

WESTERN INTERIOR ALASKA
SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL
ADVISORY COUNCIL
Meeting Materials

*February 21 - 22, 2017
Fairbanks*



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On the cover...

Caribou moving across the expanse of the
Gates of the Arctic National Park



NPS photo by Zak Richter

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WESTERN INTERIOR SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Westmark Fairbanks Hotel & Conference Center
Fairbanks

February 21-22, 2017
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily

TELECONFERENCE: call the toll free number: **1-877-638-8165**, then when prompted enter the passcode: **9060609**.

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

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

AGENDA

*Asterisk identifies action item.

- 1. Invocation**
- 2. Call to Order** (*Chair*)
- 3. Roll Call and Establish Quorum** (*Secretary*)..... 3
- 4. Welcome and Introductions** (*Chair*)
- 5. Review and Adopt Agenda*** (*Chair*) 1
- 6. Election of Officers***
 - Chair (*DFO*)
 - Vice-Chair (*New Chair*)
 - Secretary (*New Chair*)
- 7. Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes*** (*Chair*) 7
- 8. Reports**
 - Council Member Reports
 - Chair’s Report
- 9. Public and Tribal Comment on Non-Agenda Items** (available each morning)
- 10. Old Business** (*Chair*)
 - a. Revisions to Draft MOU with State of Alaska

- b. Review of draft Council correspondence letters

11. New Business (Chair)

- a. Call for Federal Wildlife Proposals
- b. Review and Approve FY2016 Annual Report* Supplemental

12. Agency Reports

(Time limit of 15 minutes unless approved in advance)

Tribal Governments

Native Organizations

Tanana Chiefs Conference Wildlife and Parks Program Upcoming 2017 Field Season
(Brian McKenna and Nicole Farnham) 23

USFWS

Yukon River 2017 Pre-season Salmon Management Review (Yukon Fishm
Management Staff)

Artificial Propagation of Yukon River Salmon - An Agency Perspective
(Fred Bue) 28

Landscape Conservation Cooperatives

NPS

BLM

ADF&G

Yukon River Comprehensive Salmon Plan Update (Jill Klein) 30

OSM

13. Future Meeting Dates*

Confirm Fall 2017 meeting date and location 32

Select Winter 2018 meeting date and location 33

14. Closing Comments

15. Adjourn (Chair)

To teleconference into the meeting, call the toll free number: 1-877-638-8165, then when prompted enter the passcode: 9060609.

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 Zach Stevenson, 907-786-3674, zachary_stevenson@fws.gov, or 800-877-8339 (TTY), by close of business on February 10, 2017.

REGION 6
Western Interior Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Seat	Year Appointed <i>Term Expires</i>	Member Name and Community	
1	2016 2019	Shirley J. Clark Grayling	
2	2004 2019	Donald V. Honea Jr. Ruby	
3	2010 2019	Pollock Simon Sr. Allakaket	
4	1993 2017	Raymond L. Collins McGrath	Vice-Chair
5	1993 2017	Jack L. Reakoff Wiseman	Chair
6	2014 2017	Darrel M. Vent, Sr. Huslia	
7	2008 2017	Timothy P. Gervais Ruby	
8	2015 2018	Dennis R. Thomas, Sr. Crooked Creek	
9	2006 2018	Jenny K. Pelkola Galena	Secretary
10	2015 2018	Fred W. Alexie Kaltag	



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



Forest Service

Federal Subsistence Board News Release

For Immediate Release:

**This provides corrected information to News
Release dated December 9, 2016*

Contact: Caron McKee

(907) 786-3880 or (800) 478-1456
caron_mckee@fws.gov

Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture appoint members to Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils

Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell, with the concurrence of Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, has made appointments to the 10 Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils. The Councils advise the Federal Subsistence Board on subsistence management regulations and policies and serve as a forum for public involvement in Federal subsistence management in Alaska. With these appointments (shown in bold), the current membership of the Councils is:

SOUTHEAST ALASKA

Steve K. Reifenstuhel, Sitka
Frank G. Wright Jr., Hoonah
Patricia A. Phillips, Pelican
Michael A. Douville, Craig
Harvey Kitka, Sitka
Robert Schroeder, Juneau

Albert H. Howard, Angoon
Donald C. Hernandez, Pt. Baker
Kenneth L. Jackson, Kake
Raymond D. Sensmeier, Yakutat
John A. Yeager, Wrangell
Michael D. Bangs, Petersburg
Cathy A. Needham, Juneau

SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA

Diane A. Selanoff, Valdez
Eleanor Dementi, Cantwell
R. Greg Encelewski, Ninilchik
Deaniel E. Stevens, Chitina
Edward H. Holsten, Cooper Landing
Gloria Stickwan, Copper Center

James R. Showalter, Sterling
Michael V. Opheim, Seldovia
Andrew T. McLaughlin, Chenega Bay
Judith C. Caminer, Anchorage
Ingrid Peterson, Homer
Thomas M. Carpenter, Cordova
Ricky J. Gease, Kenai

KODIAK/ALEUTIANS

Antone A. Shelikoff, Akutan
Patrick B. Holmes, Kodiak
Richard Koso, Adak
Samuel I. Rohrer, Kodiak

Thomas L. Schwantes, Kodiak
Coral Chernoff, Kodiak
Rebecca Skinner, Kodiak
Della Trumble, King Cove
Speridon M. Simeonoff Sr., Akhiok
Melissa M. Berns, Old Harbor

BRISTOL BAY

Pete M. Abraham, Togiak
Dennis Andrew, Sr., New Stuyahok
Nanci A. Morris Lyon, King Salmon
Molly B. Chythlook, Dillingham
William J. Maines, Dillingham

Senafont Shugak, Jr., Pedro Bay
Dan O. Dunaway, Dillingham
Lary J. Hill, Iliamna
Victor A. Seybert, Pilot Point
Richard J. Wilson, Naknek

YUKON-KUSKOKWIM DELTA

William F. Brown, Eek
James A. Charles, Tuntutuliak
John W. Andrew, Kwethluk
Michael Peters, Marshall
Lester Wilde Sr., Hooper Bay
Dale T. Smith, Jr., Mekoryuk

Anthony Ulak, Scammon Bay
Annie C. Cleveland, Quinhagak
Dorothy G. Johnson, Mountain Village
Raymond J. Oney, Alakanuk
Greg J. Roczicka, Bethel
Robert E. Aloysius, Kalskag
David A. Bill, Sr., Toksook Bay

WESTERN INTERIOR ALASKA

Shirley J. Clark, Grayling
Donald V. Honea Jr., Ruby
Pollock Simon Sr., Allakaket
Raymond L. Collins, McGrath
Jack L. Reakoff, Wiseman

Darrel M. Vent, Sr., Huslia
Timothy P. Gervais, Ruby
Dennis R. Thomas, Sr., Crooked Creek
Jenny K. Pelkola, Galena
Fred W. Alexie, Kaltag

SEWARD PENINSULA

Theodore Katcheak, Stebbins
Brandon D. Ahmasuk, Nome
Louis H. Green Jr., Nome
Thomas L. Gray, Nome
Leland H. Oyoumick, Unalakleet

Fred D. Eningowuk, Shishmaref
Elmer K. Seetot Jr., Brevig Mission
Charles F. Saccheus, Elim
Ronald D. Kirk, Stebbins

NORTHWEST ARCTIC

Raymond Stoney, Kiana
Beverly M. Moto, Deering
Hannah P. Loon, Kotzebue
Michael C. Kramer, Kotzebue
Enoch Mitchell, Noatak

Verne J. Cleveland Sr., Noorvik
Louie A. Commack, Jr., Ambler
Enoch A. Shiedt Sr., Kotzebue
Percy C. Ballot Sr., Buckland
Calvin D. Moto, Deering

EASTERN INTERIOR ALASKA

Susan L. Entsminger, Tok Cutoff
Andrew P. Firmin, Fort Yukon
Lester C. Erhart, Tanana
William L. Glanz, Central

Andrew W. Bassich, Eagle
Will M. Koehler, Horsfeld
Donald A. Woodruff, Eagle
Virgil L. Umphenour, North Pole

NORTH SLOPE

Ester Hugo, Anaktuvuk Pass
Robert V. Shears, Wainright
Wanda T. Kippi, Atqasuk
Steve Oomituk, Point Hope

Sam Kunaknana, Nuiqsut
James M. Nageak, Anaktuvuk Pass
Gordon R. Brower, Barrow
Lee Kayotuk, Kaktovik
Rosemary Ahtaungaruak, Barrow

The Federal Subsistence Board is accepting applications for the 2017 appointment cycle until February 3, 2017. For more information, go to the Federal Subsistence Management Program website at <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/statewide>.

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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MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 11-12, 2016 WESTERN INTERIOR SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

Location of Meeting

McGrath Native Village Council Community Service Center, McGrath, Alaska

Time and Date of Meeting

October 11-12, 2016 (9:05 a.m. daily)

Call to Order

The fall meeting of the Western Interior Subsistence Regional Advisory Council was called to order on October 11-12, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. AKDT.

Roll Call

There were eight (8) Council Members present and two (2) unexcused absences. Participating Council Members included:

Jack Reakoff, Chair
Fred Alexie
Ray Collins, Vice-Chair
Timothy Gervais
Jenny Pelkola, Secretary
Pollock Simon
Robert Walker
Darrel Vent

Council Members Donald Victor Honea, Jr. and Dennis R. Thomas were unexcused and absent from the meeting.

Additional Participants

There were thirty-nine (40) additional participants attended some portion of the Western Interior Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting either in person, or by teleconference (indicated with an asterix “*”). The additional participants included:

Scott Ayres, OSM	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Ken Stahlnecker, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta NWR*	
Ray Born, Deputy Refuge Mgr., Yukon Delta NWR*	
Fred Bue, Yukon River Subsistence Fisheries	
George Pappas, OSM	
Brad Scotton, Innoko/Nowitna/Koyukuk NWR*	
Jeremy Havener, Innoko/Nowitna/Koyukuk NWR	
Ken Chase, Innoko/Nowitna/Koyukuk NWR*	
Vince Matthews, Kanuti/Arctic/Yukon Flats NWR	
Robbin LaVine, OSM*	
Lisa Maas, OSM*	

Chris McKee, OSM*	
Jennifer Hardin, OSM*	
Joshua Ream, OSM*	
Orville Huntington, Koyukuk/Nowitna NWR	
Orville Lind, OSM*	
Tom Kron, OSM*	
Trevor Fox*	
Zach Stevenson, OSM	
Robert Larson, OSM	U.S. Forest Service
Dan Sharp*	Bureau of Land Management
Bruce Seppi	
Erin Julianus	
Glenn Chen	Bureau of Indian Affairs
Carol Ann Woody*	National Park Service
Marcy Okada*	
Holly Carroll, Summer Season Manager*	Alaska Department of Fish & Game
Christie Gleason, Fall Season State Manager*	
Josh Pierce*	
Jeff Estensen, Fall Season Manager for the Yukon*	
Jill Kline*	
Joshua Peirce*	
Lincoln Parrett*	
Maria Wessel*	
Wayne Jenkins, Director	Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Assoc.
Catherine Moncrieff, Staff Anthropologist*	
Danielle Stickman*	
Lamont Albertson, Director*	Kuskokwim River Intertribal Fish Commission
Adam Paskvan	Tanana Chiefs Conference
Nicole Farnhan	

Review and Adopt Agenda

Mr. Collins moved to adopt the agenda. Mr. Vent seconded the motion. Mr. Reakoff approved a motion, (8 in favor-0 opposed) to accept the agenda. The following modifications to the agenda was noted.

- Mr. Reakoff asked for the presentation by Tanana Chiefs and YRDFA to be included under Public and Tribal Comments. No objections were noted.
- Next, in-season updates from the Yukon and Kuskokwim were requested.
- The Tongass hearing was requested in the afternoon to ensure maximum participation, followed by Council Member reports.

Review and Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Mr. Vent moved to adopt the previous meeting minutes of 09 March 2016 in Anchorage. Ms. Pelkola seconded the motion. Mr. Reakoff approved a motion, (8 in favor-0 opposed) to accept the previous meeting minutes.

Public and Tribal Comments on Nonagenda Items

- A report was delivered from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA). New staffing was addressed.
 - An overview of the YRDFA Board Meeting was provided.
 - A summary of the in-season Yukon River Salmon teleconferences was provided. The teleconferences are funded by the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. The teleconferences are a communication tool that allows fishers the entire length of the river to communicate with each other and with the managers. For 2016 there were 857 total callers, during the total of 13 calls and an average of about 66 callers per teleconference. The teleconferences provide a vital means for communication among fishers and resource managers in support of coordinated subsistence fisheries management throughout the region.
 - A summary of the Yukon River Community Engagement Support for the BLM Resource Management Planning on the Central Yukon and the Bering Sea Western Interior Regions as provided. The planning process is public and it seeks through direct engagement to gain input on issues and concerns addressing any and all information pertinent to the management of the public's lands under the BLM's jurisdiction. This initiative is funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts. The BLM is an active planning mode in the Eastern Interior, the Central Yukon, and the Bering Sea/Western Interior regions. Through this initiative, tribal councils and communities, after coming to better understand the BLM planning process, noted concern for access to and protection of traditional use areas.
 - An overview of the BLM's Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) designation process was provided. Strong interest in the ACEC designation process was expressed by the Council.
 - A brief summary other initiatives was also provided including the Yukon River in-season Salmon Harvest Survey; local training; post-season harvest surveys; a study of customary trade on the Upper Yukon; a project funded by the National Science Foundation involving elders from the Lower Yukon River to discuss Chinook salmon; and a scientific research paper focused on the Nome area conducted in partnership with Kawerak, Inc. addressing how traditional knowledge can be used in Federal fisheries management, particularly the North Pacific Fisheries Management.

- A report was delivered from the Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC).
 - The goal of TCC's programs is to preserve the cultural and traditional lifestyle that remains in these regions and to advocate for the conservation and sustainability of both the resources and the traditional practices so that it may be continued and passed down from generation to generation.
 - An overview of the Henshaw Creek Weir and the Henshaw Creek Science and Culture Camp were provided. These initiatives are funded through the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and the Region 7 US Fish and Wildlife Services National Wildlife Refuge.
 - The Council expressed interest in seeing the weir study continued with ongoing support from OSM.

- Mr. Collins asked what changes have been observed in the harvesting of salmon for dog food on the Koyukuk River. Mr. Vent noted a decline in the amount of fish harvested. Mr. Alexie recommended the installation of a sonar station at Nulato, rather than the practice of using the sensor at Pilot Station to evaluate the entire river.
- The 2016 results for the Henshaw Creek Weir revealed a Chinook/chum count of 1,354. The chum numbers were 286,780 fish. Over the last five years there has been a continued high trend in chum escapements.
- TCC is planning a project to involve graduate students examining the relationship between Chinook/chum data, weather conditions, and fish passage.
- The Henshaw Creek Science and Culture Camp focuses on using traditional knowledge and science to promote the conservation of subsistence fisheries involving elders, local youth, and the Kanuti and Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuges. Activities included harvesting and processing fish; macro invertebrate identification; and outdoor skills.
- A report on the Yukon River subsistence salmon fishery was delivered by the Yukon River Subsistence Fisheries, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
 - Strong summer chum runs were observed at Henshaw Creek.
 - Chinook are half of what historical levels were but it is encouraging and we had some really severe restrictions and now we're trying to find a balance, how to allow some harvest while still conserving those fish and give the population an opportunity to rebound.
 - Changes in weather, sea ice conditions, and precipitation were noted. Outreach to subsistence fishers continues and seeks to enhance in-season management of subsistence fisheries and fisheries conservation.
 - The season's management approach focused on using six inch gillnets once the ice left the river. The 7.5-inch restriction was left in place until people started catching the first Chinook. On the Koyukuk and Innoko Rivers, people were restricted to using 6-inch gillnets. Towards the midpoint of the run, the Yukon was opened to the use of 6 inch gillnets.
 - In the commercial, District 1 fished 5.5 inch nets and those were additionally 30 meshes deep so they were not only a little bit smaller net but they were also shallower and they tended to catch really very few Chinook when they're fished in that manner. District 2 used 6-inch nets. District 4 went to five days a week of fishing towards the end of the run. A similar approach was used in Districts 5B and 5C. District 5D focused on allowing limited harvest between run pulses, while monitoring escapement goals across the border. District 6 is shared by many people and though important, federal managers had little involvement here.

Member Reports

- Mr. Reakoff delivered the Chair's report. The report included, though was not limited to the following items:
 - Participated in the teleconference for the Federal Subsistence Board Meeting;

- Participated in the Special Action Request for the Section 804 closure to non-Federally qualified users on the Kuskokwim River;
- Participated in the Sheep Working Group and attended 3 meetings with the Board of Game. The planning process was unproductive. Asked the Council to oppose the proposal in the rule book to repeal it;
- Noted fewer caribou on the Central Brooks Range and attributed this to the hunting of caribou on the North Slope of the Brooks Range by airboats and jet boats by hundreds of hunters;
- Concern was expressed for the Mulchatna caribou herd. Specifically, the management objective is too low. The two bull limit is going to start to increase the number of air taxis that will be attracted to that area again. Guides want access to that herd. The two bull limit is going to start to increase the number of air taxis that will be attracted to that area again. Guides want access to the herd.
- Mr. Simon emphasized the importance of submitting harvest tickets to adequately fund and study subsistence resources.
- Mr. Simon advocated for the continuation of the fisheries weir at Allakaket and Alatna. This effort should involve the training of youth. Mr. Simon added that the sharp decline in Chinook salmon has had a profound impact on the people of the region in the vicinity of the Upper Koyukuk River.
- Mr. Collins emphasized the importance of modifying hunting seasons to account for changes in weather and climate.
- Mr. Gervais addressed the need unfunded Chinook Research Initiative. Mr. Gervais emphasized the need to develop a new strategy to keep chinook recovery moving forward, particularly in a leaner funding environment.
- Ms. Pelkola supported a point raised by Mr. Reakoff, urging local hunters to carry a digital camera to document problems in the field (i.e. such as wanton waste) and assist with Federal law enforcement.

Old Business

The following old business was addressed:

Draft Nonrural Determination Policy

- This rule revises the list of nonrural areas in Alaska identified by the Federal Subsistence Board (Board). Only residents of areas that are rural are eligible to participate in the Federal Subsistence Management Program on public lands in Alaska. Based on a Secretarial review of the rural determination process, and the subsequent change in the regulations governing this process, the Board is revising the current nonrural determinations to the list that existed prior to 2007. Accordingly, the community of Saxman and the area of Prudhoe Bay will be removed from the nonrural list. The following areas continue to be nonrural, but their boundaries will return to their original borders: the Kenai; the Wasilla/Palmer; Homer; and Ketchikan areas respectively. The Council recommended submitting a letter to the Federal Subsistence Board regarding the need for biannual proposals. The Council emphasized the need for addressing the concerns of affected regions.

New Business

The following new business was addressed:

Tongass Submerged Lands Proposed Rule

- The U.S. District Court for Alaska in its October 17, 2011, order in Peratrovich et al. v. United States and the State of Alaska, 3:92-cv-0734-HRH (D. Alaska), enjoined the United States “to promptly initiate regulatory proceedings for the purpose of implementing the subsistence provisions in Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) with respect to submerged public lands within Tongass National Forest” and directed entry of judgment. To comply with the order, the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) must initiate a regulatory proceeding to identify those submerged lands within the Tongass National Forest that did not pass to the State of Alaska at statehood and, therefore, remain Federal public lands subject to the subsistence provisions of ANILCA.
- Following the Court’s decision, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the USDA–Forest Service (USDA–FS) started a review of hundreds of potential pre-statehood (January 3, 1959) withdrawals in the marine waters of the Tongass National Forest. In April and October of 2015, BLM submitted initial lists of submerged public lands to the Board. This proposed rule would add those submerged parcels to the subsistence regulations to ensure compliance with the Court order. Additional listings will be published as BLM and the USDA–FS continue their review of pre-statehood withdrawals. Public comments on the proposed rule were requested from the Council.
- The Council notes the proposed rule would provide Federal subsistence priority on federal lands. The Council asked whether there are any such lands in the Western Interior Alaska region. Mr. Reakoff introduced a motion requesting the U.S. Department of the Interior identify submerged lands located in Western Interior Alaska. The motion was made by Mr. Vent and seconded by Mr. Collins. The motion was approved unanimously. The Council wants an answer to this question by the next (Winter 2017) meeting.

Federal Fisheries Proposals

Yukon-Northern Area Proposals

FP17-01 – Requests a new regulation be made to Subdistrict 5D to allow for harvest of salmon during Federally recognized fisheries closures, once the mid-range of the Canadian Interim Management Escapement Goal (IMEG) and the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) goals for Chinook Salmon are projected to be achieved in the Yukon River at the Eagle sonar site. Submitted by: Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. The Council supported FP17-01. The Council noted proposal addresses a clear conservation concern. The intention is to allow for harvest especially after the midpoint return of the run has been achieved. The Council noted the proposal would be beneficial to some subsistence users. The Council noted the recommendation may unnecessarily restrict other users. The Council acknowledged it is difficult to separate out other users and recommended, in this instance, thinking of the users as one group.

FP17-02 – Requests a new regulation be made to Subdistrict 5D to allow for harvest of early-run Chinook Salmon until arrival of the first pulse of Chinook Salmon. This would allow access to a small number of early-run Chinook salmon while still protecting the main Chinook salmon run. Submitted by:

Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. The Council opposed FP17-02. The Council noted the proposal addresses a clear conservation concern. Council members noted that if there is a marginal return, the state could preclude this resource (i.e. prompting an “Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act” Title VIII – Subsistence Management and Use, §804 – Preference for subsistence use scenario). A question was raised as to whether an §804 scenario would allow only federally qualified users to harvest on federal waters. The Council deliberated the proposal extensively. The division of opinion voiced during the deliberation reflected those who felt the proposal was unnecessary versus those who felt the proposal was important to support the interests of fellow Councils.

FP17-03 – A request to allow subsistence drift gillnet fishing for Chum Salmon in the lower portion of the Yukon River Subdistrict 4A annually between Jun. 10 and Aug. 2. Submitted by: Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. The Council supported FP17-03. Council members noted the proposal would allow fishing downstream of Stink Creek. Council members noted the proposal would simplify regulations by promoting alignment with guidelines adopted by the Board of Game. Council members added there is already an adequate supply of Chum Salmon.

FP17-04 – Requests increased gillnet obstruction of Racetrack Slough of the Koyukuk River and sloughs of the Huslia River drainage between ice out and June 15. Submitted by: Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. The Council supported FP17-04. The Council noted gillnets may not be closer than 20 feet from the opposite bank, unless closed by Federal special action, while sloughs that are less than 40 feet may have $\frac{3}{4}$ coverage of net. The Council highlighted the need to accommodate customary practices without becoming mired in the distance from the bank. The Council recommended inserting a navigation provision to prevent the obstruction of vessel passage and promote the flexibility of enforcement. The Council added a concern is to address predation. The Council emphasized pike are utilized for non-wasteful consumptive subsistence use.

Kuskokwim Area Proposals

FP17-05 – Requests that Federal subsistence management plans, strategies, fishing schedules, openings, closings and fishing methods for the Kuskokwim Area be issued independently by the Federal Subsistence Management Program in consultation with appropriate agencies and entities. Submitted by: LaMont E. Albertson. The Council supported FP17-05. The Council emphasized the Kuskokwim Area is a major subsistence fishery. The Council noted the proposal would provide a forum for much needed coordination, though it unclear how implementation would be conducted. The Council stressed the need to engage all stakeholders in the decision making process. The Council affirmed the proposal will bring together all entities on the Kuskokwim River to establish coordinated fisheries management.

Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program Summary

- An overview of the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program was provided. The Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program was established in the year 2000. One of its purposes is to provide information for the management of subsistence fisheries on Federal public lands in Alaska. The program promotes collaboration between tribes, rural organizations, universities and Federal and State agencies. Since 2000 the monitoring program has funded 453 projects statewide.

Revised Draft of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Federal Subsistence Board and State of Alaska

- Mr. Reakoff urged the RAC to look very closely at that MOU on how the State is going to implement the agreement. Mr. Reakoff does not want the Federal government subservient to the State Board of Fish and Board of Game because those are politically appointed boards and they have a maximum use in their management objective. Federal management is for scientifically valid and maintaining healthy fish and wildlife populations, those are almost two divergent management strategies. A list of completed or ongoing projects for the Kuskokwim region and the Yukon region were shared.
- OSM Staff work with the Regional Advisory Councils, Federal and State fisheries managers and land managers to ensure the Monitoring Program focuses on the highest priority information needs for management of Federal subsistence fisheries. The Program requests projects every two years. For each of the six regions, OSM Staff works with the Regional Advisory Councils, Federal and
- State fisheries managers and land managers to ensure the Monitoring Program focuses on the highest priority information needs for management of Federal subsistence fisheries. When the call for proposals is issued, 24 two primary types of research projects are solicited. Harvest monitoring and traditional ecological knowledge projects and stocks, status and trends projects. Selected projects can run from two to four years. A Technical Review Committee evaluates and rates each 29 proposed project based on five criteria

Identify Issues for the Annual Report

1. Timeline requested for improving Tribal Consultation. The Council noted the need to improve Tribal Consultation. Addressing Fisheries Proposal 17-02, the Council noted Tribal Consultation neither occurred nor effectively engaged Tribal members in the Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk, and Holy Cross (GASH) sub region. The Council recommends the Office of Subsistence Management Native Liaison utilize the subsistence staff of the Refuges, the Bureau of Land Management, and the National Park Service to disseminate information to the tribes, and get input from the tribes to better answer questions and promote the sharing of information. The Council reiterated the need to have Tribal Consultation occurring on all proposals that affects subsistence use prior to the meeting of the Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. This approach is needed to ensure that communities understand how the proposals could affect them. The subsistence staff at the Refuges should help to explain how the proposals could affect the communities, traveling to the affected communities to answer questions, receive input from Tribal Councils, and help convey this information to the Federal Subsistence Board. The Council noted that such coordination on Tribal Consultation between the Regional office, Refuge staff, and Tribes is needed, rather than the current approach of teaching hunter safety courses. The Council requests a process be defined that will relay the Tribes input back to the Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) so the RACs effectively advocate for the interests of Federally qualified subsistence users in their communications with the Federal Subsistence Board.

2. Timeline requested for starting a Wildlife Resource Monitoring Program.

The Council reiterated the unmet need for establishing a Wildlife Resource Monitoring

Program, as previously requested in last year's annual report. The Council restated the program is needed to obtain information such as harvest data, required by land managers to effectively manage subsistence resources. The Council noted an example, specifying that in instances where harvest data is wanted, necessitating door-to-door harvest surveys in communities, and where the State is unable to meet this need, the Wildlife Resource Monitoring Program would be prepared to address this need. This is the 8th time the Council requested the establishment of Wildlife Resource Monitoring Program. The Council requests a timeline of how OSM is going to implement the program.

- 3. Obtain real-time remote sensing data for caribou to enhance management of this important subsistence resource.** The Chair recommended the Federal Subsistence Program obtain access to real-time remote sensing data for caribou to enhance management of this important subsistence resource. Such information could assist land managers in obtaining more timely and cost-effective estimates of caribou herd population than is presently available through radio collaring and aerial photography. Such information could be made available to land managers for instantaneous viewing by computer.
- 4. Utilize charters to reduce the burden on Subsistence Regional Advisory Council members attending meetings.** The Council noted the present approach of booking commercial air flights for Regional Advisory Council Members to attend Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (RAC) meetings is burdensome and overly time intensive. The Chair emphasized the need for booking charter flights to reduce travel time and associated costs for Subsistence RAC members attending meetings. The Council noted charter flights were previously used by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Chair also noted the use of charter flights may be more cost effective and efficient than commercial flights. The Chair added there are no direct commercial flights between the remote communities represented by Council members and the regional hubs where meetings are held.
- 5. Request for an analysis of in-season tools to enhance the assessment of salmon run strength along the Yukon River.** The Council requested an analysis of in-season tools, including, though not limited to sonar, to enhance the assessment of salmon run strength along the Yukon River. Such an assessment could examine the need for additional run strength and the most effective distribution of assessment tools as the run progresses upriver.
- 6. Request to minimize the effects of salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea on Federally qualified subsistence users of the Koyukuk and Yukon River.**
The Council reiterated its concern that the Aleutian Island Pollock trawl fleet is still fishing 10 months a year. The Council repeated its request, noted in last year's annual report, calling for the Federal Subsistence Board to directly address the Secretary of Commerce and the Secretary of the Interior and state this is a violation of the national standards. The Aleutian Island Pollock trawl fleets are fully executing a commercial fishery. The salmon bycatch associated with this fishery adversely impacts the Federally qualified subsistence users of the Koyukuk and Yukon River, who are restricted in their

harvest. This practice violates the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

- 7. Request for studies to better understand the effect of warming waters on subsistence fisheries.** The Council noted concern regarding the effect of warming waters on subsistence fisheries. The Council noted such studies are needed to understand how warming waters impact spawning, the behavior of fish, and the timing of harvest. The Council noted that all of the members are experiencing the impacts of global warming and the tracking of these benefits and impacts is needed as gradual changes can magnify over time.
- 8. Emphasis on the importance of rural seats on the Federal Subsistence Board and request for an additional Board member.** The Council noted the importance of rural seats on the Federal Subsistence Board and requested an additional Board member. The Council asks the Board to appoint that member in a timely manner. Specifically, the Council asks the Secretary of the Interior add an additional rural member to the Federal Subsistence Board, to make a nine-member board comprised of four rural seats.
- 9. Recognition of and appreciation for Mr. Robert Walker's service on the Council.** The Council recognized Mr. Robert Walker for his 15 years of service on the Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council. The Council requests a letter of appreciation be transmitted from the Federal Subsistence Board to Mr. Walker to that effect. Mr. Walker's term on the Council expires in 2016. Mr. Walker will be retiring from his role on the Council.

Review and discussion on the Kuskokwim River Partnership Project MOU and formation of Subcommittee

- An overview of the Kuskokwim River Partnership Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was provided.
- This MOU is entered into in order to formalize the fishery management partnership between the United States Department of the Interior (Department), U.S. Fish and Wildlife (Service) and the Kuskokwim River Intertribal Fish Commission. The Partnership Project establishes a two-part structure to Kuskokwim Tribes and Federally qualified users into the decision-making process for fisheries management on Federal public waters of the Kuskokwim River drainage. The MOU represents one component of a two part structure that will implement the 2014 directive from the Deputy Secretary to establish a demonstration project for the Kuskokwim River Drainage that integrates Alaska Natives into Federal fishery management into the decision-making process.
- The goal for the Subcommittee is to develop recommendations to the Councils on the initiation, review, and evaluation of proposals for regulations, policies, management plans, special actions (in-season) management, and other matters or potential impacts relating to the management, conservation, and subsistence users of the Kuskokwim River Area stocks. Fishery proposals developed by the Subcommittee and forwarded to the Board by both Councils as recommendations will be entitled to deference in accordance with Section 805 of ANILCA and

Board policy. Additional information can be found in the Kuskokwim River Partnership Project MOU in the WIRAC Fall 2016 Meeting Book.

- Mr. Reakoff asked for clarification on the formation of the Subcommittee and its potential role during in-season management. These details are still being defined.

Council Charter Review

- An overview of the Council Charter was provided, noting RAC member duties. No changes to the Charter were noted.

Tongass Submerged Lands Proposed Rule

- The U.S. District Court for Alaska in its October 17, 2011, order in *Peratrovich et al. v. United States and the State of Alaska*, 3:92-cv-0734-HRH (D. Alaska), enjoined the United States “to promptly initiate regulatory proceedings for the purpose of implementing the subsistence provisions in Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) with respect to submerged public lands within Tongass National Forest” and directed entry of judgment. To comply with the order, the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) must initiate a regulatory proceeding to identify those submerged lands within the Tongass National Forest that did not pass to the State of Alaska at statehood and, therefore, remain Federal public lands subject to the subsistence provisions of ANILCA.
- Following the Court’s decision, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the USDA–Forest Service (USDA–FS) started a review of hundreds of potential pre-statehood (January 3, 1959) withdrawals in the marine waters of the Tongass National Forest. In April and October of 2015, BLM submitted initial lists of submerged public lands to the Board. This proposed rule would add those submerged parcels to the subsistence regulations to ensure compliance with the Court order. Additional listings will be published as BLM and the USDA–FS continue their review of pre-statehood withdrawals. Public comments on the proposed rule were requested from the Council.
- The Council notes the proposed rule would provide Federal subsistence priority on federal lands. The Council asked whether there are any such lands in the Western Interior Alaska region. The Council recommends the U.S. Department of the Interior identify submerged lands located in Western Interior Alaska. The Council wants an answer to this question by the next (Winter 2017) meeting.

Agency Reports

Yukon River Subsistence Fisheries, USFWS – A report on the Yukon River subsistence salmon fishery was delivered by the Yukon River Subsistence Fisheries. Strong summer chum runs were observed at Henshaw Creek. Chinook are half of what historical levels were but it is encouraging and we had some really severe restrictions and now we're trying to find a balance, how to allow some harvest while still conserving those fish and give the population an opportunity to rebound. Changes in weather, sea ice conditions, and precipitation were noted. Outreach to subsistence fishers continues and seeks to enhance in-season management of subsistence fisheries and fisheries conservation. The season’s management approach focused on using six inch gillnets once the ice left the river. The 7.5-inch restriction was left in place until people started catching the first Chinook. On the Koyukuk and Innoko Rivers, people were restricted to using 6-inch gillnets. Toward s the midpoint of the run, the Yukon was opened to the use of 6 inch gillnets. In the commercial, District 1 fished 5.5 inch nets and those were

additionally 30 meshes deep so they were not only a little bit smaller net but they were also shallower and they tended to catch really very few Chinook when they're fished in that manner. District 2 used 6-inch nets. District 4 went to five days a week of fishing towards the end of the run. A similar approach was used in Districts 5B and 5C. District 5D focused on allowing limited harvest between run pulses, while monitoring escapement goals across the border. District 6 is shared by many people and though important, federal managers had little involvement here. Moose populations in the Upper Novi are not examined closely due to the limitations of aerial surveys. Updates on wildlife resources, hunting activity, and fire behavior by subunit were provided.

Yukon Delta NWR, USFWS – A report was delivered by the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge addressing subsistence fisheries highlights for the season (p.85).

Innoko/Nowitna/Koyukuk NWR, USFWS – A pamphlet was circulated providing an update on biological resources (i.e. moose, bear, and beaver) for the fall 2015 and spring and summer 2016 seasons in the Refuge. The RIT position will be based in McGrath. Work force planning is underway. Permits for bull hunts on the Koyukuk were reduced. Reduced adult moose numbers were observed in the Nowitna NWR.

Fisheries, ADF&G – The Alaska Department of Fish and Game reported the Coho goal was reached last year at the Delta Clearwater. An update should be available by mid-to-late October whether this year's goal was made or not. The quality of escapement; expansion of the harvest area in the Yukon Delta; and beach seining were addressed. Provided an overview of Wildlife Special Action Request 16-03. A report on the latest caribou herd population survey results was provided. A description of non-local hunter activity in the vicinity of the Controlled Use Area in Unit 23 was provided.

OSM, USFWS – Circulated an analysis of Wildlife Special Action Request 16-03. The analysis included a copy of the special action request and An analysis of the request. Mr. Reakoff expressed concern for the continued decline of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd, specifically the low bull: cow ratio. Letters of support were submitted to the Northwest Arctic RAC on behalf of the Native Village of Noatak wherein tribal council supported the closure and stated that it was beneficial to reducing user conflicts and helping to reestablish the normal migratory pattern of the herd prior to the user conflicts. The Chair entertained a motion to oppose WSA 16-03. The motion was moved by Mr. Gervais and seconded by Mr. Vent. Mr. Walker called the question on the motion. The motion carried unanimously with a vote of 8-0.

Kanuti NWR – Recommends the RAC receive a presentation on Tribal Consultation and who's supposed to do it. A description of youth engagement initiatives was provided and a request for continued funding to support this work was raised. Efforts are underway to secure grant funds to support community-based harvest monitoring and data collection in the Arctic NWR on the Porcupine Caribou Herd. Harvest monitoring results were addressed by subunit for species and taxa including, but not limited to, moose; birds; snowshoe hare; and lynx. The importance of delineating and protecting spawning areas was noted. A map of fire behavior was mentioned along with an update on staffing. Additionally, an update on outreach and youth engagement initiatives was provided. RAC members were encouraged to apply for the AC nomination

process.

Yukon River Subsistence Fisheries, USFWS – An update was provided on the State of Alaska’s efforts to resurrect the Regional Planning Team for salmon. The initiative started last spring through the Legislature. A steering committee is being formed to be followed by outreach. RAC members should be prepared to engage their local Tribal Councils to gather information on their vision towards aquaculture enhancement on the Yukon River. A news release describing this initiative is available. A paper was written with Fisheries Ecological Services emphasizing the need to maintain wild fisheries stocks, rather than shift to aquaculture as mitigation for poor fisheries management.

OSM, USFWS – An overview of the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. The overview included the goals of the program; the six regions encompassed in the program; and the role of the RACs in providing input and guidance with respect to subsistence fisheries research. The proposal process was described in detail. Additionally a handout was circulated noting Yukon River Priority Information Needs (PINs) for the 2014 and 2016 funding cycles.

Future Meeting Dates

- The Council approved the winter meeting date of 21-22 February 2017 in Fairbanks, Alaska; and
- The Council approved the fall meeting date of 09 October 2017 in Galena, Alaska.

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

Zach Stevenson, Designated Federal Official, OSM Date

Jack Reakoff, Chair Date

These minutes will be formally considered by the Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its winter 2017 public meeting, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes of that meeting.



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: Theo Matuskowitz
(907) 786-3867 or (800) 478-1456
theo_matuskowitz@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.

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.



Tanana Chiefs Conference

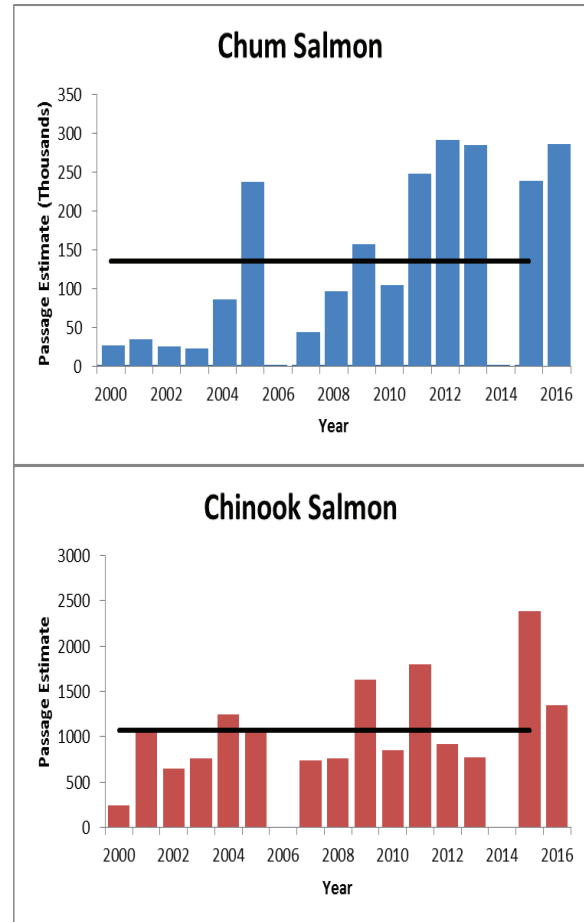
TCC Wildlife & Parks Program Upcoming 2017 Field Season



**Prepared for Western Interior Regional Advisory Council
February 2017**

Henshaw Creek Weir:

The Henshaw Creek Weir project will be operational again in 2017. The project goals are to determine the escapement of adult Chinook and chum salmon in the Henshaw Creek, as well to observe escapement quality such as age, sex, and length compositions of the returning spawners. The weir will be installed in the same location as previous years. Dates of operation will be similar to previous years, and will be based on in-season run timing characteristics. Escapement enumeration and ASL sampling will likely occur between the last week of June and the first week of August. The Henshaw Creek Weir project has been operational since the year 2000, and is funded through the Office of Subsistence Management Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program through the 2019 salmon runs.



Henshaw Creek Science & Culture Camp:

The Science and Culture Camp at Henshaw Creek serves the communities of Allakaket, Alatna, Bettles, Evansville, Hughes, and Huslia. The camp goals are to connect youth with nature, and to expose youth to both western science and traditional knowledge. The camp is hosted at the Henshaw Creek Salmon Weir, and coincides with the peak of the Chinook and chum salmon runs. The science and culture camp is a one week camp, Monday through Friday, and typically occurs during the third week of July. Camp dates for 2017 should be made available in April. The camp is jointly operated by the Tanana Chiefs Conference, the Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge, and the Allakaket Tribal Council. The camp is funded by the Alaska National Wildlife Refuges Science and Culture Camps program, and is funded through 2020.



Photos by Susan Paskvan

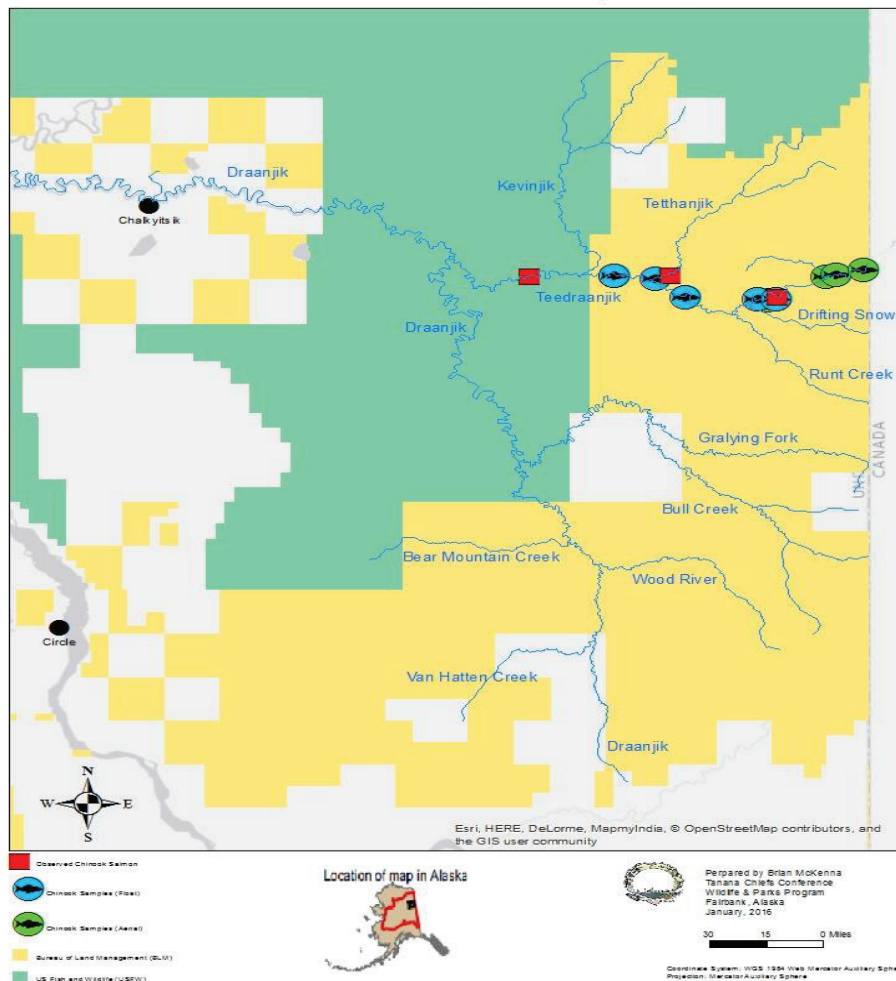


Yukon River Salmon DNA Baseline Sampling:

In 2017, TCC will be continuing efforts to collect tissue samples from Chinook salmon spawning in the Teedraanjik (Salmon Fork River). Chinook salmon tissue samples were collected in 2015 and 2016 from the Teedraanjik. Additional samples are needed for inclusion into the genetic baselines. 2017 collections will likely occur between the end of July and early August, and are funded through the 2012 Yukon River Chinook Salmon Federal Fishery Disaster administered by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission.

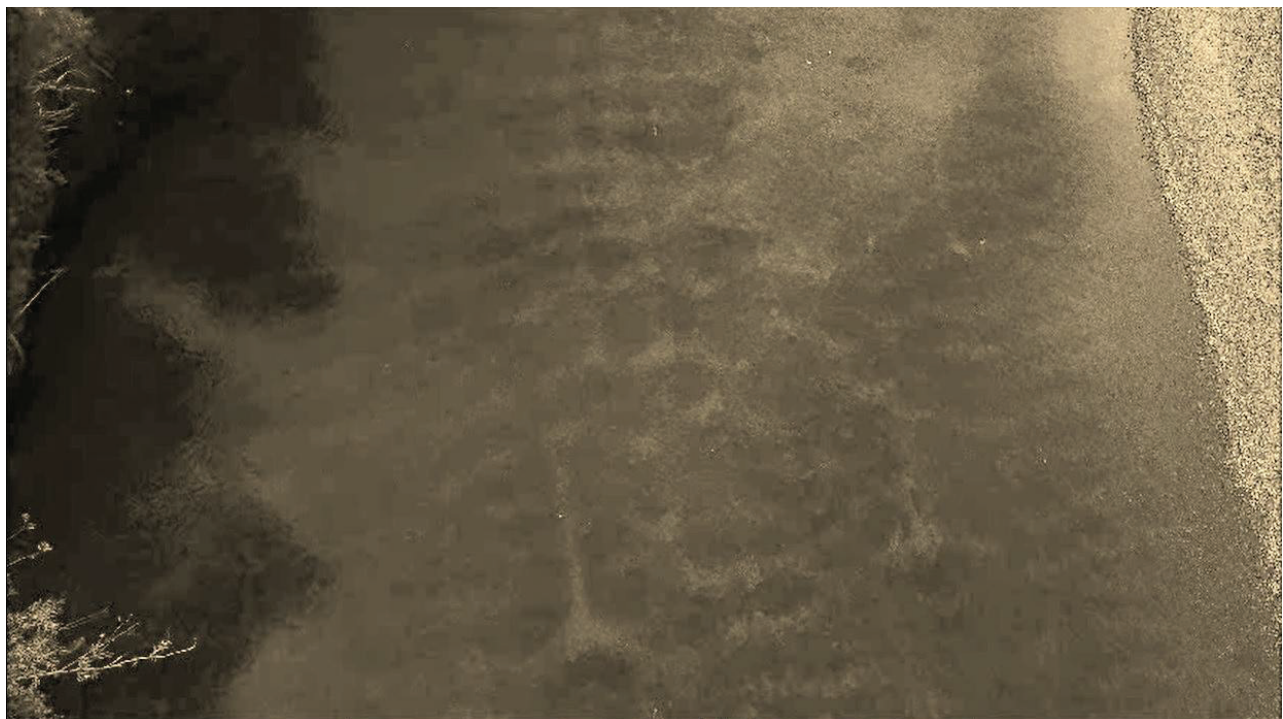


2015 Chinook Salmon Tissue Sample Collections



Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) Salmon Research:

TCC plans to utilize an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) to monitor Chinook salmon spawning habitat and population abundance. The goals for this project are to 1) create a digital elevation model (DEM) to characterize the spawning habitat for Chinook salmon, and 2) estimate population abundance for Chinook salmon spawning escapement. TCC will be collaborating with industry professionals at Remote Aquatics and Aquilo Alaska.





U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Artificial Propagation of Yukon River Salmon

An Agency Perspective



Returns of Chinook salmon to spawning grounds have increased over the past three years in the Yukon River, but largely due to decreased harvest. Production rates remain lower than normal. Plausible causes for lower production range from over-harvest; loss of older age classes; changes in freshwater habitats; natural or human-caused ecological changes in marine habitats; bycatch in non-salmon marine fisheries; and pathogens.

In recent years users have foregone harvests and invested in new gear to reduce harvest of large females. Agencies and their partners have restored access to rearing and spawning habitat; restored and protected riparian habitat; reduced water pollution; provided information to the public; and continued research.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is required by law to provide the opportunity for continued subsistence use of salmon by rural residents residing within national wildlife refuges while also maintaining the biological integrity, diversity and environmental health of salmon populations and the broad spectrum of fish, wildlife and habitat resources found within refuges. The Service also helps Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) fulfill obligations to Canada per the Pacific Salmon Treaty.

Currently, a regional planning team convened by ADF&G is discussing the use of artificial propagation in an update of the 1998 Yukon River Regional Comprehensive Salmon Plan. The Service supports the team in an ex officio capacity and has experience

with artificial propagation. The agency conducts artificial propagation to recover threatened or endangered aquatic species; restore declining populations to prevent listing under the Endangered Species Act; fulfill tribal trust obligations; and mitigate for federal water projects.

A review of scientific literature leads the Service to conclude that artificial propagation—expanding a wild salmon population beyond its natural production level—should not replace effective harvest management and habitat conservation for Yukon River Chinook salmon at this time. This perspective is consistent with the position of the Alaska Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (1993), the 1998 Yukon River Comprehensive Salmon Plan, and the Yukon River

Right: Yukon River fisherman using new gear to help meet conservation measures; Above: Yukon River; Inset: Yukon River salmon smolts on their way to sea
USFWS/K.Liebich



Salmon Agreement (2002), which declares, “Artificial propagation shall not be used as a substitute for effective fishery regulation, stock and habitat management or protection.” Scientific literature indicates introducing salmon or eggs into streams with wild salmon may result in negative consequences for wild salmon, people and/or the environment including:

- Domestic juveniles can out-compete wild juveniles for food and refugia, or fail to migrate becoming stunted freshwater residents;
- Wild salmon can be overharvested because fishermen cannot target domestic salmon;
- Domestics can reduce egg-to-juvenile survival of wild fish;
- High densities of domestics can attract predators causing unnaturally-high rates of predation for both wild and domestic fish;
- Domestic spawners stray at higher rates and can spawn with wild fish diluting genetics;
- Domestics have lower-reproductive capacity resulting in smaller populations in the long-term unless supplementation is continued;
- Domestics are less fit and suffer greater mortality at all life stages; and
- Introduction of exotic pathogens, amplification of current pathogens, introduction of infection when fish are more vulnerable, alteration of genetic resistance, and introduction of pollutants into an ecosystem.

Furthermore, recent scientific assessments of artificial propagation examined the cost:benefit ratio; probability of achieving enhancement and conservation goals; and risks to wild salmon and the environment. These reviews suggest that if a wild salmon population has declined to perilously-low levels or has been extirpated, propagation efforts are likely to fail if the reasons for the decline have not been identified and resolved. If Yukon River Chinook salmon populations decline further and artificial propagation is desired, a rigorous scientific investigation and planning process should be completed to avoid and minimize risks to wild salmon populations, humans and the environment.

Contact

Randy Brown
US Fish and Wildlife Service
randy_j_brown@fws.gov
907-456-0295



Right: Yukon River: USFWS/K.Liebich
Above: baby Chinook Salmon emerge from a redd. Ilene Fernandez, Grade 2





THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of Fish and Game

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
Headquarters Office

1255 West 8th Street
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, Alaska 99811-5526
Main: 907.465.4100
Fax: 907.465.2332

May 10, 2016

Mr. Art Nelson, Executive Director
Bering Sea Fishermen's Association
431 West 7th Avenue, Suite 204
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Mr. Nelson:

This letter is to inform you of my approval of the reactivation of the Yukon River Regional Planning Team (RPT) for the purpose of updating the 1998 *Yukon River Regional Comprehensive Salmon Plan for Alaska* (CSP).

I understand that Yukon River RPT is not able to strictly adhere to the structure of RPTs as described in law and regulation due to the lack of a Regional Aquaculture Association (RAA) in the region. Therefore, the membership of the RPT will be purposely enlarged in order to ensure broad regional stakeholder representation. The membership shall consist of thirteen voting seats. Nine of the voting seats will be appointed by the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA), apportioned across the fishery management districts on the Yukon River. The remaining four voting seats will be filled by ADF&G staff representing the divisions of Commercial Fisheries, Sport Fisheries, and Subsistence, whom I will appoint. There will be four ex-officio non-voting seats to include the Association of Village Council Presidents, Tanana Chiefs Conference, United States Fish and Wildlife Service and Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association.

The RPT shall proceed with the CSP update process in compliance with AS.10.375, and 5 AAC 40.300-370, and provide as much opportunity for public involvement as possible during the process. The plan should satisfy the regional planning process requirements for developing guidance for the permitting of salmon fishery enhancement activities while ensuring the continued sustainability of salmon stocks in the region. The plan should also provide a compilation of information pertaining to area fisheries and resources, and the statutes, regulations and policies that guide salmon fishery enhancement activities in Alaska.

Mr. Art Nelson, Executive Director - 2 -

May 10, 2016

I appreciate the efforts of Yukon River salmon fishery stakeholder representatives to reactivate the RPT and produce an updated CSP and I offer my best wishes towards a successful completion.

Sincerely,

Sam Cotten
Commissioner

cc:
Wayne Jenkins, Executive Director, Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association
Myron Naneng Sr., President Association of Village Council Presidents
Victor Joseph, President, Tanana Chiefs Conference
Fred Bue, Subsistence Fisheries Branch Chief, United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Ragnar Alstrom, Executive Director, Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association

Fall 2017 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

August - November 2017

Meeting dates and locations are subject to change.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Aug. 20	Aug. 21 Window Opens	Aug. 22	Aug. 23	Aug. 24 NS — Wainwright	Aug. 25	Aug. 26
Aug. 27	Aug. 28	Aug. 29	Aug. 30	Aug. 31	Sept. 1	Sept. 2
Sept. 3	Sept. 4 LABOR DAY HOLIDAY	Sept. 5	Sept. 6	Sept. 7	Sept. 8	Sept. 9
Sept. 10	Sept. 11	Sept. 12	Sept. 13	Sept. 14	Sept. 15	Sept. 16
Sept. 17	Sept. 18	Sept. 19 K/A - Cold Bay	Sept. 20	Sept. 21	Sept. 22	Sept. 23
Sept. 24	Sept. 25	Sept. 26	Sept. 27	Sept. 28	Sept. 29	Sept. 30
Oct. 1	Oct. 2	Oct. 3	Oct. 4	Oct. 5	Oct. 6	Oct. 7
Oct. 8	Oct. 9 COLUMBUS DAY HOLIDAY	Oct. 10 WI - Galena	Oct. 11 YKD — Bethel	Oct. 12	Oct. 13	Oct. 14
Oct. 15	Oct. 16	Oct. 17	Oct. 18	Oct. 19 AFN - Anchorage	Oct. 20	Oct. 21
Oct. 22	Oct. 23	Oct. 24 SP — Nome	Oct. 25 NW - Shungnak	Oct. 26	Oct. 27	Oct. 28
Oct. 29	Oct. 30	Oct. 31 SE - Juneau	Nov. 1 BB — Dillingham	Nov. 2	Nov. 3	Nov. 4
Nov. 5	Nov. 6 SC — Seldovia/Soldotna	Nov. 7	Nov. 8 EI — Tanana	Nov. 9	Nov. 10 Window Closes VETERANS DAY HOLIDAY	Nov. 11

Winter 2018 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

February-March 2018

Meeting dates and locations are subject to change.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Feb. 4</i>	<i>Feb. 5</i> <i>Window Opens</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>
<i>Feb. 18</i>	<i>Feb. 19</i> PRESIDENT'S DAY HOLIDAY	<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>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>Mar. 14</i>	<i>Mar. 15</i>	<i>Mar. 16</i> <i>Window Closes</i>	<i>Mar. 17</i>

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

Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Charter

- 1. Committee's Official Designation.** The Council's official designation is the Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory (Council).
- 2. Authority.** The Council is renewed by virtue of the authority set out in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 3115 (1988)), and under the authority of the Secretary of the Interior, in furtherance of 16 U.S.C. 410hh-2. The Council is regulated by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, 5 U.S.C. Appendix 2.
- 3. Objectives and Scope of Activities.** The objective of the Council is to provide a forum for the residents of the Region with personal knowledge of local conditions and resource requirements to have a meaningful role in the subsistence management of fish and wildlife on Federal lands and waters in the Region.
- 4. Description of Duties.** The Council has authority to perform the following duties:
 - a. Recommend the initiation of, review, and evaluate proposals for regulations, policies, management plans, and other matters relating to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on public lands within the Region.
 - b. Provide a forum for the expression of opinions and recommendations by persons interested in any matter related to the subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on public lands within the Region.
 - c. Encourage local and regional participation in the decisionmaking process affecting the taking of fish and wildlife on the public lands within the Region for subsistence uses.
 - d. Prepare an annual report to the Secretary containing the following:
 - (1) An identification of current and anticipated subsistence uses of fish and wildlife populations within the Region.
 - (2) An evaluation of current and anticipated subsistence needs for fish and wildlife populations within the Region.

- (3) A recommended strategy for the management of fish and wildlife populations within the Region to accommodate such subsistence uses and needs.
 - (4) Recommendations concerning policies, standards, guidelines, and regulations to implement the strategy.
 - e. Appoint one member to the Gates of the Arctic National Park Subsistence Resource Commission in accordance with Section 808 of Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA).
 - f. Make recommendations on determinations of customary and traditional use of subsistence resources.
 - g. Make recommendations on determinations of rural status.
 - h. Provide recommendations on the establishment and membership of Federal local advisory committees.
5. **Agency or Official to Whom the Council Reports.** The Council reports to the Federal Subsistence Board Chair, who is appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.
 6. **Support.** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will provide administrative support for the activities of the Council through the Office of Subsistence Management.
 7. **Estimated Annual Operating Costs and Staff Years.** The annual operating costs associated with supporting the Council's functions are estimated to be \$160,000, including all direct and indirect expenses and 1.15 staff years.
 8. **Designated Federal Officer.** The DFO is the Subsistence Council Coordinator for the Region or such other Federal employee as may be designated by the Assistant Regional Director - Subsistence, Region 7, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The DFO is a full-time Federal employee appointed in accordance with Agency procedures. The DFO will:
 - Approve or call all of the advisory committee's and subcommittees' meetings,
 - Prepare and approve all meeting agendas,
 - Attend all committee and subcommittee meetings,
 - Adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines adjournment to be in the public interest, and
 - Chair meetings when directed to do so by the official to whom the advisory committee reports.

9. **Estimated Number and Frequency of Meetings.** The Council will meet 1-2 times per year, and at such times as designated by the Federal Subsistence Board Chair or the DFO.
10. **Duration.** Continuing.
11. **Termination.** The Council will be inactive 2 years from the date the Charter is filed, unless prior to that date it is renewed in accordance with the provisions of Section 14 of the FACA. The Council will not meet or take any action without a valid current charter.
12. **Membership and Designation.** The Council's membership is composed of representative members as follows:

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

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

Members will be appointed for 3-year terms. A vacancy on the Council will be filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was made. Members serve at the discretion of the Secretary.

Council members will elect a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary for a 1-year term.

Members of the Council will serve without compensation. However, while away from their homes or regular places of business, Council and subcommittee members engaged in Council, or subcommittee business, approved by the DFO, may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in the same manner as persons employed intermittently in Government service under Section 5703 of Title 5 of the United States Code.

13. **Ethics Responsibilities of Members.** No Council or subcommittee member will participate in any specific party matter in which the member has a direct financial interest in a lease, license, permit, contract, claim, agreement, or related litigation with the Department

14. **Subcommittees.** Subject to the DFO's approval, subcommittees may be formed for the purpose of compiling information and conducting research. However, such subcommittees must act only under the direction of the DFO and must report their recommendations to the full Council for consideration. Subcommittees must not provide advice or work products directly to the Agency. The Council Chair, with the approval of the DFO, will appoint subcommittee members. Subcommittees will meet as necessary to accomplish their assignments, subject to the approval of the DFO and the availability of resources.

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



Secretary of the Interior

NOV 20 2015

Date Signed

DEC 03 2015

Date Filed

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