



Federal Subsistence Board

1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503 - 6199



FISH and WILDLIFE SERVICE
BUREAU of LAND MANAGEMENT
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FOREST SERVICE

OSM 20064.KW

AUG 06 2020

Michael Chad Kramer, Chair
Northwest Arctic Subsistence
Regional Advisory Council
1101 East Tudor Road, MS 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199

Dear Chairman Kramer:

This letter responds to the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council's (Council) Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report. The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture have delegated to the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) the responsibility to respond to these reports. The Board appreciates your effort in developing the Annual Report. Annual Reports allow the Board to become aware of the issues outside of the regulatory process that affect subsistence users in your region. We value this opportunity to review the issues concerning your region.

1. **Impacts to Federally qualified subsistence users from the proposed Ambler Road**

The Council requested a report on the proposed Ambler Road from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the lead agency in the Ambler Road Environmental Impact Statement. The Council asks the Board to assist the Council on receiving the information from BLM on how they plan to reduce impacts to:

- *Air quality during road construction and post-construction road usage, from the release of naturally occurring asbestos known to cause cancer;*
- *Federally qualified subsistence users, resulting from disturbances to the lead migration of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd;*
- *Water quality, fisheries habitat, and important spawning areas;*

- *Federally qualified subsistence users from disturbances to graves, cultural, archaeological, and historic sites.*

The Council also would like to receive the information on the evaluation of current and anticipated subsistence needs for fish and wildlife within the region and project area, including, but not limited to, moose, and sheep.

Response:

BLM is currently working on the Ambler Joint Record of Decision (JROD) with the Army Corps of Engineers. The JROD will identify the mitigation measures that the BLM and Corps of Engineers will require of the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority for the Ambler road project. When the JROD is completed, the Board through OSM will ask BLM to provide the requested information to the Council.

In the meantime, if the Council would like to learn about the Ambler road project in more detail, the Ambler Road Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is now available online at: <https://www.blm.gov/programs/planning-and-nepa/plans-in-development/alaska/AmblerRoadEIS>. Specifically for mitigation measures you can refer to the Ambler Road Final EIS Appendix N Subsistence Uses and Resources page N-46.

The Board would strongly recommend that the Council requests a presentation from BLM explaining in detail mitigation measures outlined in the Ambler Road Final EIS Appendix N Subsistence Uses and Resources page N-46. This will assist the Council with better understanding of mitigation measures and potentially develop a strategy to monitor and evaluate the impact on subsistence use from the Council's perspective.

2. Support for the development of a youth education program to provide training for greater participation in the Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils and the Federal regulatory process

The Council requests the Board to provide support and direction in developing an education program to provide training for youth to participate in the Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils and the Federal regulatory process. The Council believes that such training could help prepare the next generation of leaders to serve on the Councils and encourage youth leadership in each community. The Council also believes that youth education could help reinforce science, technology, engineering, and mathematics instructions in the classroom and provide for hands-on training about how to participate in the Federal regulatory process. Such an experience will provide opportunities to youth to learn traditional knowledge of hunting, fishing, and gathering from elders. At the same time, it will prepare youth for leadership position in their communities and strengthen the Councils.

Response:

The Board appreciates your interest and investment in cultivating youth leadership within the Northwest Arctic Region. There are many ways that Board members and office staff have engaged young people across Alaska in the Federal Subsistence Management Program. In 2018, some of our Board members participated in a mock Federal Subsistence Board meeting hosted by the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The students did a wonderful job of walking a proposal through the public process. Recently, OSM's Tribal Liaison held a video conference with a class from Dillingham High School to introduce OSM staff to students and discuss the Federal Subsistence Management Program. In the past, students have attended Council meetings or OSM staff have visited classrooms prior to a Council meeting, and regional culture camps have featured programs on the Federal Subsistence Management Program. These kinds of educational opportunities enhance participation when Council meetings are being held in or near student communities.

We encourage your Council to continue to invite youth testimony at your meetings, to hold meetings in or near schools whenever possible, and to engage with the youth throughout your region. Anytime your members have a chance to teach young Alaskans about subsistence and the Federal Subsistence Management Program, please take the opportunity to do so. These benefit youth and adults alike.

Additionally, the Board can recommend steps moving forward. With the Council's direction, OSM staff can reach out to Northwest Arctic Region schools and invite interested teachers and their classes to attend Council meetings in person or by teleconference. Staff can send Council meeting materials books to schools so students and teachers can review proposals and develop public comments in conjunction with regional meetings. At the Council's request and with Council Chair's concurrence, your Council Coordinator can make arrangements to add time to future Council meeting agendas for student testimony and questions.

OSM's Subsistence Outreach Coordinator is also available to work with the Northwest Arctic Council Coordinator to assist in coordinating outreach projects and can provide outreach materials upon request. Please encourage your regional youth to visit our webpage (www.doi.gov/subsistence), or follow our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska), to learn more about the program.

In closing, I want to thank you and your Council for your continued involvement and diligence in matters regarding the Federal Subsistence Management Program. I speak for the entire Board

in expressing our appreciation for your efforts and am confident that the Federally qualified subsistence users of the Northwest Arctic Region are well represented through your work.

Sincerely,



Anthony Christianson
Chair

cc: Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Federal Subsistence Board
Susan Detwiler, Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management
Thomas Doolittle, Deputy Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management
Lisa Maas, Acting Subsistence Policy Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management
Tom Kron, Acting Council Coordination Division Supervisor,
Office of Subsistence Management
Acting Wildlife Division Supervisor, Office of Subsistence Management
Greg Risdahl, Fisheries Division Supervisor, Office of Subsistence Management
Acting Anthropology Division Supervisor, Office of Subsistence Management
George Pappas, State Subsistence Liaison, Office of Subsistence Management
Katerina Wessels, Council Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management
Interagency Staff Committee
Benjamin Mulligan, Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Mark Burch, Special Project Coordinator, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Administrative Record