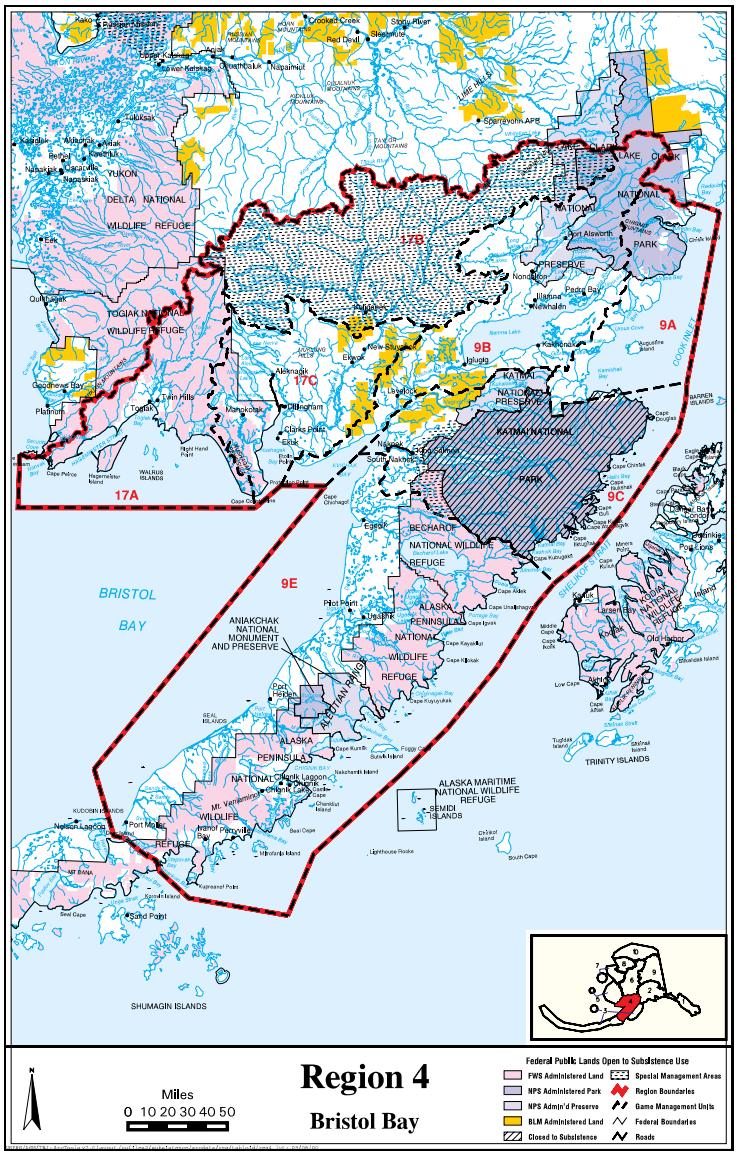

Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Meeting Materials

BRISTOL BAY SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Egan Center
Anchorage, Alaska
March 10, 2016
8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

TELECONFERENCE: call the toll free number: 1-866-916-7020, then when prompted enter the passcode: 37311548

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.

b. Refuges Proposed Rule on Hunting - Update 210

c. National Park Service Proposed Rule on Subsistence Collections 218

11. New Business *(Chair)*

a. Call for Federal Fish and Shellfish Regulatory Proposals* (*OSM Fisheries*).....225

b. Identify Priority Information Needs for FRMP* (*OSM Fisheries*)

c. Approve FY2015 Annual Report (*Council Coordinator*) BB-16

d. Season and Harvest Limits for Nushagak Caribou (*Nushagak Cairbou Herd Planning Committee*)

12. Joint Session with Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (1:30 p.m.)

a. Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program

b. Section 804 Analysis for WP16-21*.....Supplemental

13. Agency Reports

a. Federal-State Staff: Moose survey and population data needs

Unless a special report is requested by the Council, all agencies should be prepared to only provide written reports for this meeting.

14. Future Meeting Dates*

Confirm date and location of Fall 2016 meeting 235

Select date and location for Winter 2017 meeting 236

15. Closing Comments

16. Adjourn (*Chair***)**

To teleconference into the meeting, call the toll free number: 1-866-916-7020 then when prompted enter the passcode: 37311548

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 needs to Donald Mike at 907-786-3629, donald_mike@fws.gov, or 800-877-8339 (TTY), by close of business on February 20, 2016.

REGION 4
Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council

Seat	Year Apptd *Term Expires*	Member Name and Community
1	1993 ***2016***	**Peter M. Abraham** Togiak
2	1993 ***2016***	**Daniel J. O'Hara** Naknek
3	2003 **2016**	**Nanci A. Morris Lyon** King Salmon **Vice Chair**
4	2007 ***2017***	**Molly B. Chythlook** Dillingham **Chair**
5	2014 ***2017***	**Senafont Shugak, Jr.** Pedro Bay
6	2014 ***2017***	**William J. Maines** Dillingham
7	2003 ***2017***	**Dan O. Dunaway** Dillingham
8	2012 ***2018***	**Lary J. Hill** Iliamna
9	2015 ***2018***	**Victor A. Seybert** Pilot Point
10	2009 ***2018***	**Richard J. Wilson** Naknek **Secretary**

BRISTOL BAY SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes
Oct 28-29, 2015
Dillingham Middle School
Dillingham, Alaska

Call to Order
Meeting called to order by Madame Chair Molly Chythlook.

Roll Call and Establish Quorum
Roll called conducted by Coordinator Mike as requested by Chair Chythlook. Council members present: Molly Chythlook, Dan Dunaway, Richard Wilson, Dan O'Hara, Pete Abraham, Lary Hill, Nanci Morris Lyon, Senafont Shugak, Jr.
Absent: William Maines, Thomas Hedlund

Mr. R. Wilson led the invocation.

Welcome and Introductions
Chair Chythlook welcomed guests and staff members.

Government Agency Employees

Donald Mike	OSM
George Pappas	OSM
Suzanne Worker	OSM
Robbin La Vine	OSM
Carl Johnson	OSM
Andy Aderman	FWS Togiak NWR Wildlife Biologist
Mark Lisac	FWS Togiak NWR
Jon Dyasuk	FWS Togiak NWR
Susan Alexander	FWS AP/Becharof NWR
Troy Hamon	NPS Katmai Natural Resource Manager
Diane Chung	NPS Katmai Superintendent
Pat Petrivelli	BIA Anthropologist/ISC Member
Hazel Nelson	ADFG Subsistence Divison
Ted Kreig	ADFG Subsistence Division
Tim Sands	ADFG
Jason Dye	ADFG
Ian Fo	ADFG
Neil Barten	ADFG
Liza Rupp	NPS Lake Clark
Mike Folkerts	US Coast Guard
Susanna Henry	FWS Togiak NWR
Clarence Summers	NPS
Tom Cady	FWS AP/Becharof NWR

NGOs/Public

Gayla Hoseth	BBNA Subsistence Research Specialist
Courtenay Gomez	BBNA Nat Res Dir
Frank Woods	BBNA
Joe Chythlook	Dillingham

Mrs. Jacqualyn Wilson, DHS Alaska History Teacher, and history class students

On Teleconference

Joe Klutsch	King Salmon
Drew Crawford	ADFG
Bud Rice	NPS
Heather Tonneson	USFWS Anc
Gene Sandone	BBEDC
Dawn Wilburn	ADFG
Mary Beth Loewen	ADFG

Review and Adopt Meeting Agenda
Two wildlife proposals were added, WP16-34 and 35, and State BOF proposals affecting the Bristol Bay region. Agenda adopted as amended.

Review and Adoption of minutes: February 12-13, 2013
Mr. O'Hara moved to adopt the minutes and second called by Ms. Morris Lyon. Minutes adopted.

Reports
Council members reported on subsistence related activities and issues within their respective communities.

Public Testimony
Mr. Joe Klutsch, King Salmon, AK, provided his comments on wildlife proposals.

Ms. Cate Gomez, Dillingham HS 9th grade, provided testimony on subsistence activities in her region and also provided her comments on WP16-31/32, supporting harvest limit of caribou from two to three caribou.

Robin and Dillion Chaney, Dillingham HS, testified on wanton waste on migratory birds. Tristen Chaney of Dillingham also provided public testimony.

Ms. Hazel Nelson, ADFG, brought forward the ADFG Commissioner concerns on Statewide issues and improve working relationship with the Federal subsistence program.

Mr. Frank Woods provided testimony on recent Nushagak AC actions.

Old Business

Red Fish BOF Proposals-Naknek Lake

Council Coordinator Mike and Mr. R. Wilson provided an overview of the proposal drafted to provide better opportunity to harvest red fish for the Katmai descendants. The Council formed a committee consisting of some Council members, BBNA personnel, Consultant Gene Sandone of the BBEDC, and NPS personnel to consider regulatory language based on the proposal submitted, and present a complete draft proposed language for the Council to consider following the lunch break.

Following the break, a final draft of the proposal was submitted to the Council by the committee and read into the record. The Council accepted the modified language as an amendment to their original draft proposal, and voted to submit the amended proposal to the State BOF. The Council elected to send Ms. Morris Lyon, alternate Mr. O'Hara, to the State BOF meeting to speak on behalf of the Council regarding the proposal.

Rural Determination

Mr. Carl Johnson provided an overview of the Federal Subsistence Board's action taken at its July 2015 work session to move forward on implanting rural determination process.

The FSB voted to recommend to the Secretaries to adopt the proposed rule as written. The Board voted to publish a direct final rule adopting the pre-2007 non-rural determinations. The final phase of the process directed OSM staff to develop options to determine future non-rural determination for the Board's consideration.

Refuges Proposed Rule on Hunting

Ms. Susanna Henry, Togiak NWR Manager, presented the Alaska Refuges proposed rule, including recent revisions. The Council primarily expressed concerns over the predator control language. The Service's goal is to have a final rule published sometime in 2016.

New Business: Wildlife Regulatory Proposals

The following are the actions taken by the Bristol Bay RAC for the Federal Subsistence Board's consideration on each proposed regulatory wildlife proposals. The Council's recommendations are based on written public comments, Federal and State agency; NPS SRC and State AC comments, Native organizations and other public testimony heard during the public meeting.

Biological reports was presented to the Council from the State of Alaska and Federal wildlife biologists prior to deliberation on the Federal wildlife proposals. Staff analyses were presented by Ms. Suzanne Worker, OSM wildlife biologist.

Regional Proposals

WP16-21 Requests a *To-be-announced* caribou season be established in Units 9C and 9E and open to Federally qualified subsistence users.

RAC Recommendation: Support OSM conclusion

Justification: The Council supports the proposal with modification, replace *to-be-announced* to *may-be-announced.* The may be announced season will provide for opportunity to harvest caribou and will apply to the residents of the region. The herd is continuing to improve and the delegation of authority to open or close the season allows for the Manager to make in-season decisions in response to the changing caribou populations.

The modified regulation should read:

Unit 9 - Caribou

Unit 9C remainder – ~~Federal public lands are closed to the taking of caribou~~ ***1 bull by Federal registration permit or State permit.***	*~~No open season~~* ***May be announced***
Unit 9E – ~~Federal public lands are closed to the taking of caribou~~ ***1 bull by Federal registration permit or State permit.***	*~~No open season~~* ***May be announced***

Federal permits may be issued in conjunction with the State hunt. The Alaska Peninsula/Becharof National Wildlife Refuge Manager will announce any season and conditions for this hunt.

WP16-22 Requests that a Federal registration permit be required to hunt moose in Unit 9C – that portion draining into the Naknek River from the south, during the Aug. 20 – Sept 20 season. The proponent also requests that hunters acquire a State registration permit and report their hunt via that permit.

RAC Recommendation: Support OSM modification
Justification: The proposal provides for simplifying the permit process for local user groups and will provide for additional subsistence opportunity.

The modified regulation should read:

Unit 9C—Moose

Unit 9C – that portion draining into the Naknek River from the south – 1 bull ***by Federal registration permit****.* ***~~All hunters are also required to acquire a State registration permit and report their hunt via that permit.~~***	*Aug. 20 – Sept. 20*
~~A State registration permit is required during the Aug. 20 – Sept. 20 season; a Federal registration permit is required during the Dec. 1–31 season.~~	*Dec. 1 – Dec. 31*

Public lands are closed during December for the hunting of moose, except by Federally qualified subsistence users hunting under these regulations.

WP16-23 Requests an increase in the number of permits available for harvest of brown bear in Unit 9B within Lake Clark National Park and Preserve.

RAC Recommendation: Support with modification
Justification: The Council supported the proposal with modification. The modification requires a 10 day reporting requirement. A three to five day reporting requirement is not sufficient. Hunters may encounter inclement weather, which may be a factor for hunting violations. The reporting requirement within 10 days will ease compliance for the hunters. No conservation concerns exist for brown bears in Unit 9B.

WP16-24 Requests Federal lands in Units 9B and 9C be closed to the hunting of moose, except by Federally qualified subsistence users.

RAC Recommendation: Oppose
Justification: The proposal does not meet any of the criteria of the Federal Subsistence Board's policy on closures to hunting on Federal public lands in Alaska. Due to recent lack of snow cover for adequate moose surveys and census; recent biological information is minimal to develop informed recommendation. The proponent brought this proposal forward for a call for action for the local agencies to begin surveys and studies on the moose population in Units 9B and C.

WP16-25/26 Requests that the split season for caribou in a portion of Unit 17A and 17C be changed from Aug. 1 – Sept. 30 and Dec. 1 – Dec. 31, to Aug. 1 – Mar 31 and the harvest limit be increased from 2 caribou to 3 caribou.

RAC Recommendation: Support OSM modification
Justification: The Council supported WP16-25 to remove regulatory language referencing harvest quotas, limits, and number of permits available and delegate authority to determine harvest quota. The NPCH is growing and can sustain a longer season and increased harvest limit. The longer season and increased harvest limit will provide Federally qualified subsistence users additional opportunity.

The Council took no action WP16-26 based on WP16-25.

The modified regulation should read:

Unit 17A and 17C— Caribou

*Units17A and 17C – that portion of 17A and 17C consisting of the Nushagak Peninsula south of the Igushik River, Tuklung River and Tuklung Hills, west to Tvativak Bay – up to ~~23~~ **23** caribou by Federal registration permit. Public lands are closed to the taking of caribou except by residents of Togiak, Twin Hills, Manokotak, Aleknagik, Dillingham, Clark's Point, and Ekuk hunting under these regulations. ~~The harvest quota, harvest limit, and the number of permits available will be announced by the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge Manager after consultation with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the Nushagak Peninsula Caribou Planning Committee. Successful hunters must report their harvest to the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge within 24 hours after returning from the field.~~ The season may be closed by announcement of the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge Manager.*	*Aug. 1 – ~~Sept. 30~~**Mar. 31*** *~~Dec. 1 – Mar. 31~~*

WP16-27/28 Requests that the timeframe when the *Up to a 31-day* season for moose can be announced in Unit 17A be changed from Dec. 1 – Jan. 31 to Dec. 1 – end of Feb. and that the harvest limit be changed from up to 2 moose with no antler restrictions, to up to 2 moose with a limit of one antlered bull and one antlerless moose.

RAC Recommendation: Support OSMmodification
Justification: The Council supported WP16-27 with modification to specify antler restrictions. The moose population in Unit 17A is healthy and continues to grow and expanding. The modified proposed regulation will clarify the harvest limit set as two moose, but only one moose may be an antlered bull and the other would be an antlerless moose. The modified proposal will align with recent State BOG action that will reduce regulatory complexity for Federally qualified subsistence users.

The Council took no action WP16-28 based on WP16-27.

The modified regulation should read:

Unit 17A—Moose

*Unit 17A – up to 2 moose**; one antlered bull by State registration permit, one antlerless moose** by State registration permit.*	*Up to a 31-day season may be announced between Dec. 1 ~~Jan. 31~~**end of Feb.***

WP16-29/30 Requests that the caribou seasons in Unit 9B and portions of Unit 17 be extended from Aug. 1 – Mar. 15 to Aug. 1 – Mar. 31.

RAC Recommendation: Support OSM modification
Justification: The Council supported WP16-29 with modification to remove regulatory language referencing season openings and closures, harvest limits and hunt areas and delegate authority to the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge Manager. The proposed regulatory change will reduce complexity between State and Federal regulations and will provide extra opportunity to harvest caribou if they are near a village later in March.

The Council took no action WP16-30 based on WP16-29.
Modified regulation should read:

Unit 9—Caribou

Unit 9B— 2 caribou by State registration permit; no more than 1 caribou may be a bull, and no more than 1 caribou may be taken Aug. 1-Jan. 31.	*Aug. 1-Mar. ~~15~~**31***

Unit 17—Caribou

Unit 17A all drainages west of Right Hand Point— 2 caribou by State registration permit; no more than 1 caribou may be a bull, and no more than 1 caribou may be taken Aug. 1-Jan. 31. ~~The season may be closed and harvest limit reduced for the drainages between the Togiak River and Right Hand Point by announcement of the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge Manager.~~	*Aug. 1-Mar. ~~15~~**31***
Unit 17A remainder and 17C remainder— selected drainages; a harvest limit of up to 2 caribou by State registration permit will be determined at the time the season is announced. ~~Season, harvest limit, and hunt area to be announced by the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge Manager.~~	*Season may be announced between Aug. 1-Mar. ~~15~~**31***
Unit 17B and 17C— that portion of 17C east of the Wood River and Wood River Lakes— 2 caribou by State registration permit; no more than 1 caribou may be a bull, and no more than 1 caribou from Aug. 1-Jan. 31.	*Aug. 1-Mar. ~~15~~**31***

WP16-31/32 Requests a change in Federal subsistence regulations to allow same day airborne harvest of Nushagak Peninsula caribou during the winter hunt, Jan. 1 – Mar. 31.

RAC Recommendation: Support
Justification: The Nushagak Peninsula caribou population has increased and rural residents have not been able to access the herd due to poor weather conditions. The Council supported the proposal that will provide for greater opportunity to Federally qualified subsistence users in the winter hunt of Nushagak Peninsula caribou without adversely affecting the caribou herd population.

The Council took no action WP16-32 based on WP16-31.

Crossover Proposals
WP16-34 Requests closure of Federal lands in a portion of Unit 18 to the harvest of all big game by non-Federally qualified subsistence users.

RAC Recommendation: Oppose
Justification: The Council opposed the proposal to close Federal lands in portion of Unit 18 for harvest of all big game by non-Federally qualified subsistence users. Currently no conservation concerns exist for the moose population in Unit 18. The concern expressed if the population is not kept in check, the Unit 18 moose population will experience a huge crash.

WP16-35 Requests that the use of artificial light be allowed to aid in the harvesting of a bear at a den site in Unit 18.

RAC Recommendation: Support
Justification: The Council supported the proposal. Using artificial light for the taking of a bear in a den is for the safety of the hunter. The use of light will aid the hunter to ensure a clean kill of the animal will avoid unnecessary wounding of the animal. The Council also urged the proponent to submit a similar proposal to the State Bog of Game for their consideration.

Delegation of Authority
Mr. Andy Aderman, Togiak NWR Wildlife Biologist facilitated an informational discussion on the scope of the delegation of authority letters for the region. The Council expressed its appreciation for the efforts that the Refuge staff take in providing information and keeping communities informed of management actions taken.

FRMP
Ms. Robbin La Vine, OSM Anthropologist, provided an overview of the FRMP and briefed the Council on projects for the Bristol Bay region. The Council expressed the need for continued funding support for the program.

The Council was curious as to how the recusal process was working. The Chair inquired how project 16-404 was ranked No. 4 and scored so high as it did not appear to satisfy the five criteria better than other projects, and that it should be ranked lower.

Council member O'Hara suggested there was a need to research the impact of eel grass on successful sockeye rearing. Council member Dunaway expressed his gratitude to see that project 16-451 ranked No. 1, as it was rejected in the last cycle. He was also encouraged to see project 16-453 ranked high as well, given its priority for the region.

Council member Lyon stressed that the two Chinook projects should be ranked higher given the statewide crash of Chinook and the need for understanding what is happening to that species. Council member Wilson agreed regarding the importance of studying Chinook. The Council voted to have staff compile the comments and forward them to the Board.

Emperor geese Update

Ms. Gayla Hoseth, BBNA Natural Resources, provided an update on harvest strategies for the Emperor Goose population in the Bristol Bay and Yukon/Kuskokwim regions. She also provided historical and recent population data of the geese and management action plans by the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-management Council.

2015 Annual Report

The Council discussed its Annual report topics to be submitted to the Federal Subsistence Board. The following are Annual Report items to be submitted.

1. Consistent Enumeration Reports

The Council depends on consistent, current, enumeration reports on moose, caribou, and other large mammal species, in order to base its recommendations on sound science and survey reports. Without current reports, it is a challenge for the Council to analyze existing, outdated data. Without recent scientific data, it is difficult for the Council to develop informed recommendations to base its decisions on.

2. Bristol Bay Chinook

The Bering Sea high seas fisheries intercept on Chinook Salmon continues to be a concern for the residents of Bristol Bay. The smaller runs on the east side of the bay are vulnerable to incidental commercial harvest, and the sport fishery harvest is a concern to affected residents bay-wide. The Eastern Bristol Bay area runs are minimal in annual returns and are not as strong as 20 years ago.

3. Subsistence Salmon Needs

Since the inception of the Outer Port Heiden commercial fishery in 2007, Port Heiden residents have stated they have not met their subsistence needs for Chinook Salmon, and at times the other salmon returns are not as abundant. Extra effort to harvest subsistence salmon requires additional fishing days to meet their needs.

5. Interagency Management and Cooperation
The Regional Advisory Council meets biannually to address fish and wildlife proposals, and is also charged to review and comment on management plans affecting subsistence resources. The Council recognizes the need for subject matter experts to be present at Council meetings, and recognizes the cost effectiveness of teleconference to participate in public meetings due to budget cuts. Often, there are combined issues affecting subsistence uses in the Bristol Bay region and the personnel qualified to address these issues are Federal and State staff.

6. Chignik Fisheries
The Chignik area fishery is relied upon by residents of the area as a subsistence resource and a livelihood. The residents of the Chignik communities, Port Heiden, and Perryville are concerned for their subsistence fishery and the recent difficulty in meeting their needs. The communities would like an investigation as to why returns are low and subsistence needs are not being fully met.

7. Bering Sea By-Catch
Salmon returns for Western Alaska stocks have declined and subsistence needs are not being fully met. By-catch of Western Alaska Salmon stock by the Bering Sea fishing industry has been identified for the low returns of these Salmon stocks. The Council and the public need to attend the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) meetings and insist for a larger reduction on by-catch of Western Alaska bound Salmon stocks.

9. Agency Involvement in Regional Advisory Council Meetings
Refuge Information Technicians (RIT) are valuable resources to access during public meetings. The RITs are rural residents living in the communities employed by the Service and are knowledgeable on various resource issues and are the frontline of communications between communities and managers. The Council views the RITs as subject experts when the Council needs information to assist them in developing recommendations on subsistence uses and other resource related issues.

10. Youth Involvement
The Bristol Bay RAC recently met in Dillingham in October 2015 at the Dillingham Middle School gym. It provided an opportunity for the middle and high school students to experience how the RAC system operates by engaging the public to participate. The presence of students attending and participating in the RAC meeting was a meaningful experience for the Council members in attendance. The Council acknowledges the presence and participation of the students, and support from the School district and staff, they did an outstanding job of representing their school.

12. Project Funding
The current funding sources from the State of Alaska due to competitive proposals or projects have not fully funded other important subsistence projects in the Bristol Bay region. And, funding projects for commercial fishing has an indirect effect on subsistence related projects when budget cuts are made.

U.S. Coast Guard – Boating Safety

Mr. Mike Folkerts, Boating Safety Specialist for the U. S. Coast Guard, addressed the Council on boating safety, with subsistence boating in mind. The Coast Guard is currently developing a boating safety program more appropriate for rural boaters. The Coast Guard will travel throughout the State to gather boater needs in rural Alaska.

With the current climate change, the Coast Guard is having an increased presence in the region, and increased future patrols are planned with Cutters to conduct safety enforcement.

State BOF Propposals

Mr. George Pappas, OSM State Subsistence Liaison, provided an overview of the current proposals pending before the State BOF that have potential impacts on the Bristol Bay region. The Council then discussed and commented on Proposal 56, 57, 75, 79 and 83.

Agency Reports

Liza Rupp, Lake Clark National Park Cultural Resources and Subsistence Manager, provided an update on NPS activities. She also provided a status report on the Lake Clark Subsistence Resource Commission membership. She reported a recent vacancy on the Commission and provided candidates for the Council to Consider. Mr. Senafont Shugak, Jr. of Pedro Bay expressed an interest to serve. The Council appointed Mr. Shugak, Jr. to fill the vacancy.

Staff members from the BBNA Natural Resources Department, Katmai and Lake Clark NP, U.S. FWS Togiak and Alaska Peninsula refuges, ADF&G, and OSM provided informational reports on issues related to resource management, and agency projects.

Time and Location of Next meeting

The next meeting will be March 7-11, 2016 in Anchorage for the all RAC meeting.
Fall meeting Oct 26-27, 2016 in Dillingham

Adjournment Meeting adjourned.

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the forgoing minutes are accurate and complete.

\s\ Donald Mike

Donald Mike, DFO
Regional Advisory Council Coordinator

_____

Molly Chythlook, Chair
Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These minutes will be formally considered by the Bristol Bay Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its next meeting on October 29, 2013, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes of that meeting.

Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
U.S Fish & Wildlife Service
c/o Office of Subsistence Management
1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

RAC BB15053.DM

Mr. Tim Towarak, Chair
Federal Subsistence Board
c/o U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Office of Subsistence Management
1011 E. Tudor Road, Mail Stop 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Dear Chairman Towarak:

This letter is the fiscal year 2015 annual report of the Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council). The Council is authorized to submit the report under Section 805(a)(3)(D) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). At its public meeting held in Dillingham, Alaska on October 28-29, 2015, the Council brought forward the following concerns and recommendations for its 2015 annual report. This report was approved during the Council's meeting in Anchorage on March 10, 2016.

1. Consistent Enumeration Reports
The Council depends on consistent and current enumeration reports on moose, caribou, and other large mammal species in order to base its recommendations on sound science and survey reports. Without current reports and scientific data, it is a challenge for the Council to make accurate recommendations.

Council discussions in the past over regulatory proposals, particularly regarding moose, have resulted in the Council opposing proposals due to lack of biological information, erring on the side of conservation for the population. In recent years, lack of snow cover has prevented adequate and reliable population surveys, forcing the Council to rely on data that is several years old and extrapolated. Whether opposing a proposal due to inadequate data or having to rely on out-of-date data in making a recommendation, neither approach is desirable to the Council when it comes to making appropriate recommendations to the Board. Federal and State land managers should consider new methods of surveying land mammals to account for changing environmental conditions such as low snow years.

2. Chinook Salmon Intercepts
The Bering Sea high seas fisheries intercept of Chinook Salmon continues to be a concern for the residents of Bristol Bay. The smaller runs on the east side of the bay are vulnerable to incidental

Mr. Towarak

commercial harvest, and the sport fishery harvest is a concern to affected residents bay-wide. The eastern Bristol Bay area runs are minimal in annual returns and are not as strong as 20 years ago. The Bristol Bay Chinook Salmon run, as well as other Western Alaska runs, should continue be addressed as stocks of concern.

3. Commercial Interference with Subsistence Salmon Harvests
Since the inception of the Outer Port Heiden commercial fishery in 2007, Port Heiden residents have stated they have not met their subsistence needs for Chinook Salmon, and at times the other salmon returns are not as abundant. Extra effort to harvest subsistence salmon requires additional fishing days for residents to meet their needs.

The residents of the region desire to have the commercial fishery closed by the appropriate Federal fishery managers, where such activities are occurring within Federal jurisdiction. Cooperative management between the Federal Subsistence Management Program and other Federal managers is needed to ensure subsistence needs are being met.

5. Management Attendance at Council Meetings
The Regional Advisory Council meets biannually to address fish and wildlife proposals, and is also charged to review and comment on management plans affecting subsistence resources. The Council recognizes the need for subject matter experts to be present at Council meetings, and recognizes the cost effectiveness of teleconference to participate in public meetings due to budget cuts. Often, there are combined issues affecting subsistence uses in the Bristol Bay region and the personnel qualified to address these issues are Federal and State staff.

The Council encourages senior management staff from Federal and State land management agencies to attend the Council meetings in person throughout the two day public meeting. Issues at Council meetings are best addressed by managers familiar with the issues that have authority and ability to explain recent management actions. The face-to-face dialogue between the Council members and managers is beneficial in that it provides the Council accurate information needed for decision making, and the qualified staff to provide necessary subject matter expertise.

6. Chignik Fisheries
The Chignik area fishery is relied upon by residents of the area as a subsistence resource and a livelihood. The residents of the Chignik communities, Port Heiden, and Perryville are concerned for their subsistence fishery and the recent difficulty in meeting their needs. The communities would like an investigation as to why returns are low and subsistence needs are not being fully met. The Council encourages the Federal Subsistence Board to support funding projects related to subsistence salmon harvests in these areas through the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program or other cooperative projects.

7. Bering Sea Bycatch
Returns for Western Alaska salmon stocks have declined and subsistence needs are not being fully met. Bycatch of Western Alaska salmon stocks by the Bering Sea fishing industry is a likely explanation for these low returns. The Council and the public need to attend the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) meetings and insist on a larger reduction on

Mr. Towarak

bycatch of Western Alaska-bound salmon stocks. Representation from the Council and the public at these meetings will help to achieve this goal of lowering the bycatch limit through personal testimony stressing how important salmon is to the subsistence way of life.

9. Agency Involvement in Regional Advisory Council Meetings
The Council would like to express its appreciation for the service that Refuge Information Technicians (RITs) provide at its public meetings. The RITs are rural residents living in the communities employed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and are knowledgeable on various resource issues and are the frontline of communications between communities and managers. RITs provide sound information on events in communities and relay resource concerns to the Council and land managers. The Council considers RITs to be subject matter experts who provide valuable information to assist the Council in developing recommendations on subsistence uses and other resource related issues. The Council encourages the applicable Refuges to ensure their RIT positions are always filled and that RITs continue to play an active role in Council operations.

10. Youth Involvement
The Council held its fall 2015 public meeting at the Dillingham Middle/High School. It provided an opportunity for the middle and high school students to experience how the Regional Advisory Council operates by engaging public participation. The presence of students attending and participating in the meeting was also a meaningful experience for the Council members in attendance. The Council would like to acknowledge the presence and participation of the students and support from the school district and staff; they did an outstanding job representing their school and community.

Engaging the youth to participate in these public forums, and learning how to address resource management issues, is a positive step toward encouraging young subsistence users to pursue and get engaged in resource management careers. The Council and the Federal Subsistence Management Program need to find additional opportunities to engage the youth of the Bristol Bay region.

12. Research Funding
As the current crises with the Alaska State budget continues, State funding for research and monitoring of important fish resources is likely going to decline. The Council is already starting to see impacts to research in the Bristol Bay region due to budget cuts. The State will also have to make choices that benefit commercial fishing research, which will also have an effect on subsistence-related projects.

The Federal Subsistence Management Program needs to be vigilant and monitor how the State's budget cuts will impact research on subsistence fisheries. When the cuts occur, other opportunities to fund projects need to be identified to offset the current lack of data provided by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The Program could perhaps work collaboratively with the State regarding other funding sources and filling data needs. This is also an important point to consider when deciding how to fund Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program projects.

Mr. Towarak

Thank you for the opportunity for this Council to assist the Federal Subsistence Management Program to meet its charge of protecting subsistence resources and uses of these resources on Federal public lands and waters. We look forward for continuing discussions about the issues and concerns of subsistence users of the Bristol Bay Region. If you have questions about this report, please contact me via Donald Mike, Council Coordinator, with the Office of Subsistence Management at 1-800-478-1456 or, (907) 786-3629.

Sincerely,

Molly Chythlook
Chair

cc: Federal Subsistence Board
Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Eugene R. Peltola, Jr., Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management
Acting Deputy Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management
Carl Johnson, Council Coordination Division Chief, Office of Subsistence Management
Donald Mike, Subsistence Council Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management
Interagency Staff Committee
Administrative Record

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
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Fax (907) 246-6696

Agency Report to:

Bristol Bay Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Public Meeting, Anchorage, Alaska March 2016

Mammal Projects

Project: **Northern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd Composition Surveys (GMU 9)**

Composition surveys are generally not intended to estimate herd size but they provide important information regarding the age and sex composition of caribou herds. This information is used by managers to evaluate the status and trends of caribou herds. The Alaska Department of Fish & Game accomplished a composition survey of the Northern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd (NAPCH) during October 30-31, 2015. Sample size (2,122) and distribution of caribou were adequate to estimate herd composition during 2015. Estimated composition ratios were 29 calves:100 cows and 38 bulls:100 cows. The observed calf:cow and bull:cow ratios suggest continued improvement in early calf survival. Continued improvement in bull:cow ratios also suggest that late calf survival in this herd continues to improve. Data suggest that bull:cow ratios in the NAPCH are now at or above ADF&G management objectives for this herd. Increasing trends in these herd demographics suggest that limited bull-only harvests may now be feasible. Tier II hunts are currently scheduled for the NAPCH for fall 2016 and a limited number of hunters will be able to hunt the NAPCH for the first time in over a decade.

Project**: Moose Composition and Trend Surveys Summary (GMUs 9C & 9E) 2014–2015**

Poor weather and survey conditions (e.g., inadequate snow cover, high winds) frequently limit moose composition and trend-area surveys in GMU 9 and many areas are infrequently surveyed. During the 2014-2015 winter season, survey conditions were extremely poor throughout GMU 9 with little or no snow present for surveys. No snow was present during the fall moose composition survey period (Nov 01 – Dec 10). Consequently, no moose composition or trend-area surveys could be conducted during the 2014-2015 survey season. The Refuges plans to conduct moose trend-area abundance surveys during the 2015-2016 winter survey season when survey conditions are present.

Project: **Moose Reproduction and Survival Study**

The Refuge continues to study moose reproduction and survival on the Northern Alaska Peninsula. The primary objective of this study is to estimate annual twinning rates and calf survival. Twenty four cow moose with radio-collars are tracked regularly throughout the year. These radio-collared cows are easily identifiable by the large numbered tag attached to the collar. Because the proportion of cows giving birth to twins versus cows birthing single calves is influenced by nutrition, this study uses twinning rates of radio-collared moose as an indirect measure of the moose population's nutritional condition and

overall health. Relatively high twinning rates in the study area suggest that habitat is not a primary factor limiting moose abundance. In addition, captured adult and yearling cow moose appeared to be in good to excellent body condition, further suggesting good nutritional condition among moose in the area.

Chronically low calf survival appears to be the principal factor limiting moose population growth on the Alaska Peninsula. Although the actual causes of calf mortalities cannot be identified without intensive and expensive calf monitoring projects, the timing of calf mortalities suggests that predation is probably the primary factor limiting calf survival within the study area. Predation by bears was documented as the cause of several adult and calf mortalities during 2014 and 2015. In addition, GPS location data show that radio-collared cows often move out into open tundra habitats to give birth which may be a predator avoidance strategy. Information gained from this study is valuable but there is still much we do not know. Because reproduction and survival often vary among years due to a variety of factors, it is important to monitor these demographics over multiple years to provide an adequate representation of population trends.

For more information on the Refuges' mammal programs contact: Dom Watts, USFWS, Alaska Peninsula/Becharof NWR, PO Box 277, King Salmon, AK 99613. Phone: 907-246-1210; e-mail: Dom_watts@fws.gov

Avian Projects

Project: Spring Ptarmigan Density Estimate, Alaska Peninsula, May 2015

Line transect surveys of male willow ptarmigan are used to estimate population density on the northern portion of the Alaska Peninsula. Primary survey efforts began in 2013 and are scheduled to take place in May of odd-numbered years. Following recommendations from the 2013 study, survey efforts were increased for the 2015 season and incorporated additional surveyors and survey locations. High winds and precipitation limited access to study sites and delayed or canceled several surveys. Preliminary results from the 2015 surveys indicate a significant decline in willow ptarmigan numbers from the 2012 and 2013 survey work. While ptarmigan populations in other areas are known to cycle, the reason for the recent decline in ptarmigan numbers on the Alaska Peninsula is unknown. More long-term monitoring is needed to better understand this population.

For more information on the willow ptarmigan project contact: Dan Pepin, USFWS, Alaska Peninsula/Becharof NWR, PO Box 277, King Salmon, AK 99613. Phone: 907-246-3339; e-mail: Daniel_pepin@fws.gov

Project: Alaska Landbird and Breeding Bird Monitoring Surveys

The Refuge continued landbird monitoring with participation in the Alaska Landbird Monitoring Survey (ALMS) and an Off-road Breeding Bird Survey (ORBBS). These surveys document breeding birds and their habitats. Data is utilized by the Refuge in addition to being sent to the USGS's Alaska Science Center for storage and further analysis. Participation aligns with the Refuge's mission to assess the presence, relative abundance, distribution, and trends in populations of wildlife and plants. In 2015 we conducted 53 total point counts at three established survey sites. These sites had previously been surveyed in 2011 and 2013. The total number of birds detected increased at two sites and decreased at the remaining site. Further analysis and monitoring is required to determine the long-term population trends at the local and state level.

Project: Boat-based Seabird Surveys at Puale Bay

The Refuge continued the long-term monitoring of 3 seabird colonies on the Pacific coast

by partnering with Kodiak NWR to access the colonies aboard the M/V Ursa Major II. Common murre and thick-billed murre are the predominate species to nest at the colonies. This was the ninth survey since periodic monitoring began in 1989. Due to weather and time constraints, only a single count was completed for each plot/colony. Survey of breeding colonies was further complicated by large-scale abandonment of nesting cliffs at two of the colonies. Several plots were completely abandon when bald eagles or common ravens approached; a strong indication of nest failure. This made obtaining accurate colony counts of Oil Creek and Jute Peak difficult. The Puale Bay colony count was up approximately 1% from 2012 (previous count) to 3,438 murres.

For more information on avian projects contact: Melissa Cady, USFWS, Alaska Peninsula/Becharof NWR, PO Box 277, King Salmon, AK 99613. Phone: 907-246-3339; e-mail: Melissa_cady@fws.gov

Aquatic Projects

Project: Monitoring Lake Temperature at Varying Depths.

The primary purpose of this project is to acquire a long-term data series on the temperature of selected lakes. Lake temperature was recorded every hour at various depths between the lake surface and 100m. Monitoring sites were visited once or twice per year to extract data and to service monitoring equipment. With enough time, this data will be used to document long term temperature regimes in selected lakes and may help support management decisions regarding research in relation to climate change. Monitoring stations were deployed in upper Ugashik Lake, Mother Goose Lake, Needle Lake, and Becharof Lake in the fall of 2011. Unfortunately, the Becharof Lake monitoring station could not be relocated so another unit will be deployed. The remaining lakes show some individual differences but follow a similar short-term pattern of increasing summer surface temperatures from 2012 – 2014. Additional monitoring is needed.

Project: Pilot Project on Bathymetric Mapping of Selected Lakes

A pilot project to determine the feasibility of mapping the depth profiles of selected lakes within the Refuge was conducted in August 2015. We utilized an inflatable raft, GPS, commercially available sonar (fish finder), and specialized software to construct a bottom map of Needle Lake. Knowing the temperature and depth profiles, substrate composition, and human visitation patterns may help identify areas of concern and suitability for non-native introduction and establishment while providing useful data on the physical structure of lakes.

For more information on aquatic projects contact: Kevin Payne, USFWS, Alaska Peninsula/Becharof NWR, PO Box 277, King Salmon, AK 99613. Phone: 907-246-1206; e-mail: Kevin_payne@fws.gov

Visitor Services Programs

Project: Bear Creek Science and Culture Camp

Six high school students from four communities took part in the 2015 Alaska Peninsula and Becharof National Wildlife Refuge Science and Culture Camp, held at Bear Creek Camp.

The students came with a variety of science experience. Only one had consciously visited a refuge, and none knew the management distinctions and missions of parks, forests and

refuges. By living on the Refuge for a week, they obtained first-hand experience of why Refuges and the conservation of resources are important, and how we can work together to protect and conserve this landscape. These experiences spurred many conversations of the importance and philosophy of wilderness and the complexities of management policies to effectively provide for the variety of species and for the human visitors. Discussions of these sorts particularly lent themselves to the outside experiential learning setting, something that is uniquely utilized during Science and Culture Camp.

Alaska Peninsula/Becharof Science and Culture Camp consistently provides new learning opportunities and perspectives to students who live in very remote and isolated villages. By allowing them to learn in a group setting with qualified and passionate professionals, Science and Culture Camp has managed to inspire students year after year to learn to conserve and protect this pristine and fascinating landscape. In just a week, students are able to grasp and appreciate the mission of the National Fish and Wildlife Service, as well has have a better sense of identity and connection to the land where they live.

Project: Winter Outdoor School

The 2015 Outdoor School took 22 students from Bristol Bay School outside every week from March 6th until April 24th. The project was collaboration between teacher Felicity Powers and the Refuge Visitor Services Manager. The classes combined science-based education and practical skills. Students explored the surrounding wetlands and tundra, examined ecological plots, collected samples of plants and lichens, and captured some of the season's first insects. Topics for future classes may include learning biological illustration techniques, navigation by compass and GPS, and wilderness first aid.

For more information on the visitor services program contact: Sarah Griffith, USFWS, Alaska Peninsula/Becharof NWR, PO Box 277, King Salmon, AK 99613. Phone: 907-246-1201; e-mail: Sarah_Griffith@fws.gov

United States Department of the Interior

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INFORMATION BULLETIN - January 2016

Cooperative Salmon Escapement Monitoring Projects. Contact: Mark Lisac
In 2014 the Federal Subsistence Board cancelled the funding for the salmon escapement monitoring projects (weirs) on the Kanektok (KRW) and Middle Fork Goodnews (MFGRW) Rivers. ADF&G and Coastal Villages Seafood provided the bulk of the funding to operate both projects although counting for the coho salmon spawning season was cancelled due to the lack of Federal funding.

On the Middle Fork Goodnews River, ADF&G has monitored Chinook, chum and sockeye salmon escapement since 1980. Escapement goals and management of the commercial fishery are based on salmon escapement at the weir. Togiak Refuge has worked with ADF&G since 1992 to include the coho salmon and Dolly Varden runs in the project operation. ADF&G funds the project operation. Togiak Refuge provided staff support; one intern from the Careers Discovery Internship Program (CDIP) for the MFGRW. The MFGRW began operation June 25.

On the Kanektok River, ADF&G, Native Village of Kwinhagak, Coastal Villages and Togiak Refuge have worked cooperatively to monitor salmon and Dolly Varden runs since 2001. This project is currently funded by Coastal Villages Region Fund and ADF&G. Escapement goal ranges have not been established for the Kanektok River because the weir has not been operational for enough years. This weir began operation June 25.

Preliminary escapement counts (http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts) for the MFGRW and KRW thru August 18, 2015 are:

	Chinook	Sockeye	Chum	Coho	Pink	Dolly V.
MFGRW	1,398	54,383	10,885	15,084	1,025	5,565
KRW	10,416	106,751	62,170	na	1,058	35,456

na=not available

Arctic Char Population Inventory Contact: Mark Lisac

Togiak Refuge has developed a multi-year study to inventory Arctic char populations throughout the Refuge. This species was previously confirmed to occur in 27 lakes. In 2014 and 2015 we visited 21 lakes and documented Arctic char occurrence in 13 new lakes. We have collected size and genetic information from 355 fish and provided the UAF museum with voucher specimens. If you have any first hand knowledge of small or unique Arctic char populations and would be willing to share that information please contact Mark Lisac at the Refuge office.

Mulchatna Caribou Contact: Andy Aderman
Togiak Refuge assisted ADF&G with telemetry monitoring flights, radiocollar deployment, satellite data acquisition, data entry and database management. A photocensus conducted June 25, 2015 estimated 30,736 (±7456) caribou (Nick Demma, ADF&G, personal communication). A fall 2015 composition survey estimated 29 calves:100 cows and 35 bulls:100 cows. The calf:cow ratio was just below the 30:100 recorded in 2014, but is higher than all but three years since 1998. The bull:cow ratio was equal to that of 2014; these two years are the highest recorded since 2000 (Neil Barten, ADF&G, personal communication).

Nushagak Peninsula Caribou Contact: Andy Aderman
For the 2015 fall hunt, 328 permits were made available and hunters reported harvesting 42 caribou (37 bulls and 5 cows). Permits issued for the fall hunt (Aug 1-Sep 30) are also valid for the winter hunt (Dec 1–Mar 31). A fall 2015 composition survey estimated 46.3 calves:100 cows and 65.1 bulls:100 cows. The calf:cow ratio is slightly above the previous 5-year average of 45.4 calves:100 cows. The bull:cow ratio is the highest recorded since 1994. The Nushagak Peninsula Caribou Planning Committee met on December 16, 2015 to review herd status and make recommendations on harvest management. The Committee agreed to submit a Special Action to the Federal Subsistence Board to increase the harvest limit to "up to 3 caribou" for the current hunt. At a follow-up meeting on January 13, 2016 the Committee submitted 3 more Special Actions that would 1) open federal public lands for other users to harvest caribou, 2) extend the season to April 15, and 3) allow same-day-airborne hunting of caribou. These Special Actions, if approved, would be in effect for the remainder of the 2015-2016 season. As of January 28, 2016 there has been no caribou reported harvested during the winter hunt.

Moose Contact: Andy Aderman
During the January 1-February 28, 2015 winter hunt in Unit 17A, 17 moose (12 cows, 4 bulls, and 1 unknown sex) were reported harvested (Neil Barten, ADF&G, personal communication). A teleconference was held in June to discuss how Togiak Refuge and others might incorporate changes to moose survey protocols during winters with low, incomplete, or no snow cover. Participants included staff from the Alaska Department of Fish, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and University of Alaska-Fairbanks. In October, we deployed radiocollars on 19 bulls spread out over the refuge. These collared bulls, along with previously collared cows, will be used in developing sightability correction factors during moose population surveys. Population surveys on the Togiak Refuge are planned for March 2016.

The relationships of wolf and brown bear predation with moose population density and growth at Togiak National Wildlife Refuge and BLM Goodnews Block, Alaska Contact: Pat Walsh

In summer 2014, Togiak Refuge, the USFWS Conservation Genetics Lab, ADF&G, and BLM initiated a study to understand the effects of wolf and brown bear predation in regulating the population dynamics of moose on Togiak Refuge, BLM Goodnews Block, and adjacent areas. The study relies on radio telemetry and stable isotope analysis. Our approach will be to relate the predation impact by wolves and bears on moose at varying levels of moose population density. We will use existing population estimates for brown bears, and through the use of radio telemetry, we will estimate the number and composition of wolf packs on the Refuge. We will model wolf and bear predation on moose based on the quantity of wolves and bears and diet composition of both species determined through analysis of carbon and nitrogen stable isotopes occurring in bear and wolf hair. Hair will be collected from wolves when captured during radio collaring operations, and will be collected from brown bears using break-away hair snares. We captured and radioed four wolves from two packs in March 2015. During summer 2014 and 2015, we deployed approximately 400 snares, and collected approximately 200 hair samples. We will collect hair samples in summer 2016 as well, and commence laboratory analysis of samples.

Walrus Contact: Pat Walsh

The Togiak Refuge has annually monitored the number of Pacific walruses at haul-outs since 1985, using ground counts (1985-2008), aerial surveys (2003-2011) and time lapse photography (2010-2015). The objectives of the surveys are to monitor the number and timing of haul-outs and to estimate the peak haul-out at Cape Peirce, Hagemeister Island and Cape Newenham. The use of Reconyx remote cameras has improved the understanding of haul-out timing, capturing an image every hour during the day, throughout the year. Using these survey methods, the number of walrus hauling out at Cape Peirce has declined from 1985 through 2011, while no significant trend was detected at Hagemeister Island from 2005 through 2011. Walrus using haul-outs in Bristol Bay are typically recorded from late spring to late fall but have been observed at Cape Newenham every month since cameras were deployed in fall of 2014.

Seabirds Contact: Pat Walsh

The abundance and reproductive success of black-legged kittiwakes, common murres, and pelagic cormorants was monitored annually at Cape Peirce from 1990-2014, and intermittently at Cape Newenham from 1990-2009. During this period, the estimated number of kittiwakes and murres at Cape Peirce decreased, while the number of pelagic cormorants remained relatively constant. From 1991-2009, the number of kittiwakes counted at Cape Newenham averaged 2,132 birds (range 1,676-2,424), the mean number of murres was 5,815 (range 4,964-6,790), and the mean number of cormorants was 15 birds (range = 5-30). The long-term productivity of kittiwakes, murres, and cormorants at Cape Peirce averaged 24%, 42%, and 53% respectively between 1990 and 2014. No seabird monitoring was conducted in 2015. We lost the position of our seabird biologist, so we have currently suspended seabird investigations. We will commence seabird studies when we're able to refill the position.

Water Temperature Monitoring Contact: Pat Walsh

Stream temperature was monitored at 18 sites on 14 rivers in Togiak Refuge between 2001 and 2015. Temperature was recorded on an hourly basis using Onset TidbiT dataloggers and the data were successfully recovered from the field ~75% of the time. Over 1.8 million hourly temperature records have been collected, quality-graded, and entered into a relational database.

Maximum daily mean temperature readings varied from 11.5—19.6° C between sites, with the Kukaktlim Lake outlet site being the warmest and the Weary River the coldest.

Quantifying River Discharge Contact: Mark Lisac
Togiak Refuge and the USFWS Water Resources Branch have worked cooperatively since 1999 to acquire baseline hydrologic data of the flow regime (magnitude, duration, timing, frequency, and rate of change) and water quality. A network of stream discharge gages collected stream flow data from 1999-2005 at 20 locations. A subset of five of these stations continued to collect data through fall 2009, after which three of the five stations were removed. We will monitor discharge in the Togiak and Kulukak Rivers indefinitely. Each gage is instrumented with pressure sensors that measure water level every 15 minutes. On-grounds discharge measurements are made 3 to 6 times a year. In 2014, satellite transmitters were added to the stream gages that allow remote monitoring of the equipment.

Education and Outreach Contact: Terry Fuller
Togiak Refuge has an active education and outreach program including the Migratory Bird Calendar; National Wildlife Refuge Week; career fairs; production of Bristol Bay Field Notes (a new episode airs several times a week on KDLG); and numerous teacher requested classroom presentations in 12 villages in the Southwest Region, Lower Kuskokwim, Dillingham City school districts and the Dillingham 7th Day Adventist School. Field trips with area students for the 2014-2015 school year included bird walks, animal tracks and ID, archery, salmon life cycles, aquatic resources and bear safety. The refuge website is also a valuable education tool and is available at http://togiak.fws.gov. Togiak Refuge has a very active Facebook page which disseminates information on a daily basis to a rapidly growing global audience. Also, the refuge partners with others to conduct three environmental education camps described below:

Cape Peirce Marine Science and Yup'ik Culture Camp Contact: Terry Fuller
July 2015 saw an enthusiastic group of eight area junior high students representing three villages travel to Cape Peirce for this camp. Students at this camp were able to observe seabirds, marine mammals and learn how field studies are conducted, as well as learning about food webs and ecological relationships. Students and agency staff also learned about traditional Yup'ik uses of animals and plants and about Native survival skills. This camp is designed to help students gain a better understanding of the biological diversity of a marine ecosystem. It also strengthens their sense of stewardship for local natural resources. Other topics at this camp included tide pools, wilderness survival skills, archery, bear safety, Leave No Trace camping practices and careers with USFWS. Traditional councils and school districts from throughout western Bristol Bay are cooperators with this camp.

Southwest Alaska Science Academy (Salmon Camp) Contact: Terry Fuller
This past June and July (2015), Togiak Refuge helped with the 14th year of a summer camp aimed at teaching middle and high school students about fisheries science and the importance of salmon to our ecosystem. Students were selected from the Bristol Bay region. During the camp students worked in the field alongside fisheries professionals. Cooperators with the refuge on this project included the Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation, Bristol Bay Science and Research Institute, University of Alaska, University of Washington School of Fisheries, the Dillingham City and Southwest Region school districts, and the Alaska Department of Fish and

Game. This year Togiak Staff were able to share with camp students about the following: identifying the different species of Pacific salmon at various stages in their development, the salmon life cycle, jobs associated with the fishing industry, salmon in art (fish taxidermy) and archery.

Summer Outdoor Skills and River Ecology Float Camp Contact: Terry Fuller
The 2015 Float Camp took place on the Pungokepuk River. At this camp, students learned about river ecosystems and how to enjoy them safely and responsibly while taking part in a float trip conducted on a refuge river. Students observed and learned about the many fish, wildlife and plant species found on the Pungokepuk. Rafting skills, water safety, different angling practices (Catch and Release), Leave No Trace camping practices and bear safety were topics during the trip. Students also participated in other outdoor activities such as animal tracking (plaster casting tracks, with several nice bear tracks cast) and wilderness survival skills. This camp helps students understand the biological diversity of riparian ecosystems and the importance of salmon as a nutrient source, while developing a deeper sense of stewardship for local natural resources. Traditional councils and school districts from throughout western Bristol Bay are cooperators with this camp.

River Ranger Program Contact: Allen Miller
The Refuge River Ranger Program was conceived during the public use management planning process and was first implemented in 1991. The program serves many purposes. River Rangers are the main contact source for sport fishermen and local residents. Information distributed to the public includes Service policies, regulations, resource management practices, State sport fish regulations, bear safety, wilderness ethics, Leave-No-Trace camping and information about private lands to prevent trespass. Rangers document public use occurring on the river along with the location and timing of activities, conflicts between users, and sport fish catch/harvest per unit effort. Rangers also assist Refuge and ADF&G staff at the Kanektok River weir and assist Refuge staff with biological studies. In addition, Rangers patrol campsites for litter, monitor compliance of sport fishing guides and offer assistance as needed. Quinhagak Resident Charlie Roberts was hired for summer 2015 to work as a River Ranger on the Kanektok River with Refuge Information Technician (RIT) John Mark. Togiak Resident Keemuel Kenrud was hired as well (last year he worked with the refuge as an intern through the Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation) and was assigned to the Togiak River to work with RIT Pete Abraham.

Staff Changes
In January, Wildlife Biologist Roger "Doug" Holt was hired. Doug will take over the marine mammal and water monitoring projects on Togiak Refuge.

United States Department of the Interior

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Katmai National Park & Preserve
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2016 Program Updates

Katmai National Park & Preserve,
Aniakchak National Monument & Preserve,
Alagnak Wild River,
Southwest Area Inventory and Monitoring Network (SWAN)

Subsistence Coordinator—Linda Chisholm, (907) 246-2154

Aniakchak National Monument Subsistence Resource Commission
The ANIA SRC held an informal work-group session on January 27th, 2016 to discuss potential agenda items for the upcoming SRC meeting on February 10th in Port Heiden. The SRC reviews proposed federal rules and regulations that may affect subsistence use by resident zone community members of ANIA.

Natural Resources Program—Troy Hamon, (907) 246-2121 & Carissa Turner, (907) 246-2104

Changing Tides
Changing Tides is a three-year (2015-2017) research project studying the unique link between the terrestrial and nearshore environments along the Alaska Peninsula. The importance of marine intertidal resources, such as mussels and clams, to brown bear health is of particular interest and the focus of this study. In 2016, twelve bears will be collared to document their movements and use of coastal habitats; clam and mussel communities will be measured and described along the coasts of Katmai and Lake Clark National Parks; and bear foraging efforts and success will be studied though on-site observations at Hallo Bay.

Seabird Colony and Marine Mammal Haul-out Mapping
Seabird colonies and marine mammal haul-outs will be documented, measured and mapped. This will provide updated information on colony and haul-out locations, species use, and colony/haul-out size along the Katmai Coast.

Marine Debris Surveys
Long-term monitoring of marine debris using the NOAA standing stock survey protocol will continue in 2016. Survey sites at Swikshak Bay, Hallo Bay and Dakavak Bay will be visited twice a summer to document types and density of debris.

Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team (COASST) surveys
COASST surveys investigate seabird mortality by documenting and tagging bird carcasses found along survey beaches. Surveys are done several times a summer at Swikshak Bay and Hallo Bay. This long-term monitoring effort will continue in 2016. Katmai NP&P also works with the Bristol Bay School high school biology class to survey Naknek beach.

Documenting Bear Use Through Time-lapse Photography
Bear and visitor numbers are documented using time-lapse cameras at bear foraging sites. Cameras take photos every 30 minutes overlooking the foraging area. Afterwards, each photo is analyzed for the number and locations of bears and people to determine and compare use patterns. Cameras will be set up at Hallo Bay and Moraine and Funnel Creeks in 2016.

Bear Monitoring at the Brooks River
Bear use is documented annually in July and September at Brooks River. Bears that are regular users of the area are described and recognized over years. This provides information on the overall number of bears using the river, life histories of individual bears, and changes in the local bear population over time.

Bear and Visitor Use Study at Moraine and Funnel Creeks
For two weeks in August, bear and visitor use will be recorded through direct observations at Moraine and Funnel Creeks in the Katmai National Preserve. This long-term monitoring program documents use patterns in this popular visitor use area and changes in use over time.

Stream and Meadow Surveys
Aerial bear surveys are flown over coastal meadows (June) and select salmon streams (July and August) at regular intervals to document bear use at these important seasonal foraging areas.

Bald Eagle Nesting and Breeding Success Surveys
Aerial surveys are flown in the Naknek drainage in May to document eagle nests; documented nests are revisited later in the season to determine overall breeding success.

Moose Surveys
Aerial surveys of transects will be flown in November to record the number of moose and calves. This is an annual survey effort.

Bear Genetics Study
Genetic sampling will be done on bears at several locations in Katmai National Park to study the genetic diversity of the bear population.

Invasive Plant Surveys, Mapping, and Control
Areas throughout the park will be surveyed and mapped for invasive plant species. Control efforts of known invasive plant infestations will be controlled either manually or by herbicide application.

Bat Monitoring
Bat recording equipment will be set up at Brooks Camp for a second year to detect the presence and seasonality of bats in the area.

Bear Predation of Marine Mammals
Cameras will be installed on two islands off the coast of the park to see if bears are predating on sea otters and seals at haul-out locations.

Cultural Resource Program—Dale Vinson, (907) 644-3632 & Linda Chisholm, (907) 246-2154

Brooks Road Cultural Resource Damage Assessment
A team of archaeologists will assess damage to a pre-contact archeological site beneath a section of road adjacent to Lake Brooks and the historic BL-3 Fisheries Laboratory. The investigation will include consultation with local tribes and expert archeological damage investigators. This action will result in improvements to the KATM cultural resource management and protection process.

Ground-Penetrating Radar (GPR) at Brooks Camp
This project uses geophysical methods (e.g. electrical conductivity, vertical magnetic gradient analyses, and ground penetrating radar) to evaluate the sub-surface distribution of prehistoric cultural resources in the Brooks River National Historic Landmark. Non-intrusive sub-surface profiling will be followed by focused, low-impact subsurface testing this summer for chronological controls and cultural affiliations.

Savonoski River Survey
This project is a three year archeological survey and ethnographic study to collect base-line archeological data from the Savonoski River drainage. The survey will include the Savonoski River to its headwaters, passes through the Aleutian Range to the Ninagiak River and to Hallo Bay, and a northern route from the passes to Douglas Village on Swikshak Bay.

Southwest Area Inventory and Monitoring Network—Amy Miller, (907) 644-3683

Vegetation Monitoring
Vegetation monitoring will occur in alpine areas at a number of locations in the park, including areas near Pfaff Mine, Mirror Lake, Hammersley Lake, and Wolverine Lake. The purpose is to estimate long-term changes in plant species diversity, abundance, and composition in KATM's alpine ecosystem.

Bald Eagle Nest Monitoring
Bald eagle nests located along the shorelines of Naknek Lake, Brooks Lake, Lake Coville, and Lake Grosvenor are monitored annually. We conduct 2 survey flights in May to search for new nests, and to check known nests for incubating adults. We then check nests again in late July to determine the number of chicks produced in each nest.

Mercury Contamination in Resident Lake Fish
Resident lake fish play a key role in recreational and subsistence fisheries in southwest Alaska, so understanding the sources and processes that control their contaminant levels is crucial. NPS monitoring since 2005 has built a solid baseline of tissue samples from 341 fish, representing 9 species from 13 lakes in 2 park units, including Katmai (KATM). These samples indicate that some resident fish species in southwest Alaska lakes have acquired elevated concentrations of mercury (Hg), the majority of which is methylmercury, a toxic and readily biomagnified form. Why do these fish, which inhabit some of the most pristine and remote waters in North America, have such elevated Hg levels? And what accounts for differences in fish Hg levels among lakes? To answer these questions, the NPS Southwest Alaska Network is partnering with the USGS Mercury Research Laboratory. The partnership involves sampling water, plankton, and fish from 6 lakes in KATM in 2016. Samples will be tested for Hg and other analytes, with the goal of elucidating the sources of Hg and the processes by which Hg is reaching resident lake fish.

Water Quantity Monitoring
Discharge at the outlets of Lake Brooks and Naknek Lake and has been estimated since 2006 by linking rating curves established by the US Geological Survey to water level data collected during the ice-free portion of the year. This work will continue during the 2016 field season.

Water Quality Monitoring
SWAN will measure "core" water quality parameters — temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, specific conductivity, and turbidity — at 41 sites in Naknek Lake and Lake Brooks. At each site, measurements will be taken once per summer along a vertical profile at fixed depth increments. The same core parameters also will be measured hourly at the outlets of Naknek Lake and Lake Brooks during the course of the summer (May - October).

Lake Temperature Monitoring
Lake water temperature at multiple depths will be monitored hourly, year-round in 2016 at four mid-lake sites in KATM: one in Lake Brooks and three in Naknek Lake. This monitoring relies on the use of programmable data loggers attached at various depths to moored vertical temperature arrays. Data from the temperature arrays allow tracking of freeze-up and break-up dates, lake stratification, and large-scale wind events, all of which influence lake productivity.

National Atmospheric Deposition Program
Atmospheric deposition is the process whereby airborne pollutants reach the earth. Total atmospheric deposition consists of both wet and dry components. Wet deposition is monitored by the NPS through the National Atmospheric Deposition Program (NADP). One of the four NADP sites currently operating in Alaska is located in King Salmon, where it is run by KATM and SWAN jointly. This monitoring will continue through 2016.

Evaluation of Nearshore Communities and Habitats in Lower Cook Inlet
This project works to develop recommendations to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) for nearshore community assessment and long-term monitoring. The BOEM Proposed Final Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil & Gas Leasing Program 2012-2017 includes proposed Lease Sale 244 in the Cook Inlet Planning Area in 2017 (Also includes LACL and KATM). An OCS Cook Inlet Lease Sale National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis has not been undertaken since 2003. Updated information is needed to support an analysis associated with the planned lease sale. The overall objective of this study is to provide data on habitats and sensitive species to support environmental analyses for NEPA documents, potential future Exploration Plans, and Development and Production Plans. Our goal was to utilize existing protocols already developed thorough GWA when possible to ensure data comparability. The project will be on-going through 2019 and all data is being provided to the AOOS data portal.

KATM Nearshore Monitoring
We will completed another year of nearshore coastal monitoring in 2016. The monitoring encompasses all major elements of the nearshore trophic web, from primary producers to apex predators, and focuses on six vital signs: kelp and seagrasses, marine intertidal invertebrates, marine birds, black oystercatchers, sea otters, and marine water chemistry and quality.

Winter Survey to Assess Murre Die-Off
A survey of the KATM coast is to conducted (weather permitting) in March of 2016. The primary purpose of the survey is to document live bird counts and distribution, document and count bird carcasses, and collect additional specimens. The survey will also provide information as to other species' distribution and abundance, such as over-wintering sea ducks.

Weather Stations
Katmai's climate and weather stations, in addition to the associated phenology cameras, will receive annual maintenance and repairs as necessary. Two of these stations will receive upgrades to a newer data logger system and two stations will have soil temperature and moisture sensors installed.

Lake Ice
Lake Ice phenology (formation and breakup dates) of several Southwest Alaska lakes will be determined from remote sensing images for the 2015 and 2016 water year completing a 15 year record from the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer satellite data.

Snow Metrics
In cooperation with the Geographic Information Network of Alaska snow cover presence, absence and variability will be determined from remote sensing images for the 2016 snow year (September 1st - August 31st) completing a 16 year record from the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer satellite data.

Protection Division, Tom Betts (907) 246-2127

Traditional Redfish Fishery
The Alaska Board of Fisheries approved Proposal 78, the expansion of seasons and locations for redfish fishing on Naknek Lake by descendants of Katmai residents who lived in the Naknek Lake and river drainage. Identification of legitimate users remains an on-going process in consultation with local tribes. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game amended the proposal language to include use of beach seines. Redfish may be taken from the mouth of the Brooks River from September 18th through December 31st. Redfish may also be taken the outlet of Idavain Creek on the north side of Naknek Lake. Additional regulation amendments by ADF&G include prohibition of "chumming," the use of fish or fish parts, in the fresh waters of Bristol Bay Area where use of bait is not allowed. Regulations will not be codified and active until July 1, 2016.

Concessions Division, Billie Ford Woodcock, (907) 246-2109

Katmailand Contract Negotiations
In 2015 contract negotiations were initiated for Katmailand Inc. – the historic concessions operator providing food, lodging, and gift shop facilities, as well as guided tours and gear rentals at Brooks Camp in KATM. As of the start of 2016, negotiations for the 10 year contract were still under way but the Service and Concessioner are hopeful a contract will be signed no later than the end of February 2016.

American Creek Prospectus
A prospectus soliciting proposals for the six American Creek sport-fishing concession contracts was released on December 9th, 2015. Interested parties had 60 days to respond to the prospectus and submit their proposal. Proposals will be reviewed by panel members from March 7th – 11th, 2016 with anticipated contract award date during the summer of 2016 and new contract start date of January 1st, 2017.

Aniakchak Sport Hunt Prospectus
A prospectus soliciting proposals for the three hunt guide concessions contracts located in the Aniakchak Preserve is expected to be announced and released in the latter half of FY 2016. A date has not been determined for the release of this prospectus, but once released, viable candidates will have 60 days to complete and submit their proposal package for review by a Service-assembled group of panel members.

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

Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

CHARTER

1. **Committee's Official Designation.** The Council's official designation is the Bristol Bay 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 (16 U.S.C. 3115 (1988)), 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.** The Council has authority to perform the following duties:

    a. Recommend the initiation of, review, and evaluate 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 decisionmaking 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.

        (4) Recommendations concerning policies, standards, guidelines, and regulations to implement the strategy.

e. Appoint three members to the Lake Clark National Park and three members to the Aniakchak National Monument Subsistence Resource Commissions, in accordance with Section 808 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA).

f. Make recommendations on determinations of customary and traditional use of subsistence resources.

g. Make recommendations on determinations of rural status.

h. Provide recommendations on the establishment and membership of Federal local advisory committees.

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 $135,000, including all direct and indirect expenses and 1.0 staff years.

8. **Designated Federal Officer.** The DFO is the Subsistence Council Coordinator for the Region or such other Federal employee as may be designated by the Assistant Regional Director - Subsistence, Region 7, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The DFO is a full-time Federal employee appointed in accordance with Agency procedures. The DFO will:

   - Approve or call all of the Council and subcommittee meetings,
   - Prepare and approve all meeting agendas,
   - Attend all Council and subcommittee meetings,
   - Adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines adjournment to be in the public interest, and
   - 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 it is renewed in accordance with the provisions of Section 14 of the FACA. The Council will not meet or take any action without a valid current charter.

12. **Membership and Designation.** The Council's membership is composed of representative members as follows:

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. A vacancy on the Council will be filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was made. Members serve at the discretion of the Secretary.

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 specific party matter in which the member has a direct financial interest in a lease, license, permit, contract, claim, agreement, or related litigation with the Department.

14. **Subcommittees.** Subject to the DFO's approval, subcommittees may be formed for the purpose of compiling information and 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. The Council Chair, with the approval of the DFO, will appoint subcommittee members. Subcommittees will meet as necessary to accomplish their assignments, subject to the approval of the DFO and the availability of resources.

15. **Recordkeeping.** Records of the Council, and formally and informally established subcommittees of the Council, shall be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 6.2, and other approved Agency records disposition schedule. These records shall be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552.

Sally Jewell

Secretary of the Interior

NOV 2 0 2015

Date Signed

DEC 0 3 2015

Date Filed