

SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Egan Center
Anchorage, Alaska
March 9, 2016
1:30 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.

- 1. **Roll Call and Establish Quorum** (*Secretary*).....SC-3
- 2. **Invocation**
- 3. **Call to Order** (*Chair*)
- 4. **Welcome and Introductions** (*Chair*)
- 5. **Review and Adopt Agenda*** (*Chair*)SC-1
- 6. **Election of Officers**
 - Chair (*DFO*)
 - Vice-Chair (*New Chair*)
 - Secretary (*New Chair*)
- 7. **Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes*** (*Chair*)SC-4
- 8. **Reports**
 - Council Member Reports
 - Chair’s Report
- 9. **Public and Tribal Comment on Non-Agenda Items**
- 10. **Old Business** (*Chair*)
 - a. Refuges Proposed Rule on Hunting - Update210

b. Update on RFR for Kenai and Kasilof	
c. National Park Service Proposed Rule on Subsistence Collections*	218
d. Rural Determination Update	
e. Update on WP16-15 Analysis	
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)	SC-14
d. Denali SRC appointment	
12. Agency Reports	
a. Native Village of Eyak - Partner's Report	
<i>Unless a special report is requested by the Council, all agencies should be prepared to only provide written reports for this meeting.</i>	
13. Future Meeting Dates*	
Confirm date and location of Fall 2016 meeting	235
Select date and location for Winter 2017 meeting	236
14. Closing Comments	
15. 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 2
Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Seat	Year Apptd Term Expires	Member Name Community
1	2007 2016	Robert Henrichs Cordova
2	2014 2016	Eleanor Dementi Cantwell
3	2003 2016	Greg Encelewski Ninilchik Vice Chair
4	2010 2016	Mary Ann Mills Kenai
5	2014 2016	Lee R. Adler Glennallen
6	2003 2017	Gloria Stickwan Tazlina
7	2011 2017	James Showalter Sterling
8	2011 2017	Michael V. Opheim Seldovia
9	2011 2017	Andrew T. McLaughlin Chenega Bay
10	2009 2018	Judith C. Caminer Anchorage Secretary
11	2015 2018	Ingrid B. Peterson Homer
12	2003 2018	Tom Carpenter Cordova
13	2015 2018	Ricky Gease Kenai

SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Ahtna Cultural Center

Copper Center, Alaska

October 21-22, 2015

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

Meeting called to order by Chair Lohse.

Roll Call & Establish a Quorum

Roll Call: Ms Caminer. Regional Advisory Council (RAC) members present: Ralph Lohse, Greg Encelewski, Lee Adler, Andrew McLaughlin, Mary Ann Mills, Michael Opheim, James Showalter, Gloria Stickwan, Eleanor Dementi, Judy Caminer. Absent: Tom Carpenter (excused), Herman Moonin, Robert Henrich. Quorum established.

Coordinator: Donald Mike, OSM

Agency Staff Present

Tom Kron, OSM

Robbin La Vine, OSM

Tom Evans, OSM

Stewart Cogswell, OSM

Milo Burcham, Biologist USFS Cordova

David Pearson, USFS Cordova

Barbara Cellarius, NPS Wrangell-St. Elias NP

Judy Petura, NPS Wrangell-St. Elias NP

Jeff Anderson, Kenai NWR biologist

Todd Esklin, Kenai NWR biologist

Dennis Teitzel BLM Glennallen Field mgr

Andy Loranger, Kenai NWR Refuge Manager

Eric Veach, NPS Wrangell-St. Elias NP

Clarence Summers, NPS Anchorage

Dave Sarafin, NPS Wrangell-St. Elias NP

Molly McCormick, NPS Wrangell-St. Elias NP

Mark Somerville, Glennallen Area management biologist

Robert Skorkowsky, USFS Cordova Ranger District

Tom Whitford, USFS

Pat Petrivelli, BIA

Online

Drew Crawford, ADF&G

Dan Sharp, BLM

Trevor Fox, US Fish and Wildlife Service

George Pappas, OSM

Pippa Kenner, OSM

NGO and Public

Matt Piche, Native Village of Eyak
Ivan Encelewski, Ninilchik Traditional Council
Darrel Williams, Ninilchik Traditional Council
John Schandelmeier, Paxson AC
Greg Swope, Gakona
John Kunik, Glennallen
Lynn Grams, National Parks Conservation Association
Mark Heinz, Gakona
Karen Linnell, Kenny Lake
Taña Finnesand, Ahtna Cultural Center
Agatha, Kluti-Kaah

Welcome and Introductions

Introductions of RAC members and public.

Review and Adopt Agenda

Motion made to add to the meeting agenda State of Alaska working group on sheep. State of Alaska is seeking participants to sit on the Alaska Board of Game working group meeting on December 5-6, 2015. Add a report from the Attorney General's Advisory Committee on American Indian/Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence and an, update on the Request for Reconsideration proposals for the Kenai River subsistence fishery.

Motion made to adopt the amended agenda. Motion passes.

Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minute

Ms. Caminer moved to adopt the minutes as presented. Second called by Mr. Encelewski. Minutes adopted. Two abstained.

Service Awards

Five year volunteer service awards were presented to Ms. Mary Ann Mills and Ms. Judy Caminer, recognizing their contribution to the Subsistence program and the communities they represent.

Reports

Council Member Reports

Ms. Stickwan reported on their recent SRC public meetings. The SRC developed comments on the 2016 Wildlife Proposals for Federal subsistence hunting regulations. Ms. Caminer reported on attending the Federal Subsistence Board meeting.

Public & Tribal Comment on Non-Agenda Items - Opportunity was announced for the public to provide its comments/testimony to the Council throughout the public meeting.

Old Business

Rural Determination

Mr. Tom Kron, OSM, provided a summary on the recent Federal Subsistence Board action on rural determination. The Board recommended to the Secretaries to adopt the proposed rule as written. The Board then directed OSM staff to develop options for implementing a future non-rural determination process for the Board's consideration by its January 2016 public meeting in Anchorage.

Refuges Proposed Rule

Mr. Andy Loranger, Kenai NWR Manager, presented an update on the proposed rule to change statewide hunting and trapping regulations for National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska. The proposed rule will not change Federal subsistence regulations or restrict taking of fish or wildlife under Federal subsistence regulations.

New Business

The wildlife proposal analyses were presented by OSM staff biologist Tom Evans, NPS staff Barbara Cellarius and Judy Petura; U.S. Forest Service biologist Milo Burcham and the C&T analysis presented by OSM anthropologist Robbin La Vine.

Comments were received from the State of Alaska represented by Mr. Drew Crawford, the NPS Subsistence Resource Commission and State of Alaska Local Advisory Committee, and public testimony was heard during the public process of the wildlife proposals.

The following are the recommendations developed by the Council after the public process was completed, and submitted as recommendations to the Federal Subsistence Board to consider.

Regional Proposals

WP16-10a Requests that rural residents of Unit 6D be included in the C&T Use Determination for moose in Unit 6D.

RAC Recommendation: Support.

Justification: The Council heard testimony from the proponent that historically, moose have been harvested in Unit 6D. This will provide for subsistence opportunity in the future when the moose population can support a Federal subsistence opportunity for harvest.

WP16-10b Requests that a Sept. 1 to Dec. 31 season be established in Unit 6D for the harvest of one bull moose.

RAC Recommendation: Support

Justification: The Council heard testimony from the proponent that historically, moose have been harvested in Unit 6D. The moose harvest occurs in the lower elevations of the unit and is mainly the transient moose that are harvested for subsistence. Current State hunting regulations allows for a general moose hunt.

WP16-11 Requests a buck-only season be established in Unit 6D with a season of Jan. 1 – Jan. 31, and a harvest limit of one buck.

RAC Recommendation: Support with modification. The Council amended the proposal, in Unit 6D-1 buck, that only an unused harvest ticket may be used during the Jan 1-Jan 31 season.

Justification: No emergency closures for deer harvest occurred in the past winter. Some families were not able to meet their needs during the end of season, and allowing a hunt with an unused harvest ticket will provide for additional harvest opportunities. Delegation of authority will allow for emergency closure if there is a conservation concern for the population.

WP16-12 Requests an increase in the harvest for deer in Unit 6 from 4 to 5.

RAC Recommendation: Support

Justification: The proposal supported by the Council will parallel the State of Alaska hunting regulations to increase the harvest of deer in Unit 6 from 4 deer to 5.

WP16-13 Requests that Federally qualified rural residents be required to obtain a Federal registration permit to harvest black bears in Unit 6D from Sept. 10 through June 30.

RAC Recommendation: Support OSM modification

Justification: The proposal will benefit subsistence users in requiring a Federal registration permit for black bear to simplify and consolidate reporting requirements. Through this requirement, subsistence users will be covered when the State season is closed and the Federal season is open. It also allows for better tracking of the harvest.

WP16-14 Requests extending the Federal mountain goat season in Unit 6D from Aug. 20 – Jan. 31 to Aug. 20 – Feb 28.

RAC Recommendation: Support

Justification: Extending the season will benefit subsistence users and no conservation concern exists on the current goat population.

WP16-15 Requests that the harvest quota for caribou in a portion of Unit 7 be increased from five caribou to ten caribou with five animals for the community of Hope and five for the community of Cooper Landing by Federal registration permit.

RAC Recommendation: Support OSM modification to close the caribou on Federal public lands.

Justification: The Council supports the closure of Federal managed lands and is supported by the proponent. The caribou herd continues to decline and conservation concerns exist for the population.

WP16-16 Requests that Federal public lands within the Paxson Closed Area in Unit 13 be closed to hunting big game by Federally qualified subsistence users.

RAC Recommendation: Oppose

Justification: No biological reason to close the Federal public lands within the Paxson Closed Area in Unit 13. The Council supports subsistence opportunity and is not in favor of losing additional opportunities through closures. The proposal does not meet the criteria on *Policy on Closures to Hunting, Trapping and Fishing on Federal Public Lands and Waters in Alaska*. Safety issues can be addressed through additional law enforcement to ensure public safety within and adjacent to the Paxson Closed Area in Unit 13.

WP16-17 Requests that the restriction prohibiting Federally qualified subsistence users from hunting caribou within the Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline right-of-way in Unit 13 remainder be rescinded.

RAC Recommendation: Support

Justification: No conservation concerns exist for the Caribou Herd in Unit 13. The proposal will parallel the State of Alaska hunting regulations and reduces confusion.

WP16-18 Requests that brown bears be allowed to be hunted over bait in Units 11 and 12 with seasons from Apr. 15-Jun. 15 and Apr. 15-Jun. 30, respectively.

RAC Recommendation: Support

Justification: No conservation concern exists for the brown bear population in Units 11 and 12 and the current harvest is low. No increase in brown bears is anticipated and this will allow for additional subsistence opportunity.

WP16-19 Requests permission to harvest either one bull moose or two caribou between Jul. 15 and Aug. 31 by Federal registration permit for the Ahtna Heritage Foundation's Culture Camp.

RAC Recommendation: Support with modification

Justification: The Council supported the proposal with modification. The Council struck the July 15 – August 31 dates in the proposed regulation, but supported a date of 15 days prior to the Cultural camp start date, until the conclusion of the camp. In addition, if no harvest occurs an additional Cultural camp can be scheduled and the permit will be valid 15 days prior to the start of the camp. The proposal will allow for flexibility to hold the Ahtna Heritage Foundation Culture Camp via delegation of authority by the local Federal land managing agency which will allow for flexibility to hold the camp.

WP16-20 Requests that the harvest limit for sheep in Unit 11 be modified from one sheep to one ram with a $\frac{3}{4}$ curl horn or larger.

RAC Recommendation: Oppose

Justification: The Council opposed the proposal to require a $\frac{3}{4}$ curl horn or larger ram from one sheep. The Council cannot support restricting subsistence opportunities. If adopted, it will cause undue subsistence restrictions. No conservation concern exists for the sheep population in Unit 11.

Cross Proposals

WP16-60 Requests the Chisana Caribou Herd hunt be opened to all Federally qualified subsistence users with a C&T Use Determination for caribou in Unit 12 and that there be an unlimited number of Federal registration permits available.

RAC Recommendation: The Council supported the proposal as modified by the OSM to retain the delegated authority of the superintendent of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve to set the number of permits.

Justification: The subsistence hunt will provide additional subsistence opportunity for those communities with a positive C&T Use Determination for caribou in Unit 12. No conservation concerns exist and reporting requirements are in place to prevent overharvest.

WP16-67 Requests the beaver harvest limit be changed from 15 and 25 beaver/season in Units 12 and 20E, respectively, to no harvest limit in both units; trapping season dates be changed from Sept. 20-May 15 to Sept. 5-Jun. 10; and bow and arrow be added as a legal means of take for beaver in Units 12 and 20E.

RAC Recommendation: Defer to Region 9

Justification: Deference given to the Eastern Interior RAC.

WP16-68 Requests that the lynx trapping season in Units 12 and 20E be extended from Nov. 1-Dec. 31 to Nov. 1-Mar. 15, and that the Nov. 1-Nov. 30 harvest limit of five lynx be eliminated.

RAC Recommendation: Defer to Region 9

Justification: Deference given to the Eastern Interior RAC.

Delegation of Authority

Two special action requests were received for black bear. Mr. Tom Evans presented a summary of WSA15-09 requesting to close the black bear season on May 27 in Unit 6D to align with the recent emergency order by ADFG to close the season on May 27. Although the FSB did not approve the closure recommended by the WSA, the FSB approved requirement for a registration permit for the remainder of the season.

WSA15-10 requests a Federal registration permit be required for the entire season and approved by the FSB. The proponent of the WSA also requested that black bear be added to the delegation of authority letter for the Cordova Ranger District. The FSB deferred the request until the Southcentral RAC met and is able to weigh in on this request.

Ms. Caminer moved to allow delegation of authority for black bear in Unit 6D for the Cordova District Ranger and second called by Mr. Opheim. Motion passes, 4-3, one abstained vote.

Mr. Milo Burcham, Cordova District biologist, provided an overview of management actions taken on black bear, moose, and deer in Unit 6. The in-season manager can issue temporary special actions when necessary for conservation concerns, as outlined in the scope of delegation, under the delegation of authority letter issued by the Federal Subsistence Board.

2016 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program

Mr. Stewart Cogswell and Ms. Robin La Vine presented the FRMP program and explained that the Councils play an important role in development of the priority information needs and also by working with the Principle Investigators in advance.

The Council prioritized and ranked the Southcentral region proposals (TRC Ranking:Council Ranking) (1:5) (2:4) (3:1) (4:6) (5:3) (6:2).

Comments provided by the Council;

- is the Kenai Peninsula part of the funding umbrella
- the number of subsistence users impacted by the project should be considered in the ranking of the proposals
- proposals that have been eliminated because they are incomplete shouldn't be included in the list
- there is no point in ranking proposals that have been eliminated
- unsure of the compliance and enforcement of running the Chitina Creek check station, the Council has supported this in the past and still supports the concept of a check station. The Chitina Check Station impacts many subsistence users.
- the Funny and Killely River does not have much impact on subsistence users.

2015 Annual Report Issues

The following are the 2015 Annual Report topics submitted to the Federal Subsistence Board after discussing each issue.

1. Cooperative Management with Ninilchik Traditional Council Fishery
2. Unit 11 Brown Bear/Bear Research
3. Unit 6 Deer Harvest Report
5. Unit 13 Paxson Hunt Area
6. Tribal Land Management
7. Climate change

State of Alaska Dall Sheep Working Group

The State of Alaska established a working group to explore issues and make recommendations concerning future Dall sheep management in Alaska. The working group will include representatives from the Board of Game, Advisory Committees, private landowners, and other public interest groups.

The State of Alaska solicited the Council for any Council member interested in participating in the working group. The Council discussed and commented that it is important for a representative from the Council to participate and nominated Lee Adler from Glennallen to attend. Alternate member is Gloria Stickwan of Tazlina. First working group meeting is scheduled for December 5-6, 2015 in Anchorage.

Agency Reports

Ninilchik Traditional Council

Mr. Darrel Williams and Mr. Ivan Encelewski presented a power point presentation on the Ninilchik Traditional Council's (NTC) work on the subsistence gill net fisheries for the Kasilof and Kenai Rivers that is authorized in regulation by the Federal Subsistence Board.

The number of Salmon taken in the subsistence gillnet fishery on the Kasilof did not meet the needs of subsistence users that signed up to receive or harvest fish from this fishery. Part of the reason given was the late start. Issues raised included excessive paperwork; compliance with regulations, take of Chinook by the ADF&G during the Kenai River test fisheries, and need for required insurance.

No gillnet subsistence fishery on the Kenai was in operation because the operational plan was not approved. The Ninilchik Traditional Council's stated it was due entirely to lack of cooperation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife. The NTC also provided photos of fishers along the bank from a closed Federal area (dipnetting from the beach) at the Moose Range Meadows which they stated was in violation of current regulations. The Council voted to continue to support Ninilchik's operational plans for both rivers.

Native Village of Eyak

Mr. Matt Piche, presented to the Council its 2015 fisheries results. The fishery study results include the Copper River Chinook salmon escapement monitoring program, and feasibility study on the suitability of streambed Radio-frequency identification (RFID) readers on the Gulkana River.

USFWS

Mr. Jeff Anderson, In-season fishery manager, Kenai Field Office, gave an update on the timing and escapement goals for the two Kenai chinook runs and other subsistence fisheries for the Kenai Peninsula.

Mr. Todd Esklin, Kenai Wildlife Refuge, provided a synopsis of subsistence hunting activities.

Copper River-Ahtna Intertribal Resource Conservation District (CRITR)

Ms. Karen Linnell, Mr. Bruce Cain, and Mr. Bill Wall presented an update on the Copper River-Ahtna Intertribal Resource Conservation District (CRITR) and their traditional resource

stewardship programs. The Ahtna and Chitina Native Corporation lands are recognized as agricultural lands and thus fall under the U.S. Department of Agriculture. CRITR, which facilitates Native, Federal and State agencies, is currently working on three projects: 1) pellet project to provide biomass for heating; 2) creation of moose habitat; and 3) development of a landscape fire strategy.

OSM

Mr. Tom Kron presented the OSM report. An overview was provided on the progress of over 700 RFRs, and approved by the Federal Subsistence Board, on fisheries regulations for the Kenai and Kasilof rivers, including Makhnati Island. Briefing notes from Council meeting materials was referred to the Council for their reference.

U.S. Forest Service

Mr. Milo Burcham and Mr. David Pearson provided a summary of moose hunts, federal permits and subsistence salmon harvest occurring in the Cordova and Hope/Cooper Landing area.

NPS

Wrangell-St. Elias NP staff provided an overview of various projects occurring in the National Park. A handout was provided of all the activities occurring for the Council's reference.

SRC appointments: The Council appointed Ms. Eleanor Dementi of Cantwell to serve on the Denali NP Subsistence Resource Commission. Motion made by Ms. Stickwan to appoint Ms. Dementi to the Denali SRC. Motion passes.

Discussion to keep Marie Gore and Jeff Burney to the Denali SRC; the Council, in its discussion would like Jeff Burney to maintain his seat on the SRC and Ms. Dementi will be appointed to the SRC replacing Marie Gore.

BLM

Mr. Dennis Teitzel, Glennallen Field Office Manager, presented an overview of BLM Glennallen Office programs.

Future Meeting Dates

All-Council

The Council discussed the March 7-11 All-Council meeting. A synopsis of the weeks events was provided. Planning, agenda development, and work sessions are still in progress.

The Council confirmed its fall 2016 meeting October 18-19, 2016 in Anchorage.

Closing Comments

Adjourn

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

December 16, 2014

Donald Mike, DFO
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management

Ralph Lohse, Chair
Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

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

DRAFT

**Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
U.S Fish & Wildlife Service
1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503**

RAC SC15051.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 Southcentral Alaska 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 Copper Center on October 21-22, 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 9, 2016.

1. Cooperative Management with Ninilchik Traditional Council Fishery

The Council unanimously supported Ninilchik Traditional Council's (NTC) subsistence gillnet fisheries on the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers when it recommended that the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) adopt fisheries proposals FP15-10 and FP15-11.

The Council also supports the approval of an operational plan for both river systems. Even though both rivers' operational plans were essentially identical, the Kasilof River plan was approved and the operational plan for the Kenai River was not approved by the in-season manager. NTC ultimately prosecuted the subsistence fishery for the Kasilof River as authorized by the new regulation. Efforts regarding the operational plan for the Kenai River are ongoing.

The Council supports the NTC efforts, in cooperation with the in-season fishery manager and Refuge manager, to move forward with the Kenai River subsistence fishery through implementation of the operational plan. The Council questions why NTC is required to have insurance for a subsistence fishery on the Kenai and Kasilof rivers, while other user groups are not required to provide insurance with the exception of commercial guides. The Council also expressed its concern over the length of time it has taken to get the operational plans approved. Surely, when the Board delegated authority to the in-season manager to approve the operational plan, the Board contemplated that it would be done in a timely manner to fulfill the intentions of the regulation.

Mr. Towarak

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The Council urges the Federal Subsistence Board to view the presentation that NTC provided to the Council at its fall 2015 meeting on NTC's efforts to provide a subsistence gillnet fishery on the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers. A copy of that presentation is enclosed.

2. Unit 11 Brown Bear Population Status and Research

Brown bear baiting will be allowed on Federal public lands if the Federal Subsistence Board approves wildlife proposal WP16-18. In Units 11 and 12 and the Kenai Peninsula, brown bear population information and harvest data to track the current status has been limited. Additional biological information is needed if management action is to be taken when a conservation concern arises.

Monitoring the general population through brown bear hair samples is a tool used to gauge the overall health of the population. The Council supports additional monitoring efforts of the brown bear through new technology. Trail cameras can be used in addition to hair samples along bear trail routes. With the additional monitoring efforts, this will allow managers the tool needed to manage season and harvest limits. The Council urges the Board to encourage managers to pursue any new methods they can to better assess the status of the brown bear population in these units.

3. Unit 6 Deer Harvest Report

Federal subsistence harvest reporting for deer in Unit 6 is currently not required, but collecting information such as harvest data, user groups, and area of hunt is beneficial to the Council to help it develop recommendation on future proposals and also can serve as an in-season management tool. Thus, there should be an interagency effort to develop a harvest reporting system for Federal subsistence permits on Federal public lands. The harvest data will be an additional resource for the Council to use when deliberating on future proposals and can also serve as a monitoring tool to measure the overall health of the deer population.

5. Unit 13 Paxson Hunt Area

With the newly opened portion of Unit 13 that was part of the Paxson Closed Area, there has been an increase in hunters using the area when the Nelchina caribou migrate through. This has caused a safety concern for residents hunting in the area due to the high volume of hunters within a small corridor. Reports of hunters parking on the road to hunt caribou has brought up safety issues by commuters navigating through parked vehicles on the sides of the highway and hunters near residential areas discharging their rifles while hunting caribou. The Richardson Highway is also used by semi-trucks for the transportation of goods. All of these factors combined create serious safety concerns for all users of the highway.

The Council requests the Board begin a dialogue with the Alaska Department of Transportation and the Department of Public Safety to address the safety concerns received from the residents of the area. Increased safety patrols and hunter education will help alleviate these concerns to ensure the communities and other users are not exposed to unnecessary safety hazards as we move forward. Additionally, installing more safety signs and developing additional public parking along the hunting corridor could help alleviate safety concerns.

6. Tribal Resource Management

In November 2014, the U.S. Attorney General issued a report entitled, *Advisory Committee on American Indian/Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence: Ending Violence so Children Can Thrive*. The report noted:

The Department of Interior (DOI) and the State of Alaska should empower Alaska Tribes to manage their own subsistence hunting and fishing rights, remove the current barriers, and provide Alaska Tribes with the resources needed to effectively manage their own subsistence hunting and fishing.

Regulations that limit the ability of Alaska Natives to conduct traditional subsistence hunting and fishing are directly connected to violence in Alaska Tribes and the exposure of Alaska Native Children to that violence. Violence is essentially nonexistent during the times in which the communities are engaging in traditional subsistence hunting and fishing activities, and violence spikes during times when Alaska Natives are unable to provide for their families. Beyond providing basic food, subsistence fishing and hunting has been essential to Alaska Native families' way of life for generations. Like language and cultural traditions, it has been passed down from one generation to the next and is an important means of reinforcing tribal values and traditions and binding families together in common spirit and activity. Interfering with these traditions erodes culture, family, a sense of purpose and ability to provide for one's own, and a sense of pride.¹

The Council is involved in subsistence management by providing its recommendations to the Federal Subsistence Board on matters relating to the take of fish and wildlife for subsistence regulatory proposals, management plans, and policies, among others, to protect and uphold Title VIII of ANILCA. The Attorney General's report squarely addresses how regulation of subsistence activities impacts culture and the cycle of violence in Alaska Native communities. This is and should be a part of the discussion in implementing Title VIII of ANILCA, and the Council requests that the Board include these issues as part of the conservation at public meetings when applicable.

7. Effects of Climate Change on Subsistence

Climate change impacts on subsistence activities, seasons and harvest limits, migratory patterns and returns, and communities continue to be of concern for the Council. The Council would like to receive status reports on how climate change is affecting community lives and the natural resources and how management is adapting to the changes.

¹https://edit.justice.gov/sites/default/files/defendingchildhood/pages/attachments/2014/11/24/aian_executive_summary.pdf

Mr. Towarak

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Thank you for the opportunity for this Council to assist the Federal Subsistence Management Program in meeting 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 Southcentral 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,

Richard Encelewski
Vice Chair

Enclosure

cc: Federal Subsistence Board
Southcentral Alaska 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
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Region 10
Chugach National Forest
Cordova Ranger District

612 2nd Street
P.O. Box 280
Cordova, AK 99574

File Code: 2610 Subsistence

Date: 1/21/2016

Subject: Use of delegated authority by Chugach National Forest district rangers in 2015

To: Greg Encelewski, Chair Southcentral Regional Advisory Council

The Seward and Cordova district rangers of the Chugach National Forest have been delegated authority, through the Federal Subsistence Board “to make in-season management decisions to ensure the continued viability of fish and wildlife populations, to issue emergency special actions if necessary to ensure continued viability of fish and wildlife populations, to continue subsistence uses of fish and wildlife, or for reasons of public safety; or temporary special actions if the proposed temporary change will not interfere with the conservation of healthy fish and wildlife populations, will not be detrimental to the long-term subsistence uses fish and wildlife resources, and is not an unnecessary restriction on non-subsistence uses “. The Seward District Ranger has delegated authority for Caribou and Moose hunts in Unit 7. The Cordova District Ranger has delegated authority for Moose, Deer, and Black Bears and for freshwater fisheries in the Prince William Sound area, except for the Copper River drainage.

In consultation with ADFG biologist Jeff Selinger, the Seward district Ranger again issued a Special Action before the start of the 2015 Unit 7 moose season, setting a quota of 3 fork-antlered bull moose. Two bull moose were reported harvested during the Unit 7 Federal season, and neither of the harvested bulls were fork antlered bulls that counted towards the Special Action quota. Only 1 caribou was reported harvested during the 2015 Federal caribou season in Unit 7. This was in contrast to the 4 caribou taken on the first day of the Federal Unit 7 caribou season in 2014, which was the first season that Cooper Landing residents were eligible to participate in the hunt.

In 2015, the Cordova District Ranger did not utilize their delegated authority. Surveys indicate that the Unit 6D Prince William Sound deer population is recovering and mild weather and lack of snow through the 2015 hunting season did not create any conservation concerns for the population. The Unit 6C moose population is currently at an all-time high. Thirty-five antlerless moose permits and 36 bull moose permits were issued. Thirty antlerless moose and at least 33 bulls were harvested and for a hunter success of 89%. Black Bears were just added to the Cordova District Ranger delegated authority letter in late fall of 2015. One-hundred and four freshwater fishing permits were issued by the Cordova Ranger District office. With 50% of harvest reports returned, 764 coho and 117 sockeye were reported harvested.

Sincerely,

Milo Burcham
Subsistence Lead
Chugach National Forest

Backcountry and Wilderness Stewardship Plan

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Newsletter • January 2016



Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve is in the process of preparing a Backcountry and Wilderness Stewardship Plan. The purpose of this plan is to guide the management of backcountry and wilderness character and resources in Wrangell-St. Elias within the legal framework of the Wilderness Act of 1964, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980, and National Park Service (NPS) policy and regulations.

Public scoping process

Official public scoping for the Backcountry and Wilderness Stewardship Plan occurred from May 2015 through November 2015. Public scoping consisted of three primary components – interviews held with stakeholders, public meetings, and briefings to stakeholder groups. For an in depth description of the public scoping process and analysis of comments received, see the “[Public Scoping Report](#)” released in January 2016.

The dominant themes received in public scoping were as follows: 1) there are currently very few issues or visitor impacts in the backcountry and wilderness and we should manage to keep it that way; 2) the current lack of regulations is part of the character of this wilderness and should be retained if possible; and 3) NPS administrative use contributes to impacts to wilderness character and should be acknowledged and managed.

Topic areas – as defined by public comment

The topic areas described below have been revised based on public input. Specific feedback on topics and subtopics is identified here and will correspondingly be addressed in the plan.

Airstrip maintenance and management

Identifying which airstrips are maintained, if any, and how maintenance will occur is part of this topic - for instance, if maintenance is conducted by the NPS or in coordination with commercial operators. Development of new airstrips will be evaluated in this topic, as will potential limits to establishing new airstrips. How airstrips facilitate or hinder dispersal of use across the park will be considered.

Cabin maintenance and management

How cabins are used and how maintenance should occur is the focus of this topic area. Identification of which cabins, if any, should be actively maintained by the NPS or other user groups will be addressed. How cabins are managed, including options relating to reservation systems will be considered, as will the role of cabins in providing for public health and safety.

Motorized use

Use of snowmachines, ORVs, and helicopters by visitors, local residents, and the NPS is the primary focus of this topic. How, where, and for what purposes these technologies are used will be addressed, including the recreational use of snowmachines. Based on impacts to wilderness resources and character, possible limitations will be considered to some forms of motorized use and for certain purposes.

Visitor use & impacts

This topic will address potential impacts to visitor experience and wilderness resources stemming from increased visitor use, as well as temporal and geographic concentration of use. Concerns associated with different user groups and particular types of use, such as private pilot use, base camping, and horse use will also be addressed. Evaluation of impacts will focus on social trails, campsites, campfire rings, garbage, human waste, and other similar impacts. The role of the NPS in facilitating visitor experiences relating to trails, signs, and advertising, among other factors will be addressed. Defining elements of the desired “visitor experience” and “visitor expectations” for different areas in Wrangell-St. Elias will be part of this topic.

Commercial use

It is anticipated that commercial use by air taxis, sport hunting guides, and guiding services will be addressed as separate, but interrelated uses. Self-regulation by commercial operators will be considered, as will methods for the NPS to supplement this process. An extent necessary determination, which addresses levels of use by commercial operators, will be part of the plan.

Subsistence

Subsistence use and traditional activities in backcountry and wilderness will continue to be provided for in this plan.

Cumulative effects

This topic will address how different actions and activities conducted by visitors, administrators, commercial users, and scientific researchers cumulatively effect wilderness character. The character of Wrangell-St. Elias as predominately unregulated will be considered. Contributions to cumulative effects by the other topic areas in the plan will also be addressed.

Miscellaneous

This topic will address items raised in public scoping that do not fall within one of the other topic areas. Installations in wilderness, use of modern technology, how the park is advertised, and the role of the NPS in day-to-day activities will be addressed here.



Data collection

Assessing on-the-ground impacts

Quantifiable data regarding impacts created by visitors has been collected since 2014, including information on social trails, campsites, campfire rings, airstrips, cabins, and other information. The purpose of this information is to evaluate how on-the-ground impacts are changing over time given site-specific conditions and how the impacts correlate with trends in visitor use over time.

In 2014 and 2015, a total of approximately 510 miles were traveled looking for impacts. Of this total distance travelled, approximately 72 miles were found to have discernable impacts from social trails – though most of the impacts observed have been extremely minimal. A summary of the trips conducted and impacts observed is available in Table 1.

The impact assessments conducted to date have observed relatively few impacts. As a result, Wrangell-St. Elias generally has the opportunity to make small revisions in management as necessary to preserve existing conditions.

Table 1. Summary of trips conducted and impacts observed.

Trip Location	Percent of route with discernable impacts	Condition class* and explanation of rating
Allie’s Valley to Bremner	5%	1 – Essentially no impacts from modern human activity were found.
Baultoff to Horsfeld	90%	4 – Extensive horse trails, many impacted campsites, and some trash associated with camps were observed.
Black Mountain	N/A**	
Bremner to Tebay Lakes	1%	1 – Essentially no impacts from modern human activity were found.
Donoho Basin	48%	5 – Extensive social trails, trash, campfire rings, were observed, as well as instances of improperly disposed human waste.
Dadina to Sanford Plateau	1%	1 – Essentially no impacts from modern human activity were found.
Glacier Creek	12%	2 – Minimal impacts, including minimal social trails and some impacted campsites were observed on this trip.
Hanagita Lake	N/A**	
Hidden Lake to Lakina	6%	2 – Minimal impacts were observed on this trip. Impacts observed included social trails, some impacted campsites, and campfire rings.
Huberts Landing	13%	2 – Some impacts, including social trails, trash, and some impacted campsites, were observed on this trip.
Iceberg to Bremner	4%	1 – Essentially no impacts from modern human activity were found.
Jaeger Mesa	5%	1 – Essentially no impacts from modern human activity were found.
Jacksina Creek	0%	1 – Essentially no impacts from modern human activity were found.
Kotsina River	N/A**	
Nutzotin Mountains	21%	3 – A relatively high number of social trails, as well as campsites, campfire rings, and trash were observed on this trip.
Ross Green Lake	1%	2 – Minimal impacts were observed, namely impacted campsites and human waste.
Skolai Pass	9%	3 – Some social trails, campsites, and campfire rings were observed.
Skolai to Wolverine	26%	4 – Social trails, as well as campsites, campfire rings, and trash were observed on this trip.
Solo Creek to Chisana	37%	4 – Many horse trails, as well as some impacted campsites and associated trash were observed on this trip.
Steamboat Hills	0%	1 – Essentially no impacts from modern human activity were found.
Tana and Chitina Rivers	N/A**	
Wolverine to Amphitheatre	6%	2 – Minimal impacts were observed, namely social trails.
Wrangell Plateau	13%	2 – Minimal impacts were observed, namely social trails and some trash.

* Condition class is a comprehensive evaluation of the overall condition of the route/trip on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 as the least impacted and 5 as the most impacted. This scale is relative to conditions observed here at Wrangell-St. Elias and incorporates observations of social trails, campsites, trash, human waste, and other factors.

** These trips were conducted in a way that precluded their being counted proportionately to the other trips; for instance, when the trip did not allow continuous data collection or the primary purpose of the trip was for another project.

Data analysis

Analyzing visitor use trends

The majority of access to park backcountry and wilderness is facilitated by commercial operators, including air taxis, guided recreational services, and hunting services. Commercial operators are required to submit actual use reports to the park each year. The park is currently analyzing data in these reports to determine trends in visitation, including levels of use, the popularity of various locations, and types of use, among other variables. The purpose of this information and analysis is to use trends in visitation to inform future management strategies. This project is ongoing and more results will be released in the near future.

Data from the past five years of visitor use facilitated by commercial operators is summarized below. In general, visitor use in the backcountry and wilderness has increased since 2010 (Figure 1). The average trip length in backcountry and wilderness areas from 2010-2014 was 4 days. Sport hunting was the activity which received the highest number of user days (Figure 2).

Top 10 most visited locations:

1. Skolai Pass
2. Iceberg Lake
3. Nizina
4. Wolverine
5. Fosse
6. Solo Creek
7. Mac Coll Ridge
8. Snag Creek
9. Lakina River
10. Glacier Creek

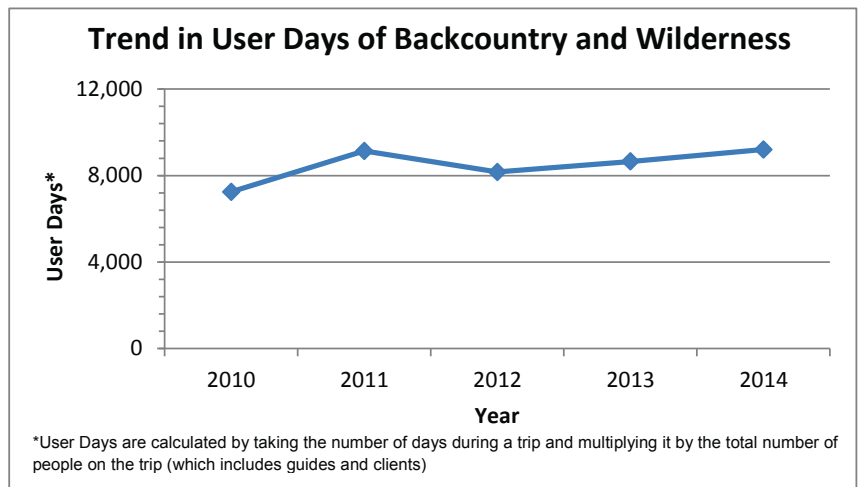


Figure 1. Trend in user days of backcountry and wilderness from 2010-2014.

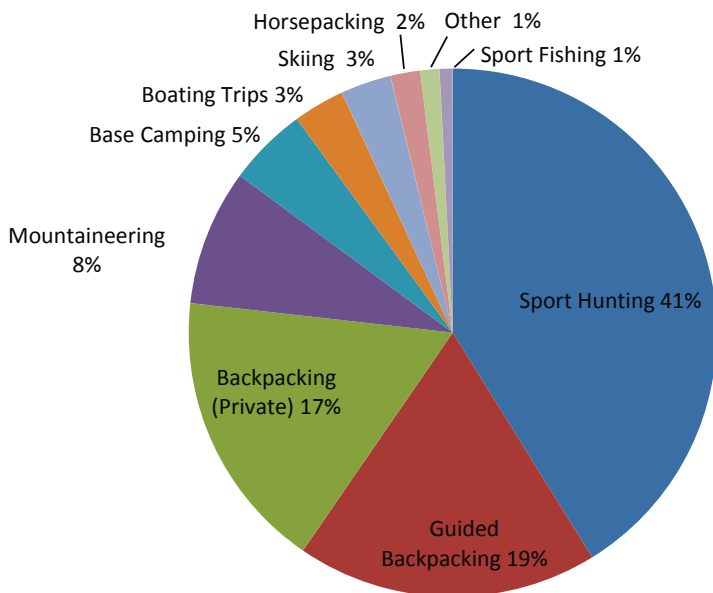


Figure 2. Summary of user days by activity, from 2010-2014.

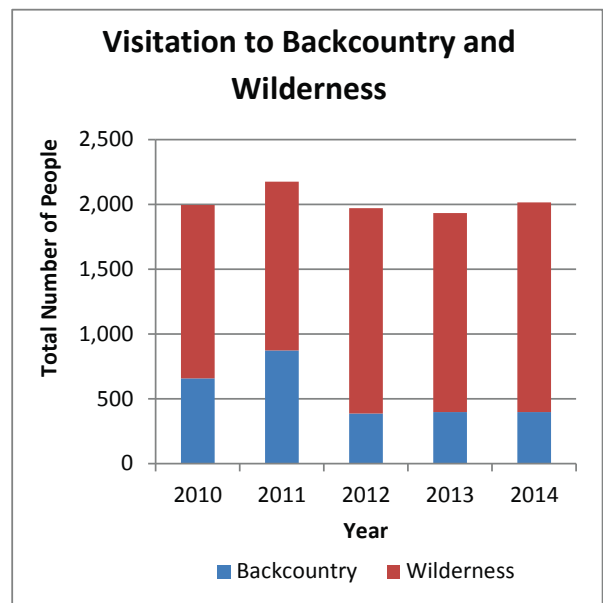


Figure 3. Dispersal of visitors across backcountry and wilderness.

Next steps in the planning process

Proposed action development

Based on the feedback received in public scoping, a Proposed Action will be developed. This Proposed Action will delineate management zones, and will identify desired future conditions, indicators, measures, standards, and thresholds for each zone. It is anticipated that the Proposed Action will be released by the summer of 2016. Public comments on the Proposed Action will be solicited.

Development of management alternatives

Based on the comments received on the Proposed Action, a suite of Management Alternatives will be developed. The Management Alternatives will articulate a variety of approaches regarding desired conditions, indicators, measures, standards, and adaptive management actions. Public comments on the Management Alternatives will be solicited.

Draft EA

Based on the comments received on the Management Alternatives, a Draft EA will be developed. The Draft EA will synthesize the management alternatives into a comprehensive document that analyzes the affected environment, impact topics, and identifies an NPS preferred alternative. Public comments on the Draft EA will be solicited.

Final EA

Based on the comments received on the Draft EA, a Final EA will be released, accompanied by a Finding of No Significant Impact statement.

How to stay involved

Staying up to date

The plan email list is the best way to make sure you are kept up-to-date about the planning process and opportunities for participation. To verify that you are on the email list or wish to receive updates via mail, please contact us at the information provided in the "Submitting Comments" section below.

Submitting comments

Official public comments will be accepted at several stages of the planning process, as outlined above. You can submit comments via email, regular mail, or on the internet at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=44299>

Written comments may be mailed to:
Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve
ATTN: Bruce Rogers
P.O. Box 439
Copper Center, Alaska 99573

Comments may be emailed to:
Bruce_Rogers@nps.gov

For more information about the plan or planning process, please contact Bruce Rogers, project manager, at 907-822-7276.

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

Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Charter

1. **Committee's Official Designation.** The Council's official designation is the Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory (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 one member to the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission and two members to the Denali National Park Subsistence Resource Commission 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 \$160,000, including all direct and indirect expenses and 1.15 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 advisory committee's and subcommittees' meetings,
 - Prepare and approve all meeting agendas,
 - Attend all committee 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:

Thirteen members who are knowledgeable and experienced in matters relating to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife and who are residents of the Region represented by the Council. To ensure that each Council represents a diversity of interests, the Federal Subsistence Board in their nomination recommendations to the Secretary will strive to ensure that nine of the members (70 percent) represent subsistence interests within the Region and four of the members (30 percent) represent commercial and sport interests within the Region. The portion of membership representing commercial and sport interests must include, where possible, at least one representative from the sport community and one representative from the commercial community.

The Secretary of the Interior will appoint members based on the recommendations from the Federal Subsistence Board and with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.

Members will be appointed for 3-year terms. 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 or other subgroups 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.



Secretary of the Interior

NOV 20 2015

Date Signed

DEC 03 2015

Date Filed