



YUKON-KUSKOKWIM DELTA
SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL
ADVISORY COUNCIL
Meeting Materials

February 15 - 16, 2017
Bethel



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On the cover...

Caribou in the Kilbuck Mountains, Yukon
Delta National Wildlife Refuge



Yukon Delta NWR USFWS photo

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YUKON-KUSKOKWIM DELTA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

AVCP Regional Housing Authority Meeting Room
Bethel

February 15-16, 2017
9:00 am ~ 5:30 pm daily

TELECONFERENCE: call the toll free number: 1-866-864-5314, then when prompted enter the passcode: 3091862.

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*)

Agenda

- a. Revisions to Draft MOU with State of Alaska
- b. Kuskokwim Partnership Project update

11. New Business (Chair)

- a. Call for Federal Wildlife Proposals*24
- b. Approve FY2016 Annual Report Supplemental
- c. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Draft Alaska Native Relations Policy Supplemental

12. Agency Reports

(Time limit of 15 minutes unless approved in advance)

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- 3) Yukon River 2017 Pre-season Salmon Management Review (*Yukon Fisheries Management Staff*)50

ADF&G

- 1) Yukon River Comprehensive Salmon Plan update (*Jill Klein*)52

YRDFA

OSM

13. Future Meeting Dates*

- Confirm Fall 2017 meeting date and location57
- Select Winter 2018 meeting date and location58

14. Closing Comments

15. Adjourn (Chair)

To teleconference into the meeting, call the toll free number: 1-866-864-5314, then when prompted enter the passcode: 3091862.

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 Eva Patton, 907-786-3358, eva_patton@fws.gov, or 800-877-8339 (TTY), by close of business on October 3, 2016.

REGION 5
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Seat	Year Appointed <i>Term Expires</i>	Member Name and Community
1	2004 2019	William F. Brown Eek
2	1997 2019	James A. Charles Tuntutuliak
3	2014 2019	John W. Andrew Kwethluk
4	2014 2019	Michael P. Peters Marshall
5	1996 2017	Lester Wilde, Sr. Hooper Bay Chair
6	2014 2017	Dale T. Smith, Jr. Mekoryuk
7	2014 2017	Anthony F. Ulak Scammon Bay Secretary
8	2014 2017	Annie C. Cleveland Quinhagak
9	2014 2017	Dorothy G. Johnson Mountain Village
10	2013 2018	Raymond J. Oney Alakanuk
11	2003 2018	Greg J. Roczicka Bethel Vice Chair
12	2003 2018	Robert E. Aloysius Kalskag
13	2012 2018	David Bill, Sr. Toksook Bay



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:
December 9, 2016

Contact: Carl Johnson
(907) 786-3676 or (800) 478-1456
carl_johnson@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. Reifenstuhl, 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

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
Joseph A. Garnie, Teller
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
Rhonda O. Pitka, Beaver
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, Atkasuk
Steve Oomituk, Point Hope
William J. Maines, Dillingham

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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YUKON-KUSKOKWIM DELTA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

AVCP Regional Housing Authority Building Meeting Room
Bethel, Alaska
October, 12-13, 2016

MEETING MINUTES

Council Members Present:

Lester Wilde, Sr., Chair
James Charles
John Andrew
Michael Peters
William (Charlie) Brown
Dale Smith, Jr.
Anthony Ulak
Robert Aloysius
David Bill, Sr.
Raymond Oney
Dorothy Johnson
Annie Cleveland

Yupik Translation Services: Patrick Samson and David Nicholai

Meeting Attendees:

Tribal Organizations:

Jennifer Hooper, Natural Resources Director, Association of Village Council Presidents
Jenessa Esquible, Partners Program Biologist, Orutsararmiut Native Council
Alissa Joseph Rodgers, ONC
Dan Gillikin, Native Village of Napaimute
Lamont Albertson, Kuskokwim Intertribal Fish Commission and Kuskokwim Salmon Management Working Group
Orienne Reich, Kuskokwim Intertribal Fish Commission

Public and Local organizations:

Martin Nicholai, AVCP Inc.
Jacob Black, Napakiak
Alex Nick, Bethel
Alan Joseph, Bethel

Agency staff:

Eva Patton, Council Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management
Orville Lind, Native Liaison, Office of Subsistence Management

Pippa Kenner, Anthropologist, Office of Subsistence Management
Gary Decossas, Fisheries Statistician, Office of Subsistence Management
Stewart Cogswell, Fisheries Division Chief, Office of Subsistence Management
Ken Stahlnecker, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge
Ray Born, Deputy Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge
Spencer Rearden, USFWS Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge
Aaron Webber, Fisheries Biologist, USFWS Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, Bethel
Susanna Henry, Refuge Manager, Togiak National Wildlife Refuge
Pat Petrivelli, Subsistence Anthropologist, Interagency Staff Committee, BIA
Gerald Maschmann, USFWS Yukon Subsistence Fisheries, Fairbanks
Wayne Jenkins, Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association

Via teleconference:

Jill Klein, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Jeff Estensen, Yukon River fall season fisheries manager, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Holly Carroll, Yukon Area Fisheries Manager, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Aaron Potter, Kuskokwim Area Fisheries Manager, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Maria Wessel, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Stephanie Quinn Davidson, Yukon River Intertribal Fish Commission.
Kate Shebert, Environmental Coordinator, Native Village of (unable to hear name line garbled)
John Carson, Anchorage
Bill Alstrom, St. Mary's

Roll call: Quorum established with 12 of 13 Council members present. Council member Greg Rockzicka excused absence.

Adoption of agenda: The Council reviewed and approved the agenda with amendments to add Yukon River Drainage Association and the Yukon River Intertribal Fish Commission under agency reports and change the order of some items to attend to action items and presenters schedules. Bering Sea Elders Group was also added to the agenda if they were able to call in via teleconference to discuss their work with the Council.

Council Member Reports:

Lester Wilde, Sr., Chair – Hooper Bay: Lester Wilde relayed that they rely on a certain wind to get salmon into Hooper Bay to fish. The north wind or west northwest wind brings salmon into the bay where they can harvest them. Lester voiced concern that salmon were disturbed from coming in to the bay this year because of noise impacts from all the barge motors bringing in gravel and equipment for building a new airport. He believes it caused the salmon not to enter and therefore they did not get to harvest any Chinook or chum salmon last summer. They were fortunate at least to get some pink salmon which are still silver bright and fat before they enter the river. He noted the only fish he saw drying on racks in Hooper Bay were pink salmon. Lester is very concerned about large fuel barges that off load fuel to smaller barges just off shore and increasing shipping traffic and there is no emergency response equipment or measures for oil spills on the coast or even up river.

Lester concurred with the experience of other Council members that the weather is warmer and has been too warm to hunt during the usual season.

James Charles – Tuntutuliak: James Charles stated that the people appreciated what the Refuge has been doing last couple of years working with the community to find subsistence fishing opportunities for non-salmon fish during the Chinook conservation closures. He noted they opened up rivers to fishing that do not have salmon spawning runs such as the Tagayarak, Qinaq (Kinak) and Tuntutuliak Rivers which are nearby and traditionally important areas for fishing. People from his village have been able to have set nets inside these rivers to catch fish and they thank the refuge for doing that.

John Andrew – Kwethluk: John Andrew mentioned that fisheries have been really restrictive middle of May to July. Fisherman have to travel far to harvest salmon and it requires a good boat. It would be helpful for people to be able to use set nets again – they have not been able to use their usual gear. He also noted short openers make it difficult since they usually fish one to two hours and then it takes 6 - 8 hours to put up the fish and then two to three weeks to take care of it to dry. There are seven households that share his fish camp to put up fish for the year but this summer only four of these households were able to fish and this causes hardships for large families and there is less to share. John stressed that because of later fishing openings their fish don't dry very well. He noted also that the moose season was too early and the temperatures were too warm to hunt because bull moose don't move when it's warm. Many people did not have a chance to get out and harvest a moose because temperatures were too warm before the season closed. John stressed that gas is costly and you need money to have a good boat to go way up river to hunt.

Michael Peters – St. Mary's: Michael Peters explained that we need to work together to set subsistence regulations and listen to elders words and take all this into consideration. He relayed that dip nets do not work well for fishing around his community the water is too high and it's difficult for elders to use. They would like to see some opportunity to use set nets again for subsistence salmon harvest.

William (Charlie) Brown – Eek: Charlie Brown shared that it was very important for communities to be able to fish on the west side of the Kuskokwim River in tributaries that don't have salmon spawning runs. He thanked Fish and Wildlife service for that opportunity. Charlie stressed that it is helpful to have some opportunity to get some subsistence fish when the rest of the river is closed off. They were able to get whitefish and some salmon in those non-spawning rivers.

Dale Smith, Jr. – Mekoryuk: Dale Smith shared that last summer they had an abundance of dog (Chum) Salmon, red (Sockeye) Salmon, Pollock and Pacific Cod but and while Halibut still come around they have been scarce. Halibut has been an issue of concern for people on Nunivak and Nelson Island. They have also been seeing a lot less Murre around Nunivak Island in the past couple years.

Robert Aloysius – Kalskag: Robert Aloysius stressed that the Federal Subsistence Board is

supposed to look after the subsistence needs of rural people but State regulations closed the entire river to fishing with any kind of net in May and prevented communities from getting subsistence Sheefish and whitefish that are in the river right after break up. The first subsistence fish they get in the spring is Sheefish. He stressed not being able to fish at all puts great hardship on the people who depend on fish for their food.

Robert also shared that many locals do not appreciate nonresidents coming here and making regulations to restrict the people in this area. The people have lived in this place for over 10, 000 years and know how to live with nature. They have traditionally harvested the salmon during the best time of year to preserve it for the year by drying it well. He noted many people in the villages don't have freezers, so they have to harvest when it's the right time when they can dry the fish and when there is no flies.

David Bill, Sr. – Toksook Bay: David Bill expressed concern about changes he has experienced in the Etolin Strait area with many animals such as the birds, seals and walrus changing their usual migratory path. He has also seen a decline in the number of walrus that usually haul out in that area. David is concerned that the noise of diesel engines and tug boats play a role in displacing animals. He noted water conducts sound and the mechanized sound carries a long way and disturbs the animals and he is concerned it could disrupt the migration of salmon coming into the bay. There has been an increase in barge traffic in Kuskokwim Bay.

David also concurred with Dale Smith that oil spills are a grave concern for subsistence communities on the coast. He stressed that he is very familiar with the wind and current patterns around Nunivak and Nelson Island and a spill in the area could have a huge impact even into the Kuskokwim River because it will get carried far by the currents and the tides.

Annie Cleveland - Quinahagak: Annie Cleveland reported good harvest of Chinook in the Kanektok River this year and that she was able to get all she needed for the winter in two drifts. There was no commercial fishing this year and the men from the community were eager to have some commercial fishing opportunity. Someone reported seeing a lot of dead fish floating by their camp on the Kenektok River this summer and she is interested in having a biologist look into it to see what the cause of death was.

Council: The reviewed the letter the Council wrote to the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC) regarding concerns about halibut and asked that NPFMC provide regular updates to the Council on Bering Sea bycatch of salmon and halibut. The Council discussed developing a continued dialogue and information sharing which would allow for a better working relationship.

*The Council voted unanimously to write another letter to NPFMC relaying Council member concerns discussed during member reports.

Public and Tribal Comment on Non-Agenda Items

Jacob Black, subsistence hunter from Bethel, stated that the moose opening on the Kuskokwim was too late. Local hunters were saying that when it is too warm up in the mountains it creates a

concern that meat will go bad. Having to return right away to report harvest also is difficult because usually hunters share one boat and it does not allow time for both hunters to get a moose before returning. Mr. Black also shared that the opening of salmon fishery was too late – most of the fish have passed by and the weather is not good for drying fish at that time. The concern is warm and humid weather that occurs later in the summer and flies that emerge at that time both cause salmon to spoil when drying on the open air racks. Mr. Black also stated he is not in favor of fishing permits because of people who are facing hardships and don't have the finances to be able to go hunting so they are in need of more fish.

Paul Smith, subsistence hunter and fisher from Bethel, relayed concerns about the subsistence restrictions that make it difficult for people on the Yukon and Kuskokwim. He noted that his elders had warned him about this time of hardship coming. Mr. Smith asked about salmon management that closed the whole river but Kuskokwim Bay was still open to fish around the communities of Quinahagak, Goodnews Bay and Plantinum. He expressed concern for the Bering Sea commercial fisheries and salmon bycatch impacts when subsistence has been severely limited for communities all along the river. These regulations have made it very difficult to live a subsistence way of life and many families are experiencing great hardship.

Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes*

The Council reviewed and approved the previous meeting minutes from March 2016. No edits or corrections were provided.

Draft Non-rural Determination Policy* Orville Lind, Office of Subsistence Management, provide a brief review of the Draft Nonrural Determination Policy. In November of 2015 the final rule changing the rural determination process was published. The new regulation states that the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) will determine which communities in Alaska are non-rural and that all other communities and areas are therefore rural. In January of 2016 the Board directed the Staff to create a nonrural policy that outlines the administrative process for future nonrural determinations. This past July, 2016, the Board approved a draft nonrural policy, which was provided to the Councils in the meeting book for review. Regional Advisory Council feedback on the draft policy will be considered by the Board at the January 2017 meeting in their determination whether to adopt the policy.

The Council asked to have time to read the policy and provide any comments or questions the following day. The Council had questions about the changes to population size as a criteria for consideration and had concerns that Bethel was near the 7000 threshold that had been part of the Rural Determination process in the past. The Council was updated that that the specific criteria that were used before would no longer be in place under the new policy and that the Councils would have a role in the nonrural review process of defining rural characteristics.

2016 Fisheries Season Summary USFWS/ADF&G

Yukon Fisheries Review: Gerald Maschmann from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in Fairbanks and Holly Carroll from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) presented on Yukon River fishery season summary. Yukon River Chinook Salmon run came in near the

upper end of the pre-season expectations and above the recent five year average. Both summer and fall chum salmon returns were above average run size. The Coho Salmon run was above average based on the Pilot Station sonar index. At the beginning of the season the ice went out 20 days early and the Chinook run was a little earlier than usual. All Chinook Salmon escapements are believed to have been met or surpassed established goals.

Chinook Salmon conservation strategies and management actions were applied along the Yukon River through most of the summer season. Many subsistence fishermen indicated to managers at the beginning of the season that they intended to make up for their low Chinook Salmon harvest with good quality fall chum salmon from the front of the run. There was some limited subsistence access to the abundant summer chum salmon, and more selective fishing opportunities were offered this year than in previous years. However fisherman in the middle river reported less success targeting summer chum. The Federal and State managers recognize the sacrifices of the Yukon River fishing communities for conserving Chinook Salmon. The managers hope to visit more communities along the river and will make an effort to increase this outreach next year.

Kuskokwim Fisheries Review: Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge manager Ken Stahlnecker and Deputy manager Ray Born provided the Council with an the 2016 Kuskokwim River subsistence fisheries season summary. A review of the management actions was provided and the Council discussed the inseason management process. Positive feedback was shared by both the Council and managers on how the process went and efforts to increase communications and transparency between inseason managers and subsistence fishers, communities, and tribes along the Kuskokwim.

This year gear type restrictions and season openings and closings were used as the methods to manage the harvest as rather than issuing permits as was done during the 2015 season. The first special action was issued June 1st when the Federal in-season manager closed Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge waters to the harvest of Chinook and chum salmon by all users except residents of the Kuskokwim River drainage and the coastal villages that were identified in the Section 804 subsistence user prioritization analysis.

On June 3rd, two days later, Refuge waters were closed to the harvest of Chinook and chum salmon by Federally-qualified users. That action recognized that fishing openings, closings, and methods for Federally-qualified subsistence users would be announced by subsequent special action after consultation and coordination with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fisheries Commission and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. A series of weekly in-season meetings were held between Fish and Wildlife Service, Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fisheries Commission, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game using an objective-based stakeholder involved decision making process as a framework. As the season progressed, harvest data that were collected by Orutsararmiut Native Council (ONC) were incorporated into the decision making process.

On June 12th, the first season opener was a 12-hour opener. The opportunity was provided for Chinook and chum harvest for Federally-qualified subsistence users with approved gear types.

Further openings were announced throughout the season based on the same decision making process.

Council members discussed concerns about feedback from many people that the subsistence fish opening was late in the season and the weather was too humid for drying fish without risk of spoilage and also the flies emerge and lay eggs later in the season. The Council requested consideration of timing of subsistence fishing openings earlier in the season when the weather conditions are best for drying fish.

The Council also discussed with the Refuge staff during subsistence fishing closures for salmon conservation to consider keeping non-salmon bearing tributaries open for fishing for other important subsistence fish such as whitefish, pike, char, and burbot. This is very helpful for communities near these tributaries such as Eek and Tuntutuliak to be able to still harvest some fish during the salmon closures.

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Proposals*

Inseason summaries and available relevant data were presented to Council for consideration prior to the Council making recommendations on fisheries proposals.

Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) Staff Pippa Kenner (Anthropologist) and Gary Decossas (Fisheries Statistician) presented Yukon Fisheries Proposals 17-01, 02, 03, 04 and Kuskokwim Fisheries Proposal 17-05. The Council discussed the OSM analyses and considered recommendations from State and Federal agencies as well as public and Tribal comments.

The Council requested that consultation with Tribes on Federal subsistence fish and wildlife proposals occur prior to the Council meetings so that the Council can be informed of what the tribes in the region are thinking and take that into consideration.

Orville Lind, Native Liaison for Office of Subsistence Management, gave a short update on Tribal and Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) corporation consultation process according to the Federal Subsistence Board's policy. Normally tribal consultation would be held in advance of the Regional Advisory Council meetings so that the Council can consider feedback from tribes in the region when making recommendations on proposals. He stated that sometimes situations throws off the timing of consultations, and consultation will be scheduled after the RAC meetings this fall.

Yukon-Northern Area Proposals Fisheries Proposals:

FP17-01: Revise harvest limits to allow harvest once the mid-range of the interim management escapement goal and the total allowable catch goal are projected to be achieved in the Yukon River.

Council recommendation: Support. FP17-01. Vote: Support for: 10, Against: 1, Abstain: 1, Absent: 1

Justification: The Council discussed at length the sacrifices and efforts of communities along the Yukon River and that people in the Council member villages have forgone harvesting Chinook salmon for many years now. The Council noted that these efforts have helped to meet escapement goals. The Council received a briefing on overview of management in 5-D in comparison to the Yukon River overall in terms of restricted fishing times and no access to Summer Chum in the upper river. The Council supported this proposal noting that if the Canadian Interim Escapement Goal was projected to be met based on the Eagle River sonar count that it should not pose a conservation concern and could support this limited harvest opportunity.

FP17-02: Allow for harvest of early-run Chinook Salmon in sub-district 5D on the Yukon River

Council recommendation: Oppose FP17-02 Vote: Support for: 2, Against: 10, Absent: 1

Justification: The Council expressed concern for the protection of the first pulse of Chinook and that harvest of the "tricklers" ahead of the first pulse may jeopardize meeting escapement goals. The Council noted that communities all along the river have made an effort to restrict Chinook salmon harvest and protection of the first pulse of Chinook salmon including the early "tricklers" should be closed uniformly along the entire length of the Yukon River in order to ensure escapement goals are met.

FP17-03: Revise the season dates and align Federal regulations with State regulations in sub-district 4A on the Yukon River submitted by the Western Interior Council seeks to allow subsistence drift gillnet fishing for chum salmon in the lower portion of the Yukon River Subdistrict 4A annually between June 10th and August 2nd.

Council recommendation: Support Proposal FP 17-03 as modified by OSM. Vote: Support for: 11, Absent: 2

Justification: The Council confirmed with Staff presenting that this proposal would allow Federally qualified subsistence users an increased opportunity to fish for Chum salmon with the use of drift gill nets. The proposal would also reduce regulatory complexity by having equal State and Federal regulations in these fishing districts.

FP17-04: Revise methods and means for use of gillnets in Racetrack Slough of the Koyukuk River and the sloughs of the Huslia River drainage.

Council recommendation: Support proposal FP17-04 as modified by the Western Interior Council that streams less than 40 feet wide can be up to 70 percent blocked and streams over 40 feet wide have to allow a 20-foot open corridor passage. Vote: Support for: 11, Against: 1, Absent 2

Justification: The Council confirmed that this proposal made sense based on their own experiences. The proposed use of gillnets on the Koyukuk River would increase subsistence opportunity for people in that region. Pike is an important subsistence food and the harvest would take place prior to the arrival of salmon so it did not pose a conservation concern.

Kuskokwim Area Proposals:

FP17-05: For the Kuskokwim area, remove __.27(e)(4)(ii) from the regulations. Federal subsistence management plans, strategies, fishing schedules, openings, closings, and fishing methods are issued independently by the USFWS.

This proposal submitted by Lamont Albertson requests that the 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. OSM's preliminary conclusion is to defer Fisheries Proposal FP17 and revise the delegation of authority letter from the Federal Subsistence Board to the Kuskokwim River Federal in-season fisheries manager in order to address the proponent's concern regarding collaborative development of in-season management plans and strategies on an annual basis in accordance with objectives of the Kuskokwim River Partnership Project.

Lamont Albertson addressed the Council to elaborate on the intent of his proposal. Referencing his long-time involvement with the Kuskokwim Salmon Management Working Group and current work with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, he expressed they simply want the Federal Subsistence Management Program, including the Federal in-season manager, to work with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, including direct participation of the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group, and the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fisheries Commission to determine a management strategy for the Kuskokwim area subsistence fisheries. They would like everyone to have a seat at the table to talk about the fisheries and reach conclusions together. He stressed the experience working with the federal inseason managers and staff in the past two years has been extraordinarily positive bringing together the best science and traditional knowledge through the involvement of Tribal and community representatives to cooperatively develop an understanding of the best approach to manage for subsistence needs and escapement needs to protect the resource for the children and grandchildren. Mr. Albertson stressed he has great respect for the State Area Managers and do work together but don't have the same level of interaction and formal arrangement for a fully engaged seat at the table with the State of Alaska.

Alissa Joseph-Rodgers reported to the Council on behalf of Greg Roczicka, Natural Resources Director for Orutsararmiut Native Council (ONC) that the ONC Subsistence Committee met on September 29th, 2016 to review and discuss, Fisheries Proposal 17-05 and after extensive discussion unanimously decided to support the proposal as written.

Allen Joseph, subsistence hunter and fisher from Bethel, spoke in support of FP17-05. Mr. Joseph relayed that overall he felt the relationship of the Refuge with the tribes of the Y-K Delta are very good and there have been successful partnerships with the Refuge such as the Hooper Bay Goose Management Plan. He stressed that the proposal was an invitation to work at a similar level on salmon and encouraged the Refuge to craft it so that it worked for the people. Mr. Joseph highlighted that U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is a big component of the lives of people in the Y-K Delta because they live within the Refuge and opportunities to increase collaboration and work with the people and Tribes is very important.

Yukon Delta Refuge Manager Ken Stahlnecker reviewed fisheries proposal 17-05 and discussed the Refuge recommendations. Copies of a letter addressed to the Y-K Delta Council Chair from Yukon Delta Refuge manager Ken Stahlnecker regarding the Refuge position and points of discussion for FP17-05 was handed out the Council. He noted that while the Refuge appreciates the overall intent and support the idea of coordinating management of the fishery on the Kuskokwim River they respectfully oppose the proposal because they feel there are other avenues to accomplish the intent of the proposal short of implementing regulation. The Federal Subsistence Board delegated authority to the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge manager to issue in-season actions associated with subsistence fisheries. The delegation of authority letter states the Federal manager is responsible for local management of subsistence fishing by Federally-qualified subsistence users, including the authority to restrict all users in Federal waters if necessary to conserve healthy fish stocks, or to provide for subsistence uses in Federal waters. In delegating this authority, the Federal Subsistence Board's stated intent was that the Refuge manager coordinates with Department of Fish and Game and involved Regional Advisory Council representatives to conserve healthy fish stocks while providing for subsistence uses. Mr. Stahlnecker believes that this delegated authority provides a resolution to many of the issues raised in FP17-05 without a rigid regulation. Overall the Refuge felt that fisheries management was being conducted in close collaboration with the State of Alaska that would jeopardize the current spirit of close collaboration with the State of Alaska.

Maria Wessel, Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), offered that the State supports increased collaboration in order to be aligned when possible, and would also like to see the ability for more discerning when closures take place by species, for example, in the sport fishery. Ms. Wessel shared that the State does appreciate the fisheries management expertise these past few years from the Yukon Delta Refuge and look forward to continued collaboration on the State-run suite of assessment projects and the two weirs run by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Ms. Wessel concluded ADF&G feels a greater level of collaboration will be possible without the regulation requested in FP17-05. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was recently signed between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, ratifying the Kuskokwim River Partnership Project. Ms. Wessel expressed that the State would like to see this partnership project continue to evolve and include the State in this collaborative project.

Review and discussion on Partnership Project MOU: Steward Cogswell, OSM Fisheries Director, shared the MOU that the Fish and Wildlife Service has with the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC) which is part one of the Kuskokwim Partnership Project. He noted the feedback on the success of the KRITFC from everyone involved. More people have been involved in the inseason fisheries management recommendations. They are now working on further details for implementation and highlighted that Y-K Delta Council member Greg Roczicka had been involved with those discussions. The desire is to everyone work together on this final phase of the partnership project and people's voice to be heard. Mr. Cogswell requested the Council nominate someone to be a part of the finale discussions on what exactly that's going to look like at the end, and make sure it's representative and meets the needs of everyone involved. The YKDRAC nominated Bob Aloysius and James Charles as an alternate.

Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program* OSM Anthropologist Pippa Kenner presented an overview of the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and provided handouts outlining the Yukon and Kuskokwim region priority information needs. The program began in 2000 supporting research to provide information important for the management of subsistence fisheries on Federal public lands in Alaska. Partnerships are encouraged between rural organizations, Tribes, universities and State and Federal agencies. The Regional Advisory Councils help to advise the program to on what are the highest priority information needs for their region by identifying issues of local concern and knowledge gaps related to subsistence fisheries. There is a call for research proposals every two years addressing both traditional ecological knowledge and harvest monitoring and stock, status and trends projects. OSM Staff works with the Regional Advisory Councils and Federal managers to ensure that the monitoring program focuses on the highest priority information needs for management of Federal subsistence fisheries.

The Council was provided with a list of the current projects in place for both the Yukon and Kuskokwim regions and then reviewed the priority information needs list that they had developed previously which included the following:

Kuskokwim Fisheries Research Priority Information Needs

- Reliable estimates of Chinook, chum, sockeye, and coho salmon (projects using weirs, sonar, and mark/recapture methods).
- Methods for including quality of escapement methods.
- Estimate the size and growth of the sport fishery over the next 30 years, including the impacts of the sport fishery on cultural values and social systems.
- Understanding of the meaning and significance of sharing in the context of the social, cultural, and economic life of people in the Lower Kuskokwim area.
- Local knowledge of whitefish species to supplement information from previous research in Central Kuskokwim River drainage communities.
- Local knowledge of whitefish species to supplement information from previous research in Lower Kuskokwim River drainage communities.
- An indexing method for estimating species-specific whitefish harvests on an annual basis for the Kuskokwim drainage.
- Sheefish and whitefish enumeration throughout the Kuskokwim River

The Council also discussed an interest in learning more about subsistence salmon fishing around Cape Vancouver. Council member Dale Smith highlighted that this is an important area for Nunivak and Nelson Island residents to subsistence fish for Chinook and would be helpful to know more about it. Council member David Bill Sr. added that the Yup'ik name for this area is Asaqtooluk and the salmon are just passing through quickly in a two week window on way to spawning grounds elsewhere.

Attending public and agency staff also provided input on research priorities.

Yukon Delta Refuge manager Ken Stahlnecker noted he would like to encourage continued support for funding of the Kuskokwim River drainage fish weirs in future years. He stressed that

the weirs provided invaluable information to evaluate the success of salmon management and to support research and refining the understanding of fisheries factors influencing salmon productivity. The data is important for helping make management decisions.

The Council concurred with a recommendation for researching ocean survival of Chinook and understanding the whole life cycle of salmon from spawning grounds to feeding in the Bering Sea. Dan Gillikin suggested pit tag outmigration project had been started on the Kwethluk River in the past and could be expanded on to track the number of fish that return as adults.

The Council also added support for continuing research postseason subsistence harvest surveys, inseason subsistence harvest surveys, and support for the Kuskokwim Salmon Management Working Group.

The Council made a motion to support the Kuskokwim priority information needs discussed above and added the ocean survival of Chinook salmon. The motion passed unanimously: 12 yes, 1 absent.

Yukon Fisheries Research Priority Information Needs

- Reliable estimates of salmon escapements. For example, projects using weir, sonar or mark/recapture methods.
- Geographic distribution of salmon and whitefish species. Of specific interest are the Nulato River, Salmon Fork of the Black River, Porcupine River, and Chandalar River.
- An indexing method for estimating species-specific whitefish harvests on an annual basis for the Yukon drainage.
- Methods for including quality of escapement measures, for example, potential egg deposition, sex and size composition of spawners, spawning habitat utilization, in establishing Chinook salmon spawning goals and determining the reproductive potential and genetic diversity of spawning escapements.
- Review of escapement data collection methods throughout the Yukon drainage to ensure that test fisheries are accurately accounting for size distribution and abundance of fish.
- Assessment of incidental mortality with gillnets, with particular consideration for delayed mortality from entanglement or direct mortality from drop-outs. For example, loss of Chinook salmon from six-inch mesh chum fisheries.
- Escapement changes through time in relation to changes in gillnet construction and use, for example, set versus drift fishing, mesh size changes, for Chinook salmon subsistence harvest in the mainstem Yukon River.
- Bering cisco population assessment and monitoring.
- Burbot population assessments in lakes and rivers known to support subsistence fisheries.
- Evaluation on the placement and effectiveness of the Pilot Station sonar and potential use of sonar in other locations on the Yukon River.
- More test fisheries on the Yukon River to expand in season salmon run assessment at various locations on the river. The village of Marshall expressed interest in participating in a test fishery.
- Effects of beaver dams on salmon spawning.

- Overview of salmon lifecycle with focus on health of spawning grounds to feeding in Bering Sea.

Attending public and agency staff also provided input on research priorities.

Alex Nick of Bethel discussed details of local knowledge of whitefish highlighting places such as a place on the Yukon River between Marshall and Russian Mission where there is an abundance of Bering Cisco in the winter. His dad used to set his fish trap in that one spot in the winter and always caught a lot of Bering Cisco.

Wayne Jenkins, Director, Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA), discussed research priorities that the Yukon River villages had provided feedback on. These included identifying and mapping anadromous spawning area for Chinook, Summer Chum, and Fall Chum starting at the village level with interviews, research best approaches to integrating traditional knowledge into the management making decisions, and expand inseason harvest surveys in more communities on the Yukon and include harvest of summer and fall chum along with Chinook. Mr. Jenkins also offered that the YRDFA can assist with local hire as a cooperater on FRMP projects and are able to use their community connections to help engage local people on subsistence fisheries research and monitoring projects in their area.

The Council made a motion to approve the Priority Information Needs discussed above including the recommendations shared by Wayne Jenkins of YRDFA. Vote 12 yes, 1 Absent.

Revisions to MOU with the State

Orville Lind, Office of Subsistence Management, gave a short presentation of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Federal Subsistence Board and the State of Alaska. It establishes guidelines to coordinate management of subsistence uses of fish and wildlife resources on Federal public lands in Alaska. This document builds upon the July 18, 2012 draft MOU which incorporated recommended changes from the Regional Advisory Councils, Subsistence Resource Commissions, and Advisory Committees. The intent of this MOU is to provide a foundation to build on with the State to coordinate the management of fish and wildlife resources for subsistence uses on Federal public lands in Alaska. *The Council reviewed the draft MOU between the Federal Subsistence Board and the State of Alaska provided in the meeting book and expressed their full support.

Review Annual Report Reply and Identify Issues for 2016 Annual Report

The Council reviewed the reply from the Federal Subsistence Board from their previous annual report and discussed issues to include for the 2016 annual report. Topics the Council wanted to address to the Board were: Timing of subsistence fishing opportunities when weather is conducive to safely dry fish, adjusting the timing of the fall subsistence moose hunt to later in the season due to warmer temperatures, opportunity to harvest spring sheefish in advance of the Chinook conservation closures, dip nets as an ineffective means of fishing for many communities, and concerns about increased shipping traffic in the Bering Sea and potential impacts to subsistence communities in the YKDelta.

Charter Review

The Council reviewed their Charter discussed the role and authority of the Council and voted unanimously to approve renewal of the Charter.

Tongass Submerged Lands proposed rule:

Orville Lind, Office of Subsistence Management, presented a briefing on the Tongass Submerged Lands proposed rule which is being presented to all 10 Council regions. The Council voted unanimously to take no action and refer this proposal back to the affected users in the Southeast RAC region.

Agency Reports:

Native Village of Napaimute and Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program: Dan Gillikin, Environmental Director and Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program biologist with the Native Village of Napaimute, shared that they have been working cooperatively with ADF&G and FWS through the Tribal Wildlife Grant process to obtain funding through agreements to operate the Salmon River Weir. Also the other fishery project that got funded through ADF&G and Tribal Wildlife Grants for the second year was the Aniak test fishery, which operated from June 1st to July 15th focused primarily on Chinook salmon abundance indices and looking at species ratios. Another project started this year was the mid river in-season subsistence salmon harvest surveys. This is also an OSM project and partners with ADF&G. They also revived internship programs through an advance science camp at the George River Weir and the Math and Science Expedition on the Salmon and Aniak River in partnership with Kuspuk School District and Excel Alaska Program funded by the Partners Program.

Orutsararmiut Native Council: Janessa Esquible, Orutsararmiut Native Council Partners for Fisheries Monitoring Program Biologist provided the Council with a power point presentation on the inseason subsistence monitoring projects that they have been involved with such as fish camp and boat harbor surveys. Orutsararmiut Native Council (ONC) has been conducting fish camp surveys for at least 20 years with a focus on collecting qualitative data such as inquiring about to fish camp families, the timing of the salmon run and asking about their harvest goals and how catch rates are. Since 2015 they have been focused on collecting more information on mesh size, length and depth, how many of each salmon species were harvested by families, and gear typed used. This data is used for in-season management decisions, such as occurred this past summer with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. This summer they focused a lot of survey time at the Bethel boat harbor to reach as many people as possible who were fishing during the openers.

ONC also partners with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game on the age, sex, length study. They provide training and sampling kits for any interested families or community members that would like to sample the subsistence harvested Chinook salmon to obtain information on age, sex and length. ONC also hosted an Alaska Native Science and Engineering student on various fisheries projects and also worked in conjunction with the Kuskokwim School district for Math and Science Expedition on the Aniak River.

Alissa Joseph-Rogers with ONC also provided followed up with information on programs that will include traditional knowledge being passed on to the younger generations. Alissa invited

Council members and other elders in the region to share with the Bethel Regional High School Science Club. ONC is also working on developing a summer program camp and are inviting a few elders to come and teach the students and youth about Yupik history, traditional knowledge, and culture, to help bring them back to their roots, traditional values, and give them a sense of where they come from and who they are.

Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission: Lamont Albertson mentioned that he was very appreciative of all the work and support from other tribes and fisheries commissions and other agencies. He stated that he could not thank the USFWS enough for their assistance and all that they have done. The approach of working together and with Inter-Tribal Fish Commission is a setting a model for other activities throughout the United States. And they are looking forward to another excellent year next year.

Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission: Stephanie Quinn-Davidson, director for the Yukon Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, shared that they have 30 out of about 50 Federally recognized tribes on the Yukon River drainage that have ratified the commission's constitution. They are working to gain all full membership of all the Yukon River tribes by next summer so that the tribes can have a unified voice in recommending management options for the 2017 fishery. Tanana Chief's Conference is funding vast majority of the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, and she is trying to secure long-term funding outside of Tanana Chiefs Conference.

Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge: Ken Stahlnecker, Refuge Manager for Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, along with Ray Born, Deputy Refuge Manager, presented a summary of the actions that were taken throughout the 2016 Chinook salmon fishery last summer. In consultation with the Kuskokwim Inter-Tribal Fisheries Commission and the ADF&G, the Refuge established an escapement objective of 100,000 Chinook, and a harvest objective of 40,000 Chinook for the Kuskokwim River within Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. The decision was made this year to use gear type restrictions and season openings and closings as the methods to manage the harvest as opposed to issuing permits as was done during the 2015 season. A review of subsistence fisheries actions and inseason management was provided to the Council in advance for discussion on regulatory proposals. (see above in minutes).

Ken Stahlnecker, also along with Ray Born, Deputy Manager, presented a brief update of the subsistence on migratory waterfowl 30 day emergency closure along with moose, salmon and law enforcement activities. Mr. Stahlnecker also stated that he is new to the Delta and willing to work with everyone and extends an invite to call or stop in for a visit if there is a concern or questions.

Togiak National Wildlife Refuge: Suzanna Henry, Refuge Manager from Togiak Refuge, gave a brief update on the fish counting weirs on the Middle Fork of the Goodnews River and the Kanektok River. The warmer water temperatures on the upper lakes is a concern because of increased mortality - small fish found dead along the lake shores. Warmer temperatures will cause fish to be more susceptible to bacterial or viral infections. The Refuge is working with Refuge Information Technician John Mark from Quinhagak and sent in fish, which had injuries on them from Lampreys, to the lab for analysis. Warm temperatures in the ocean are also

affecting sea birds dying from starvation. The Refuge has also been working with ADF&G on moose surveys and trying to come up with a better method of counting without snow cover.

Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association: Wayne Jenkins, Director of Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YR DFA), provided the Council with a letter of request from the Ohogamiut Traditional Council to the Y-K Delta Council requesting support for their and Native Village of Marshall request to Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on Area of Critical Concern (ACEC) designations. Mr. Jenkins provided an overview for the Council on what the ACEC process was and a map of areas the Tribe had selected as critical to their subsistence activities surrounding the village. The Council made a motion to support the request of the Ohogamiut Traditional Council and write a letter of support to BLM regarding the importance of these ACEC selections for subsistence in the region.

Mr. Jenkins provided updates on Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and other subsistence fisheries projects on the Yukon River they have been involved with. They are excited to announce new staff member Danielle Stickman who will be working on outreach and education with YR DFA with communities on the Yukon River. Danielle is Dena'ina/Koyukon Athabaskan and was raised in Fairbanks and Nondalton.

YR DFA's pre-season salmon fishery prep meetings are funded by the Yukon River Panel, and have been hosted by YR DFA for the past six years. They expanded attendance of invitees from local communities the entire length of the Alaska portion of the river, fishers, managers, researchers and other stakeholders came together for a full day designed to prepare everyone for the fishing season ahead. This year the meeting was hosted Anchorage on April 28 and they hosted 82 Yukon River fishers and community representatives, and 17 fisheries managers and staff. The aim of the collaborative efforts by fishers and fishery managers on the Yukon River was to ensure the meeting of escapement goals for Canadian-bound Chinook and fall chum salmon, and, if possible, to provide some opportunities for some harvest of Chinook salmon with an emphasis on the harvest of summer and fall chum to meet subsistence needs.

YR DFA manages the Yukon River In-season Management Teleconferences which is funded by the FRMP and the Yukon River Panel. The teleconferences took place this summer as usual in June, July, and August on Tuesdays 1:00 p.m. This is a call-in communication tool that allows fishers the entire length of the river to communicate with each other and the managers.

YR DFA manages the in-season salmon survey program funded by FRMP and YR DFA was able to hire 10 community surveyors who interviewed fisherman for six weeks as the Chinook salmon were passing through their villages. Their results were reported to YR DFA, the managers, and on the teleconferences. The communities participating this year were Alakanuk, Mountain Village, Marshall, Russian Mission, Anvik, Ruby, Huslia, Tanana, Fort Yukon, and Eagle.

Other research projects YR DFA is involved in with anthropologist Catherin Moncrieff and will be able to report on further when completed are:

- 1) Customary trade in the Upper Yukon River project is funded by FRMP, in partnership with ADF&G Subsistence Division.

2) Yukon River salmon declines, learning from tradition workshop.

This project is funded by the National Science Foundation and in partnership with Calista Education and Culture Group. The workshop is planned with elders from the Lower Yukon River to discuss Chinook Salmon.

3) A case study on how people of the Yukon River value salmon, funded by the North Pacific Research Board.

4) Traditional knowledge in Federal fisheries management is a paper funded by PEW Charitable Trusts and Kawerak, Incorporated examines ways that traditional knowledge can be used in Federal fisheries management,

Alaska Department of Fish and Game: Jill Klein, Special Assistant to the Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, provided a handout on the Yukon Salmon Management Plan and had planned to discuss the process with the Council via teleconference. However, the meeting ran very late and she was unable to present at this time. The Council would like to receive this update at its winter 2017 meeting.

Office of Subsistence Management:

Stewart Cogswell, Acting Deputy Assistant Regional Director at Office of Subsistence Management, and Orville Lind presented a short update on OSM staffing changes.

Future Meeting Dates* The Council confirmed the winter meeting date for February 15th and 16th 2017 in Bethel and selected Oct 11th and 12th in Bethel for the fall 2017 meeting.

Closing Comments: Chair Lester Wilde thanked staff and all the meeting participants. The Council appreciates support and assistance in their work and for the information shared at the meeting.

The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 7:33 pm.

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

Eva Patton, Designated Federal Officer
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management

Lester Wilde, Sr. Chair
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These draft minutes will be formally considered by the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its Winter 2017 public 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.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 9, 2016

EXECUTIVE ORDER

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NORTHERN BERING SEA CLIMATE RESILIENCE

By the authority vested in me as the President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, 43 U.S.C. 1331 *et seq.*, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Purpose. As recognized in Executive Order 13689 of January 21, 2015, (Enhancing Coordination of National Efforts in the Arctic), Arctic environmental stewardship is in the national interest. In furtherance of this principle, and as articulated in the March 10, 2016, U.S.-Canada Joint Statement on Climate, Energy, and Arctic Leadership, the United States has resolved to confront the challenges of a changing Arctic by working to conserve Arctic biodiversity; support and engage Alaska Native tribes; incorporate traditional knowledge into decisionmaking; and build a sustainable Arctic economy that relies on the highest safety and environmental standards, including adherence to national climate goals. The United States is committed to achieving these goals in partnership with indigenous communities and through science-based decisionmaking. This order carries forth that vision in the northern Bering Sea region.

The Bering Sea and Bering Strait are home to numerous subsistence communities, rich indigenous cultures, and unique marine ecosystems, each of which plays an important role in maintaining regional resilience. The changing climate and rising average temperatures are reducing the occurrence of sea ice; changing the conditions for fishing, hunting, and subsistence whaling; and opening new navigable routes to increased ship traffic. The preservation of a healthy and resilient Bering ecosystem, including its migratory pathways, habitat, and breeding grounds, is essential for the survival of marine mammals, fish, seabirds, other wildlife, and the subsistence communities that depend on them. These communities possess a unique understanding of the Arctic ecosystem, and their traditional knowledge should serve as an important resource to inform Federal decisionmaking.

Sec. 2. Policy. It shall be the policy of the United States to enhance the resilience of the northern Bering Sea region by conserving the region's ecosystem, including those natural resources that provide important cultural and subsistence value and services to the people of the region. For the purpose of carrying out the specific directives provided herein, this order delineates an area hereafter referred to as the "Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area," in which the exercise of relevant authorities shall be coordinated among all executive departments and agencies (agencies). All agencies charged with regulating, overseeing, or conducting activities in the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area shall do so with

attention to the rights, needs, and knowledge of Alaska Native tribes; the delicate and unique ecosystem; the protection of marine mammals, fish, seabirds, and other wildlife; and with appropriate coordination with the State of Alaska.

The boundary of the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area includes waters within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone bounded to the north by the seaward boundary of the Bering Straits Native Corporation established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act; to the south by the southern boundaries of the Northern Bering Sea Research Area, the St. Matthew Habitat Conservation Area, and the Nunivak-Kuskokwim Habitat Conservation Area; and to the west by the maritime boundary delimited by the Agreement Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Maritime Boundary, signed at Washington, June 1, 1990.

Sec. 3. Withdrawal. Under the authority granted to me in section 12(a) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, 43 U.S.C. 1341(a), I hereby withdraw from disposition by leasing for a time period without specific expiration the following areas of the Outer Continental Shelf: (1) the area currently designated by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management as the Norton Basin Planning Area; and (2) the Outer Continental Shelf lease blocks within the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's St. Matthew-Hall Planning Area lying within 25 nautical miles of St. Lawrence Island. The boundaries of the withdrawn areas are more specifically delineated in the attached map and, with respect to the St. Matthew-Hall Planning Area, the accompanying table of withdrawn Outer Continental Shelf lease blocks. Both the map and table form a part of this order, with the table governing the withdrawal and withdrawal boundaries within the St. Matthew-Hall Planning Area. This withdrawal prevents consideration of these areas for future oil or gas leasing for purposes of exploration, development, or production. This withdrawal furthers the principles of responsible public stewardship entrusted to this office and takes due consideration of the importance of the withdrawn area to Alaska Native tribes, wildlife, and wildlife habitat, and the need for regional resiliency in the face of climate change. Nothing in this withdrawal affects rights under existing leases in the withdrawn areas.

Sec. 4. Task Force on the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area. (a) There is established a Task Force on the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area (Bering Task Force), under the Arctic Executive Steering Committee (AESC) established in Executive Order 13689, to be co-chaired by an office of the Department of the Interior, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the U.S. Coast Guard.

(b) The membership of the Bering Task Force (member agencies) shall include, in addition to the Co-Chairs, designated senior-level representatives from:

- (i) the Department of State;
- (ii) the Department of Defense;
- (iii) the Department of Transportation;
- (iv) the Environmental Protection Agency;
- (v) the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers;

- (vi) the U.S. Arctic Research Commission;
- (vii) the National Science Foundation; and
- (viii) such agencies and offices as the Co-Chairs may designate.

(c) Consistent with the authorities and responsibilities of its member agencies, the Bering Task Force, with the purpose of advancing the United States policy in the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area as set forth in section 2 of this order, shall:

- (i) Establish and provide regular opportunities to consult with the Bering Intergovernmental Tribal Advisory Council as described in section 5 of this order;
- (ii) Coordinate activities of member agencies, including regulatory, policy, and research activities, affecting the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area and its value for subsistence and cultural purposes;
- (iii) Consider the need for additional actions or strategies to advance the policies established in section 2 of this order and provide recommendations as appropriate to the President through the AESC;
- (iv) Consider and make recommendations with respect to the impacts of shipping on the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area including those described in sections 7 and 8 of this order; and
- (v) In developing and implementing recommendations, coordinate or consult as appropriate with existing AESC working groups, the State of Alaska, regional and local governments, Alaska Native tribal governments, Alaska Native corporations and organizations, the private sector, other relevant organizations, and academia.

Sec. 5. The Bering Intergovernmental Tribal Advisory Council. (a) The Bering Task Force, within 6 months of the date of this order, and after considering recommendations from Alaska Native tribal governments, shall, in accordance with existing law, establish a Bering Intergovernmental Tribal Advisory Council, for the purpose of providing input to the Bering Task Force and facilitating effective consultation with Alaska Native tribal governments.

(b) The Bering Intergovernmental Tribal Advisory Council shall be charged with providing input and recommendations on activities, regulations, guidance, or policy that may affect actions or conditions in the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area, with attention given to climate resilience; the rights, needs, and knowledge of Alaska Native tribes; the delicate and unique ecosystem; and the protection of marine mammals and other wildlife.

(c) The Bering Intergovernmental Tribal Advisory Council should include between 9 and 11 elected officials or their designees representing Alaska Native tribal governments with a breadth of interests in the Northern Bering Sea Climate

Resilience Area, and may include such additional Federal officials and State and local government elected officials as the Bering Task Force deems appropriate. The Bering Intergovernmental Tribal Advisory Council will adopt such procedures as it deems necessary to govern its activities.

Sec. 6. Traditional Knowledge in Decisionmaking. It shall be the policy of the United States to recognize and value the participation of Alaska Native tribal governments in decisions affecting the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area and for all agencies to consider traditional knowledge in decisions affecting the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area. Specifically, all agencies shall consider applicable information from the Bering Intergovernmental Tribal Advisory Council in the exercise of existing agency authorities. Such input may be received through existing agency procedures and consultation processes.

Sec. 7. Pollution from Vessels. The Bering Task Force, within 9 months of the date of this order and after coordination as needed with existing working groups within the AESC, shall provide the AESC with recommendations on:

(a) Actions to ensure or support implementation of the International Code for Ships Operating in Polar Waters, as adopted by the International Maritime Organization, especially with respect to limitations on discharges from vessels in the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area; and

(b) Any additional measures necessary to achieve the policies established in section 2 of this order, such as the potential identification of zero-discharge zones, assessments of the pollution risks posed by increased vessel traffic, or noise reduction measures associated with sensitive ecological and cultural areas within the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area.

Sec. 8. Shipping Routing Measures. (a) In recognition of the United States commitment to reduce the impact of shipping within the Bering Sea and the Bering Strait and the many environmental factors in the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area that inform the best routes for navigation, safety, and the marine environment, the U.S. Coast Guard should conclude its ongoing port access route study for the Chukchi Sea, Bering Strait, and Bering Sea (Bering Sea PARS) pursuant to the Ports and Waterways Safety Act, 33 U.S.C. 1221 *et seq.*

(b) In designation of routes and any areas to be avoided, and consistent with existing authorities, consideration should be given to the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area, including the effects of shipping and vessel pollution on the marine environment, fishery resources, the seabed and subsoil of the Outer Continental Shelf, marine mammal migratory pathways and other biologically important areas, and subsistence whaling, hunting, and fishing.

(c) In recognition of the value of participation of Alaska Native tribal governments in decisions affecting the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area, the U.S. Coast Guard should consider traditional knowledge, including with respect to marine mammal, waterfowl, and seabird migratory pathways and feeding and breeding grounds, in the development of the Bering Sea PARS, establishment of routing measures and any areas to be avoided, and subsequent rulemaking and management decisions.

(d) No later than December 30, 2016, the U.S. Coast Guard shall publish preliminary findings for the Bering Sea PARS in the *Federal Register*, including information related to its status, potential routing measures, and its projected schedule. The U.S. Coast Guard should also consider using this opportunity to provide notice of any new information or proposed measures resulting from its ongoing consultation process.

(e) Upon completion of the Bering Sea PARS, the U.S. Coast Guard shall promptly issue a notice of proposed rulemaking for any designation contemplated on the basis of the study. The U.S. Coast Guard shall coordinate as appropriate with the Department of State and other coastal nations and submit any proposed routing measures to the International Maritime Organization by 2018 for the purpose of their adoption and implementation.

Sec. 9. Oil Spill Preparedness. The U.S. Coast Guard, in coordination with all relevant agencies and the State of Alaska, shall update the Area Contingency plans, the Subarea Response Plans, and the Geographic Response Strategies relevant to the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area. These plans and strategies shall be consistent with the National Contingency Plan, and shall include appropriate measures to improve local response capacity and preparedness such as spill response training opportunities for local communities, including Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response training for Village Public Safety Officers and other first responders.

Sec. 10. Continuity of Existing Habitat Protection. The area included in the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area is currently closed to commercial non-pelagic trawl gear under rules implementing the Fishery Management Plans of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Management Area and the Arctic Management Area. Consistent with existing law, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, in coordination with the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, shall take such actions as are necessary to support the policy set forth in section 2 of this order, including actions to maintain the existing prohibitions on the use of commercial non-pelagic trawl gear.

Sec. 11. General Provisions. (a) Nothing in this order shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

- (1) the authority granted by law to a department, agency, or the head thereof; or
- (2) the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(b) This order shall be implemented consistently with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(c) This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

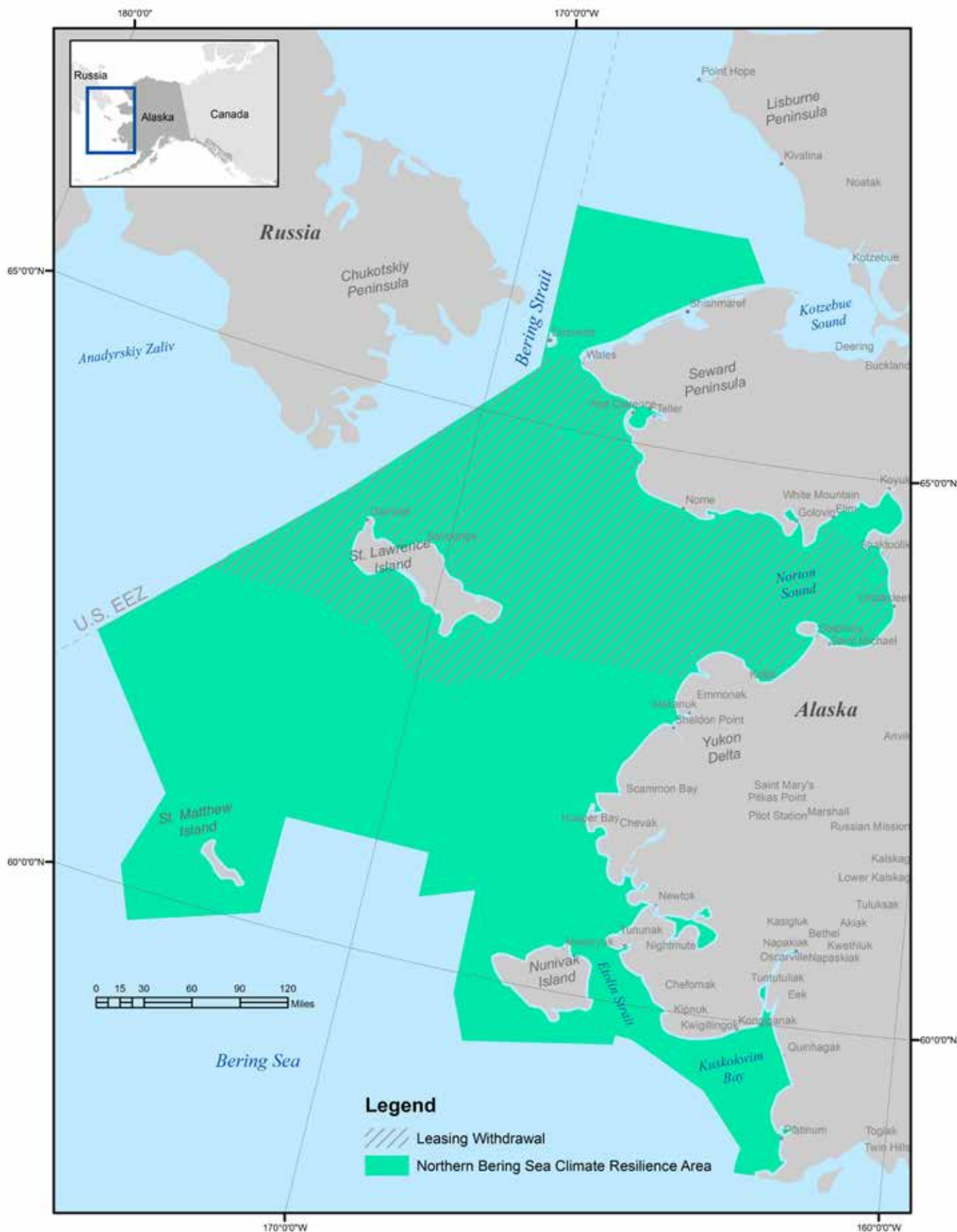
(d) The policies set forth in this order are consistent with existing U.S. obligations under international law and

nothing in this order shall be construed to derogate from obligations under applicable international law.

BARACK OBAMA

THE WHITE HOUSE,
December 9, 2016.

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The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 09, 2016

FACT SHEET: White House Announces Actions to Protect Natural and Cultural Resources in Alaskan Arctic Ocean

Since taking office, President Obama has worked to protect the Arctic's natural and cultural resources and the communities that rely upon them through the use of science-based decision making, enhanced coordination of Federal Arctic management, efforts to combat illegal fishing, and revitalization of the process for establishing new marine sanctuaries. Building on this effort, today, President Obama is announcing new steps to enhance the resilience of the Alaskan Arctic environment and the sustainability of Alaskan native communities with the creation of the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area.

In addition to today's protections, the Obama Administration is announcing approximately \$30 million in philanthropic commitments for projects in rural northern Alaska and Canada. These projects include investments over the next three years related to shipping, ecosystem science, community and ecological resilience, and tribal engagement. Earlier this week, the Department of Commerce **deployed** an Economic Development Assessment Team to Nome, Alaska to help the region diversify, grow its economy, and address challenges related to climate change and community resilience.

Today's actions are also supportive of the March 2016 U.S.-Canada Joint Statement on Climate, Energy, and Arctic Leadership and make substantial progress on its objectives of conserving Arctic biodiversity through science-based decision-making, incorporating indigenous science and traditional knowledge into decision-making, and supporting strong Arctic communities. These actions employ science-based leadership to improve marine and coastal resilience and sustain our Nation's precious natural resources.

Executive Order Creating the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area

Native villages in the northern Bering Sea region of Alaska largely practice a subsistence-based lifestyle that is inextricably tied to the rich marine ecosystem of the Bering Sea. Warming ocean temperatures, sea ice loss, and increasing ship traffic all threaten the subsistence practices and food security of these communities. The coastal tribes along the northern Bering Sea and the Bering Strait have requested that the Federal Government take action to protect the health of the marine ecosystems of the Northern Bering Sea and Bering Strait while maintaining opportunities for sustainable fishing and sustainable economic development.

In direct response to these requests, the President signed an Executive Order creating the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area. This area, encompassing 112,300 square miles, represents a hugely productive, high-latitude ocean ecosystem and supports one of the largest seasonal marine mammal migrations in the world, including thousands of bowhead and beluga whales, hundreds of thousands of walruses and ice seals, and millions of migratory birds. It is home to more than 40 tribes of coastal Yup'ik and Inupiaq peoples whose way of life has been linked with the marine environment for thousands of years.

The Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area is delineated for the purpose of focusing a locally-tailored collection of protections related to oil and gas, shipping, and fishing. The order also establishes a Task Force charged with coordinating Federal activities in this area to enhance ecosystem and community resilience, conserve natural resources, and protect the cultural and subsistence values this ecosystem provides for Alaskan native communities. Further, agencies are directed to consider traditional knowledge in decision making and establish a formal consultative mechanism for engaging with regional tribal governments to seek their input on Federal activities. This action advances science-based decision-making and engagement with Alaska Native peoples in addressing the changing Arctic consistent with the Joint Statement signed at the White House Arctic Science Ministerial and consultation with Alaska Natives in preparation for the [Ministerial](#).

Shipping

In recognition of the increase in shipping through the Bering Strait, the Coast Guard is nearing completion of a Port Access Route Study (PARS) for the region. A PARS is the first step in assessing the need for vessel traffic control measures and developing

a set of recommendations. Any recommended international routing measures would be submitted to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) which sets international rules for maritime commerce. The Executive Order directs the Coast Guard to give careful consideration to community recommendations regarding environmentally sensitive Areas to Be Avoided (ATBAs) and to publish its initial findings by the end of 2016 and to move its conclusions to the International Maritime Organization for action by 2018.

Fishing

Sea bottom habitat is extremely important to the ecosystem in the Northern Bering Sea and helps to support the incredible abundance of marine mammals and sea birds in the region, including critical subsistence resources. In recognition of these connections, bottom trawling is already banned in the region to protect the sea floor. The Executive Order makes it Federal policy to support the continued prohibition on bottom trawling, which destroys sensitive benthic ecosystems.

Oil and Gas

Under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, the President has withdrawn Norton Basin planning area and portions of the St. Matthew-Hall planning area from future oil and gas leasing to further protect the regional ecosystem and coastal communities. The five year leasing plans issued by the Department of the Interior do not include plans for leasing in the withdrawn areas, so there will not need to be changes to those plans to reflect the withdrawal. The total area withdrawn from leasing through this Executive Order is 40,300 square miles.

Coordination and Consultation

This Order also advances the Administration's priorities of elevating traditional knowledge in decision making and coordinating Federal efforts in the Arctic. Today's actions establish a Federal Task Force on the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area (Bering Task Force), under the Arctic Executive Steering Committee (AESC) established by Executive Order 13689. The Bering Task Force will coordinate Federal activity and consider additional mechanisms to reduce impacts to subsistence and cultural activities within the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area. The Executive Order also formally elevates the voice of Alaskan native tribes and the role of indigenous knowledge in decision-making within the region by mandating that the Task Force establish and engage in regular consultation with a Bering Intergovernmental Tribal Advisory Council, which will consist primarily of tribal

government representatives with participation from Federal, state, and local officials for coordination purposes. Together, these two groups will guide the incorporation of valuable traditional knowledge and science into Federal resource management in the northern Bering Sea region, thus preserving this unique ecosystem and the indigenous peoples who rely upon it.

Commitments to Rural Northern Alaska and Canada

Today, in support of the U.S.-Canada commitments to a Shared Arctic Leadership model, the philanthropic community is pledging approximately \$30 million for projects in rural northern Alaska and Canada.

- The **Arctic Funders Collaborative (AFC)**, a group of eleven U.S., Canadian and international philanthropic foundations, is announcing that a subset of its members will coordinate and mobilize resources through grant programs across the Arctic at a projected \$27 million over the next three years in the following areas:
 - Community-led planning and monitoring initiatives that foster adaptation and resilience to a changing Arctic climate
 - Low-impact shipping corridors in Arctic Alaska and Canada, including routing and mitigation measures to help improve maritime safety and spill prevention
 - Northern-led policy development informed by indigenous knowledge and science
 - Fostering connections between Northern priorities and social finance institutions in ways that support culture, community resilience and sustainable economic opportunities
 - Building in-region capacity of indigenous-led organizations and emerging leaders across the Arctic

Priority geographic areas for marine stewardship support include the northern Bering Sea and the Bering Strait, the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas, the Northwest Passage, Lancaster Sound, Baffin Bay, the Davis Strait, and Hudson Bay.

- Today, the **Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation** is announcing a \$3.7 million grant to support research that couples state-of-the-art geophysical observations from unmanned aerial systems with a community-engaged research approach to bridge scientific and indigenous understanding of sea ice change in the Alaskan Arctic. Led by the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Columbia University, and Kotzebue residents, the project will research changing patterns of Arctic ice and other physical characteristics in Kotzebue Sound and the Chukchi Sea, using a combination of traditional knowledge and sensing technologies in modules carried by drones. From the beginning of the work - including development of the research design - the project will involve local experts who have sea ice experience and other environmental knowledge.



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 346
Bethel, Alaska 99559



IN REPLY REFER TO:

To: Chair, Federal Subsistence Board
From: Ray Born, Deputy Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta NWR
Date: December 12, 2016
RE: 2016 Yukon Delta NWR Summary of Waterfowl and Moose Management Actions

Introduction

The 2016 moose and waterfowl management actions were the similar to last year. The waterfowl 30 day closure was based on field observations by the waterfowl biologists in coordination with Association of Village Council Presidents. The September 1-15, 2016 moose season in unit 18 based on the 2015 moose surveys conducted in coordination with the State of Alaska.

Management Objectives

Our primary objective for waterfowl was to allow for migratory bird nesting during the critical times for the birds. This will also allow for gathers to collect eggs prior to the critical nesting season.

Our primary objective for the moose closure was to allow for hunters to reach the harvest quota of 90 bull moose (utilizing past harvest rates), allow better planning for hunting, and still allow for population growth. The set closure date would allow hunters to plan their hunts, particularly for those that want to travel long distances to Federal public lands.

Outreach

News releases were provided to all of the village corporations on the refuge and news outlets in Bethel area. Public Service Announcements were also done on the local radio station by the acting Refuge Manager.

Special Actions

For moose there was one special action announcing a September 15, 2016 moose season closure on Federal public lands of Unit 18 Kuskokwim in anticipation of reaching the harvest quota of 90 bull moose in the September 1-15 season. This would be an increase in season length from previous years and is justified by an increase in population and healthy bull and calf ratios. A State registration permit (RM615) will be required to hunt on Federal public lands with a 72-hour reporting requirement for successful hunters and a September 25, 2016 deadline for unsuccessful hunters to report.

For waterfowl, a 30-day Emergency Closure was established for the 2016 Alaska subsistence spring migratory bird harvest in the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta region. The spring waterfowl season was closed during the initiation of migratory bird nesting from May 20 through June 20, 2016. This emergency closure came after consultation with the Association of Village Council Presidents Waterfowl Conservation Committee and Fish and Wildlife Service Biologists. This closure was established in 50 CFR 92.21 and through the publication of the notice. A special closure for Black Brant and Cackling Canada geese, from the time of egg laying until young birds were fledged, remained in effect through July 10, 2016.

Preliminary Post Season Summary

Post season assessment of the waterfowl closure is that it was successful.

Post season assessment of the moose closure is that only 45 bull moose were taken during the opener for moose September 1 to 15. Hunters talked to identified the weather was too warm and too early for effective moose hunting as one of the contributing factors.



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 346
Bethel, Alaska 99559



IN REPLY REFER TO:

To: Chair, Federal Subsistence Board
From: Ray Born, Deputy Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta NWR
Date: December 8, 2016
RE: 2016 Kuskokwim Salmon Summary of Management Actions

Introduction

The 2016 salmon season began with a forecasted return by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game of 125,000 to 219,000 Chinook salmon. The previous 2015 season made the in-river goal of 65,000 to 120,000 Chinook and was estimated to be 172,000 and missed only one of the three goals established for the Kwethluk, Kogrugluk, and George Rivers. The Kwethluk and Kogrugluk weirs made their goals with the subsistence restrictions in place.

Management Objectives

Our primary objective was to allow an escapement objective of 100,000 fish and for a limited (~40,000) harvest of Chinook salmon. We had an additional objective of having the earliest opportunity to harvest chum/sockeye while targeting the upper end of the in river escapement goal for Chinook salmon. Other objectives were to have a tributary closure to allow the greatest chance of making escapement of the Kwethluk. Our intentions were to follow guidelines outlined in the State of Alaska Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Plan 5 AAC 07.365, to the extent possible, to meet escapement goals, provide for subsistence use, and allow commercial fishing on available harvestable surpluses. ADF&G managed the Kuskokwim river drainage above and below the Refuge during the federal closure. The intention of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was to continue to work with the Kuskokwim Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC); ADF&G and their Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group; and the public to ensure management objectives are being met.

Outreach

Meetings were scheduled with 11 villages from the mouth of the Kuskokwim to Aniak that were primarily affected by anticipated special actions. Outreach was done by refuge staff and the leadership of Refuge Law Enforcement. Topics addressed during these visits included the 2015 season summary, the forecasted Chinook returns for 2016, and finally various conservation strategies for the 2016 season. Other pre-season activities included the relationship formalization between the US Fish and Wildlife Service and KRITFC with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU established a three person in-season team from KRITFC to provide in-season tribal representation to the in-season manager. A negotiated harvest of 40,000 Chinook salmon was accomplished to allow a block opening fishery that occurred from June 12, 2016 to July 1, 2016.

Special Actions

A total of eight Special Actions were issued by the Yukon Delta NWR Refuge Manager beginning on June 3, 2016 that limited the Chinook subsistence fishery to Federally Qualified Users. The final Special Action was issued on July 7, 2016 returning the active management of the salmon fishery to the State of Alaska. Throughout the federal management time frame legal gear types included equipment identified

in the Federal subsistence regulations to include set and drift gillnets, hook and line, fish wheels, dip nets, beach seines and all other gear types. Approved gillnets included those with 6-inch or less mesh, not exceeding 45-meshes deep, not exceeding 300-feet (50-fathoms) long from the Refuge boundary at the Kuskokwim River mouth to the Johnson River, and not exceeding 150-feet (25-fathoms) long from the Johnson River to the Refuge boundary at Aniak. The following are summaries of the major management actions taken;

June 1, 2016: FSA 3-KS-01-16, the Federal in-season manager closed Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) waters to the harvest of Chinook and chum salmon by all users except by residents of the Kuskokwim River drainage and the coastal villages of Cheformak, Kipnuk, Kwgillingok, and Kongiganek, who were identified in the Section 804 Subsistence User Prioritization analysis. The subsistence harvest of fish other than Chinook and chum salmon with gillnets was closed in the Kuskokwim River and select tributaries identified under State of Alaska (State) regulations by Emergency Order 3-S-WR-01-16.

June 3, 2016: FSA 3-KS-01a-16: the Federal in-season manager closed Refuge waters to harvest of Chinook and chum salmon by federally qualified users. Fishing openings, closings, and fishing methods for federally qualified users would be announced by subsequent Special Action, after consultation and coordination with the KRITFC and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G).

June 12, 2016: FSA 3-KS-02-16, FSA 3-KS-03-16, the Federal manager allowed a harvest opportunity for Chinook and chum salmon in the Federal public waters of the Kuskokwim River drainage for 12 hours by federally qualified users. Additionally, the Federal manager closed the salmon spawning tributaries of Federal public waters within the Refuge to gill net fishing until August 11, 2016 (FSA 3-KS-03-16). Salmon spawning tributaries included Eek, Kwethluk, Kasigluk, Kisaralik, Tuluksak, and Aniak Rivers and their salmon spawning tributaries.

June 16, 2016: FSA 3-KS-04-16, the Federal manager allowed a harvest opportunity for Chinook and chum salmon in the Federal public waters of the Kuskokwim River drainage for 24 hours by federally qualified users through June 17, 2016, except for salmon bearing tributaries closed by FSA 3-KS-03-16.

June 21, 2016: FSA 3-KS-05-16, FSA 3-KS-06-16, the Federal manager allowed a harvest opportunity for Chinook and chum salmon by Federally qualified users on the section of Federal public waters of the main stem and salmon tributaries from the refuge boundary at Aniak downstream to a line crossing the river at the south edge of Uknarik Slough downstream of Kalskag, except for those salmon spawning tributaries closed by FSA 3-KS-03-16 until further notice. In addition, the Federal manager allowed a 72 hour harvest opportunity for federally qualified users through June 24, 2016 of Chinook and chum salmon in Federal public waters of the Kuskokwim River and tributaries, except for those closed by FSA 3-KS-03-16.

June 29, 2016: FSA 3-KS-07-16, the Federal manager allowed a harvest opportunity for Chinook and chum salmon in the Federal public waters of the Kuskokwim drainage for 72 hours (FSA 3-KS-07-16) by federally qualified users through July 2, 2016.

July 7, 2016: FSA 3-KS-08-16, the Federal manager rescinded all previously issued Special Actions, which included opening the drainage to all federally qualified users and all non-Federally qualified subsistence users and uses.

Additional Special Action Requests

There were additional Special Action request to continue Federal Management into chum and sockeye management. No action was taken on these requests given the escapement objectives were expected to be made for both chum and sockeye and a modest harvest strategy was expected to take place by the State of Alaska. The abundances of chum, sockeye, and Coho salmon were expected to be large enough to meet escapement goals and provide subsistence and non-subsistence harvest opportunities. This was the right decision given harvest of chum and sockeye were continued to be allowed and escapement for all other non-Chinook species were achieved.

Subsistence Fishing During Refuge Management

Across all openers, an estimated that a total of 77,109 salmon were harvested. Of this, most was Chinook (27,231), followed closely by chum (26,466), and sockeye (23,412) (Figure 1). Fishers within geographic stratum C (Napaskiak to Akiachak) harvested the most total salmon (27,695), made up primarily of chum salmon (11,670), while stratum A (below Johnson River) harvested the most Chinook salmon (9,248) (Figure 2). Stratum E harvested a very small portion of the total salmon harvest (3%; 2,260). In general, there was a decreasing trend through time in the estimated number of boat trips, although in the second and third openers there was an increase in effort on the first day.

Figure 1. Total salmon harvest by species across all four openers. Includes harvest by both drift boat trips and set nets.

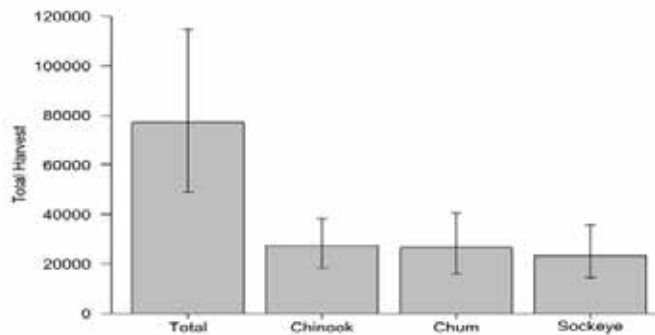
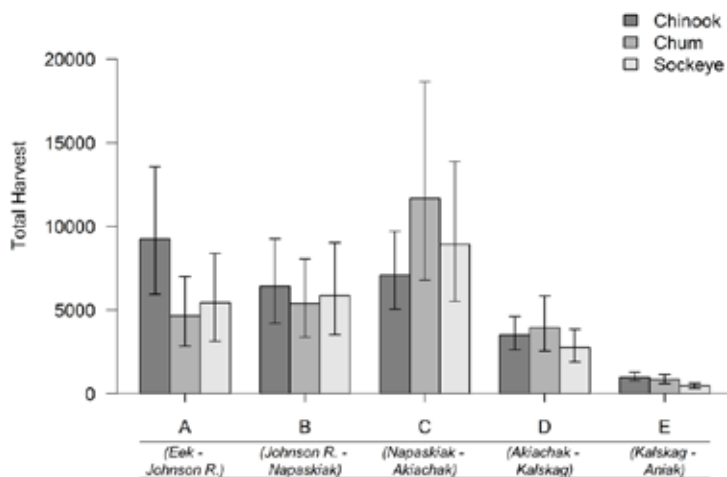


Figure 2. Total estimated salmon harvest by species and geographic stratum across all four openers. Includes harvest by both drift boat trips and set nets.



Preliminary Post Season Summary

The Alaska Department of Fish & Game has a preliminary estimate of 146,400 Chinook salmon escapement (unharvested) in the Kuskokwim river in 2016. On two of three weir projects the escapement was met. The Kogrugluk river weir with an escapement range of 4,800 – 8,800 saw 7,050 Chinook return. The Kwethluk river with a range of 4,100-7,500, observed 3,555 Chinook pass in the 10 days of operation, preliminary estimates of the days not observed will at least meet the escapement goal. The George river weir with an escapement range of 1,800 – 3,300 saw a return of 1,663 Chinook, 137 fish below the escapement goal. Given the consecutive years the weirs have not made escapement, our inseason goal was to be conservative.

Two of three projects with escapement goals for salmon were met on the Kuskokwim, this could not have been done without the cooperative management efforts of the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission; the Alaska Department of Fish and Game along with the Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Working Group; and the hard sacrifices and agreements made by subsistence fisherman on the Kuskokwim.



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Togiak National Wildlife Refuge
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Dillingham, Alaska 99576
Phone 907-842-1063
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INFORMATION BULLETIN - December 2016

Cooperative Salmon Escapement Monitoring Projects. Contact: Pat Walsh

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

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

On the Kanektok River, ADF&G, Native Village of Kwinhagak, Coastal Villages and Togiak Refuge have worked cooperatively to monitor salmon and Dolly Varden runs since 2001. This project was cancelled for 2016 due to lack of funding

Arctic Char Population Inventory Contact: Pat Walsh

Togiak Refuge has developed a multi-year study to inventory Arctic char populations throughout the Refuge. This species was previously confirmed to occur in 27 lakes. During 2014-2016 we visited 21 lakes and documented Arctic char occurrence in 13 new lakes. We have collected size and genetic information from 355 fish and provided the UAF museum with voucher specimens.

Mulchatna Caribou Contact: Andy Aderman

Togiak Refuge assisted ADF&G with telemetry monitoring flights, radiocollar deployment, satellite data acquisition, data entry and database management. A photocensus conducted June 28, 2016 estimated 27,242 caribou, down from the 2015 estimate of 30,736 caribou (Neil Barten, ADF&G, personal communication). Composition surveys in October 2016 estimated 38 bulls and 23 calves per 100 cows. The bull to cow ratio has steadily increased over the last 10 years, while the calf to cow ratio for 2016 was below the 10-year average of 27 calves per 100 cows (Neil Barten, ADF&G, personal communication).

Nushagak Peninsula Caribou Contact: Andy Aderman

A photocensus conducted on June 30, 2016 found a minimum of 1,230 caribou. A similar effort in 2015 found a minimum of 1,313 caribou. A composition survey in October estimated 51 bulls and 40 calves per 100 cows. The previous 5-year average ratios were 44.4 bulls and 45.6 calves per 100 cows. As of December 20, 2016, a total of 39 caribou (28 bulls and 11 cows) have been reported harvested (34 by Federal permit and 5 by State permit).

Moose Contact: Andy Aderman

During the 2016 fall hunt in Unit 17A, 55 bulls were reported harvested (Neil Barten, ADF&G, personal communication). Results of a Refuge-wide moose survey conducted in October are forthcoming. In addition, 44 sightability trials involving radio-collared moose were conducted. Survey crews detected the radio-collared moose in 32 of the trials suggesting a sightability correction factor of 1.375. Snow cover was absent for all areas searched. Another moose population survey on the Togiak Refuge is planned for March 2017.

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 13 wolves from four packs. During summers 2014-2016, we deployed over 400 snares, and collected over 200 brown bear hair samples.

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 (2010-2016). Overall, walrus numbers have declined, with the greatest declines at Cape Peirce and Cape Newenham. Peak counts in the most current year (2015) totaled 1,031 at Cape Peirce, 726 on Hagemeister Island, and 396 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 since cameras were deployed in fall of 2014.

Seabirds Contact: Kara Hilwig

The abundance and reproductive success of black-legged kittiwakes, common murrelets, and pelagic cormorants has been monitored annually at Cape Peirce from 1990-2014, and intermittently at Cape Newenham from 1990-2009. Seabird studies were resumed at Cape Peirce in 2016 with the hiring of a new Seabird Biologist in May. From 1990-2014, average numbers of kittiwakes counted per year ranged from 423-1906 individuals. In 2016, the average count of

kittiwakes was 547. From 1990-2014, average numbers of pelagic cormorants counted per year ranged from 48-149 individuals. In 2016, the average count of cormorants was 32. From 1990-2014, average numbers of common murrelets counted per year ranged from 1680-4563 individuals. In 2016, the average count of murrelets was 83. Observations of murrelets and cormorants were the lowest recorded since the initiation of the monitoring project. Initial observations indicate near complete nest failure for kittiwakes and murrelets. However, large cormorant chicks were observed in early July.

Water Temperature Monitoring Contact: Doug Holt

Stream temperature was monitored at 18 river sites on Togiak Refuge between 2001 and 2016. Temperature was recorded on an hourly and the data were successfully recovered from the field ~75% of the time. Maximum daily mean temperature readings varied from ~11.5 - >20° C across sites, with the Kukaktlim Lake outlet site being the warmest and the Weary River the coldest. There was evidence for a trend of cooler water temperatures from 2001 until about 2012 but that trend has been increasing since summer of 2013.

A die off of stickleback and Alaska blackfish was reported by public users on Kukaktlim Lake and observed by Service employees retrieving temperature loggers on Gechiak Lake. A review of measurements from these loggers showed that temperatures were over 20° C for several hours on several days prior to each observed die off. It is unclear if the fish die offs were a direct result of the sustained high temperatures or a result of other factors, either independently of or in connection with, the temperatures. Constant monitoring of temperature are the only data available on the lakes where the die offs were observed.

Temperature was monitored at 2 lakes with temperature loggers equally spaced from surface to 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. Each gage is instrumented with pressure sensors that measure water level every 15 minutes. On-grounds discharge measurements are made 3 to 6 times a year. In 2014, satellite transmitters were added to the stream gages that allow remote monitoring of the equipment.

Education and Outreach Contact: Terry Fuller

Togiak Refuge has an active education and outreach program including the Migratory Bird Calendar; National Wildlife Refuge Week; career fairs; production of Bristol Bay Field Notes (a new episode airs each week on KDLG); and numerous teacher requested classroom presentations

in 12 villages in the Southwest Region, Lower Kuskokwim, Dillingham City school districts and the Dillingham 7th Day Adventist School. The 2017 Migratory Bird Calendar is now available. Field trips with area students for the 2015-2016 school year included bird walks, animal tracks and ID, 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>. Togiak Refuge has a very active Facebook page which disseminates information on a daily basis to a rapidly growing global audience. Also, the refuge partners with others to conduct three environmental education camps described below:

Cape Peirce Marine Science and Yup'ik Culture Camp Contact: Terry Fuller

In July 2016 an enthusiastic group of eight area junior high students representing three villages traveled to Cape Peirce for this camp. Students experienced outstanding and uncharacteristic sunny weather and were able to observe seabirds, marine mammals, learn how field studies are conducted, as well as learning about food webs and ecological relationships. Students and agency staff also learned about traditional Yup'ik uses of animals and plants and about Native survival skills. This camp is designed to help students gain a better understanding of the biological diversity of a marine ecosystem. It also strengthens their sense of stewardship for local natural resources. Other topics at this camp included tide pools, wilderness survival skills, archery, bear safety, Leave No Trace camping practices and careers with USFWS. Amanda McCutcheon also discussed opportunities with the National Park Service (NPS), her former agency. Traditional councils and school districts from throughout western Bristol Bay are cooperators with this camp.

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

This past June and July (2016), Togiak Refuge helped with the 15th 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. This year Togiak Staff were able to share with camp students about the following: identifying the different species of Pacific salmon at various stages in their development, the salmon life cycle, jobs associated with the fishing industry, salmon in art (fish taxidermy) and archery.

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

The 2016 Float Camp took place on the Pungokepuk River. At this camp, six high school students (two from Manokotak and four 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 Pungokepuk. Rafting skills, water safety, different angling practices (Catch and Release), Leave No Trace camping practices and bear safety were topics during the trip. Students also participated in other outdoor activities such as animal tracking (plaster casting tracks, with several nice bear tracks cast) and wilderness survival skills. This camp helps students understand the biological diversity of riparian ecosystems and the importance of salmon as a nutrient source, while

developing a deeper sense of stewardship for local natural resources. Traditional councils and school districts in western Bristol Bay are cooperators with this camp.

River Ranger Program Contact: Amanda McCutcheon Cochran

The Refuge River Ranger Program was conceived during the public use management planning process and was first implemented in 1991. The program serves many purposes. River Rangers are the main contact source for sport fishermen and local residents. Information distributed to the public includes Service policies, regulations, resource management practices, State sport fish regulations, bear safety, wilderness ethics, Leave-No-Trace camping and information about private lands to prevent trespass. Rangers document public use occurring on the river along with the location and timing of activities, conflicts between users, and sport fish catch/harvest per unit effort. Rangers also assist Refuge and ADF&G staff at the Kanektok River weir and assist Refuge staff with biological studies. In addition, Rangers patrol campsites for litter, monitor compliance of sport fishing guides and offer assistance as needed.

Quinhagak Resident Charlie Roberts was re-hired for summer 2016 to work as a River Ranger on the Kanektok River with Refuge Information Technician (RIT) John Mark. During the Winter Charlie is a student at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Charlie attended the refuge's Summer Outdoor Skills and River Ecology Float Camp several years, and it later lead to this summer job that helps him save money to continue his college education.

Togiak Resident Keemuel Kenrud was hired by the Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation for the summer and was assigned to the Togiak River to work with RIT Pete Abraham. Keemuel was also selected as an Arctic Youth Ambassador. The program was established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, and U.S. Department of State in partnership with nonprofit partner Alaska Geographic. Youth from the program have been featured around Alaska and even in the White House to call attention to environmental and cultural issues in the Arctic.

Solid Waste Removal Contact: Pat Walsh

A new project to identify and remove solid waste from Togiak Refuge was initiated this year. Solid waste damages valuable habitat, negatively impacts ecosystems, and degrades the wilderness character of the refuge. We identified 25 sites consisting of abandoned snow machines, camps gear, fuel cans, and barrels. We cleaned five sites, removing approximately 2,300 pounds of solid waste.

Conservation Easement Baseline Documentation Report Contact: Pat Walsh

Togiak Refuge and Choggiung Ltd. have begun discussions of refuge acquisition of a conservation easement on Choggiung land on the Nushagak Peninsula. We have completed a Baseline Documentation Report which documents existing conditions and conservation values of the land.

Staff Update

Several vacant staff positions were filled this year, and four positions will be vacant at the end of 2016. In January, Wildlife Biologist Roger "Doug" Holt was hired and is overseeing the marine

mammal and water monitoring projects on Togiak Refuge. In May Wildlife Biologist/Pilot Kara Hilwig was hired to oversee the refuge's seabird program and to assist the Refuge with aviation. Amanda McCutcheon Cochran was hired as the Visitor Services Manager in May and is overseeing the Refuge Information Technician (RIT), outreach, environmental education, and river ranger programs. Administrative Officer Debbie Reiswig is transferring to the National Park Service – Denali National Park at the end of December. Also departing in December is Law Enforcement Officer and Pilot Jeff Hicks who is transferring to Kodiak NWR. Long-time Fisheries Biologist Mark Lisac retires January 20, 2017 and Refuge Information Technician Pete Abraham retires December 31, 2016. Debbie, Jeff, Pete, and Mark will all be missed.



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

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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

YUKON RIVER REGIONAL PLANNING TEAM

As authorized under 5AAC 40.300 -40.370

August 17, 2016

To all those interested in Yukon River area salmon resources:

The Yukon River Regional Planning Team (RPT) is preparing to update the Yukon River Regional Comprehensive Salmon Plan (CSP) and seeks your input and participation.

The RPT is authorized by Alaska statutes and regulations and was established by the Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) in 1994. The RPT is comprised of 13 voting members that include nine members nominated from the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) and four from the ADF&G. There are also six ex-officio non-voting members to ensure broader representation along the Yukon River. The RPT has the responsibility to develop and maintain a regional comprehensive salmon plan to rehabilitate natural salmon stocks and supplement natural salmon production. The current Yukon River Regional Comprehensive Salmon Plan (CSP) was approved in 1998 and is still valid but is nearly 20 years old and needs to be updated. It can be viewed at the ADF&G website: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingHatcheriesPlanning.enhance>. If you need a paper copy, please let me know and I will mail one.

At this time, the RPT is beginning to gather information from groups and individuals interested in the salmon resources of the area; subsistence, sport and commercial fishermen; local government and Alaska Native representatives; private citizens and state and federal agency representatives. Public meetings will also be held in the region in the coming year to provide additional opportunities for input.

The purpose of this letter and the upcoming meetings is to gather information on community concerns, salmon use, priorities and preferences, and ideas of what specifically might be done to sustain or increase salmon production. From this information gathering, and using their knowledge of the salmon resources of the Yukon River region, the RPT will evaluate salmon production goals and develop lists of projects, by species and district, to rehabilitate natural salmon stocks and supplement natural salmon production. These projects could be implemented and continued in both the short term (5 years) and long term (10 to 20 years).

Completion and acceptance of a document such as the CSP must follow a definite and widely publicized process that provides as much opportunity for input as possible. Under the State of Alaska Administrative Code, that process includes the following:

- The draft regional comprehensive salmon plan must be distributed for public review;
- The regional planning team shall respond to comments received as a result of these reviews, and may incorporate them in the final draft of the regional comprehensive salmon plan;
- The regional planning team shall submit a final draft of the regional comprehensive salmon plan to the commissioner of ADF&G for review and approval.

CSP update announcement

August 17, 2016

Please take this opportunity to review the current CSP and provide comments to the RPT to assist with the drafting of the CSP update. Comments should be made in writing and submitted to the RPT through the Chair at ADF&G, 333 Raspberry Road, AK 99518, or via e-mail at Jill.klein@alaska.gov. Additional opportunities for commenting will be available through the public meetings and when the draft CSP update is circulated for review.

If you have any questions or require further information, please don't hesitate to ask. Please feel free to circulate this letter as you see fit. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Jill Klein
RPT Chair
ADF&G, Commissioner's Office
333 Raspberry Road
Anchorage, AK 99518
907-267-2228
Jill.klein@alaska.gov

Yukon River Regional Planning Team membership

YRRPT Voting Member:	Representing
Lester Wilde	Coastal
Allen Hanson	Y1
Bill Alstrom	Y2
Basil Larson	Y3
Pollock Simon, Sr.	Koyukuk River
Fred Huntington, Sr.	Y4
Charlie Wright	Y5-A,B,C
Andrew Firmin	Y5-D
Rondell Jimmie	Y6
Sam Rabung	ADFG Commercial Fisheries
Tim Viavant	ADFG Sport Fisheries
Caroline Brown	ADFG Subsistence Fisheries
John Linderman	ADFG Commercial Fisheries

YRRPT Non-voting member:

Tim Andrew	AVCP
Gale Vick	TCC
Fred Bue	USFWS
Jennifer Williams	YDFDA
Stephanie Quinn-Davidson	Yukon Inter Tribal Fish Commission

Chair: Jill Klein, Special Assistant to the Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Support Staff: Bering Sea Fishermen's Association, Chris Stark and Art Nelson

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 <i>Window Opens</i>	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 <i>Window Closes</i> 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**

Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Charter

1. **Committee's Official Designation.** The Council's official designation is the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta 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. Make recommendations on determinations of customary and traditional use of subsistence resources.
 - f. Make recommendations on determinations of rural status.
 - g. Provide recommendations on the establishment and membership of Federal local advisory committees.
5. **Agency or Official to Whom the Council Reports.** The Council reports to the Federal Subsistence Board Chair, who is appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.
6. **Support.** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will provide administrative support for the activities of the Council through the Office of Subsistence Management.
7. **Estimated Annual Operating Costs and Staff Years.** The annual operating costs associated with supporting the Council's functions are estimated to be \$175,000, including all direct and indirect expenses and 1.15 staff years.
8. **Designated Federal Officer.** The DFO is the Subsistence Council Coordinator for the Region or such other Federal employee as may be designated by the Assistant Regional Director – Subsistence, Region 7, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The DFO is a full-time Federal employee appointed in accordance with Agency procedures. The DFO will:
 - Approve or call all of the advisory committee's and subcommittees' meetings,
 - Prepare and approve all meeting agendas,
 - Attend all committee and subcommittee meetings,
 - Adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines adjournment to be in the public interest, and
 - Chair meetings when directed to do so by the official to whom the advisory committee reports.
9. **Estimated Number and Frequency of Meetings.** The Council will meet 1-2 times per year, and at such times as designated by the Federal Subsistence Board Chair or the DFO.
10. **Duration.** Continuing.
11. **Termination.** The Council will be inactive 2 years from the date the Charter is filed, unless prior to that date it is renewed in accordance with the provisions of Section 14 of the FACA. The Council will not meet or take any action without a valid current charter.

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

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

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

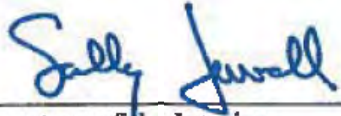
Members will be appointed for 3-year terms. A vacancy on the Council will be filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was made. Members serve at the discretion of the Secretary.

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

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

- 13. Ethics Responsibilities of Members.** No Council or subcommittee member will participate in any specific party matter in which the member has a direct financial interest in a lease, license, permit, contract, claim, agreement, or related litigation with the Department.
- 14. Subcommittees.** Subject to the DFO's approval, subcommittees may be formed for the purpose of compiling information and conducting research. However, such subcommittees must act only under the direction of the DFO and must report their recommendations to the full Council for consideration. Subcommittees must not provide advice or work products directly to the Agency. The Council Chair, with the approval of the DFO, will appoint subcommittee members. Subcommittees will meet as necessary to accomplish their assignments, subject to the approval of the DFO and the availability of resources.

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



Secretary of the Interior

NOV 20 2015

Date Signed

DEC 03 2015

Date Filed

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