



SEWARD PENINSULA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL Meeting Materials

*October 4-5, 2022
Nome*



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On the cover...

Aerial photo of Shishmaref



NPS, BELA photo

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SEWARD PENINSULA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Mini Convention Center

Nome, Alaska

October 4-5, 2022, beginning at 8:30 am

TELECONFERENCE: call the toll-free number: 1-866-617-1525, then when prompted enter the passcode: 54006314

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Public comments are welcome for each agenda item and for regional concerns not included on the agenda. The Council appreciates hearing your concerns and knowledge. Please fill out a comment form to be recognized by the Council chair. Time limits may be set to provide opportunity for all to testify and keep the meeting on schedule.

PLEASE NOTE: These are estimated times and the agenda is subject to change. Contact staff for the current schedule. Evening sessions are at the call of the chair.

AGENDA

*Asterisk identifies action item.

1. Invocation

2. Call to Order (*Chair*)

3. Roll Call and Establish Quorum (*Secretary*) 4

4. Welcome and Introductions (*Chair*)

5. Review and Adopt Agenda* (*Chair*) 1

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7. Reports

Council Member Reports

Chair’s Report

8. Service Awards

9. Public and Tribal Comment on Non-Agenda Items (available each morning)

10. Old Business (*Chair*)

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b. Board FY2021 Annual Report Replies – summary (*Council Coordinator*) 18

c. Special Actions

a. WSA22-01 Update (*OSM*)

b. FSA22-01/02/03/04 Update (*OSM*)

11. New Business (Chair)

a. Fisheries Proposals and Closure Reviews* (*OSM Fisheries/Anthropology*) 21

Crossover Proposals and Closure Reviews

 1. **FP23-02** Revise customary and traditional use determination for
 Yukon River Salmon 22

b. 2024 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (*OSM Fisheries/Anthropology*) 48

 1. Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program Overview

 2. 2024 Priority Information Needs*

c. 2024-2027 Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Notice of Funding Opportunity (*OSM Fisheries*)

 1. Call for the Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program proposals (*OSM Fisheries*) 54

d. Identify Issues for FY2022 Annual Report* (*Council Coordinator*) 55

e. Fall 2022 Council application/nomination open season (*Council Coordinator*)

f. Joint meeting: North American Caribou Workshop and Arctic Ungulate
 Conference in May 2023* (*OSM*) 57

g. Telephonic/internet expenses related to the Council teleconference meetings (*OSM*)

h. Harvest of Wildlife for Sport Purposes in National Preserves* (*NPS*)

i. State of Alaska Board of Fisheries/Board of Game Proposal Review

12. Agency Reports

(Time limit of 15 minutes unless approved in advance)

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Native Organizations

National Park Service

 Bering Land Bridge National Preserve

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 Anchorage Field Office 58

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Office of Subsistence Management

13. Future Meeting Dates*

Confirm winter 2023 meeting date and location (March 3-4, 2023: Nome) 66

Select fall 2023 meeting date and location 67

14. Closing Comments

15. Adjourn (*Chair*)

To call into the meeting, dial the toll-free number: 1- 866-617-1525, then when prompted enter the passcode: 54006314

Reasonable Accommodations

The Federal Subsistence Board is committed to providing access to this meeting for all participants. Please direct all requests for sign language interpreting services, closed captioning, or other accommodation to Nissa Pilcher, 907-455-1847, nissa_batespilcher@fws.gov, or 800-877-8339 (TTY), by close of business on September 23, 2022.

DRAFT

REGION 7
Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory
Council

Seat	Yr Apptd Term Expires	Member Name & Community	Represents
1	2021 2024	Mary Freytag Unalakleet	Subsistence
2	2022	VACANT	
3	2010 2022	Louis H. Green, Jr. Nome	Chair Subsistence
4	2003 2022	Tom L. Gray Nome	Vice-Chair Commercial/ Sport
5	2017 2023	Deahl D. Katchag Unalakleet	Subsistence
6	2016 2023	Leland H. Oyounick Unalakleet	Subsistence
7	2020 2023	Martin A. Aukongak Golovin	Subsistence
8	1994 2024	Elmer K. Seetot Jr. Brevig Mission	Secretary Subsistence
9	2021 2024	Robert F. Moses Sr. Golovin	Subsistence
10	2015 2024	Ronald D. Kirk Stebbins	Subsistence

SEWARD PENINSULA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Via Teleconference

March 3-4, 2022

Invocation

Elmer Seetot gave an invocation.

Call to Order, Roll Call and Quorum Establishment

The meeting was called to order Thursday, March 3 at 9:05 am. Council members Mary Freytag, Louis Green Jr., Leland Oyoumick, Martin Aukongak, Elmer Seetot, Jr., Robert Moses, Sr., and Ronald Kirk were present. Deahl Katchatag and Tom Gray were not present and were excused. The Council has one vacant seat. A quorum was established with seven of nine seated Council members participating by phone.

Attendees:

Via teleconference

- Katerina Wessels, Lisa Grediagin, Orville Lind, Nissa Pilcher, Jarrod Stone, Tom Plank, and Dr. Brent Vickers; Office of Subsistence Management (OSM), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Jeannette Koelsch, Nikki Braem, Letty Hughes, Ken Adkisson and Victoria Florey; National Park Service (NPS)
- Bruce Seppi, Walker Gussey and Chris McKee; Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Jennifer Bell, William (Bill) Dunker, Nicole Edmison and Mark Burch; Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G)
- Dr. Glenn Chen and Rosalie Debenham; Bureau of Indian Affairs

Review and Adopt Agenda

Motion by Mr. Aukongak, seconded by Mr. Seetot, to adopt the agenda with no changes other than the order.

The motion passed unanimously.

Election of Officers

Mr. Louis Green, Jr. was elected the Council's Chair

Mr. Tom Gray was elected the Council's Vice Chair

Mr. Elmer Seetot was elected the Council's Secretary

The Council approved all officers on an interim basis, with plans to hold elections again in the fall 2022 when they can conduct an in-person meeting.

Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion by Mr. Kirk, seconded by Mr. Seetot, to approve the fall 2021 meeting minutes as presented.

The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member and Chair Reports

Leland Oyoumick of Unalakleet reported that fishing was very poor this year. The silvers (Coho Salmon) never showed up in large numbers – there were more king (Chinook Salmon) than silvers this year. The Chum Salmon didn't show up either. There were a lot of Pink Salmon, and some smelt. The tom cod (Saffron Cod) numbers are down, and they are small or juveniles. Fall moose hunting was good, although he was unsure of how any bear hunters had fared. Mr. Oyoumick also noted the weather had been very inconsistent during the winter months with several warming events, including two separate heavy rainfalls.

Mary Freytag of Unalakleet reported that they received quite a bit of rain in December and January, a family member collected ten gallons of water during that time. Ms. Freytag also noted in response to concerns from other members about difficulties with local users being able to harvest moose that in the AHTNA region, the Tribal corporation was successful in getting a good portion of the moose allocation reserved for just Tribal use.

Ronald Kirk of Stebbins reported that the winter has been weird. The flats are full of ice and air pockets; the community is having to warn the younger hunters to be careful. It is very slippery and dangerous out there. Mr. Kirk noted that many in his community were unable to harvest moose when the season was open.

Robert Moses of Golovin reported that the weather in his community has been warm and cold, with a lot of wind, especially from the South, and some high water. There wasn't a lot of tom cod or smelt this year, and less silver, Pink, and Chum salmon. Some of the silver and Chum salmon didn't look very good and had boils and sores on them. Mr. Moses said that the community has been out moose hunting, and there has been no caribou. Last year people had to travel a long way to get any. He also noted that there has been a big decline in seal over the last four or five years. There used to be so many that the bay was black with them. The seals that are here are losing their fur, and their skin is the wrong color, and they sometimes have a really difficult time breathing. When the hunters run across these seals, they just leave them alone. Maybe it is tied to lack of food in the ocean. Mr. Moses noted that people say there are no tom cod anymore, which may be the primary source of food that brings the seals into this bay. People used to catch 500 to 1000 tom cods and they relied on that for winter subsistence foods, and maybe it was that way with the *oogruk* [bearded seal] population too.

Martin Aukongak of Golovin reported that there wasn't any caribou this year and that he had to travel to Wainwright last week. People have been getting moose in the fall and now during the January season. There were a lot of bears before freeze-up. Trapping has been slower than the previous year, but one trapper in town got a wolverine. Crabbing has been better, but a rain event just took place and that may

slow crabbing down or make people move their pots further out. There are a lot of rabbits (snowshoe hare) and he saw a squirrel two days ago, which is very early. Mr. Aukongak also stated that people are getting trout (Arctic char) at camp.

Elmer Seetot of Brevig Mission reported on some recent caribou movement in his area and noted that there was a good cold spell in December, with very strong winds from the north. There was good sea ice cover, which will be helpful for the birds who had a rough time last year. There were two rain events over the winter, and everything is now starting to melt very fast.

Louis Green of Nome reported he had similar weather events and experiences as others. The salmon runs were very poor, and he heard reports that the tom cod were late or just never came. The moose season in Unit 22D was a little longer than it has been. While his family got a moose there were many that didn't. A moratorium on the moose may be necessary to bring the population back up again like they did in Unalakleet; people need food, but it is very competitive out there for the moose. People can spend thousands of dollars to get out there and get out far enough and don't end up with a moose. He noted that he has not heard of any real considerable hunting of caribou out of Nome other than those hunters that travel a far distance. Beluga hunting seemed to be successful in the fall; he was unable to go out but heard good reports from those that were. There are a few subsistence crabbers out. There wasn't a commercial crabbing season this year or last due to lack of a buyer. He also reported that he was unsure of bear hunting in the area, but he didn't see any or any sign when he was out. Mr. Green thanked everyone for their reports, that these reports are important to have this information documented; it tells the tale, and it lets the managers know that the eyes on the ground are paying attention and that we are passing along information to them.

Old Business

WSA21-01a: Requesting closure of Federal public lands in Units 23 and 26A to caribou hunting by non-Federally qualified users from August 1 to September 30, 2022

Ms. Nichole Edminson, ADF&G, presented information on the Western Arctic Caribou Herd (WACH). The NPS was unable to give their report as their WACH biologist was currently conducting field work on this herd

Mr. Tom Plank presented on WSA21-01. The Council had questions on what was driving the population decline – predation/food/climate, as well as what the herd being in 'preservative management' means.

The Council also expressed concern over the lack of predator surveys and the lack of any proposed regulation changes made by the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group to State or Federal hunts

- Motion by Mr. Kirk, seconded by Mr. Aukongak, to support deferred special action request WSA21-01a as written. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.
- Justification is to support the Northwest Arctic Council's recommendations. The Council said that their region's users live off the same herd and the Council is backing its neighbors.

Review Joint Yukon Kuskokwim Delta, Western Interior, Eastern Interior, and Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Councils letter to the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC) on bycatch for review and adoption.

Ms. Katerina Wessels presented the Joint Councils' letter to the Council. The Council discussion focused around the origin of and percentage of hatchery raised salmon that are in the Bering Sea, actions of other Councils on this letter, past regional requests on Chinook and Chum salmon bycatch caps, what entity has jurisdiction on the Yukon River for fisheries management, concern over the high levels of bycatch occurring and how those fish are disposed of, and the desire to request a zero bycatch allocation for the trawl fishermen or call for a moratorium on trawl fishing for a period of time.

- Motion by Mr. Kirk, seconded by Ms. Freytag, to support the letter with the following amendments passed on a unanimous vote;
 - Reduce the Chinook Salmon bycatch to 10,000 fish,
 - Reduce the Chum Salmon bycatch to 150,000 fish,
 - Require that the two Tribal/subsistence seats on the NPFMC have no affiliation with a Community Development Quota fishery, and
 - Require that cameras be onboard ships 24/7 to serve as fisheries observers.

2021 Council Charter changes overview

Council had no discussion or questions after being given the overview

New Business

Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program Update

Mr. Jarred Stone presented the Council with the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program update. The priority information needs that the Council developed during the last cycle for the Seward Peninsula area are Chinook, Chum and Coho salmon abundance estimates for Boston, Fish, Paragon and Wagonwheel Rivers, Summer and fall Chum Salmon abundance estimates for the Agiapuk River drainage including American River and Igloo Creek, Chinook Salmon abundance estimates for the Unalakleet River, Chinook, Chum and Coho salmon abundance estimates for the Pigmiktalik River, and changes in Arctic Grayling, Dolly Varden, and Sheefish populations related to climate change.

Council questioned if any of these priority information needs will have a follow up. Mr. Stone provided information about the process and noted that none of these Seward Peninsula specific topics would be researched during the 2022 field season. Mr. Kirk and Council Chair Green both volunteered to view previous priority information needs from past cycles and discuss research concerns or local concerns with Mr. Stone during the summer 2022.

Call for Federal Fish and Shellfish Proposals

Mr. Stone informed the Council that the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) will be accepting proposals to change Federal regulations for the subsistence harvest of fish and shellfish on Federal public lands and waters for the 2023-2025 regulatory years for a period of at least 30 days upon the publication of the proposed rule in the Federal Register. The Board will consider proposals to change Federal subsistence

fish and shellfish seasons, harvest limits, methods, and means related to taking of fish for subsistence uses, as well as customary and traditional use determinations. The Council did not have any fish or shellfish proposals to submit currently.

Fisheries Closure Review Discussion

Mr. Stone presented to the Council the information on the Fisheries Closure Reviews that will come for Council's review and action during the fall 2022 meeting. The Council requested a brief list of the fisheries closures that will be under review for the fall 2022 meeting, which they received. None of the fisheries closures up for review are located in the Seward Peninsula Region, although there are three Yukon River drainage closures up for review in the Western Interior Region, where some Seward Peninsula residents have a customary and traditional use determination. Specifically, closures in Bonanza Creek, Kanuti River, and the Jim River will be reviewed.

Call for Non-rural Determination Proposals

Dr. Brent Vickers informed the Council that the Board will be accepting proposals to change non-rural determinations. The Council did not have any non-rural use proposals to submit currently.

Review and approve FY2021 annual report

Motion by Mr. Kirk, seconded by Mr. Moses, to approve the report as written. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Wildlife Special Action WSA22-01 Federal Muskox Permit System

Ms. Lisa Grediagin presented to the Council the analysis on WSA22-01a. Temporary Wildlife Special Action WSA22-01a, submitted by the BLM and the NPS, requests 1) changing the Federal muskox permit system in Units 22 and 23 from a Federal registration permit to a Federal drawing permit, and 2) standardizing language in the delegation of authority letters.

The Council had a lengthy discussion on this request. The Council asked OSM questions on when the Board will be taking up the request, why it wasn't put in under the regular wildlife cycle, the actual change to the current process if this request was to be adopted. Staff explained that this request will not change any current practice, but instead temporarily modify Federal regulations so that the current practices can be maintained until a regulatory fix can be implemented. The Council also received clarification on the different permitting types and how and where they are dispersed.

Motion by Mr. Kirk, seconded by Mr. Moses, to support WSA22-01. The motion passed on a unanimous vote. Justification was that the Council considered this a housekeeping request and recognized that the overharvest of muskox population is a concern. They felt administering the permit by random drawing to be the most equitable manner for distribution and would help protect the muskox population.

Fisheries temporary special action FSA22-01, -02, -03 and -04 requests for the Yukon River Chinook and Chum Salmon Fisheries

Dr. Vickers presented to the Council a synopsis on FSA22-01, -02, -03, and -04 as they were recently submitted, and a full analysis has not been conducted. The Council received clarification on the actions

of the two other Councils that had met and reviewed this special action requests; the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Council supported the request with an amendment to exclude the Black River and the Western Interior Council supported the request with an amendment to include Coho Salmon in the request. Motion by Mr. Kirk, seconded by Oyoumick, to support FSA22-01, -02, -03, and -04 with modifications requested by the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and the Western Interior Councils on a unanimous vote (the Eastern Interior Council had not yet met to discuss this request at the time of this meeting). Justification was to support the requestors as well as the other Councils' amendments.

Federal Subsistence Board Annual Report Reply Process Review and Revision Discussion and Council comments and feedback

Ms. Grediagin and Ms. Wessels presented to the Council information on the current report reply process. The Council had no comments to forward on at this time.

Receiving Public Testimony Protocol – Guided Discussion

Ms. Grediagin led the Council through the discussion. The Council had no comments.

Briefing and Council comments on proposed actions to automate Federal subsistence permits

Ms. Grediagin presented to the Council information on the Office of Management and Budget's exploration to automate Federal subsistence permits. The Council noted that not everyone has the luxury of having access to the internet, much less to computers and other equipment that would be necessary to apply and receive permits online but did not take formal action.

Briefing on the Secretarial regulations proposing the inclusion of identified submerged lands in the Tongass National Forest

Ms. Grediagin presented to the Council information on this topic. The Council had no comments.

Agency Reports:

- Bering Land Bridge Preserve Report presented by Letty Hughes, Wildlife Biologist, and Nichole Braem, Cultural Anthropologist, NPS
- Bureau of Land Management Report presented by Tom Sparks, Wildlife Biologist, Anchorage Field Office, BLM
- Office of Subsistence Management Report presented by Lisa Grediagin, Wildlife Division Lead, OSM

Future Meeting Dates:

Fall meeting dates confirmed for October 4-5, 2022, in Nome
Winter meeting dates selected are March 22-23, 2023, in Nome

Nissa Pilcher, Subsistence Council Coordinator for Katerina Wessels, Designated Federal Officer
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management

Louis Green Jr., Chair
Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These minutes will be formally considered by Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council at its fall 2022 meeting, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes at that meeting.

A more detailed report of this meeting, copies of the transcript, and meeting handouts are available upon request. Call Nissa Pilcher at 1-800-478-1456 or (907)891-9054, email nissa_batespilcher@fws.gov.

DRAFT



Federal Subsistence Board

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



FISH and WILDLIFE SERVICE
BUREAU of LAND MANAGEMENT
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
BUREAU of INDIAN AFFAIRS

FOREST SERVICE

AUG 26 2022

In Reply Refer To
OSM 22088.NP

Louis Green Jr., Chairman
Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
c/o Office of Subsistence Management
1011 W, Tutor Road, M/S 121
Anchorage, AK 99503-6199

Dear Chairman Green:

The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) met on April 12-15, 2022 to consider proposed changes to Federal subsistence management regulations for the harvest of wildlife on Federal Public Lands in Alaska and wildlife closure reviews. This letter is to provide a report on the actions taken by the Board on proposals and closure reviews affecting Federally qualified subsistence users.

Pursuant to section 805(c) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), Federal regulations (50 CFR 100.10 (e)) provides that the Board will defer to the recommendations of a Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) regarding take unless, (1) the recommendation is not supported by substantial evidence, (2) the recommendation violates recognized principles of fish and wildlife management, or (3) adopting the recommendation would be detrimental to the satisfaction of subsistence needs. When a Council's recommendation is not adopted, the Board is required by Secretarial regulations to set forth the factual basis and reasons for the decision.

The Board acted on 59 proposals and 16 closure reviews for the 2022-24 wildlife regulatory cycle. The Board agreed with the recommendations of the Councils, in whole or with modifications, on 50 of 59 proposals. The Board deferred four proposals until the winter 2023 Board meeting: WP22-07, WP22-08, WP22-10, and WP22-40. The Board accepted the recommendations of the Councils on 15 of 16 wildlife closure reviews, voting to maintain status quo on 14 of them. Furthermore, the Board also on deferred fisheries proposal FP21-10, adopting it with the Office of Subsistence Management modification.

Details of these actions and the Boards' deliberations are contained in the meeting transcriptions. Copies of the transcripts may be obtained by calling toll free number 1-800-478-1456 and are available online at the Federal Subsistence Management Program website, <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/library/transcripts/federal-subsistence-board>.

The Board uses a consensus agenda on those proposals and closure reviews where there is agreement among the affected Council(s), a majority of the Interagency Staff Committee, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game concerning a proposed regulatory action. These proposals and closure reviews were deemed non-controversial and did not require a discussion. The consensus agenda contained two proposals and two closure reviews affecting the Seward Peninsula Region. The Board *adopted* **WP22-42**, which increased the moose harvest limit in Unit 18 remainder to 3 moose, and **WP22-48**, which modified the boundary between two hunt areas in Unit 22A. The Board voted to *maintain status quo* on **WCR22-09c**, which reviewed the closure to moose hunting by non-Federally qualified users from Oct. 1-Aug. 31 in Unit 22A remainder, and **WCR22-16**, which reviewed the closure to moose hunting by non-Federally qualified users in Unit 22E.

The remaining seven proposals and six closure reviews affecting the Seward Peninsula Region appeared on the non-consensus agenda. The Board took action consistent with the Council's recommendations on five of the proposals and five of the closure reviews. The Board *adopted* statewide proposals **WP22-01**, which clarified who is and who is not a participant in a community harvest system and how participation affects community and individual harvest limits, and **WP22-02**, which removed language from designated hunting regulations prohibiting the use of a designated hunter permit by a member of a community operating under a community harvest system. The Board adopted proposal **WP22-41**, which delegated authority to the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge manager to open and close seasons, announce harvest limits, and set sex restrictions across the range of the Mulchatna Caribou Herd via a delegation of authority letter. The Board *adopted with modification* **WP22-45**, which revised harvest regulations for Alaska hare, including shortening the season to Aug. 1-May 31 and modifying the definition of hare; and **WP22-50**, which removed the harvest limit for beaver in Unit 23.

The Board also voted to *maintain status quo* on **WCR22-11**, which reviewed the closure to moose hunting by non-Federally qualified users in Unit 22B west of the Darby Mountains during the fall season, **WCR22-12**, which reviewed the closure to moose hunting except by residents of White Mountain and Golovin in Unit 22B west of the Darby Mountains during the winter season, **WCR22-13**, which reviewed the closure to moose hunting except by residents of Units 22C and 22D in Unit 22D within the Kougarok, Kuzitrin, and Pilgrim River drainages, **WCR22-14**, which reviewed the closure to moose hunting except by residents of Units 22C and 22D in Unit 22D west of the Tisuk River drainage and Canyon Creek, and **WCR22-45**, which reviewed the closure to caribou hunting by non-Federally qualified users in a portion of Unit 23.

The Board's actions differed from the Council's recommendations for two proposals and a closure review on the non-consensus agenda: **WP22-47**, **WP22-49**, and **WCR22-09b**. The Board's actions on these proposals and closure review are explained in detail in the enclosed report.

The Federal Subsistence Board appreciates your Council's active involvement in and diligence with the regulatory process. The ten Regional Advisory Councils continue to be the foundation of the Federal Subsistence Management Program, and the stewardship shown by the Regional Advisory Council chairs and their representatives at the Board meeting is noteworthy.

If you have any questions regarding the summary of the Board's actions, please contact Nissa Pilcher, Council Coordinator, at 907-891-9054 or nissa_batespilcher@fws.gov.

Sincerely,



Anthony Christianson, Chair
Federal Subsistence Board

Enclosure

cc: Federal Subsistence Board
Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council members
Office of Subsistence Management
Interagency Staff Committee
Administrative Record

FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD 805(c) REPORT

April 12-15, 2022
via teleconference

Section 805(c) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act provides that the “Secretary ... shall consider the report and recommendations of the regional advisory councils concerning the taking of fish and wildlife on the public lands within their respective regions for subsistence uses.” The Secretary has delegated authority to issue regulations for the take of fish and wildlife to the Federal Subsistence Board. Pursuant to this language in Section 805(c), the Board generally defers to the Council’s recommendations. However, Section 805(c) also provides that the Board “may choose not to follow any recommendations which [it] determines is not supported by substantial evidence, violates recognized principles of fish and wildlife conservation, or would be detrimental to the satisfaction of subsistence needs.” The purpose of this report is to detail how the Board’s action differed from the Council’s recommendations based on these criteria.

SEWARD PENINSULA AREA WILDLIFE PROPOSALS

Regional Proposals

Wildlife Proposal WP22-47

DESCRIPTION: WP22-47 requested that calf harvest be permitted for caribou in Unit 22.
Submitted by: Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS:

Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council – **Support**

Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council – **Support**

Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council – **Support**

Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council – **Oppose**

North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council – **Support with modification** to only allow harvest of orphaned calves.

BOARD ACTION: **Reject**

JUSTIFICATION: The Board stated that the Western Arctic Caribou Management Plan, which recommends a prohibition on calf harvest when the herd is under preservative management should be adhered to. This proposal would have violated recognized principles of fish and wildlife conservation per the harvest recommendations in the Western Caribou Management Plan which the Board had previously reviewed and voiced its approval of.

Wildlife Proposal WP22-49

DESCRIPTION: WP22-49 requested that the Federal public lands closure for moose in the portion of Unit 22 north of and including the Tagoomenik and Shaktoolik River drainages be rescinded Sep. 1 – 20, to coincide with the State’s nonresident moose season. Submitted by: Lance Kronberger

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS:

Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council – **Oppose**

BOARD ACTION: **Adopt**

JUSTIFICATION: Recently completed surveys in 2020 and 2021 in Unit 22A Central, adjacent to the area in question, showed extremely high bull cow ratios and a population estimate that is above state management objectives. In addition, estimates of the total harvest that are below the harvestable surplus indicate that the moose population in Unit 22A North can sustain additional harvest pressure that may result from rescinding the closure to non-Federally qualified users. Current harvest pressure has been mostly focused on the more easily accessible State lands adjacent to river corridors and not the more remote and difficult to access Federal lands in the area. The last time this came before the Board part of the rationale for not lifting the closure was a lack of recent biological data.

This is no longer the case and the Board's closure policy states that the Federal public lands and waters should be reopened as soon as practicable once the conditions that originally justified the closure have changed to such an extent that the closure is no longer necessary. Since the closure was originally put in place due to conservation concerns continuing the closure is no longer supported by substantial evidence, and recent biological metrics indicate opening the closure to non-Federally qualified users would not violate recognized principles of fish and wildlife conservation.

The Board takes the concerns of the Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council seriously and acknowledges that any additional harvest by non-Federally qualified users that may take place because of the opening of this closure should be monitored closely to prevent overharvest.

SEWARD PENINSULA AREA WILDLIFE CLOSURE REVIEWS

Wildlife Closure Review WCR22-09b

DESCRIPTION: WCR22-09b reviewed the closure to moose hunting except by residents of Unalakleet in the central portion of Unit 22A.

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS:

Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council – **Maintain status quo**

BOARD ACTION: **Modify** the closure to open to all Federally qualified subsistence users

JUSTIFICATION: Moose populations and the harvest quota have increased in the hunt area and bull:cow ratios are extremely high, all of which indicate that there is a surplus of bulls available for harvest. Opening the area to all Federally qualified subsistence users is a conservative and appropriate incremental approach consistent with past Board actions in other areas of Unit 22 in 2018. Additionally, given the improved biological metrics, keeping the area open to only a subset of Federally qualified subsistence users is not supported by substantial evidence.



Federal Subsistence Board

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



FISH and WILDLIFE SERVICE
BUREAU of LAND MANAGEMENT
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
BUREAU of INDIAN AFFAIRS

FOREST SERVICE

JUL 27 2022

In Reply Refer To
OSM 22067.KW

Louis Green, Chair
Seward Peninsula Subsistence
Regional Advisory Council
c/o Office of Subsistence Management
1101 East Tudor Road, MS 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199

Dear Chairman Green:

This letter responds to the Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council's (Council) fiscal year 2021 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. Resident Caribou Herd in the Northern Seward Peninsula

At its fall meeting held October 26-27, 2021, the Council heard from multiple individuals regarding caribou and reindeer on the northern Seward Peninsula. Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) biologists Alex Hansen and Bill Dunker discussed the current status of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd (WACH) and shared some perspectives on the caribou and/or reindeer that may now represent a resident herd in the northern portion of Unit 22. According to ADF&G, caribou and/or reindeer can be found year-round on the Seward Peninsula. It is unknown, however, if caribou from the WACH have mingled in with local reindeer, if these animals migrate intermittently with the larger WACH, or if they now permanently inhabit the area. There are an estimated 3,000-5,000 animals that appear to be in the area year-round. There has been no research conducted to confirm if the herd is comprised more of rogue reindeer or caribou that dispersed from the WACH and no longer migrate.

Council members mentioned that there are caribou or a hybrid of caribou-reindeer towards Serpentine Hot Springs in Bering Land Bridge National Preserve. They inquired on the status of

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caribou distributed on the northern peninsula, and expressed concern that the sedentary population may deter migrating caribou from these wintering grounds, and prevent the traditional north-south WACH migration.

Recommendation:

The Council is requesting that ADF&G and Federal agencies initiate research on what appears to be a resident herd of caribou and/or reindeer in the northern Seward Peninsula. Collaring animals will provide a better understanding of whether or not these animals migrate. Genetic research will help identify whether these animals are reindeer or caribou, and possibly their origin.

The purpose of including the Council's concerns in the Annual Report is to alert the Board that the Council is bringing up questions and concerns of caribou residing in the northern Seward Peninsula year-round.

Response:

The Board acknowledges that Council members would like to understand the range and genetic structure of caribou that reside on the northern Seward Peninsula. Historically, discussions have taken place among agency staff at public meetings, as Alaska Department of Fish and Game Western Arctic Caribou biologist Alex Hansen stated at the October 2021 fall Council meeting. Bering Land Bridge National Preserve (BELA) recognizes there are caribou year-round on the northern Seward Peninsula, but the population status and extent of their range is unknown and there is no assessment project in the works. BELA staff will initiate Tribal consultations, conduct a literature review, and engage with staff from the University of Alaska Fairbanks Reindeer Research Program to learn what genetic work has been accomplished with reindeer on the northern Seward Peninsula. These efforts are attainable within the near future and information will be brought forward to the Council.

2. Bering Sea-Western Interior Planning Area Environmental Impact Statement

The Council brought up concerns regarding land use in the Unalakleet, Golovin, and Golsovia drainages following the signing of the Bering Sea-Western Interior Environmental Impact Statement on January 15, 2021. Several Council members expressed apprehension that the Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and the lifting of Public Land Orders (PLO) were not comprehensively addressed in the environmental impact statement (EIS). This could lead to potential impacts on subsistence resources if mining activities were to be conducted in the Unalakleet, Golovin, and Golsovia drainages. The Council is particularly concerned about mining activities reducing lichen availability in areas where caribou and reindeer graze. The Council also worries about impacts to anadromous fish streams due to potential mining activities.

According to Bureau of Land Management (BLM) staff, most of the PLOs were set aside under ANILCA and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). The EIS addressed which PLOs will remain in effect or be lifted. Therefore, if PLOs are lifted, Federal mining claims can be

Chairman Green

staked within areas that are critical to subsistence activities and resources. Currently, BLM has not lifted any of the PLOs. This is done at the Secretary of the Interior level. The lands are currently not open to mineral entry, but have the potential to be.

Recommendation:

The Council requests that these concerns be elevated to the Secretary of the Interior through the Board to keep PLOs in place to protect subsistence activities and resources.

Response:

The Board is grateful for your review and vigilance on this issue. As advisors to the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture (Secretaries), it is appropriate that Regional Advisory Councils communicate important subsistence related issues to the Secretaries. The Board encourages the Council to have a detailed discussion of this issue on record and to formulate your request to the Board in a letter. Per your Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Correspondence Policy, you should submit your correspondence to the Board through the Assistant Regional Director of the Office of Subsistence Management. Then Board would be able to discuss your request to elevate your concerns the Office of the Secretary of the Interior. Thank you for bringing these potential impacts on your subsistence ways of life to the Board's attention.

In closing, I want to thank you and your Council for your continued involvement and diligence 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 subsistence users of the Seward Peninsula Region are well represented through your work.

Sincerely



Anthony Christianson
Chair

cc: Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Federal Subsistence Board
Office of Subsistence Management
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

Presentation Procedure for Proposals and Closure Reviews

1. Introduction and Presentation of Draft Staff Analysis

2. Report on Board Consultations:

- a. Tribes
- b. ANCSA Corporations

3. Agency Comments:

- a. ADF&G
- b. Federal
- c. Tribal

4. Advisory Group Comments:

- a. Other Regional Advisory Council(s)
- b. Fish and Game Advisory Committees
- c. Subsistence Resource Commissions

5. Summary of Written Public Comments

6. Public Testimony

7. Regional Council Recommendation (motion to adopt)

8. Discussion/Justification

- Is the recommendation consistent with established fish or wildlife management principles?
- Is the recommendation supported by substantial evidence such as biological and traditional ecological knowledge?
- Will the recommendation be beneficial or detrimental to subsistence needs and uses?
- If a closure is involved, is closure necessary for conservation of healthy fish or wildlife populations, or is closure necessary to ensure continued subsistence uses?
- Discuss what other relevant factors are mentioned in OSM Draft Staff Analysis

9. Restate final motion for the record

10. Council's Vote

FP23–02 Executive Summary																
General Description	<p>Proposal FP23-02 requests the Federal Subsistence Board to recognize customary and traditional uses of Chinook, summer Chum, Coho, Sockeye, and Pink salmon in the Yukon River drainage by residents of Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay. <i>Submitted by: Chevak Native Village.</i></p>															
Proposed Regulation	<p>Customary and traditional use determinations—Fish</p> <p>Yukon-Northern Area</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"><i>Yukon River drainage</i></td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"><i>Salmon other than Fall Chum Salmon</i></td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"><i>Rural residents of the Yukon River drainage and the community of community of Stebbins, Scammon Bay, Hooper Bay, and Chevak</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"><i>Yukon River drainage</i></td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"><i>Fall Chum Salmon</i></td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"><i>Rural residents of the Yukon River drainage and the communities of Stebbins, Scammon Bay, Hooper Bay, and Chevak</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"><i>Yukon River drainage</i></td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"><i>Freshwater fish species (other than salmon)</i></td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"><i>Residents of the Yukon-Northern Area</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"><i>Remainder of the Yukon-Northern Area</i></td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"><i>All fish</i></td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"><i>Residents of the Yukon-Northern Area, excluding the residents of the Yukon River drainage and excluding those domiciled in Unit 26B</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"><i>Tanana River drainage contained within the Tetlin NWR and the Wrangell-St. Elias NPP</i></td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"><i>Freshwater fish (other than salmon)</i></td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"><i>Residents of the Yukon-Northern Area and residents of Chistochina, Mentasta Lake, Slana, and all residents living between Mentasta Lake and Chistochina</i></td> </tr> </table>	<i>Yukon River drainage</i>	<i>Salmon other than Fall Chum Salmon</i>	<i>Rural residents of the Yukon River drainage and the community of community of Stebbins, Scammon Bay, Hooper Bay, and Chevak</i>	<i>Yukon River drainage</i>	<i>Fall Chum Salmon</i>	<i>Rural residents of the Yukon River drainage and the communities of Stebbins, Scammon Bay, Hooper Bay, and Chevak</i>	<i>Yukon River drainage</i>	<i>Freshwater fish species (other than salmon)</i>	<i>Residents of the Yukon-Northern Area</i>	<i>Remainder of the Yukon-Northern Area</i>	<i>All fish</i>	<i>Residents of the Yukon-Northern Area, excluding the residents of the Yukon River drainage and excluding those domiciled in Unit 26B</i>	<i>Tanana River drainage contained within the Tetlin NWR and the Wrangell-St. Elias NPP</i>	<i>Freshwater fish (other than salmon)</i>	<i>Residents of the Yukon-Northern Area and residents of Chistochina, Mentasta Lake, Slana, and all residents living between Mentasta Lake and Chistochina</i>
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FP23–02 Executive Summary	
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	Support
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	None

DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS

FP23-02

ISSUES

Proposal FP23-02, submitted by the Chevak Native Village, requests the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) to recognize customary and traditional uses of Chinook, summer Chum, Coho, Sockeye, and Pink salmon in the Yukon River drainage by residents of Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay.

DISCUSSION

The proponent states that residents of Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay depend on Chinook, summer Chum, Coho, Sockeye, and Pink salmon in the Yukon River drainage and should be able to harvest salmon under Federal regulations. The current customary and traditional use determinations for Yukon River drainage salmon were adopted from State regulations in 1992 at the beginning of the Federal Subsistence Management Program and should be modified to include these three coastal communities.

For the purpose of the customary and traditional use determinations for salmon, the Yukon River drainage consists of waters flowing into the Bering Sea from Point Romanof extending south and west along the coast of the delta to approximately one nautical mile south of the mouth of the Black River, based on the description of the Yukon River drainage in regulation in **Appendix 1**. District 1 of the Yukon River drainage encompasses the mouth of the Yukon River and the Black River, as shown in **Figure 1**. The Coastal District, which encompasses the three communities, is shown in **Figure 2**.

In contrast, for the propose of managing seasons, harvest limits, and gear, the “Yukon River drainage” encompasses the entire Yukon Area. This has confused interpretation of these customary and traditional use determinations, which this analysis is intended to fix.

Existing Federal Regulation

Customary and traditional use determinations—Fish

Yukon-Northern Area

<i>Yukon River drainage</i>	<i>Salmon other than Fall Chum Salmon</i>	<i>Residents of the Yukon River drainage and the community of community of Stebbins</i>
<i>Yukon River drainage</i>	<i>Fall Chum Salmon</i>	<i>Residents of the Yukon River drainage and the communities of Stebbins, Scammon Bay, Hooper Bay, and Chevak</i>

<i>Yukon River drainage</i>	<i>Freshwater fish species (other than salmon)</i>	<i>Residents of the Yukon-Northern Area</i>
<i>Remainder of the Yukon-Northern Area</i>	<i>All fish</i>	<i>Residents of the Yukon-Northern Area, excluding the residents of the Yukon River drainage and excluding those domiciled in Unit 26B</i>
<i>Tanana River drainage contained within the Tetlin NWR and the Wrangell-St. Elias NPP</i>	<i>Freshwater fish (other than salmon)</i>	<i>Residents of the Yukon-Northern Area and residents of Chistochina, Mentasta Lake, Slana, and all residents living between Mentasta Lake and Chistochina</i>

Proposed Federal Regulation

Customary and traditional use determinations—Fish

Yukon-Northern Area

<i>Yukon River drainage</i>	<i>Salmon other than Fall Chum Salmon</i>	<i>Residents of the Yukon River drainage and the community of community of Stebbins, Scammon Bay, Hooper Bay, and Chevak</i>
<i>Yukon River drainage</i>	<i>Fall Chum Salmon</i>	<i>Residents of the Yukon River drainage and the communities of Stebbins, Scammon Bay, Hooper Bay, and Chevak</i>
<i>Yukon River drainage</i>	<i>Freshwater fish species (other than salmon)</i>	<i>Residents of the Yukon-Northern Area</i>
<i>Remainder of the Yukon-Northern Area</i>	<i>All fish</i>	<i>Residents of the Yukon-Northern Area, excluding the residents of the Yukon River drainage and excluding those domiciled in Unit 26B</i>

<i>Tanana River drainage contained within the Tetlin NWR and the Wrangell-St. Elias NPP*</i>	<i>Freshwater fish (other than salmon)</i>	<i>Residents of the Yukon-Northern Area and residents of Chistochina, Mentasta Lake, Slana, and all residents living between Mentasta Lake and Chistochina</i>
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*Note: NWR=National Wildlife Refuge and NNP=National Park and Preserve.

Relevant Federal Regulations

50 CFR 100.14 Relationship to State procedures and regulations.

(a) State fish and game regulations apply to public lands and such laws are hereby adopted and made a part of the regulations in this part to the extent they are not inconsistent with, or superseded by, the regulations in this part.

Relevant State Regulations

5 AAC 05.100 - Description of Yukon Area

The Yukon Area includes all waters of Alaska between a line extending 315° northwest from Point Romanof at 63° 12.16' N. lat., 162° 49.72' W. long. to a point three nautical miles offshore at 63° 14.27' N. lat., 162° 54.40' W. long. and the latitude of the westernmost point of the Naskonat Peninsula, including those waters draining into the Bering Sea.

Descriptions of Yukon Area districts and subdistricts in State regulations are in **Appendix 1**. These State regulations that include Federal public waters are incorporated into these Federal regulations.

Extent of Federal Public Waters

For purposes of this discussion, the phrase “Federal public waters” is defined as those waters described under 50 CFR 100.3. Federal public waters in the Yukon Area include all navigable and non-navigable freshwaters located within and adjacent to the exterior boundaries of the following Federal conservation units: Arctic, Innoko, Kanuti, Koyukuk, Nowitna, Tetlin, Yukon Delta, and Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuges, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, and Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Steese National Conservation Area, and White Mountains National Recreation Area. Federal public waters also include those segments of Beaver Creek, Birch Creek, Delta River, and Fortymile River National Wild and Scenic River systems located outside the boundaries of the other listed Federal conservation units (see **Lower Yukon River Map** and **Upper Yukon River Map**).

Inland freshwaters in Yukon District 1 and the Coastal District, nearby the communities in this proposal, are entirely within the outer boundary of the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. District 1

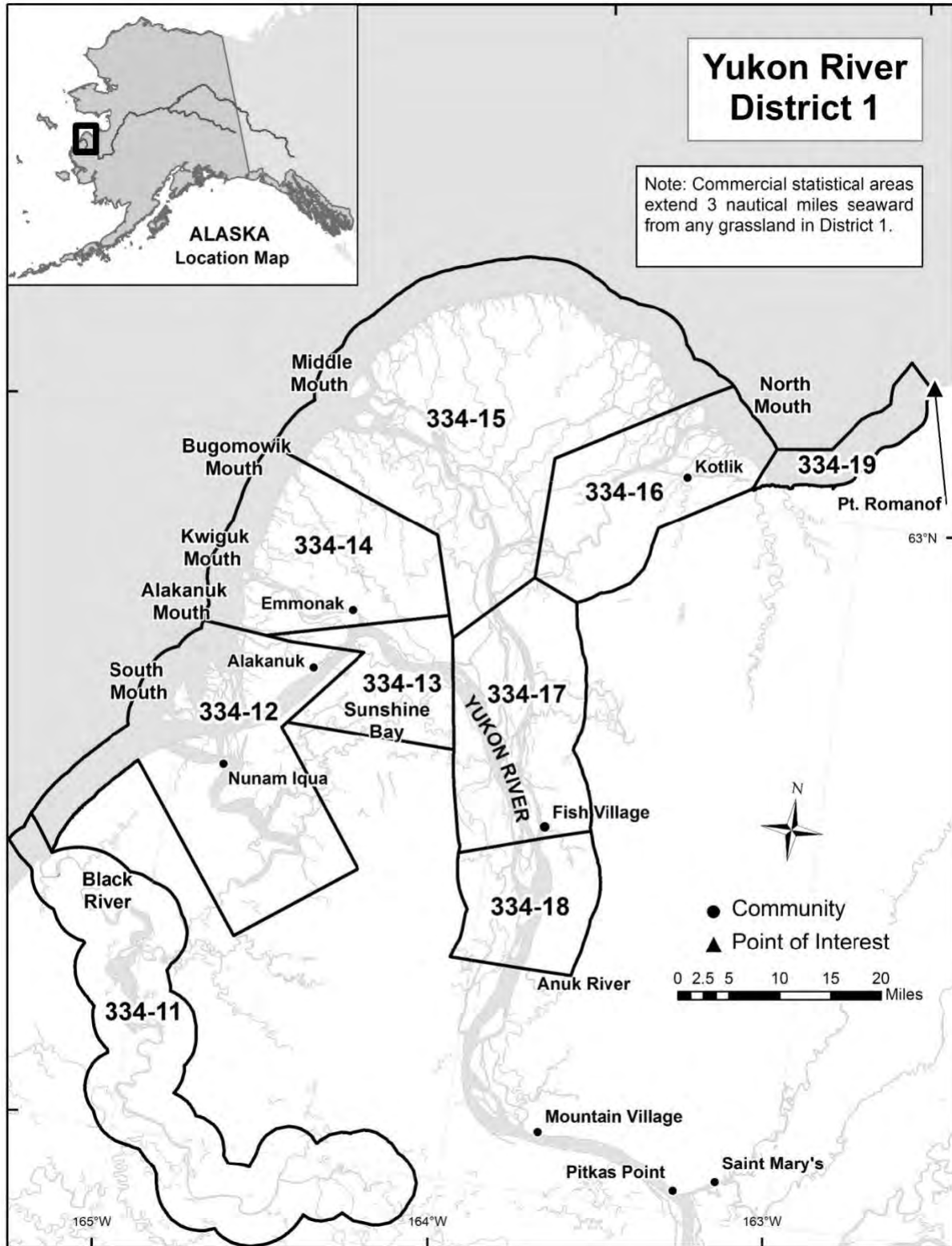


Figure 1. Map showing District 1 of the Yukon River drainage. The Black River drainage is situated within District 1 (Source: Estensen et al. 2018).

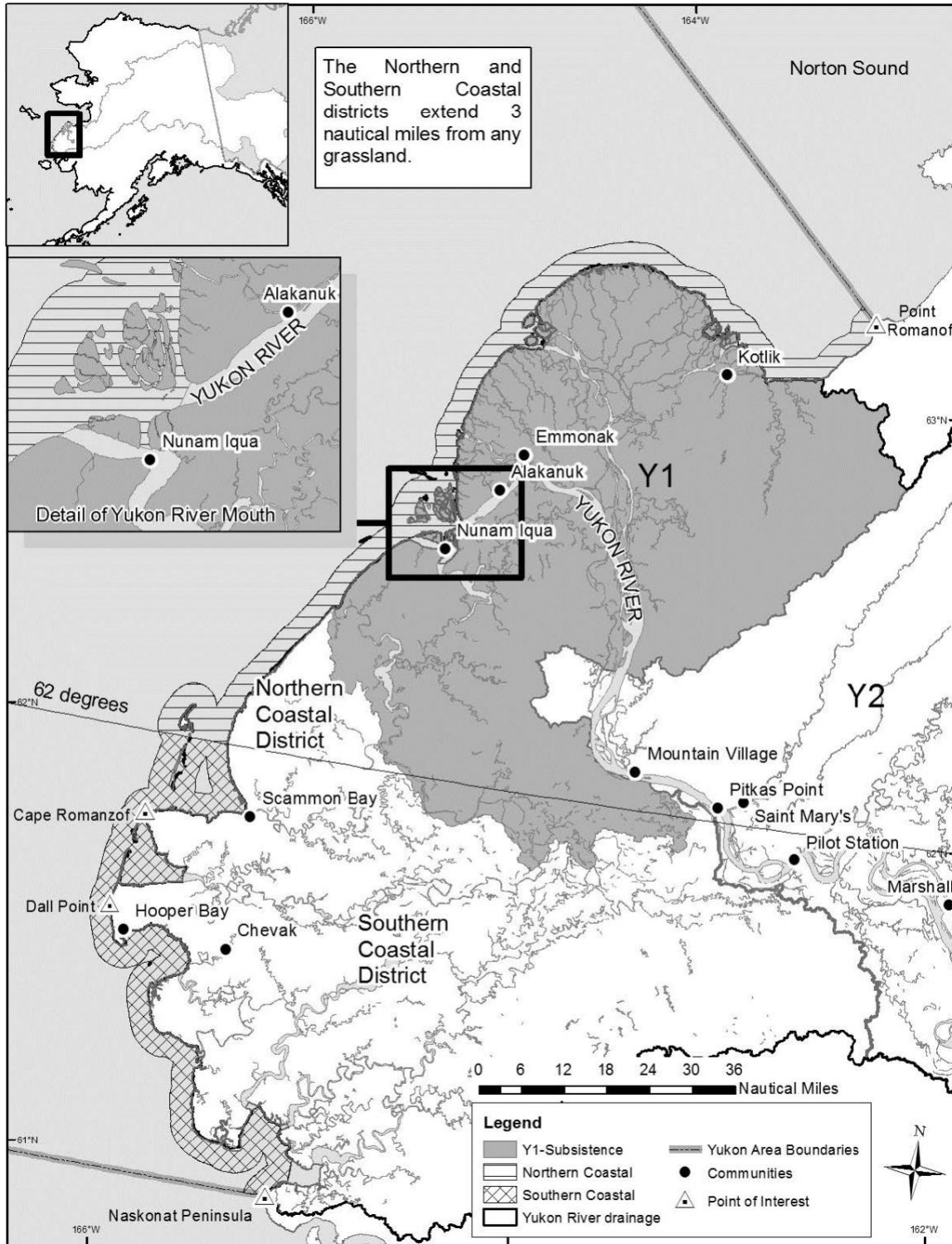


Figure 2. Map showing the Coastal District of the Yukon Area. The communities of Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay are situated within the Southern Coastal District (Source: Estensen et al. 2018).

encompassing the mouth of the Yukon River and the Black River is shown in **Figure 1**. The Coastal District, which encompasses the three communities, is shown in **Figure 2**.

Regulatory History

In 1987, the Alaska Board of Fisheries adopted a regulation limiting the subsistence harvest of fall Chum Salmon in the Yukon River drainage to rural residents of the Yukon River drainage and the communities of Chevak, Hooper Bay, Scammon Bay, and Stebbins (State of Alaska July 1987 Register 102: page 5-14). The communities of Chevak, Hooper Bay, Scammon Bay, and Stebbins were considered outside the Yukon River drainage. Stebbins was outside the northern boundary of the Yukon Area.

It appears the definitions differ between the “Yukon River drainage” and the broader “Yukon Area,” because the communities of Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay were specifically cited. The new regulation is in **bolded** language:

5 AAC 01.235 Limits on Participation in Subsistence Finfish Fisheries—Yukon Area

(a) Only those residents domiciled in the community of Nenana between mile posts 300 and 309 of the Parks Highway and in the community of Minto may take pike in the waters of the Tolovana River drainage upstream of its confluence with the Tanana River.

(b) Only those residents domiciled in rural locations in the Yukon River drainage as determined by the joint Boards of Fisheries and Game under 5 AAC 99, and the communities of Stebbins, Scammon Bay, Hooper Bay, and Chevak may take Yukon River Fall chum salmon for subsistence purposes.

In 1988, the Alaska Board of Fisheries adopted a regulation limiting subsistence harvests of all salmon in the Yukon Area to rural residents of the Yukon Area and the community of Stebbins (State of Alaska April 1988 Register 105: page 5-15). Scammon Bay, Hooper Bay, and Chevak were considered within the Yukon Area. This new regulation for the Yukon Area, *(a)* below, encompassed the previous regulation for the Yukon River drainage, *(b)* below. The new regulation is in **bolded** language:

5 AAC 01.235 Limits on Participation in Subsistence Finfish Fisheries—Yukon Area

~~*(a) Only those residents domiciled in the community of Nenana between mile posts 300 and 309 of the Parks Highway and in the community of Minto may take pike in the waters of the Tolovana River drainage upstream of its confluence with the Tanana River.*~~

(a) Only those residents domiciled in the rural locations of the Yukon Area, as determined by the joint Boards of Fisheries and Game in 5 AAC 99.014 and in the community of Stebbins may take salmon in the Yukon Area.

(b) Only those residents domiciled in rural locations in the Yukon River drainage, as determined by the joint Boards of Fisheries and Game under 5 AAC 99, and the communities of Stebbins,

Scammon Bay, Hooper Bay, and Chevak may take Yukon River Fall chum salmon for subsistence purposes.

(c) Only those residents domiciled in rural locations in the Yukon Area, as determined by the joint Boards of Fisheries and Game in 5 AAC 99.014, may take freshwater fish species, including sheefish, whitefish, lamprey, burbot, sucker, grayling, pike, char, and blackfish, in the Yukon Area.

....

In 1992, the Federal Subsistence Board adopted Yukon Area customary and traditional use determinations for salmon and freshwater fishes that were in State regulations (57 Fed. Reg. 104, 22962 [May 29, 1992]). The difference between the definitions of the “Yukon River drainage” and the “Yukon Area,” mentioned above, appeared to still exist in the new Federal regulations:

Customary and Traditional Use Determinations for Fish—Yukon Area

<i>Yukon Area</i>	<i>Salmon</i>	<i>Rural residents of the Yukon Area, including the community of Stebbins</i>
<i>Yukon River</i>	<i>Fall Chum Salmon</i>	<i>Rural residents of the Yukon River drainage, including the communities of Stebbins, Scammon Bay, Hooper Bay, and Chevak</i>
<i>Yukon Area</i>	<i>Freshwater fish</i>	<i>Residents of the Yukon Area</i>

In 1993, the Alaska Board of Fisheries revised all State customary and traditional use findings to include all residents of Alaska (State of Alaska July 1993 Register 126: page 21). Subsequently, for the State, any question of effects of these regulations on residents of Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay was no longer relevant. The new regulation was the following:

5 AAC 01.236 Customary and Traditional Uses of Fish Stocks—Yukon-Northern Area

The Alaska Board of Fisheries finds that the following fish stocks are customarily and traditionally taken or used for subsistence:

(1) Salmon in the Yukon-Northern Area

...

In 1999, the Federal Subsistence Board announced it was revisiting customary and traditional use determinations statewide for fish and shellfish to incorporate determinations that the Board of Fisheries had made since 1990 where they applied on Federal public waters and were consistent with Title VIII of

the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, ANILCA. For those determinations made by the Board of Fisheries since 1990, the Board made a determination that eligibility for fisheries should be limited to the residents of the area identified (64 Fed. Reg. 64; 1279–1284 [January 8, 1999]). The new regulations are in **bolded** language:

Customary and traditional use determinations for fish— Yukon-Northern Area

<i>Yukon River Area drainage</i>	<i>Salmon other than Fall Chum Salmon</i>	<i>Rural residents of the Yukon River drainage and the community of community of Stebbins</i>
<i>Yukon River drainage</i>	<i>Fall Chum Salmon</i>	<i>Rural residents of the Yukon River drainage and the communities of Stebbins, Scammon Bay, Hooper Bay, and Chevak</i>
<i>Yukon River drainage</i>	<i>Freshwater fish species (other than salmon)</i>	<i>Residents of the Yukon-Northern Area</i>
<i>Remainder of the Yukon-Northern Area</i>	<i>All fish</i>	<i>Residents of the Yukon-Northern Area, excluding the residents of the Yukon River drainage and excluding those domiciled in Unit 26B</i>

Again, the difference between the definitions of the “Yukon River drainage” and the “Yukon Area,” mentioned above, appeared to still exist in the newly modified Federal regulations (67 Fed. Reg. 26, 5893 [February 7, 2002]). It appears residents of the communities of Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay were considered to be outside of the Yukon River drainage for the purposes of these customary and traditional use determinations. Instead, the three communities were within the “Remainder” area of the Yukon-Northern Fisheries Management Area. If this was true, the communities had a determination for all salmon species in the Yukon-Northern Area except for in the Yukon River drainage. In the Yukon River drainage, the communities were eligible to harvest fall Chum Salmon only. In contrast, for the propose of managing seasons, harvest limits, and gear, the “Yukon River drainage” encompasses the entire Yukon Area. This has confused interpretation of these customary and traditional use determinations, which this analysis is intended to fix.

Eight Factors for Determining Customary and Traditional Use

Customary and traditional uses in a community or area is generally exemplified through the eight factors: (1) a long-term, consistent pattern of use, excluding interruptions beyond the control of the community or area; (2) a pattern of use recurring in specific seasons for many years; (3) a pattern of use consisting of methods and means of harvest which are characterized by efficiency and economy of effort

and cost, conditioned by local characteristics; (4) the consistent harvest and use of fish or wildlife as related to past methods and means of taking: near, or reasonably accessible from the community or area; (5) 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; (6) a pattern of use which includes the handing down of knowledge of fishing and hunting skills, values, and lore from generation to generation; (7) a pattern of use in which the harvest is shared or distributed within a definable community of persons; and (8) 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 the community or area.

The Board makes customary and traditional use determinations based on a holistic application of these eight factors. In addition, the Board takes into consideration the reports and recommendations of any appropriate Regional Advisory Council regarding customary and traditional use of subsistence resources (50 CFR 100.16(b) and 36 CFR 242.16(b)). The Board makes customary and traditional use determinations for the sole purpose of recognizing the pool of users who generally exhibit the eight factors. The Board does not use such determinations for resource management or restricting harvest. If a conservation concern exists for a particular population, the Board addresses that concern through the imposition of harvest limits or season restrictions rather than by limiting the customary and traditional use finding.

Introduction

The ancestors of people living in the area of Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay have relied on a seasonal round of wild resource harvesting in which salmon was prominent for at least several thousand years. Evidence suggests the ancestors of contemporary Central Yup'ik people most likely settled coastal areas of the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta by sometime after 4,500 years ago. The area consists of an intricate web of waterways ultimately flowing into the Bering Sea. VanStone (1984a:227) notes, "From the earliest times people were oriented toward a maritime economy in which the seal was the most important animal hunted. On the adjacent tundra there was some caribou hunting, and fishing for salmon was significant at the mouths of rivers and in certain bays."

A resident of Chevak further describes this longevity,

Before the missionaries, we were nomadic. . . . There are no further records, but we can establish that our forefathers have lived for generations before our first known establishment or communal remains in *Nunaruluq*. . . . Artifacts are proof that our forefathers were here for generations before the influx of the western society (Slats 2022, pers. comm.)

The area is crisscrossed by waterways, sloughs, and lakes that allow routes for people to access interior areas. Coastal areas are shallow, which discouraged Europeans from visiting the area, and as a result Yupiit in coastal areas had intensive contact with Europeans later than those who lived along the banks of the Yukon River, for example. While people lived in numerous settlements situated near to seasonal

migrations of fish, birds, seals, caribou, and other animals, “It was the presence of predictable supplies of salmon that made possible large and stable concentration of population” in this nomadic network (VanStone 1984b:207).

Historical settlements in the vicinity of these three communities are numerous (Fienup-Riordan 1986, Frink 2016, Godduhn et al. 2020). “Much of this rhythm of harvesting foods across the landscape is practiced even today. But a significant change is that the people of Chevak and other coastal communities are permanently settled. Some families still move out to the summer fish camp, and some will still travel to berry camp” (Frink 2016:26). Contemporary village sites are generally bases for winter activities. During summer, families disperse and reorganize into a number of smaller settlements, known as summer camps or fish camps. Some people are highly mobile between alternative dwelling places, especially during summer months (Ikuta 2016).

Processing, Preservation, and Storage

The ability to keep foods edible is time-consuming and requires training and ability because proper processing is critical. “In the extreme Arctic environment, being able to find and harvest your foods is crucial. But just as important is the attendant processing of the harvested animals. Without the proper processing of foods, the harvest would be meaningless. Women have perfected the art of processing foods for appropriate consumption and storage in the Arctic climate for thousands of year” (Frink 2016:31). Frink (2016) describes women processing salmon,

Salmon are commonly cut with their tails still in place and hung. . . After the fish are dried, some are smoked in plywood sheds enclosed by plastic tarps. Before these structures were used, women would smoke the fish with willow wood (still used as fuel) in small, sod-covered pits. After the fish are properly prepared, they are stored in five-gallon plastic buckets, which have largely replaced the use of woven grass bags (Frink 2016:40).

People at Scammon Bay said that they begin salmon harvesting with the arrival of the first Chinook and summer Chum Salmon. At Scammon Bay,

Salmon fishers set gillnets in coastal areas to harvest these fish and process their harvests by cutting, hanging, and drying fish for long-term storage. Some salmon are also smoked, salted, partially dried and frozen, fresh frozen, or eaten fresh. Salmon fishing continues throughout the summer months depending on the needs of individual families and fishing groups . . . Fishers also set gillnets for pink salmon, coho salmon, and whitefishes in summer months (Ikuta et al. 2016:28).

People use store-bought foods to supplement meals but rely on subsistence or traditional foods (Frink 2016, Ikuta 2016).

The Subsistence Way of Life

People show animals respect in many ways (see Fienup-Riordan 1994, 2007). A resident of Chevak explained,

The subsistence way of life is taught from childhood until they begin living the subsistence ways, and the subsistence users will then teach their own children as they have been taught. . . . Hunting, fishing, handling, preparing, preserving, and storing are taught throughout their lives. The subsistence ways are a generational practice that is handed down for generations since time immemorial. . . . Fish and game that allowed itself to be caught is shown respect and is handled with care and processed with respect. All the parts are put back to the earth or the river with the understanding that they will return to you. All parts are used. . . . Nothing is wasted and we never take more than we need. We rely on the fish for maintaining our culture and heritage. Our fish camps are an integral part of what we use to teach our children subsistence (Slats 2022, pers. comm.).

Community Background

Residents of Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay rely on a seasonal round of wild resource harvesting in which salmon are prominent. These three communities are situated near one another on the Bering Sea coast in southwestern Alaska. Chevak is approximately 140 air miles from Bethel and 520 air miles from Anchorage, Alaska. These communities are accessible by airplane only. Residents are primarily of Yup'ik and Cup'ik (in Chevak and Hooper Bay) cultural traditions (Fienup-Riordan 1986; Slats 2022, pers. comm.).

Chevak (*Cev'ak*), or *Qissunamiut* “Kashunamiut” (people of *Qissunaq* “Kashunak”), is located on the north bank of the Ninglikfak River, which empties into Hooper Bay 17 miles to the east of Chevak. Earlier, people lived at Kashunak (known locally as *Nunaraluq*),

. . . when traders, and following them Jesuit missionaries, entered the region in the later 1800s and early 1900s. . . . In 1949, the people of Kashunak left their village mound and brought their belongs upriver to Old Chevak, conveniently located at the confluence of the Keoklivik and Kashunak rivers. . . . Shortly after the establishment of the village, Old Chevak was vacated in 1950, and the entire group moved to the present village of Chevak (Frink 2016:13)

Chevak was established in about 1950 by residents of Old Chevak because the Bureau of Indian Affairs would not build a school in the low marshy lands surrounding the site of Old Chevak (Frink 2016; Slats 2022, pers. comm.).

Hooper Bay (*Naparyarmiut*) is the largest coastal community in the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta area and functions as the hub of transportation and trade for nearby villages. It is located two miles from the Bering Sea on the shores of Hooper Bay. The protected bay and abundance of wild resources attracted people to this village site. Hooper Bay was also known as *Askinuk* or *Askinaghamiut* (Orth 1967, FWS 1988).

The community of Scammon Bay (*Marayaaq*) is situated about one mile from the Bering Sea at the mouth of the Kun River. Historically, people called the people living there *Marayaarmiut* (people of *Marayaaq*). In the 1930s, people moved to the site of the contemporary Scammon Bay community to escape flooding, to attend church, to visit the nearby trading post, for children to attend school, and for other reasons (Ikuta et al. 2016, Godduhn et al. 2020).

The combined population of these communities has more than tripled in the 60 years between 1960 and 2020; in 2020, an estimated 2,926 people were permanent rural residents (**Table 1**, ADLWD 2022).

Table 1. The estimated number of people living in the communities of Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay, based on the U.S. Census (ADLWD 2022).

Community	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Chevak city	315	387	466	598	765	938	951
Hooper Bay city	460	490	627	845	1,014	1,093	1,375
Scammon Bay city	115	166	250	343	465	474	600
Total	890	1,043	1,343	1,786	2,244	2,505	2,926

Geographic Use Areas/Method and Means

People living in the coastal communities of Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay harvest salmon from marine waters and freshwater rivers, streams, sloughs, and lakes.

Chevak residents harvest salmon primarily along the coast and in the lower stretches of some rivers from Nuok Spit in Hooper Bay south to the mouth of the Aphrewn River. Set and drift nets are used to harvest salmon (FWS 1988), but as put forth by a Chevak resident, “Methods and mean of harvest would be those that are allowed by law and regulation. We are law abiding citizens. We prefer use of traditional tools and means of taking fish and game to maintain our culture and heritage” (Slats 2022, pers. comm.) (see **Figure 3**). A resident of Chevak continued,

We have fished for all fish in the ponds, streams, creeks, rivers, and our seas. . . . We have hunted and fished for the land and water resources in Kashunak and the river south from Chevak, the Bay, and mainly the rivers south of our location since time immemorial. We will continue to hunt and fish so long as the wind shall blow and the grass still blooms. Closing of fish that has been our mainstay will turn a culture and tradition into a life of extreme hardship through regulations, instead of environmental and climatic challenges that have been evident throughout our lives” (Slats 2022, pers. comm.).

Hooper Bay residents harvest salmon primarily with set nets in Hooper Bay and numerous rivers near the community. A popular area is the tidal flats inward of Nuok Spit. The lower Kokechik River, the Kashunak River from Nanvaranak Lake downstream to the Keoklevik River, the Keoklevik River, and the mouth of the Kashunak River are all important salmon fishing areas. Chinook and Chum salmon are



Figure 3. Map showing some of the rivers, creeks, and lakes visited by residents of Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay to harvest salmon (base map google.com)

the primary species of salmon harvested. Some Pink and Coho salmon are also harvested (FWS 1988) (see **Figure 3**).

At Scammon Bay, sea ice-out typically occurs in late May, and people begin herring fishing. Salmon fishing begins with the arrival of the first Chinook and summer Chum salmon:

Some people set gillnets in the Kun River or in Scammon Bay within a short distance from the community. Others travel to family fish camp sites, some of which are within five to ten miles west of Scammon Bay along the coast. Other fish camps are as far away as 20 miles north along the coast at the mouth of Melatolik Creek, to 40 miles north in the lower portion of Black River (Ikuta et al. 2016:28).

Scammon Bay residents described where they traveled in 2013 in order to harvest salmon:

[People] harvested salmon in the lower five miles of the Black River, in an area of the Bering Sea surrounding the mouth of the Black River, and in a strip of ocean along the coast extending approximately 15 miles from the mouth of the Black River southwest towards the mouth of Melatolik Creek. Fishers also harvested salmon in the mouth of Melatolik Creek and in the mouth of the Kipungolak River where it drains into the Black River. [People] harvested salmon in locations close to Scammon Bay including in the Kun River, from the mouth of the Kikneak River and other sites downstream to the mouth of the Kun River. Fishers also harvested salmon in an area of the Scammon Bay water body extending from the community eight miles west along the coast (Ikuta et al. 2016:68).

Residents of the three communities travel to the mouth of the Yukon River to participate in salmon commercial and subsistence fisheries there (Wolfe 1981, 1982; Fienup-Riordan 1986; Crawford and Lingnau 2004; Ikuta et al. 2016). In the 1980s, “Scammon Bay families regularly moved north to fish salmon around the mouth of the Black River. In 1981 some Scammon Bay people fished along the south pass, apparently with fish camps established on Manning Island” at the south mouth of the Yukon River (Wolfe 1981:59). Residents of Hooper Bay and Chevak worked at the salmon processor in Mountain Village. Fienup-Riordan (1986) reported that from their fish camps just inside the mouth of the Black River (about 30 miles below the south mouth of the Yukon River), Scammon Bay “men sometimes move into the Yukon River proper, as far up as Mountain Village, to try their luck drifting. Also, after the commercial season closes at Black River, several families normally relocate to the north or middle mouths of the Yukon River to take advantage of the fall runs of Chum and Coho, which only briefly visit the Black River area” (Fienup-Riordan 1986:136).

Estimated Harvest of Salmon

In addition to population growth, social and economic changes have affected salmon harvesting in the area. One subsistence activity that impacted salmon harvesting levels was the use of salmon to feed sled dogs, described below.

The period from 1900 to 1940 encompasses the peak sled dog era in the Yukon River drainage . . . virtually every family maintained a small number of sled dogs In the 1930s airplanes began to replace commercial dog teams for the movement of freight and mail but sled dogs continued to provide the bulk of winter transportation for individuals and families throughout the Yukon River drainage (Andersen and Scott 2010:2–5).

During the summer of 1957, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service collected harvest information in the community of Scammon Bay and estimated a harvest of 2,270 Chum Salmon and observed 140 sled dogs. In Hooper Bay they estimated a harvest of 12,150 Chum Salmon and observed 116 sled dogs. In Chevak they estimated a harvest of 14,480 Chum Salmon and observed 350 sled dogs (Mattson 1962).

By the 1970s snowmobiles had largely replaced the family dog team although some people continue to keep dogs (Andersen and Scott 2010).

Division of Subsistence ADF&G Household Harvest Survey

Residents of the community of Scammon Bay collaborated with researchers at the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Division of Subsistence in 2013 to estimate their community’s harvests and describe their uses of wild resources (Ikuta et al 2016). While Chevak and Hooper Bay were not included in this research, some insight into the general use patterns of salmon can be gained because of their proximity and cultural similarities to Scammon Bay. Additionally, subsistence harvest surveys and ethnographic interviews were conducted by ADF&G Division of Subsistence in winter 2022 in Chevak and Hooper Bay, but results of these surveys have not yet been published at the time of this analysis (McDavid 2022, pers. comm.). Harvest of salmon plays a vital role in the seasonal round of all three communities.

Based on the household survey conducted in 2013, people at Scammon Bay harvested an estimated 11,488 salmon in 2013, or 85 pounds in edible weight per person. By far, most of the harvest was summer Chum Salmon (**Table 2**).

Table 2. The estimated harvest of salmon by species in numbers of fish and per person in pounds of edible weight at Scammon Bay in 2013 (N=86 households) (Source: ADF&G 2022b).

Salmon species	Salmon estimated harvest (in fish)	Lower harvest estimate (in fish)	Upper harvest estimate (in fish)	Per person harvest (in pounds of edible weight)
Summer Chum	9,680	9,669	9,691	71.4
Fall Chum	157	156	159	1.2
Unknown Chum	43	43	43	0.3
Coho Salmon	139	138	139	1.0
Chinook Salmon	455	454	456	6.9
Pink Salmon	930	927	932	4.0
Sockeye Salmon	84	84	85	0.6
Total	11,488	11,475	11,500	85.4

Division of Commercial Fisheries ADF&G Postseason Harvest Survey

Only two of these communities are included in the State’s salmon harvest monitoring program: Scammon Bay and Hooper Bay. **Table 3** describes the harvest of salmon by species and year from 2006 to 2021, based on the annual postseason salmon harvest survey conducted by the Division of Commercial Fisheries at ADF&G. Summer Chum Salmon are harvested at the highest levels in these communities. People have been able to harvest fewer and fewer salmon each year as conservation concerns for salmon have increased and harvest opportunities have been curtailed, especially in recent years, as demonstrated in **Table 3**.

Sharing of Wild Food Harvests

A Chevak resident described that people normally share their wild food harvests,

Sharing is our tradition, within our families, community members, and especially our elders. Customary trade is based on need for certain types of food that is not available in our areas, i.e. interior communities that don’t have fish and game from the sea and vice versa. . . . Gift giving is done during festivals, potlucks, and potlatches. Communities will give gifts to other communities that come to their communities for celebrations, festivals, potlatches, and potlucks (Slats 2022, pers. comm.)

People sharing their harvests of wild resources is a predominant feature of subsistence economies in Alaska. Salmon were and continue to be distributed through kin and community networks. A high level of sharing occurs at Scammon Bay, and households share, either through giving (45% of households) or receiving (58% of households), based on household surveys conducted in 2013 and local oral interviews with residents (ADF&G 2022b). For example, Ikuta and others (2016) documented that Scammon Bay households received salmon shared by Hooper Bay and Chevak households.

Reliance upon a Wide Diversity of Fish and Wildlife

Residents of Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay rely on a wide variety of wild resources. These resources comprise a substantial portion of their diet. The ADF&G Division of Subsistence household survey conducted in Scammon Bay in 2013 demonstrates this variety of use. **Table 4** describes this variety of wild foods. The overall harvest rate was 417 pounds in edible weight per person. Residents of Scammon Bay harvest fish (including salmon, halibut, herring, and whitefish), land mammals (including caribou and moose), and marine mammals (including seals), at the highest levels. Birds and eggs, vegetation (including berries), marine invertebrates (including clams and mussels), and small land mammals (including hares and porcupines) comprise smaller portions of annual harvests but are important components of the diet (ADF&G 2022b).

Table 3. Estimated harvests of salmon for subsistence at Hooper Bay and Scammon Bay 2006–2021, based on postseason surveys. Chevak residents were not surveyed. Pink and Sockeye salmon questions were not on the survey (Source: ADF&G 2022a; 2019, 2020, 2021 are preliminary data).

Community	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Chinook																
Hooper Bay	376	430	388	183	584	252	1,090	1,210	455	534	284	320	456	784	436	13
Scammon Bay	507	768	1,104	722	716	517	1,014	332	108	432	602	733	661	1,233	935	17
Summer Chum																
Hooper Bay	19,468	12,234	12,007	9,195	17,020	13,460	15,799	13,629	13,236	11,870	6,324	7,969	8,332	2,999	3,450	290
Scammon Bay	4,703	3,887	6,113	3,602	5,405	4,845	7,442	9,506	6,068	8,598	5,520	6,036	7,019	4,037	3,776	13
Fall Chum																
Hooper Bay	26	64	329	41	116	267	1	91	137	79	105	139	158	210	636	28
Scammon Bay	84	170	57	117	70	48	10	58	115	119	657	422	367	605	417	11
Coho																
Hooper Bay	175	26	66	24	45	0	7	73	118	95	121	222	117	342	150	41
Scammon Bay	160	84	50	222	79	55	86	214	86	79	234	213	754	462	200	9
Total																
Hooper Bay	20,045	12,754	12,790	9,443	17,765	13,979	16,897	15,003	13,946	12,578	6,834	8,650	9,063	4,335	4,672	372
Scammon Bay	5,454	4,909	7,324	4,663	6,270	5,465	8,552	10,110	6,377	9,228	7,013	7,404	8,801	6,337	5,328	50

Table 4. The harvest of wildlife resources by resource category, in pounds of edible weight, during one study year in 2013 at Scammon Bay, based on household surveys (N=86 households) (Source: ADF&G 2022b).

Wild resource category	Per Person harvest (in pounds edible weight)	Percentage of total wild resources harvested
Salmon	85	20%
Nonsalmon Fish	103	25%
Land Mammals	82	20%
Large Land Mammals	82	20%
Small Land Mammals	<1	<1%
Marine Mammals	84	20%
Birds and Eggs	40	10%
Marine Invertebrates	1	<1%
Vegetation	21	5%
All Resources	417	100%

Recent Events

In spring 2022, the Federal Subsistence Board adopted Fisheries Special Action FSA22-01 and closed Federal public waters of the Yukon Area to the harvest of salmon from June 1 through September 30, 2022. Any subsistence fishing opportunity on Federal public waters would be announced by the Federal Manager. This highlighted an issue, that Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay residents’ customary and traditional use determination for salmon in the Yukon River drainage is for fall Chum Salmon only. If the Federal Manager provided opportunity to harvest salmon in District 1, residents of the three communities would not be eligible to harvest other species of salmon there, and Federal regulations prevent the Office of Subsistence Management from accepting a Special Action Request between two-year fishery regulatory cycles to modify a customary and traditional use determination, and therefore, a Special Action Request was not an option.

Staff requested the Chevak Native Village to submit this proposal requesting the Federal Subsistence Board to recognize the customary and traditional uses of all salmon species in the Yukon River drainage by residents of Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay.

Effects of the Proposal

If this proposal is adopted, residents of Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay will be eligible to harvest Chinook, summer Chum, Coho, Sockeye, and Pink salmon, in addition to fall Chum Salmon, under Federal regulations in the Yukon River drainage beginning April 1, 2023.

If this proposal is adopted, the primary effect on the three communities is to make them eligible to continue harvesting these salmon species, Chinook, summer Chum, Coho, Sockeye, and Pink salmon, in the Yukon River drainage when the Federal Manager, one, closes the drainage to the harvest of salmon

except by Federally qualified subsistence users, and two, provides subsistence fishing opportunity. Currently, residents of the three communities are not Federally qualified subsistence users of these salmon species, and most salmon harvesting in the Yukon River drainage by them has been under State regulations.

If this proposal is not adopted, residents of the three communities will continue to be non-eligible to harvest Chinook, summer Chum, Coho, Sockeye, or Pink salmon in the Yukon River drainage when it is closed to the harvest of these salmon species except by Federally qualified users and when harvest opportunity is provided by the Federal Manager. The effect on these communities can be substantial because they are highly dependent on salmon. For example, Yukon District 1 includes the Black River, which is a fish harvesting area frequently mentioned by residents of the communities.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Support Proposal FP23-02.

Justification

Residents of Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay exemplify the customary and traditional use of all species of salmon in the Yukon River drainage. Traditionally and historically, residents of the three communities have used this area to harvest salmon, which is an important component of their diet and a large portion of their subsistence harvests each year.

Fisheries Special Action FSA22-01 was adopted by the Board in spring 2022 and highlighted that these three communities do not have a customary and traditional use determination for Chinook, summer Chum, Coho, Sockeye, or Pink salmon in the Yukon River drainage. The Chevak Native Village submitted this proposal on behalf of the residents of Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay.

In the past, State regulations have provided opportunities for these communities to harvest salmon in the Yukon River drainage, but FSA22-01, described above, closed the Federal public waters in the drainage to the harvest of salmon, and State regulations were no longer effective.

The Board should recognize the customary and traditional uses of all salmon in the Yukon River drainage by residents of Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay.

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APPENDIX 1

YUKON AREA FISHING DISTRICTS AND SUBDISTRICTS

5 AAC 05.100 - Description of Yukon Area

The Yukon Area includes all waters of Alaska between a line extending 315° northwest from Point Romanof at 63° 12.16' N. lat., 162° 49.72' W. long. to a point three nautical miles offshore at 63° 14.27' N. lat., 162° 54.40' W. long. and the latitude of the westernmost point of the Naskonat Peninsula, including those waters draining into the Bering Sea.

5 AAC 05.200 - Fishing districts and subdistricts

(a) District 1 consists of that portion of the Yukon River drainage from a line extending northwest from Point Romanof at 63°12.16' N. lat., 162° 49.72' W. long., to a point three nautical miles offshore at 63° 14.27' N. lat., 162° 54 .40' W. long., extending south and west along the coast of the delta to a line approximately one nautical mile south of the mouth of the Black River from 62° 20.58' N. lat., 165° 22.66' W. long., to a point located three nautical miles offshore at 62° 22.67' N. lat., 165° 27.37' W. long., including the waters within three nautical miles seaward from any grassland bank within that area, and upstream from the mouth of the Black River to the northern edge of the mouth of the Anuk River and all waters of the Black River.

(b) District 2 consists of that portion of the Yukon River drainage from the northern edge of the mouth of the Anuk River upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker located at Toklik, and includes the Anuk River drainage.

(c) District 3 consists of that portion of the Yukon River drainage from an ADF&G regulatory marker located at Toklik upstream to an ADF&G regulatory marker at the mouth of an unnamed slough three-fourths of a mile downstream from Old Paradise Village.

(d) District 4 consists of the Yukon River drainage from an ADF&G regulatory marker at the mouth of an unnamed slough three-fourths of a mile downstream from Old Paradise Village upstream to the western edge of the mouth of Illinois Creek at Kallands.

(1) Subdistrict 4-A consists of that portion of the Yukon River drainage from an ADF&G regulatory marker at the mouth of an unnamed slough three-fourths of a mile downstream from Old Paradise Village upstream to the tip of Cone Point;

(2) Subdistrict 4-B consists of the Yukon River drainage from the tip of Cone Point upstream along the north bank of the river to the westernmost edge of Illinois Creek and includes the following islands: Cook, Lark, Serpentine, Louden, Fish, Dainty, Yuki, Melozi, Dasha, Straight, Kit, Fox, Hardluck, Mickey, Florence, Doyle, Chokoyik, Lady, Liner, Flora and Cronin;

(3) Subdistrict 4-C consists of the Yukon River drainage from the tip of Cone Point upstream along the south bank of the river to a point opposite the westernmost edge of Illinois Creek and includes the following islands: Cat, Hen, Jimmy, Big, Ninemile, Ham, Emerald, Edith, Kathaleen, Henry, Burns, Youngs, Weir, Clay, Large and Brant.

(e) District 5 consists of that portion of the Yukon River drainage (excluding the Tanana River drainage) from the western edge of the mouth of Illinois Creek to the United States-Canada border, and includes the Illinois Creek drainage.

(1) Subdistrict 5-A consists of the Yukon River drainage from a point opposite the westernmost edge of Illinois Creek upstream along the south bank of the river to the easternmost edge of the Tanana River mouth and includes the following islands: Second, Corbusier, Sixmile, Deet'laa', Swanson, Blind, Basco, Sword, Leonard, Still, Tanana and Mission;

(2) Subdistrict 5-B consists of the Yukon River drainage from the westernmost edge of Illinois Creek upstream along the north bank of the river to a point opposite the easternmost edge of the Tanana River mouth upstream along both banks of the Yukon River to the westernmost tip of Gar-net Island and includes the following islands: Willow I, II, and III, Steamboat, Grant, Darwin, Little Joker, Station, Tozitna, Circle, Bull, and Long;

(3) Subdistrict 5-C consists of the Yukon River drainage upstream from the westernmost tip of Garnet Island to ADF&G regulatory markers located approximately two miles downstream from Waldron Creek;

(4) Subdistrict 5-D consists of the Yukon River drainage from ADF&G regulatory markers located approximately two miles downstream from Waldron Creek upstream to the United States-Canada border.

(f) District 6 consists of the Tanana River drainage to its confluence with the Yukon River.

(1) Subdistrict 6-A consists of that portion of the Tanana River drainage from its mouth upstream to the eastern edge of the mouth of the Kantishna River and includes the Kantishna River drainage;

(2) Subdistrict 6-B consists of that portion of the Tanana River drainage from the eastern edge of the mouth of the Kantishna River upstream to the eastern edge of the mouth of the Wood River and includes the Wood River drainage;

(3) Subdistrict 6-C consists of the Tanana River drainage from the eastern edge of the mouth of the Wood River upstream to the eastern edge of the mouth of the Salcha River and includes the Salcha River drainage;

(4) Old Minto Area consists of that portion of Subdistrict 6-B from the downstream end of upper Tolovana Island, located approximately two miles upstream of the Tolovana River, to three miles upstream of the mouth of the Totchaket Slough.

(g) Repealed 7/13/2012.

(h) Coastal District: all waters between the latitude of the westernmost point of the Naskonat Peninsula and a line extending 315° northwest from Point Romanof at 63° 12.16' N. lat., 162° 49.72' W. long. to a point three nautical miles offshore at 63° 14.27' N. lat., 162° 54.40' W. long. not included in (a) - (f) of this section.

Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP)

2024 Overview

Quick Info

- Established in 2000
- Focuses on subsistence fisheries in Federal public waters in Alaska
- Solicits proposals every two years
- Projects may be awarded up to four years of funding
- See <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/frmp> for more information

What is the FRMP?

The Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) funds research to provide information that can help manage subsistence fisheries in Federal public waters in Alaska. *Projects are required to focus on harvest monitoring, traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), and stock status and trends.* Proposals are evaluated based on strategic priority, scientific merit, investigator ability and resources, cost/benefit, and the extent to which they meaningfully involve Alaska Native and rural organizations (partnerships and capacity building). Projects may be led by Alaska Native and rural organizations, universities, government agencies, or private contractors.

Priority Information Needs (PINs)

PINs are research needs that could be addressed through FRMP projects. Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) members help develop potential PINs throughout the summer before an FRMP cycle. Potential PINs are then discussed and finalized during the fall Council meetings. Finalized PINs are included in the FRMP project solicitations and ultimately influence the direction of the Monitoring Program.

FRMP Timeline

March-November 2022: Council members develop potential 2024 priority information needs and finalize them at fall Council meetings

December 2022: OSM publishes Notice of Funding Opportunity

February – May 2023: OSM reviews proposals

June 2023: Technical Review Committee evaluates and scores proposals

September – November 2023: Councils and Interagency Staff Committee comment on proposals

January 2024: Federal Subsistence Board provides recommendation on the draft Monitoring Plan that includes proposals recommended for funding

February 2024: Assistant Regional Director for OSM approves Monitoring Plan and notification letters are sent to applicants

May - July 2024: Projects begin

Seward Peninsula FRMP projects, organized by Priority Information Needs, 2012-2022

Inventory and baseline data of fish assemblages in major rivers of northern Seward Peninsula tied to subsistence use, including Shishmaref, with the intent to add to the anadromous fish catalog.

- Included in call for 2020 funding year.
- Related projects:
 - FRMP 20-100: Fish assemblages and genetic stock determination of salmon in Bering Land Bridge National Preserve

Unalakleet River Chinook Salmon escapement assessment

- Included in calls for 2022, 2018, and 2016 funding years.
- Related projects:
 - FRMP 22-103: Unalakleet River Chinook Salmon escapement assessment – continuation
 - FRMP 18-103: Unalakleet River Chinook Salmon escapement assessment – continuation
 - FRMP 14-101: Unalakleet River Chinook Salmon escapement assessment – continuation

Northern Alaska Region FRMP Projects Since 2000

Project Number	Project Title	Investigators
<i>North Slope</i>		
00-002	Eastern NS Dolly Varden Spawning and Over-wintering Assessment	ADF&G, USFWS
01-113	Eastern NS Dolly Varden Genetic Stock ID Stock Assessment	ADF&G, USFWS
01-101	Eastern NS (Kaktovik) Subsistence Fish Harvest Assessment	AD&FG, KIC
02-050	NS (Anaktuvuk Pass) Subsistence Fish Harvest Assessment	ADF&G, NSB, AKP
03-012	SST of Arctic Cisco and Dolly Varden in Kaktovik Lagoons	USFWS
04-103	North Slope Dolly Varden Sonar Feasibility	USFWS
06-108	North Slope Dolly Varden Aerial Monitoring	ADF&G
07-105	North Slope Dolly Varden Genetic Baseline Completion	USFWS
07-107	Hulahula River Dolly Varden Sonar Enumeration	USFWS
12-154	North Slope Salmon Fishery HM/TEK	ADF&G
14-103	Beaufort Sea Dolly Varden Dispersal Patterns	UAF
16-101	Arctic Dolly Varden Telemetry	USFWS
16-106	Aerial Monitoring of Dolly Varden Overwintering Abundance	ADF&G, USFWS
16-107	Chandler Lake Trout Abundance Estimation	ADF&G
16-152	Meade River Changes in Subsistence Fisheries	ADF&G
18-100 ^a	Colville River Grayling Habitat and Migration	ADF&G

Project Number	Project Title	Investigators
<i>Northwest Arctic</i>		
00-001	Northwestern Dolly Varden and Arctic Char Stock Identification	ADF&G, USFWS
00-020	Hotham Inlet Kotzebue Winter Subsistence Sheefish Harvest	ADF&G
01-136	Northwestern Alaska Dolly Varden Genetic Diversity	ADF&G, USFWS
01-137	Northwestern Alaska Dolly Varden Spawning Stock Assessment	ADF&G
02-023	Qaluich Nigingnaqtuat: Fish That We Eat	AJ
02-040	Kotzebue Sound Whitefish Traditional Knowledge	ADF&G, MQ
03-016	Selawik River Harvest ID, Spring and Fall Subsistence Fisheries	USFWS
04-101	Selawik River Inconnu Spawning Abundance	USFWS
04-102	Selawik Refuge Whitefish Migration and Habitat Use	USFWS
04-109	Wulik River Dolly Varden Wintering Stocks	USFWS, ADF&G
04-157	Exploring Approaches to Sustainable Fisheries Harvest Assessment	ADF&G, MQ
07-151	Northwest Alaska Subsistence Fish Harvest Patterns and Trends	ADF&G, MQ
08-103	Kobuk River Sheefish Spawning and Run Timing	ADF&G, USFWS
10-100	Selawik Drainage Sheefish Winter Movement Patterns	UAF, USGS, USFWS, NVK
10-104	Hotham Inlet Kotzebue Winter Subsistence Sheefish Harvest	USFWS
10-152	Climate Change and Subsistence Fisheries in Northwest Alaska	UAF
12-100	Selawik River Sheefish Spawning Abundance and Age Structure	USFWS
12-103	Kobuk River Sheefish Spawning Frequency, Location, and Run Timing	ADF&G, USFWS
12-104	Noatak River Dolly Varden Evaluation of Overwintering Populations	ADF&G, NPS
12-153	NW AK Key Subsistence Fisheries Harvest Monitoring Program	ADF&G, MQ
14-104	Selawik R Inconnu Spawning Population Abundance	USFWS
16-103	Kobuk River Dolly Varden Genetics	ADF&G, USFWS
16-104	Selawik Sheefish Age Structure and Spawning Population	USFWS

Project Number	Project Title	Investigators
16-105	Kobuk River Sheefish Abundance	ADF&G
18-101	Kobuk River Dolly Varden Genetic Diversity	ADF&G, USFWS
20-101 ^a	Life-history Variability and Mixed-stock Analysis of Dolly Varden in the Noatak River	ADF&G, UAF, USFWS
20-150 ^a	Traditional Ecological Knowledge of Dolly Varden and Whitefish Species in Northwest Alaska	20-150 ^a
22-101 ^a	Kotzebue Sound Sheefish – Describing Coastal Movement, Temperature Preference, and Potential Range Expansion	WCS
22-104 ^a	Selawik R Inconnu Spawning Population Age Structure Evaluation and Spawner Recruitment Response to a 2004 Permafrost Thaw Slump	USFWS
22-150 ^a	Traditional Ecological Knowledge of Salmon in River Drainages of Kotzebue Sound	ADF&G
<i>Seward Peninsula</i>		
01-224	Nome Sub-district Subsistence Salmon Survey	ADF&G, KI
02-020	Pikmiktalik River Salmon Site Surveys and Enumeration	USFWS, NPS, STB, KI
04-105	Pikmiktalik River Chum and Coho Salmon Enumeration	KI
04-151	Customary Trade of Fish in the Seward Peninsula Area	ADF&G, KI
05-101	Unalakleet River Coho Salmon Distribution and Abundance	ADF&G, NVU
06-101	Pikmiktalik River Chum and Coho Salmon Enumeration	KI
10-102	Unalakleet River Chinook Salmon Abundance Estimate	ADF&G, BLM, NSEDC
10-151	Local Ecological Knowledge of Non-Salmon Fish in the Bering Strait	KI
14-101	Unalakleet River Chinook Salmon Abundance Estimate	NSEDC, NVU ADF&G, BLM
18-103 ^a	Unalakleet River Chinook Salmon Escapement Assessment	NSEDC, NVU ADF&G, BLM
20-100 ^a	Fish Assemblages and Genetic Stock Determination of Salmon in Bering Land Bridge National Preserve	NPS, ADF&G ADF&G
22-103 ^a	Unalakleet River Chinook Salmon Escapement Assessment – Continuation	ADF&G, NSEDC, BLM

Project Number	Project Title	Investigators
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a = On-going projects.

Acronyms used for investigators are: **ADF&G** = Alaska Department of Fish and Game, **AJ** = Anore Jones, **AKP** = City of Anaktuvuk Pass, **BLM** = Bureau of Land Management, **KI** = Kawarek Inc., **KIC** = Kaktovik Inupiat Corp., **MQ** = Maniilaq, **NSEDC** = Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation, **NVU** = Native Village of Unalakleet, **NSB** = North Slope Borough, **STB** = Stebbins IRA, **SWCA** = SWCA Environmental Consultants, **UAF** = University Alaska Fairbanks, **USFWS** = U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, **USGS** = U.S. Geological Survey, and **WCS**= Wildlife Conservation Society.

Draft Northern Region Priority Information Needs for the 2024 FRMP cycle

These draft Priority Information Needs were identified by Council volunteers, summer 2022.

Seward Peninsula

- Chinook, Chum and Coho salmon abundance estimates for Boston, Fish, Paragon, and Wagonwheel rivers.
- Summer and Fall Chum salmon abundance estimates for the Agiapuk River drainage including American River and Igloo Creek.
- Chinook, Chum, and Coho salmon abundance estimates for the Pikmiktalik River, with comparison to historical counts.
- Changes in Arctic Grayling, Dolly Varden, and Sheefish populations related to climate change.
- Changes in salmon species composition and expansion of salmon species into new waters in the Seward Peninsula.
- Map traditional fishing areas in the Seward Peninsula region.
- The effects of expanding beaver range and population on subsistence fisheries in the Seward Peninsula region. Include effects of dams on fish migration and effects of changes to water quality on fish health.

Northwest Arctic

- Inventory and baseline data of fish assemblages in major rivers tied to subsistence use in Northwest Alaska. When possible, applicants are encouraged to include fisheries proximal to the communities of Shishmaref, Buckland, Deering, Kivalina, Point Hope and villages along Kobuk and Noatak rivers.

- Evaluate changes in water temperature and resulting low oxygen in major river systems associated with subsistence fishery resources in the Northwest Arctic Region, and how these changes will affect salmon, whitefish, Northern Pike, and other fish vital for subsistence.
- The effects of expanding beaver populations and range on subsistence fisheries, including whitefish, in the Northwest Arctic Region. Include effects of dams on fish migration and effects of changes to water quality on fish health.
- Document Herring abundance, seasonal movements, and health and investigate causes of large herring mortality events in the Northwest Arctic.
- Document the effects of changing river and tributary conditions on salmon spawning in the Noatak and Kobuk river drainages, with focus on the potential effects of increased precipitation on spawning viability.
- Changes in species compositions, abundance, and migration timing, especially of Dolly Varden, Lake Trout, and whitefish species in the Northwest Arctic, to address changing availability of subsistence fishery resources.
- Identify the spawning areas, critical habitat and range expansion in major rivers tied to subsistence for Broad Whitefish, Least Cisco, Northern Pike, salmon, Grayling, and Dolly Varden in the Northwest Alaska Region.

North Slope

- Using Traditional Ecological Knowledge and harvest monitoring, document new fish species and changes in abundance, size, timing, and distribution of existing fish species, as well as impacts of new or expanding species on other fish that are important to subsistence in the North Slope Region.
- Document and investigate the possible causes of mold, disease, and discoloration on Broad Whitefish in the Colville River in the vicinity of Nuiqsut. Compare environmental conditions in the Colville River—including temperature—with those in the Ikpikpuk River, where whitefish are healthy and mold has not been observed to date. Investigators are encouraged to draw on both stock status and trends and Traditional Ecological Knowledge research methods.
- Document the effects of climate change, including late freeze-up, on subsistence fishing access, harvests, and preservation and the impact of these changes on community-wide harvest levels and food security on the North Slope. Research could investigate adaptations for continuing community-wide harvest levels where traditional preservation methods are impacted. Studies including Ikpikpuk River are of particular interest.
- Baseline fish habitat and water quality monitoring (especially temperature, dissolved oxygen, and silt) on the rivers and tributaries important to subsistence fishing for communities of the North Slope Region. Investigators are encouraged to include overwintering areas.

Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program Notice of Funding Opportunity

The Office of Subsistence Management is seeking proposals for the Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program to strengthen Alaska Native and rural involvement in Federal subsistence management. The Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program is a competitive grant program that provides funding for biologist/social scientist/educator positions in Alaska Native and rural nonprofit organizations with the intent of increasing the organizations' ability to participate in Federal subsistence management. In addition, the program supports a variety of opportunities for rural students to learn about subsistence resource monitoring and management through science camps and paid internships.

More information about the Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program Notice of Funding Opportunity can be found in *GrantSolutions.gov*, *Grants.gov*, or on the Office of Subsistence Management Website <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/partners>, or by contacting Karen Hyer at Karen_Hyer@fws.gov, 907-786-3689.



McLees Lake Weir, Unalaska Island. Photograph by Jenny Renee.

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.

2023 NORTH AMERICAN CARIBOU WORKSHOP & ARCTIC UNGULATE CONFERENCE

Anchorage, Alaska ■ May 8-12, 2023

Come to the conference to share your knowledge and learn from others! Join an international group of managers, biologists, Indigenous and Local Knowledge holders, and others to share knowledge of caribou, muskoxen, Dall's sheep, moose, and reindeer. The meeting will provide opportunities for exchanging viewpoints, concerns, and recommendations regarding the health, stewardship, use, and study of these important species.

The theme for the joint meeting is *Crossing Boundaries*: Arctic ungulates regularly cross landscape boundaries, connecting ecosystems and peoples, necessitating partnerships and collaboration across management and political boundaries. A critical component of such partnerships involves crossing the boundaries of Western science and Indigenous knowledges to identify creative opportunities to sustain Arctic ungulate populations in a changing world. We will explore these themes across four days of research talks, storytelling, workshops and panel discussions. Join us!

For more information visit www.nacw-auc-2023.org or e-mail info@nacw-auc-2023.org.



The Wilderness Society





United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Anchorage Field Office
4700 BLM Road
Anchorage, Alaska 99507-2591
www.blm.gov/alaska

Updates to Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils **Fall 2022 Meetings**

The Anchorage Field Office completed a busy summer 2022 field operations. The summary below is an overview of priority projects by resource. We are continuing to increase in fieldwork operations, while adhering to any COVID-19 protocols and mitigations.

An overview map of the Anchorage Field Office can be found at:

https://www.blm.gov/sites/blm.gov/files/documents/files/Maps_Alaska_Anchorage-Field-Office.pdf

BLM Alaska publicly available interactive maps are available at: <https://blm-egis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MinimalGallery/index.html?appid=d2da853631fe4b60ac768f19bec4e84b>

Wildlife and Subsistence

- Conducted Breeding Bird Survey routes on the Unalakleet and Anvik Rivers in June.
- Completed a peregrine falcon nesting survey on the Kuskokwim River between McGrath and Aniak in July.
- Assisted Alaska Department of Fish and Game with the release of 28 Wood Bison on the Innoko River near Kellen Creek. The bison were barged to the site and held in a temporary corral before being released on August 6th to the wild bison herd already in the area.
- BLM issued federal muskox permits for hunts in Units 22B, 22D and 23.
- BLM issued federal moose permits in Unalakleet for the fall hunt in unit 22A.
- Contributed funds in an Inter-agency Agreement with FWS Togiak Wildlife Refuge to help monitor the Mulchatna Caribou Herd.
- Contributed funds in an Interagency Agreement with NPS to help fund the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group meeting in December. The meeting is funded by BLM, NPS and FWS and ADF&G. The working Group will discuss the management of the herd and its current population status.

Aquatics

- Conducted e-DNA sampling in the Kigluaik Mountains on the Seward Peninsula for BLM sensitive species Kigluaik Arctic Char.
- Completed initial aquatic habitat baseline data collection from the Seward Peninsula Planning Area based out of Kotzebue and Nome as part of the National Assessment Inventory and Monitoring Program (AIM). AIM data provides a framework to inventory and quantitatively assess the condition and trend of natural resources on public lands.
- Conducted ongoing stream gaging flow quantification efforts on Big River and Unalakleet Wild and Scenic River
- Conducted ongoing water quality monitoring work at Platinum. This is a partnership with USFWS Togiak National Refuge for installation of a Video Weir in 2023 on the Salmon River monitoring salmon escarpment numbers.

Ecology

- Continued collecting Assessment Inventory and Monitoring (AIM) terrestrial and riparian and wetland plot data for the Kobuk Seward Peninsula Planning Area. In July/August 2022, 23 plots were established and sampled using this monitoring framework. Data on plant cover, invasive species, sensitive species, woody structure, phenology, pollinator activity, and soil structure were collected. In addition to these national core monitoring indicators, BLM has developed methods to collect data on lichen cover and disturbance to determine rangeland health in areas that BLM permits reindeer grazing.
- In July 2022, exclosures on the Seward Peninsula were visited and monitored. These small fenced-in areas protect vegetation from grazing, providing a baseline to learn about the long-term effects of grazing on lichens and plants. The exclosures were installed in 2011 and 2012 and baseline data was collected at that time. This is the first year that vegetation has been reassessed to determine how it has changed over the past 10 years. Data will be analyzed during the upcoming winter months.
- Re-issued four firewood harvest permits to residents on the Seward Peninsula.
- Collaborated with the United State Forest Service Forest Inventory and Analysis Program (FIA) to facilitate data collection at 105 plot locations on BLM within the FIA's Southwest Inventory Unit.
- Anchorage Area: Conducted invasive species control treatments on Campbell Tract in July with another planned for August 2021. Bird vetch and orange hawkweed were targeting this year and spot treatment occurred within a 6-acre area that is assessed annually.

- Continuing to support the Anchorage Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area through an assistance agreement to partially fund meetings, public events, and chairperson coordination.

Archaeology

- OTZ Telecom Cooperative has applied to the BLM for rights-of-way to construct several towers that would provide internet service to northwest Alaska. The BLM is working with the USDA Rural Utilities Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, and the State of Alaska to develop a Programmatic Agreement to address potential effects to cultural resources under the National Historic Preservation Act.

Recreation

- Spring 2022- conducted SRP monitoring in the Neacola Mountains and Tordrillo Mountains.
- June 2022- inspected guide and outfitter camps in GMU 19D & 19C.
- July 2022- inspected guide and outfitter camps and airstrips in GMU 23.
- August 2022- a new BLM sign will be placed at the boundary of BLM lands and Unalakleet Native Lands on the Unalakleet Wild and Scenic River.
- Issued new Special Recreation Permit (SRP) for guided bear hunts in GUA 21-03.
- Issued new Special Recreation Permit (SRP) for guided big game hunts in GUA 19-12.
- Issued new Special Recreation Permit (SRP) for guided big game hunts in GUA 21-01.

Iditarod Trail

- The BLM worked with Denali National Park & Preserve personnel to rehabilitate and stabilize the Rohn Public Use Cabin. The work stabilized the condition of this National Register of Historic Places eligible cabin for decades to come.

Realty

- OTZ lease application
- Mukluk Telephone fiberoptic lease application
- Private individual road right of way application

- Bristol Bay Cellular 2 ROW lease renewals
- NPS Nome lease clean-up of Hill 3870 on the Teller Road
- Seldovia Certificate Inspection and Possession Environmental Site Assessment exam

Hazmat

- Kolmakoff Mine Site has been funded for FY23 remedial fieldwork.
- Three remote trespass cabin sites have been remediated and will be submitted for regulatory closure.
- RCRA HAZMAT removed and disposed of from an aircraft crash site in Squirrel River SMRA.
- Accumulated HAZMAT from AFO and GFO properly disposed of.

Minerals

- Minerals staff have had a productive field inspection and are scheduled to accomplish all planned mine inspections by the end of September.
- Salmon River Fish Passage Project is undergoing NEPA review and funding options are being sought after.
- Nixon Fork experienced a severe wildfire fire event that burned much of the surface infrastructure. There continues to be multiple enforcement actions against the operator and staff are trying to bring them into compliance before the end of FY22.
- Multiple operators in Flat have made progress in their mine site reclamation.
- One operator in Nome is beginning reclamation this fall and BLM is pursuing cleanup actions for the other operator.
- Minerals staff have worked extensively in closing out legacy mineral material casefiles associated with Native Allotments.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game Subsistence Division

Review of Arctic Area Subsistence Division Projects

Helen Cold
ADF&G Subsistence Division

Presentation to the Seward Peninsula RAC
October 4-5, 2022



Bering Land Bridge Ethnographic Overview and Assessment

- **Funding Agency:** National Park Service (NPS)
- **Purpose:** Produce an ethnographic overview and assessment (EOA) for Bering Land Bridge National Preserve
- **Focus area:** Bering Land Bridge zone communities (Wales, Shishmaref, Deering)
- **Methods:**
 - Comprehensive literature review
 - Community consultations
 - Create EOA document for NPS
- **Project timeline:**
 - Project Start 09/2020, project end 09/2024
 - Literature review conducted and report writing in progress
- **Future work:**
 - Community consultations postponed due to COVID, anticipated for 2023
 - Draft report finalized and shared with communities spring 2024, report compete fall 2024



Western Arctic Caribou Herd Harvest Assessment

- **Funding Agency:** Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
 - Research partnership among 8 study communities, ADF&G Subsistence, ADF&G Department of Wildlife Conservation
- **Purpose:** conduct household large mammal harvest surveys in 8 communities within the range of the Western Arctic caribou herd
- **Focus area:** Communities of **Golovin, White Mountain, Shishmaref, Selawik, Shungnak, Noatak, Deering** and Kobuk
- **Methods:**
 - Household surveys, ethnographic interviews with mapping, and participant observation
- **Project timeline:**
 - Project Start 03/2019, project end 06/2024
 - 4 years of surveys - each community is surveyed twice, once every 2 years
 - Spring 2022 visited Shungnak, White Mountain, Selawik and Golovin
- **Future work:**
 - Visit all study communities fall 2022-spring 2023 for ethnographic interviews and participant observation
 - Visit Deering, Kobuk, Golovin and Shishmaref spring 2023 for second round of surveys/final year of data collection



Questions?

Thank you!

Helen Cold
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Winter 2023 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

Last updated 03/28/2022

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
<i>Feb. 19</i>	Feb. 20 PRESIDENTS DAY HOLIDAY	<i>Feb. 21</i> <i>Window Opens</i>	<i>Feb. 22</i>	<i>Feb. 23</i> NSRAC (Kaktovik)	<i>Feb. 24</i>	<i>Feb. 25</i>
			KARAC (TBD)			
<i>Feb. 26</i>	<i>Feb. 27</i>	<i>Feb. 28</i>	<i>Mar. 1</i>	<i>Mar. 2</i>	<i>Mar. 3</i>	<i>Mar. 4</i>
		SEARAC (Juneau)				
			EIRAC (Arctic Village or Fairbanks)			
<i>Mar. 5</i>	<i>Mar. 6</i>	<i>Mar. 7</i>	<i>Mar. 8</i>	<i>Mar. 9</i>	<i>Mar. 10</i>	<i>Mar. 11</i>
	NWARAC (TBD)					
<i>Mar. 12</i>	<i>Mar. 13</i>	<i>Mar. 14</i>	<i>Mar. 15</i>	<i>Mar. 16</i>	<i>Mar. 17</i>	<i>Mar. 18</i>
		BBRAC (Dillingham)		SCRAC (Anchorage)		
<i>Mar. 19</i>	<i>Mar. 20</i>	<i>Mar. 21</i>	<i>Mar. 22</i>	<i>Mar. 23</i>	<i>Mar. 24</i>	<i>Mar. 25</i>
			SPRAC (Nome)			
<i>Mar. 26</i>	<i>Mar. 27</i>	<i>Mar. 28</i>	<i>Mar. 29</i>	<i>Mar. 30</i>	<i>Mar. 31</i>	<i>Apr. 1</i>
<i>Apr. 2</i>	<i>Apr. 3</i>	<i>Apr. 4</i>	<i>Apr. 5</i>	<i>Apr. 6</i>	<i>Apr. 7</i> <i>Window Closes</i>	<i>Apr. 8</i>
	YKDRAC (Alakanuk)					
		WIRAC (Aniak)				

Fall 2023 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

Last updated 08/1/2022

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
<i>Aug. 13</i>	Aug. 14 Window Opens	<i>Aug. 15</i>	<i>Aug. 16</i>	<i>Aug. 17</i>	<i>Aug. 18</i>	<i>Aug. 19</i>
<i>Aug. 20</i>	<i>Aug. 21</i>	<i>Aug. 22</i>	<i>Aug. 23</i>	<i>Aug. 24</i>	<i>Aug. 25</i>	<i>Aug. 26</i>
<i>Aug. 27</i>	<i>Aug. 28</i>	<i>Aug. 29</i>	<i>Aug. 30</i>	<i>Aug. 31</i>	<i>Sep. 1</i>	<i>Sep. 2</i>
<i>Sep. 3</i>	Sep. 4 Labor Day Holiday	<i>Sep. 5</i>	<i>Sep. 6</i>	<i>Sep. 7</i>	<i>Sep. 8</i>	<i>Sep. 9</i>
<i>Sep. 10</i>	<i>Sep. 11</i>	<i>Sep. 12</i>	<i>Sep. 13</i>	<i>Sep. 14</i>	<i>Sep. 15</i>	<i>Sep. 16</i>
<i>Sep. 17</i>	<i>Sep. 18</i>	<i>Sep. 19</i>	<i>Sep. 20</i>	<i>Sep. 21</i>	<i>Sep. 22</i>	<i>Sep. 23</i>
<i>Sep. 24</i>	<i>Sep. 25</i>	<i>Sep. 26</i>	<i>Sep. 27</i>	<i>Sep. 28</i>	<i>Sep. 29</i>	<i>Sep. 30</i>
<i>Oct. 1</i>	<i>Oct. 2</i>	<i>Oct. 3</i>	<i>Oct. 4</i>	<i>Oct. 5</i>	<i>Oct. 6</i>	<i>Oct. 7</i>
<i>Oct. 8</i>	Oct. 9 Columbus Day Holiday	<i>Oct. 10</i>	<i>Oct. 11</i>	<i>Oct. 12</i>	<i>Oct. 13</i>	<i>Oct. 14</i>
<i>Oct. 15</i>	<i>Oct. 16</i>	<i>Oct. 17</i>	<i>Oct. 18</i>	<i>Oct. 19</i>	<i>Oct. 20</i>	<i>Oct. 21</i>
<i>Oct. 22</i>	<i>Oct. 23</i>	<i>Oct. 24</i>	<i>Oct. 25</i>	<i>Oct. 26</i>	<i>Oct. 27</i>	<i>Oct. 28</i>
<i>Oct. 29</i>	<i>Oct. 30</i>	<i>Oct. 31</i>	<i>Nov. 1</i>	<i>Nov. 2</i>	Nov. 3 Window Closes	<i>Nov. 4</i>

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*)

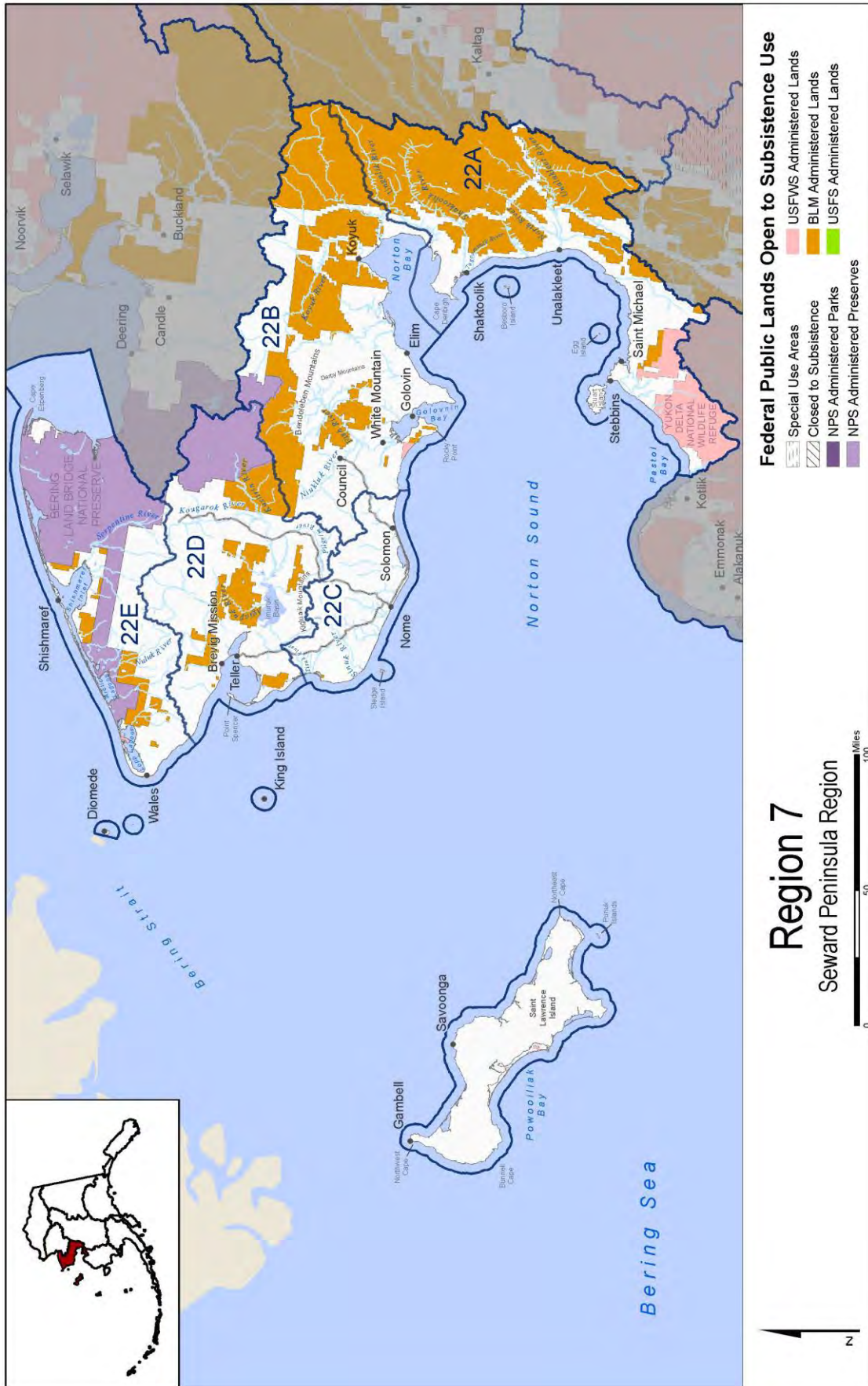
The Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture created the Federal Subsistence Board and delegated to it the responsibility for managing fish and wildlife resources on Federal public lands. The Board was also given the duty of establishing rules and procedures for the operation of the Regional Advisory 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.



**Department of the Interior
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Charter

1. **Committee's Official Designation.** The Council's official designation is the Seward Peninsula 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 evaluate 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 on 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. Make recommendations on determinations of customary and traditional use of subsistence resources.
 - f. Make recommendations on determinations of rural status.
 - g. Provide recommendations on the establishment and membership of Federal local advisory committees.
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 \$155,000, including all direct and indirect expenses and 1.0 staff year.
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 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:

Ten 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 seven of the members (70 percent) represent subsistence interests within the region and three 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.

If appointments for a given year have not yet been announced, a member may continue to serve on the Council following the expiration of his or her term until such appointments have been made. Unless reappointed, the member's service ends on the date of announcement even if that member's specific seat remains unfilled.

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 DFO's 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.** The 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 schedules. These records must be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552).

 /signature on the filed original/
Secretary of the Interior

 Dec. 10, 2021
Date Signed

 Dec. 13, 2021
Date Filed

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