For an Individual C&T use determination, the analysis should address the following questions:

1. Does the applicant have a long-term, consistent pattern of use of these resources, excluding interruptions beyond their control? Please explain.
2. Does the applicant have a pattern of use for these resources recurring in specific seasons for many years? Please explain.
3. Does the applicant have a pattern of use of these resources consisting of methods and means of harvest which are characterized by efficiency and economy of effort and cost, conditioned by local characteristics? Please explain.
4. Does the applicant exhibit consistent harvest and use of fish or wildlife as related to past methods and means of taking: near, or reasonably accessible from the park unit? Please explain.
5. Does the applicant exhibit a means of handling, preparing, preserving, and storing fish or wildlife which has been traditionally used by past generations, including consideration of alteration of past practices due to recent technological advances, where appropriate? Please explain.
6. Does the applicant exhibit a pattern of use which includes the handing down of knowledge of fishing and hunting skills, values, and lore from generation to generation? Please explain.
7. Does the applicant exhibit a pattern of use in which the harvest is shared or distributed within a definable community of persons? Please explain.
8. Does the applicant exhibit a pattern of use which relates to reliance upon a wide diversity of fish and wildlife resources of the area and which provides substantial cultural, economic, social, and nutritional elements to your household? Please explain.

The analysis should include an integrated discussion of the eight factors. A factor-by-factor discussion is not required in the analysis and it is also not necessary that all eight factors be addressed to demonstrate a pattern of use. The eight factors provide a framework for examining the pattern of use of a resource. There are regional, cultural and temporal variations and the application of the eight factors will likely vary by region and by resource depending on actual patterns of use. The goal of customary and traditional use determination analyses is to recognize customary and traditional uses in the most inclusive manner possible.

As a result of this analysis (Select All that Apply):

- ○ There is substantial evidence to support the issuance of a Subsistence Eligibility Permit
- ○ There is substantial evidence to support the issuance of an Individual Customary and Traditional Use Determination for (species and location) _____

- ○ There is **NOT** substantial evidence to support the issuance a Subsistence Eligibility Permit
- ○ There is **NOT** substantial evidence to support the issuance an Individual Customary and Traditional Use Determination for (species and location) _____

Brief Justification:

Signature of Analyst:_____ Date: _____

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
ALASKA REGION

SUBSISTENCE ELIGIBILITY PERMIT* DECISION

*(*For determination of subsistence eligibility under the provisions of 36 CFR 13.440.)*

To be completed by the relevant Superintendent:

Applicant Name:

Name of Park or Monument for which permit is requested:

Request Date:

After reviewing the request, evaluation form, staff analysis and recommendation, I have decided to (select one):

- ○ Issue a Subsistence Eligibility Permit to the applicant
- ○ Deny a Subsistence Eligibility Permit to the applicant

Superintendent Signature: _____ Date:_____

NOTE: Pursuant to 36 CFR 13.495 (b) an applicant whose application has been denied by the Superintendent has the right to have his/her application reconsidered by the Alaska Regional Director by contacting the Regional Director within 180 days of the issuance of the denial. The Regional Director may extend the 180-day time limit to initiate a reconsideration for good cause shown by the applicant.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
ALASKA REGION

INDIVIDUAL CUSTOMARY AND TRADITIONAL USE DETERMINATION

RAC RECOMMENDATION

To be completed by the relevant Subsistence Coordinator:

Date of Formal Action:

Proponent Name:

Proponent Request:

Affected RAC:

This RAC has determined that (select all that apply):

- ○ There is sufficient evidence to support an individual customary and traditional use determination for (name) for (species) in (unit(s)/subunit(s))
- ○ There is NOT sufficient evidence to support an individual customary and traditional use determination for (name) for (species) in (unit(s)/subunit(s))

Brief justification for above decision:

Signature of RAC Chair or Designee_____
Date_____

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
ALASKA REGION

INDIVIDUAL CUSTOMARY AND TRADITIONAL USE DETERMINATION

SRC RECOMMENDATION

To be completed by the relevant Subsistence Coordinator:

Date of Formal Action:

Proponent Name:

Proponent Request:

Affected SRC:

This SRC has determined that (select all that apply):

- ○ There is sufficient evidence to support an individual customary and traditional use determination for (name) for (species) in (unit(s)/subunit(s))
- ○ There is NOT sufficient evidence to support an individual customary and traditional use determination for (name) for (species) in (unit(s)/subunit(s))

Brief justification for above decision:

Signature of SRC Chair or Designee_____
Date_____

Changes to the Individual Customary and Traditional (C&T) Process (01/2021)

What is C&T Use?

C&T Use is a long-established, consistent pattern of use, incorporating practices and customs which have been transmitted from generation to generation that play an important role in the community.

What is a C&T Use Determination?

- C&T Use Determinations are made for areas and species through the Federal regulatory process.
- Only residents of areas specified in the C&T determination are considered "Federally qualified subsistence users" for that species and area.

What is an Individual C&T?

Per 50 CFR 100.16, individual C&T use only applies to National Park Service (NPS) managed parks and monuments where subsistence is authorized. To hunt or trap in a national park or monument, a person must:

- Be a Federally qualified subsistence user
- Have a C&T determination
- EITHER live in a resident zone community OR have a 13.440 subsistence eligibility permit

The Federal Subsistence Board has made changes to streamline the Individual C&T process:

Step	Application Window	Application Review	Proposed Analysis	Advisory Committee Review	Decisionmaker	Decision Timeline
Previous Process	Every two years	May be invalidated if application is incomplete or 13.440 subsistence eligibility permit is needed	Standard 8 factor format for C&T proposals. Analysis is prepared by NPS and Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) staff	Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council(s) (RAC)	Federal Subsistence Board (FSB)	Fixed schedule: at annual FSB regulatory meeting
New Process	Open continuously	NPS staff collaborates with applicant and helps process 13.440 subsistence eligibility permits, if needed	Standard 8 factor format for C&T proposals. Analysis is prepared by NPS staff	Federal Subsistence RAC(s) AND National Park Service Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC)	Federal Subsistence Board (FSB)	Flexible schedule: at next public FSB meeting following RAC and SRC recommendations

More collaboration between Park staff and subsistence users

Both RACs and SRC review and comment

Potential application errors are immediately resolved

Faster application processing times

ANNUAL REPORT REPLY PROCESS REVISION

During the Federal Subsistence Board's (Board) August 2021 work session, the Board reviewed and discussed the annual report reply process and agreed to add this topic to the Regional Advisory Councils (Councils) Fall meeting agendas to get Council input on proposed revisions.

ANILCA, Section 805 gives authority to the Councils to prepare an annual report containing information related to current and future subsistence uses of fish and wildlife populations, an evaluation of current and future subsistence needs for these populations, a strategy for their management, and recommendations related to policies, standards, guidelines, and regulations to implement the strategy. These reports are invaluable as they provide the Board with a broad, holistic picture of local resource conditions, and the needs and challenges facing communities across rural Alaska. With this knowledge, the Board can make more informed decisions.

Historically, the Federal Subsistence Management Program has strived to provide responses to every topic listed in annual reports, developed by a diverse group of Federal staff. While all topics can be important to the Board in understanding local conditions, it is unclear if the responses on all matters warrant the use of often very limited staff capacity. Furthermore, the same or similar topics are often repeated in subsequent years with no resolution, and many topics are on issues over which the Board has no regulatory authority.

Importantly, ANILCA does not require replies to annual reports from the Councils and currently the Code of Federal Regulations state that the Board "consider the reports and recommendations of the Regional Councils." Instead of replying to every topic in an annual report, the Board believes it would be more beneficial to use other communication methods when Councils request a response from the Board, or from others who may have better technical understanding of each issue. Often this is already accomplished by Councils writing letters to these entities, including to the Board. This proposed revision will allow for more substantive and timely responses from the Board on topics most critical to the Councils. We propose that Councils consider letter writing as the most appropriate means for requesting a response to topics of concern, and that the annual report process be streamlined as a mechanism for informing the Board of local conditions and needs. Under this scenario, Councils could ask their Coordinators to write a letter to the Board if there are annual report topics to which they are specifically requesting a response. Any other topics, such as those outside the regulatory authority of the Board, can be addressed to the appropriate Federal agency staff at Council meetings, or Councils can write letters requesting a response directly from them, thus streamlining the response process and encouraging direct agency communications with the Councils.

The suggested revision is not intended to diminish the ability of the Councils to report to the Board on topics of concern, and Councils will still receive responses when requested from the Board. At this time, the Board is seeking input from the Councils on this proposed change to the annual report process. Council feedback on this issue is critical as the Board moves forward to make the reply process more efficient and responsive. The Board will consider Council input on this revision at its winter work session at the end of January 2022.

Building Partnerships and Capacity for Federal Subsistence Fisheries Management and Research in the North

Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program (PFMP)

Introduction

The Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program was established in 2002 to increase the opportunity for Alaska Native and rural organizations to participate in Federal subsistence management. The program provides funding for fishery biologist, social scientist, or educator positions within the organization, with the intent of building and sustaining the organization's fisheries management expertise. In addition, the program supports a variety of opportunities for local, rural students to connect with subsistence management through science camps and paid internships.

The program has provided funding to mentor more than 100 college and 450 high school students, some of whom have gone on to become professionals in the field of natural resource conservation. To date with 13.3 million dollars spent, the program has supported nine Alaska Native organizations in building capacity. Organizations are funded for up to four years through a competitive grant process.

How to Get Involved

The next funding opportunity will open in 2023; it is never too early to reach out and to begin planning the components of a proposed PFMP program. The Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) is happy to answer questions and provide advice regarding its various funding programs.

OSM also partners with the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP) to provide internship opportunities that expose students to careers in natural resource management. If your existing Alaska based fisheries program could benefit from a student internship, or if your program has exciting fisheries-related opportunities to challenge and educate Alaska's rural youth, please be sure to let us know!

For more information, please visit our site at https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/partners. You can also contact the program's coordinator, Karen Hyer at karen_hyer@fws.gov or 907-786-3689.

Partner Contacts

- **BBNA**: Cody Larson, clarson@bbna.com
- **YTT:** Jennifer Hanlon, jhanlon@ytttribe.org
- **NVE**: Matt Piche, matt.piche@eyak-nsn.gov
- **NVN**: Dan Gillikin, dangillikin@gmail.com
- **ONC**: Janessa Esquible, jesquible@nativecouncil.org

- **TCC:** Brian McKenna, brian.mckenna@tananachiefs.org
- **QTU:** Chandra Poe, chandra@qawalagin.com

2021 Partners Program Participant Summaries

Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA)

The Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA) researches and highlights the role of fish used in satisfying a way of life, through collaborative investigations with our member tribes, universities, and state and federal managers. These partnerships inform our citizens of any changes to the public's relationships with fish and emphasize the value in the co-production of traditional knowledge and contemporary sciences research.

The BBNA Partners program funding is used in supporting the conversation between our residents, communities, and the managers tasked with decision-making on essential food resources. The program reinforces public input to the region's Fish and Game Advisory Committees, NPS Subsistence Resource Commissions, and the Federal Regional Advisory Council, while relaying information gathered from the social science investigations. Recent focus has been on subsistence fishery funding from section 12005 of the Cares Act, and the Chignik Fisheries disaster relief efforts.

Over the past year, the program informed and collaborated on multiple investigations and recent publications, some of which are available online and focus on; The Naknek River Subsistence Salmon Harvest, Subsistence Salmon Sharing Networks on the Alaska Peninsula, Voices of Alaska Native Women Fishers, Sharing Food and Community Resilience, and a Subsistence Harvest Assessment and Stock Composition of Dolly Varden and Nonsalmon Fish Stocks in the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge.

BBNA's program has coordinated dozens of internships with partners like Lake Clark National Park, Togiak National Wildlife Refuge, Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game, and the University of Washington. The leaders involved in these summer experiences have guided many students into careers in natural resource management. Some of those students have now become the mentors to the next cohort of future leaders. While the 2020 summer internships were successfully held virtually, we are looking forward to getting the hands-on field experiences in 2021!

Yakutat Tlingit Tribe (YTT)

Yakutat Tlingit Tribe (YTT) is a federally recognized tribe with 820 enrolled Tribal Members located on the northern coast of the Gulf of Alaska. Developing conservation concerns about local salmon stocks have highlighted the need for building capacity for fisheries monitoring and management in the YTT Environmental Department. Through the Partners Program, YTT hired a full time Fisheries Biologist in 2020 to participate in subsistence management and instill placed-based knowledge on the Situk River. YTT's Fisheries Biologist partners with the Yakutat District River Ranger to serve as the primary contacts to the public on the Situk River (April-September).

The team's primary job is to contact Situk users to promote stewardship and cultural awareness. Being on the river during peak fishing seasons, they can communicate conservation messages to anglers streamside on topics like catch and release, don't tread on redds, salmon ecology, angler etiquette, current regulations, alternative fishing sites, and habitat degradation. The biologist provides river users with

context about history and cultural importance of salmon with the Situk being the primary source for subsistence in Yakutat. In the past, brown bears associating anglers with fish has been a safety concern for both people and bears on the Situk. However, in coordination with the USFS Wildlife Biologist and Fish and Game, the River Rangers have aggressively worked to curb the behaviors amongst fisherman that lead to this problem. The consistent presence of the partners alone will prompt stewardship and good behavior amongst the varied Situk River users.

The Partners Program has enhanced YTT's capacity by broadening the scope of resources and tools available to the Tribe such as allowing access to valuable datalike river use, stream restoration trainings, and research methods like eDNA. This partnership forges a strong foundation that strengthens and supports the YTT Environmental Department's capacity to identify and respond to conservation concerns that impact tribal interests. YTT looks forward to expanding the department and welcoming an intern under the Partners Program.

Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC)

The Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) serves as a non-profit organization for the Interior region of Alaska. The TCC region covers an area of 235,000 square miles and overlaps three separate National Wildlife Refuges (NWR): Kanuti, Koyukuk-Innoko-Nowitna, and the Yukon Flats. Since its creation, the TCC has become the provider of several programs in the Interior of Alaska. Through contracts with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, TCC is responsible for the management and delivery of services such as housing, land management, tribal government assistance, education and employment services, and natural resources management.

Within TCC's organizational structure, the Wildlife and Parks (W&P) Program is responsible for serving the subsistence needs of its tribes and tribal members. The Partners Program allows the TCC W&P Program the ability to maintain a fulltime fisheries biologist on staff and has allowed TCC to develop the capacity to address the subsistence needs of TCC tribes and tribal members by conducting a variety of fisheries research programs and also by participating in federal and state fisheries management meetings.

Through the Partners Program, TCC has successfully operated the Henshaw Creek Weir salmon monitoring project in the upper Koyukuk River. TCC strives to recruit and hire local technicians and youth to assist with the project each year. The Henshaw project also hosts an annual summer science and culture camp that is jointly operated by TCC and the Kanuti NWR. Elders and youth are brought together at the camp where the Elders teach students traditional skills (like setting nets, cutting and drying fish, and Athabascan language). TCC and Kanuti staff provide lessons in western science such as weir sampling, salmon biology and ecology and fisheries management.

Outside of the Henshaw Creek Weir project, TCC has been able to lead other fisheries investigations such as updating the Yukon River Chinook and chum salmon genetic baselines, mapping salmon spawning habitat and updating the Anadromous Waters Catalog and exploring the capabilities of small unmanned aerial systems to assist with salmon research and management. Additionally, each year they host one or two Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP) summer bridge students and provide them with the opportunity to gain hands on knowledge and experience in fisheries management within the Yukon River drainage.

Native Village of Eyak (NVE)

The Native Village of Eyak's Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (NVE-DENR) Fisheries Program focuses on population monitoring, filling data gaps, using traditional ecological knowledge to improve data collection, and working with partners to ensure a future with healthy robust fish populations while supporting sustainable fisheries. PFMP funds are used to support a permanent fish biologist responsible for leading the fisheries program and seasonal fisheries interns who gain valuable hands-on experience.

The current PFMP is also supporting the development of a youth science and subsistence camp and outreach with other organizations and researchers throughout the region. Current research led by NVE's Partners Program biologist includes Chinook salmon inriver abundance, Copper River (2003-2021); Chinook salmon distribution and stock specific run timing, Copper River (2019-2021); Klutina River salmon enumeration sonar pilot study (2021-2024).

Furthermore, NVE is continually sharing its resources and expertise to accomplish more work through partnerships with other researchers. Current partners on side-studies include Alaska Department of Fish and Game Division of Sport Fish and Commercial Fisheries, Prince William Sound Science Center, and Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission.

Native Village of Napaimute (NVN)

The Native Village of Napaimute (NVN) is a federally recognized tribe and has about 100 members; the village is only seasonally occupied currently. The Napaimute Partners in Fisheries Monitoring Program main goals are to; improve effectiveness of local outreach related to fisheries management, provide opportunities in natural resource education and experience for local youth, build local capacity through strategic program and workforce development, and develop a sustainable natural resource program.

Outreach related to fisheries management is achieved by participating in management discussions with various advisory groups i.e., Kuskokwim River Inter Tribal Fish Commission, Kuskokwim Salmon Management Working Group, and agencies (ADF&G, USFWS). We routinely post in-season management actions on social media and around the Villages to keep fishers informed on the latest regulations.

Our youth outreach involves two projects; the Math Science Expedition (MSE) and the George River Internship (GRI). The MSE is tailored more to be leadership development experience with some exposure to fisheries ecology and data collection. The MSE typically accommodates 25-30 students on a two week-long rafting trip down the Salmon and Aniak Rivers.

The GRI is an advanced paid Internship opportunity on the George River where Interns learn about river ecology, hydrology, sampling techniques for fish and benthic macro- invertebrates, leadership skills and career opportunities in the area of natural resource management.

The PFMP has allowed us to build the capacity to peruse funding for and help support fisheries monitoring programs (Aniak Test Fishery & Salmon River Weir) funded through the USFWS Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program, along with several environmental monitoring and fisheries assistance projects. Projects are mostly staffed by local residents and Alaska Native Science and Engineering Students (ANSEP).

Orutsararmiut Native Council (ONC)

Orutsararmiut Native Council (ONC) is the Federally recognized Tribal Government for the Native Village of Bethel, Alaska and has greatly expanded its Partners Program since 2008. ONC Partners Program strives to support ongoing fisheries in season and postseason monitoring programs; serve as a mentor for rural, Alaska Native student interns in coordination with other state, federal, and tribal entities; communicate results of the fisheries monitoring program projects to various audiences to enhance federal subsistence management awareness in rural communities; continue youth internship programs; and pursue external funds and partnerships to expand the current Partners Program. In the past, with the support of the Partners Program, ONC was able to conduct annual Science & Culture Camps, as well as science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) middle school career exploration programs in Bethel with the help of Alaska Native Science & Engineering Program (ANSEP) and several other partner agencies.

Our Partners Program also became involved with the Aniak & Salmon River Math & Science Expedition by fisheries educational outreach with youth from the middle Kuskokwim. ONC's involvement with youth camp programs throughout the years was able to reach many students ranging from 6th to 12th grade. Despite the difficulties and cancellations that came with the COVID-19 pandemic, ONC's Partners Program work has continued in a safe manner with new procedures and creative methods to engage youth. We would like to sincerely thank the Office of Subsistence Management and other partnering entities, for without their support, our program would not have had the ability to support the youth of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. The support of our partners has allowed ONC to have great success in expanding its involvement on scientific and educational outreach projects and programs.

Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska (QTU)

The Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska is a federally recognized sovereign nation. The Unangan people have continuously occupied their homelands along the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands for thousands of years, relying on a close relationship with the sea and lands.

As a new participant in the Partners program, the Tribe is looking forward to continuing work to ensure healthy subsistence species and food sovereignty for generations to come.

A key project in our first year as a Partners program participant was collaborating with ADFG to operate a weir at McLees Lake, monitoring this sockeye run that is an important subsistence resource for the community. In our first year, we restored structures at the site that had fallen into disrepair during a 2-year gap in funding for the weir. Our staff gained experience in weir setup and operations and scale sampling. We are looking forward to building our staff capacity and increasing our presence at the weir in coming seasons and working to ensure continuity of this important salmon monitoring site.

In addition to continuing work at the McLees weir in partnership with ADFG, in the coming years we are looking forward to establishing a strong outreach and education program to build awareness and support of subsistence resource management, so important to our coastal community.

Winter 2022 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

Last updated 3/19/2021

Due to travel budget limitations placed by Department of the Interior on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Office of Subsistence Management, the dates and locations of these meetings will be subject to change.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday-	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Feb. 6	*Feb. 7 Window Opens*	*Feb. 8*	*Feb. 9*	*Feb. 10*	*Feb. 11*	*Feb. 12*
		BB - Naknek		**SC - Anchorage**		
Feb. 13	*Feb. 14*	*Feb. 15*	*Feb. 16*	*Feb. 17*	*Feb. 18*	*Feb. 19*
	NWA - Kotzebue		**WI - Galena**			
Feb. 20	*Feb. 21* ***PRESIDENTS DAY HOLIDAY***	*Feb. 22*	*Feb. 23*	*Feb. 24*	*Feb. 25*	*Feb. 26*
		KA - Kodiak				
Feb. 27	*Feb. 28*	*Mar. 1*	*Mar. 2*	*Mar. 3*	*Mar. 4*	*Mar. 5*
		YKD - Bethel		**SP - Nome**		
Mar. 6	*Mar. 7*	*Mar. 8*	*Mar. 9*	*Mar. 10*	*Mar. 11*	*Mar. 12*
		EI - Fort Yukon				
		NS - TBD				
Mar. 13	*Mar. 14*	*Mar. 15*	*Mar. 16*	*Mar. 17*	*Mar. 18*	*Mar. 19*
Mar. 20	*Mar. 21*	*Mar. 22*	*Mar. 23*	*Mar. 24*	*Mar. 25* *Window Closes*	*Mar. 26*
		SEA - Sitka				

Fall 2022 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

Last updated 8/5/2021

Due to travel budget limitations placed by Department of the Interior on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Office of Subsistence Management, the dates and locations of these meetings will be subject to change.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Aug. 7	*Aug. 8 Window Opens*	*Aug. 9*	*Aug. 10*	*Aug.11*	*Aug. 12*	*Aug.13*
Aug. 14	*Aug. 15*	*Aug. 16*	*Aug. 17*	*Aug. 18*	*Aug. 19*	*Aug. 20*
Aug. 21	*Aug. 22*	*Aug. 23*	*Aug. 24*	*Aug. 25*	*Aug. 26*	*Aug. 27*
Aug. 28	*Aug. 29*	*Aug. 30*	*Aug. 31*	*Sep. 1*	*Sep. 2*	*Sep. 3*
Sep. 4	*Sep. 5* ***Labor Day Holiday***	*Sep. 6*	*Sep. 7*	*Sep. 8*	*Sep. 9*	*Sep. 10*
Sep. 11	*Sep. 12*	*Sep. 13*	*Sep. 14*	*Sep. 15*	*Sep. 16*	*Sep. 17*
Sep. 18	*Sep. 19*	*Sep. 20*	*Sep. 21*	*Sep. 22*	*Sep. 23*	*Sep. 24*
Sep. 25	*Sep. 26*	*Sep. 27*	*Sep. 28*	*Sep. 29*	*Sep. 30*	*Oct. 1*
Oct. 2	*Oct. 3*	*Oct. 4*	*Oct. 5*	*Oct. 6*	*Oct. 7*	*Oct. 8*
Oct. 9	*Oct. 10* ***Columbus Day Holiday***	*Oct. 11*	*Oct. 12*	*Oct. 13*	*Oct. 14*	*Oct. 15*
Oct. 16	*Oct. 17*	*Oct. 18*	*Oct. 19*	*Oct. 20*	*Oct. 21*	*Oct. 22*
Oct. 23	*Oct. 24*	*Oct. 25*	*Oct. 26*	*Oct. 27*	*Oct. 28*	*Oct. 29*
Oct. 30	*Oct. 31*	*Nov. 1*	*Nov. 2*	*Nov. 3*	*Nov. 4 Window Closes*	*Nov. 5*

Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Correspondence Policy

The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) recognizes the value of the Regional Advisory Councils' role in the Federal Subsistence Management Program. The Board realizes that the Councils must interact with fish and wildlife resource agencies, organizations, and the public as part of their official duties, and that this interaction may include correspondence. Since the beginning of the Federal Subsistence Program, Regional Advisory Councils have prepared correspondence to entities other than the Board. Informally, Councils were asked to provide drafts of correspondence to the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) for review prior to mailing. Recently, the Board was asked to clarify its position regarding Council correspondence. This policy is intended to formalize guidance from the Board to the Regional Advisory Councils in preparing correspondence.

The Board is mindful of its obligation to provide the Regional Advisory Councils with clear operating guidelines and policies, and has approved the correspondence policy set out below. The intent of the Regional Advisory Council correspondence policy is to ensure that Councils are able to correspond appropriately with other entities. In addition, the correspondence policy will assist Councils in directing their concerns to others most effectively and forestall any breach of department policy.

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Title VIII required the creation of Alaska's Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils to serve as advisors to the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture and to provide meaningful local participation in the management of fish and wildlife resources on Federal public lands. Within the framework of Title VIII and the Federal Advisory Committee Act, Congress assigned specific powers and duties to the Regional Advisory Councils. These are also reflected in the Councils' charters. *(Reference: ANILCA Title VIII §805, §808, and §810; Implementing regulations for Title VIII, 50 CFR 100 _.11 and 36 CFR 242 _.11; Implementing regulations for FACA, 41 CFR Part 102-3.70 and 3.75)*

The Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture created the Federal Subsistence Board and delegated to it the responsibility for managing fish and wildlife resources on Federal public lands. The Board was also given the duty of establishing rules and procedures for the operation of the Regional Advisory Councils. The Office of Subsistence Management was established within the Federal Subsistence Management Program's lead agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to administer the Program. *(Reference: 36 CFR Part 242 and 50 CFR Part 100 Subparts C and D)*

Policy

1. The subject matter of Council correspondence shall be limited to matters over which the Council has authority under §805(a)(3), §808, §810 of Title VIII, Subpart B §___.11(c) of regulation, and as described in the Council charters.

2. Councils may, and are encouraged to, correspond directly with the Board. The Councils are advisors to the Board.

3. Councils are urged to also make use of the annual report process to bring matters to the Board’s attention.

4. As a general rule, Councils discuss and agree upon proposed correspondence during a public meeting. Occasionally, a Council chair may be requested to write a letter when it is not feasible to wait until a public Council meeting. In such cases, the content of the letter shall be limited to the known position of the Council as discussed in previous Council meetings.

5. Except as noted in Items 6, 7, and 8 of this policy, Councils will transmit all correspondence to the Assistant Regional Director (ARD) of OSM for review prior to mailing. This includes, but is not limited to, letters of support, resolutions, letters offering comment or recommendations, and any other correspondence to any government agency or any tribal or private organization or individual.
    a. Recognizing that such correspondence is the result of an official Council action and may be urgent, the ARD will respond in a timely manner.
    b. Modifications identified as necessary by the ARD will be discussed with the Council chair. Councils will make the modifications before sending out the correspondence.

6. Councils may submit written comments requested by Federal land management agencies under ANILCA §810 or requested by regional Subsistence Resource Commissions (SRC) under §808 directly to the requesting agency. Section 808 correspondence includes comments and information solicited by the SRCs and notification of appointment by the Council to an SRC.

7. Councils may submit proposed regulatory changes or written comments regarding proposed regulatory changes affecting subsistence uses within their regions to the Alaska Board of Fisheries or the Alaska Board of Game directly. A copy of any comments or proposals will be forwarded to the ARD when the original is submitted.

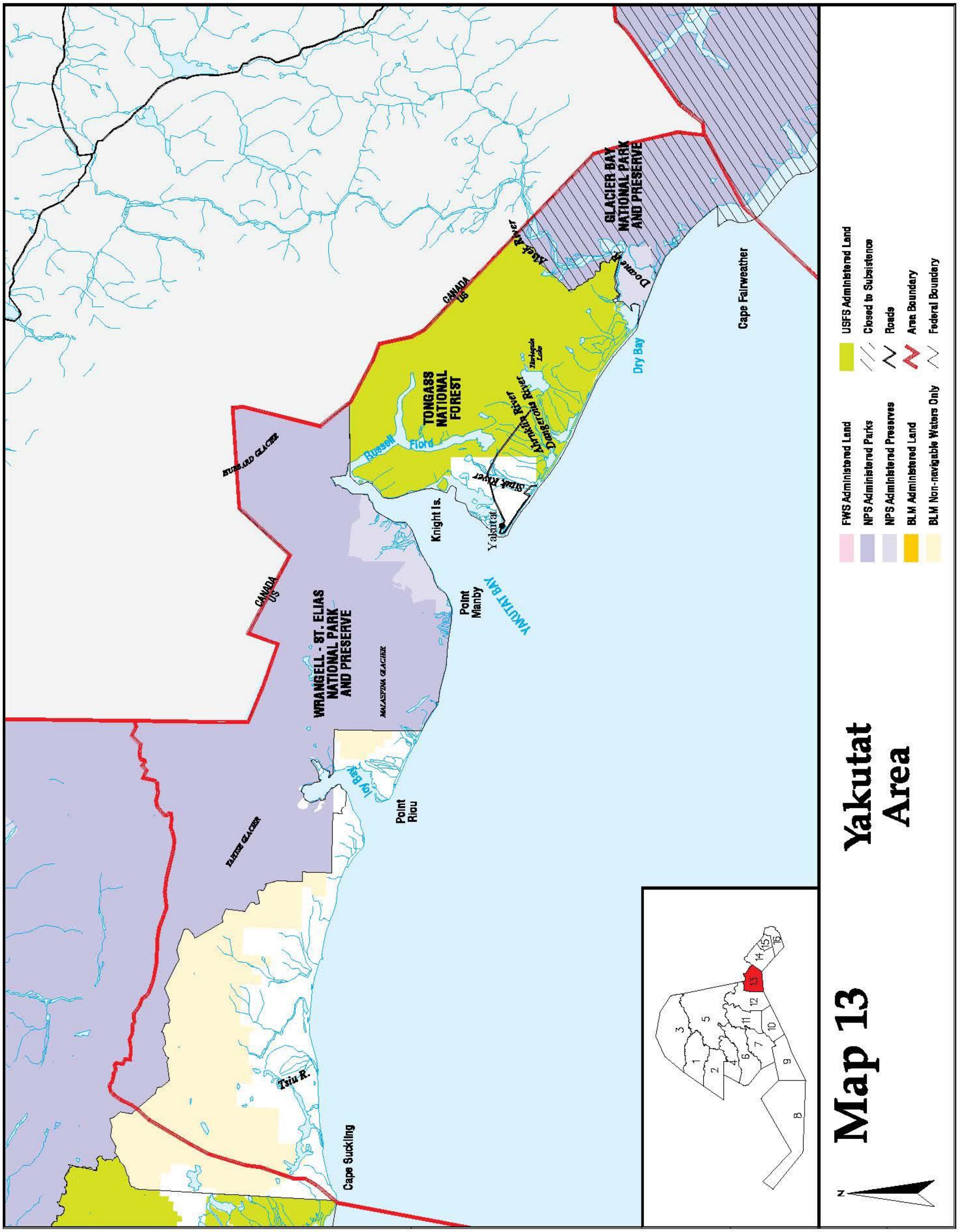
8. Administrative correspondence such as letters of appreciation, requests for agency reports at Council meetings, and cover letters for meeting agendas will go through the Council's regional coordinator to the appropriate OSM division chief for review.

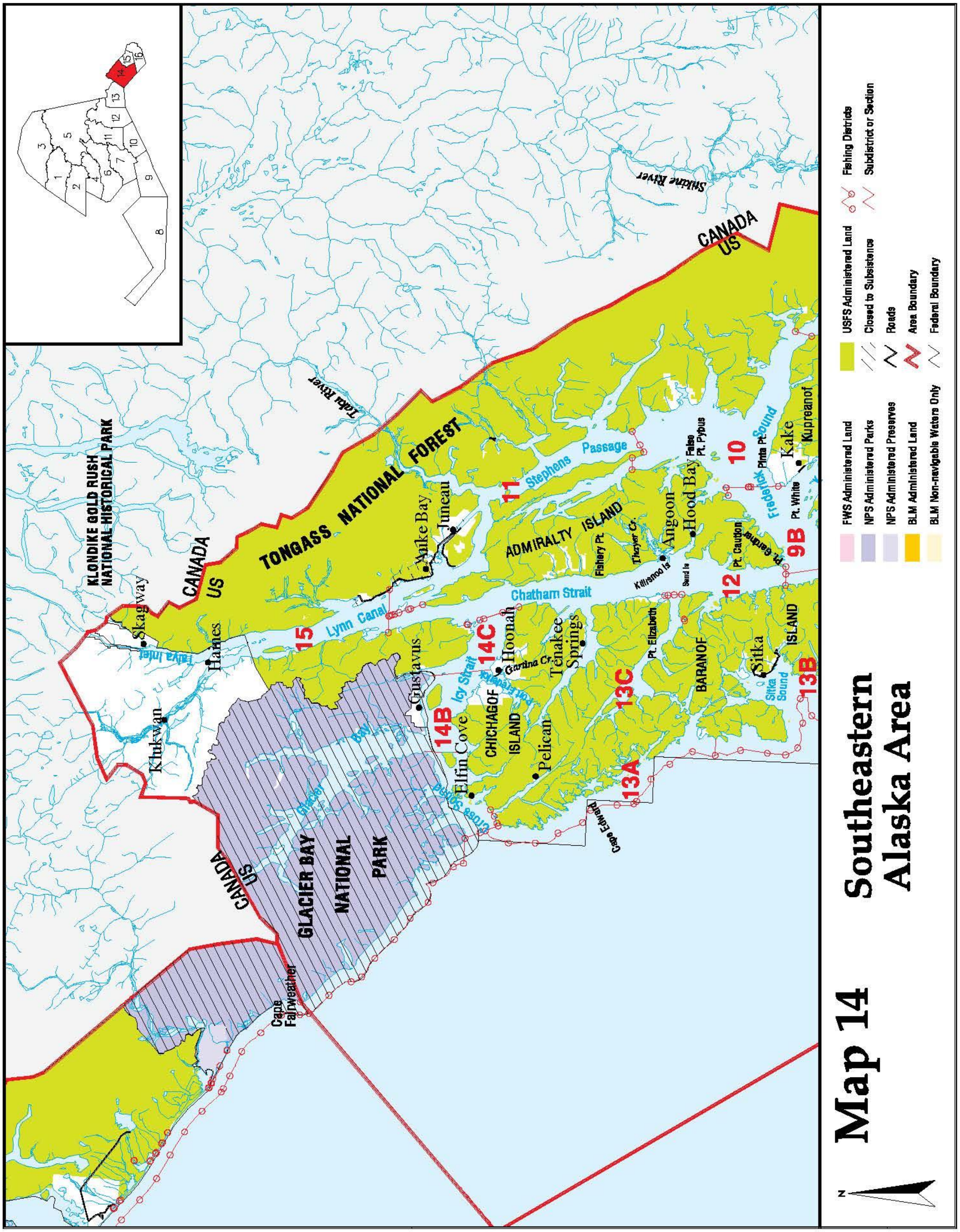
9. Councils will submit copies of all correspondence generated by and received by them to OSM to be filed in the administrative record system.

10. Except as noted in Items 6, 7, and 8, Councils or individual Council members acting on behalf of or as representative of the Council may not, through correspondence or any other means of communication, attempt to persuade any elected or appointed political officials, any government agency, or any tribal or private organization or individual to take a particular action on an issue. This does not prohibit Council members from acting in their capacity as private citizens or through other organizations with which they are affiliated.

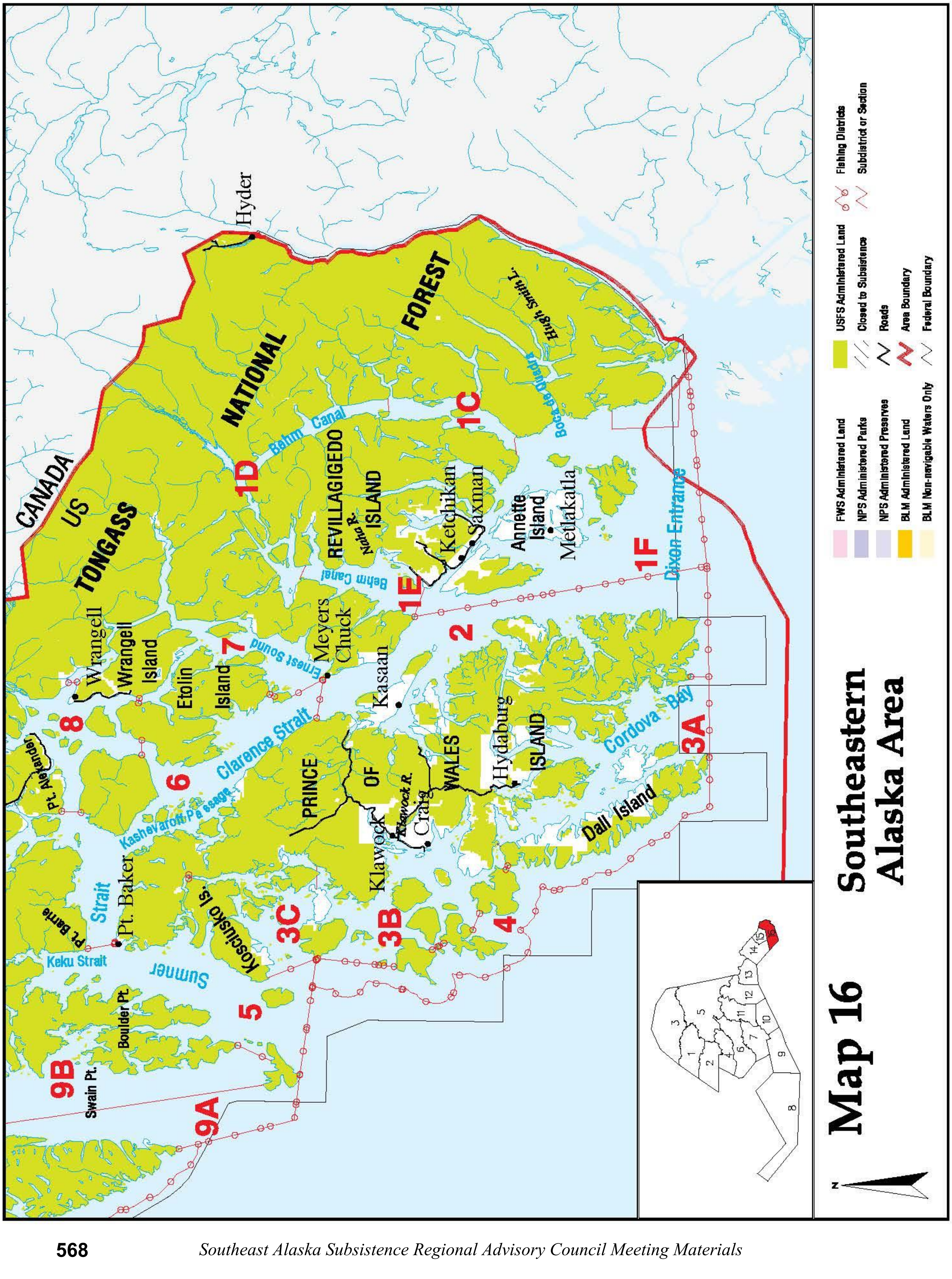
Approved by the Federal Subsistence Board on June 15, 2004.


GULF OF ALASKA
NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN
DIXON ENTRANCE
WRANGELL - ST. ELIAS NATIONAL PARK
MALASPINA GLACIER
5B
TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST
5A
WRANGELL - ST. ELIAS NATIONAL PRESERVE
GLACIER BAY NATIONAL PRESERVE
GLACIER BAY NATIONAL PARK
1D
1C
1B
1A
2
3
4
KLONDIKE GOLD RUSH NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
SITKA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
MISTY FJORDS NATIONAL MONUMENT
ALASKA MARITIME NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
WHITEHORSE
Juneau
Ketchikan
Sitka
Petersburg
Wrangell
Prince Rupert
Miles
0 20 40 60 80 100
Region 1
Southeast
Federal Public Lands Open to Subsistence Use
FWS Administered Land
NPS Administered Park
NPS Admin'd Preserve
BLM Administered Land
USFS Administered Land
Selected - Not Conveyed
Closed to Subsistence
Special Management Areas
Region Boundaries
Game Management Units

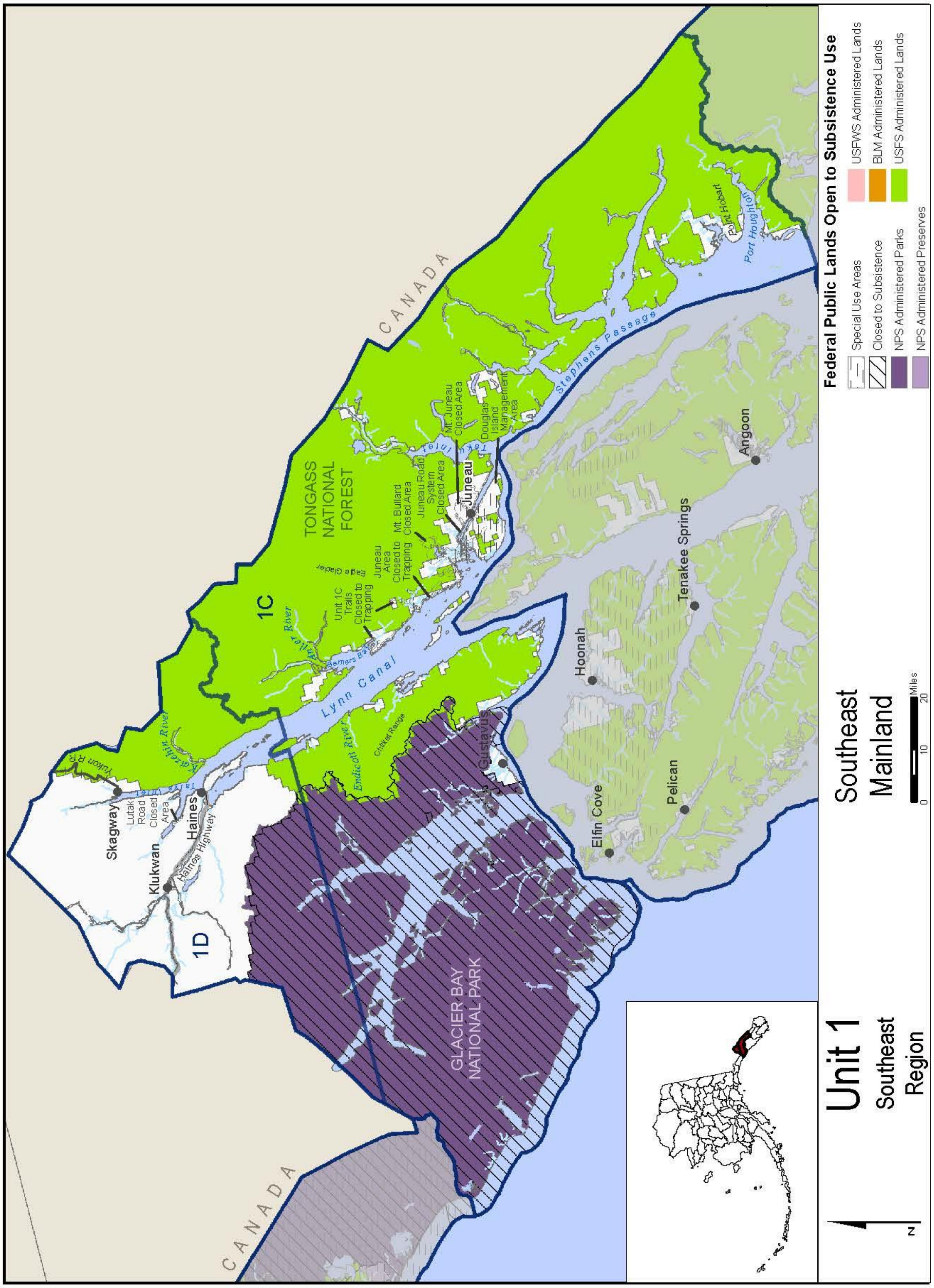

Map 13
Yakutat Area
FWS Administered Land
NPS Administered Parks
NPS Administered Preserves
BLM Administered Land
BLM Non-navigable Waters Only
USFS Administered Land
Closed to Subsistence
Roads
Area Boundary
Federal Boundary
GLACIER BAY NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE
TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST
WRANGELL - ST. ELIAS NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE
CANADA
US
Alsek River
Doame R.
Cape Fairweather
Dry Bay
Dangerous River
Situk River
Russell Fiord
Knight Is.
Yakutat
YAKUTAT BAY
Point Manby
MALASPINA GLACIER
HUBBARD GLACIER
YAHTSE GLACIER
Icy Bay
Point Riou
Tsiu R.
Cape Suckling

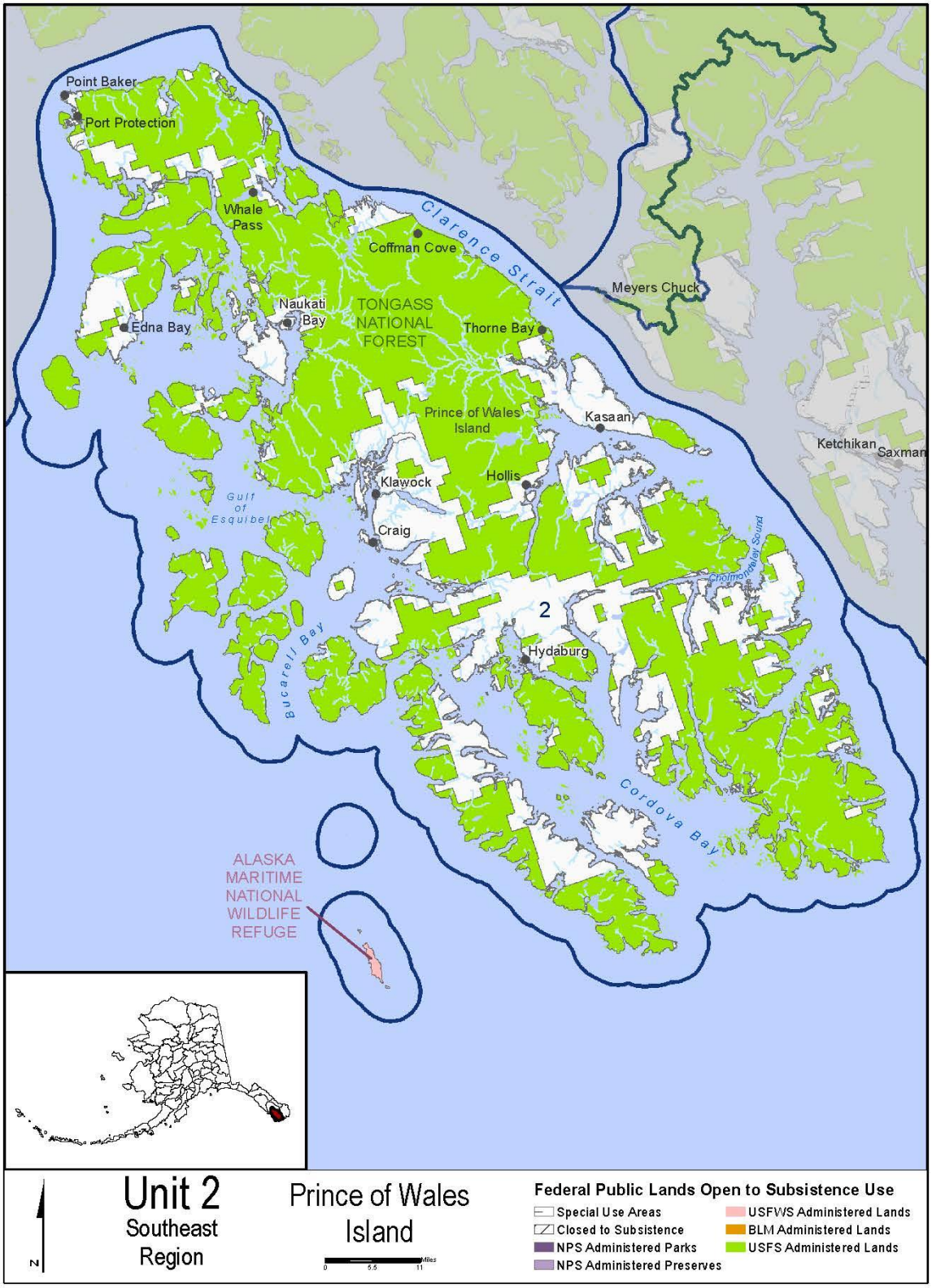

Map 14
Southeastern Alaska Area
KLONDIKE GOLD RUSH NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST
GLACIER BAY NATIONAL PARK
CANADA
US
ADMIRALTY ISLAND
CHICHAGOF ISLAND
BARANOF ISLAND
Lynn Canal
Chatham Strait
Stephens Passage
Icy Strait
Frederick Sound
Sitka Sound
Taku River
Stikine River
Taiya Inlet
Skagway
Haines
Klukwan
Gustavus
Juneau
Auke Bay
Hoonah
Tenakee Springs
Pelican
Elfin Cove
Angoon
Hood Bay
Sitka
Kake
Kupreanof
Cape Fairweather
Cape Edward
False Pt. Pybus
Pt. Gardner
Pt. Caution
Pt. White
Pt. Elizabeth
Fishery Pt.
Killisnoo Is.
15
14B
14C
13A
13B
13C
12
11
10
9B
FWS Administered Land
NPS Administered Parks
NPS Administered Preserves
BLM Administered Land
BLM Non-navigable Waters Only
USFS Administered Land
Closed to Subsistence
Roads
Area Boundary
Federal Boundary
Fishing Districts
Subdistrict or Section
N

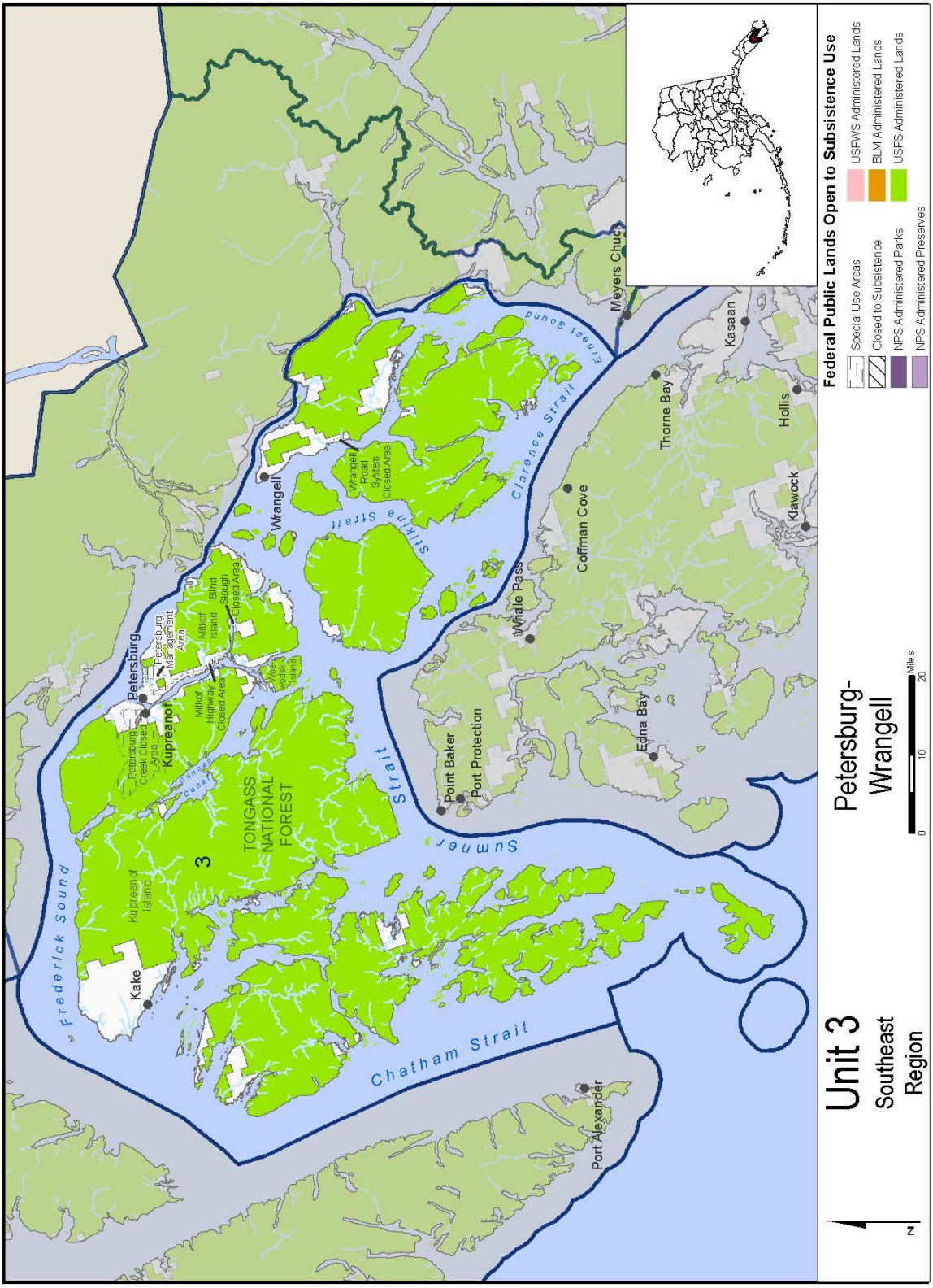

14C
Hoonah
Gartina Cr.
Tenakee Springs
Chatham Strait
11
Stephens Passage
Fishery Pt.
Thayer Cr.
Killisnoo Is.
Pt. Elizabeth
13C
Angoon
Hood Bay
Sand Is.
False Pt. Pybus
12
Pt. Caution
BARANOF ISLAND
Sitka
Pt. Gardner
Frederick Sound
10
Pinta Pt.
Pt. White
Portage Bay
Kake
Kupreanof
9B
Kuiu Island
13B
Chatham Strait
Island
Petersburg
LeConte Bay
Mitkof Island
8
Pt. Alexander
Kuiu Strait
Pt. Barrie
Swain Pt.
Boulder Pt.
Pt. Baker
Strait
Wrangell
Wrangell Island
Kashevarof Passage
6
Etolin Island
9A
Sumner
Kosciusko Is.
5
7
Clarence Strait
Ernest Sound
1D
Behm Canal
3C
PRINCE OF WALES
Meyers Chuck
REVILLAGIGEDO ISLAND
Klawock
Klawock R.
Craig
Kasaan
3B
1E
Ketchikan
Saxman
1C
2
Hydaburg
4
Annette Island
1F
Metlakatla
CANADA
US
TONGASS
NATIONAL FOREST
Stikine River
Map 15
Southeastern Alaska Area
N
FWS Administered Land
NPS Administered Parks
NPS Administered Preserves
BLM Administered Land
BLM Non-navigable Waters Only
USFS Administered Land
Closed to Subsistence
Roads
Area Boundary
Federal Boundary
Fishing Districts
Subdistrict or Section

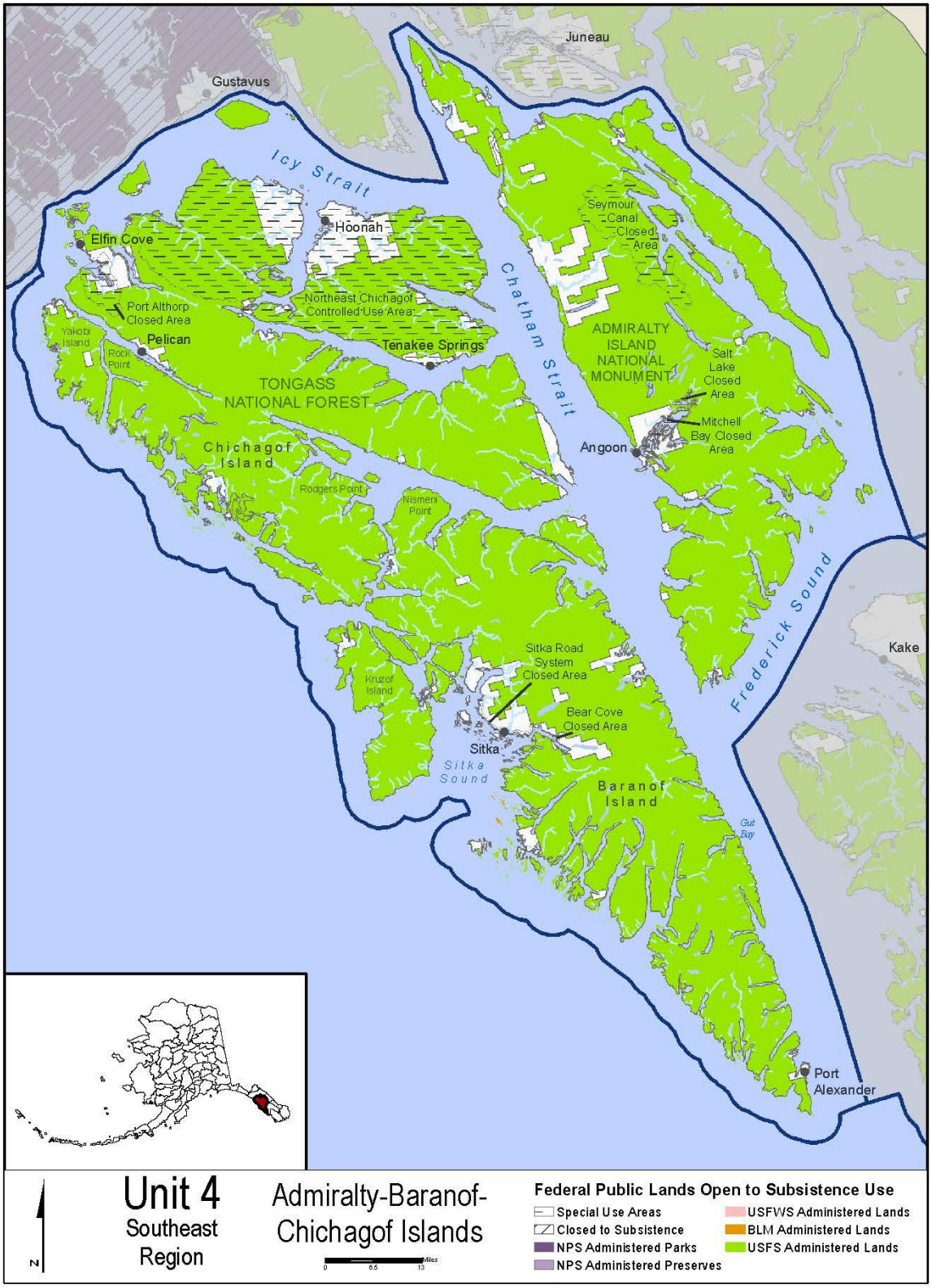

Map 16
Southeastern Alaska Area
CANADA
US
TONGASS
NATIONAL
FOREST
Hyder
REVILLAGIGEDO
ISLAND
Behm Canal
Naha R.
Ketchikan
Saxman
Annette
Island
Metlakatla
Dixon Entrance
Hugh Smith L.
Boca de Quadra
Wrangell
Wrangell
Island
Etolin
Island
Ernest Sound
Meyers
Chuck
Kasaan
Clarence Strait
PRINCE
OF
WALES
ISLAND
Hydaburg
Klawock R.
Klawock
Craig
Cordova Bay
Dall Island
Kashevarof Passage
Pt. Alexander
Pt. Baker
Pt. Barrie
Strait
Keku Strait
Sumner
Kosciusko Is.
Boulder Pt.
Swain Pt.
1C
1D
1E
1F
2
3A
3B
3C
4
5
6
7
8
9A
9B
FWS Administered Land
NPS Administered Parks
NPS Administered Preserves
BLM Administered Land
BLM Non-navigable Waters Only
USFS Administered Land
Closed to Subsistence
Roads
Area Boundary
Federal Boundary
Fishing Districts
Subdistrict or Section
N

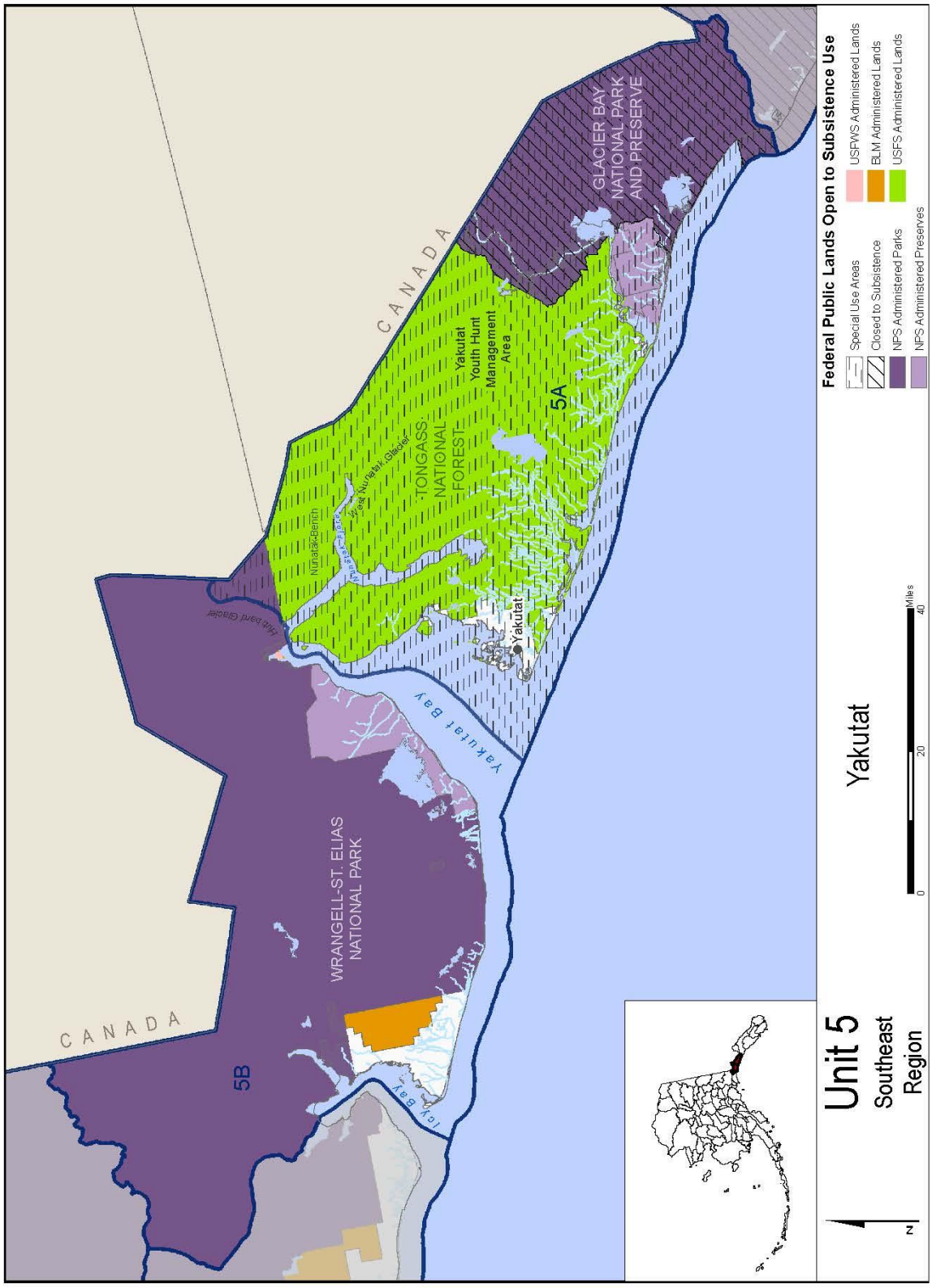

1B
1A
CANADA
Kupreanof
Petersburg
LeConte Bay
Stikine River
Wrangell
Anan Creek Closed Area
Hyder Salmon River Closed Area
Hyder
Point Baker
Port Protection
Whale Pass
Coffman Cove
Edna Bay
Naukati Bay
Thorne Bay
Kasaan
Klawock
Hollis
Craig
Hydaburg
Revillagigedo Island
Behm Canal
Margaret Creek Closed Area
MISTY FJORDS NATIONAL MONUMENT
Ketchikan Road System Closed Area
Cleveland Peninsula
Clarence Strait
Ketchikan
Saxman
Metlakatla
Unit 1
Southeast Region
Southeast Mainland
Miles
0 5 10
N
Federal Public Lands Open to Subsistence Use
Special Use Areas
Closed to Subsistence
NPS Administered Parks
NPS Administered Preserves
USFWS Administered Lands
BLM Administered Lands
USFS Administered Lands


Unit 1
Southeast Region
Southeast Mainland
Federal Public Lands Open to Subsistence Use
Special Use Areas
Closed to Subsistence
NPS Administered Parks
NPS Administered Preserves
USFWS Administered Lands
BLM Administered Lands
USFS Administered Lands
Miles
0
10
20
N
CANADA
CANADA
TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST
GLACIER BAY NATIONAL PARK
1C
1D
Lynn Canal
Stephens Passage
Port Houghton
Point Hobart
Skagway
Haines
Klukwan
Haines Highway
Lutak Road Closed Area
Juneau
Gustavus
Elfin Cove
Pelican
Hoonah
Tenakee Springs
Angoon
Unit 1C Trails Closed to Trapping
Juneau Area Closed to Trapping
Mt. Bullard Closed Area
Juneau Road System Closed Area
Mt. Juneau Closed Area
Douglas Island Management Area
Eagle Glacier
Berners Bay
Endicott River
Chilkat Range
Taku Inlet
Yukon R.R.


Point Baker
Port Protection
Whale Pass
Coffman Cove
Clarence Strait
Meyers Chuck
Naukati Bay
TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST
Edna Bay
Thorne Bay
Prince of Wales Island
Kasaan
Ketchikan
Saxman
Klawock
Hollis
Craig
Gulf of Esquibel
Cholmondeley Sound
2
Hydaburg
Bucarell Bay
Cordova Bay
ALASKA MARITIME NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
N
Unit 2
Southeast Region
Prince of Wales Island
Miles
0
5.5
11
Federal Public Lands Open to Subsistence Use
Special Use Areas
Closed to Subsistence
NPS Administered Parks
NPS Administered Preserves
USFWS Administered Lands
BLM Administered Lands
USFS Administered Lands


Unit 3
Southeast
Region
Petersburg-
Wrangell
Miles
0
10
20
N
Federal Public Lands Open to Subsistence Use
Special Use Areas
Closed to Subsistence
NPS Administered Parks
NPS Administered Preserves
USFWS Administered Lands
BLM Administered Lands
USFS Administered Lands
Frederick Sound
Chatham Strait
Sumner Strait
Stikine Strait
Clarence Strait
Frosti Sound
TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST
3
Petersburg
Kupreanof
Kupreanof Island
Kake
Wrangell
Meyers Chuck
Kasaan
Thorne Bay
Hollis
Klawock
Coffman Cove
Whale Pass
Point Baker
Port Protection
Edna Bay
Port Alexander
Petersburg Creek Closed Area
Petersburg Management Area
Mitkof Island Highway Closed Area
Mitkof Island Blind Slough Closed Area
Wrangell Road System Closed Area
Woewodski Island
Duncan Canal


Juneau
Gustavus
Icy Strait
Hoonah
Elfin Cove
Port Althorp Closed Area
Pelican
Yakobi Island
Rock Point
Northeast Chichagof Controlled Use Area
Tenakee Springs
TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST
Chichagof Island
Rodgers Point
Nismeni Point
Seymour Canal Closed Area
Chatham Strait
ADMIRALTY ISLAND NATIONAL MONUMENT
Salt Lake Closed Area
Mitchell Bay Closed Area
Angoon
Frederick Sound
Kake
Sitka Road System Closed Area
Kruzof Island
Bear Cove Closed Area
Sitka
Sitka Sound
Baranof Island
Gut Bay
Port Alexander
N
Unit 4
Southeast Region
Admiralty-Baranof-Chichagof Islands
0 6.5 13 Miles
Federal Public Lands Open to Subsistence Use
Special Use Areas
Closed to Subsistence
NPS Administered Parks
NPS Administered Preserves
USFWS Administered Lands
BLM Administered Lands
USFS Administered Lands


CANADA
GLACIER BAY NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE
TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST
Yakutat Youth Hunt Management Area
5A
Yakutat
Yakutat Bay
WRANGELL-ST. ELIAS NATIONAL PARK
5B
CANADA
Icy Bay
Federal Public Lands Open to Subsistence Use
Special Use Areas
Closed to Subsistence
NPS Administered Parks
NPS Administered Preserves
USFWS Administered Lands
BLM Administered Lands
USFS Administered Lands
Miles
0
20
40
N
Unit 5
Southeast
Region
Yakutat

Department of the Interior
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Charter

1. **Committee's Official Designation.** The Council's official designation is the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council).

2. **Authority.** The Council is renewed by virtue of the authority set out in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) (16 U.S.C. 3115 (1988)) Title VIII, and under the authority of the Secretary of the Interior, in furtherance of 16 U.S.C. 410hh-2. The Council is regulated by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, (5 U.S.C. Appendix 2).

3. **Objectives and Scope of Activities.** The objective of the Council is to provide a forum for the residents of the Region with personal knowledge of local conditions and resource requirements to have a meaningful role in the subsistence management of fish and wildlife on Federal lands and waters in the Region.

4. **Description of Duties.** Council duties and responsibilities, where applicable, are as follows:

   a. Recommend the initiation, review, and evaluation of proposals for regulations, policies, management plans, and other matters relating to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on public lands within the Region.

   b. Provide a forum for the expression of opinions and recommendations by persons interested in any matter related to the subsistence uses of fish and wildlife one public lands within the Region.

   c. Encourage local and regional participation in the decision-making process affecting the taking of fish and wildlife on the public lands within the region for subsistence uses.

   d. Prepare an annual report to the Secretary containing the following:

      (1) An identification of current and anticipated subsistence uses of fish and wildlife populations within the Region;

      (2) An evaluation of current and anticipated subsistence needs for fish and wildlife populations within the Region;

(3)A recommended strategy for the management of fish and wildlife populations within the Region to accommodate such subsistence uses and needs; and

(4)Recommendations concerning policies, standards, guidelines, and regulations to implement the strategy.

e. Appoint one member to the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission in accordance with section 808 of the ANILCA.

f. Make recommendations on determinations of customary and traditional use of subsistence resources.

g. Make recommendations on determinations of rural status.

h. Provide recommendations on the establishment and membership of Federal local advisory committees.

i. Provide recommendations for implementation of Secretary's Order 3347: Conservation Stewardship and Outdoor Recreation, and Secretary's Order 3356: Hunting, Fishing, Recreational Shooting, and Wildlife Conservation Opportunities and Coordination with States, Tribes, and Territories. Recommendations shall include, but are not limited to:

(1)Assessing and quantifying implementation of the Secretary's Orders, and recommendations to enhance and expand their implementation as identified;

(2)Policies and programs that:

(a)increase outdoor recreation opportunities for all Americans, with a focus on engaging youth, veterans, minorities, and other communities that traditionally have low participation in outdoor recreation;

(b)expand access for hunting and fishing on Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service lands in a manner that respects the rights and privacy of the owners of non-public lands;e

(c)increase energy, transmission, infrastructure, or other relevant projects while avoiding or minimizing potential negative impacts on wildlife; and

(d)ecreate greater collaboration with States, Tribes, and/or Territories.

j. Provide recommendations for implementation of the regulatory reform initiatives and policies specified in section 2 of Executive Order 13777: Reducing

Regulation and Controlling Regulatory Costs; Executive Order 12866: Regulatory Planning and Review, as amended; and section 6 of Executive Order 13563: Improving Regulation and Regulatory Review. Recommendations shall include, but are not limited to:

Identifying regulations for repeal, replacement, or modification considering, at a minimum, those regulations that:

(1)eliminate jobs, or inhibit job creation;

(2)are outdated, unnecessary, or ineffective;

(3)impose costs that exceed benefits;

(4)create a serious inconsistency or otherwise interfere with regulatory reform initiative and policies;

(5)rely, in part or in whole, on data or methods that are not publicly available or insufficiently transparent to meet the standard for reproducibility; or

(6)derive from or implement Executive Orders or other Presidential and Secretarial directives that have been subsequently rescinded or substantially modified.

All current and future Executive Orders, Secretary's Orders, and Secretarial Memos should be included for discussion and recommendations as they are released. At the conclusion of each meeting or shortly thereafter, provide a detailed recommendation meeting report, including meeting minutes, to the Designated Federal Officer (DFO).

5. **Agency or Official to Whom the Council Reports.** The Council reports to the Federal Subsistence Board Chair, who is appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.

6. **Support.** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will provide administrative support for the activities of the Council through the Office of Subsistence Management.

7. **Estimated Annual Operating Costs and Staff Years.** The annual operating costs associated with supporting the Council's functions are estimated to be $195,000, including all direct and indirect expenses and 1.15 Federal staff years.

8. **Designated Federal Officer.** The DFO is the Subsistence Council Coordinator for the Region or such other Federal employee as may be designated by the Assistant Regional Director – Subsistence, Region 11, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The DFO is a full-time Federal employee appointed in accordance with Agency procedures. The DFO will:

(a)Approve or call all Council and subcommittee meetings;

(b)Prepare and approve all meeting agendas;

(c)Attend all committee and subcommittee meetings;

(d)Adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines adjournment to be in the public interest; and

(e)Chair meetings when directed to do so by the official to whom the advisory committee reports.

9. **Estimated Number and Frequency of Meetings.** The Council will meet 1-2 times per year, and at such times as designated by the Federal Subsistence Board Chair or the DFO.

10. **Duration.** Continuing.

11. **Termination.** The Council will be inactive 2 years from the date the charter is filed, unless prior to that date, the charter is renewed in accordance with the provisions of section 14 of the FACA. The Council will not meet or take any action without a valid current charter.

12. **Membership and Designation.** The Council's membership is composed of representative members as follows:

Thirteen members who are knowledgeable and experienced in matters relating to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife and who are residents of the region represented by the Council.

To ensure that each Council represents a diversity of interests, the Federal Subsistence Board in their nomination recommendations to the Secretary will strive to ensure that nine of the members (70 percent) represent subsistence interests within the region and four of the members (30 percent) represent commercial and sport interests within the region. The portion of membership representing commercial and sport interests must include, where possible, at least one representative from the sport community and one representative from the commercial community.

The Secretary of the Interior will appoint members based on the recommendations from the Federal Subsistence Board and with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.

Members will be appointed for 3-year terms. Members serve at the discretion of the Secretary.

Alternate members may be appointed to the Council to fill vacancies if they occur out of cycle. An alternate member must be approved and appointed by the Secretary before attending the meeting as a representative. The term for an appointed alternate member will be the same as the term of the member whose vacancy is being filled.

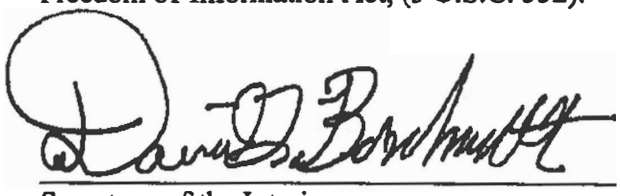
Council members will elect a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary for a 1-year term.

Members of the Council will serve without compensation. However, while away from their homes or regular places of business, Council and subcommittee members engaged in Council, or subcommittee business, approved by the DFO, may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in the same manner as persons employed intermittently in Government service under section 5703 of title 5 of the United States Code.

13. **Ethics Responsibilities of Members.** No Council or subcommittee member will participate in any Council or subcommittee deliberations or votes relating to a specific party matter before the Department or its bureaus and offices including a lease, license, permit, contract, grant, claim, agreement, or litigation in which the member or the entity the member represents has a direct financial interest.

14. **Subcommittees.** Subject to the DFOs approval, subcommittees may be formed for the purpose of compiling information or conducting research. However, such subcommittees must act only under the direction of the DFO and must report their recommendations to the full Council for consideration. Subcommittees must not provide advice or work products directly to the Agency. Subcommittees will meet as necessary to accomplish their assignments, subject to the approval of the DFO and the availability of resources.

15. **Recordkeeping.** Records of the Council, and formally and informally established subcommittees or other subgroups of the Council, must be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 6.2, and other approved Agency records disposition schedule. These records must be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act, (5 U.S.C. 552).



Secretary of the Interior

DEC 12 2019
Date Signed

DEC 13 2019
Date Filed

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