



EASTERN INTERIOR ALASKA  
SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL  
ADVISORY COUNCIL  
Meeting Materials

*March 4-5, 2021*





**EASTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

via teleconference  
March 4-5, 2021]  
convening at 9:00 AM daily

**TELECONFERENCE:** call the toll free number: 1-866-560-5984, then when prompted enter the passcode: 12960066

**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*)
- 4. Welcome and Introductions** (*Chair*)
- 5. Review and Adopt Agenda\*** (*Chair*)
- 6. Election of Officers\***
  - Chair (*DFO*)
  - Vice-Chair (*New Chair*)
  - Secretary (*New Chair*)
- 7. Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes\*** (*Chair*)
- 8. Reports**
  - Council Member Reports
  - Chair's Report

**9. Public and Tribal Comment on Non-Agenda Items** (available each morning)

**10. Old Business** (*Chair*)

Hunter Ethics Education and Outreach Initiative (*Council Coordinator*)

Update on NPS individual C&T determinations

**11. New Business** (*Chair*)

Call for Federal Wildlife Proposals\* (*OSM Wildlife*)

Wildlife status updates from ADF&G and Federal staff, if requested by the Council Chair

Council Charter Review\* (*Council Coordinator*)

Review and approve FY2020 Annual Report\* (*Council Coordinator*)

Fisheries Resources Monitoring Program Information Update (*OSM Fisheries*)

Alaska Board of Game proposals\* (*Chair*)

**12. Agency Reports**

(Time limit of 15 minutes unless approved in advance)

Tribal Governments

Native Organizations

US Fish and Wildlife Service

2021 Yukon River Pre-season Salmon (*USFWS/ADF&G*)

Impacts of hatchery production on Alaska's wild fisheries

Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (*Serena Fitka and Catherine Moncrieff*)

Climate Change Research (*Todd Brinkman*)

National Park Service

Denali National Park and Preserve Update (*Patricia Owen and Amy Craver*)

Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve Update (*Marcy Okada*)

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve Update (*Barbara Cellarius*)

Bureau of Land Management

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Office of Subsistence Management

**13. Future Meeting Dates\***

Confirm Fall 2021 meeting date and location

Select Winter 2022 meeting date and location

**14. Closing Comments**

**15. Adjourn (Chair)**

To call into the meeting, dial the toll free number: 1-866-560-5984, then when prompted enter the passcode: 12960066

*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 Tom Kron, 907-351-0081, tom\_kron@fws.gov or 800-877-8339 (TTY), by close of business on February 25, 2021.

**REGION 9**  
**Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council**

<b>Seat</b>	<b>Year Appointed <i>Term Expires</i></b>	<b>Member Name and Community</b>	
<b>1</b>	2001 <b>2022</b>	<b>Susan L. Entsminger</b> Mentasta	<b>Chair</b>
<b>2</b>	2007 <b>2022</b>	<b>Andrew P. Firmin</b> Fort Yukon	<b>Vice-Chair</b>
<b>3</b>	2021 <b>2022</b>	<b>Nicholas Henry</b> Chalkyitsik	
<b>4</b>	2021 <b>2022</b>	<b>Linda Evans</b> Rampart	
<b>5</b>	2021 <b>2023</b>	<b>William L. Glanz</b> Central	
<b>6</b>	2002 <b>2020</b>	Vacant	
<b>7</b>	2021 <b>2023</b>	<b>Robert C. Wright, Sr.</b> Tanana	<b>Secretary</b>
<b>8</b>	2017 <b>2021</b>	<b>Charlie Jagow</b> Porcupine River	
<b>9</b>	2004 <b>2021</b>	<b>Donald A. Woodru</b> Eagle	
<b>10</b>	2018 <b>2021</b>	<b>Timothy McManus</b> Nenana	

**EASTERN INTERIOR ALASKA  
SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Meeting Minutes**

via teleconference  
October 14-15, 2020

**Invocation**

Donald Woodruff gave an invocation.

**Call to Order, Roll Call and Quorum Establishment**

The meeting was called to order October 14, 2020 at 9:00 am. Council members Sue Entsminger, Andy Bassich, Andrew Firmin, William Glanz, Timothy McManus, Donald Woodruff, Robert Wright, and Charles Jagow participated in person via teleconference. The Council has two vacant seats. A quorum was established with eight of eight seated Council members participating by phone.

**Attendees:**

*Via teleconference*

- Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) – Katya Wessels, Tom Kron, Karen Hyer, Pippa Kenner, Lisa Maas, Cory Graham, George Pappas
- U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – Jimmy Fox, Ally Mulligan, Mark Bertram, Vince Mathews, Jan Conitz
- National Park Service (NPS) – Barbara Cellarius, Dave Sarafin, Marcy Okada, Amy Craver, Pat Owens, Matt Sorum
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) – Mark Burch, Jeff Estensen, Deena Jallen, Brooke McDavid, Jeff Gross
- Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) – Glenn Chen
- Forest Service (FS) – Milo Burcham
- Bureau of Lands Management (BLM) – Jim Herriges
- Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) – Brian McKenna
- Doyon, Ltd. – Sharon Nicolas, Andrew Tinnel
- Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) – Serena Fitka, Catherine Moncrieff
- Members of the public – Amanda Pope

**Review and Adopt Agenda**

Motion by Mr. Woodruff, seconded by Mr. Glanz, to adopt the agenda as read with the following changes:

- add topic *New Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation animal health regulations* as an item 11d under Old Business.
- keep agency reports short (down to five minutes)
- add *Tetlin NWR Report* as item Agency Reports USFWS d.
- add *Denali National Park and Preserve (NPP) Update* as item Agency Reports NPS c.
- move agenda item 14. *Future Meeting Dates* to the first day of the meeting
- add *ADF&G Report on the Fortymile Caribou Herd Season update* (Jeff Gross) on the second day of the meeting

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

### **Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes**

Motion by Mr. Woodruff, seconded by Mr. McManus, to approve the winter 2020 meeting minutes as presented. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Motion by Mr. Woodruff, seconded by Mr. Glanz, to approve the fall 2019 meeting minutes as presented. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

### **Future Meeting Dates:**

Winter 2021 meeting to be held March 4-5, 2021 in Fairbanks or Arctic Village

Fall 2021 meeting to be held October 7-8, 2021 in Fairbanks (alternative dates October 19-20)

### **Council Member and Chair Reports**

**Andrew Firmin** of Fort Yukon reported that there were no fishing opportunities this past summer and he caught only three fish. He hoped to travel to Seward or Copper Center to fish for Sockeye Salmon, but with pandemic travel restrictions, was not able to. Fort Yukon restricted travel on March 23 and since then there were only three or four opportunities to go to Fairbanks to buy necessary supplies. This put a lot of pressure on other species of fish resources and wildlife resources. The lack of fish last summer left mushers not being able to provide enough food for their dog teams, and many mushers had to trim their teams as much as 50%. The moose hunt was fairly successful and harvested meat was shared with many. Mr. Firmin wants to know how many moose were harvested in his region during last summer because there was a lot of pressure on this resource due to the lack of fish. The bird hunting was fair last spring, and the water levels were high during the summer.

**Robert Wright** of Tanana reported that, with no salmon coming, he had seen a lot of hardship along the Yukon River. It is a hardship for all, and not just for people who have sled dog teams. With warm weather, moose are not going into rut, and you can paddle right up to a cow moose who doesn't even respond to a call. During the last two years, Mr. Wright was able to harvest a moose only on the last day of the season. Last summer the water levels were high, and right now the whitefish and humpy runs are good on the Yukon River.

**Andy Bassich** of Eagle reported that his biggest concerns were regarding the King Salmon and fall Chum Salmon runs. The returning King Salmon were of the poorest quality he have seen in 30 years that he fished on the Yukon River. The fish were soft and, in his opinion, it was not due to warm water temperatures. The poor returns, especially in the absence of fall Chum Salmon, resulted in tremendous costs for the mushers that are trying to maintain a dog team. Mr. Bassich is also very concerned about how liberal the fall caribou season was, and questions the caribou management actions taken this past year. Food security is a huge issue, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The loss of fisheries and the possibility of altering caribou migration routes before they move through his area to their wintering grounds are putting a lot of hardship on people that rely on these food resources.

**Donald Woodruff** of Eagle reported that his community didn't not have any COVID-19 cases so far. The caribou hunt was very successful; they were allowed two caribou per person. The fisheries were very bad; however, he was able to catch 12 King Salmon early in the year. At the very beginning of the first run, and the quality was very good.

**Bill Glanz** of Central reported that the caribou hunt in his area was a total nightmare. The Fortymile Caribou Harvest Management Coalition had never voted to allow these number of caribou to be taken, and he wants to hear from ADF&G who gave them the permissions. There was very little law enforcement in his area. The Pinnell Mountain Trail was completely torn up by the motorized vehicles with huge tires. Mr. Glanz's community was really concerned about this, and the way the caribou hunt happened. Moose were far and few in between in Central, and there were lots of outside hunters.

**Charlie Jagow** of Porcupine River reported that it was a pretty cold, rainy summer and no fires. On the Porcupine and Coleen rivers, it was dryer. The fall was rather warm, but despite this moose hunting was quite good. The moose were talking to each other, which was a little surprising considering the current weather. It finally started to freeze up recently and the ice is running on the Porcupine River. Mr. Jagow expressed his concern and frustration with the Fortymile Caribou Herd hunt. He travelled on the Steese Highway a lot during hunting season and got to see the amount of traffic there. It has always been mayhem, but this year was exceptionally crazy. Mr. Jagow thinks that we will start altering caribou migration routes with all the hunting pressure.

**Timothy McManus** of Nenana reported that he did some goose hunting in springtime at Minto Flats. The geese follow the ice, but the ice went out fast, so it was hit and miss for some hunters. When Mr. McManus fished the first run on the Yukon River, there were lots of fish. He had to deal with the high water and drifts, so fishing was very challenging. The berry season was really good. The bees and the yellow jackets were very bad. A lot of hunters harvested moose in the fall, but there is still a lot of water everywhere, so more than likely the hunters dropped moose in the water. While fishing on a fish wheel, Mr. McManus had to throw the Chum Salmon back with a dip net. He caught some silvers and whitefish for Nenana seniors' He did weekly lunches and put some fish up for their Council for the winter. The ice started forming up on the river and there is a hint of snow. Bull permits were issued by telephone this year, and were all gone in 20 seconds. However, one person from Nenana was able to get one.

*Sue Entsminger* of Mentasta reported that winter cold temperatures lasted late into the season. After the winter 2020 meeting, three Councils' representatives, including Chair Entsminger, testified on behalf of their Councils at the Alaska Board of Game meeting, which worked out well. The COVID-19 related closures significantly impacted Ms. Entsminger's guide business. The ADF&G closed the non-resident hunting season, and she lost a significant part of her income because of this. She was not able to accommodate all of her hunting clients in May and needed to move some to June. The berry crop was not good in her area this year. The summer was cold and wet. Chair Entsminger does not understand the drastic changes in the management of the Fortymile Caribou Herd. She believes that the management style should not be "a feast or a famine." Many people in her area did well moose hunting. The users on the road system are very dependent on salmon on the Copper River, and there will be several Federal proposals discussed later in the meeting that propose to change salmon regulations.

### **Service Awards**

Katya Wessels, Council Coordinator with OSM, presented Bill Glanz with the fifteen year service award. Mr. Woodruff, Mr. Bassich, Mr. Wright, Mr. McManus, and Chair Entsminger provided comments and congratulations to Mr. Glanz.

### **Public and Tribal Comments on Non-Agenda Items**

Amanda Pope from Circle provided public testimony. Ms. Pope said that when ADF&G opened the Fortymile caribou hunt for two permits per person, she was concerned that the subsistence hunters would not be able to participate in this opportunity because this opening was announced a week after the subsistence hunt started. There was also a concern that outside hunters were able to hunt for moose and caribou at the same time, and that wanton waste had been appearing the last couple of years. Local people are trying to compete with outside hunters. The Council thanked Ms. Pope for speaking to them about the impacts to subsistence users and food security for people in the rural areas of Alaska.

### **Old Business**

#### ***The Federal Subsistence Board 805(c) Report***

Mr. Wessels presented an overview of the Federal Subsistence Board 805(c) Report to the Council. The Board supported the Council's recommendation on six out of six proposals and one closure review affecting the Eastern Interior Region.

#### ***Wildlife Special Actions WSA20-01, WSA20-02, and WAS20-03***

Lisa Maas, Wildlife Biologist and acting Policy Coordinator with OSM, was available on the phone to answer questions regarding Wildlife Special Actions WSA20-01, WSA20-02, and WAS20-03. There were no questions.

### ***Hunter Ethics Outreach and Education Initiative***

Ms. Wessels provided a status overview with the Hunter Ethics Outreach and Education Initiative. Not much had been done within the last year due to staff shortages and the COVID-19 pandemic, except that some initial contacts were made with the representatives from the Eielson Air Force Base and Ft. Wainwright. Jimmy Fox, Yukon Flats Refuge Manager, spoke about their partnership with the Council of Athabaskan Tribal Governments on the hunter liaison project in Fort Yukon and Circle. Amanda Pope, hunter liaison in Circle, spoke about her work on the project. Mr. Bassich made a suggestion to expand the hunter liaison program to the Taylor Highway.

Motion by Mr. Bassich, second by Mr. Glanz, to set up a teleconference meeting in the springtime between the main stakeholders to continue the efforts with hunter outreach and ethics program. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

### ***New Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation animal health regulations***

Chair Entsminger talked about the proposed changes to the animal health regulations by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, including screening all ages of domestic sheep and goats for *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* (*Movi*) prior to import, as well as finally adding *Movi* to the Alaska reportable disease list. The information was provided to the Council as part of the Supplemental Materials prior to the meeting. The Council discussed the potential devastating effects to Alaska wildlife if they contract *Movi*.

Motion by Mr. Bassich, second by Mr. Wright, to support amending 18 AAC 26.125 for goats and 36.125 for sheep to require all age groups of imported domestic goats and sheep to be tested for *Movi*. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

## **New Business**

### ***Fisheries Proposals and Closure Reviews***

#### *Regional:*

#### *FCR21-06 Tanana drainage, Toklat River—all species—August 15 through May 15*

Corey Graham, Fisheries Biologist with OSM, presented FCR21-06 to the Council. Motion by Mr. Woodruff, second by Mr. Glanz, to support the OSM preliminary conclusion on FCR21-06. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

The Council agreed with the OSM preliminary conclusion to eliminate the closure to subsistence fishing on the Toklat River from August 15 through May 15. The Council pointed out that the escapement numbers are fine, and harvest is relatively small in that area. Eliminating the closure to subsistence fishing on the Toklat River will allow Federally qualified subsistence users to take small amounts of fish in the area to meet food security needs in their region.

FCR21-07 Yukon drainage, Nome Creek—Grayling—closed all year

Mr. Graham presented FCR21-07 to the Council. Motion by Mr. Woodruff, second by Mr. Glanz, to support the OSM preliminary conclusion on FCR21-07 to maintain status quo. Motion to amend the original motion by Mr. Bassich, second by Mr. Glanz, to close Nome Creek fishing to all users including non-Federally-qualified users. The motion to amend passed 5 to 2. The original motion as amended to support the closure and close fishing to all users including non-Federally-qualified users passed 4 to 3.

The Council said catch-and-release fishing should not be allowed when conservation concerns exist that preclude subsistence uses. The Council thinks current regulations give priority and more liberal opportunities to sport fishers over Federally qualified subsistence users. If the intent of this closure is to protect the grayling population from over exploitation, then the closure should be for all users and uses, including catch-and-release sport fishing. It is well documented that catch-and-release fishing causes mortality, which could affect a small population of grayling. The Council's reason for this modification is a conservation concern for grayling. Any and all causes of grayling mortality should be eliminated. The Council also noted that Nome Creek is not easily accessible or widely used, and that there are many other creeks in the area "loaded with grayling," such as Deadwood Creek and Crooked Creek.

Crossover Proposals:

FCR21-04 Yukon drainage Northern Area, Jim River—all species—closed all year

Mr. Graham presented FCR21-04 to the Council. Motion by Mr. Bassich, second by Mr. Wright, to defer to the Western Interior RAC. The Council considers it to be more appropriate for the home region to make recommendations to the Board on this matter. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

FP21-11 Proposal to record daily harvest and report to the agency that issued permit within 3 days of harvest, upper Copper River—all fish

Karen Hyer, Fisheries Biologist with OSM, presented FP21-11 to the Council. Motion by Ms. Entsminger, second by Mr. Woodruff, to support Fisheries Proposal FP21-11 as written. The motion to support passed 7 to 1.

The Council supported this proposal due to the increased use of upper Copper River fish by users from all over the state. The Council indicated in-season harvest monitoring and enumeration are needed to prevent overharvest and allow managers to timely respond during years with weak runs. The Council believes that there might be a conservation concern and does not want to see fish declining in the Copper River. The Council thinks that in-season reporting would be very beneficial to managers. The Federal program should lead the way in this type of monitoring for the State to follow, and the State and Federal programs

should work together to achieve the best harvest management. This reporting would not be a burden to users. Almost everyone has telephones, or other ways to access the internet.

The Council pointed out that all Yukon River communities on the road system must fill out catch calendars. The Yukon River communities that are not on the road system must fill out in-season reports. The Council expressed an opinion that similar harvest monitoring and reporting should be instituted in more areas than just the Copper River. Additionally, the Council noted that on the Taylor Highway successful caribou hunters must report their harvest within three days under State regulations, and if this works for reporting wildlife harvest, then it should work for reporting fish harvest. This proposed regulation is a step in the right direction for the better future of fisheries in Alaska.

FP21-12 Monofilament or multifilament mesh dip nets may not be used before August 15, when the majority of the Chinook run has passed into the upper Copper River, to avoid injury to Chinook. Before August 15, dip nets must be rigged with braided, inelastic mesh—salmon

Ms. Hyer presented FP21-12 to the Council. Motion by Ms. Entsminger, second by Mr. McManus, to support Fisheries Proposal FP21-12 as written. The motion failed on a unanimous vote.

The Council thinks that if adopted, this regulation will cause hardship for subsistence users and make the use of dip nets more restrictive for them than for other users. It's onerous to change all your gear and it might be difficult to get other materials. The Council shared that mesh changes on the Yukon River caused a lot of hardship and they don't want it to be repeated on the Copper River. The Council believes that a better long-term solution is to educate people on how to remove King Salmon quickly and safely from dip nets.

The Council also notes that there is a lot of discussion about monofilament versus other braided net materials, but most of the research was done in set net or drift net fisheries where net materials make a difference. However, given the relatively short amount of time that fish are in dip nets and the conservation that dip nets provide, dip net materials don't make that much of a difference to fish injury.

FP21-13 Prohibit fishing with dip nets from boats or craft floating in the river; only allow dipnet use from banks, upper Copper River—salmon

Ms. Hyer presented FP21-13 to the Council. Motion by Ms. Entsminger, second by Mr. Woodruff and Mr. Bassich, to support Fisheries Proposal FP21-13 as written. The motion to support passed 6 to 2.

The Council noted that this proposed regulatory change is getting a lot of support from Federally qualified subsistence users because fishing from boats has long-term effects on the way fishing is done in the Copper River. The Council said that fishing from boats is becoming increasingly competitive and provides an advantage over traditional methods and means, such as dip netting from shore and using fish wheels. This is a typical situation in a fishery where people have discovered a new method of fishing; once it becomes popular because of its success and advantages, it will overturn long-term established

fisheries practices. Next we'll be dealing with too many boats on the river. It will become dangerous to people, and the conflicts will start with too many boats trying to fish at the same time.

The Council believes that the Federal Subsistence Board should take the lead on this issue by recognizing the negative effects of dip netting from boats on Federally qualified subsistence users and use its leverage to convince the State to also pass this regulation. Additionally, the Council said that this type of fishing does not give fish a place to hide and rest without being interrupted and captured, which is an issue due to their long migrations.

FP21-14 Prohibit use of onboard device that indicates bathymetry and/or fish locations (fish finders) while fishing from boat or other watercraft in the upper Copper River—all fish

Ms. Hyer presented FP21-14 to the Council. Motion by Ms. Entsminger, second by Mr. Glanz to support Fisheries Proposal FP21-14 as written. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Fish returns over the last several years have been very poor; therefore, the Council supports this conservation minded proposal for the sake of future generations. The Council noted that, traditionally, subsistence users do not use fish finders while looking for fish. It is likely that fish finders will not do much good finding fish in a silty river like the Copper River. In addressing the public comments about river navigability, the Council suggested to use depth finders rather than fish finders because you need them when your boat goes at a speed of 35–40 miles per hour and you are in unfamiliar waters.

Southcentral Alaska Region proposal of interest to the Council

FP21-10 Proposal to create new dip net fishery for Sockeye Salmon in the lower Copper River

Milo Burcham with the U.S. Forest Service presented FP21-10 staff analyses to the Council. Motion by Ms. Entsminger, seconde by Mr. Glanz, to support Fisheries Proposal FP21-10 that requests the Federal Subsistence Board to implement a salmon subsistence fishery in the lower Copper River adjacent to Copper River Highway with a harvest limit of 15 salmon, other than pink salmon, with not more than five Chinook Salmon per household using a dip net, rod and reel, spear or gaff only. The motion to support failed 7 to 0 (1 absent).

The Council opposed this proposal due to a potential conservation concern and depletion of an important subsistence resource. The Federally qualified subsistence users in the upper Copper River that depend on the river resources have serious concerns regarding the establishment of this new fishery. The Council believes that this is not the right time to open a new fishery. There is already a lot of hardship taking place, not only in the Copper River, but also in many other Alaskan rivers that are losing King Salmon runs. Other salmon returns are poor as well. When salmon runs are weak, communities in the upper river have much less access to other fish resources than the users in the lower river. The Council is concerned that this fishery will specifically target King Salmon, especially since it includes rod and reel, spear or gaff. The users in the Cordova area already have multiple places to fish for other salmon species.

Additionally, the Council wanted to highlight to the Board that there appears to be a difference of positions within the community of Cordova regarding the establishment of this fishery. Some users support the fishery and some oppose. Eleven comments received by OSM prior to the proposal written comment deadline of July 2, 2020 were all in opposition to the proposal. During the meeting, the Council learned that a large number of written public comments in support solicited by the proposal proponent were given to the Forest Service and submitted to the Southcentral Alaska Council coordinator during its recent meeting. At the meeting, the public expressed frustration that these comments were submitted after the proposal written comment deadline. The Council commented that this situation made it difficult for the Council to evaluate public support or opposition to a particular proposal. Moreover, the Council became privy to information that suggested the some users in Cordova have been illegally selling their subsistence fish, because the salmon caught in this fishery are highly sought after.

### ***The Fortymile Caribou Herd Management***

The Council had a discussion with Jeff Gross, Area Wildlife Biologist with the ADF&G in Tok, regarding the management of the Fortymile Caribou Herd fall 2020 hunt and the effects of increased hunting pressure. During the fall 2020 RC860 registration hunt for caribou, August 10 – September 30, ADF&G increased the resident bag limit to 2 caribou to help reduce herd size because the herd was beginning to show signs of malnutrition. The Council was concerned over management decisions that allowed the more liberal caribou harvest, as well as allowing hunters to possess both moose and caribou tags simultaneously.

Motion by Mr. Bassich, second by Mr. Firmin, to write a letter to the ADF&G Commissioner and the Alaska Board of Game regarding the Council's concerns regarding the management of the Fortymile Caribou Herd fall 2020 hunt and the effects of increased hunting pressure. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

### ***2022 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program***

Ms. Kenner with OSM presented the 2022 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP) to the Council and shared the Priority Information Needs (PINs) from the Yukon Region working group discussion results. The PINs list presented to the Council contained 12 priorities. The Council said it also would like to see projects that address:

- 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.
- Effects of predatory fish, such as pike, Sheefish, and whitefish, on out-migrating salmon fry.
- Harvest reporting and monitoring in the upper reaches of the Yukon River above Rampart Rapids (Yukon River bridge), including the tributaries, such as the Chandalar and Sheenjek rivers.

- More reliable estimates of in-season harvest through an expansion of the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA) in-season survey to assist forecasting Chinook, summer Chum, fall Chum, and Coho salmon run abundance.
- Effects of environmental stressors, such as heat stress, on salmon mortality during adult upriver migration and/or pre-spawn mortality within spawning tributaries.

Motion by Mr. McManus, second by Mr. Woodruff, to support the PINs list, including additional information needs identified during the meeting. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

### ***Identifying Issues for FY 2020 Annual Report***

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

- Subsistence needs satisfaction and food security
- Impacts of hatchery production on wildlife and Alaska's wild fisheries
- Climate change and its impacts on wildlife, fish, and hunting/fishing seasons
- Hunter ethics education and outreach, and dialog with rural communities

### ***Proposed Review Process for NPS Individual Customary and Traditional Use Determinations***

Marcy Okada with the NPS presented the Council with the NPS proposed changes to the individual customary and traditional (C&T) use determinations review process and requested the Council's opinion on the changes. Ms. Okada and Barbara Cellarius with NPS answered the Council's questions regarding the proposed process changes. Motion by Mr. Bassich, second by Mr. Glanz, to approve the NPS proposed changes to the individual C&T use determination process. The Council feels comfortable with delegating the responsibility of making a decision to issue individual C&T use permits to the NPS, streamlining the process. The Council also agrees with the Subsistence Resource Commission's request to be involved in and consulted with during this process. The Council feels that this will make the process have good checks and balances and asks the Board to keep the Council apprised on its decision on this matter. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

### **Agency Reports:**

- Brian McKenna, Fisheries Biologist with the TCC, presented The Tanana Chiefs Conference Fisheries Program report of activities.
- Serena Fitka, Executive Director, and Catherine Moncrieff, Anthropologist with the YRDFA presented the August 2020 Report to the Yukon River Regional Advisory Councils.
- Jimmy Fox, Refuge Manager, USFWS, presented the 2020 Summary of Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge projects and issues.
- Nathan Hawkaluk, Deputy Refuge Manager, USFWS, presented the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge summary of activities.

- Gerald Maschmann with the USFWS presented the 2020 Yukon River Salmon Season Summary. Mr. Maschmann, Deena Jallen, and Jeff Estensen with the ADF&G answered the Council's questions.
- Timothy Lorenzini with USFWS presented the Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge report.
- Matt Sorum, Wildlife Biologist with the NPS, presented the Yukon-Charley National Preserve update.
- David Sarafin, Fisheries Biologist with the NPS, presented the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (WSENP&P) fisheries update and Barbara Cellarius with the NPS presented the rest of the WSENP&P updates.
- Pat Owen, Wildlife Biologist with the NPS, presented the Denali National Park and Preserve update.
- Jim Herriges, Wildlife Biologist with the BLM, presented the update for the Eastern Interior Field Office.
- Brooke McDavid with the ADF&G, Division of Subsistence, provided a brief update.
- Tom Kron, Acting Council Coordination Division Chief, presented the OSM update. Mr. Bassich asked Mr. Kron to look into the matter of possible solicitation of people's testimony [for FP21-10].

Mr. Woodruff proposed to write a thank you letter to Thomas Doolittle, Deputy Assistant Regional Director for OSM, to thank him for his service and wish him a good retirement. Mr. McManus asked to pass his prayers and good thoughts to Zach Stevenson, Council Coordinator.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Bassich, second by Mr. Woodruff. The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

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Katerina Wessels, Designated Federal Officer  
USFWS Office of Subsistence Management

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Susan L. Entsminger, Chair  
Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These minutes will be formally considered by the Eastern Interior Alaska 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 Katerina Wessels at 1-800-478-1456 or 1-907-786-3885, email [katerina\\_wessels@fws.gov](mailto:katerina_wessels@fws.gov).



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](http://www.regulations.gov):**

1. Connect to [www.regulations.gov](http://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.”

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**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](mailto: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](http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/index.cfm) or by visiting [www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska](http://www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska).

**Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council**

c/o Office of Subsistence Management  
1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199  
Telephone: (907) 786-3674, Fax: 907-786-3989  
Toll-Free: 1-800-478-1456

RAC/EI200040.KW

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

Dear Chairman Christianson:

The Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) submits this FY 2020 annual report to the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) under the provisions of Section 805 (a)(3)(D) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). At its public meeting via teleconference on October 14-15, 2020, the Council identified concerns and recommendations for this report. The Council approved this annual report at its winter 2021 meeting. The Council wishes to share information and raise a number of concerns aligned with the implementation of Title VIII of ANILCA and the continuation of subsistence uses in the Eastern Interior Alaska Region.

**1. Food security and subsistence needs satisfaction**

The Council brings its concern to the attention of the Board regarding rapidly declining important subsistence food resources in the Eastern Interior Region, which results in the most of subsistence needs not being met (except caribou harvest). The Council members report that in FY 2020 all across the Region the fisheries were very poor and salmon are in significant decline. Salmon are one of the most critical subsistence resources that communities rely on for food security. According to ADF&G data, “The composition of the wild food harvest in rural Alaska is 31.8% salmon, 21.4% other fish, 22.3% land mammals, 14.2% marine mammals, 2.9% birds, 3.2% shellfish, and 4.2% wild plants.”<sup>1</sup>

In the summer of 2020, some communities had almost no fishing opportunities and the average season’s catch was dismal (sometimes as few as three fish) with only a few Chinook Salmon and almost zero fall Chum Salmon. Sometimes, the only fish available to Federally qualified subsistence users were whitefish, pike, suckers, and sticklebacks.

<sup>1</sup> Food Security and Wild Resource Harvests in Alaska, James A. Fall and Marylynn L. Kostick, Alaska Department of Fish and Game Division of Subsistence, July 2018.

The returning Chinook Salmon were of the poorest quality the Yukon fishers had seen in the last thirty years. With few salmon coming, there is a lot of hardship and lack of critical food for the Federally qualified subsistence users in the communities along the Yukon River and in other parts of the Eastern Interior Region.

Besides being a critical food source for Federally qualified subsistence users, Chum Salmon are also a very important food source for sled dogs. The poor returns, especially of fall Chum Salmon, resulted in tremendous costs to mushers that maintain sled dog teams. The lack of fish last summer left mushers unable to stock up enough of food for their dogs teams for the winter, and many mushers had to cull their teams, sometimes as much as fifty percent. Due to the pandemic travel restrictions and quarantines, Federally qualified subsistence users were not even able to travel to other fishing areas in the State to compensate for the lack of fish in their region.

According to the U.S. Congress findings outlined in the Title VIII Sec. 801 of ANILCA, “the continuation of the opportunity for subsistence uses by rural residents of Alaska, including both Natives and non-Natives, on the public lands ... is essential to Native physical, economic, traditional, and cultural existence and to non-Native physical, economic, traditional, and social existence.” ANILCA also states that “no practical alternative means are available to replace the food supplies and other items gathered from fish and wildlife ...” Based on its observations, the Council feels that over the coming decade climate change impacts and other environmental stressors will have significant yet unpredictable impacts on food security for the Federally qualified subsistence users.

The Council raises the alarm that the depletion of wild salmon stocks creates a very serious situation making traditional food unavailable to the users. The Council requests that the Board directs Federal managers to step up and develop measures to mitigate the situation before it is too late. The Federal managers need to make their decisions based on Federally qualified subsistence users’ food needs that are identified through comprehensive surveys. Additionally, the Council believes that Federal managers need to show flexibility, and when salmon stocks are not available, provide easier access to the other subsistence fish stocks. Based on last summer’s situation, it is very important to develop adaptation strategies and policy responses in cooperation with State managers to accommodate subsistence users’ critical needs and provide food security.

## **2. Impacts of hatchery production on Alaska’s wild fisheries**

In the last three annual reports, the Council highlighted to the Board the issue of hatchery production impacts on Alaska’s wild fisheries.

The Council understands that, as the Board pointed out in its FY2019 annual report reply, “the hatchery system in Alaska and the vast majority of Alaska’s marine waters are outside the purview of the Board”; however, the Council acts in accordance with the ANILCA Title VIII mandate that these annual reports to the Board contain “an evaluation of current and anticipated subsistence needs for fish” and “recommended strategy for the management of fish.” The Council believes that the increase in hatchery production is

having tremendous biological impact on all of Alaska's wild fisheries.

It is time for Yukon River subsistence users to be better informed about the potential impacts of hatchery production on their fisheries in the State of Alaska and along the Pacific Rim. ANILCA mandates that the Council can have access to "all available technical and scientific support data;" therefore, the Council requests to make the existing data on the current biological impacts of hatchery production available to it. Specifically, the Council requests a synopsis of historic data on hatchery production from 1980 to the present. Having access to this information will allow the Council that represents the Federally qualified subsistence users of the Eastern Interior Region to have a better understanding of anthropogenic impacts on fish resources crucial to the users. Understanding of these impacts is the key to restoring some of the fisheries.

The fish populations are not familiar with and don't recognize administrative borders of various Federal and State agencies; for this reason, the Council suggests that the Board consider working collaboratively across traditional jurisdictional boundaries with other agencies to develop policies and regulations that support "the continued viability of such populations" and insure long term viable fisheries for Federally qualified subsistence users throughout the State of Alaska.

### **3. Climate change and its impacts on moose mating seasons**

The Council observed that over the last few years, moose were not going into rut until the end of September, which has a significant impact on the current hunting season. The Council also wants to highlight to the Board its observation of smaller calf moose in the early spring, which is potentially a result of climate change.

In accordance with ANILCA mandates, the Council requests "all available technical and scientific support data" on climate change impacts on moose, for example later rutting dates, and potential effects on legal hunting seasons. Having access to this information will allow the Council to develop informed proposed regulatory changes and work with State and Federal managers on adjusting hunting seasons that better correspond to the moose rutting season. Timely adjustment of hunting season's on the Federal public lands will accommodate remote Federally qualified subsistence users, so they can harvest moose legally when the weather is sufficiently cool for hanging meat to dry. Many remote users do not have freezers, and rely on harvesting when weather conditions are cooler and drier.

### **4. Hunter ethics education and outreach and dialog with rural communities**

The Council again would like to emphasize to the Board their wishes to continue work on developing of the Board's approved hunter ethics and education initiative. To achieve better understanding between rural communities and the Federal Subsistence Management Program, it is imperative to increase cultural awareness and foster respect for people that live in rural Alaska. The Council also would like to have a better mechanism to engage in a direct dialog with rural communities like Arctic Village. A lot

of the times when a meeting is held in a hub community, rural users do not have an opportunity to attend it.

In October 2019, the Council requested the Board's approval to create a subcommittee to work on Arctic Village Sheep Management Area issues and find mutually beneficial solutions. The Board deferred to act on the Council's request until the Council, with the help of their Coordinator, develops a framework for establishing this subcommittee. Prior to the fall 2020 Council meeting, no work had been done on the development of this framework due to the Council Coordinator being on extended sick leave and OSM staff shortages, and the last meeting was held via teleconference due to the pandemic travel restrictions.

However, despite these delays, the Council wants to continue pursuing the creation of a subcommittee and other means of having an open, engaged dialog with rural communities. Other means might be to have one of the Board agencies, such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, sponsor a Council member trip to a community, or receive approval from OSM's Assistant Regional Director to hold a future meeting in a rural community. Getting users from rural communities like Arctic Village involved with the Council will provide them with better opportunities to become proactive in the management of the wildlife; plus, it can become an example for other communities. The Council requests that OSM provide "adequate qualified staff," as mandated in ANILCA, to accomplish these goals.

The Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council appreciates the Board's attention to these matters and the opportunity to assist the Federal Subsistence Management Program in meeting its charge of protecting subsistence resources and uses of these resources on Federal public lands and waters. The Council looks forward to continuing discussions about the issues and concerns of subsistence users from the Eastern Interior Region. If you have questions about this report, please contact me via Katerina Wessels, Subsistence Council Coordinator with the Office of Subsistence Management at 1-800-478-1456 or 907-786-3885, or email at [katerina\\_wessels@fws.gov](mailto:katerina_wessels@fws.gov).

Sincerely,

Susan Entsminger  
Chair

cc: Federal Subsistence Board  
Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council  
Susan Detwiler, Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management  
Acting Deputy Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management  
Katerina Wessels, Acting Policy Coordinator and Council Coordinator,  
Office of Subsistence Management

Steve Fadden, Acting Wildlife Division Supervisor,  
Office of Subsistence Management  
George Pappas, State Liaison and Acting Fisheries Division Supervisor,  
Office of Subsistence Management  
Tom Kron, Acting Council Coordination Division Supervisor,  
Office of Subsistence Management  
Pippa Kenner, Anthropologist, Office of Subsistence Management  
Corey Graham, Fisheries Biologist, Office of Subsistence Management  
Lisa Maas, Wildlife Biologist, Office of Subsistence Management  
Benjamin Mulligan, Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish & Game  
Mark Burch, Special Projects Coordinator, Alaska Department of Fish & Game  
Interagency Staff Committee  
Administrative Record

DRAFT



## **Arctic National Wildlife Refuge U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Summary of Activities**



**Prepared for Eastern Interior and North Slope  
Regional Advisory Councils - October 2020 (revised)**

**Arctic National  
Wildlife Refuge  
907-456-0250,  
800-362-4546**

**[arctic\\_refuges@fws.gov](mailto:arctic_refuges@fws.gov), <http://arctic.fws.gov>**

## **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic**

Beginning in early March 2020, Arctic Refuge staff began working from home to protect both themselves as well as Arctic Refuge communities from the spread of the COVID-19 disease. Many planned projects, events and activities had to be postponed, canceled, or held virtually. The US Fish and Wildlife Service in Alaska has established safety guidelines allowing some limited field work to proceed while adhering to strict protocol for COVID-19 safety. The refuge continues to plan and conduct important surveys and field work within established safety guidelines.

## **Refuge Staffing Changes:**



In December 2020, Paul Leonard was hired as the new Supervisory Wildlife Biologist Arctic NWR. His role will be to lead the biological staff and guide scientific project planning and implementation. Paul's background is in landscape ecology and wildlife biology. He recently assisted with projects to help identify and mitigate the potential impacts of Oil & Gas exploration on the Coastal Plain

## **Oil and Gas Leasing Programs:**

- The Department of Interior released the Record of Decision (ROD) on the Arctic Coastal Plain Leasing EIS on August 17, 2020. The selected alternative is Alternative B which opens the entire area for oil and gas leasing.
- An Environmental Assessment was conducted by BLM to permit a KIC proposal for seismic exploration on the Arctic Coastal Plain of the Refuge. If approved, the project would begin no earlier than January 21, 2021.
- An oil and gas lease sale is to be held January 7, 2021 for the entire coastal plain of Arctic NWR.
- Field Projects/Research – Refuge staff and cooperators are planning research projects for the 2021 summer season. It is anticipated that roughly 20 individual research and/or inventory and monitoring projects will be conducted in 2021 across the coastal plain.

## **Biological Monitoring and Research**

- Wildlife Research
  - Tundra Nesting Birds on North Slope -The Canning River Delta study site in Arctic Refuge was established in the late 1970s and has since become the primary tundra nesting bird research station for the refuge. Due to travel restrictions because of COVID-19, we did not conduct work at the camp this year. However, Refuge staff and the Refuge Directorate Fellow were able to conduct work off the Dalton Highway in mid-July for the purpose of testing new tools for remotely monitoring nesting birds and tagging cackling geese to determine wintering areas. Cackling geese have increased 10 fold in this area over the last several decades and are now the most common waterbird at the study site. Our work seeks to track the post-breeding and wintering movements of cackling geese by attaching 25 g neck collars (about the weight of a single aa battery) that collect a GPS location every 15 minutes then transmits the data via cell towers when the birds enter areas of cell coverage in Canada and the lower 48. In prior years, all the birds that have reported spent at least some of the winter in Albuquerque, NM. Some of these birds wintering in Albuquerque have used our sister National



Wildlife Refuge, Valle de Oro, and others grazed at school ballfields.

**Figure 1.** GPS/GSM derived locations of a cackling goose in December-February at ballfields at West Mesa High School in Albuquerque, NM. This bird was tagged the previous summer at her nest on the Canning River Delta.



**Figure 2.** Arctic Refuge Directorate Fellow collecting data at a cackling goose nest south of Prudhoe Bay. Photo credit – Sadie Ulman

- Pilot Study of Remote Monitoring Tools for Use with Small Mammals - Lemmings are a keystone species in the high Arctic. Traditional ecological knowledge and scientific research indicate lemming populations undergo dramatic fluctuations, and many predators (e.g., owls, foxes, and jaegers) prey almost exclusively on lemmings during high abundance years. When lemmings are scarce, predators may shift their diet to more abundant prey, such as ground-nesting birds or their eggs. In Alaska, research suggests peak lemming abundance often corresponds with increased reproductive effort and nest survival of ground nesting birds. This summer, Refuge staff began developing novel remote tools for monitoring lemmings in Arctic Refuge. Remote monitoring techniques reduce handling (and therefore disturbance and stress to animals), cut costs, and provide larger sample sizes to answer more complex ecological questions. The methods being evaluated are: 1) RFID loggers to passively ‘recapture’ tagged small mammals, and 2) small triggered game cameras repurposed for capturing images of small mammals for abundance estimates. If successful, this method will be implemented at multiple sites in Arctic Refuge to study lemming ecology. Data on lemming population dynamics will be used to assess the relationships between predators, small mammals, and breeding success of tundra nesting birds in an area potentially impacted by the changing climate and industrialization.

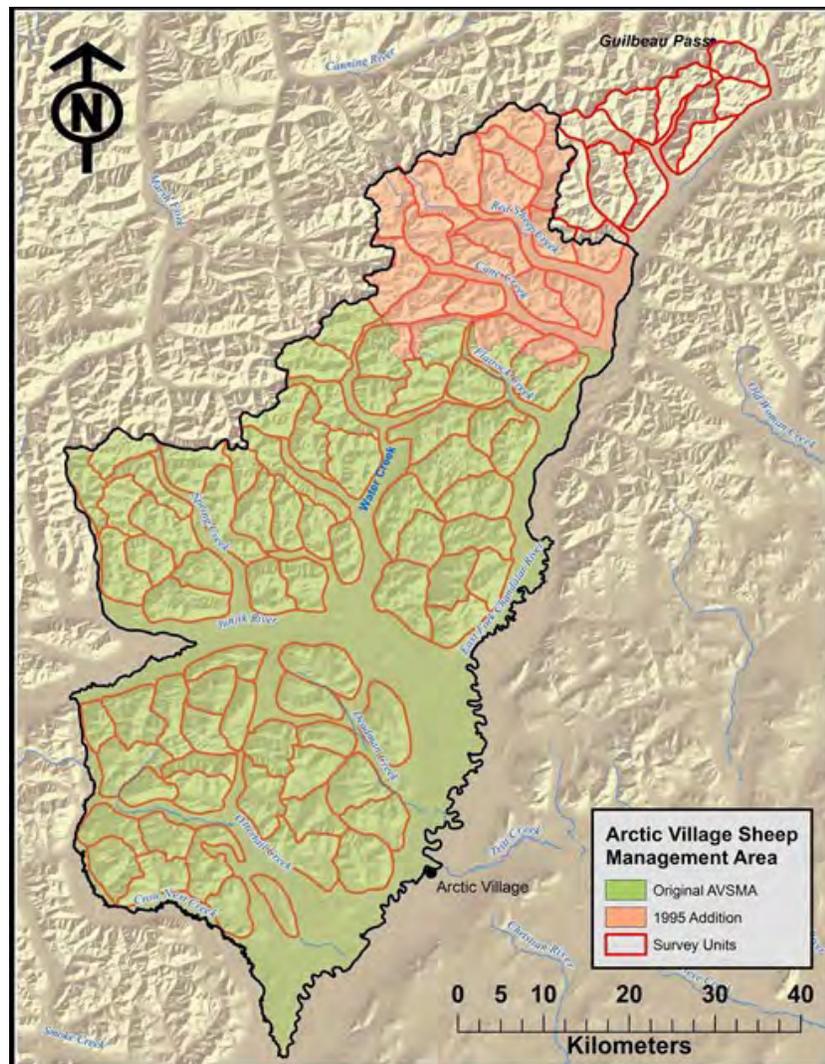
This pilot study was originally intended to occur at the Canning River Delta in Arctic Refuge during the summer of 2020, but due to COVID-19 related disruptions, the project was modified and instead occurred, in collaboration with Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the National Park Service, at Creamer's Field Migratory Bird Refuge in Fairbanks. Staff redesigned the study plan to utilize voles and mice as surrogate species for lemmings until normal annual work resumes.



**Figure 3.** A tundra vole captured at Creamer's Field Migratory Bird Refuge with a Sherman trap. The vole is fitted with a subcutaneous PIT tag which is "read" by the RFID loggers being tested. We also fitted ear tags on PIT-tagged individuals, so that they are distinctly visible on the motion-triggered game cameras used in tandem with the RFID logger.

- Wildlife Monitoring
  - Dall's Sheep

Dan Shelden (Pilot) and William Leacock (Biologist) conducted a minimum count sheep survey in the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area (AVSMA) from August 8 through August 13, 2020. Operations were based out of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Station at Arctic Village. The AVSMA was broken down into 5 survey areas, roughly Red Sheep Creek to Cane Creek, Cane Creek to Flatrock Creek, Chandalar River to Water Creek, Water creek to Spring Creek, and the Junjik River to Crow Nest Creek. A total of 279 sheep were documented within the AVSMA. The previous survey, conducted in 2012, documented 309 sheep within the AVSMA, but did not survey the Junjik River to Crow Nest Creek survey area. Detailed composition data is still being analyzed.



**Figure 4.** The Arctic Village Sheep Management (AVSMA) survey area

## **Public Use Management**

- Polar Bear viewing – Per USFWS directive, Special Use Permits for Polar Bear Viewing were not issued for 2020. Arctic Refuge staff based in Kaktovik continue to support the community to address potential issues that emerge during the season when bears are present in large numbers around the community. As of January 2021, there has been no change to the status of permitted polar bear viewing management on Arctic NWR.
- Arctic NWR domestic animal regulation – Following the directive in the 2015 Revised Comprehensive Conservation Plan, Arctic NWR drafted a new regulation that would prohibit certain types of domestic pack animals (sheep, goats, and camelids) on Refuge lands to mitigate disease transmission potential to wild ungulates, primarily Dall sheep. The regulation was included in a broader national USFWS hunt/fish package and is in the process of being finalized. As part of this regulatory process, the USFWS held a hearing in order to solicit public comment. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and limitations on in person meetings, particularly in larger groups, the public hearing was held virtually using an online meeting platform. This regulation went into effect on August 27, 2020. Since then, a lawsuit has been filed by llama user group advocates to overturn the regulation.
- Clarify new regulations for the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area (AVSMA) – The State Board of Game recently passed a new state hunt opportunity that would occur within the boundary of the federally designated AVSMA. The area was labeled as “Eastern Brooks Range Management Area” and it directly overlays the Federal AVSMA (Figure 5). There was some early confusion as to whether the AVSMA area was open to non-qualified users during both the Youth Hunt in early August and during the winter hunt beginning in October (Figure 6). The area is not open to either hunt on Federal lands within the special management area (over 99% of the area). Refuge staff is working with Regional communications specialists to address how best to communicate the current status of the AVSMA to the public.

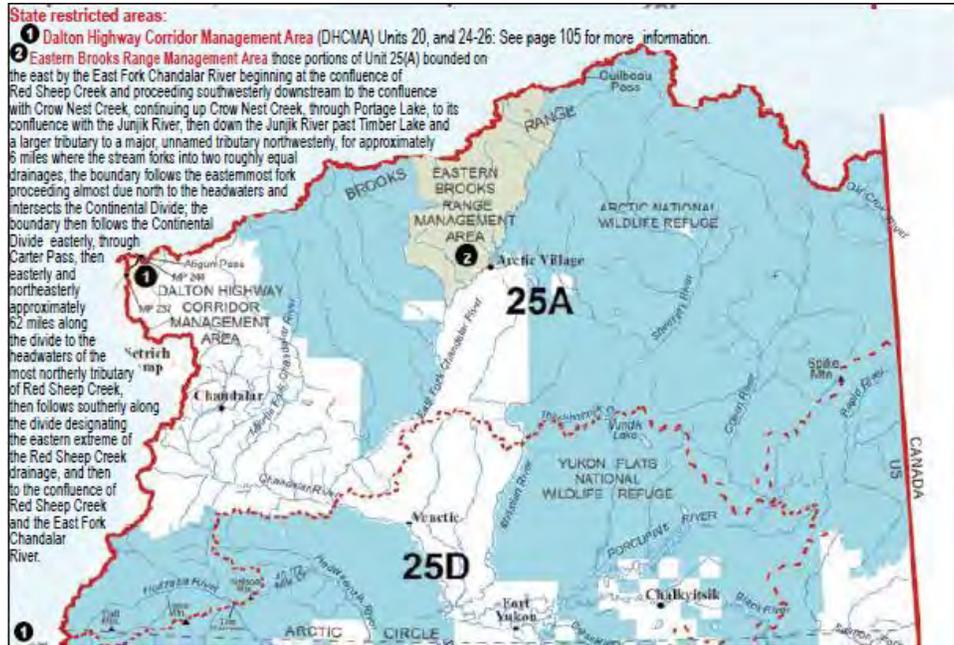


Figure 5. 2020-2021 Alaska Hunting Regulations, page 132

<b>R</b>	<b>25A</b> ★ Eastern Brooks Range Management Area	<b>One ram with full-curl horn or larger. Youth hunt only</b>	HT	Aug 1-Aug 5
		<b>OR</b> <b>One ram with 3/4 curl horn or less every four regulatory years by permit available online at <a href="http://hunt.alaska.gov">http://hunt.alaska.gov</a> or in person in Fairbanks and Kaktovik beginning Sept 10.</b> <i>The use of aircraft for access to hunt sheep and to transport harvested sheep is prohibited in this hunt except into and out of the Arctic Village and Kaktovik airports. No motorized access from the Dalton Highway</i>	RS595	Oct 1-April 30

Figure 6. 2020-2021 Alaska Hunting Regulations, page 135

## **Public Outreach and Environmental Education**

- 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge – 2020 marked the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (Range) in 1960. Although COVID-19 dampened the intended recognition and celebration for 2020, Refuge and USFWS staff are moving forward with plans to more fully celebrate the Refuge’s 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary virtually, and hopefully with in-person interactive events in 2021 if travel and field restrictions ease.



- Importance of Harvest and Hunter Effort Reporting

Federal Subsistence Hunt Application Wildlife - Registration -FS2502 - 2020/21 - Dall Sheep		Permit No.
Federal Land Unit: Arctic NWR - Arctic Village Sheep Mgmt Area	Unit(s) & Subunit(s): 25A ARCTIC VILLAGE	AK Hunting License Number:
Applicant's Name (First, Middle Initial, Last):	Date of Birth (mm/dd/yy):	Telephone Number:
Mailing Address:	Physical Address:	
Applicant's Signature	Community of Primary Residence:	
I certify that I am a rural resident as defined by 50 CFR 100.4 and 50 CFR 242.4. I have read and understand the conditions on the permit and agree to comply with them and applicable regulations as found in 50 CFR 100 and 50 CFR 242.		Issuing Agent (Print):
Federal Subsistence Harvest Report Permit Number: Permittee's Name: Permit Event: FS2502 - 2020/21		Date Permit Issued (mm/dd/yy):
1. Did you hunt? Yes ___ No ___ Did you use a designated hunter where allowed? Yes ___ No ___ 2. A. How many days did you hunt? _____ B. How did you get to hunt area? (Circle your primary method of getting to where you started walking) 1. Airplane 3. Boat 5. Snow machine 7. Highway Vehicle 2. Horse/Dog Sled 4. 3/4-Wheeler 6. Other off road vehicle 8. No vehicle used C. Specific Locations: _____ D. Subunit Hunted: _____ E. Did you take an animal? Yes ___ No ___ 3. A. Date taken _____ (mm/dd/yy) B. Sex of animal: Male ___ Female ___		<b>NON-TRANSFERABLE</b> UNIT: 25A ARCTIC VILLAGE SEASON: 08/10/20 thru 04/30/21 LEGAL: Two Ram Sheep with one ram sheep per permit. Successful Harvest: <u>Must</u> return permit Harvest Report within 5 days after taking an animal. Unsuccessful or did not Hunt: <u>Must</u> return permit Harvest Report within 15 days after the close of the season.
INTERNET REPORTING <a href="http://fws.gov/alaska/harvestreport">http://fws.gov/alaska/harvestreport</a> UNIQUE CODE Not Available for this Permit		FEDERAL PERMIT PERMIT NO: REGULATORY YEAR: 2020/21 HUNT NO: FS2502 UNIT(S): 25A ARCTIC VILLAGE SEASON: 08/10/20 thru 04/30/21 SPECIES: Dall Sheep LEGAL: Two Ram Sheep with one ram sheep per permit. CONDITIONS: See Back Permit must be in your possession while hunting or transporting the animal taken. You must also show this permit to any person authorized to enforce Federal law who requests it. Failure to return the harvest report will result in you being ineligible to receive a permit for the following regulatory year, and may result in a fine. Print Name: _____ X _____ Hunter's Signature JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN

FWS Form 3-2320 REV 10/13

- Harvest and Hunter effort reporting is important to the hunters and wildlife managers because:
  - Confirms the importance of wildlife for food & cultural needs
  - Shows the hunters commitment to be part of the wildlife management process
  - Is a tool for protecting wildlife from overharvest
  - Helps to provide healthy wildlife populations for future generations
  - Above is a sample federal permit for sheep hunting in the Arctic Village Sheep Management area in Unit 25A. Refuge staff in cooperation with the Arctic Village Council staff are working closely with issuing permits and harvest/hunter effort reporting.

# U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

## 2021 Summary for Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge

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January 2021



*Photo credit: USFWS*

Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge  
PO Box 779, Tok, AK 99780



## STAFF UPDATE

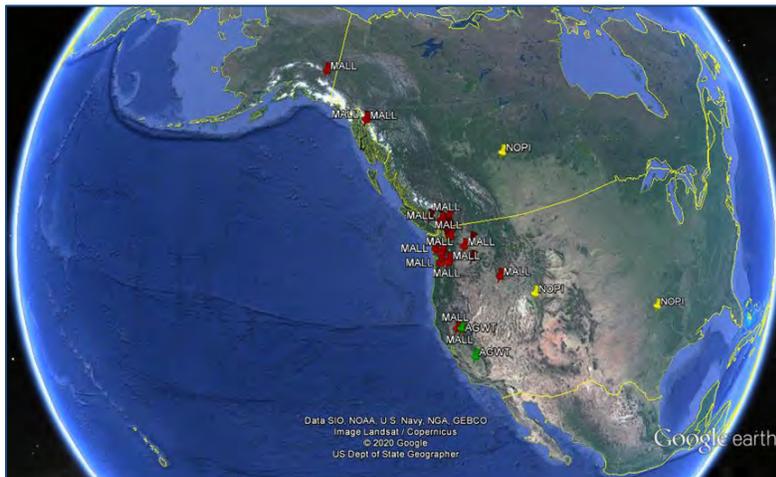
Tetlin NWR is in the process of hiring a new environmental educator. This position focuses on outreach in the local communities, and was previously held by current Visitor Services Manager Tim Lorenzini.

In addition to regular outreach staff, Tetlin NWR is hiring two seasonal park rangers to help staff the Tok Main Street Visitor Center. This is a collaborative effort with NPS, BLM, and the Tok Chamber of Commerce to help educate the traveling public about public lands in the Eastern Interior. The BLM Eastern Interior Office is also hiring two park rangers.

## BIOLOGY PROJECTS

### Duck Banding

Band returns continue to come in for waterfowl banded in the Upper Tanana Valley over the past three summers. A majority of returns continue to come from the Pacific Northwest. The Refuge plans to continue banding efforts in the Summer of 2021.



Map. Harvest locations of ducks banded in the Upper Tanana Valley from 2017-2020.

### Northwest Boreal Lynx Project

Lynx numbers are suspected to be low considering low hare numbers and several collared lynx mortalities in the past year. Of the 80 lynx collared on the Tetlin NWR since 2015, 17 are currently known to be alive and 11 of those are still on the refuge. The 6 lynx that have left the refuge are distributed across the Yukon Territory, Northwest Territories, and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. In 2020 alone, 26 lynx from the Tetlin NWR have died. We did not document any kittens being born to collared lynx in 2020, presumably due to inadequate prey numbers (snowshoe hares) to support reproduction.

Tetlin NWR plans to have two crews operating throughout February on the Refuge in the ongoing project studying lynx movements. The Refuge hired two SCA interns for one-month positions to help with these efforts. Staff and interns are going through extra efforts to follow a COVID mitigation protocol, including quarantining and getting two rounds of coronavirus tests, to ensure the safety of staff and communities.

## FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE HUNTS

### 2020 Mid-Season Report

Subsistence hunters are having above average success harvesting caribou so far during the 2020-2021 winter hunt (FC1202). This hunt targets the Nelchina Herd Caribou. GPS-enabled collars put on Mentasta Herd Caribou by Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve with substantial help from Glennallen Alaska Department of Fish and Game have made monitoring the Mentasta Herd much easier and safer. Mentasta Herd Caribou have largely remained outside of the hunt area. A few collared Mentasta herd individuals are within the hunt area but are staying in areas that are very difficult for hunters to access and are not likely at risk of harvest.



## VISITOR SERVICES

Tetlin NWR saw a dramatic decline in the number of visitors this past season due to a closure of the US/Canada border to non-essential travel. The lack of tourist travel and concerns with COVID-19 led to the decision to keep the refuge visitor center closed for the 2020 season. There was a slight increase of intrastate tourism from more urban areas, but not nearly enough to make up for the loss of highway travelers.



Decisions on whether the visitor will be opened for 2021 have not been made at this time, but the Refuge is hoping to reopen the center as soon as possible.

Expect a newsletter for 2021 soon.

## **Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association Report to Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council - Winter 2021**

**Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association 30th Annual Board meeting** - December 15-16, 2020 held by teleconference.

Due to COVID-19 our Annual meeting, which is usually held in April, was postponed to December. The Board of Directors pushed it as far back to see if travel restrictions would be lifted, which they did not. The teleconference option was best to the YRDFA delegation because of internet connectivity.

Over the course of the 2-day meeting the delegation gave community reports, all district seats were filled, and 4 of the 6 resolutions were passed. The YRDFA Delegation reported poor fishing throughout the Yukon drainage along with high water levels, reports of ichthyophonous in fish, and the current impacts of climate change. The delegate members who retained their seats are as follows;

- District Y1, Seat 3, Michael James, Alakanuk
- District Y2, Seat 3, Nick Andrew Sr., Marshall
- District Y4, Seat 2, Richard Burnham, Kaltag

The newly elected members to the YRDFA Delegation are as follows;

- District Y2, Seat 1, Stanley Pete, Nunam Iqua
- Canada, Seat 1, Al Von Finster, Whitehorse, YT
- Coastal, Alternate 1, Richard Tuluk, Chevak
- District Y1, Alternate 1, Paul Andrews, Emmonak
- District Y2, Alternate 1, Michelle Peterson, Mt. Village
- District Y5, Alternate 1, James Roberts, Tanana
- Canada, Alternate 1, Carl Sidney, Teslin, YT

Resolutions brought forth to the YRDFA Delegation were as follows.

- 2020-01 - 2020 Yukon River Fisheries Disaster Declaration Request - PASSED
- 2020-02 - BLM Bering Sea-Western Interior and Central Yukon Resource Management - PASSED
- 2020-03 - Opposing the Proposed Road to the Ambler Mining District - NOT PASSED
- 2020-04- Protection to Yukon River Salmon in the Marine Environment - PASSED
- 2020-05- Mining in the Yukon River Region - PASSED
- 2020-06- Escapement to Upper End of Goal - NOT PASSED

YRDFA Delegation would like the staff to work on our Strategic Plan with Goal #2 as priority, which is;

*Reduce threats to Yukon River salmon and their habitat throughout their lifecycle.*

*Objective 1. Reduce marine mortality by getting management measures in place to limit Chinook and chum bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery;*

*Objective 2. Advocate for protection of Yukon River salmon in existing and new mining, oil and gas, road development and pipeline projects;*

*Objective 3. Advocate for protection of Yukon River salmon in the marine environment, including advocating against offshore aquaculture, hatchery production and monitoring federal fisheries management,*

*Objective 4. Address the impacts of climate change on the Yukon River salmon through research and monitoring, and advocate for policies which will reduce climate change impacts;*

*Objective 5. Reduce marine debris and contamination throughout the Yukon River watershed.*

YRDFA Staff will work on this objective by;

- Search for funding to hire additional staff to focus on areas of policy and advocacy to engage in marine environment activities; such as, Board of Fish, North Pacific Fisheries Management Council, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration meetings, etc.
- Continue creating partnerships with other organizations and agencies to create a clearinghouse of past and current research of the Yukon River to clearly establish gaps where monitoring can be done.

**Post Season Meeting** - December 17, 2020 held by teleconference.

Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions prevented YRDFA from hosting a face-to-face Yukon River Salmon Management Pre-Season meeting, so we allocated our fund to host a fall Yukon River Salmon Management Post-Season meeting, which is funded by the Pacific Salmon Commission under the Restoration and Enhancement Grant.

During our Post-season teleconference we had 47 participants and the meeting lasted for 180 minutes. The YRDFA Board and Alternates gave community reports for their districts. The Coastal District reported large pods of belugas, which may have affected the salmon population and/or migration. All districts reported low subsistence harvest and high water throughout the summer. Russian Mission reported catching coho and a couple of sockeye in their net early December. The Alaska Department of Fish & Game along with the US Fish & Wildlife Service gave their reports.

We ended the call with questions and discussion. Questions revolve around traditional knowledge of low returns and how communities responded, changes in management of fisheries are needed, and COVID funds available to fishermen.

### **FRMP Project Updates:**

#### **-In-Season Salmon Management Teleconferences:**

We are still holding off season teleconferences on the 3rd Tuesday of the month for Jan and Feb. Our next one will be at **1pm on Tuesday, January 19th** and we will be focusing on bycatch of salmon in the Bering Sea with guest presenter Diana Stramm of the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council.

We will start our InSeason Teleconferences in late May or the first Tuesday in June. All teleconferences are at 1pm and use our regular call in number 1-800-315-6338 code 98566#.

**-In-Season Subsistence Salmon Survey Program:**

Through the Inseason Subsistence Salmon Survey Program, YRDFA hires a local person in 10 communities along the Yukon River stretching from Alakanuk to Eagle to survey fishers during the Chinook salmon season in their community. The observations fishers share with YRDFA surveys are summarized by community to protect anonymity and then shared with Yukon River Inseason Managers and the Yukon River community through the In-season Salmon Management Teleconferences. This important communication tool helps managers ensure that both Yukon River escapement is met and as many subsistence fishers are meeting their goals as possible. We plan to revisit and revise the survey forms over the next few months and begin re hiring our surveyors in April. This project is funded by the FRMP through March of 2024.

**-Traditional Ecological Knowledge of anadromous fish in the Yukon Flats with an emphasis on Draanjik drainage:**

This project, funded by the FRMP, was extended until March of 2022 due to the pandemic. We are working on completing the biological field work and developing Community Review packets to be sent to each community for their feedback. TCC staff will be conducting an aerial survey of the Kevinjik Creek in the Teedraanjik drainage to identify and locate a Coho salmon spawning area (Nèhdljij Ni'inlii) that has not yet been added to the Anadromous Waters Catalog. This location has been identified by traditional knowledge and with positive eDNA analysis. Additional fieldwork is planned for the spring and summer of 2021 to document rearing juvenile and spawning adult Chinook and chum salmon.

**New Projects:**

***They Told Us There'd Come a Time, Conserving Fish, Preserving Tradition on the Yukon River, A catalog of Elders Warnings:***

This project, funded by the North Pacific Research Board, has YRDFA partnering with the Tanana Chiefs Conference young adult Emerging Leaders to research documented Local and Traditional Knowledge of salmon. The goal of the project year 1 is to review Local and Traditional Knowledge archives for warnings from Elders about salmon shortages or threats. Early in the new year we will have a workshop, virtually, to train our team to access the archives.



# United States Department of Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve  
4175 Geist Road  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709



## Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council Meeting March 4-5, 2021

- **Moose:** We are currently monitoring 21 adult female moose in the Preserve using GPS collars and we conducted a fall calf survival flight in November to count how many calves survived the summer. We found that 9 of the females (43%) still had calves and one of these had twins, which means that 42% of the calves we counted in the spring survived until November. Since this is the first year of monitoring this metric, we don't know how this compares to normal for moose in the Preserve, but it appears generally comparable to other moose populations in the area. For upcoming fieldwork this spring, we plan to deploy additional collars and count calf survival in March/April, as well as conduct calving flights in late May/early June.

For more information, contact Matt Cameron, (907) 455-0626, [matthew\\_cameron@nps.gov](mailto:matthew_cameron@nps.gov)

- **Wolf Studies:** We are currently monitoring 8 packs within the Preserve, 7 of which denned during the summer. The fall pack count averaged 7.2 wolves, which is slightly lower than the long-term average (7.7 wolves). Over the 2019 biological year (May 2019-May 2020) we tracked 24 GPS-collared wolves. Of the 24 wolves, 5 died and 5 dispersed outside of the Preserve. We are working on studies evaluating how wolf deaths in the pack affects pack structure and productivity, how prevalent disease is, how wolves use the landscape, and what their winter diet consists of.

We completed a study that evaluates how changes in temperature and precipitation and spring onset dates affect when wolves den and reproductive success in eight populations across northwestern North America between 2000 and 2017. We found that the onset of spring shifted 14.2 days earlier, but the average denning date did not change, indicating a potential misalignment. See here for additional

information: <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/wolfdendate.htm>

For more information, contact Mat Sorum, (907) 455-0676, [mat\\_sorum@nps.gov](mailto:mat_sorum@nps.gov)

- **Invasive Plant Species:** White sweet clover (*Melilotus albus*) is a tall, invasive flowering plant commonly found along Alaska's road system, riverbanks, gravel bars, and other sunny, disturbed areas. Its presence was not known in Yukon-Charley until an observation was reported last year. Along several glacial rivers in Alaska (Nenana and Healy Rivers), dense stands of white sweet clover have been shown to reduce light availability and recruitment for other sun-loving native plants. To gather preliminary data on the infestation, Preserve staff surveyed the Yukon River in July and confirmed that white sweet clover had, indeed, expanded into the preserve. Seven populations were located within Yukon-Charley, the furthest occurring approximately 55 river miles downstream from Eagle. One small infestation was removed; the rest were too well



established to manage within the scope of the trip. Please let us know if you see white sweet clover while traveling in Yukon Charley and would like to help with our tracking effort. Contact: [Danielle\\_Knapp@nps.gov](mailto:Danielle_Knapp@nps.gov)



**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**  
Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve  
Mile 106.8 Richardson Hwy. P.O. Box 439  
Copper Center, AK 99573-0439  
907 822 5234

## **Winter 2021 Fisheries Report**

**Dave Sarafin, Fisheries Biologist**

### **FISHERIES RESEARCH AND MONITORING PROJECTS**

#### ***Tanada Creek Salmon Weir and Upper Yukon Burbot Assessments***

The park Fisheries Program plans on performing work during the 2021 field season on two projects funded through the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP); the Tanada Creek salmon weir and a Burbot population assessment in Ptarmigan Lake of the Upper Yukon River Drainage. Neither of these projects operated during 2020, as both projects were impacted by risk mitigation measures associated with the Covid-19 pandemic.

One particular challenge we had during 2020 was recruiting a full crew of local residents to work on the Tanada Creek weir project. This project is based out of Slana which has typically provided a very limited pool of applicants interested in these seasonal positions. For the 2021 season we are attempting to recruit locally, but may consider applicants from outside of the local community. Please help inform any potential applicants of these upcoming employment opportunities; local hire announcements should be posted on the park website in late January to early February.



**Tanada Creek weir site.**

#### ***Tracing Mercury in Lake Trout Food Webs***

As part of a collaborative project between NPS and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the WRST Fisheries Program is planning to assist with field activities to support a study investigating the tracing of Mercury (Hg) in Lake Trout food webs. This study was prompted by findings of elevated Hg levels in muscle tissue of Lake Trout residing in certain lakes of WRST. Three lakes in the park are intended to be studied, including: Copper Lake, Tanada Lake, and one other lake (yet to be determined).

## **UPPER COPPER RIVER FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE FISHERIES**

### ***2020 Season Summary***

The Federal subsistence salmon fisheries of the upper Copper River were open from May 15 through September 30. Through the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) Federal subsistence permit website 216 Chitina Subdistrict permits, 377 Glennallen Subdistrict permits, and 1 Batzulnetas area permits were issued. Tables 1 through 4 (pages 4 to 7) show historical reported and expanded harvests for the Federal subsistence fisheries in each subdistrict. Overall harvest by Federal subsistence users during 2020 is estimated to be 16,144 fish, which is 72% of the 5-year average historical harvest of 22,570 fish and 77% of the 10-year average historical harvest of 21,076 fish.

### ***2020 Copper River Salmon Run Strength and Management Actions***

During 2020, The commercial fishery in the Copper River District was limited in response to a weak salmon return. Total commercial harvest reported for the season was 98,266 Sockeye Salmon and 5,850 Chinook Salmon. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) reported the total season harvest (through July 28) to be the 4th lowest commercial harvest in the last 50 years for the district.

The ADFG sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the Copper River) recorded salmon passage from May 19 through July 28; providing a season total estimate of 530,313 salmon migrating upstream. This estimate is 85% of the cumulative management objective of 624,709 salmon for this date. The ADFG reported this to be the 12<sup>th</sup> lowest season estimate on record (1978-2020).

Performance in the commercial fishery and in-river sonar salmon passage estimates are the primary in-season assessments of the salmon return to the Copper River. The overall returns of both Sockeye and Chinook Salmon were weak. In-river assessments of the Chinook Salmon return, along with assumptions of up-river harvests, indicate that the sustainable escapement goal (SEG) of 24,000 fish was likely not met for this season. As well, the minimum threshold 360,000 fish of the wild stock Sockeye Salmon SEG range of 360,000 to 750,000 may not have been achieved this season. This includes assumptions of the additional factors of up-river harvests, hatchery stock contribution, and the non-Sockeye Salmon component of the sonar passage estimates. These factors will be further assessed during the post-season to provide a final escapement estimate.

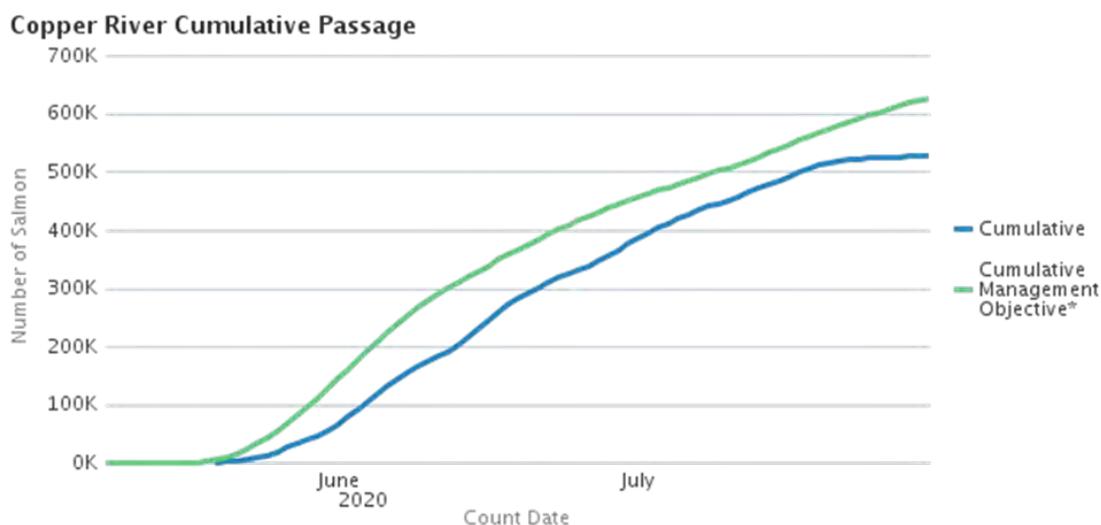
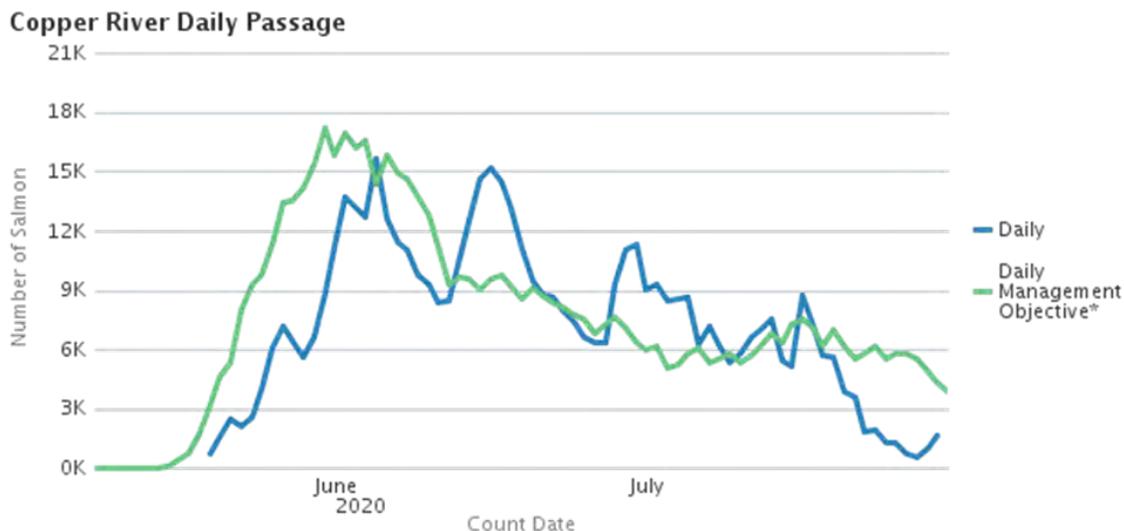
The State subsistence fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict was open from June 1 through September 30. Effective June 20, the State sport fishery annual limit was reduced from 4 to 1 Chinook Salmon for the Upper Copper River drainage. Effective August 3, the Sockeye Salmon sport fisheries of the Upper Copper River drainage closed for the remainder of the season. Effective June 22, the Chitina personal use fishery was closed to the retention of Chinook Salmon. The personal use fishery in the Chitina Subdistrict was closed for most of August to conserve Sockeye Salmon for escapement; it re-opened September 1 to provide Coho Salmon harvest opportunity.

No Federal Special Actions were issued by the in-season manager this season.

### **2021 Preseason Copper River Salmon Forecast:**

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game forecast was not available at the time of preparing this report.

### 2020 Copper River Salmon Passage at Miles Lake Sonar.



Source: [http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.salmon\\_escapement](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.salmon_escapement)

### 2021 Early Season Management Strategy for Federal Subsistence Fisheries

Unless in-season run abundance indices prompt concerns of meeting salmon escapement goals, we anticipate all Federal subsistence salmon fisheries of the Upper Copper River to be open continuously from May 15 through September 30 during the 2021 season.

**Table 1. Federal Subsistence Expanded Fish Harvests in the Upper Copper River District, including Harvests by Gear Type.**

Year	Expanded Harvest Estimates <sup>2</sup>						Harvest by Gear Type					
	Sockeye	Chinook	Coho	Steelhead /Rainbow Trout	Other Species	Total Harvest	Fish Wheel %	Fish Wheel Total	Dip Net %	Dip Net Total	Rod and Reel %	Rod and Reel Total
2002	10,644	745	100	77	N.A.	11,567						
2003	17,220	687	268	16	N.A.	18,191						
2004	24,035	815	216	15	N.A.	25,082						
2005	24,781	412	55	7	37	25,292						
2006	20,737	507	55	17	37	21,353						
2007	19,107	704	85	7	25	19,928						
2008	14,864	892	268	21	54	16,099						
2009	14,821	590	52	22	36	15,521						
2010	17,050	362	111	46	25	17,594	85.3%	15,114	14.6%	2,586	0.1%	23
2011	18,201	814	70	6	283	19,373	88.2%	17,091	11.6%	2,244	0.2%	39
2012	17,146	410	93	45	113	17,806	90.5%	16,111	9.3%	1,651	0.3%	45
2013	19,988	391	36	8	81	20,503	86.1%	17,654	13.9%	2,849	0.0%	0
2014	25,525	454	97	14	57	26,148	89.5%	23,407	10.5%	2,738	0.0%	2
2015	29,157	430	29	15	218	29,849	90.2%	26,911	9.6%	2,871	0.2%	67
2016	21,106	465	52	6	406	22,035	89.7%	19,768	10.2%	2,248	0.1%	17
2017	20,243	483	10	8	549	21,294	89.7%	19,104	10.2%	2,171	0.1%	19
2018	20,166	2,763	31	4	45	23,008	83.4%	19,202	16.5%	3,791	0.1%	19
2019	22,177	1,029	22	3	59	23,291	79.2%	18,401	20.8%	4,825	0.1%	16
2020	16,144	729	29	8	62	16,972	69.7%	11,829	30.3%	5,142	0.0%	0
5-yr. Avg. 2015- 2019	22,570	1,034	29	7	255	23,895	86.4%	20,677	13.4%	3,181	0.1%	27
10-yr. Avg. 2010- 2019	21,076	760	55	16	184	22,090	87.2%	19,276	12.7%	2,797	0.1%	25

<sup>1</sup> This table reflects entries to the online database from 2011 through 1/13/2021. Data prior to 2011 relies on NPS records. Data for all years subject to changes resulting from entry error corrections.

<sup>2</sup> Expanded Harvest estimate derived from a basic, direct ratio expansion based on the percentage of permits that reported.

**Table 2. Glennallen Subdistrict Federal Reported and Expanded Subsistence Fishery Harvests<sup>1</sup>**

Year	Percentage		Sockeye		Chinook		Coho		Steelhead/Rainbow Trout		Other Species		All Species
	Permits Issued	of Permits Reported	Reported Harvest	Harvest Estimate <sup>2</sup>	Reported Harvest	Harvest Estimate <sup>2</sup>	Reported Harvest	Harvest Estimate <sup>2</sup>	Reported Harvest	Harvest Estimate <sup>2</sup>	Reported Harvest	Harvest Estimate <sup>2</sup>	Total Harvest
													Estimate <sup>2</sup>
2002	201	80.6	7,944	9,856	564	700	81	100	62	77	35	43	10,777
2003	221	83.3	13,616	16,346	554	665	152	182	13	16	20	24	17,233
2004	261	78.9	17,704	22,439	636	806	152	193	12	15	12	15	23,468
2005	267	85.8	19,973	23,279	331	386	47	55	6	7	32	37	23,763
2006	254	87.4	16,711	19,120	430	492	28	32	15	17	32	37	19,698
2007	281	84.3	15,225	18,060	569	675	34	40	6	7	21	25	18,808
2008	269	81.4	11,347	13,940	705	866	148	182	17	21	44	54	15,063
2009	274	85.0	11,836	13,925	494	581	34	40	19	22	31	36	14,605
2010	269	87.7	12,849	14,651	300	342	64	73	39	44	22	25	15,136
2011	277	87.7	14,163	16,145	701	799	53	60	5	6	248	283	17,293
2012	275	92.0	14,461	15,718	371	403	78	85	40	43	104	113	16,363
2013	273	89.0	15,834	17,789	331	372	24	27	6	7	62	70	18,264
2014	315	90.5	21,614	23,889	397	439	23	25	10	11	52	57	24,422
2015	325	92.3	24,695	26,753	384	416	13	14	7	8	201	218	27,408
2016	320	82.8	15,884	19,181	369	446	9	11	5	6	332	401	20,044
2017	338	85.2	15,691	18,415	399	468	1	1	7	8	468	549	19,442
2018	335	91.3	15,287	16,736	2,432	2,662	0	0	4	4	41	45	19,448
2019	343	89.8	15,873	17,677	849	945	0	0	3	3	53	59	18,685
2020	377	79.0	9,729	12,308	504	638	0	0	6	8	49	62	13,015
5-yr. Avg. 2015-2019	332	88.3	17,486	19,752	887	988	5	5	5	6	219	254	21,005
10-yr. Avg. 2010-2019	307	88.8	16,635	18,695	653	729	27	30	13	14	158	182	19,650

<sup>1</sup> This table reflects entries to the online database from 2011 through 1/13/2021. Data prior to 2011 relies on NPS records. Data for all years subject to changes resulting from entry error corrections.

<sup>2</sup> Expanded Harvest estimate derived from a basic, direct ratio expansion based on the percentage of permits that reported.

**Table 3. Chitina Subdistrict Federal Reported and Expanded Subsistence Fishery Harvests<sup>1</sup>**

Year	Sockeye		Chinook		Coho		Steelhead/Rainbow Trout		Other Species		All Species		
	Permits Issued	Percentage of Permits Reported	Reported Harvest	Harvest Estimate <sup>2</sup>	Reported Harvest	Harvest Estimate <sup>2</sup>	Reported Harvest	Harvest Estimate <sup>2</sup>	Reported Harvest	Harvest Estimate <sup>2</sup>	Reported Harvest	Harvest Estimate <sup>2</sup>	Total Harvest Estimate <sup>2</sup>
2002	122	73.0	575	788	33	45	0	0	0	0	N.A.	N.A.	833
2003	100	82.0	717	874	18	22	70	85	0	0	N.A.	N.A.	982
2004	109	76.1	1,215	1,597	7	9	18	24	0	0	N.A.	N.A.	1,629
2005	76	84.2	1,265	1,502	22	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,529
2006	75	85.3	1,379	1,617	13	15	20	23	0	0	0	0	1,655
2007	98	88.8	929	1,046	26	29	40	45	0	0	0	0	1,120
2008	82	85.4	789	924	22	26	74	87	0	0	0	0	1,036
2009	68	91.2	817	896	8	9	11	12	0	0	0	0	917
2010	92	85.9	2,061	2,399	17	20	33	38	1	1	0	0	2,459
2011	85	85.9	1,766	2,056	13	15	8	9	0	0	0	0	2,081
2012	89	93.3	1,332	1,427	6	6	8	9	1	1	0	0	1,443
2013	99	90.9	1,999	2,199	17	19	8	9	1	1	10	11	2,239
2014	113	94.7	1,549	1,636	14	15	68	72	3	3	0	0	1,726
2015	111	92.8	2,231	2,404	13	14	14	15	7	8	0	0	2,441
2016	128	80.5	1,549	1,925	16	20	33	41	0	0	4	5	1,991
2017	132	79.5	1,454	1,828	12	15	7	9	0	0	0	0	1,852
2018	132	91.7	3,144	3,430	92	100	28	31	0	0	0	0	3,561
2019	181	90.1	4,053	4,501	75	83	20	22	0	0	0	0	4,606
2020	216	80.6	3,090	3,836	74	92	23	29	0	0	0	0	3,956
5-yr. Avg. 2015- 2019	137	86.9	2,486	2,818	42	47	20	24	1	2	1	1	2,890
10-yr. Avg. 2010- 2019	116	88.5	2,114	2,381	28	31	23	25	1	1	1	2	2,440

<sup>1</sup> This table reflects entries to the online database from 2011 through **1/13/2021**. Data prior to 2011 relies on NPS records. Data for all years subject to changes resulting from entry error corrections.

<sup>2</sup> Expanded Harvest estimate derived from a basic, direct ratio expansion based on the percentage of permits that reported.

**Table 4. Batzulnetas Federal Reported and Expanded Subsistence Fishery Harvests<sup>1</sup>**

Year	Percentage		Sockeye		Chinook		Other Species	
	Permits Issued	of Permits Reported	Reported Harvest	Harvest Estimate <sup>2</sup>	Reported Harvest	Harvest Estimate <sup>2</sup>	Reported Harvest	Harvest Estimate <sup>2</sup>
2002	1	100.0	208	208	0	0	0	0
2003	1	100.0	164	164	0	0	0	0
2004	1	100.0	182	182	0	0	0	0
2005	1	100.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2006	0	N.A.	0	0	0	0	0	0
2007	1	100.0	1	1	0	0	0	0
2008	1	100.0	1	1	0	0	0	0
2009	0	N.A.	0	0	0	0	0	0
2010	3	100.0	106	106	0	0	0	0
2011	3	66.7	9	14	0	0	0	0
2012	3	66.7	101	152	0	0	0	0
2013	3	100.0	862	862	5	5	12	12
2014	2	100.0	146	146	0	0	0	0
2015	4	100.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2016	0	N.A.	0	0	0	0	0	0
2017	1	100.0	254	254	2	2	0	0
2018	1	100.0	468	468	0	0	0	0
2019	1	100.0	209	209	0	0	0	0
2020	1	100.0	67	67	0	0	0	0
5-yr. Avg. 2015-2020	1	100.0	186	166	0	0	0	0
10-yr. Avg. 2010-2019	2	92.6	216	221	1	1	1	1

<sup>1</sup> This table reflects entries to the online database from 2011 through 1/13/2021. Data prior to 2011 relies on NPS records. Data for all years subject to changes resulting from entry error corrections.

<sup>2</sup> Expanded Harvest estimate derived from a basic, direct ratio expansion based on the percentage of permits that



## United States Department of the Interior

### NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve

Mile 106.8 Richardson Hwy. P.O. Box 439

Copper Center, AK 99573-0439

907 822 5234 Fax 907 822 3281

<http://www.nps.gov/wrst>



## WRANGELL-ST. ELIAS NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE WILDLIFE REPORT

Spring 2021

Judy Putera, Wildlife Biologist

(907) 822-7241 or [judy\\_putera@nps.gov](mailto:judy_putera@nps.gov)

### Chisana Caribou Herd

ADF&G deployed 4 GPS/Iridium and 2 VHF radiocollars on April 13 and 15, 2020. Additional radiocollars were deployed October 12 and 13, 2020 by ADF&G in cooperation with WRST. We deployed 7 GPS/Iridium and 15 VHF radiocollars on 18 adults and 4 calves. This brings the total GPS/Iridium collars to 11 and VHF collars to 15 on the Alaska side of the range. The Yukon Department of Environment will deploy an equal amount of GPS/Iridium and VHF collars in spring of 2021.

During the captures, hair, nasal swabs, and blood were collected from 20 animals while fecal samples were collected from 17 animals. The NPS Alaska Subsistence Advisory Council will provide funding for laboratory analyses of a majority of these samples. Results will be available at the fall meeting.

### Moose

We completed a minimum moose count in the upper Copper River trend count area in mid-November 2020. Snow and survey conditions were excellent. Survey results are presented for this trend count area between 2003-2009 and 2019-2020 (Table 1). The 2019 and 2020 trend count area is larger and within the black boundary depicted in Figure 1. The trend count area was smaller during surveys conducted between 2003-2009 as depicted by the area south of the red line.

The 2019 survey was conducted under less than ideal conditions with incomplete snow cover in some areas. It was also conducted in mid-December, approximately one month later than the 2020 survey. We observed the highest calf:cow and bull:cow ratios in 2020 than in previous years.

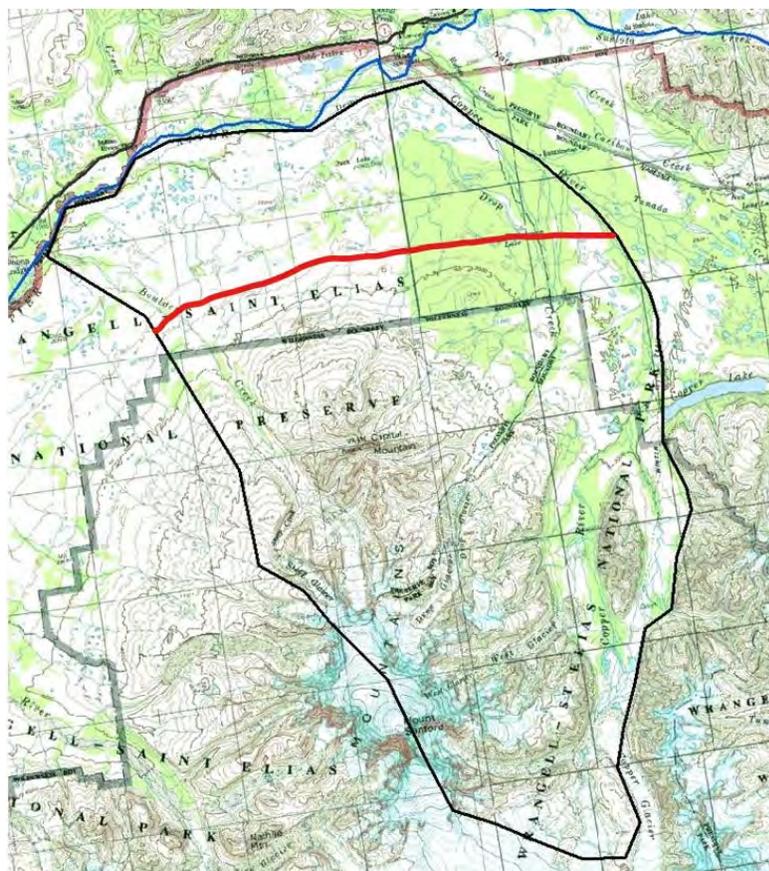


Figure 1. Upper Copper River trend count area, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve.

Table 1. Moose surveys conducted in the upper Copper River trend count area, 2003-2009 and 2019-2020, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve.

Year	Cow	Calf	Yrlg Bull	Med Bull	Large Bull	Total Bull	Total Moose	Calves: 100 Cows	Bulls: 100 Cows
2003	215	21	25	43	29	97	333	10	45
2004	142	25	15	33	30	78	245	18	55
2005	183	11	21	39	32	92	286	6	50
2006	218	31	11	39	36	86	335	14	39
2008	186	22	-	-	-	77	285	12	41
2009	131	16	12	25	32	69	216	12	53
2019	132	5	8	22	24	54	191	4	41
2020	119	25	17	41	34	92	236	21	77



**United States Department of the Interior**  
**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**  
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## **WRANGELL-ST. ELIAS NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE SUBSISTENCE AND ANTHROPOLOGY REPORT**

Winter/Spring 2021

Barbara Cellarius, Cultural Anthropologist and Subsistence Coordinator  
(907) 822-7236 or [barbara\\_cellarius@nps.gov](mailto:barbara_cellarius@nps.gov)

### **Federal Subsistence Hunting Permits**

During fall 2021, park staff in Chitina, Copper Center, McCarthy/Kennecott, and Slana along with staff from Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge had issued 249 federal registration permits for goat, moose, and sheep hunts in Unit 11 and for sheep and caribou hunts taking place primarily in Wrangell-St. Elias portion of Unit 12 as of January 12, 2021. See Table 1 for a summary of the permits issued for these hunts. The table does not include 25 Unit 13 moose permits and 58 Unit 13 caribou permits issued at the Slana Ranger Station, and numerous joint state/federal permits (RM291) issued by Wrangell-St. Elias staff for the moose hunt for portions of Units 11 and 12 in the northern part of the park. Permit and harvest numbers for the RM291 hunt area are shown in Table 2.

**Chisana caribou herd hunt:** The Chisana caribou herd hunt takes place in Unit 12 east of the Nabesna River and Glacier and south of the Winter Trail. Consistent with the management plan for the herd, the 2020 harvest quota was set at 7 bull caribou. A total of 7 permits were issued, 4 people reported hunting, and 3 animals were harvested during the 2020 season.

**South Unit 11 winter moose hunt:** A winter moose hunt in the southern portion of Unit 11 was established in 2014. The season is November 20 to January 20. The quota for the 2020-21 season was 7 bull moose. As of January 12, 2020, 8 permits have been issued for the hunt, and 1 moose was reported harvested. Note that the season was still open when this report was written.

**Table 1. Federal Subsistence Registration Permits in Wrangell-St. Elias NPP, 2010-2020**

**Unit 11 Moose -- Fall Hunt, since 2012 remainder only (FM1106)\*\***

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020*
Permits Issued	244	217	189	146	123	128	138	132	144	107	156
Individuals Hunting	151	131	75	78	70	70	75	72	85	45	68
Animals Harvested	20	27	9	12	10	13	16	13	12	10	15
Success Rate (%)	13.2	20.6	12.0	15.4	14.3	18.6	21.3	18.1	14.1	22.2	22.1

**Unit 11 Moose -- Winter Hunt in southern part of unit (FM1107)**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020*
Permits Issued	-	-	-	-	32	17	20	14	11	8	8
Individuals Hunting	-	-	-	-	3	3	4	4	2	2	1
Animals Harvested	-	-	-	-	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Success Rate (%)	-	-	-	-	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0

**Unit 11 Goat (FG1101)**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020*
Permits Issued	39	53	42	30	31	29	22	26	30	27	27
Individuals Hunting	7	14	6	7	10	6	4	3	8	8	4
Animals Harvested	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Success Rate (%)	14.3	7.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0

**Unit 11 Elder Sheep (FS1104)**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020*
Permits Issued	19	23	32	20	25	25	32	34	38	34	38
Individuals Hunting	5	10	11	5	10	8	12	13	18	14	12
Animals Harvested	0	0	1	0	1	3	3	4	1	1	1
Success Rate (%)	0.0	0.0	9.1	0.0	10.0	37.5	25.0	30.8	5.6	7.1	8.3

**Unit 11 Elder/Junior Sheep (FS1103)**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020*
Permits Issued	0	2	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	1
Individuals Hunting		1	0				1	2	0		0
Animals Harvested		0	0				0	0	0		
Success Rate (%)		0.0	-				0.0	0.0	-		

**Unit 12 Elder Sheep (FS1201)**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020*
Permits Issued	13	9	13	9	9	7	11	12	14	14	12
Individuals Hunting	3	3	3	3	5	3	6	4	8	6	4
Animals Harvested	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1
Success Rate (%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	16.7	25.0	0.0	0.0	25.0

**Table 1. Federal Subsistence Registration Permits in Wrangell-St. Elias NPP, 2010-2020 (cont.)****Unit 12 Elder/Junior Sheep (FS1204)**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020*
Permits Issued	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Individuals Hunting	0	1	0								
Animals Harvested	0	0	0								
Success Rate (%)	-	-	-								

**Unit 12 Elder/Junior Sheep (FS1204)**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020*
Permits Issued	-	-	9	9	11	11	8	8	6	4	7
Individuals Hunting	-	-	8	7	8	7	8	3	3	3	4
Animals Harvested	-	-	2	3	2	0	1	0	2	1	3
Success Rate (%)	-	-	25.0	42.9	25.0	--	12.5	0.0	66.7	33.3	75.0

Source: Federal Subsistence Permit Database.

\* 2020 data as of 1/12/2021. The season for the Unit 11 winter moose hunt was still open when this report was written.

\*\* From 2012 forward, the federal Unit 11 moose permit is for Unit 11 remainder only.

Notes: Success rate is calculated based on the number of individuals hunting, not total permits issued.

**Table 2. Joint State-Federal Permits for the Fall Moose Hunt in Portions of Units 11 and 12 (RM291), 2012-2020****All Hunters**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Permits Issued	253	246	296	250	277	244	250	277	316
Individuals Hunting	164	151	191	142	179	145	155	159	180
Total Animals Harvested	23	19	20	20	23	19	23	21	26
Unit 11 Harvest	16	10	11	9	17	15	17	14	10
Unit 12 Harvest	7	9	9	11	6	4	6	7	14
Success Rate (%)	14.0	12.6	10.5	14.1	12.8	13.1	14.8	13.2	14.4

**Federally Qualified Subsistence Users**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Permits Issued	158	135	154	168	176	155	171	172	173
Individuals Hunting	94	74	92	89	106	88	108	103	106
Animals Harvested	19	15	15	14	18	15	19	21	15
Success Rate (%)	20.2	20.3	16.3	15.7	17.0	17.0	17.6	20.4	14.2

Source: Emails from ADF&G Tok and RC012 from 2018 Alaska Board of Game Central/Southwest Region Meeting.

Notes: (1) Hunt was established in 2012.

(2) 2020 figures are as of 1/13/2021. Some hunters have not yet submitted harvest reports.

(3) Success rate is calculated based on the number of individuals hunting, not the number of permits issued.

(4) Data for Federally Qualified Subsistence Users excludes records with ambiguous residency (e.g., urban mailing address and rural resident community or local mailing address and non-local resident community).

## **Traditional Knowledge, Ethnographic, and Subsistence Access Projects:**

Work is underway on several ethnographic and subsistence projects. All projects are being supervised by the Wrangell-St. Elias cultural anthropologist, with much of the work being carried out either by other park staff or by various project partners through cooperative agreements.

**An Ethnohistory of the Chisana River Basin:** A manuscript on the ethnohistory of the Chisana River Basin was drafted a decade ago, but never finalized for publication. In this project, park staff are revising the manuscript for publication, with the assistance of the original author from Yukon College (now Yukon University) in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory. In addition to providing a view of the Chisana gold rush from the lens of Alaska Native involvement, the report is important for documenting traditional uses of an area that is the borderland between the Upper Tanana and Upper Ahtna Athabascans. Editing of the report is complete, and a graphic artist is working on the publication design. It is scheduled to be available as both a printed report and an electronic document by summer/fall 2021.

**Ahtna Ethnographic Overview and Assessment (EOA):** This project will produce a report documenting Ahtna Athabaskan connections to Wrangell-St. Elias. An EOA is a baseline cultural anthropological study that aims to document traditional associations between distinct cultural communities and landscapes, places or resources. This EOA will consist of an annotated inventory of ethnographic and related materials relevant to the Ahtna Athabascans; a narrative synopsis of our current understanding of these materials, with a focus on connections to Wrangell-St. Elias; and an analysis of data gaps and additional research needs. This project is being completed through a cooperative agreement with the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission. Park staff recently reviewed and commented on an initial draft of the report, and outreach to local communities about it is planned for spring/summer 2021. The report is scheduled to be completed in mid-2022.

**Documenting Traditional Ecological Knowledge about Historic Dynamics of Caribou Herds Associated with Wrangell-St. Elias:** The goals of this project are to conduct a literature review/data mining regarding traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and historic information (e.g., seasonal movement patterns; and herd sizes, interactions, and habitat relations) of the three caribou herds (Chisana, Mentasta and Nelchina) that spend time in Wrangell-St. Elias as well as to conduct new traditional knowledge interviews about caribou with knowledgeable long-term residents. Topics to be covered in the traditional knowledge interviews may include long-term knowledge about seasonal movement patterns, herd sizes, and observations regarding caribou in relation to the larger ecosystem and the other caribou herds. The information will be summarized in a report designed to inform management decisions about caribou. This project is being completed through a cooperative agreement with the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission.

**Local Knowledge of Winter Environmental Conditions and Their Impacts on Subsistence Access:** The goals of this project are to document local knowledge of changing environmental conditions, and to evaluate implications for winter subsistence access. This will be accomplished by interviewing trappers and possibly other Copper Basin residents who are out on the landscape during the winter about ambient environmental conditions (e.g., temperatures, snow and ice conditions), how conditions have changed over their lifetimes/careers, other traditional ecological knowledge about winter environmental conditions, and the way in which these conditions have impacted access to subsistence resources. The information gathered during the interviews will be summarized in a report. This project is being completed through a cooperative agreement with the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission.

**Quantify Changing Environmental Conditions to Inform Decisions about Allowed Means of Winter Access to Subsistence Resources:** This project will quantify temporal and spatial patterns of river freeze-up, winter ice conditions, and break-up using remote sensing data and evaluate the implications of changing environmental conditions for temporal and spatial patterns of winter subsistence access in the park. The analysis will focus on the Copper and Chitina Rivers. In addition to peer reviewed journal publications, interpretive products for the general public will be produced. This project is being completed through a cooperative agreement with the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Institute of Arctic Biology. Work has begun on preparing the remote sensing data for analysis. In addition, four time-lapse cameras were installed in September 2020 to collect daily images of the Copper River during winter 2020-2021 that will help with the interpretation and validation of the satellite imagery. Three of the cameras are game cameras where images are stored locally, and one is a satellite-linked camera that uploads real-time images online (<http://fresheyesonice.org/realtime-data/river-ice-camera/>), accessible to the public.

## **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.

# Fall 2021 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

*Last updated 11/4/2020*

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.

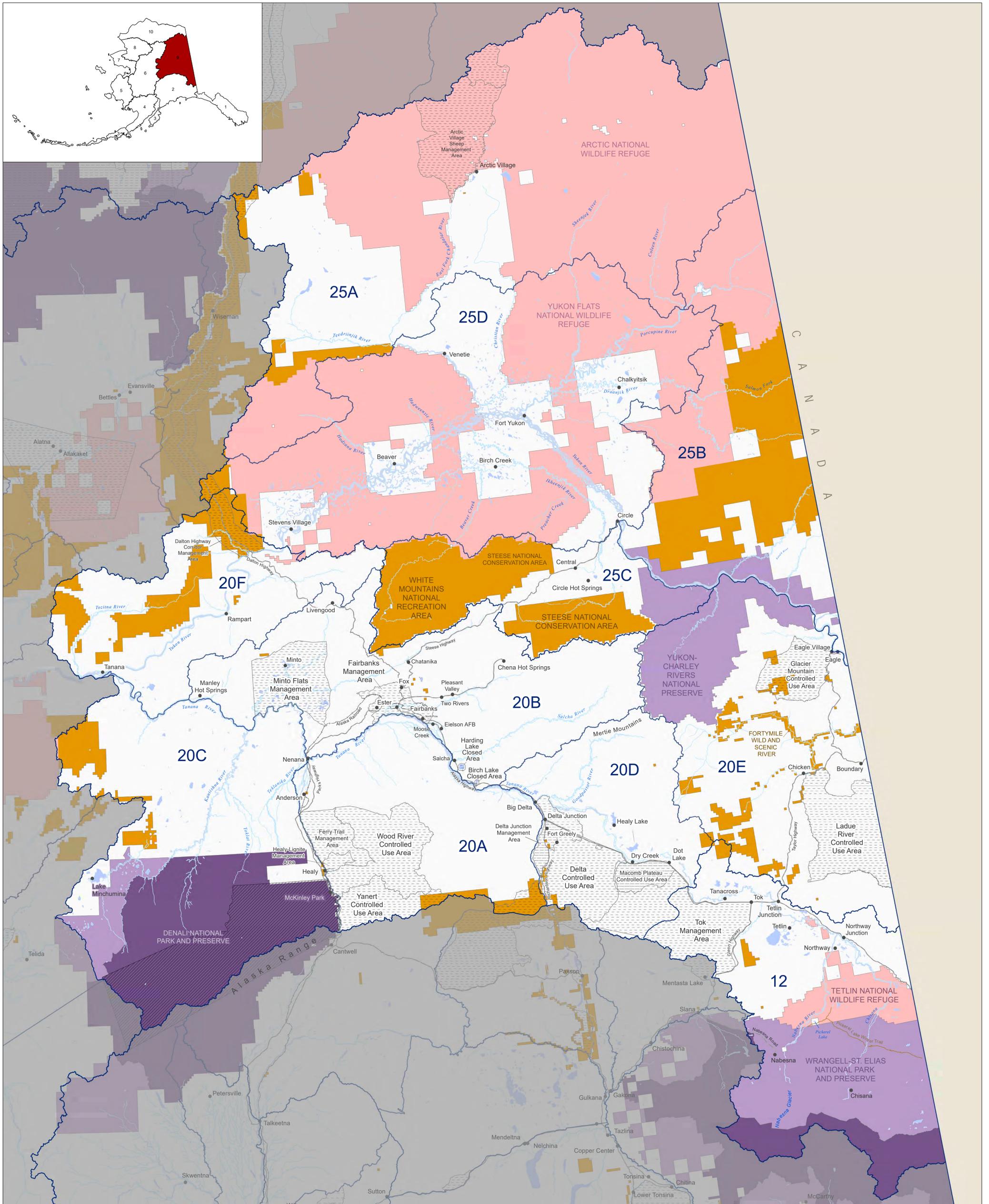
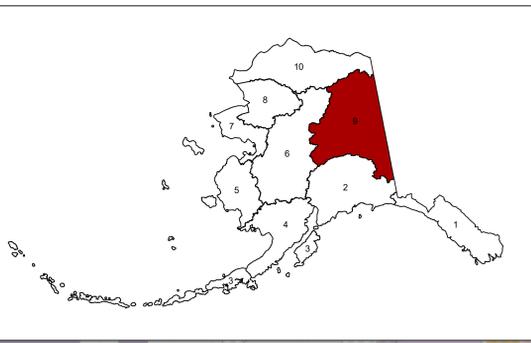
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday-	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Aug. 15	Aug. 8 Window Opens	Aug. 9	Aug. 10	Aug. 11	Aug. 12	Aug. 13
Aug. 14	Aug. 15	Aug. 16	Aug. 17	Aug. 18	Aug. 19	Aug. 20
Aug. 21	Aug. 22	Aug. 23	Sep. 1	Sep. 2	Sep. 3	Sep. 4
Sep. 5	Sep. 6 <b>Labor Day Holiday</b>	Sep. 7	Sep. 8	Sep. 9	Sep. 10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

# Winter 2022 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

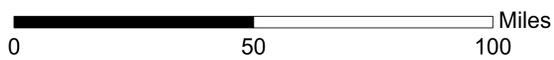
*Last updated 12/8/2020*

Due to travel budget limitations placed by Department of the Interior on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and 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 <b>PRESIDENTS DAY HOLIDAY</b></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 9 Eastern Interior Region



## Federal Public Lands Open to Subsistence Use

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

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

**Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council**

**Charter**

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

- (3) A recommended strategy for the management of fish and wildlife populations within the Region to accommodate such subsistence uses and needs.
- (4) Recommendations concerning policies, standards, guidelines, and regulations to implement the strategy.

Appoint one member to the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission and one member to the Denali National Park Subsistence Resource Commission in accordance with section 808 of the ANILCA.

Make recommendations on determinations of customary and traditional use of subsistence resources.

Make recommendations on determinations of rural status.

Provide recommendations on the establishment and membership of Federal local advisory committees.

Provide recommendations for implementation of Secretary's Order 3347: Conservation Stewardship and Outdoor Recreation, and Secretary's Order 3356: Hunting, Fishing, Recreational Shooting, and Wildlife Conservation Opportunities and Coordination with States, Tribes, and Territories.

Recommendations shall include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Assessing and quantifying implementation of the Secretary's Orders, and recommendations to enhance and expand their implementation as identified;
- (2) Policies and programs that:
  - (a) increase outdoor recreation opportunities for all Americans, with a focus on engaging youth, veterans, minorities, and other communities that traditionally have low participation in outdoor recreation;
  - (b) expand access for hunting and fishing on Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service lands in a manner that respects the rights and privacy of the owners of non-public lands;
  - (c) increase energy, transmission, infrastructure, or other relevant projects while avoiding or minimizing potential negative impacts on wildlife; and
  - (d) create greater collaboration with States, Tribes, and/or Territories.

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

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

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

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 \$175,000, 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:

Ten members who are knowledgeable and experienced in matters relating to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife and who are residents of the Region represented by the Council.

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

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

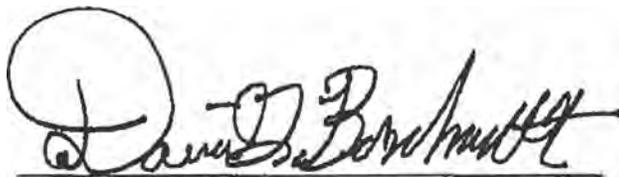
Members will be appointed for 3-year terms. Members serve at the discretion of the Secretary.

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 schedules. 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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