



***Southeast Alaska
Subsistence Regional
Advisory Council***

**Bertrand Adams Sr., Chairman
P. O. Box 349
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Mr. Tim Towarak, Chair
Federal Subsistence Board
c/o U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Office of Subsistence Management
1011 E. Tudor Road, Mail Stop 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Greetings Chairman Towarak:

This is the 2013 Annual Report of the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council as authorized under Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. The Council wishes to share information and raise a number of concerns dealing with implementation of Title VIII of ANILCA and the continuation of subsistence uses in the Yakutat and Southeastern Alaska areas.

In 2013, the Council met in Ketchikan, March 12-14, and September 24-26. During the March meeting, the Council submitted several letters: 1) clarification regarding implementation of the extended jurisdiction petition, 2) assistance to include the subsistence harvest of Chinook salmon in the Stikine River into the base level catch, 3) concerns with the effects of transboundary mining and 4) concerns regarding accommodating subsistence uses in the newest revision of the Tongass Land Management Plan. During the September meeting, the Council was able to: 1) listen to the Federal Subsistence Board's (Board) public hearing regarding the criteria that will be used to make rural determinations, 2) provide the Board recommendations on wildlife proposals and 3) make recommendations regarding the priority for funding fisheries monitoring program projects.

The Council remains concerned with the impacts to subsistence users due to the expanding sea otter population in the region. Public testimony indicates that the USFWS is not concerned with those effects and is not promoting any rule or policy changes that would facilitate the harvest of otters by coastal Natives as authorized by Congress. The Council is also concerned with the lack of water quality testing of waters flowing into Alaska from mines in Canada and the waste water from tour ships.

2013 Annual Report Topics

Issue 1: Customary and Traditional Use Determination Process

The Council remains concerned with the appropriateness of current customary and traditional use regulations. We are pleased with the efforts by the Office of Subsistence Management to communicate our concerns to the other Councils. We anticipate that there will be a consensus between the Councils this year on Region-specific regulatory changes that will recognize local conditions and benefit local users as intended in ANILCA.

Issue 2: Adequate funding of the subsistence program and the population assessment studies for fish and wildlife

The Council's cannot function as intended by Congress without adequate funding for staff to provide comprehensive staff analyses and allocate sufficient time during the biannual meetings for conducting Council business. While we are very aware of budget challenges at the Office of Subsistence Management and the U.S. Forest Service, the Council process is the heart of the subsistence management program and adequate funds must be found to maintain that responsibility.

Issue 3: Deference for rural determinations and customary and traditional use determinations

The Councils should be given deference to regulatory changes regarding rural determinations and customary use of fish and wildlife. The Councils, as representatives of local residents, are the bodies best able to identify both the rural character of communities and the cultural and social characteristics of these communities regarding fish and wildlife harvest practices in their Regions.

Thank you for considering the management and program issues of concern to the Council. Please address any questions with this letter directly to Mr. Robert Larson, Council Coordinator, U. S. Forest Service, Box 1328, Petersburg, AK 99833, (907) 772-5930, robertlarson@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,

Bertrand Adams Sr.
Chair

cc. Federal Subsistence Board Members
Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
David Jenkins, Acting Deputy Assistant Regional Director, OSM
Carl Johnson, Council Coordination Division Chief, OSM
Interagency Staff Committee
Administrative Record

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