



BRISTOL BAY
SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL
ADVISORY COUNCIL
Meeting Materials

March 12-13, 2019
Naknek



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On the cover...

Wolverine and mink tracks trace the shore line of Lake Clark



NPS photo in public domain

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BRISTOL BAY SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Dolly's Hall
Naknek

March 12 -13, 2019
9:00 a.m. daily

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. Invocation**
- 2. Call to Order** (*Chair*)
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- 6. Election of Officers***
 - Chair (*DFO*)
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 - Council Member's Reports
 - Chair's Report
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(Time limit of 15 minutes unless approved in advance)

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12. Closing Comments

13. 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, 907-786-3629, donald_mike@fws.gov, or 800-877-8339 (TTY), by close of business on March 4, 2019.

REGION 4
Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Seat	Year Appointed Term Expires	Member Name and Community
1	2019	VACANT
2	2016 2019	Dennis Andrew, Sr. New Stuyahok
3	2003 2019	Nanci Ann Morris Lyon King Salmon Vice Chair
4	2007 2020	Molly B. Chythlook Dillingham Chair
5	2017 2020	William W. Trefon, Jr. Nondalton
6	2014 2020	William J. Maines Dillingham
7	2003 2020	Dan O. Dunaway Dillingham
8	2018	VACANT
9	2018	VACANT
10	2018	VACANT

BRISTOL BAY SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Dillingham Middle School Gym, Dillingham

November 6, 2018

8:30 a.m. daily

Meeting Minutes

Invocation

Mr. Orville Lind provided the invocation.

Call to Order

Vice Chair Morris Lyon called the meeting to order.

Roll Call and Establish Quorum

Present: Dennis Andrews, Sr., Nanci Morris Lyon, William Trefon, Jr., Dan Dunaway, Lary Hill, Richard Wilson. Molly Chythook, William Maines, and Victor Seybert were on excused absence. With one vacant seat, a quorum was established.

Welcome and Introductions

Agency staff

Jennifer Harden	Office of Subsistence Management (OSM)
Robbin La Vine	OSM
Scott Ayers	OSM
Pat Walsh	Togiak National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)
Andy Aderman	Togiak NWR
Susanna Henry	Togiak NWR
Liza Rupp	Lake Clark National Park & Preserve
Linda Chislom	Katmai National Park & Preserve
Jon Gerkens	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Susan Alexander	Alaska Peninsula/Becharof NWR
Glenn Chen	Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)
Gabriela Halas	Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G)
Bronwyn Jones	ADF&G
Carol Ann Woody	National Park Service (NPS)
Carol Damburg	USFWS (teleconference)
Susan Worker	OSM (teleconference)
George Pappas	OSM (teleconference)

NGOs/Public

Ted Kreig	Dillingham
Gayla Hoseth	Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA)
Cody Larson	BBNA
Frank Woods	Dillingham

Review and Adopt Agenda

The Council adopted the meeting agenda as presented.

Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Mr. Dunaway moved to adopt and approve the previous meeting minutes. Meeting minutes adopted.

Council Member Reports

Council members reported most of subsistence resources are on the increase or stable. Members reported in the region that moose were low during last fall's season. Salmon harvest overall was good and most residents met their subsistence needs. Caribou are returning slowly but in good health and numbers. In the northern area of Iliamna Lake, there have been reports of increased use of jet boats affecting the local habitat and low flying aircraft in subsistence use areas that have disrupted moose and caused additional competition for resources.

Public and Tribal Comment on Non-Agenda Items

There were no comments.

New Business

Fisheries Proposals

FP19-11 Salmon. Revise snagging regulations to allow fishing for salmon in Sixmile Lake and its tributaries. Mr. Scott Ayers and Ms. Robbin La Vine presented the analysis. The OSM recommendation is to support the proposal with modification.

Action: The Council supports the proposal as modified by OSM to specify limits for the Sixmile Lake tributaries within and adjacent to the exterior boundaries of Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, unless otherwise prohibited.

Justification: The Council supported the proposal with modification as recommended by the Office of Subsistence Management. The Council stated that this regulation is needed to continue subsistence practices. The regulation will provide additional opportunity for Federally qualified users of Nondalton and other communities with customary and traditional use of salmon in the area of Lake Iliamna.

Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP) Updates and Priority Information Needs (PINs)

Mr. Scott Ayers and Ms. Robbin La Vine presented the FRMP and PINs information. The Council supported the PINs recommendation developed by the Bristol Bay and Kodiak Aleutians Councils working group.

Identify Issues for Annual Report

The Council discussed and agreed to submit the following items to the Federal Subsistence Board. Annual reports allow the Board to become aware of the issues outside of the regulatory process that affect subsistence users and is a tool for the Council to bring regional subsistence uses and needs to the Secretaries' attention. The following list are topics the Council identified for the 2018 Annual Report and the key points of discussion for each issue:

1. Low Level Aircraft Flights

Residents in the Lake Iliamna and the Lake Clark region have expressed concerns about aircraft flying at low levels and disrupting wildlife and user groups in the area. The Chulitna River drainage in particular is important habitat for moose and other resources central to the subsistence practices of rural residents. The area is primarily accessed by boat or snowmachine in the winter. Low level flights are disruptive to the subsistence hunters and other users for a successful harvest. Local residents have approached the Lake Clark Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) and brought these concerns to its attention.

Aircraft offers access to remote lakes for transporters to drop hunters to hunting camps, which are also used by local residents for generations. This results in user conflict, trespass on private property, and local concerns about competition for the limited resources.

Glen Alsworth, Jr., a pilot and tour operator and member of the Lake Clark SRC, initiated an educational outreach effort by writing to area pilots and asking that they avoid the river corridor and to keep flights above 1,000 feet in altitude during the moose season (see enclosed). Additional outreach efforts included notifying other pilots to avoid the river corridor and to avoid low level flying directly over Long and Nikabuna Lakes within the Chulitna River drainage. These outreach efforts can be coordinated through the SRC and local communities.

Additionally, local communities are communicating with the National Park Service to address the issue of increased air traffic and low level flights over sensitive areas. The Council encourages continued efforts by the local communities, and encourages the National Park Service to actively work with the communities affected to begin management planning for air traffic in subsistence use corridors through the use of concessions permits or other management tools.

2. Historical Migratory Bird Management

The Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council Co-Chair brought to the Council's attention a recent apology letter signed on September 13, 2018 by the Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Commissioner, stating the need to "reconcile the past and acknowledge that these regulations harmed hunters and their families. We seek to continue rebuilding relationships with Alaska's Indigenous peoples who were affected by the unintended consequences of past harvest regulations..."

The Council urges the Federal Subsistence Board to acknowledge the letter signed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Alaska Department of Fish and Game in its next scheduled public meeting.

3. All-Council Meeting

The Council supports another All-Council meeting in Anchorage. The Council expressed that it was beneficial to all Council members attending the various training sessions.

The Council suggests that the following items be on the agenda or be part of the program for the next All-Council meeting:

- Closing session with all Councils to develop resolutions to submit to the Board;
- Discussion during the closing session for all Councils to develop consensus on management plans or other issues affecting all Councils;
- Regulations, and interpretation of them, related to the use of snowmobiles for hunting.

4. Sea Gull Population

Rural communities rely on various subsistence resources throughout the seasonal cycles of subsistence harvest. Local observations report that there are fewer sea gulls present in the Lake Iliamna area. Sea gulls are one of many subsistence resources available in the region. The Council wonders if the local sea gull population decline is limited to a specific geographic area or is occurring statewide. Therefore, the Council requests a briefing from the Migratory Bird Program on the population status of sea gulls in the Iliamna Lake area.

Agency Reports

Reports from tribal, Federal and State land managing agencies provided a summary of resource management activities occurring within their respective lands or tribal activities.

Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA) provided a summary of its activity working with communities within the Bristol Bay region. BBNA received comments from the communities of Chignik Bay, Chignik Lake, Chignik Lagoon, and Perryville, that most families did not meet their subsistence needs. Sockeye Salmon returns last summer were very weak.

Lake Clark Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) Appointment

Lake Clark National Park & Preserve (NPP) staff informed the Council of a vacancy on the Lake Clark NPP SRC. The Council has the authority to appoint SRC members under ANILCA Title VIII Sec 808. The Bristol Bay Council appoints three members to the SRC.

Lake Clark NPP recommended Mr. Warren Hill be appointed to the SRC. Mr. Hill serves on the Iliamna Local Advisory Committee and is a resident and subsistence user. The Council approved, on a unanimous vote, a motion to appoint Mr. Hill to the Lake Clark SRC.

Ms. Linda Chislom, Katmai National Park, provided a report on its recent SRC meeting held in Port Heiden on October 31. No quorum was established, so the SRC held an informational meeting where no action was taken. Lake Clark NPP and SRC discussed wildlife population in the area, and the Lake Clark NPP provided a status report on the Pike Ridge project; the access project is moving forward.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Representatives from Togiak and Alaska Peninsula/Becharof NWR highlighted a summary of the reports they provided in the meeting materials.

The Office of Subsistence Management provided a briefing document and summarized the highlights to the Council.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G)

ADF&G representative, Chris Peterson, Wildlife Biologist, provided a report on the biological status, of the Mulchatna Caribou herd and ongoing wolf management projects occurring within Unit 17.

Snowmachine Working Group

The Council formed a working group to address use of snowmachines to position for hunting caribou. The working group will consist of local community stakeholders, Federal and State agency staff, Regional Advisory Council members and State of Alaska Advisory Committee members. The group will develop recommendations for the Bristol Bay RAC to consider and forward its recommendation to the Federal Subsistence Board to consider defining “positioning” while engaging in subsistence hunting practices.

Future Meeting Dates

The Council confirmed its winter 2019 meeting dates and location on February 12-13, 2019, in Naknek, respectively. The Council then selected its fall 2019 meeting dates and location as November 5-6, 2019, in Dillingham, respectively.

Closing Comments

Council members offered brief individual comments.

Adjourned

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

Donald Mike, DFO
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management

Nanci Morris Lyon, Vice Chair
Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

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

DRAFT

**FEDERAL WILDLIFE CLOSURE REVIEW
WCR18-04/06**

Closure Location: Unit 9C, that portion draining in the Naknek River from the north and Graveyard Creek and Coffee Creek, Unit 9C remainder (WCR18-04), and Unit 9E (WCR18-06)—Caribou

Current Federal Regulation

Unit 9—Caribou

Unit 9C, that portion draining into the Naknek River from the north and Graveyard Creek and Coffee Creek—2 caribou by State registration permit. Federal public lands are closed to the taking of caribou except by residents of Unit 9C and Egegik Aug. 1 – Mar. 15

Unit 9C, remainder—1 bull by Federal registration permit or State permit. Federal public lands are closed to the taking of caribou except by residents of Unit 9C and Egegik May be announced

Unit 9E—1 bull by Federal registration permit or State permit. Federal public lands are closed to the taking of caribou except by residents of Unit 9E, Nelson Lagoon, and Sand Point May be announced

Closure Dates: Year-round

Current State Regulation

Unit 9—Caribou

Unit 9C, that portion north of the north bank of the Naknek River and south of the Alagnak River drainage—two caribou by permit RC503 Aug. 1 – Mar. 31

Unit 9C south of the north bank of the Naknek River— one caribou by permit TC505 Aug. 10 – Oct. 10
Nov. 1 – Feb. 28

Unit 9E

TC505

Aug. 10 – Oct. 10

Nov. 1 – Apr. 30

Regulatory Year Initiated: 1999, closed except to residents of 9C and 9E; 2006, closed to all users.

Regulatory History

Prior to 1999, the harvest limit in Unit 9C remainder and Unit 9E remainder (which included most of Unit 9E) was 4 caribou. The season began on August 1 in both hunt areas, and ended on March 31 in Unit 9C remainder and on April 30 in Unit 9E remainder. At that time, there was no Federal season in the southernmost portion of Unit 9E.

The Federal Subsistence Board's (Board) 1999 decision on three proposals resulted in the first iteration of the current closure. Collectively, WP99-32, submitted by the Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council), WP99-33, submitted by Tim Enright of Pilot Point, and WP99-34, submitted by Chignik Lagoon Traditional Council, requested more restrictive harvest limits, more conservative seasons, and closure of some Federal public lands to the harvest of caribou in Units 9C and 9E. In response to a decline in the Northern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd (NAPCH), the Board adopted these proposals with modification. In addition to reduction in harvest limits and seasons, this action resulted in the closure of Federal public lands within Unit 9C remainder and all of Unit 9E to caribou harvest except by residents of Unit 9C and 9E. The Alaska Board of Game (BOG) implemented a Tier II hunt for the NAPCH the same year.

In 2000, the Board considered WP00-33, which was submitted by the Bristol Bay Native Association and requested the provision of designated hunter permits for caribou in Unit 9C and 9E. The Board approved this request because it was consistent with customary and traditional hunting practices and was not expected to impact the caribou population.

In 2004, the Board considered WP04-43, a request from the Council to allow same day airborne hunting for caribou throughout Unit 9 and 17, except on National Park Service (NPS) lands. All four Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils that voted on this proposal (Bristol Bay, Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, Western Interior Alaska, Kodiak/Aleutians) opposed it, and the Board rejected the request.

In 2005, caribou seasons in Units 9C remainder and 9E were the subject of two special actions, both submitted by the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM). The first, Emergency Special Action WSA05-02, requested that caribou hunting on Federal lands be closed in Unit 9C remainder and Unit 9E, following the rapid decline of the Northern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd and the State's closure of the Tier II season. As authorized by the Board, this request was approved with the unanimous consent of the Interagency Staff Committee. Subsequently, Temporary Special Action WSA05-11 was submitted, a necessary step to extend the closure beyond the 60-day period approved through WSA05-02. With

support of the Council, the Board adopted this proposal, resulting in elimination of the caribou season for the entirety of the 2005-06 regulatory year.

The Federal public lands closures in Units 9C remainder and 9E were reviewed in 2005 (WCR05-04/06). The Council concurred with OSM's recommendation, which was to maintain the status quo given continued population decline and insufficient recruitment. At the same meeting, the Council voted to submit a proposal to close Federal public lands in Units 9C remainder and 9E to the harvest of caribou by all users, effectively extending the closure that resulted from the Board's actions on WSA05-02 and WSA05-11. This proposal, WP06-22, was adopted by the Board, resulting in elimination of the Federal season for caribou in these units (BBRAC 2005). The State Tier II hunt was closed in 2005 as well.

The Council reviewed the Federal public lands closure again in 2010 (WCR10-04/06) and 2014 (WCR14-04/06). In response to the 2010 review, the Council voted in favor of maintaining the closure (BBRAC 2011). In response to the 2014 review, the Council voted to submit Proposal WP16-21 to modify the conditions of the hunt. Specifically, the Council requested that the closure be modified to allow caribou harvest by residents of 9C and 9E. The Council also requested that a may-be-announced caribou season be established in Units 9C remainder and 9E, noting that the State was considering opening a Tier II drawing hunt. The Council believed that it would be useful for Federal managers to have the flexibility to open a hunt on Federal lands as well, particularly considering the extent of Federal land in Unit 9 (BBRAC 2015). Proposal WP16-21 was considered by the Board at their April 2016 meeting. With the support of the Council, the Board adopted the proposal with modification to reduce the pool of eligible subsistence users on Federal public lands in Unit 9C remainder to residents of Unit 9C and Egegik, and on Federal public lands in Unit 9E to residents of 9E, Nelson Lagoon and Sand Point. The new Federal hunt coincided with 2016 changes in State regulations that opened a Tier II hunt (TC505).

In 2018, State harvest regulations for caribou in Unit 9 were again modified when the BOG acted on Proposals 125 and 127. As a result of the BOG's action on Proposal 125, the Tier II season for the NAPCH was extended throughout the TC505 permit area. In the portion of Unit 9C south of the north bank of the Naknek River, it was extended by 34 days to Aug. 10 – Oct. 10 and Nov. 1 – Feb. 28. In Unit 9E, it was extended by 20 days to Aug. 10 – Oct. 10 and Nov. 1 – Apr. 30. The BOG's action on proposal 127 resulted in the portion of Unit 9C north of the Naknek River and south of the Alagnak River drainage becoming part of the RC503 Mulchatna Caribou Herd (MCH) permit area, with an Aug. 1 – Mar. 31 season, rather than part of the NAPCH TC505 permit area.

The Board considered a similar change in 2018. Proposal WP18-21, submitted by the Council, in part requested that the caribou season in Unit 9C north of the Naknek River be changed from a may-be-announced season to an Aug. 1 – Mar. 15 season with a harvest limit of 2 caribou. This request was consistent with requested Federal regulation changes throughout the range of the MCH and similar to the new State regulations in this hunt area. The Board adopted WP18-21 with modification to create a new hunt area, removing the portion of Unit 9C that drains into the Naknek River from the north and Graveyard Creek and Coffee Creek from Unit 9C remainder. The Board's action effectively shifted the regulatory emphasis within the new hunt area from the NAPCH to the MCH, reflecting current distribution patterns of these two herds. Consequently, the Federal public lands closure within the new

hunt area should be considered separately from the closure in Unit 9C remainder and Unit 9E, since they apply to different populations.

Unit 9C is comprised of 85% Federal Public Lands and consists of 78% NPS managed lands, 4% U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) managed lands and 4% Bureau of Land Management (BLM) managed lands. Unit 9E is comprised of 49% Federal public lands and consists of 44% USFWS managed lands and 5% NPS managed lands (**Figure 1**).

Closure last reviewed: 2014 – WCR14-04/06

Justification for Original Closure (ANILCA Section 815 (3) criteria):

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

The original closure, in 1999, was initiated at a time when the population was declining and there was a need to ensure subsistence opportunity for local users. By 2006, when Federal public lands were closed to all users, the population had declined to a point that any harvest was unsustainable.

Council Recommendation for Original Closure:

The Council's actions in 1999 addressed both conservation concerns and the need to provide continued subsistence opportunity for local communities. Specifically, the Council supported more restrictive harvest limits and seasons due to declining population size. They also supported closing Federal public lands in Units 9C remainder and 9E to caribou harvest except by residents of Unit 9C and 9E. The Council believed it was reasonable to limit distribution of Federal permits to these users, considering who has a customary and direct dependence on the resource, who is in closest proximity to the resource, and who has access to alternative resources. In 2006, noting that recruitment was insufficient to offset adult mortality, the Council agreed that closing Federal public lands to all users was an appropriate compliment to the State's decision to close the State Tier II season.

State Recommendation for Original Closure:

In 1999, the State supported efforts to improve herd productivity by restricting harvest limits, reducing the season and limiting harvest through the use of quotas. In 2006, acknowledging the serious conservation concern, the State stopped issuing Tier II permits and supported closing the Federal caribou season.

Biological Background

Northern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd

Generally speaking, the NAPCH occupies Units 9C and 9E, from the Naknek River in the north to Port Moller in the south. It has varied considerably in size in the last century, ranging from approximately

2,000 during population lows to approximately 20,000 during population highs. These fluctuations in population size have been accompanied by shifts in distribution and movement patterns, likely due to impacts of population size on habitat quality. Following the most recent population peak in the mid-1980s, the herd began wintering north of the Naknek River. More recently, this northern range has become less important, with few caribou crossing to the north side of the Naknek River by 2000 (Crowley 2015).

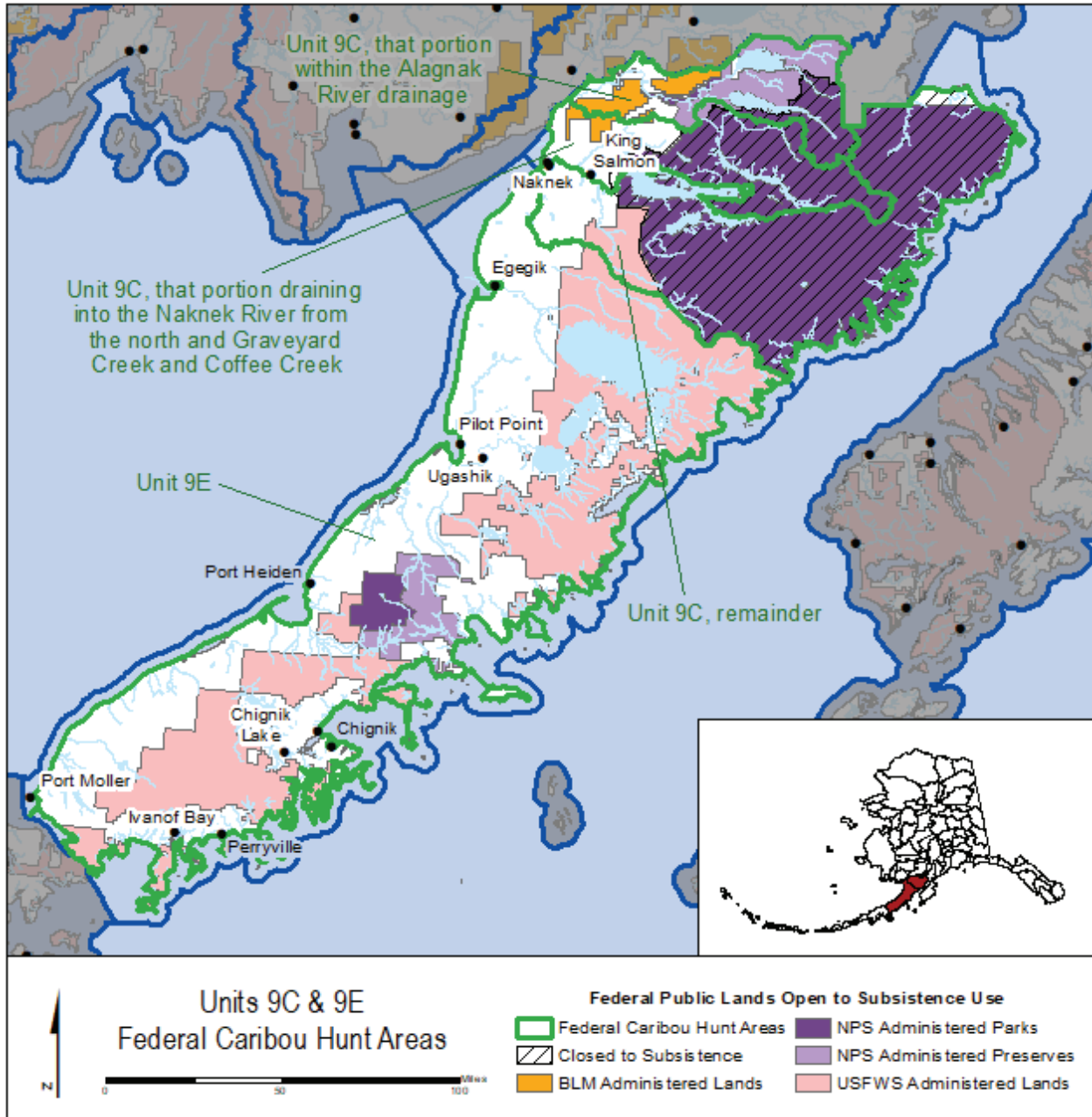


Figure 1. Units 9C and 9E Federal caribou hunt areas.

The NAPCH experienced a steady multi-decade decline in population size between the mid-1980s and the mid-2010s, approximating historical lows of 2,000 caribou. Nutritional limitations have been implicated

in the decline. In recent years, the population has showed a positive growth trend and is currently estimated to be approximately 3,600 caribou (**Table 1**), but remains well below the State’s population objective of 12,000 – 15,000 caribou (Crowley 2014, 2015, 2016).

Table 1. Northern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd composition counts and population estimates, 1984 – 2016 (Crowley 2014, 2016).

Year	Bulls: 100 cows	Calves: 100 cows	% of Total bulls			Composition sample size	Population Estimate
			Small bulls	Medium bulls	Large bulls		
1984	39	39	67	16	17	1,087	20,000
1990	41	29	-	-	-	1,484	17,000
1991	42	47	54	34	12	1,639	17,000
1992	40	44	44	38	19	2,766	17,500
1993	44	39	52	29	19	3,021	16,000
1994	34	34	58	28	14	1,857	12,500
1995	41	24	49	29	22	2,907	12,000
1996	48	38	71	19	10	2,572	12,000
1997	47	27	54	31	14	1,064	10,000
1998	31	30	57	28	15	1,342	9,200
1999	40	21	58	30	12	2,567	8,600
2000	38	18	59	24	18	1,083	7,200
2001	49	28	61	24	15	2,392	6,300
2002	46	24	57	19	24	1,007	6,600
2003	36	11	46	30	24	2,776	-
2004	34	7	40	34	25	1,355	-
2005	23	7	37	41	22	1,914	-
2006	26	14	26	43	31	1,725	-
2007	27	7	29	38	33	1,719	-
2008	19	10	33	25	43	1,841	-
2009	19	16	30	35	35	2,126	-
2010	25	18	30	31	39	1,795	2,169 ^a
2011	26	20	26	37	37	2,395	2,321 ^a
2012	28	22	24	37	40	1,352	2,525 ^a
2013	31	21	26	41	33	2,076	2,708 ^a
2014	40	34	23	50	28	2,295	3,101 ^a
2015 ^b	38	29	53	29	18	2,122	3,411 ^a
2016	70 ^c	24	30	47	23	1,556	3,617 ^a

^aEstimate based on simulation modeling.

^bSurvey limited to northern portion of NAP range.

^cLikely biased high due to inability to locate entire herd

Calf-cow ratios have improved markedly from the single digit ratios of the mid-2000s, but have been trending downward since 2014. At last count, in 2016, there were 24 calves:100 cows. Bull:cow ratios have improved in the last decade. The 2016 survey resulted in an estimated 70 bulls:100 cows, an

improbably high number of bulls (**Table 1**). Inability to locate the entire herd during the survey is likely to blame. Regardless, the bull:cow estimates show an increasing trend. Local biologists estimate that the current bull:cow is 40 bulls:100 cows or more, which exceeds the management objective of 35 bulls:100 cows (Crowley 2014, 2016, 2018 pers. comm.).

Mulchatna Caribou Herd

Currently, the MCH range covers ~60,000 square miles, primarily within Units 9B, 9C, 17A, 17B, 17C, 18, 19A and 19B. This population has experienced dramatic changes in population size and distribution in the past 40 years. In the early 1980s, the population was estimated to include approximately 20,000 caribou. Its winter range included the north and west side of Iliamna Lake north of the Kvichak River, where it intermingled with the NAPCH. By the mid-1990s, the herd had grown to its peak size of approximately 200,000 caribou and had begun wintering in southern Unit 18 and southwestern Unit 19B. Subsequently, the herd began a period of decline that persisted until recently (Barten 2015).

In 2013, population estimate for the MCH was 18,308 caribou, the lowest estimate in over 30 years and well below the State's population objective of 30,000 – 80,000 caribou (**Table 2**). Since then, the population appears to have grown. Surveys indicate that the population has been between 26,000 and 31,000 caribou since 2014. The most recent estimate, in 2016, was 27,242 caribou (Barten 2016).

The MCH experienced a steady increase in the bull:cow ratio between 2010 and 2016. In 2016, the ratio was 39 bulls:100 cows, which is the highest estimate since the late 1990s (**Table 2**). The proportion of bulls classified as large in 2016 was 28%, which is among the highest estimates on record and is well above the long-term average of 19%. In 2017, the bull:cow ratio declined to 32 bulls:100 cows, just below the State's management objective of 35 bulls:100 cows. Calf:cow ratios have been variable, which is typical of caribou herds occupying interior and southwest Alaska. In 2017, the calf:cow ratio was 23 calves:100 cows, within the range of variability observed in recent years (Barten 2016, ADF&G 2018a).

Harvest History

Northern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd

Harvest of the NAPCH has varied considerably since 1990. These changes correspond to population size and harvest restrictions. Between 1990 and 1993, when the herd was large and seasons and harvest limits were liberal, annual reported harvest approached or exceeded 800 caribou annually. Declining herd size, fluctuating distribution and more restrictive regulations resulted in reported harvests of 400 – 500 caribou between 1994 and 1999 (**Table 3**). Reported harvest during the 1990s was skewed heavily toward hunters residing outside of Units 9C and 9E. However, unreported harvest was high at an estimated 500 – 1,500 caribou annually, particularly among residents of Units 9C and 9E. Accounting for this, residents of Units 9C and 9E likely harvested a greater proportion than harvest data suggests (Sellers 1995, 1999).

In 1999, following implementation of the State Tier II hunt, more restrictive Federal regulations, and implementation of the Federal public lands closure, reported harvest declined dramatically, averaging just 96 caribou per year between 1999 and 2004 (**Table 3**). User demographics shifted as well, with at least 90% of the reported harvest attributable to local users, defined here as those who are currently eligible to

harvest caribou on Federal public lands in either Unit 9C remainder or in Unit 9E (residents of Units 9C, 9E, Sand Point and Nelson Lagoon). Legal harvest ceased in 2005, following closure of the State and Federal hunting seasons (ADF&G 2018b).

Table 2. Mulchatna Caribou Herd composition counts and population estimates, 1975 – 2016 (Barten 2016).

Year	Bulls: 100 cows	Calves: 100 cows	% of Total bulls			Composition sample size	Population Estimate
			Small bulls	Medium bulls	Large bulls		
1975	55	35	-	-	-	1,846	14,000
1978	50	65	-	-	-	758	7,500
1980	31	57	-	-	-	2,250	-
1981	53	45	-	-	-	1,235	20,600
1986	56	37	-	-	-	2,172	-
1987	68	60	-	-	-	1,858	52,500
1988	66	54	-	-	-	536	-
1993	42	44	-	-	-	5,907	150,000 ^a
1996	42	34	49	29	22	1,727	200,000 ^a
1998	41	34	28	43	29	3,086	-
1999	30	14	60	26	14	4,731	175,000 ^b
2000	38	24	47	33	20	3,894	-
2001	25	20	32	50	18	5,728	-
2002	26	28	57	30	13	5,734	147,000 ^b
2003	17	26	36	45	19	7,821	-
2004	21	20	64	29	7	4,608	85,000 ^b
2005	14	18	55	33	12	5,211	-
2006	15	26	57	34	9	2,971	45,000 ^b
2007	23	16	53	36	11	3,943	-
2008	19	23	47	36	17	3,728	30,000 ^b
2009	19	31	40	44	16	4,595	-
2010	17	20	30	44	26	4,592	-
2011	22	19	32	41	27	5,282	-
2012	23	30	38	38	24	4,853	22,809 ^c
2013	27	19	39	36	25	3,222	18,308 ^c
2014	35	30	44	31	25	4,793	26,275 ^c
2015	35	29	35	43	22	5,414	30,736 ^c
2016	39	22	43	29	28	5,195	27,242 ^c
2017	32	23	-	-	-	5,160	-

^aEstimate derived from photo-counts, corrected estimates, subjective estimate of number of caribou in areas not surveyed, and interpolation between years when aerial photo surveys were not conducted.

^bEstimate of minimum population size based on July photo census.

^cEstimate based on Rivest et al. (1998) caribou abundance estimator.

Federal and State seasons were reestablished in 2016. Since then, harvest has averaged 70 caribou annually (**Table 3**), all of which were taken by local users. On average, harvest was 81% bulls, and 62% of reporting hunters were successful. Two-thirds of the total harvest was taken during the winter hunt,

between December and April. However, harvest in September was higher than in any other single month, averaging 21% of the total harvest (ADF&G 2018b). Local biologists believe that the NAPCH can sustain a 4% harvest rate (150 caribou) and continue to grow (BOG 2018). Local State and Federal managers have the authority to manage for this quota through Emergency Orders and Special Actions. The quota has not been exceeded since seasons were opened in 2016.

Table 3. Reported harvest of the Northern Alaska Peninsula Caribou Herd 1990 – 2017, by sex. (Sellers 1995, 1999; ADF&G 2018b).

Year	Harvest (number of caribou)			Unknown Sex
	Total	Males	Females	
1990	791	679	110	2
1991	806	688	115	3
1992	921	816	98	7
1993	1,345	1,165	175	5
1994	569	478	91	-
1995	533	486	47	-
1996	481	438	43	-
1997	482	446	36	-
1998	490	453	31	6
1999	155	147	8	-
2000	82	76	6	-
2001	95	87	8	-
2002	82	78	4	-
2003	128	122	6	-
2004	32	30	2	-
2005 ^a	-	-	-	-
2006 ^a	-	-	-	-
2007 ^a	-	-	-	-
2008 ^a	-	-	-	-
2009 ^a	-	-	-	-
2010 ^a	-	-	-	-
2011 ^a	-	-	-	-
2012 ^a	-	-	-	-
2013 ^a	-	-	-	-
2014 ^a	-	-	-	-
2015 ^a	-	-	-	-
2016	82	74	8	-
2017	58	42	16	-

^aNo season

Mulchatna Caribou Herd

Like the NAPCH, harvest from the MCH has declined significantly as a result of declining population size and more restrictive harvest regulations (**Table 4**). Harvest among all user groups has declined since

2000, but is especially pronounced among non-local residents and nonresidents due to regulatory restrictions. Since 2013, local users, defined as those with a customary and traditional use determination, have harvested 80% of the total reported MCH harvest. Of the reported harvest, 11% occurred in Unit 9C between 2000 and 2014. Although harvest location data is less reliable beginning in 2015, it is assumed that, on average, long-term geographic patterns of harvest persist.

Table 4. Reported harvest from the Mulchatna Caribou Herd 2000 – 2017, by game management unit (ADF&G 2017, 2018b).

Year	Harvest (number of caribou)										
	Total	Unit 9A	Unit 9B	Unit 9C	Unit 17A	Unit 17B	Unit 17C	Unit 18	Unit 19A	Unit 19B	Unknown
2000	512	-	74	16	72	58	104	115	46	27	-
2001	726	-	98	41	100	56	85	311	19	16	-
2002	370	-	39	5	2	87	58	139	28	12	-
2003	795	6	76	26	8	44	151	419	44	21	-
2004	623	-	66	25	28	41	151	298	11	3	-
2005	934	-	72	104	33	42	275	367	28	13	-
2006	424	1	72	7	21	13	68	229	12	1	-
2007	549	-	9	165	17	7	2	325	12	12	-
2008	386	-	16	129	20	4	4	212	-	1	-
2009	253	-	7	1	1	10	35	198	-	1	-
2010	405	-	1	6	2	15	28	347	-	6	-
2011	394	-	29	189	-	7	61	108	-	-	-
2012	307	-	26	23	2	12	38	206	-	-	-
2013	83	-	8	-	-	25	7	41	-	2	-
2014	129	-	15	1	1	10	19	75	1	7	-
2015	192	-	7	-	-	10	6	2	-	-	167
2016	258	-	12	1	13	30	39	-	-	-	163
2017	423	2	15	-	15	72	116	33	-	4	166

OSM Recommendation:

- maintain status quo
- initiate proposal to modify or eliminate the closure
- other recommendation

Justification

OSM recommends that the Federal public lands closure in the portion of Unit 9C draining into the Naknek River from the north and Graveyard Creek and Coffee Creek be rescinded, while the closures within Units 9C remainder and 9E be retained. This recommendation is consistent with the Board’s 2018 decision to adjust the regulatory structure in Unit 9C to reflect current distributions of the NAPCH and the MCH.

Although the NAPCH wintered north of the Naknek River following the population peak of the mid-1980s, movement and distribution patterns have changed and this area is no longer considered important for the NAPCH. Rather, the MCH is currently the predominate occupant of the lands north of the Naknek River. While the MCH remains near the low end of the population objective, it has grown relative to the 2013 population low and has shown improvement in bull:cow ratios. In addition, the majority of harvest from the MCH occurs outside of Unit 9C. Collectively, there is no evidence that the Federal public lands closure in the portion of Unit 9C draining into the Naknek River from the north and Graveyard Creek and Coffee Creek is warranted for the conservation of either the NAPCH or the MCH.

The NAPCH remains the population of concern in Unit 9C remainder and Unit 9E. Although this population has also shown improvement in population size and bull:cow and calf:cow ratios in recent years, it remains well below the established population size objective. The current management approach, which includes the State's Tier II hunt, limiting harvest on Federal lands to those with customary and direct dependence on the resource, and a harvest quota managed by Emergency Order/Special Action, appears to be effective in allowing harvest while supporting population growth. Consequently retaining the Federal public lands closure within Units 9C remainder and 9E is appropriate and likely offers the best opportunity for continued recovery of the NAPCH.

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Federal Subsistence Board News Release



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

Forest Service

For Immediate Release:
January 31, 2019

Contact: Caron McKee
(907) 786-3880 or (800) 478-1456
caron_mckee@fws.gov

Call for Proposals to Change Federal Subsistence Hunting and Trapping Regulations

The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) is accepting proposals through March 27, 2019 to change Federal regulations for the subsistence harvest of wildlife on Federal public lands for the July 1, 2020–June 30, 2022 regulatory years. The Board will consider proposals to change Federal subsistence hunting and trapping seasons, harvest limits, methods of harvest, and customary and traditional use determinations.

Submit proposals:

- **By mail or hand delivery**
Federal Subsistence Board
Office of Subsistence Management – Attn: Theo Matuskowitz
1011 East Tudor Road, MS-121
Anchorage, AK 99503-6199
- **Online at <https://www.regulations.gov>**
Search for docket number FWS-R7-SM-2018-0015.
- **At any Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting**
A current list of meeting dates and locations can be found at <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regions>, or by contacting the Office of Subsistence Management at the phone number or email address below. Due to the recent lapse in funding for the Federal government budget, some of the meeting dates published in the proposed rule (84 FR 623; January 31, 2019) have been changed. Revised meeting dates and locations will be announced in subsequent news releases as they become available.

The proposed rule, *Subsistence Management Regulations for Public Lands in Alaska—2020–21 and 2021–22, Subsistence Taking of Wildlife Regulations*, published in the Federal Register on January 31, 2019 (84 FR 623).

You may call the Office of Subsistence Management at 800-478-1456 or email subsistence@fws.gov with questions.

Additional information on the Federal Subsistence Management Program may be found on the web at www.doi.gov/subsistence or by visiting www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska.

Missing out on the latest Federal subsistence issues? If you'd like to receive emails and notifications on the Federal Subsistence Management Program you may subscribe for regular updates by emailing fws-fsb-subsistence-request@lists.fws.gov.

-###-

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This document has been cleared for public release #20601312019.



U.S.C. 4321–4370f), and have made a preliminary determination that this action is one of a category of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment. This proposed rule involves a safety zone lasting for 2 hours that will prohibit entry within 100-yards of swim participants. Normally such actions are categorically excluded from further review under paragraph L63(a) of Appendix A, Table 1 of DHS Instruction Manual 023–01–001–01, Rev. 01. A preliminary Record of Environmental Consideration supporting this determination is available in the docket where indicated under **ADDRESSES**. We seek any comments or information that may lead to the discovery of a significant environmental impact from this proposed rule.

G. Protest Activities

The Coast Guard respects the First Amendment rights of protesters. Protesters are asked to contact the person listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section to coordinate protest activities so that your message can be received without jeopardizing the safety or security of people, places, or vessels.

V. Public Participation and Request for Comments

We view public participation as essential to effective rulemaking, and will consider all comments and material received during the comment period. Your comment can help shape the outcome of this rulemaking. If you submit a comment, please include the docket number for this rulemaking, indicate the specific section of this document to which each comment applies, and provide a reason for each suggestion or recommendation.

We encourage you to submit comments through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>. If your material cannot be submitted using <http://www.regulations.gov>, contact the person in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section of this document for alternate instructions.

We accept anonymous comments. All comments received will be posted without change to <https://www.regulations.gov> and will include any personal information you have provided. For more about privacy and the docket, visit <https://www.regulations.gov/privacyNotice>.

Documents mentioned in this NPRM as being available in the docket, and all public comments, will be in our online docket at <https://www.regulations.gov>

and can be viewed by following that website's instructions. Additionally, if you go to the online docket and sign up for email alerts, you will be notified when comments are posted or when a final rule is published.

List of Subjects in 33 CFR Part 165

Harbors, Marine safety, Navigation (water), Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Security measures, Waterways.

For the reasons discussed in the preamble, the Coast Guard is proposing to amend 33 CFR part 165 as follows:

PART 165—SAFETY ZONE; TANAPAG HARBOR, SAIPAN, CNMI

■ 1. The authority citation for part 165 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 46 U.S.C. 70034 (previously codified in 33 U.S.C. 1231); 46 U.S.C. 70051 (previously codified in 50 U.S.C. 191); 33 CFR 1.05–1, 6.04–1, 6.04–6, and 160.5; Department of Homeland Security Delegation No. 0170.1.

■ 2. Add § 165.T14–0020 to read as follows:

165.T14–0020 Safety Zone; Tanapag Harbor, Saipan, CNMI.

(a) **Location.** The following area, within the Guam Captain of the Port (COTP) Zone (See 33 CFR 3.70–15), all navigable waters within a 100-yard radius of race participants in Tanapag Harbor, Saipan. Race participants, chase boats and organizers of the event will be exempt from the safety zone.

(b) **Effective Dates.** This rule is effective from 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. on March 31, 2019.

(c) **Enforcement.** Any Coast Guard commissioned, warrant, or petty officer, and any other COTP representative permitted by law, may enforce this temporary safety zone.

(d) **Waiver.** The COTP may waive any of the requirements of this rule for any person, vessel, or class of vessel upon finding that application of the safety zone is unnecessary or impractical for the purpose of maritime security.

(e) **Penalties.** Vessels or persons violating this rule are subject to the penalties set forth in 46 U.S.C. 70036 (previously codified in 33 U.S.C. 1232) and 46 U.S.C. 70052 (previously codified in 50 U.S.C. 192).

Dated: January 23, 2019.

Christopher M. Chase,
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard, Captain of the Port, Guam.

[FR Doc. 2019–00563 Filed 1–30–19; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 9110–04–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

36 CFR Part 242

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 100

[Docket No. FWS–R7–SM–2018–0015; FXFR13350700640–190–FF07J00000; FBMS#4500129154]

RIN 1018–BD11

Subsistence Management Regulations for Public Lands in Alaska—2020–21 and 2021–22 Subsistence Taking of Wildlife Regulations

AGENCIES: Forest Service, Agriculture; Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: This proposed rule would establish regulations for hunting and trapping seasons, harvest limits, and methods and means related to taking of wildlife for subsistence uses during the 2020–21 and 2021–22 regulatory years. The Federal Subsistence Board is on a schedule of completing the process of revising subsistence taking of wildlife regulations in even-numbered years and subsistence taking of fish and shellfish regulations in odd-numbered years; public proposal and review processes take place during the preceding year. The Board also addresses customary and traditional use determinations during the applicable cycle. When final, the resulting rulemaking will replace the existing subsistence wildlife taking regulations. This rule would also amend the general regulations on subsistence taking of fish and wildlife.

DATES:

Public meetings: The Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils will hold public meetings to receive comments and make proposals to change this proposed rule on several dates between February 5 and March 12, 2019, and then will hold another round of public meetings to discuss and receive comments on the proposals, and make recommendations on the proposals to the Federal Subsistence Board, on several dates between September 19 and November 5, 2019. The Board will discuss and evaluate proposed regulatory changes during a public meeting in Anchorage, AK, in April 2020. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific information on dates and locations of the public meetings.

Public comments: Comments and proposals to change this proposed rule must be received or postmarked by March 27, 2019.

ADDRESSES:

Public meetings: The Federal Subsistence Board and the Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils' public meetings will be held at various locations in Alaska. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific information on dates and locations of the public meetings.

Public comments: You may submit comments by one of the following methods:

- *Electronically:* Go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov> and search for FWS–R7–SM–2018–0015, which is the docket number for this rulemaking.
- *By hard copy:* U.S. mail or hand-delivery to: USFWS, Office of Subsistence Management, 1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121, Attn: Theo Matuskowitz, Anchorage, AK 99503–6199, or hand delivery to the Designated Federal Official attending any of the Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council public meetings. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for additional information on locations of the public meetings.

We will post all comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>. This generally means that we will post any personal information you provide us (see the Public Review Process section below for more information).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Chair, Federal Subsistence Board, c/o U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Attention: Thomas C.J. Doolittle, Office of Subsistence Management; (907) 786–3888 or subsistence@fws.gov. For questions specific to National Forest System lands, contact Thomas Whitford, Regional Subsistence Program Leader,

USDA–Forest Service, Alaska Region; (907) 743–9461 or twhitford@fs.fed.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Under Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) (16 U.S.C. 3111–3126), the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture (Secretaries) jointly implement the Federal Subsistence Management Program. This program provides a rural preference for take of fish and wildlife resources for subsistence uses on Federal public lands and waters in Alaska. The Secretaries published temporary regulations to carry out this program in the **Federal Register** on June 29, 1990 (55 FR 27114), and final regulations were published in the **Federal Register** on May 29, 1992 (57 FR 22940). The Program has subsequently amended these regulations a number of times. Because this program is a joint effort between Interior and Agriculture, these regulations are located in two titles of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR): Title 36, “Parks, Forests, and Public Property,” and Title 50, “Wildlife and Fisheries,” at 36 CFR part 242.1–28 and 50 CFR part 100.1–28, respectively. The regulations contain subparts as follows: Subpart A, General Provisions; Subpart B, Program Structure; Subpart C, Board Determinations; and Subpart D, Subsistence Taking of Fish and Wildlife.

Consistent with subpart B of these regulations, the Secretaries established a Federal Subsistence Board to administer the Federal Subsistence Management Program. The Board comprises:

- A Chair appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture;
- The Alaska Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;

- The Alaska Regional Director, National Park Service;
- The Alaska State Director, Bureau of Land Management;
- The Alaska Regional Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs;
- The Alaska Regional Forester, USDA–Forest Service; and
- Two public members appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.

Through the Board, these agencies and public members participate in the development of regulations for subparts C and D, which, among other things, set forth program eligibility and specific harvest seasons and limits.

In administering the program, the Secretaries divided Alaska into 10 subsistence resource regions, each of which is represented by a Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council). The Councils provide a forum for rural residents with personal knowledge of local conditions and resource requirements to have a meaningful role in the subsistence management of fish and wildlife on Federal public lands in Alaska. The Council members represent varied geographical, cultural, and user interests within each region. Members are appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.

Public Review Process—Comments, Proposals, and Public Meetings

The Councils have a substantial role in reviewing this proposed rule and making recommendations for the final rule. The Federal Subsistence Board, through the Councils, will hold public meetings on this proposed rule at the following locations in Alaska, on the following dates:

Region 1—Southeast Regional Council	Wrangell	February 12, 2019.
Region 2—Southcentral Regional Council	Anchorage	February 26, 2019.
Region 3—Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Council	Kodiak	February 21, 2019.
Region 4—Bristol Bay Regional Council	Naknek	February 12, 2019.
Region 5—Yukon–Kuskokwim Delta Regional Council	Bethel	March 12, 2019.
Region 6—Western Interior Regional Council	Anchorage	February 20, 2019.
Region 7—Seward Peninsula Regional Council	Nome	March 5, 2019.
Region 8—Northwest Arctic Regional Council	Kotzebue	February 27, 2019.
Region 9—Eastern Interior Regional Council	Fairbanks	March 5, 2019.
Region 10—North Slope Regional Council	Utqiagvik	February 13, 2019.

During April 2019, the written proposals to change the subpart D, take of wildlife regulations, and subpart C, customary and traditional use determinations, will be compiled and distributed for public review. During a

subsequent public comment period, written public comments will be accepted on the distributed proposals. The Board, through the Councils, will hold a second series of public meetings in September through November 2019,

to receive comments on specific proposals and to develop recommendations to the Board at the following locations in Alaska, on the following dates:

Region 1—Southeast Regional Council	Petersburg	October 8, 2019.
Region 2—Southcentral Regional Council	Seward	October 2, 2019.

Region 3—Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Council	Kodiak	September 19, 2019.
Region 4—Bristol Bay Regional Council	Dillingham	November 5, 2019.
Region 5—Yukon–Kuskokwim Delta Regional Council	Bethel	October 12, 2019.
Region 6—Western Interior Regional Council	Aniak	October 8, 2019.
Region 7—Seward Peninsula Regional Council	Nome	October 22, 2019.
Region 8—Northwest Arctic Regional Council	Kotzebue	October 28, 2019.
Region 9—Eastern Interior Regional Council	Fairbanks	October 15, 2019.
Region 10—North Slope Regional Council	Utqiagvik	October 22, 2019.

Prior to both series of meetings, notices will be published of specific dates, times, and meeting locations in local and statewide newspapers, along with announcements on radio, television and social media sites. Locations and dates may change based on weather or local circumstances. The amount of work on each Council's agenda determines the length of each Council meeting, but typically the meetings are scheduled to last 2 days. Occasionally a Council will lack information necessary during a scheduled meeting to make a recommendation to the Board or to provide comments on other matters affecting subsistence in the region. If this situation occurs, the Council may announce on the record a later teleconference to address the specific issue when the requested information or data is available. These teleconferences are open to the public, along with opportunities for public comment; the date and time will be announced during the scheduled meeting and that same information will be announced through news releases and local radio, television, and social media ads.

The Board will discuss and evaluate proposed changes to the subsistence management regulations during a public meeting scheduled to be held in Anchorage, Alaska, in April 2020. The Council Chairs, or their designated representatives, will present their respective Councils' recommendations at the Board meeting. Additional oral testimony may be provided on specific proposals before the Board at that time. At that public meeting, the Board will deliberate and take final action on proposals received that request changes to this proposed rule.

Proposals to the Board to modify the general fish and wildlife regulations, wildlife harvest regulations, and customary and traditional use determinations must include the following information:

- a. Name, address, and telephone number of the requestor;
- b. Each section and/or paragraph designation in this proposed rule for which changes are suggested, if applicable;
- c. A description of the regulatory change(s) desired;

d. A statement explaining why each change is necessary;

e. Proposed wording changes; and
 f. Any additional information that you believe will help the Board in evaluating the proposed change.

The Board immediately rejects proposals that fail to include the above information, or proposals that are beyond the scope of authorities in § ____ .24, subpart C (the regulations governing customary and traditional use determinations), and §§ ____ .25 and ____ .26, subpart D (the general and specific regulations governing the subsistence take of wildlife). If a proposal needs clarification, prior to being distributed for public review, the proponent may be contacted, and the proposal could be revised based on their input. Once distributed for public review, no additional changes may be made as part of the original submission. During the April 2020 meeting, the Board may defer review and action on some proposals to allow time for cooperative planning efforts, or to acquire additional needed information. The Board may elect to defer taking action on any given proposal if the workload of staff, Councils, or the Board becomes excessive. These deferrals may be based on recommendations by the affected Council(s) or staff members, or on the basis of the Board's intention to do least harm to the subsistence user and the resource involved. A proponent of a proposal may withdraw the proposal provided it has not been considered, and a recommendation has not been made, by a Council. After that, the Board must approve withdrawal of a proposal. The Board may consider and act on alternatives that address the intent of a proposal while differing in approach.

You may submit written comments and materials concerning this proposed rule by one of the methods listed in **ADDRESSES**. If you submit a comment via <http://www.regulations.gov>, your entire comment, including any personal identifying information, will be posted on the website. If you submit a hardcopy comment that includes personal identifying information, you may request at the top of your document that we withhold this information from public review. However, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

We will post all hardcopy comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Comments and materials we receive, as well as supporting documentation we used in preparing this proposed rule, will be available for public inspection on <http://www.regulations.gov>, or by appointment, between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays, at: USFWS, Office of Subsistence Management, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99503.

Reasonable Accommodations

The Federal Subsistence Board is committed to providing access to these meetings for all participants. Please direct all requests for sign language interpreting services, closed captioning, or other accommodation needs to the Office of Subsistence Management, 907–786–3888, subsistence@fws.gov, or 800–877–8339 (TTY), at least 7 business days prior to the meeting you would like to attend.

Tribal Consultation and Comment

As expressed in Executive Order 13175, "Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments," the Federal officials that have been delegated authority by the Secretaries are committed to honoring the unique government-to-government political relationship that exists between the Federal Government and federally Recognized Indian Tribes (Tribes) as listed in 79 FR 4748 (January 29, 2014). Consultation with Alaska Native corporations is based on Public Law 108–199, div. H, Sec. 161, Jan. 23, 2004, 118 Stat. 452, as amended by Public Law 108–447, div. H, title V, Sec. 518, Dec. 8, 2004, 118 Stat. 3267, which provides that: "The Director of the Office of Management and Budget and all Federal agencies shall hereafter consult with Alaska Native corporations on the same basis as Indian tribes under Executive Order No. 13175."

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act does not provide specific rights to Tribes for the subsistence taking of wildlife, fish, and shellfish. However, because tribal members are affected by subsistence fishing, hunting, and trapping regulations, the Secretaries, through the Board, will provide federally recognized Tribes and Alaska Native corporations

an opportunity to consult on this proposed rule.

The Board will engage in outreach efforts for this proposed rule, including a notification letter, to ensure that Tribes and Alaska Native corporations are advised of the mechanisms by which they can participate. The Board provides a variety of opportunities for consultation: Proposing changes to the existing rule; commenting on proposed changes to the existing rule; engaging in dialogue at Council meetings; engaging in dialogue at the Board's meetings; and providing input in person, by mail, email, or phone at any time during the rulemaking process. The Board commits to efficiently and adequately providing an opportunity to Tribes and Alaska Native corporations for consultation in regard to subsistence rulemaking.

The Board will consider Tribes' and Alaska Native corporations' information, input, and recommendations, and address their concerns as much as practicable.

Developing the 2020–21 and 2021–22 Wildlife Seasons and Harvest Limit Regulations

Subpart C and D regulations are subject to periodic review and revision. The Federal Subsistence Board currently completes the process of revising subsistence take of wildlife regulations in even-numbered years and fish and shellfish regulations in odd-numbered years; public proposal and review processes take place during the preceding year. The Board also addresses customary and traditional use determinations during the applicable cycle.

The current subsistence program regulations form the starting point for consideration during each new rulemaking cycle. The regulations at § _____.24 pertain to customary and traditional use determinations; the regulations at § _____.25 pertain to general provisions governing the subsistence take of wildlife, fish, and shellfish; and the regulations at § _____.26 pertain to specific provisions governing the subsistence take of wildlife.

The text of the proposed amendments to 36 CFR parts 242.24, 242.25, and 242.26 and 50 CFR parts 100.24, 100.25, and 100.26 is the final rule for the 2018–2020 regulatory period for wildlife (83 FR 50758; October 9, 2018).

These regulations will remain in effect until subsequent Board action changes elements as a result of the public review process outlined above in this document.

Compliance With Statutory and Regulatory Authorities

National Environmental Policy Act

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement that described four alternatives for developing a Federal Subsistence Management Program was distributed for public comment on October 7, 1991. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was published on February 28, 1992. The Record of Decision (ROD) on Subsistence Management for Federal Public Lands in Alaska was signed April 6, 1992. The selected alternative in the FEIS (Alternative IV) defined the administrative framework of an annual regulatory cycle for subsistence regulations.

A 1997 environmental assessment dealt with the expansion of Federal jurisdiction over fisheries and is available at the office listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. The Secretary of the Interior, with concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture, determined that expansion of Federal jurisdiction does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the human environment and, therefore, signed a Finding of No Significant Impact.

Section 810 of ANILCA

An ANILCA § 810 analysis was completed as part of the FEIS process on the Federal Subsistence Management Program. The intent of all Federal subsistence regulations is to accord subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on public lands a priority over the taking of fish and wildlife on such lands for other purposes, unless restriction is necessary to conserve healthy fish and wildlife populations. The final § 810 analysis determination appeared in the April 6, 1992, ROD and concluded that the Federal Subsistence Management Program, under Alternative IV with an annual process for setting subsistence regulations, may have some local impacts on subsistence uses, but will not likely restrict subsistence uses significantly.

During the subsequent environmental assessment process for extending fisheries jurisdiction, an evaluation of the effects of this rulemaking process was conducted in accordance with § 810. That evaluation also supported the Secretaries' determination that these rules will not reach the "may significantly restrict" threshold that would require notice and hearings under ANILCA § 810(a).

Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA)

This proposed rule does not contain any new collections of information that require Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval. OMB has reviewed and approved the collections of information associated with the subsistence regulations at 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100, and assigned OMB Control Number 1018–0075, which expires June 30, 2019. An agency may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Regulatory Planning and Review (Executive Order 12866)

Executive Order 12866 provides that the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) in the Office of Management and Budget will review all significant rules. OIRA has determined that this proposed rule is not significant.

Executive Order 13563 reaffirms the principles of E.O. 12866 while calling for improvements in the nation's regulatory system to promote predictability, to reduce uncertainty, and to use the best, most innovative, and least burdensome tools for achieving regulatory ends. The executive order directs agencies to consider regulatory approaches that reduce burdens and maintain flexibility and freedom of choice for the public where these approaches are relevant, feasible, and consistent with regulatory objectives. E.O. 13563 emphasizes further that regulations must be based on the best available science and that the rulemaking process must allow for public participation and an open exchange of ideas. We have developed this rule in a manner consistent with these requirements.

Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980 (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*) requires preparation of flexibility analyses for rules that will have a significant effect on a substantial number of small entities, which include small businesses, organizations, or governmental jurisdictions. In general, the resources to be harvested under this proposed rule are already being harvested and consumed by the local harvester and do not result in an additional dollar benefit to the economy. However, we estimate that two million pounds of meat are harvested by subsistence users annually and, if given an estimated value of \$3.00 per pound, this amount would equate to about \$6 million in food value statewide. Based upon the amounts and

values cited above, the Departments certify that this rulemaking will not have a significant economic effect on a substantial number of small entities within the meaning of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act

Under the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (5 U.S.C. 801 *et seq.*), this proposed rule is not a major rule. It will not have an effect on the economy of \$100 million or more, will not cause a major increase in costs or prices for consumers, and will not have significant adverse effects on competition, employment, investment, productivity, innovation, or the ability of U.S.-based enterprises to compete with foreign-based enterprises.

Executive Order 12630

Title VIII of ANILCA requires the Secretaries to administer a subsistence priority for rural Alaskan residents on public lands. The scope of this program is limited by definition to certain public lands. Likewise, these proposed regulations have no potential takings of private property implications as defined by Executive Order 12630.

Unfunded Mandates Reform Act

The Secretaries have determined and certify pursuant to the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act, 2 U.S.C. 1502 *et seq.*, that this rulemaking will not impose a cost of \$100 million or more in any given year on local or State governments or private entities. The implementation of this rule is by Federal agencies and there is no cost imposed on any State or local entities or tribal governments.

Executive Order 12988

The Secretaries have determined that these regulations meet the applicable standards provided in §§ 3(a) and 3(b)(2) of Executive Order 12988, regarding civil justice reform.

Executive Order 13132

In accordance with Executive Order 13132, the proposed rule does not have sufficient federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment. Title VIII of ANILCA precludes the State from exercising subsistence management authority over fish and wildlife resources on Federal lands unless it meets certain requirements.

Executive Order 13175

Title VIII of ANILCA does not provide specific rights to tribes for the subsistence taking of wildlife, fish, and

shellfish. However, as described above under *Tribal Consultation and Comment*, the Secretaries, through the Board, will provide federally recognized Tribes and Alaska Native corporations an opportunity to consult on this proposed rule.

Executive Order 13211

Executive Order 13211 requires agencies to prepare Statements of Energy Effects when undertaking certain actions. However, this proposed rule is not a significant regulatory action under E.O. 13211, affecting energy supply, distribution, or use, and no Statement of Energy Effects is required.

Drafting Information

Theo Matuskowitz drafted this proposed rule under the guidance of Thomas C.J. Doolittle, Jr. of the Office of Subsistence Management, Alaska Regional Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage, Alaska. Additional assistance was provided by:

- Daniel Sharp, Alaska State Office, Bureau of Land Management;
- Clarence Summers, Alaska Regional Office, National Park Service;
- Dr. Glenn Chen, Alaska Regional Office, Bureau of Indian Affairs;
- Carol Damberg, Alaska Regional Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and
- Thomas Whitford, Alaska Regional Office, USDA–Forest Service.

List of Subjects

36 CFR Part 242

Administrative practice and procedure, Alaska, Fish, National forests, Public lands, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Wildlife.

50 CFR Part 100

Administrative practice and procedure, Alaska, Fish, National forests, Public lands, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Wildlife.

Proposed Regulation Promulgation

For the reasons set out in the preamble, the Federal Subsistence Board proposes to amend 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100 for the 2020–21 and 2021–22 regulatory years.

- The text of the proposed amendments to 36 CFR 242.24, 242.25, and 242.26 and 50 CFR 100.24, 100.25, and 100.26 is the final rule for the 2018–2020 regulatory periods for wildlife (83 FR 50759; October 9, 2018).

Dated: December 21, 2018.

Thomas C.J. Doolittle,

Acting Assistant Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Dated: December 21, 2018.

Thomas Whitford,

Subsistence Program Leader, USDA—Forest Service.

[FR Doc. 2019–00424 Filed 1–30–19; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3411–15–4333–15–P

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

38 CFR Part 17

RIN 2900–AQ47

Urgent Care

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is proposing to amend its regulations that govern VA health care. This rule would grant eligible veterans access to urgent care from qualifying non-VA entities or providers without prior approval from VA. This rulemaking would implement the mandates of the VA MISSION Act of 2018 and increase veterans' access to health care in the community.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before March 4, 2019.

ADDRESSES: Written comments may be submitted through <http://www.Regulations.gov>; by mail or hand-delivery to: Director, Regulation Policy and Management (00REG), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, North West, Room 1063B, Washington, DC 20420; or by fax to (202) 273–9026. (This is not a toll-free telephone number.) Comments should indicate that they are submitted in response to “RIN 2900–AQ47 Urgent Care.” Copies of comments received will be available for public inspection in the Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Room 1063B, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday (except holidays). Please call (202) 461–4902 for an appointment. (This is not a toll-free telephone number.) In addition, during the comment period, comments may be viewed online through the Federal Docket Management System (FDMS) at <http://www.Regulations.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Joseph Duran, Director of Policy and Planning, 3773 Cherry Creek North Drive, Denver, CO 80209. Joseph.Duran2@va.gov. (303) 370–1637. (This is not a toll-free number.)



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

Federal Subsistence Board Informational Flyer



Forest Service

Contact: Regulatory Affairs Division Chief
(907) 786-3888 or (800) 478-1456
subsistence@fws.gov

How to Submit a Proposal to Change Federal Subsistence Regulations

Alaska residents and subsistence users are an integral part of the Federal regulatory process. Any person or group can submit proposals to change Federal subsistence regulations, comment on proposals, or testify at meetings. By becoming involved in the process, subsistence users assist with effective management of subsistence activities and ensure consideration of traditional and local knowledge in subsistence management decisions. Subsistence users also provide valuable wildlife harvest information.

A call for proposals to change Federal subsistence fishing regulations is issued in January of even-numbered years and odd-numbered years for wildlife. The period during which proposals are accepted is no less than 30 calendar days. Proposals must be submitted in writing within this time frame.

You may propose changes to Federal subsistence season dates, harvest limits, methods and means of harvest, and customary and traditional use determinations.

What your proposal should contain:

There is no form to submit your proposal to change Federal subsistence regulations. Include the following information in your proposal submission (you may submit as many as you like):

- Your name and contact information (address, phone, fax, or E-mail address)
- Your organization (if applicable).
- What regulations you wish to change. Include management unit number and species. Quote the current regulation if known. If you are proposing a new regulation, please state, “new regulation.”
- Write the regulation the way you would like to see it written in the regulations.
- Explain why this regulation change should be made.
- You should provide any additional information that you believe will help the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) in evaluating the proposed change.

1011 East Tudor Road MS-121 • Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199 • subsistence@fws.gov • (800) 478-1456 / (907) 786-3888
This document has been cleared for public release #0605132015.

You may submit your proposals by:

1. By mail or hand delivery to:
Federal Subsistence Board
Office of Subsistence Management
Attn: Theo Matuskowitz
1011 E. Tudor Rd., MS-121
Anchorage, AK 99503
2. At any Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting (A schedule will be published in the Federal Register and be announced statewide, bi-annually, prior to the meeting cycles)
3. On the Web at <http://www.regulations.gov>

Submit a separate proposal for each proposed change; however, do not submit the same proposal by different accepted methods listed above. To cite which regulation(s) you want to change, you may reference [50 CFR 100](#) or [36 CFR 242](#) or the proposed regulations published in the Federal Register: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>. All proposals and comments, including personal information, are posted on the Web at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

For the proposal processing timeline and additional information contact the Office of Subsistence Management at (800) 478-1456/ (907) 786-3888 or go to <http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/proposal/submit.cfm>.

How a proposal to change Federal subsistence regulations is processed:

1. Once a proposal to change Federal subsistence regulations is received by the Board, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) validates the proposal, assigns a proposal number and lead analyst.
2. The proposals are compiled into a book for statewide distribution and posted online at the Program website. The proposals are also sent out the applicable Councils and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and the Interagency Staff Committee (ISC) for review. The period during which comments are accepted is no less than 45 calendar days. Comments must be submitted within this time frame.
3. The lead analyst works with appropriate agencies and proponents to develop an analysis on the proposal.
4. The analysis is sent to the Councils, ADF&G and the ISC for comments and recommendations to the Board. The public is welcome and encouraged to provide comments directly to the Councils and the Board at their meetings. The final analysis contains all of the comments and recommendations received by interested/affected parties. This packet of information is then presented to the Board for action.
5. The decision to adopt, adopt with modification, defer or reject the proposal is then made by the Board. The public is provided the opportunity to provide comment directly to the Board prior to the Board's final decision.
6. The final rule is published in the Federal Register and a public regulations booklet is created and distributed statewide and on the Program's website.

A step-by-step guide to submitting your proposal on www.regulations.gov:

1. Connect to www.regulations.gov – there is no password or username required.
2. In the white space provided in the large blue box, type in the document number listed in the news release or available on the program webpage, (for example: FWS-R7-SM2014-0062) and select the light blue “Search” button to the right.

3. Search results will populate and may have more than one result. Make sure the Proposed Rule you select is by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and **not** by the U.S. Forest Service (FS).
4. Select the proposed rule and in the upper right select the blue box that says, "Comment Now!"
5. Enter your comments in the "Comment" box.
6. Upload your files by selecting "Choose files" (this is optional).
7. Enter your first and last name in the spaces provided.
8. Select the appropriate checkbox stating whether or not you are providing the information directly or submitting on behalf of a third party.
9. Fill out the contact information in the drop down section as requested.
10. Select, "Continue." You will be given an opportunity to review your submission.
11. If everything appears correct, click the box at the bottom that states, "I read and understand the statement above," and select the box, "Submit Comment." A receipt will be provided to you. Keep this as proof of submission.
12. If everything does not appear as you would like it to, select, "Edit" to make any necessary changes and then go through the previous step again to "Submit Comment."

Missing out on the latest Federal subsistence issues? If you'd like to receive emails and notifications on the Federal Subsistence Management Program you may subscribe for regular updates by emailing fws-fsb-subsistence-request@lists.fws.gov. Additional information on the Federal Subsistence Management Program may be found on the web at www.doi.gov/subsistence/index.cfm or by visiting www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska.

Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
c/o Office of Subsistence Management
1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199
Phone: (907) 786-3888, Fax: (907) 786-3898
Toll Free: 1-800-478-1456

RAC BB 19000.CJ

Mr. Anthony Christianson, Chair
Federal Subsistence Board
c/o Office of Subsistence Management
1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199

Dear Chairman Christianson:

The Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) appreciates the opportunity to submit this annual report to the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) under the provisions of Section 805(a)(3)(D) and Section 805(c) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). At its public meeting held in Dillingham, November 6, 2018, the Council brought forward the following concerns and recommendations for its FY2018 Annual Report. The Council wishes to share information and raise a number of concerns dealing with implementation of Title VIII of ANILCA and the continuation of subsistence uses in the Bristol Bay Region.

1. Low Level Aircraft Flights

Residents in the Lake Iliamna and Lake Clark region have expressed concerns about aircraft flying at low levels and disrupting wildlife and user groups in the area. The Chulitna River drainage in particular is an important habitat for moose and other resources central to the subsistence practices of rural residents. The area is primarily accessed by boat or snowmachine in the winter. Low level flights are disruptive for all users for a successful harvest. Local residents have approached the Lake Clark Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) and brought these concerns to its attention. Transporters also access to remote lakes to drop hunters at hunting camps, which have been used by local residents for generations. This results in user conflict, trespass on private property, and local concerns about competition for limited resources.

Glen Alsworth, Jr., a pilot and tour operator and member of the Lake Clark SRC, initiated an educational outreach effort by writing to area pilots and asked that they avoid the river corridor and keep flights above 1,000 feet in altitude during the moose season (see enclosed). Additional

outreach efforts can include notifying other pilots about avoiding the river corridor and flying at low level directly over Long and Nikabuna Lakes within the Chulitna River drainage. These outreach efforts could be coordinated through the SRC and local communities.

Additionally, local communities are communicating with the National Park Service to address the issue of increased air traffic and low level flights over sensitive areas. The Council encourages continued efforts by local communities, and also encourages the National Park Service to actively work with communities to begin management planning for air traffic in subsistence use corridors through the use of concessions permits or other management tools.

2. Historical Migratory Bird Management

The Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council co-chair brought to the Council's attention a recent apology letter signed on September 13, 2018 by the Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Commissioner stating the need to "reconcile the past and acknowledge that those regulations harmed hunters and their families. We seek to continue rebuilding relationships with Alaska's Indigenous peoples who were affected by the unintended consequences of past harvest regulations..."

The Council urges the Federal Subsistence Board to acknowledge the letter signed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Alaska Department of Fish and Game in its next scheduled public meeting.

3. All Council Meeting

The Council supports conducting another All Council meeting in Anchorage. It would be beneficial to All Council members attending training sessions.

The Council suggests that the following items be on the agenda or part of the program at the next all-Council meeting:

- Regulations, and interpretation of them, related to the use of snowmobiles for hunting
- Closing session with all Councils to develop resolutions to submit to the Board
- Discussion during the closing session for all Councils to develop consensus on management plans or other issues affecting all Councils

4. Sea Gull Population

Rural communities rely on various subsistence resources throughout the seasonal cycles of subsistence harvest. Local observations report that there are fewer sea gulls present in the Lake Iliamna area. Sea gulls are one of many subsistence resources available in the region. The Council would like to know if the local sea gull population decline is limited to a specific geographic area or is it occurring statewide. Therefore, the Council requests a briefing from the Migratory Bird Program on the population status of sea gulls in the Iliamna Lake area.

Chairman Christianson

3

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

Sincerely,

Molly Chythlook
Chair

Enclosure

cc: Federal Subsistence Board

Thomas Doolittle, Acting Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management

Dr. Jennifer Hardin, Subsistence Policy Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management

Chris McKee, Wildlife Division Supervisor, Office of Subsistence Management

Greg Risdahl, Fisheries Division Supervisor, Office of Subsistence Management

Pippa Kenner, Acting Anthropology Division Supervisor

Office of Subsistence Management

Carl Johnson, Supervisory Program Analyst, Office of Subsistence Management

Donald Mike, Subsistence Council Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management

Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Mark Burch, Special Projects Coordinator, Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Interagency Staff Committee

Administrative Record

LAKE CLARK NATIONAL PARK
SUBSISTENCE RESOURCE COMMISSION
General Delivery
Port Alsworth, AK 99653

November 1, 2018

Greeting to Pilots,

Used to be I could shoot a high powered rifle off my front porch in any direction without concern for injuring anyone....except perhaps my own shoulder or eye! Can't anymore.

We are sharing this wild place with many neighbors, friends and guests these days. Some things never should change...like the way our ancestors utilized the resources for subsisting, and some things will necessarily change, like the way we access and share these special places.

The Chulitna River drainage on the north side of Lake Clark is a very important habitat for moose and other species critical to the subsistence diets of most of our local village residents. Access is primarily by boat during open water and snowmobile during the winter months, and aircraft noise can be disruptive to successful hunting.

Recently, a number of subsistence users expressed their concerns at a Subsistence Resource Commission Meeting regarding low flying aircraft during the fall hunting season and asked what could be done about it.

My first inclination is to simply ask that pilots understand and respect the Chulitna River corridor. Many pilots are not familiar with the significance of the Chulitna and are not informed regarding respectful practices that we all can adhere to.

First, during the fall hunting season, after mid-August through September 20, please avoid the river itself, preferably by flying at least 1000 feet high and flying to the sides of the valley, instead of directly over the river.

Secondly, pass the word around to fellow pilots and operators. This common sense solution will benefit the users immediately, without any pursuit of regulatory relief, which often has unforeseen consequences that may be worse than the problem itself.

Third, avoid low flights over Long Lake and Nikabuna Lakes, except for takeoff and landing to minimize disturbances to wildlife.

I acknowledge that we continue to recognize that safety comes first and fly where it is the safest to fly even if you must remain near the river during weather conditions that dictate it.

A few minor changes will make us all more considerate neighbors.

Sincerely,



Glen Alsworth, Chair

cc: Susanne Fleek Green, Superintendent, Lake Clark NPP



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Togiak National Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 270
Dillingham, Alaska 99576
Phone 907-842-1063
Fax 907-842-5402



INFORMATION BULLETIN - February 2019

Cooperative Salmon Escapement Monitoring Projects. Contact: Pat Walsh

ADF&G has monitored Chinook, chum and sockeye salmon escapement on the Middle Fork Goodnews River since 1980. Togiak Refuge has worked with ADF&G since 1992 to assist in staffing the weir until 2017, during which reduced Refuge funding prevented providing staff assistance.

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. However, this project has been cancelled for the past three years (2016-2018) due to lack of funding.

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 composition survey conducted October 12-13, 2018 estimated ratios of 32 bulls and 34 calves per 100 cows. The bull-to-cow ratio of 32 bulls-to-100 cows was the same as 2017, slightly below the objective of 35:100. The calf-to-cow ratio during this survey exceeded the objective of 30:100 and was the highest observed since 1998 (Neil Barten, ADF&G, personal communication).

Nushagak Peninsula Caribou Contact: Andy Aderman

A photocensus of the Nushagak Peninsula Herd on July 3, 2018 found a minimum of 709 caribou in 4 groups which resulted in a total population estimate of 787 +/- 114 (673-901) caribou at the 95% confidence interval (Dominic Demma, ADF&G, personal communication). A similar effort in 2017 found a minimum of 786 caribou in 5 groups resulting in an estimate of 968 +/- 217 (751-1185) caribou.

The Nushagak Peninsula Caribou Planning Committee met July 27, 2018 to review results of previous hunts, population and lichen monitoring and the harvest strategy. Average lichen cover on the Nushagak Peninsula has declined from 48% estimated in 2002 down to 30% in 2017. There was consensus among the Committee members to support the harvest objective of 150 caribou and an initial harvest limit of 2 caribou per hunter for the 2018-2019 hunt. As of February 19, 2019, only 11 caribou (6 bulls and 5 cows) have been reported in the Federal permit

hunt. Only 1 caribou (cow) has been reported in the RC501 hunt immediately north of the Federal hunt.

A composition survey conducted October 5, 2018 estimated ratios of 24.9 bulls and 34.2 calves per 100 cows. The bull to cow ratio declined to its lowest level since reintroduction. The calf to cow ratio declined to its third lowest level.

Moose Contact: Andy Aderman

In May 2018, 20 of 31 (64.5%) radio-collared adult cows produced 33 calves suggesting a production rate of 106.5 calves per 100 adult cows which is down from the previous 5 year average of 111.2 calves per 100 adult cows. The twinning rate was 65.0% which is similar to the previous 5 year average of 63.5%. Calf survival from birth to November was 33.3% (11/33), the second lowest rate since monitoring began in 1998.

The reported moose harvest in Unit 17A for 2018-2019 as of February 19, 2019 is 61 (41 bulls and 20 cows) with the following breakdown: 8 cows in the fall RM571 hunt; 29 bulls reported in the fall RM573 hunt; 5 bulls in the fall DM 570 hunt; 7 bulls in the winter RM575 hunt and 12 cows in the winter RM576 hunt (Neil Barten, ADF&G, personal communication). Note: both the RM575 and RM576 hunts got extended to February 25, 2019.

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 Genetics Lab, ADF&G, and BLM initiated a study to understand the effects of wolf and brown bear predation in regulating the populations of moose. The study relies on radio telemetry and stable isotope analysis. Our approach is 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 isotopes occurring in bear and wolf hair. Hair is being collected from wolves when captured during radio collaring operations, and has been collected from brown bears using break-away hair snares. So far, we have captured and radioed 27 wolves from seven packs. During summers 2014-2016, we deployed over 400 snares, and collected over 200 brown bear hair samples. Initial analysis in 2017 identified data gaps, so additional bear hair was collected in 2018. Final lab analyses will occur in 2019.

Walrus Contact: Doug Holt

The Togiak Refuge has annually monitored the number and timing of Pacific walrus at haul-outs since 1985, using ground counts (1985-2008), aerial surveys (2003-2011) and time lapse photography (2010-2017). Overall, walrus numbers have declined, with the greatest declines at Cape Peirce and Cape Newenham. Peak counts in the most current year when every day was counted (2015) were 722 at Cape Peirce, 682 on Hagemeister Island, and 437 at Cape Newenham. 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 except one since cameras were deployed in fall of 2014.

Seabirds Contact: Kara Hilwig

The abundance and reproductive success of black-legged kittiwakes, common murre, and pelagic cormorants was monitored annually at Cape Peirce from 1990-2014 and 2016-2018. In the past 28 years, the long-term average number of birds counted on study plots was 1,074 kittiwakes (range = 238-1,906), 2,666 murre (range = 53-4,563), and 90 cormorants (range = 15-123). In 2018, an average of 307 kittiwakes, 53 murre, and 15 cormorants were counted, which is the lowest number of murre and cormorants and second lowest number of kittiwakes counted during 28 years of monitoring. The long-term overall productivity (the number of nests with fledged chicks to the total number of nests) of kittiwakes, murre, and cormorants averaged 22%, 36%, and 49% respectively. In 2018, productivity of kittiwakes, murre, and cormorants was 0%, marking the third year in a row of reproductive failure at Cape Peirce. Three murre and 51 kittiwake eggs were observed in 2018 on the study plots, but subsequently failed. Six cormorant chicks were observed but disappeared before the 48-day fledging period. Twenty-eight years of seabird monitoring at Cape Peirce has revealed high variation in nesting adult counts and reproductive success, but never three consecutive years as low as 2016-2018. Other seabird monitoring sites in Alaska have also exhibited low numbers of returning adult birds and low reproductive success. This has been attributed to several factors including warmer climatic conditions occurring earlier in the breeding season affecting migration timing, adult condition, ocean temperature, ocean productivity, disease prevalence, and the distribution and abundance of forage items. Population and productivity monitoring will continue in June 2019 at Cape Peirce.

Invasive Aquatic Plant Surveys Contact: Kara Hilwig

Elodea spp. is a highly invasive and difficult to control aquatic plant implicated in the degradation and loss of fish habitat across the world. It was confirmed present in Alaska in 2009 and is now found in several waterbodies across the State. *Elodea* fragments carried by floatplanes and other means are able to rapidly colonize large areas forming dense mats, resulting in severe negative ecological consequences for native species and substantial economic costs to control or eradicate them. *Elodea* infestations in salmon streams and lakes can reduce the quality of salmon spawning and rearing habitat. Bristol Bay has been identified as a high risk area for new introductions of *Elodea* and has a large economic loss potential due to the value of its sockeye fishery. Early detection and removal of *Elodea* from pristine waters of Bristol Bay will be the least expensive and most effective method of protecting one of the largest salmon fisheries in the world from the detrimental effects of this invader.

In 2018, Refuge and Park staff cooperated to complete the first *Elodea* survey on Togiak Refuge and Wood-Tikchik State Park. The Refuge and the Park are popular floatplane destinations and many flights to these areas originate from *Elodea* infested floatplane bases. Survey sites were prioritized based on 1) a State-wide risk assessment completed by T. Schwoerer (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Alaska Fairbanks, 2017) which incorporated economic risk factors with *Elodea* habitat suitability criteria, and 2) floatplane operations on the Refuge and the Park with known connections to *Elodea* infested waters. During this effort, biologists determined the most efficient survey methods. These included 1) surveying when *Elodea* was at its greatest biomass and fragmentation stage, 2) beach combing for plant fragments on leeward shorelines on moderately windy days, 3) overflights to visually assess habitat suitability and presence of

aquatic vegetation mats, and 4) rake grabs in vegetation mats to verify plant identification. Crews sampled over 50 locations by boat and floatplane and no *Elodea* was detected. Among the sites that were surveyed, biologists identified discrete locations where annual monitoring was clearly prudent. Funding proposals are currently being submitted to continue this work.

Water Temperature Monitoring Contact: Doug Holt

Stream temperature monitoring was conducted at 21 locations on 14 rivers in Togiak National Wildlife Refuge from August 2001 until July 2016. Continuous hourly water temperatures were recorded at each site. Over 2.1 million temperature records were collected, quality-graded, and digitally stored in a relational database. The warmest month each year was July. The maximum recorded mean daily summer temperatures varied by location, with median values of 9.8–22.9°C across sites. The warmest temperatures were observed in the Kukaktlim Lake outlet and the coolest temperatures were observed in the Weary River. Based on differences in maximum daily mean temperature, the four warmest sites were each located near a lake outlet. Recorded temperature measurements at each site except the Weary River exceeded the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's 13°C temperature criteria for fish habitat two or more years, with temperature readings at Gechiak Lake outlet, Kukaktlim Lake outlet, Middle Fork Goodnews Lake outlet, and Nichols Lake outlet exceeding these criteria annually. The warmest year observed was 2004. Previous analyses of data collected on these sites indicated a cooling trend but recently a warming trend has been observed. More monitoring is required to determine if differences in previous and current trend observations are the result of cyclical patterns or a long-term warming trend.

Temperature was monitored at 2 lakes with temperature loggers equally spaced from surface to the lake bottom and temperature recorded every hour. Both lakes exhibited similar patterns of turnover and surface freezing in winter beginning near the end of November and thawing near the end of April each year. Data from each lake showed evidence of multiple freeze/thaw events during the winter of 2015-2016.

Quantifying River Discharge Contact: Pat Walsh

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.

Education and Outreach Contact: Terry Fuller

Togiak Refuge has an active education and outreach program, conducting an average of 60+ classroom visits throughout 12 Bristol Bay villages annually. Classroom visits include lessons about the Migratory Bird Calendar; National Wildlife Refuge Week; careers in natural resource conservation, and numerous teacher requested classroom presentations. The refuge works with several school districts and private schools including the Southwest Region, Lower Kuskokwim, Dillingham City school districts and the Dillingham 7th Day Adventist School. Field trips with area students for the 2017-2018 school year included bird walks, wilderness survival skills,

archery, salmon life cycles, aquatic resources and bear safety. The refuge website is also an education tool and is available at <http://togiak.fws.gov>.

The refuge, in partnership with Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the Southwest Region School District, has also conducts hunter safety courses throughout western Bristol Bay Villages. Classes have impacted more than 100 students in Manokotak, Dillingham, Twin Hills, Togiak, Aleknagik and Quinhagak. The refuge plans to continue these courses, as requested, in 2019 and will be adding the National Archery in School Program to its offerings in the future.

The refuge education program also produces Bristol Bay Field Notes, an award-winning weekly radio program on KDLG 670 AM that covers an array of outdoor-related topics (past episodes can be found on KDLG's website). Togiak Refuge has an active and heavily followed Facebook page which disseminates information on a daily basis to a rapidly growing global audience.

The refuge hosted its annual Open House at the Refuge Headquarters on Saturday, September 29, 2018 and over 130 people were in attendance and took part in a number of "hands on" activities. The refuge co-sponsored a 5K "Salmon Fun Run/Walk" on July 28, 2018 with the Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation. Nearly 200 people participated and received information on healthy lifestyle choices, including staying active in the outdoors on National Wildlife Refuges.

Other annual outreach programs for the community continue as well. The refuge hosted a family bird feeder building program in December and the annual Christmas Bird Count (Dillingham circle) January 5th. The family "Build-A-Bird Feeder Workshop" increased the Christmas Bird Count participation. The refuge is grateful for financial assistance from the Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges to conduct these programs.

Togiak Refuge staff continues to work with the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to conduct household subsistence waterfowl surveys. Refuge staff and volunteers are currently conducting surveys (spring 2019) in Aleknagik, Dillingham, Togiak, Clark's Point, Igiugig, Port Alsworth, Newhalen, Naknek, Pilot Point, Chignik Lake, and Goodnews Bay.

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

In July 2018 an enthusiastic group of eight area junior high students representing two villages (Dillingham and Goodnews Bay) traveled to Cape Peirce for this camp. Students were able to observe seabirds, marine mammals, and learn how field work is conducted, as well as learning about the food webs and ecological relationships found at the Cape Peirce area. Students 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. Refuge Interpreter Jon Dyasuk spoke with

students about traditional resource uses. Reporter Isabelle Ross of KDLG participated in the camp and authored a feature story about the camp for the KDLG website and the *Bristol Bay Times*. Traditional councils and school districts from throughout western Bristol Bay are cooperators with this camp.

Southwest Alaska Science Academy (Salmon Camp) Contact: Terry Fuller

In July 2018, Togiak Refuge helped with the 18th 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 ADF&G.

Summer Outdoor Skills and River Ecology Float Camp Contact: Terry Fuller

The 2018 Float Camp took place on the Pungokebuk River. At this camp, eight high school students (one from Togiak and five from Dillingham) 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 Ongivinuk. 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 wilderness survival skills. This year's students were able to assist refuge biologists with two ongoing projects on the Pungo: a bear hair project, which collects bear hair through the use of specialized snares and a water quality project that utilizes sensors which are deployed in the river. This camp helps students grasp 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. Ben Thrash from the University of Georgia was along as an "Artist-in-Residence" and all of the students had an opportunity to try their hand at art in the field. Reporter Avery Lill from KDLG also took part and was able to report on the camp. Traditional councils and school districts in western Bristol Bay are cooperators with this camp.

Division of Refuge Law Enforcement Contact: Derek Thompson

Federal Wildlife Officers work to protect wildlife and habitat and make refuges safe places for staff and visitors. Federal Wildlife Officer (FWO) Derek Thompson entered on duty in December 2017. Shortly after his arrival FWO Thompson worked to introduce himself to the area and bring educational outreach to the surrounding villages. He became a certified Alaska Hunter Information & Training Program Instructor. In cooperation with the Southwest Region School District, FWO Thompson instructed Basic Hunter Education courses in Ekwok, Koliganek, and Nunapitchuk. Additionally FWO Thompson provided firearm safety clinics in Kongiganak, and Atmautluak.

FWO's Thompson, Miller, and Harvey along with the Alaska Wildlife Troopers conducted multiple snowmobile patrols. Several of which were on the Nushagak Peninsula. No violation notices were issued by US Fish & Wildlife Service (US FWS) FWO's relating to caribou hunting on the Nushagak Peninsula in 2018. However during the spring patrols FWO Thompson did find



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Alaska Peninsula and Becharof National Wildlife Refuges
P. O. Box 277
King Salmon, Alaska 99613
907-246-3339



Agency Report to:

Bristol Bay Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Public Meeting, Naknek, Alaska
Winter 2019

Federal Subsistence Caribou Hunts for GMU 9C remainder and 9E

The public hearing regarding the opening of FC0914 and FC0915 was conducted on 18 April, 2018. No concerns regarding the opening were voiced by the public or by other Federal agencies or ADF&G. Subsequently the season was announced with season dates that matched the ADF&G season dates.

The number of Federal permits is limited. Five permits are drawn for 9C remainder and 10 permits are drawn for 9E. Six individuals applied for the 9C remainder permits and 9 individuals applied for the 9E permits. Additionally, almost 300 TC505 permits were issued by ADF&G. The announcement of a Federal season allows TC505 permit holders to harvest on Federal lands as allowed by federal regulations.

Combined Federal and State harvest for previous years was approximately 80 animals per year. The 2018-2019 hunt opened just prior to the time of writing so harvest numbers were minimal.

Cultural and Educational Subsistence Permits

No cultural or educational subsistence permits were requested.

Staffing at Alaska Peninsula and Becharof NWR

Pete Harvey came onboard in late 2017 as the Federal Wildlife Officer after the departure of Jim Wittkop.

The Refuge Mammal Biologist, Dom Watts, accepted a position at Kenai National Wildlife Refuge in December 2016. That position remains vacant.

Mammal Projects

Project: Moose Composition and Trend Surveys Summary (GMUs 9C & 9E)

Working collaboratively with ADF&G and Katmai NP, the Refuge flew 3 trend areas in 2017. Refuge 2017 efforts focused on 3 state and refuge trend units in 9E and 1 large refuge trend unit in 9C.

For 2018 the Refuge will continue to share USFWS aviation resources (plane/pilot) with ADF&G biologists to fly both Refuge and State trend sites during the fall moose composition survey period (Nov 01 – Dec 10). Two refuge survey units in 9C (Big Creek and Kujulik) are slated for long term composition and trend monitoring for the next 5 years. All Refuge survey data will be provided to King Salmon ADF&G Area Biologists for compilation and analysis into the larger dataset of GMU 9 moose abundance and composition.

Project: Moose Reproduction and Survival Study

In 2017 the Refuge concluded a 9 year study radio tracking a total of 37 cows for reproduction, adult survival, and calf survival data. Due to the refuge big game/mammal biologist position remaining vacant since 2016, the Refuge was unable to commit to continuing further with this project. The remaining 7 radio-collared cows from the refuge study were assigned to the ADF&G Area Biologist who is undertaking a similar cow survival study unit-wide in GMU 9. In 2018 the Refuge will continue to assist in a supporting role to ADF&G in tracking radio-collared moose on the Peninsula, but will not be able to undertake any large complex mammal studies until the big game/mammal biologist position can be filled at Alaska Peninsula-Becharof NWR. In 2018/2019 the Refuge will attempt to compile and analyze the moose survival, production, and calf survival data from 2009-2017. Progress is expected, but report finalization will continue to be impeded by refuge biological staffing short-falls in the big game/mammal position.

For more information on the Refuges' mammal programs contact: Dan Pepin, USFWS, Alaska Peninsula/Becharof NWR, PO Box 277, King Salmon, AK 99613. Phone: 907-246-1233; e-mail: Dan_Pepin@fws.gov

Avian Projects

Project: Alaska Landbird and Breeding Bird Monitoring Surveys

The Refuge continued landbird monitoring with participation in the Alaska Landbird Monitoring Survey (ALMS) and a Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) route. These surveys document breeding birds and their habitats. Data from ALMS is utilized by the Refuge in addition to being sent to the USGS's Alaska Science Center for storage and further analysis at the state level. These Breeding Bird Surveys are a continent-wide program administered jointly by the USGS – Patuxent Wildlife Research Center and Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service. Participation in these surveys aligns with the Refuge's mission to assess the presence, relative abundance, distribution, and trends in populations of wildlife and plants.

In 2018 we conducted 36 ALMS point counts and collected habitat data at two established survey sites on the Dog Salmon and Kejulik Rivers. We conducted 50 BBS point counts along the entirety of the Alaska Peninsula Highway. The total number of landbirds and the total number of species detected remains within 15% of historical averages. Further analysis and monitoring is required to determine the long-term population trends at the local and state level.

Project: Tree Swallow Nest Box Monitoring Project

The Alaska Peninsula represents the southwestern edge of the tree swallow breeding range; global declines in aerial insectivore populations have prompted increased study of these species, especially at range edges where declines are likely to be more pronounced.

In recent years, the Refuge expanded the existing nest box monitoring efforts in participation with The Alaska Swallow Monitoring Network, part of the Alaska Songbird Institute. Initial efforts to monitor tree swallows began in 2007. This year a total of 52 nest boxes were monitored. The project focuses on nest box occupancy, nesting phenology, nesting success rates, and recapture data collected from banding efforts.

In 2018, 46 of the 52 monitored nest boxes were occupied (88%). The overall nest success rate was 93%, down from 96% in 2017. We reduced banding efforts due to staffing limitations this year and focused banding on adults due to better recapture rates. This year we banded 45 new adults, 19 chicks, and recaptured 36 adults that were banded in previous years.

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. The remaining lakes show some individual differences but follow a similar short-term pattern of increasing temperatures from 2012 – 2016.

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

Visitor Services Programs

Project: Celebrating a New Interactive Exhibit in the King Salmon Interagency Visitor Center

This June the Refuge celebrated the launch of a new exhibit at the King Salmon Interagency Visitor Center. Partnering with local expert, LaRece Egli, the Refuge worked to design an interactive touchscreen display to better orient and educate the many annual visitors to our area. The current section of the exhibit on the Refuge highlights stunning images of the Alaska Peninsula and Becharof National Wildlife Refuges and interpretive text to help viewers connect with these remote and wild lands that they might not otherwise be able to experience. Also included in the exhibit is LaRece's "Our Life" project, which focuses on Bristol Bay's rich cultural history. This exhibit is able to be updated on a regular basis and all partners in the Visitor Center have been invited to create and have their content included. At the exhibit launch, the Refuge hosted an educator from the Bird Treatment and Learning Center to present 3 live bird

of prey shows with Red-tailed hawk Scarlet. There were also cupcakes and other activities for attendees to participate in. Throughout the day, there were over 100 people in attendance at this event.

Project: Science-based Exploration with Bristol Bay Youth

This summer the Refuge Visitor Services program brought on one volunteer intern to assist in providing quality environmental education opportunities for youth in Bristol Bay. For the third year in a row, the Refuge partnered with the local Bristol Bay Parks and Rec Department to provide science based programs for summer camp participants. Topics this summer included: Plate Tectonics, Volcanoes, the Solar System, and Tree Swallow Biology. By the end of the 6-week period during the months of June & July, over 80 youth participated in the programming, many of whom were repeat attendees from week to week.

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

Fall 2019 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

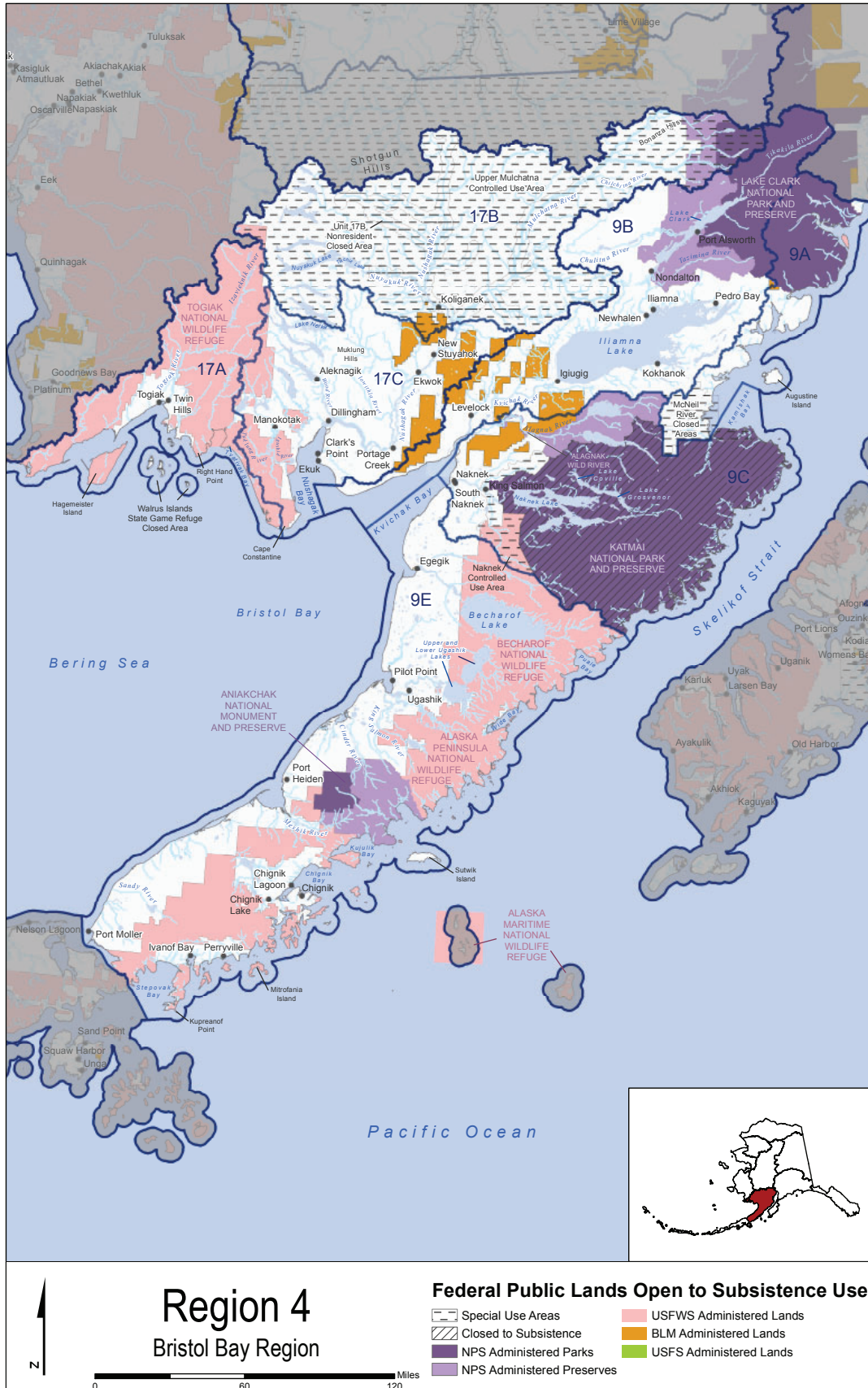
Due to travel budget limitations placed by Department of the Interior on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Office of Subsistence Management, the dates and locations of these meetings will be subject to change.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Aug. 18</i>	<i>Aug. 19</i>	<i>Aug. 20</i>	<i>Aug. 21</i>	<i>Aug. 22</i>	<i>Aug. 23</i>	<i>Aug. 24</i>
<i>Aug. 25</i>	<i>Aug. 26</i>	<i>Aug. 27</i>	<i>Aug. 28</i>	<i>Aug. 29</i>	<i>Aug. 30</i>	<i>Aug. 31</i>
<i>Sept. 1</i>	<i>Sept. 2</i> LABOR DAY HOLIDAY	<i>Sept. 3</i>	<i>Sept. 4</i>	<i>Sept. 5</i>	<i>Sept. 6</i>	<i>Sept. 7</i>
<i>Sept. 8</i>	<i>Sept. 9</i>	<i>Sept. 10</i>	<i>Sept. 11</i>	<i>Sept. 12</i>	<i>Sept. 13</i>	<i>Sept. 14</i>
<i>Sept. 15</i>	<i>Sept. 16</i>	<i>Sept. 17</i>	<i>Sept. 18</i>	<i>Sept. 19</i>	<i>Sept. 20</i>	<i>Sept. 21</i>
				K/A — Cold Bay		
<i>Sept. 22</i>	<i>Sept. 23</i>	<i>Sept. 24</i>	<i>Sept. 25</i>	<i>Sept. 26</i>	<i>Sept. 27</i>	<i>Sept. 28</i>
<i>Sept. 29</i>	<i>Sept. 30</i>	<i>Oct. 1</i>	<i>Oct. 2</i>	<i>Oct. 3</i>	<i>Oct. 4</i>	<i>Oct. 5</i>
			SC — Seward			
<i>Oct. 6</i>	<i>Oct. 7</i>	<i>Oct. 8</i>	<i>Oct. 9</i>	<i>Oct. 10</i>	<i>Oct. 11</i>	<i>Oct. 12</i>
		WI — Aniak				
		SE — Petersburg				
<i>Oct. 13</i>	<i>Oct. 14</i> COLUMBUS DAY HOLIDAY	<i>Oct. 15</i>	<i>Oct. 16</i>	<i>Oct. 17</i>	<i>Oct. 18</i>	<i>Oct. 19</i>
		EI — Fairbanks		AFN — Fairbanks		
<i>Oct. 20</i>	<i>Oct. 21</i>	<i>Oct. 22</i>	<i>Oct. 23</i>	<i>Oct. 24</i>	<i>Oct. 25</i>	<i>Oct. 26</i>
		NS — Utqiagvik				
		SP — Nome				
<i>Oct. 27</i>	<i>Oct. 28</i>	<i>Oct. 29</i>	<i>Oct. 30</i>	<i>Oct. 31</i>	<i>Nov. 1</i>	<i>Nov. 2</i>
	NW — Noatak					
<i>Nov. 3</i>	<i>Nov. 4</i>	<i>Nov. 5</i>	<i>Nov. 6</i>	<i>Nov. 7</i>	<i>Nov. 8</i>	<i>Nov. 9</i>
		YKD — Bethel				
		BB — Dillingham				

Winter 2020 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

Due to travel budget limitations placed by Department of the Interior on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Office of Subsistence Management, the dates and locations of these meetings will be subject to change.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Feb. 2</i>	<i>Feb. 3</i> <i>Window Opens</i>	<i>Feb. 4</i>	<i>Feb. 5</i>	<i>Feb. 6</i>	<i>Feb. 7</i>	<i>Feb. 8</i>
<i>Feb. 9</i>	<i>Feb. 10</i>	<i>Feb. 11</i>	<i>Feb. 12</i>	<i>Feb. 13</i>	<i>Feb. 14</i>	<i>Feb. 15</i>
<i>Feb. 16</i>	<i>Feb. 17</i> PRESIDENT'S DAY HOLIDAY	<i>Feb. 18</i>	<i>Feb. 19</i>	<i>Feb. 20</i>	<i>Feb. 21</i>	<i>Feb. 22</i>
<i>Feb. 23</i>	<i>Feb. 24</i>	<i>Feb. 25</i>	<i>Feb. 26</i>	<i>Feb. 27</i>	<i>Feb. 28</i>	<i>Feb. 29</i>
<i>Mar. 1</i>	<i>Mar. 2</i>	<i>Mar. 3</i>	<i>Mar. 4</i>	<i>Mar. 5</i>	<i>Mar. 6</i>	<i>Mar. 7</i>
<i>Mar. 8</i>	<i>Mar. 9</i>	<i>Mar. 10</i>	<i>Mar. 11</i>	<i>Mar. 12</i>	<i>Mar. 13</i> <i>Window Closes</i>	<i>Mar. 14</i>



**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 (ANILCA) (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.** Council duties and responsibilities, where applicable, are as follows:
 - a. Recommend the initiation, review, and evaluation of proposals for regulations, policies, management plans, and other matters relating to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on public lands within the Region.
 - b. Provide a forum for the expression of opinions and recommendations by persons interested in any matter related to the subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on public lands within the Region.
 - c. Encourage local and regional participation in the decision-making process affecting the taking of fish and wildlife on the public lands within the Region for subsistence uses.
 - d. Prepare an annual report to the Secretary containing the following:
 - (1) An identification of current and anticipated subsistence uses of fish and wildlife populations within the Region;
 - (2) An evaluation of current and anticipated subsistence needs for fish and wildlife populations within the Region;

- (3) A recommended strategy for the management of fish and wildlife populations within the Region to accommodate such subsistence uses and needs; and
 - (4) Recommendations concerning policies, standards, guidelines, and regulations to implement the strategy.
- e. 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 ANILCA.
- f. Make recommendations on determinations of customary and traditional use of subsistence resources.
- g. Make recommendations on determinations of rural status.
- h. Provide recommendations on the establishment and membership of Federal local advisory committees.
- i. Provide recommendations for implementation of Secretary's Order 3347: Conservation Stewardship and Outdoor Recreation, and Secretary's Order 3356: Hunting, Fishing, Recreational Shooting, and Wildlife Conservation Opportunities and Coordination with States, Tribes, and Territories. Recommendations shall include, but are not limited to:
 - (1) Assessing and quantifying implementation of the Secretary's Orders, and recommendations to enhance and expand their implementation as identified;
 - (2) Policies and programs that:
 - (a) increase outdoor recreation opportunities for all Americans, with a focus on engaging youth, veterans, minorities, and other communities that traditionally have low participation in outdoor recreation;
 - (b) expand access for hunting and fishing on Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service lands in a manner that respects the rights and privacy of the owners of non-public lands;
 - (c) increase energy, transmission, infrastructure, or other relevant projects while avoiding or minimizing potential negative impacts on wildlife; and
 - (d) create greater collaboration with states, tribes, and/or territories.

- j. Provide recommendations for implementation of the regulatory reform initiatives and policies specified in section 2 of Executive Order 13777: Reducing Regulation and Controlling Regulatory Costs; Executive Order 12866: Regulatory Planning and Review, as amended; and section 6 of Executive Order 13563: Improving Regulation and Regulatory Review. Recommendations shall include, but are not limited to:

Identifying regulations for repeal, replacement, or modification considering, at a minimum, those regulations that:

- (1) eliminate jobs, or inhibit job creation;
- (2) are outdated, unnecessary, or ineffective;
- (3) impose costs that exceed benefits;
- (4) create a serious inconsistency or otherwise interfere with regulatory reform initiative and policies;
- (5) rely, in part or in whole, on data or methods that are not publicly available or insufficiently transparent to meet the standard for reproducibility; or
- (6) derive from or implement Executive Orders or other Presidential and Secretarial directives that have been subsequently rescinded or substantially modified.

At the conclusion of each meeting or shortly thereafter, provide a detailed recommendation meeting report, including meeting minutes, to the Designated Federal Officer (DFO).

5. **Agency or Official to Whom the Council Reports.** The Council reports to the Federal Subsistence Board Chair, who is appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.
6. **Support.** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will provide administrative support for the activities of the Council through the Office of Subsistence Management.
7. **Estimated Annual Operating Costs and Staff Years.** The annual operating costs associated with supporting the Council's functions are estimated to be \$155,000, 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:

- (a) Approve or call all of the Council and subcommittee meetings;
- (b) Prepare and approve all meeting agendas;
- (c) Attend all Council and subcommittee meetings;
- (d) Adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines adjournment to be in the public interest; and
- (e) Chair meetings when directed to do so by the official to whom the advisory committee reports.

9. Estimated Number and Frequency of Meetings. The Council will meet 1-2 times per year, and at such times as designated by the Federal Subsistence Board Chair or the DFO.

10. Duration. Continuing.

11. Termination. The Council will be inactive 2 years from the date the charter is filed, unless prior to that date, the Charter is renewed in accordance with the provisions of section 14 of the FACA. The Council will not meet or take any action without a valid current charter.

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

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 Council or subcommittee deliberations or votes relating to a specific party matter before the Department or its bureaus and offices including a lease, license, permit, contract, grant, claim, agreement, or litigation in which the member or the entity the member represents has a direct financial interest.
14. **Subcommittees.** Subject to the DFOs approval, subcommittees may be formed for the purpose of compiling information 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. 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.



Secretary of the Interior

DEC 01 2017

Date Signed

DEC 04 2017

Date Filed

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