



YUKON-KUSKOKWIM DELTA
SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL
ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Materials

March 3-4, 2021



REGION 5
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Seat	Year Appointed Term Expires	Member Name and Community
1	2019	VACANT
2	2019	VACANT
3	2006 2022	John W. Andrew Kwethluk
4	2019 2022	Thomas G. Alstrom Alakanuk
5	2020	VACANT
6	2018 2020	VACANT
7	2017 2020	VACANT Chair
8	2018 2020	VACANT Vice-Chair
9	2018 2020	VACANT
10	2001 2021	Raymond J. Oney Alakanuk Secretary
11	2021	VACANT
12	2003 2021	Robert E. Aloysius Kalskag
13	2018 2021	Richard B. Slats Chevak

YUKON-KUSKOKWIM DELTA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

By teleconference
March 3-4, 2021
convening at 9:00 am 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. 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*)1
- 4. Welcome and Introductions** (*Chair*)
- 5. Review and Adopt Agenda*** (*Chair*)2
- 6. Election of Officers***
 - Chair (*DFO*)
 - Vice-Chair (*New Chair*)
 - Secretary (*New Chair*)
- 7. Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes*** (*Chair*)5
- 8. Reports**
 - Council Member Reports
 - Chair’s Report
- 9. Public and Tribal Comment on Non-Agenda Items** (available each morning)
- 10. Old Business** (*Chair*) [if any]

11. New Business (Chair)

- a. Call for Federal Wildlife Proposals*15
Note: The Council will receive wildlife updates prior to discussion on potential proposals
- b. Council Charter Review*33
- c. Review and approve FY2020 Annual Report*Supplemental
- d. Fisheries Resources Monitoring Program Information Update (OSM)

12. Agency Reports

(Time limit of 15 minutes unless approved in advance)

Tribal Governments

- Orutsararmiut Native Council – *Janessa Esquible* Supplemental
- Native Village of Napaimute – *Dan Gillikin*

Native Organizations

- Association of Village Council Presidents – *Jennifer Hooper*
- Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission – *Mary Peltola*..... Supplemental
- Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission – *Stephanie Quinn-Davidson*

- Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association – *Serena Fitka*..... Supplemental

US Fish and Wildlife Service

- Togiak National Wildlife Refuge – *Kenton Moos* 20
- Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge – *Boyd Blihovde*.....Supplemental
- 2021 Kuskokwim River Salmon management pre-season discussion (USFWS/ADFG)
- 2021 Yukon River Pre-season Salmon Outlook (USFWS/ADFG)

- Bureau of Land Management – *Bonnie Million*.....27

National Park Service – update on request for delegation of authority for individual customary and traditional use determinations.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Office of Subsistence Management

13. Future Meeting Dates*30

- Confirm Fall 2021 meeting date and location
- Select Winter 2022 meeting date and location

14. Closing Comments

Reasonable Accommodations

The Federal Subsistence Board is committed to providing access to this meeting for all participants. Please direct all requests for special accommodation needs to Eva Patton, 907-786-3358, eva_patton@fws.gov, or 800-877-8339 (TTY), by close of business on February 23, 2021.

DRAFT

YUKON-KUSKOKWIM DELTA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Via Teleconference

October 6-7, 2020

Invocation

Richard Slats gave an invocation.

Call to Order, Roll Call and Quorum Establishment

The meeting was called to order on Tuesday, October 6 at 9:15 AM. Council members John Andrew, Carl Maxie Sr., Phillip Peter Sr., Richard Slats, Raymond Oney, James Landlord, Thomas Alstrom, and Alissa Nadine Rogers were present participating by teleconference. Robert Aloysius was not present and was excused. With eight out of nine seated Council members present, Quorum was established. The Council has four vacant seats.

Attendees:

Via teleconference

- *Office of Subsistence Management, Anchorage:* Eva Patton, Greg Risdahl, Pippa Kenner, Cory Graham, Tom Kron
- *Federal Subsistence Board member:* Rhonda Pitka, Beaver
- *Orutsararmiut Native Council, Bethel:* Janessa Esquible, Caroline Black, Avery Hoffman, Mathew Van Kapsner
- *Kuskokwim River Intertribal Fish Commission:* Mary Peltola, Terese Schomogyi, *Bethel;* Kevin Whitworth, *McGrath*
- *Association of Village Council Presidents, Bethel:* Jennifer Hooper, Paige Jones
- Lamont Albertson, Aniak
- Native Village of Napaimute: Dan Gillikin
- *Native Community of Akiak:* Mike Williams, Moses Jones, Robert Williams, James Nicholai
- *Organized Village of Kwethluk:* Evan Olick
- *Kwethluk Incorporated:* Chariton Epchook, Anthony Olick
- *Native Village of Alakanuk:* Gabriel Buster
- *Calista Corporation:* Mary Martinez
- *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge, Bethel:* Boyd Blihovde, Ray Born, Chris Tulik, Aaron Moses, Gary DeCossas, Matt Donald
- *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Togiak National Wildlife Refuge, Dillingham:* Andy Aderman

- *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Carol Damburg, Anchorage, Gerald Maschmann, Jan Conitz, Fairbanks*
- *Bureau of Land Management, Anchorage: Bonnie Million, Bruce Seppi*
- *Bureau of Indian Affairs, Anchorage: Glenn Chen*
- *National Park Service, Fairbanks: Marcy Okada*
- *Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation Palmer: Mark Burch, Anchorage: Todd Rinaldi, Commercial Fisheries Division: Ben Gray, Nicholas Smith, Keegan Birchfield Anchorage: Jeff Estensen, Deena Jalen, Sabrina Garcia, Fairbanks; Sportfish Division: John Chythlook, Subsistence Division: David Runfola, Chris McDevitt, Fairbanks*
- *Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association: Serena Fitka, Catherine Moncrieff*
- *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association Alaska Fisheries Science Center, Juneau Jim Murphy, Ellen Yasumiishi,*

Review and Adopt Agenda

Motion by Mr. Peter, Sr., seconded by Mr. Andrew, to adopt the agenda as read with the following changes:

- Add student interns Avery Hoffman and Mathew Van Kapsner to agenda to co-present on ONC fisheries and ADF&G sonar project.
- Move ADF&G Mulchatna caribou herd update to earlier on the agenda
- Update on presenters for agenda items as needed
- Allow for public comment opportunity after lunch and end of day to better accommodate when public is able to call in.

The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion #2 by Mr. Andrew, seconded by Mr. Oney, to approve the March 16 -17, 2020 meeting minutes as with the following modifications: Last name spelling corrections for meeting participants from Alakanuk should be spelled Paul *Kassock* and George *Peter*, and Native Village of Kwethluk participants should be listed as *Evan Nicolai*, Martin *Nicolai*, and Frank *Ashepak*.

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

The Council also discussed interest in having longer more detailed minutes, including public discussion rather than the new abbreviated format recently implemented by the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM). OSM staff noted that complete verbatim transcripts are available for each meeting and posted to the website for public access. Copies of meeting transcripts can also be mailed by request.

Council Member and Chair Reports

Richard Slats of Chevak reported that traditionally ptarmigan have always been the first red meat of the year followed by geese. Then when the fish come in, they either fish off of Hooper Bay or go to the two rivers south of Chevak where they traditionally set up fish camps. King Salmon are shrinking in size,

according to elders. Richard report had gear challenges himself this year and an injury that made it hard to get into a boat so he plans to fish for whitefish and pike by jigging under the ice this winter.

Richard reported that he tries to keep abreast of all the issues in the region. Climate change is making it hard for subsistence users and now with the pandemic food security has become even more of a priority. He asked everyone to keep this in mind that the pandemic has made it even more difficult for rural communities to get access to fresh healthy food.

Raymond Oney of Alakanuk reported that subsistence fisheries have been on the top of their mind since breakup because it provides their food security for winter. The Yukon had a good spring breakup but the water was high and the Chinook came in late - people wondered where the fish were. There were few fish all summer all the way from the headwaters all the way down the river. People reported that the salmon did not show up on the spawning grounds. Creeks that normally were full of fish had none. Even the bears were not catching fish for the winter. He is concerned that in addition to Chinook, the Coho and summer Chum Salmon have been way down too. Ray expressed that it was probably the worst fishing season in his lifetime. He stressed the need to address climate change, which is accelerating out of control. Everyone needs to work together to find solutions and rebuild fish stocks on the Yukon River. Everyone needs to be at the table, but understand it will take reducing harvest to save the Chinook. He stressed that they are fortunate to have supported a moratorium on moose decades ago, which let the moose population rebuild and now they are abundant.

Thomas Alstrom of Alakanuk reported that the Yukon Delta is made up of three main rivers: the north channel near Kotlik has colder water, the middle mouth, and the south river mouth which has three villages on them. He said that the fish may have been late because they were waiting for the strong currents and water deep water to subside and waiting out in the ocean in the colder water in Norton Sound. Then, when the fish came, they went into the north mouth in the colder water. He suggested that ADF&G focused the test fishing on the north mouth, which is the smallest. He observed more Chums and Cohos coming in more through the north mouth this year.

Thomas reported that people in Alakanuk have been catching a lot of Imarpinraq (Bering Cisco) along the coastline. And now they are just beginning to see snow geese fly and Canadian geese are starting to group up to fly south. Lamprey Eels are also grouping up and getting ready to migrate upstream, and they are catching some. They are also seeing some belugas swimming upriver in the last few days.

James Landlord of Mountain Village reported that summer Chum Salmon were slow coming in. Last month some people in his community said they didn't catch enough fish to put away for winter and several families didn't catch any salmon at all even when they tried dip netting in several locations. James reported that the fall Chum Salmon were late, too. There was hardly any wind this summer – it was mostly calm conditions. He notes the fish come when there are high winds to mix up the water at the mouth, but this summer it was real calm with hardly any winds from the south or southwest. At least there were plenty of moose to go around, and he thinks everyone caught their moose this year.

Phillip Peter Sr. of Akiachak reported that moose harvest was good for his community this year but is very concerned about subsistence fishing for Chinook Salmon. The Chinook were late and not coming in heavily in June. Then at the end of July they had the third opening with Federal management but few people got King salmon. Phillip reported that for the fourth opening, he did pretty good with his fish catch. Chums and Reds are doing okay and he caught quite a few of them. Phillip is concerned they are losing the older, larger Chinooks and is worried the smaller 6 inch mesh is just choking them. He feels that the subsistence way of life for fishing is changing with too many restrictions but something needs to be done to work together to protect the Chinook Salmon. His Grandmother used to tell him to not catch too many Chinook – he would catch 20 fish and his Grandma was satisfied with that. But now the population of each family member in the village is growing and when there are fish openings, they have to wait in line to find a spot to drift.

John Andrew of Kwethluk reported that everything was late after spring breakup; by the time they were whitefish fishing in the lakes they were late. The whitefish were really small this year, and they were sporadic on the river – he didn't catch many whitefish. John reported that the Chinook, Chum, Reds, and Coho Salmon were all late this year. And the Chinook were small, but he didn't bother to go out with 4 inch mesh gear allowed because the fish tear up the nets and get hurt and don't make it to the spawning grounds. John highlighted that moose season was excellent this year, but there were wolves everywhere even coming up right onto the Kwethluk airstrip road.

Carl Maxie of Napaskiak reported that he has to look for a good fishing spot every year because the fish move around in shifting channels. There were less salmon this year, but he thought they were larger in size overall with some opportunity for Reds and Chums in June. He's sees lots of seals coming into the Kuskokwim River and it seems like the whitefish are moving up the river. Carl suggested more monitoring fish movement to plan around opening subsistence fishing opportunity since fish were pretty spotty when they did get a chance to fish. His grandfather always used to tell him that when the winds would blow up the Yukon and Kuskokwim River, that the fish would start to come upriver in big numbers, and that was the good time to fish. He noted there are lots of moose in the area and would like to see expanded hunting opportunity. He hopes everyone gets through this pandemic thing soon.

Alissa Rogers of Bethel reported that when she was growing up she spent almost every weekend in a different village hunting or fishing with her relatives. She reported that this year the Sheefish just trickled in and her Sheefish catch was small. They are seeing a lot more Blackfish and they were big. Alissa reported that her family hasn't fished for Chinook since 2005. They did catch some Chums and Reds, but the meat was soft and needed to be put on ice right away. She went fishing for Silver Salmon twice this fall, and they were really nice - the meat was pristine with no abnormalities. They caught more pike than whitefish this year and heard reports of people catching small, tiny Kings while fishing for whitefish. She noted the fishing opportunity openers did not coincide with the fish migrations and weather. Lamprey reports were unusual, they normally don't catch them till summer or fall, but this year there were bunches of Lamprey swimming on the surface of the water near the Bethel sea wall in the spring. She noted they looked like balls of snakes. Geese and swans are grouping up now and getting ready to fly south. She is not seeing as many small birds as usual, but did notice the swallows left really early this year. Blueberries

were really big, but sour. There were lots of salmon berries and there are more highbush cranberries around this year. There's a lot of mouse food (seeds gathered by mice) everywhere – their caches are bigger than usual and plentiful this year. Her own garden didn't do as well because of the weather, but they still got potatoes and all the root vegetables did well. Alissa reported they did get out moose hunting, but otherwise didn't get out much this year because of COVID-19 and they are being really careful.

Old Business

805(c) Report – Update

The Council received a written report on the Federal Subsistence Board Action on 2020-22 wildlife proposals affecting the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region as directed under 805(c) of ANILCA. Eva Patton, Council Coordinator provided a brief overview of this report.

Regional Advisory Council Nominations – Update

Fifteen applications were received for the Y-K Delta RAC region - plenty of applications to fill all currently vacant and expiring Council seats. Nominations are now in the Secretary of Interior's Office for final appointment due the first week of December 2020. New applications for the 2021 RAC appointment cycle are being sent out widely now and all are encouraged to apply from across the Y-K Delta region. Every year there are three to four seats that expire on each Council.

New Business

Fisheries Proposals and Closure Reviews

Office of Subsistence Management staff Pippa Kenner and Cory Graham provided the Council with overview and analysis of fisheries proposals and closure reviews for the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region.

Regional:

FP21-01: Repeal closure to subsistence fishing prior to, during and after State commercial fishing periods in Kuskokwim Districts 1 and 2 – salmon. Motion by Mr. Peter, Sr., seconded by Mr. Maxie to support FP21-01. Council Justification: This proposal will minimize confusion; aligns State and Federal regulations (currently the State regulations are less restrictive than the Federal Subsistence regulations); makes regulations less restrictive; gives subsistence users more opportunity to fish without being closed for so long around commercial fishing periods which currently have very few participants anyway since there is no commercial buyer on the Kuskokwim. There are only a few catcher sellers taking part in commercial openings. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

FP21-02: Modify spacing requirements for set gillnets in Kuskokwim River tributaries from 150 feet to 75 feet – all fish. Motion by Mr. Peter Sr. and seconded by Mr. Oney to support FP21-02. The motion failed with 3 votes in favor and 5 against and 1 absent.

Council justification: Reducing set net distance in Kuskokwim tributary rivers from 150 feet to 75 feet will not increase actual opportunity – it will only increase crowding and less efficient fishing for all. When set nets are only 75 feet apart, the nets set upstream are blocked or corked, and everyone will have a difficult time catching fish. Set net sights are managed traditionally by families and they use the same

eddies year after year. Set net sites so close together will reduce the number of fish caught by everyone upstream. Good set net sights are limited, and people often try to set nets as close to the mouth of the rivers as they can. Reducing the distance between nets will cause crowding and reduces safety. Reduced distance will increase density of nets at the mouth of tributary rivers and there will be a greater likelihood that nets will be run over by boats especially at night with regular boat traffic to and from villages and subsistence activities. This poses a safety issue and also increases likelihood of nets and boat motors getting damaged.

FP21-03: Modify language to clarify set gillnet orientation in tributaries of the Kuskokwim River – all fish. Motion by Mr. Peter, Sr. and seconded by Mr. Oney Council to support FP21-03. Council justification: This proposal clarifies that it is legal in both State and Federal regulations to use a drift gill net in tributaries, which is a traditional practice. The Council also stressed that this is done with care to not overfish or disturb spawning areas and it is important to continue Chinook Salmon conservation measures at this time by closing fishing on tributary rivers when needed. The Council confirmed with the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Manager that this proposal will clarify regulations and that it is legal to use drift gill nets in tributaries, but inseason management tools can still restrict fishing methods when needed for Chinook Salmon and other fish conservation measures. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Crossover:

FCR21-04: Closure to Federally qualified subsistence users in the Yukon drainage, Jim River – all fish. Motion by Mr. Oney and seconded by Mr. Peter, Sr. to defer FCR21-04 to the home RAC region. Council justification: Defer to the Western Interior RAC: this stream is in that region and they would be most familiar with subsistence fishing communities in this area. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

FCR21-07: Closure to Federally qualified subsistence users in the Yukon drainage, Nome Creek – Arctic Grayling. Motion by Mr. Landlord and seconded by Mr. Oney to defer FCR21-07 to the home RAC region. Council justification: Defer to the Eastern Interior RAC: this stream is in that region and they would be most familiar with subsistence fishing communities in this area. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

2022 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program

Pippa Kenner, Anthropologist with Office of Subsistence Management presented the Council with the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP) Priority Information Needs (PINs) working group discussion results for the Yukon and Kuskokwim River regions. The Council discussed details of research priorities at length and heard from local fishers on their observations.

Motion by Mr. Andrew and seconded by Mr. Maxie to support the following Kuskokwim FRMP Priority Information Needs (PINs):

- Impacts of climate change in continued harvest and use of fish; and impacts of climate change on fish, for example fish migration, spawning, and life cycle.
- Knowledge of population, reproduction, and health of spawning habitat for declining Humpback Whitefish populations.
- Documentation of oral histories describing salmon harvest methods in the Kuskokwim River drainage, specifically the period before the development of the modern commercial fishery.
- Reliable quantitative and/or qualitative estimates of salmon run size, escapement, and harvest in the Kuskokwim River drainage including Kuskokwim Bay tributaries.
- Explore new and cost effective methods for conducting in-season salmon run and harvest assessments in the Kuskokwim River drainage, with an emphasis on community-based monitoring.
- Estimates of “quality of escapement” measures to help inform salmon stock assessments, for example potential egg deposition, age, sex, and size composition of spawners, and advancing genetic baselines.
- Improved Kuskokwim River drainage-wide and sub-stock specific salmon run size and timing forecasts.
- Distribution, abundance, condition, and survival of juvenile and out-migrating salmon in the Kuskokwim River drainage.
- Traditional ecological knowledge of fishes.
- Information sharing between stakeholders and agencies concerning salmon conservation in the Kuskokwim River drainage, for example, outreach to villages using the media and other methods.
- The meaning and significance of sharing, barter, and/or customary trade of subsistence foods in the context of the social, cultural, and economic life of people in the lower Kuskokwim drainage.
- Effects of environmental stressors, such as heat stress, on salmon mortality during adult upriver migration, and/or pre-spawn mortality within spawning tributaries.
- Effects of *Ichthyophonus* infection on Chinook and Chum Salmon mortality and spawning success.
- Assessment of incidental Chinook Salmon mortality with gillnets, with particular consideration for delayed mortality from entanglement or direct mortality from drop-outs (for example, loss of Chinook Salmon from 6-inch mesh nets).
- Collect baseline information on the resident fish community to better understand potential impacts and to assess impacts of proposed development projects.

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

- Motion by Mr. Oney and seconded by Mr. Peter to approve the following Yukon region FRMP PINs: Impacts of climate change in continued harvest and use of fish and impacts of climate change on fish, for example, impacts to fish migration, spawning and life cycle.
- Effects of environmental stressors, such as heat stress on salmon mortality during adult upriver migration and/or pre-spawn mortality within spawning tributaries.
- Effects of *Ichthyophonus* infection on Chinook salmon mortality and spawning success.
- Knowledge of population, reproduction and health of spawning habitat for Bering Cisco and Humpback Whitefish.
- Reliable estimates of Chinook, Summer Chum, fall Chum and Coho salmon escapements and/or harvest, particularly sub-stocks that are large contributors to the total run.
- Estimates of quality of escapement measures for Chinook Salmon, for example potential egg deposition, age, sex and size composition of spawners, percentage of females, percentage of jacks, and

spawning habitat utilization with an emphasis on Canadian origin stocks.

- Reliable in-season harvest of salmon harvest in the lower, middle and upper Yukon River subsistence fishery.
- Reliable estimates of age, sex, length and genetic composition of salmon harvested in the subsistence fishery with emphasis on Chinook and fall Chum Salmon.
- In-season estimates of genetic stock composition of Chinook, summer Chum and fall Chum Salmon runs and harvest.
- Reliable methods of forecasting Chinook, summer Chum, fall Chum and Coho Salmon run abundance.
- Assessment of incidental mortality with gillnets, dipnets and seines with particular consideration for delayed mortality from entanglement from dropouts and live release of Chinook Salmon, for example loss of Chinook Salmon from six inch mesh net during Chum Salmon fisheries and the live release of Chinook Salmon from dipnets and seines.
- Traditional ecological knowledge of fish.

Identify Issues for FY2020 Annual Report

The Council identified the following topics for inclusion into the FY-2020 Annual Report:

- Climate change mitigation
- Include TEK along with science studies
- Effects of the pandemic on food security
- Declare when food security or other emergencies that are going on and put them on the forefront
- Continue monitoring Mulchatna caribou herd and other inventory and monitoring studies
- Need to protect the resources for people that live in the villages who depend on them for their survival.
- Hardship of meeting by teleconference and request for technical support for Councils for video conferencing.

Proposed Review Processes for National Park Service Individual Customary and Traditional Use Determinations

Marcy Okada with the National Park Service (NPS) presented the Council with the proposed changes to the NPS individual customary and traditional use determinations review process and requested the Council's opinion on the changes.

Motion by Mr. Andrew and seconded by Mr. Alstrom to take no action on this request from the Park Service. The motion passed by unanimous vote. The Council expressed frustration at the lack of advance detailed information on this Individual C&T request before it being presented to the Council for action and that a full analysis of the request and effects should have been provided to the Council and public for review. While there are no National Park Service lands within the boundaries of the Y-K Delta RAC region, the Council is not comfortable making recommendations without adequate information and understanding of how this may impact subsistence communities and other regions who would be directly

affected by the National Park Service independently making individual C&T determinations without it going through the Federal Subsistence Management Program public process.

Agency Reports:

- Office of Subsistence Management Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program presented by Pippa Kenner
- Orutsararmiut Native Council report and Partners Program updates presented by Janessa Esquible and Avery Hoffman
- Native Village of Napaimute report and Partners Program update presented by Dan Gillikin
- Association of Village Council Presidents report presented by Paige Jones
- Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission report presented by Mary Peltola
- Kuskokwim Community Based Fish Harvest Monitoring report by Lamont Albertson
- Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association report presented by Serena Fitka and Catherine Moncrieff
- 2020 Yukon River Salmon Season Summary presented by Gerald Maschmann, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Deena Jalen and Jeff Estensen, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- 2020 Kuskokwim River Salmon Season Summary presented by Gary DeCossas and Ray Born, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Nicholas Smith, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge updates presented by Boyd Blihovde and Aaron Moses
- Togiak National Wildlife Refuge updates presented by Andy Aderman
- Bureau of Land Management written report summary read into record (Bonnie Million offline)
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence, report presented by David Runfoia
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, caribou report by Todd Rinaldi
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Commercial Fisheries Division, Bethel Sonar report by Keegan Birchfield with ONC student intern Matthew Van Kapsner.
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration report on Marine Ecology of Western Alaska Juvenile Salmon by Jim Murphy and co-presented with ADF&G Sabrina Garcia
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, report on Bering Sea ecosystem and environmental change presented by Ellen Yasumiishi
- Office of Subsistence Management report provided by Greg Risdahl

Future Meeting Dates:

Winter 2021 meeting to be held March 3-4, 2021 in Bethel

Fall 2021 meeting to be held October 6-7 in Bethel

Eva Patton, Designated Federal Officer
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management

Alissa Nadine Rogers, Chair
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These minutes will be formally considered by the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its winter 2021 meeting, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes at that meeting.

A more detailed report of this meeting, copies of the transcript, and meeting handouts are available upon request. Call Eva Patton at 1-800-478-1456 or 907-786-3358, email eva_patton@fws.gov.

DRAFT



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

Federal Subsistence Board Informational Flyer



Forest Service

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

How to Submit a Proposal to Change Federal Subsistence Regulations

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

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

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

What your proposal should contain:

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

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

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.

Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Correspondence Policy

The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) recognizes the value of the Regional Advisory Councils' role in the Federal Subsistence Management Program. The Board realizes that the Councils must interact with fish and wildlife resource agencies, organizations, and the public as part of their official duties, and that this interaction may include correspondence. Since the beginning of the Federal Subsistence Program, Regional Advisory Councils have prepared correspondence to entities other than the Board. Informally, Councils were asked to provide drafts of correspondence to the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) for review prior to mailing. Recently, the Board was asked to clarify its position regarding Council correspondence. This policy is intended to formalize guidance from the Board to the Regional Advisory Councils in preparing correspondence.

The Board is mindful of its obligation to provide the Regional Advisory Councils with clear operating guidelines and policies, and has approved the correspondence policy set out below. The intent of the Regional Advisory Council correspondence policy is to ensure that Councils are able to correspond appropriately with other entities. In addition, the correspondence policy will assist Councils in directing their concerns to others most effectively and forestall any breach of department policy.

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Title VIII required the creation of Alaska's Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils to serve as advisors to the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture and to provide meaningful local participation in the management of fish and wildlife resources on Federal public lands. Within the framework of Title VIII and the Federal Advisory Committee Act, Congress assigned specific powers and duties to the Regional Advisory Councils. These are also reflected in the Councils' charters. (*Reference: ANILCA Title VIII §805, §808, and §810; Implementing regulations for Title VIII, 50 CFR 100 __.11 and 36 CFR 242 __.11; Implementing regulations for FACA, 41 CFR Part 102-3.70 and 3.75*)

The Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture created the Federal Subsistence Board and delegated to it the responsibility for managing fish and wildlife resources on Federal public lands. The Board was also given the duty of establishing rules and procedures for the operation of the Regional Advisory Councils. The Office of Subsistence Management was established within the Federal Subsistence Management Program's lead agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to administer the Program. (*Reference: 36 CFR Part 242 and 50 CFR Part 100 Subparts C and D*)

Policy

1. The subject matter of Council correspondence shall be limited to matters over which the Council has authority under §805(a)(3), §808, §810 of Title VIII, Subpart B §____.11(c) of regulation, and as described in the Council charters.
2. Councils may, and are encouraged to, correspond directly with the Board. The Councils are advisors to the Board.
3. Councils are urged to also make use of the annual report process to bring matters to the Board's attention.

4. As a general rule, Councils discuss and agree upon proposed correspondence during a public meeting. Occasionally, a Council chair may be requested to write a letter when it is not feasible to wait until a public Council meeting. In such cases, the content of the letter shall be limited to the known position of the Council as discussed in previous Council meetings.
5. Except as noted in Items 6, 7, and 8 of this policy, Councils will transmit all correspondence to the Assistant Regional Director (ARD) of OSM for review prior to mailing. This includes, but is not limited to, letters of support, resolutions, letters offering comment or recommendations, and any other correspondence to any government agency or any tribal or private organization or individual.
 - a. Recognizing that such correspondence is the result of an official Council action and may be urgent, the ARD will respond in a timely manner.
 - b. Modifications identified as necessary by the ARD will be discussed with the Council chair. Councils will make the modifications before sending out the correspondence.
6. Councils may submit written comments requested by Federal land management agencies under ANILCA §810 or requested by regional Subsistence Resource Commissions (SRC) under §808 directly to the requesting agency. Section 808 correspondence includes comments and information solicited by the SRCs and notification of appointment by the Council to an SRC.
7. Councils may submit proposed regulatory changes or written comments regarding proposed regulatory changes affecting subsistence uses within their regions to the Alaska Board of Fisheries or the Alaska Board of Game directly. A copy of any comments or proposals will be forwarded to the ARD when the original is submitted.
8. Administrative correspondence such as letters of appreciation, requests for agency reports at Council meetings, and cover letters for meeting agendas will go through the Council's regional coordinator to the appropriate OSM division chief for review.
9. Councils will submit copies of all correspondence generated by and received by them to OSM to be filed in the administrative record system.
10. Except as noted in Items 6, 7, and 8, Councils or individual Council members acting on behalf of or as representative of the Council may not, through correspondence or any other means of communication, attempt to persuade any elected or appointed political officials, any government agency, or any tribal or private organization or individual to take a particular action on an issue. This does not prohibit Council members from acting in their capacity as private citizens or through other organizations with which they are affiliated.

Approved by the Federal Subsistence Board on June 15, 2004.



United States Department of the Interior

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



INFORMATION BULLETIN - January 2021

Cooperative Salmon Escapement Monitoring Projects. Contact: Pat Walsh

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) has monitored Chinook, chum and sockeye salmon escapement on the Middle Fork Goodnews River since 1980. Togiak National Wildlife Refuge (Togiak Refuge) has worked with ADF&G since 1992 to assist in staffing the weir until 2017, after which reduced funding prevented providing staff assistance.

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

The Togiak Refuge fisheries biologist retired in 2017 and the position has not been refilled. However, the current Togiak Refuge manager has identified re-filling this position as a high priority, as well as re-engaging in cooperative salmon monitoring projects.

Mulchatna Caribou Contact: Andy Aderman

Togiak Refuge assisted ADF&G with telemetry and law enforcement flights, satellite data acquisition, data entry and database management. A July 2020 post-calving survey estimated the Mulchatna herd at approximately 13,500 caribou, similar to the 2019 estimate, and well below the population objective of 30,000-80,000 caribou.

Togiak Refuge Manager Moos, under authority delegated by the Federal Subsistence Board, opened caribou hunting (Aug. 1-Sept. 20, 1 bull) and closed Federal public lands in the hunt area for caribou hunting except by federally qualified rural residents. The Federal hunt ran concurrently with the State of Alaska registration permit hunt **RC503** for Mulchatna caribou. As of December 28, the reported harvest was 54 bulls.

Nushagak Peninsula Caribou Contact: Andy Aderman

Reported harvest for the 2019-2020 hunt was 307 caribou (132 bulls, 166 cows, 9 unknown sex), of which 288 were taken under the Federal FC1702 permit, 12 under the State RC501 permit, and 7 taken illegally. Over the last four seasons hunters have reported a total of 799 caribou. A photocensus of the Nushagak Peninsula Herd on July 7, 2020 found a minimum of 209 caribou in 2 groups which resulted in a total population estimate of 226 +/- 47 (209-273) caribou at the 95% confidence interval. A similar effort in 2019 found a minimum of 710 caribou in 5 groups

resulting in an estimate of 822 +/- 164 (710-986) caribou. Hunting related mortality (reported and unreported harvest, wounding loss) accounted for the majority of the population decline. Predation on caribou occurs primarily by brown bears and wolves, however, other predators (coyotes, wolverine, lynx) occur on the Nushagak Peninsula that likely kill some caribou.

The Nushagak Peninsula Caribou Planning Committee met via teleconference July 28, 2020 and reviewed results of previous hunts, population and lichen monitoring and the harvest strategy changes made at the October 2019 meeting. Those changes included lowering both the population objective and optimum level to 200-600 and 400, respectively. Agency biologists agreed a limited harvest of bulls (ten or less) would not impact the growth of the herd. A majority of the Committee favored having a hunt with a total of 5 permits (bulls only), with all permits going to Manokotak. Refuge Manager Moos' decision was to open the Federal caribou hunt on the Nushagak Peninsula from August 1-September 20 with a harvest objective of 5 bulls and all 5 permits going to the Manokotak Village Council. No caribou have been reported harvested in the 2020-2021 Federal permit hunt.

Moose Contact: Andy Aderman

In October 2019 a moose survey conducted in Unit 17A estimated 2139 +/-495 (1644-2634) moose at the 90% confidence interval. This was about a 10% decline from the March 2017 estimate 2370 +/- 564 (1806-2934) moose at the 90% confidence interval. Moose seen during the October 2019 survey (249 cows, 224 bulls, and 26 calves) resulted in estimates of 90 bulls and 10.4 calves per 100 cows.

During the 2019-2020 winter moose hunts in Unit 17A (RM 575 and RM 576), hunters reported harvesting 9 bulls and 36 cows. In the Goodnews area winter moose hunt (RM 621), hunters reported harvesting 2 moose.

Staff from the Togiak Refuge and ADF&G-Bethel conducted minimum count surveys in the Goodnews and Kanektok/Arolik moose hunt areas during February/March 2019. In the Goodnews area a minimum of 450 moose (386 adults, 64 calves) were observed. The Goodnews area moose population has more than doubled since the last minimum count of 203 in March 2012. In the Kanektok/Arolik area a minimum of 236 moose (205 adults, 31 calves) were observed. The Kanektok/Arolik moose population increased 35 percent since the last minimum count of 173 in March 2018. A moose population minimum count is planned for the combined Goodnews and Kanektok/Arolik areas during February/March 2021.

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 41 wolves from seven packs. During summers 2014-2016, we deployed over 400 snares, and collected over 200 brown bear hair samples. Initial analysis in 2017 identified data gaps, so additional bear hair was collected in 2018. Lab analyses are complete and modelling is currently underway.

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 (2010-2019). Overall, walrus numbers observed at haul-outs on Togiak Refuge have declined, with the greatest declines at Cape Peirce and Cape Newenham. Peak counts in the most current year when every day was counted (2016) were 401 at Cape Peirce, 897 on Hagemeister Island, and 454 at Cape Newenham. Walrus using haul-outs in Bristol Bay are typically recorded from late spring to late fall but were observed at Cape Newenham every month since cameras were deployed in fall of 2014 until February 2017. Data were recovered at all sites during summer 2019 and are currently being examined. In an effort to reduce potential spread of COVID-19 in the community travel to field sites was strictly limited and sites were not visited during 2020. The most recent report was completed in August 2019 and is available to the public at <https://ecos.fws.gov/ServCat/DownloadFile/168185>.

Seabirds Contact: Pat Walsh

The abundance and reproductive success of black-legged kittiwakes, common murre, and pelagic cormorants was monitored annually at Cape Peirce from 1990-2014 and 2016-2019. Monitoring was postponed in 2020. In the past 29 years, the long-term average number of birds counted on study plots was 1,075 kittiwakes (range = 238-1,906), 2,595 murre (range = 53-4,563), and 80 cormorants (range = 15-123). Twenty-nine years of seabird monitoring at Cape Peirce has revealed high variation in nesting adult counts and reproductive success, but never four consecutive years of reproductive success as low as 2016-2019 for all three species. Population and productivity monitoring will continue in June 2021 at Cape Peirce.

Invasive Aquatic Plant Surveys Contact: Kara Hilwig

Elodea spp. is a highly invasive and difficult to control aquatic plant implicated in the degradation and loss of fish habitat across the world. It was confirmed present in Alaska in 2009 and is now found in several waterbodies across the State. In 2020, Refuge and Park staff cooperated to complete the third round of *Elodea* surveys within the Togiak Refuge, Wood-Tikchik State Park and the surrounding area. Twenty-five annual monitoring sites have been established in high use areas such as lodge docks, boat ramps, and popular float plane destinations. Thus far, no *Elodea* has been detected. Funding proposals are currently being submitted to continue this work in 2021.

Water Temperature Monitoring Contact: Doug Holt

Stream temperature monitoring has been conducted at 21 locations on 14 rivers in Togiak Refuge since August 2001. Continuous hourly water temperatures were recorded at each site. Over 2.4 million temperature records were collected, quality-graded, and digitally stored in a relational database through October 2019. The warmest month each year was July. The maximum recorded mean daily summer temperatures varied by location, with median values of 9.8–22.9°C

across sites. The warmest temperatures were observed in the Kukaktlim Lake outlet and the coolest temperatures were observed in the Weary River. The most recent stream temperature monitoring report was completed in September 2018 and is available to the public at <https://ecos.fws.gov/ServCat/DownloadFiles/169087>. A report detailing measurements recorded through summer 2019 is currently under review and a link to that report will be provided when the report is finalized and posted.

We used moored all-season temperature arrays to record hourly temperatures throughout the water column in 2 lakes on or near the Togiak Refuge 2011-2018. The lakes differed significantly in surface area, water volume, and elevation with Ongivinuk Lake being smaller and at higher elevation than Snake Lake. We observed variation in lake ice phenology and fewer days of ice cover on Snake Lake than on Ongivinuk Lake each winter when data were available for both lakes. We observed that both lakes were dimictic, exhibiting turnover events in spring and fall. We observed water temperatures in excess of standards for fish rearing and migration habitats during summer down to 12.5 m in Snake Lake and down to 5 m in Ongivinuk Lake. The most recent lake water temperature monitoring report was completed in March 2019 and is available to the public at <https://ecos.fws.gov/ServCat/DownloadFile/169088>. In an effort to reduce spread of COVID-19 sites were not visited during 2020.

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, although due to Covid-19 travel restrictions, no field work occurred in 2020.

Recovery of overgrazed lichen on Hagemeister Island Contact: Pat Walsh

Reindeer were removed from Hagemeister Island in 1993 following overgrazing that resulted in starvation in about 1/3 of the herd and damage to reindeer habitat. Since then, Togiak Refuge biologists have monitored the recovery of lichen communities and have found that average lichen biomass increased from 450 lb/acre in 2003 to 709 lb/acre in 2015. We calculated time to recovery with three competing growth curves which estimate grazeable biomass may be reached in 34-41 years and full recovery in 71 – approximately 400 years. Lichen communities were composed of various mixtures of at least 78 lichen species, but were dominated by important reindeer forage species. While reindeer overgrazing diminished forage quantity, it did not eradicate preferred forage. Results from this study have been accepted for publication in the journal *Rangifer*.

Education and Outreach Contact: Terry Fuller and Jon Dyazuk

Togiak Refuge has an active education and outreach program, conducting an average of 60+ classroom visits throughout 12 Bristol Bay villages annually, during a normal school year. That total was cut short for the end of the 2019-2020 calendar year due to covid-19. Classroom visits include lessons about the Migratory Bird Calendar, National Wildlife Refuge Week, careers in natural resource conservation, and numerous teacher requested classroom presentations. The

Refuge works with several school districts and private schools including the Southwest Region, Lower Kuskokwim, Dillingham City school districts and the Dillingham 7th Day Adventist School. Some topics often include bird walks, wilderness survival skills, archery, salmon life cycles, aquatic resources, and bear safety. At this time, outreach is still being impacted by covid-19; we are hopeful for a return to full outreach efforts in the near future. The refuge website is also an education tool and is available at <http://togiak.fws.gov>.

Togiak Refuge, in partnership with ADF&G and the Southwest Region School District, also conducts hunter safety courses throughout western Bristol Bay Villages. Classes have impacted more than 100 students in Manokotak, Dillingham, Twin Hills, Togiak, Aleknagik and Quinhagak. The refuge plans to continue these courses, as requested, in 2021 and is in the planning stages to add a National Archery in School Program to its offerings in the future, pending a return to normal outreach efforts.

The Refuge education program also produces Bristol Bay Field Notes, an award-winning weekly radio program on KDLG 670 AM that covers an array of outdoor-related topics (past episodes can be found on KDLG's website). Togiak Refuge has an active and heavily followed Facebook page which disseminates information on a daily basis to a rapidly growing global audience. These outreach efforts have not been affected by covid-19 and are available for public consumption at their regular rate of production.

The Refuge normally hosts an Open House event, in celebration of National Public Lands Day and National Hunting and Fishing Day. It was not held in 2020. This event is usually attended by 100-200 people and includes a wide range of displays, hands on activities, food and beverages.

Togiak Refuge staff continues to work with the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council and the ADF&G to conduct household subsistence waterfowl surveys. Refuge staff and volunteers conducted surveys in a number of southwest Alaska communities, Aleknagik, Dillingham, Togiak, Clark's Point, Newhalen, Nondalton, Chignik Lake and Chignik Lagoon. Surveys will be put on hold for this year, due to covid-19.

Also, the Refuge partners with others to conduct three environmental education camps. As with other Service sponsored education camps, those camps were cancelled for 2020, due to covid-19 related concerns. The descriptions that follow are from the 2019 camps.

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

In July 2019 an enthusiastic group of seven area junior high students representing three villages (Dillingham, Togiak and Platinum) traveled to Cape Peirce for this camp. Students were able to observe seabirds, marine mammals, and learn how field work is conducted, as well as learning about the food webs and ecological relationships found at the Cape Peirce area. Students also learned about traditional Yup'ik uses of animals and plants and about Native survival skills. This camp is designed to help students gain a better understanding of the biological diversity of a marine ecosystem. It also strengthens their sense of stewardship for local natural resources. Other topics at this camp included tide pools, wilderness survival skills, archery, bear safety, Leave No Trace camping practices and careers with USFWS. Refuge Interpreter Jon Dyasuk spoke with students about traditional resource uses. A special offering for this year's camp was

the chance for the students to try their hand drawing with Colorado pastel artist Penny Creasy. Traditional councils and school districts from throughout western Bristol Bay are cooperators with this camp.

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

In July 2019, Togiak Refuge helped with the 19th year of a summer camp aimed at teaching middle and high school students about fisheries science and the importance of salmon to our ecosystem. Students were selected from the Bristol Bay region. During the camp students worked in the field alongside fisheries professionals. Cooperators with the Refuge on this project included the Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation, Bristol Bay Science and Research Institute, University of Alaska, University of Washington School of Fisheries, the Dillingham City and Southwest Region school districts, and ADF&G.

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

The 2019 Float Camp took place on the Togiak River early August. At this camp, four high school students learned about river ecosystems and how to enjoy them safely and responsibly while taking part in a float trip conducted on a refuge river. Students observed and learned about the many fish, wildlife and plant species found on the Togiak and its tributaries. 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 wilderness survival skills. This camp helps students grasp the biological diversity of riparian ecosystems and the importance of salmon as a nutrient source, while developing a deeper sense of stewardship for local natural resources. Montana Artist Mara Menahan was along as an “Artist-in-Residence” and all of the students had an opportunity to work with Mara on natural history illustration while in the field. Traditional councils and school districts in western Bristol Bay are cooperators with this camp.

Division of Refuge Law Enforcement Contact: Derek Thompson

Federal Wildlife Officers work to protect wildlife and habitat and make refuges safe places for visitors and staff. Senior Federal Wildlife Officer (SFWO) Derek Thompson is stationed in Dillingham, AK. He is the Officer responsible for patrolling Togiak Refuge and managing its law enforcement program.

2020 has been a unique year. SFWO Thompson saw a decrease in commercial activity in Togiak Refuge and steady use from local users. Many patrols were focused on caribou. Caribou (Nushagak Peninsula and Mulchatna) enforcement patrols will continue to be a priority for SFWO Thompson. SFWO Thompson routinely works with other state and federal agencies to achieve efficient and effective law enforcement. This year SFWO Thompson teamed with the Bureau of Land Management’s law enforcement Rangers to patrol the Mulchatna Caribou herd.

SFWO Thompson encourages anyone with questions regarding USFWS law enforcement to contact him; and reminds all who enjoy and rely upon the resources in the Bristol Bay Region that the USFWS Division of Refuge Law Enforcement is here to help protect those resources for future generations.

Staff Update

New hires to announce:

Jannelle Trowbridge, Wildlife Biologist. Jannelle is a recent graduate from UAA and is from Nome.

Stan Cullings, Deputy Manager. Stan arrived in October from Arizona.

We still have a couple vacancies and hope to fill them in the near future.



Bureau of Land Management – Anchorage Field Office

Updates to the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
March 3 – 4 , 2021

MINE SITE MONITORING/RECLAMATION

Platinum Mine Site – Aquatics and Mine Compliance staff are developing a plan to reconnect fish passage through the historic tailings of the Platinum Mine Site. Monitoring data at the Salmon River have shown that fish passage in the system is restricted during much of the summer by three reaches of the stream that periodically flow subsurface. Staff will be monitoring water quality and quantity on the Salmon River in support of this effort.

RECREATION

Recreation Permits – The BLM will conduct Special Recreation Permit compliance checks in the Nulato Hills northeast and south of Unalakleet, in the Squirrel River area northeast of Kotzebue; and south of McGrath in the Alaska Range in summer 2021. The permits are related to Iditarod National Historic Trail events and outfitter and guide permits.

Guides, Lake Iliamna – The BLM authorized new Special Recreation Permits (SRP) for two hunting guides near Lake Iliamna. One previously had an SRP with the BLM Fairbanks Office. The other holds a National Park Service permit in Katmai National Park and wanted to be able to hunt the adjoining BLM land.

Guides, Golsovia Drainage – The BLM authorized one new Special Recreation Permit (SRP) for a hunting guide in the Golsovia River drainage. This guide replaced a guide that retired. In addition, one guide did not renew their permit and is no longer operating in the area.

REALTY

ANCSA D1 Withdrawal Revocations – The Realty staff is wrapping up recommendations on the revocation of Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act D1 Withdrawals. For more information on the history and purpose of D1 withdrawals and the revocation process visit https://www.blm.gov/programs/lands-and-realty/regional-information/alaska/d-1_withdrawals

Alaska Native Vietnam Veterans Allotments – Applications are being accepted through Dec. 29, 2025 for the Alaska Native Vietnam-era Veterans Land Allotment Program of 2019. The program provides the opportunity for eligible Vietnam-era veterans or their heirs to select 2.5 to 160 acres of Federal land. For more information visit <https://www.blm.gov/alaska/2019AKNativeVetsLand>

COLLABORATIVE CAMPBELL TRACT EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Campbell Creek Monitoring – Aquatics staff will resurvey and analyze 33 cross sections on Campbell Creek to characterize the creek's response to natural and recreational stressors by comparing them to measurements made by the USGS in 2001.

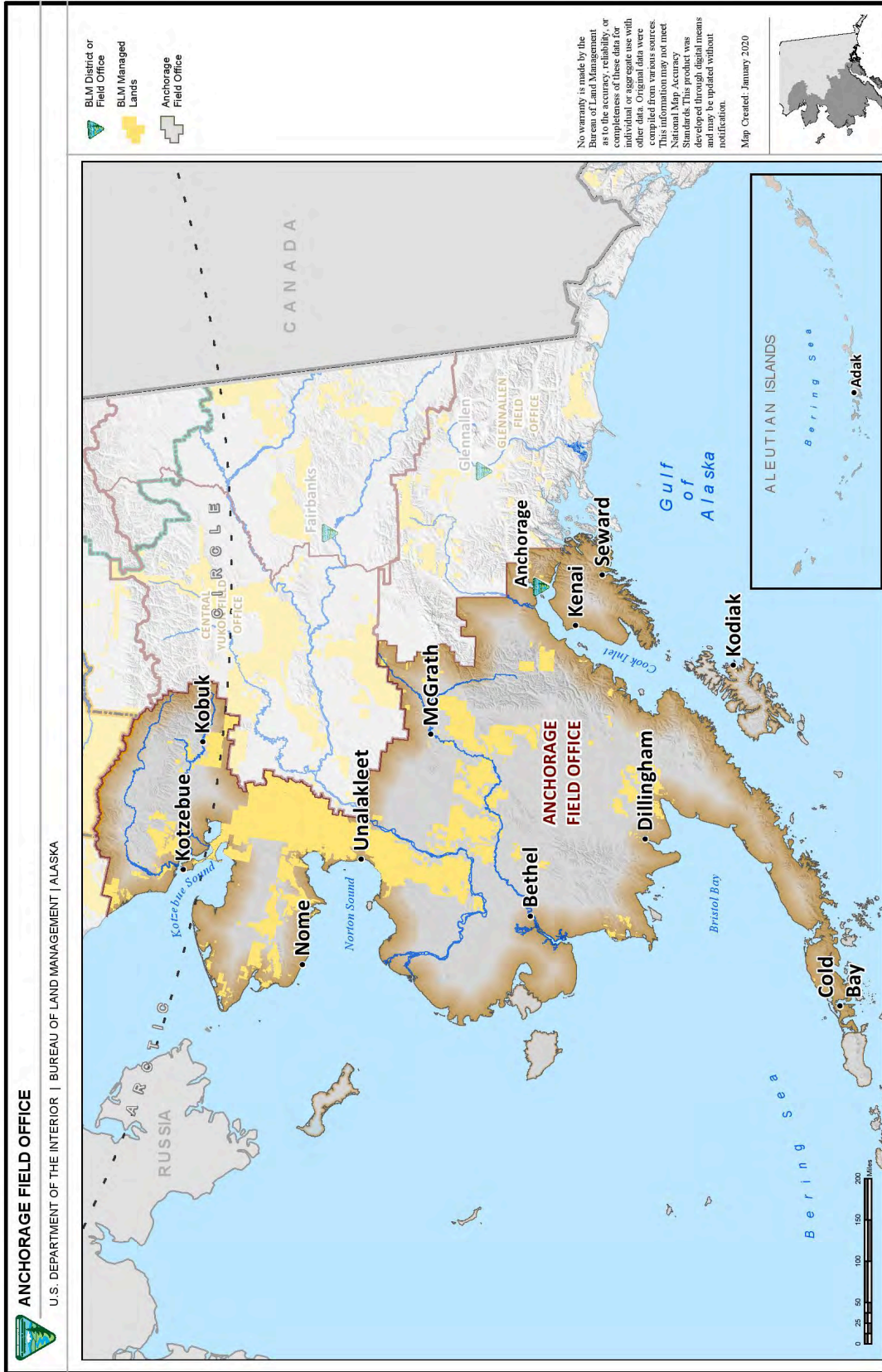
Curriculum Midsummer Night's Science Series – Aquatics staff will lead a discussion with the public during one of the Campbell Creek Science Center's Summer Science Series. The presentation will focus on efforts to characterize the Creek's response to natural and recreational induced stressors.

Curriculum Development – Aquatics staff is working with Campbell Creek Science Center staff in developing a stream hydrology curriculum for primary school students.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

COVID-19 – BLM Law Enforcement conducted patrols in accordance with village requests to limit travel in and out of the villages due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Caribou Patrol – BLM Law Enforcement assisted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in patrolling the Mulchatna caribou herd. The agencies request that any information about poaching be reported as soon as possible.



Fall 2021 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

Last updated 1/29/2021

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

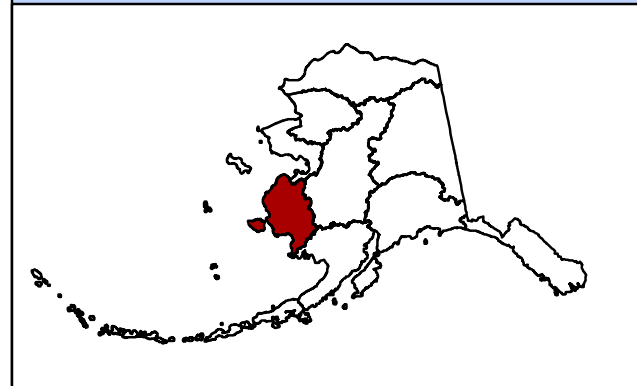
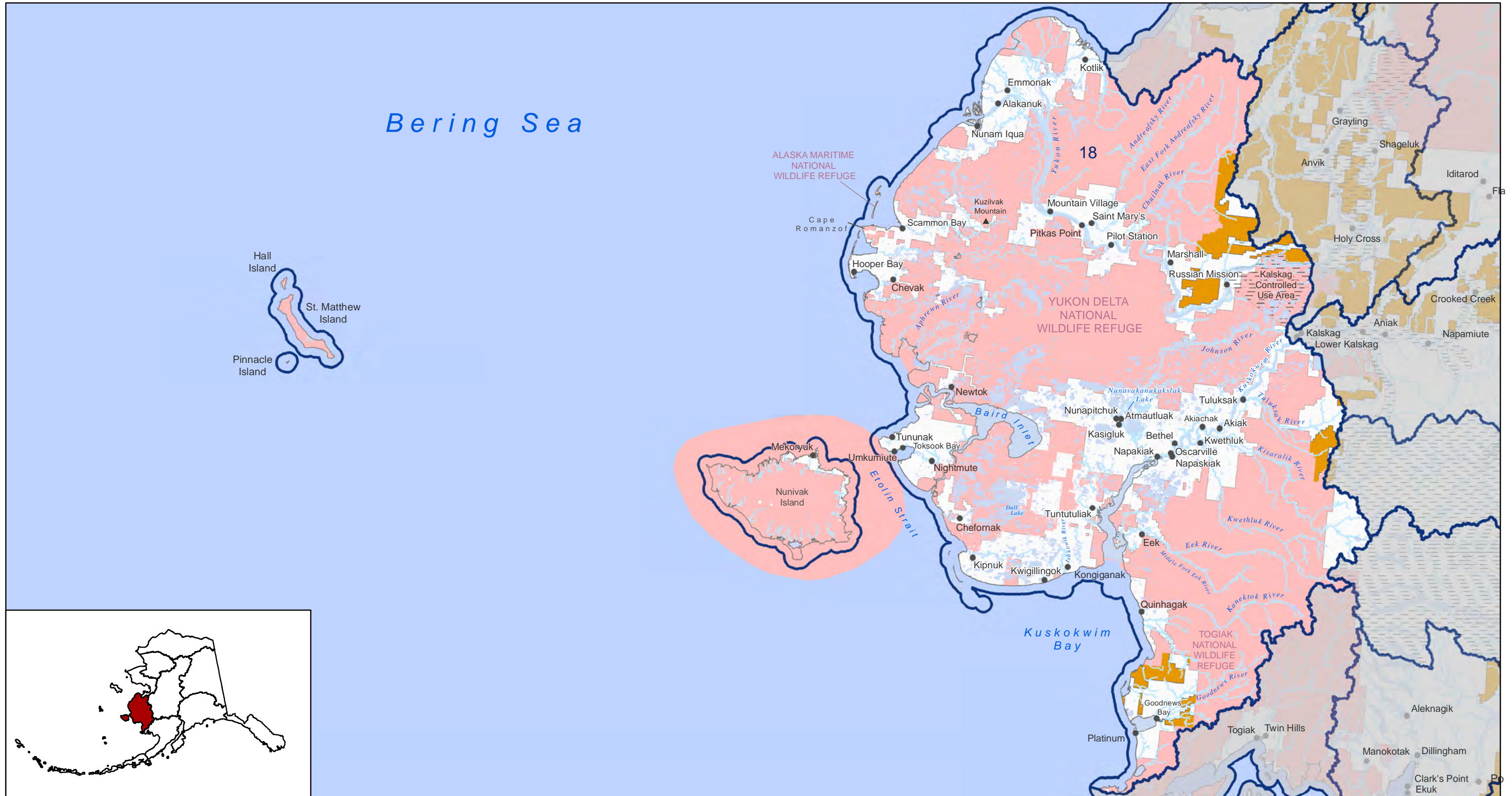
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Aug. 15	Aug. 8 Window Opens	Aug. 9	Aug. 10	Aug. 11	Aug. 12	Aug. 13
Aug. 14	Aug. 15	Aug. 16	Aug. 17	Aug. 18	Aug. 19	Aug. 20
Aug. 21	Aug. 22	Aug. 23	Sep. 1	Sep. 2	Sep. 3	Sep. 4
Sep. 5	Sep. 6 Labor Day Holiday	Sep. 7	Sep. 8	Sep. 9	Sep. 10	Sep. 11
Sep. 12	Sep. 13	Sep. 14	Sep. 15	Sep. 16	Sep. 17	Sep. 18
Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Sep. 21	Sep. 22	Sep. 23	Sep. 24	Sep. 25
Sep. 26	Sep. 27	Sep. 28	Sep. 29	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 2
	KA - Unalaska					
Oct. 3	Oct. 4	Oct. 5	Oct. 6	Oct. 7	Oct. 8	Oct. 9
				EIRAC - Fairbanks		
			YKD - Bethel			
Oct. 10	Oct. 11 Columbus Day Holiday	Oct. 12	Oct. 13	Oct. 14	Oct. 15	Oct. 16
			WIRAC - Anchorage			
			SC - Anchorage			
Oct. 17	Oct. 18	Oct. 19	Oct. 20	Oct. 21	Oct. 22	Oct. 23
		SEA - Craig				
		EIRAC - alternate dates				
Oct. 24	Oct. 25	Oct. 26	Oct. 27	Oct. 28	Oct. 29	Oct. 30
		SPRAC - Nome				
		BBRAC - Dilligham				
Oct. 31	Nov. 1	Nov. 2	Nov. 3	Nov. 4	Nov. 5 Window Closes	Nov. 6
	NWARAC - Kotzebue			NS - Utqiagvik		

Winter 2022 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

Last updated 12/8/2020

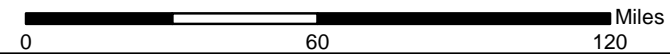
Due to travel budget limitations placed by Department of the Interior on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Office of Subsistence Management, the dates and locations of these meetings will be subject to change.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday-	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Feb. 6</i>	<i>Feb. 7 Window Opens</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>
<i>Feb. 20</i>	<i>Feb. 21 PRESIDENTS DAY HOLIDAY</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>Mar. 17</i>	<i>Mar. 18</i>	<i>Mar. 19</i>
<i>Mar. 20</i>	<i>Mar. 21</i>	<i>Mar. 22</i>	<i>Mar. 23</i>	<i>Mar. 24</i>	<i>Mar. 25 Window Closes</i>	<i>Mar. 26</i>



Region 5

Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Region



Federal Public Lands Open to Subsistence Use

- Special Use Areas
- Closed to Subsistence
- NPS Administered Parks
- NPS Administered Preserves
- USFWS Administered Lands
- BLM Administered Lands
- USFS Administered Lands

Created by OSM on September 27, 2017

**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 (Council).
2. **Authority.** The Council is renewed by virtue of the authority set out in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) (16 U.S.C. 3115 (1988)), and under the authority of the Secretary of the Interior, in furtherance of 16 U.S.C. 410hh-2. The Council is regulated by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, (5 U.S.C. Appendix 2).
3. **Objectives and Scope of Activities.** The objective of the Council is to provide a forum for the residents of the Region with personal knowledge of local conditions and resource requirements to have a meaningful role in the subsistence management of fish and wildlife on Federal lands and waters in the Region.
4. **Description of Duties.** Council duties and responsibilities, where applicable, are as follows:
 - a. Recommend the initiation, review, and evaluation of proposals for regulations, policies, management plans, and other matters relating to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on public lands within the Region.
 - b. Provide a forum for the expression of opinions and recommendations by persons interested in any matter related to the subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on public lands within the Region.
 - c. Encourage local and regional participation in the decision-making process affecting the taking of fish and wildlife on the public lands within the Region for subsistence uses.

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.
- h. Provide recommendations for implementation of Secretary's Order 3347: Conservation Stewardship and Outdoor Recreation, and Secretary's Order 3356: Hunting, Fishing, Recreational Shooting, and Wildlife Conservation Opportunities and Coordination with States, Tribes, and Territories. Recommendations shall include, but are not limited to:
 - (1) Assessing and quantifying implementation of the Secretary's Orders, and recommendations to enhance and expand their implementation as identified;
 - (2) Policies and programs that:
 - (a) increase outdoor recreation opportunities for all Americans, with a focus on engaging youth, veterans, minorities, and other communities that traditionally have low participation in outdoor recreation;
 - (b) expand access for hunting and fishing on Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service lands in a manner that respects the rights and privacy of the owners of non-public lands;
 - (c) increase energy, transmission, infrastructure, or other relevant projects while avoiding or minimizing potential negative impacts on wildlife; and
 - (d) create greater collaboration with States, Tribes, and/or Territories.
- i. Provide recommendations for implementation of the regulatory reform initiatives and policies specified in section 2 of Executive Order 13777: Reducing Regulation and Controlling Regulatory Costs; Executive Order 12866: Regulatory Planning and Review, as amended; and section 6 of Executive Order 13563: Improving Regulation and Regulatory Review. Recommendations shall include, but are not limited to:
 - Identifying regulations for repeal, replacement, or modification considering, at a minimum, those regulations that:

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

All current and future Executive Orders, Secretary's Orders, and Secretarial Memos should be included for discussion and recommendations as they are released. At the conclusion of each meeting or shortly thereafter, provide a detailed recommendation meeting report, including meeting minutes, to the Designated Federal Officer (DFO).

- 5. **Agency or Official to Whom the Council Reports.** The Council reports to the Federal Subsistence Board Chair, who is appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.
- 6. **Support.** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will provide administrative support for the activities of the Council through the Office of Subsistence Management.
- 7. **Estimated Annual Operating Costs and Staff Years.** The annual operating costs associated with supporting the Council's functions are estimated to be \$196,000, including all direct and indirect expenses and 1.15 Federal 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 11, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The DFO is a full-time Federal employee appointed in accordance with Agency procedures. The DFO will:
 - (a) Approve or call all Council and subcommittee meetings;
 - (b) Prepare and approve all meeting agendas;
 - (c) Attend all committee and subcommittee meetings;
 - (d) Adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines adjournment to be in the public interest; and

(e) Chair meetings when directed to do so by the official to whom the advisory committee reports.

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

10. **Duration.** Continuing.

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

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

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. Members serve at the discretion of the Secretary.

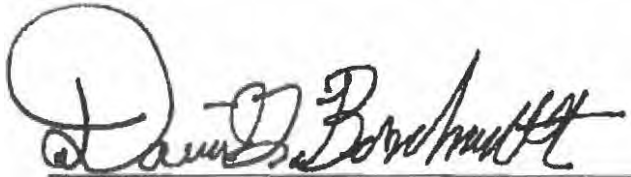
Alternate members may be appointed to the Council to fill vacancies if they occur out of cycle. An alternate member must be approved and appointed by the Secretary before attending the meeting as a representative. The term for an appointed alternate member will be the same as the term of the member whose vacancy is being filled.

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

Members of the Council will serve without compensation. However, while away from their homes or regular places of business, Council and subcommittee members engaged in Council, or subcommittee business, approved by the DFO, may be allowed travel

expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in the same manner as persons employed intermittently in Government service under section 5703 of title 5 of the United States Code.

13. **Ethics Responsibilities of Members.** No Council or subcommittee member will participate in any Council or subcommittee deliberations or votes relating to a specific party matter before the Department or its bureaus and offices including a lease, license, permit, contract, grant, claim, agreement, or litigation in which the member or the entity the member represents has a direct financial interest.
14. **Subcommittees.** Subject to the DFOs approval, subcommittees may be formed for the purpose of compiling information and conducting research. However, such subcommittees must act only under the direction of the DFO and must report their recommendations to the full Council for consideration. Subcommittees must not provide advice or work products directly to the Agency. Subcommittees will meet as necessary to accomplish their assignments, subject to the approval of the DFO and the availability of resources.
15. **Recordkeeping.** Records of the Council, and formally and informally established subcommittees or other subgroups of the Council, must be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 6.2, and other approved Agency records disposition schedule. These records must be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552).



Secretary of the Interior

DEC 12 2019

Date Signed

DEC 13 2019

Date Filed

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