



**Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council**

c/o Office of Subsistence Management  
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Anthony Christianson, Chair  
Federal Subsistence Board  
c/o Office of Subsistence Management  
1011 E. Tudor Road, MS 121  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199

Dear Chairman Christianson:

The Southcentral Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) appreciates the opportunity to submit its FY-2021 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 meetings held via video/teleconference on October 13-14, 2021, the Council identified concerns and recommendations for this report. The Council approved this Annual Report at its February 10-11, 2022 meeting. The Council wishes to share the following information and concerns dealing with the implementation of Title VIII of ANILCA and the continuation of subsistence uses in the Southcentral Region:

**1. FP21-10 Deferral**

Fisheries Proposal FP21-10 is a Southcentral Region proposal. During its Fall 2020 meeting, the Council conducted their regulatory process on this proposal with due diligence. Comments, both for and against this proposal, were substantial. The discussions and subsequent deliberation of this Council were thorough. The majority of Council members voted to support the proposal with the OSM suggested modification for the requirement to report take of salmon within 48 hours of harvest. The Council justification for its recommendation included: it provides additional harvest opportunities under ANILCA's provision for rural subsistence priority and that creation of this fishery was important for those underserved Federally-qualified subsistence users who do not own boats. Importantly, the Council felt that subsistence users should be provided the opportunity to obtain their fish and that any restrictions to address a conservation concern should first come from other user groups.

The Council later learned the Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council took up this proposal during their Fall 2021 meeting and they provided a comment in opposition to this proposal to the Board.

The Board, at its January 2021 regulatory meeting, deferred action on FP21-10 because there was concern this proposal had elicited a pointed disagreement between Southcentral and Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Councils. The Board deferred action on FP21-10 until ‘such time as both Councils could meet and work to develop a compromise proposal that can be supported by all affected.’ This placed an unnecessary extra burden on Council members.

The Council has been aware of this polarizing issue for many years and has observed that it is affecting relationships between subsistence users up and down the Copper River. Although difficult, these Council members fulfilled their duties as Regional Advisory Council members and made a recommendation on this matter ‘relating to the subsistence take of fish in their region.’ The Council should not have been asked to consider this proposal again, with several new Council members, in hopes that they may change their support of this proposal.

A joint meeting between the Southcentral and Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Councils is set for mid-March 2022 to discuss possible compromises. The Council will follow through with the Board’s request to discuss and deliberate. They will try to collaborate with the Eastern Interior Council members on a compromise to address the issue outlined in the proposal. However, this Council hopes the amount of time, effort, and stress on all participants is not lost to this Board. Nor should it escape notice that almost one-half of the current Southcentral Council members are new and have not had the same opportunities of hearing testimony and presentations on this matter, nor did they participate in the original regulatory process. New Council members will be expected to digest a large amount of information, appreciate the geographic area controversy, and be prepared to offer input and recommendations on this issue with little time to prepare. This limited understanding could significantly affect the ability to debate this issue adequately and to make a recommendation that is truly best for the region.

In the future, the personal commitment expected of every Council member to prepare and attend an additional meeting should be considered before the Board defers any future proposals on the mere basis that two Councils have disagreed. Council members would prefer the Board perform its duties as the decision-making body of this program.

## **2. Customary and Traditional Use Determinations (C&T)**

The Council has concerns about the process currently being used to make C&T determinations and its relation to current and anticipated subsistence harvests. The Council found it very confusing during its fall 2021 regulatory meeting to consider and address the many issues presented in proposals. The manner in which they were written, analyzed, and combined made it very difficult for the Council to adequately concentrate on each proposal. For instance, wildlife proposal **WP22-16/17/18/19/21/22/23/24/26a** was a combination of proposals regarding the harvests of moose, caribou, goat, and sheep resources for the residents of Moose Pass in four different game management units. In addition, for some of these C&T proposals, the Council felt there was a lack of information or substantial evidence to make an adequate and well-supported C&T determination.

The Council suggests that the Office of Subsistence Management make further efforts (with additional funding) to do research to get the information/evidence necessary for the Council to

make a recommendation on proposed C&T determinations. The Council also suggests that when an area is up for C&T determination, that the effect this designation may have on surrounding areas is also considered. C&T analyses should be wholly inclusive and should address all effects. A significant amount of additional C&T proposals are anticipated in the future on resources that, in some cases, are declining. It is important that a review of the strategy to address C&T determinations be done now so that any exacerbation of declining resource populations can be avoided. The Regional Advisory Councils need to receive the most comprehensive analyses with the most current data possible to make an effective decision regarding C&T determinations.

### **3. Subsistence Use Amounts**

The Council recognizes declining populations of fish and wildlife throughout the State. It recognizes the need for a review of Federal Subsistence Use Amounts to identify specific needs and subsistence uses for fish and wildlife. The Council requests that supporting staff substantiate the shortage of fish and wildlife statewide and then provide information on how Subsistence Use Amounts may be reviewed and changed to support subsistence users' needs and priorities during these periods of declining fish and wildlife populations.

The Council received a request from Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission (AITRC) to put this item in its Annual Report and the Council is attaching that letter for full details. AITRC encouraged this Council to demand more proactive Federal subsistence management presence and activities regarding sustainable management of salmon fisheries on the Copper River. There was a request for this Council to develop Federal subsistence use amounts findings to include in this report to the Board; however, the Council cannot fulfill such a request without assistance from the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM). AITRC seeks to have Copper River Sockeye and Chinook Salmon Federal subsistence use amounts findings made on the anticipated Federal subsistence needs. There was no time for the Council to discuss this at its last regulatory meeting due to the large amount of required action items that the Council had to address. Therefore, the Council asks that the Board direct OSM to provide information at its winter meeting advising the Council how it may follow through on such requests. The Council would like to support efforts to conserve salmon on the Copper River and would like to know if Subsistence Use Amounts is a viable and productive way to move towards stronger Federal management of salmon on the Copper River.

### **4. Jurisdictional Issue to Provide for Federally Qualified User Harvest**

This report topic specifically addresses current and anticipated subsistence needs: Opportunity for Federally-qualified users to harvest finfish and shellfish in the salt waters of Prince William Sound (PWS) area. The Council recognizes that rural residents of this area have historically utilized crabs, shrimp, and other items found in the tidal zone and understands that there is a need for subsistence harvest of saltwater resources at the Federal level similar to what occurs in other communities throughout the state. These PWS rural and Tribal residents live within or on the edge of the Chugach National Forest (where land and freshwater streams are 'Federal public

lands’) and have hunted and fished upon these lands for decades. However, when they wish to dig a clam, they are only able to dig clams according to State regulations. They can put a shrimp pot out one-half mile from shore but only under State regulations. Everything from shellfish, octopus, and crabs to the rockfish harvest limit is under State regulations.

Subsistence users are experiencing conflicts with other users for shellfish, octopus, shrimp, crab, finfish, and rockfish. Under State regulations, which provides no priority for Federally-qualified subsistence users, the allowable catch of these resources is limited and because of competing commercial and sport interests, subsistence users are not able to meet their subsistence harvest needs. The Council feels this is a disservice to subsistence users in this area.

There is a substantial need to shift jurisdiction in saltwater by using a co-management strategy in order to provide opportunities for subsistence users to obtain food. The Council would like to know what policies, standards, guidelines, and regulations (North Pacific Fishery Management Council, NOAA – National Marine Fisheries Service, etc., ANILCA, extra-territorial jurisdiction) can be explored to establish dual jurisdiction (Federal and State) for these resources to provide a meaningful opportunity for subsistence and personal use harvest.

#### **5. Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP) – Research and Funding**

There are many key FRMP projects that will provide vital information on fish stocks in the Southcentral region. The Council is concerned about the shortage of funds for these projects in recent years as it seems the money set aside for these projects is reduced with each passing year. The Council would like to see the Federal Subsistence Management Program revise research and monitoring projects to include work that could be done by Tribes and regional organizations. Cooperative agreements with Native organizations and Tribal entities would better meet the intent of ANILCA. There is more competition for funding FRMP projects, and the Council would like to see more projects awarded to local Native and Tribal organizations as they have the traditional ecological knowledge to offer in addition to the skills required to successfully accomplish the FRMP project tasks. Further, the State of Alaska should develop their own programs for research and monitoring instead of competing with Tribes and local organizations for FRMP monies. The Council requests that the Board instruct OSM to investigate options for assisting local entities in receiving FRMP funds to continue critical research and monitoring of fish stocks and to report these options to the Council.

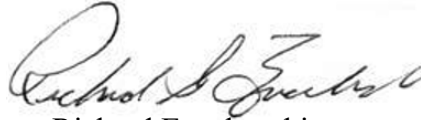
#### **6. Climate Change**

The Council would like more information and research on the impacts that ocean acidification and other recent effects of climate change have had on the fish stocks in the Southcentral region. The last two years of limited salmon runs have been quite alarming in various parts of the region. The Council would like to know if an organized effort or an FRMP project can be put forward to gather specific data that may explain the drastic changes observed in lower stocks for different salmon species, changes in salmon run timing, and various effects on shellfish. This would be a good project for Native/Tribal organizations where local traditional knowledge could be incorporated. The Council would support an FRMP research on finfish and shellfish in Prince

William Sound with priorities on understanding the effect of ocean acidification on those resources. The information gathered from such a project would be crucial for the management decisions on the Copper River and other areas of Prince William Sound.

The Southcentral 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 in the Southcentral Region. If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact me via DeAnna Perry, Subsistence Council Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management, at [deanna.perry@usda.gov](mailto:deanna.perry@usda.gov), or 1-800-478-1456 or 907-209-7817.

Sincerely,



Richard Encelewski

Chair

Enclosure

cc: Federal Subsistence Board  
Southcentral Subsistence Regional Advisory Council  
Office of Subsistence Management  
Interagency Staff Committee  
Benjamin Mulligan, Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Mark Burch, Special Projects Coordinator, Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Administrative Record