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Appendix

Relevant Federal Regulations

§___.4 Definitions

The following definitions apply to all regulations contained in this part:

...

Customary trade means exchange for cash of fish and wildlife resources regulated in this part, not otherwise prohibited by Federal law or regulation, to support personal and family needs; and does not include trade which constitutes a significant commercial enterprise.

...

Subsistence means the customary and traditional uses by rural Alaska residents of wild, renewable resources for direct personal or family consumption as food, shelter, fuel, clothing, tools, or transportation; for the making and selling of handicraft articles out of nonedible byproducts of fish and wildlife resources taken for personal or family consumption; for barter, or sharing for personal or family consumption; and for customary trade.

§___.25 Subsistence taking of fish, wildlife, and shellfish: general regulations

(a) Definitions

...

Bear means black bear, or brown or grizzly bear

...

Big game means black bear, brown bear, bison, caribou, Sitka black-tailed deer, elk, mountain goat, moose, musk ox, Dall sheep, wolf, and wolverine.

...

Edible meat means . . . For black bear, brown and grizzly bear, “edible meat” means the meat of the front quarter and hindquarters and meat along the backbone (backstrap).

...

Handicraft means a finished product made by a rural Alaskan resident from the nonedible byproducts of fish or wildlife and is composed wholly or in some significant respect of natural materials. The shape and appearance of the natural material must be substantially changed by the skillful use of hands, such as sewing, weaving, drilling, lacing, beading, carving, etching, scrimshawing, painting, or other means, and incorporated into a work of art, regalia, clothing, or other creative expression, and can be either traditional or contemporary in design. The handicraft must have substantially greater monetary and aesthetic value than the unaltered natural material alone.

...

Sealing means placing a mark or tag on a portion of a harvested animal by an authorized representative of the ADF&G; sealing includes collecting and recording information about the conditions under which the animal was harvested, and measurements of the specimen submitted for sealing, or surrendering a specific portion of the animal for biological information.

...

Skin, hide, pelt, or fur means any tanned or untanned external covering of an animal's body. However, for bear, the skin, hide, pelt, or fur means the external covering with claws attached.

...

Trophy means a mount of a big game animal, including the skin of the head (cape) or the entire skin, in a lifelike representation of the animal, including a lifelike representation made from any part of a big game animal; "trophy" also includes a "European mount" in which the horns or antlers and the skull or a portion of the skull are mounted for display

...

(j) Utilization of fish, wildlife, or shellfish.

...

(2) If you take wildlife for subsistence, you must salvage the following parts for human use:

...

(ii) The hide and edible meat of a brown bear, except that the hide of brown bears taken in Units 5, 9B, 17, 18, portions of 19A and 19B, 21D, 22, 23, 24, and 26A need not be salvaged;

...

(7) If you are a Federally qualified subsistence user, you may sell handicraft articles made from the skin, hide, pelt, or fur, including claws, of a brown bear taken from Units 1–5, 9A–C, 9E, 12, 17, 20, 22, 23, 24B (only that portion within Gates of the Arctic National Park), 25, or 26.

(i) In Units 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, you may sell handicraft articles made from the skin, hide, pelt, fur, claws, bones, teeth, sinew, or skulls of a brown bear taken from Units 1, 4, or 5.

(ii) Prior to selling a handicraft incorporating a brown bear claw(s), the hide or claw(s) not attached to a hide must be sealed by an authorized Alaska Department of Fish and Game representative. Old claws may be sealed if an affidavit is signed indicating that the claws came from a brown bear harvested on Federal public lands by a Federally qualified user. A copy of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game sealing certificate must accompany the handicraft when sold.

...

(13) You may sell the raw/untanned and tanned hide or cape from a legally harvested caribou, deer, elk, goat, moose, musk ox, and sheep.

§___.27 Subsistence taking of fish.

...

(b) Methods, means, and general restrictions.

...

(11) Transactions between rural residents. Rural residents may exchange in customary trade subsistence-harvested fish, their parts, or their eggs, legally taken under the regulations in this part, for cash from other rural residents. The Board may recognize regional differences and regulates customary trade differently for separate regions of the State.

(i) Bristol Bay Fishery Management Area—The total cash value per household of salmon taken within Federal jurisdiction in the Bristol Bay Fishery Management Area and exchanged in customary trade to rural residents may not exceed \$500.00 annually.

(ii) Upper Copper River District—The total number of salmon per household taken within the Upper Copper River District and exchanged in customary trade to rural residents may not exceed 50 percent of the annual harvest of salmon by the household. No more than 50 percent of the annual household limit may be sold under paragraphs (b)(11) and (12) of this section when taken together. These customary trade sales must be immediately recorded on a customary trade recordkeeping form. The recording requirement and the responsibility to ensure the household limit is not exceeded rests with the seller.

(iii) Customary trade of Yukon River Chinook salmon may only occur between Federally qualified rural residents with a current customary and traditional use determination for Yukon River Chinook salmon.

(12) Transactions between a rural resident and others. In customary trade, a rural resident may exchange fish, their parts, or their eggs, legally taken under the regulations in this part, for cash from individuals other than rural residents if the individual who purchases the fish, their parts, or their eggs uses them for personal or family consumption. If you are not a rural resident, you may not sell fish, their parts, or their eggs taken under the regulations in this part. The Board may recognize regional differences and regulates customary trade differently for separate regions of the State.

(i) Bristol Bay Fishery Management Area—The total cash value per household of salmon taken within Federal jurisdiction in the Bristol Bay Fishery Management Area and exchanged in customary trade between rural residents and individuals other than rural residents may not exceed \$400.00 annually. These customary trade sales must be

immediately recorded on a customary trade recordkeeping form. The recording requirement and the responsibility to ensure the household limit is not exceeded rest with the seller.

(ii) Upper Copper River District—The total cash value of salmon per household taken within the Upper Copper River District and exchanged in customary trade between rural residents and individuals other than rural residents may not exceed \$500.00 annually. No more than 50 percent of the annual household limit may be sold under paragraphs (b)(11) and (12) of this section when taken together. These customary trade sales must be immediately recorded on a customary trade recordkeeping form. The recording requirement and the responsibility to ensure the household limit is not exceeded rest with the seller.

(iii) Customary trade of Yukon River Chinook salmon may only occur between Federally qualified rural residents with a current customary and traditional use determination for Yukon River Chinook salmon.

WP24 07 Executive Summary	
General Description	Proposal WP24-07 requests clarification of Federal trapping regulations that exempt Federally qualified subsistence users from Municipality of Anchorage trapping closures on Federal public lands in Units 7 and 14C. <i>Submitted by: Tom Lessard of Cooper Landing</i>
Proposed Regulation	<p><i>§100.26(n)(7)(iii)(B) & §100.26(n)(14)(iii)(A)</i></p> <p><i>Federally qualified subsistence users trapping under these regulations are exempt from Municipality of Anchorage Ordinance AO 2019-050(S) while on Federal public lands which are open to trapping.</i></p>
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	Oppose Proposal WP24-07.
Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	

WP24 07 Executive Summary	
<i>Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation</i>	
<i>Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation</i>	
<i>Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation</i>	
<i>Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation</i>	
<i>North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation</i>	
<i>Interagency Staff Committee Comments</i>	
<i>ADF&G Comments</i>	
<i>Written Public Comments</i>	<i>None</i>

**DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS
WP24-07**

ISSUES

Wildlife Proposal WP24-07, submitted by Tom Lessard of Cooper Landing, requests clarification of Federal trapping regulations that exempt Federally qualified subsistence users from Municipality of Anchorage trapping closures on Federal public lands in Units 7 and 14C.

DISCUSSION

The proponent states that Municipality of Anchorage Ordinance Number 2019-50(S) prohibits otherwise legal Federal subsistence trapping on Federal public lands within the Municipality of Anchorage in the Turnagain Arm and Portage Valley areas. The Anchorage Assembly created “Prohibited Trapping Zones” for safe trails within 50 yards of developed trails, excluding off-shoots; and within one-quarter mile of established trailheads, campgrounds, and permanent dwellings. The proponent states that the Municipal ordinance prohibits trapping, punishable by fines, on approximately 20 square miles within Portage Valley, which is mostly Federal public land.

Existing Federal Regulation

None

Proposed Federal Regulation

§100.26(n)(7)(iii)(B) & §100.26(n)(14)(iii)(A)

Federally qualified subsistence users trapping under these regulations are exempt from Municipality of Anchorage Ordinance AO 2019-050(S) while on Federal public lands which are open to trapping.

Existing State Regulation

5 AAC 92.510 Areas Closed to Trapping

(3) Unit 14(C) (Anchorage Area):

(A) the drainages into Eklutna River and Eklutna Lake, within Chugach State Park except Thunderbird Creek and those drainages flowing into the East Fork of the Eklutna River upstream from the bridge above the lake;

(B) the Eagle River Management Area;

(C) that portion of Chugach State Park outside of the Eagle River, Anchorage, and Eklutna management areas is open to trapping under Unit 14(C) seasons and bag limits,

except that trapping of wolf, wolverine, land otter, and beaver is not allowed; killer style steel traps with an inside jaw spread seven inches or greater are prohibited; a person using traps or snares in the area must register with the Department of Natural Resources Chugach State Park area office and provide a trapper identification; all traps and snares in the area must be marked with the selected identification; the use of traps or snares is prohibited within

(i) 50 yards of developed trails;

(ii) one-quarter mile of trailheads, campground, and permanent dwellings;

(iii) repealed 7/1/2009;

(D) all land and water within the Anchorage Management Area as described in 5 AAC 92.530(3);

(E) in the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge in Unit 14(C), described in AS 16.20.031: all land and water south and west of and adjacent to the toe of the bluff that extends from Point Woronzof southeasterly to Potter Creek;

(F) the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) Management Area, except for beaver, muskrat, mink, weasel, marten, otter, fox, and coyote in areas designated by the commander;

Extent of Federal Public Lands/Waters

Unit 7 is comprised of 77% Federal public lands and consists of 52% U.S. Forest Service (USFS) managed lands, 23% National Park Service (NPS) managed lands, and 2% U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) managed lands.

Unit 14C is comprised of 16% Federal public lands and consists of 11% USFS managed lands and 5% Bureau of Land Management (BLM) managed lands.

Customary and Traditional Use Determinations

The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) has not made a customary and traditional use determination for furbearers in Units 7 and 14C. Therefore, all rural residents of Alaska may harvest furbearers in these units.

Regulatory History

In 2014, the Board rejected Proposal WP14-01, which requested Federal regulations requiring trapper identification tags on all traps and snares, the establishment of a maximum allowable time limit for checking traps, and establishment of a harvest/trapping report form to collect data on non-target species captured. The proposal analysis indicated statewide application would be unmanageable, would require substantial law enforcement and public education efforts, and could cause subsistence users to

avoid the regulation by trapping under State regulations. The proposal was unanimously opposed by all ten Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils, Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), and the public as reflected in written public comments.

In 2015, the Alaska Board of Game (BOG) considered Proposal 180, to prohibit trapping within 250 feet of most public roads and trails in the Cooper Landing Area. They opposed the proposal, stating trappers and local residents need to work together to find a solution or compromise upon which all users can agree. BOG members also noted concerns about the enforceability of the proposal and loss of trapping opportunity by requiring trappers to travel 250 feet off trail and back to set and check traps (ADF&G 2015).

In 2016, the BOG considered Proposal 80, to restrict trapping in and around cities with populations over 1,000 people. Specifically, trapping within one-quarter mile of publicly maintained roads, 200 feet of publicly maintained trails, and one mile of permanent dwellings, schools, businesses, and campgrounds would be prohibited. ADF&G stated that proposals restricting trapping should be addressed at regional rather than statewide BOG meetings, so affected local communities can comment. ADF&G also referred to State regulations that limit trapping in management areas. The BOG opposed the proposal due to opposition by 26 Fish and Game Advisory Committees and concern for unintended consequences. The BOG also commented that these types of restrictions could be better handled through city or borough ordinances (ADF&G 2016).

In 2019, the Anchorage assembly passed Municipal ordinance AL No. 2019-50(S), which made it illegal to trap within a prohibited trapping zone. This ordinance established prohibited trapping zones within the Municipality of Anchorage boundaries on public lands owned by the municipality and any land within 50 yards of developed trails and one-quarter mile of trailheads, campgrounds, and permanent dwellings. It also required anyone trapping within the municipal boundary to mark each trap with trapper identification number or contact information of trapper. The Anchorage assembly passed this ordinance for the safety of trail users and pets in Anchorage (MOA 2019).

In 2020, Proposal WP20-20, submitted by Robert Gieringer, requested that hunting and trapping in Unit 7 be prohibited within one mile of roads and trails and that traps be marked with brightly colored tape. This proposal was on the consensus agenda but was removed at the Board meeting by request from a member of the public. The Board rejected the proposal. The Board stated Federal regulations would be more restrictive than State regulations, violating the rural subsistence priority mandated by the Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act (ANILCA). Furthermore, all users would still be able to hunt and trap without restrictions under State regulations, decreasing the proposal's effectiveness and increasing user confusion. The Board also stated marking traps with brightly colored tape could result in attracting more people to the trap and possibly pets (FSB 2020).

In March 2022, the BOG considered deferred Proposal 199 at their 2022 Statewide Regulations meeting. Proposal 199 requested 50-yard setbacks along certain multi-use trails and trailheads in Units 13, 14, and 16. This proposal was deferred from the January 2022 BOG meeting so a workshop could be held to reach a compromise on the proposal. The BOG attempted to modify the proposal several

times with different amendments, including language created from the workshop. All versions of this proposal were rejected.

In April 2022, the Board considered Proposal WP22-15, submitted by the Cooper Landing Community Safe Trails Committee, requesting setbacks of 1,000 feet on both sides of certain trails; 1,000-foot setbacks on certain roads; and trapping moratoriums in campgrounds plus 1,000-foot setbacks around certain campgrounds. The Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, ADF&G, Interagency Staff Committee and Office of Subsistence Management were all in opposition to this proposal due to potential of lost subsistence opportunity and regulatory confusion. While this proposal received 25 written public comments in support of the action, the Board rejected this proposal on the consensus agenda.

In March 2023, at the Southcentral Region BOG meeting in Soldotna, the BOG considered numerous trap setback proposals. Proposals 145–153 included trap setbacks at various locations throughout Units 7 and 15. While most of these proposals did not pass, three were adopted by the BOG. Amended Proposal 145 made it illegal to hunt and trap within one-quarter mile of wildlife crossings along the Sterling Highway. Amended Proposals 146 and 149 established trap setbacks along certain trails within Kachemak Bay State Park and along the perimeter of campgrounds in Unit 7, respectively. Setback distance was set at 50 yards unless the trap was elevated at least 3 feet above the ground, under water, under ice, or enclosed.

Effects of the Proposal

If this proposal is adopted, clarification would be provided in codified Federal regulations that federally qualified subsistence users trapping under Federal regulations on Federal public lands in Units 7 and 14C are exempt from the trapping closures established by the Municipality of Anchorage Ordinance AO 2019-050(S). Functionally, this would have no effect on subsistence users or wildlife populations as State and municipal regulations do not apply to federally qualified subsistence users taking fish or wildlife on Federal public lands under Federal regulations. However, adoption of this proposal could reduce user confusion by explicitly clarifying this exemption.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Oppose Proposal WP24-07.

Justification

OSM opposes this proposal because the ordinance passed by the Anchorage assembly does not apply to Federal public lands. Therefore, federally qualified subsistence users trapping under Federal regulations are currently exempt from this ordinance.

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WP24-08 Executive Summary	
General Description	Wildlife Proposal WP24-08 requests to establish quarter mile trapping and hunting setbacks from wildlife crossing structures along the Sterling Highway. <i>Submitted by Alaska Wildlife Alliance.</i>
Proposed Regulation	<p>50 CFR 100.26(n)(7) <i>(ii) In the following areas, the taking of wildlife for subsistence uses is prohibited or restricted on public lands:</i></p> <p>(C) You may not hunt, trap, or take wildlife within a quarter mile of wildlife crossing structures along the Sterling Highway.</p> <p>50 CFR 100.26(n)(15) <i>(ii) In the following areas, the taking of wildlife for subsistence uses is prohibited or restricted on public lands:</i></p> <p>(A) You may not take wildlife, except for grouse, ptarmigan, and hares that may be taken only from October 1 through March 1 by bow and arrow only, in the Skilak Loop Management Area, which consists of that portion of Unit 15A bounded by a line beginning at the easternmost junction of the Sterling Highway and the Skilak Loop (milepost 76.3), then due south to the south bank of the Kenai River, then southerly along the south bank of the Kenai River to its confluence with Skilak Lake, then westerly along the northern shore of Skilak Lake to Lower Skilak Lake Campground, then northerly along the Lower Skilak Lake Campground Road and the Skilak Loop Road to its westernmost junction with the Sterling Highway, then easterly along the Sterling Highway to the point of beginning.</p> <p>(B) You may not hunt, trap, or take wildlife within a quarter mile of wildlife crossing structures along the Sterling Highway.</p>
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	Support Proposal WP24-08.
Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation	

WP24-08 Executive Summary	
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	None.

**DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS
WP24-08**

ISSUES

Wildlife Proposal WP24-08, submitted by Alaska Wildlife Alliance, requests to establish quarter mile trapping and hunting setbacks from wildlife crossing structures along the Sterling Highway.

DISCUSSION

The proponent states that the Sterling Highway MP 45–60 Project contains plans for 5 wildlife crossing structures along the road (**Figures 1, 2, & 3**). These structures are expected to reduce moose-vehicle collisions and to allow them and other wildlife species to move freely across the road. Monitoring of existing structures on the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge (KNWR) has shown current use by wildlife, with more use expected once trails have been established. If wildlife use were to increase, these structures would create an unnatural choke point where wildlife use would be concentrated and more easily harvested. On the KNWR hunting and trapping is incidentally prohibited around these structures through safety restrictions implemented through refuge specific regulations. However, without regulations prohibiting the taking of wildlife at the to-be-constructed crossings on lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), these new structures meant to benefit wildlife may be targeted by those harvesting wildlife. The proponents submitted a similar State proposal 145, which the Alaska Board of Game (BOG) adopted at their March 2023 meeting.

Existing Federal Regulation

No existing Federal regulation.

Proposed Federal Regulation

50 CFR 100.26(n)(7)

(ii) In the following areas, the taking of wildlife for subsistence uses is prohibited or restricted on public lands:

(C) You may not hunt, trap, or take wildlife within a quarter mile of wildlife crossing structures along the Sterling Highway.

50 CFR 100.26(n)(15)

(ii) In the following areas, the taking of wildlife for subsistence uses is prohibited or restricted on public lands:

(C) *You may not take wildlife, except for grouse, ptarmigan, and hares that may be taken only from October 1 through March 1 by bow and arrow only, in the Skilak Loop Management Area, which consists of that portion of Unit 15A bounded by a line beginning at the easternmost junction of the Sterling Highway and the Skilak Loop (milepost 76.3), then due south to the south bank of the Kenai River, then southerly along the south bank of the Kenai River to its confluence with Skilak Lake, then westerly along the northern shore of Skilak Lake to Lower Skilak Lake Campground, then northerly along the Lower Skilak Lake Campground Road and the Skilak Loop Road to its westernmost junction with the Sterling Highway, then easterly along the Sterling Highway to the point of beginning.*

(D) *You may not hunt, trap, or take wildlife within a quarter mile of wildlife crossing structures along the Sterling Highway.*

Existing State Regulation

5 AAC 92.510(a)(8)

(F) all land within one-fourth mile of the two wildlife underpasses and one wildlife overpass on the Sterling Highway are closed to hunting;

5 AAC 92.510(a)(12)

(D) all land within one-fourth mile of the two wildlife underpasses on the Sterling Highway are closed to hunting;

5 AAC 92.550(4)

(E) all land within one-fourth mile of the two wildlife underpasses on the Sterling Highway are closed to trapping;

5 AAC 92.550(9)

(A) all land within one-fourth mile of the two wildlife underpasses and one wildlife overpass on the Sterling Highway are closed to trapping;



Figure 1. Map showing locations of wildlife crossing structures along the west end of the Sterling Highway project (DOTPF 2023).

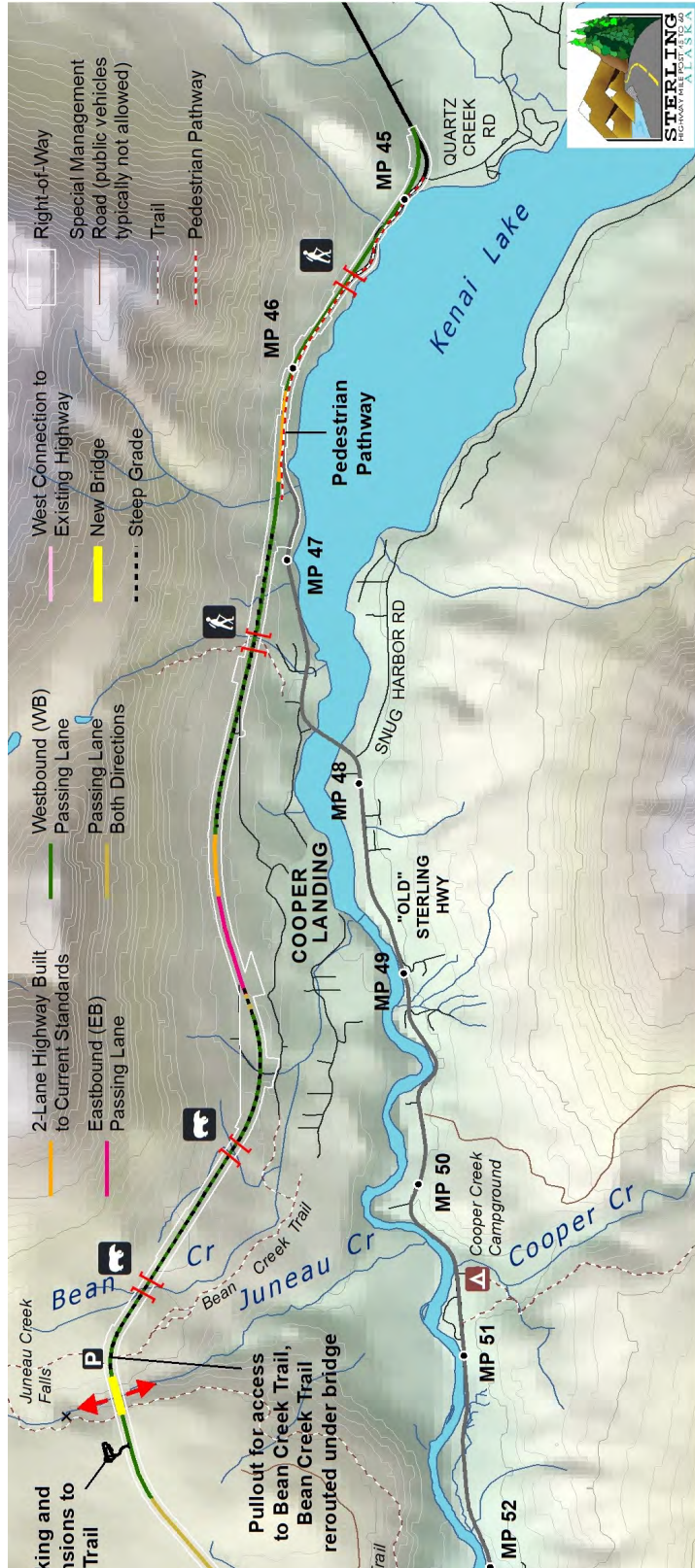


Figure 2. Map showing locations of wildlife crossing structures along the east end of the Sterling Highway project (DOTPF 2023).

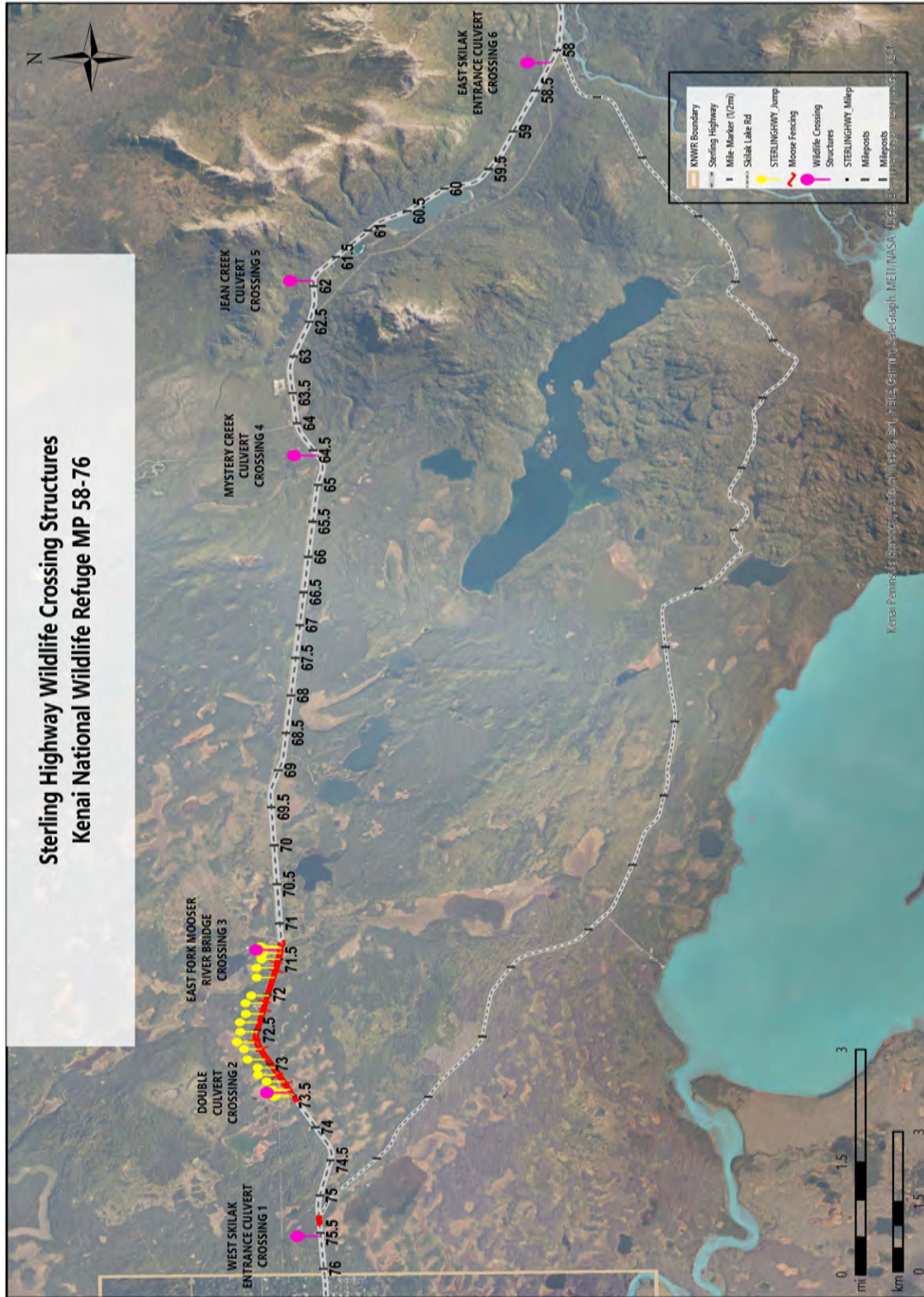


Figure 3. Map showing locations of currently existing wildlife crossing structures along the Sterling Highway within KNWR (Canterbury 2023, pers. comm.)

Extent of Federal Public Lands/Waters

Unit 7 is comprised of 77% Federal public lands and consists of 52% USFS managed lands, 23% National Park Service (NPS) managed lands, and 2% U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) managed lands.

Unit 15A is comprised of 58% Federal public lands and consists of 57% USFWS and 1% USFS managed lands.

Customary and Traditional Use Determinations

Residents of Cooper Landing, Hope, and Moose Pass have a customary and traditional use determination (C&T) for caribou in Unit 7. Residents of Port Graham and Nanwalek have C&T for goats in Unit 7, Brown Mountain hunt area. Residents of Chenega Bay, Cooper Landing, Hope, Moose Pass, Nanwalek, Ninilchik, Port Graham, Seldovia, and Tatitlek have C&T for goat in Unit 7, remainder. Residents of Chenega Bay, Cooper Landing, Hope, Moose Pass, and Tatitlek have C&T for moose in Unit 7. Residents of Cooper Landing and Moose Pass have C&T for sheep in Unit 7.

Residents of Ninilchik have C&T for black bear in Unit 15A and 15B and for brown bear in Unit 15. Residents of Cooper Landing, Hope, Moose Pass, Nanwalek, Ninilchik, Port Graham, and Seldovia have C&T for goat in Units 15A and 15B. Residents of Cooper Landing, Ninilchik, Moose Pass, Nanwalek, Port Graham, and Seldovia have C&T for moose in Units 15A and 15B. Residents of Cooper Landing and Ninilchik have C&T for sheep in Units 15A and 15B. All rural residents of Unit 15 have C&T for ptarmigan and spruce grouse in Unit 15.

Regulatory History

In 2015, the BOG considered Proposal 180 to prohibit trapping within 250 feet of most public roads and trails in the Cooper Landing Area. They opposed the proposal, stating trappers and local residents need to work together to find a solution or compromise upon which all users can agree. BOG members also noted concerns about the enforceability of the proposal and loss of trapping opportunity by requiring trappers to travel 250 feet off trail and back to set and check traps (ADF&G 2015).

In 2016, the BOG considered Proposal 80, to restrict trapping in and around cities with populations over 1,000 people. Specifically, trapping within ¼ mile of publicly maintained roads, 200 feet of publicly maintained trails, and one mile of permanent dwellings, schools, businesses, and campgrounds would be prohibited. ADF&G stated that proposals restricting trapping should be addressed at regional rather than statewide BOG meetings, so affected local communities can comment. ADF&G also referred to State regulations that limit trapping in management areas. The BOG opposed the proposal due to opposition by 26 Fish and Game Advisory Committees and concern for unintended consequences. The BOG also commented that these types of restrictions could be better handled through city or borough ordinances (ADF&G 2016).

In 2020, Proposal WP20-20, submitted by Robert Gieringer, requested that hunting and trapping in Unit 7 be prohibited within one mile of roads and trails, and that traps be marked with brightly colored tape. This proposal was on the consensus agenda but was removed at the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) meeting by request from a member of the public. The Board rejected the proposal. The Board stated Federal regulations would be more restrictive than State regulations, violating the rural subsistence priority mandated by ANILCA. Furthermore, all users would still be able to hunt and trap without restrictions under State regulations, decreasing the proposal's effectiveness and increasing user confusion. The Board also stated marking traps with brightly colored tape could result in attracting more people to the trap and possibly pets (FSB 2020).

In 2022, the Board considered Proposal WP22-15, submitted by the Cooper Landing Community Safe Trails Committee, requesting setbacks of 1,000 feet on both sides of certain trails, 1,000-foot setbacks on certain roads, and trapping moratoriums in campgrounds plus 1,000-foot setbacks around certain campgrounds. The Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, ADF&G, Interagency Staff Committee and Office of Subsistence Management were all in opposition to this proposal due to potential of lost subsistence opportunity and regulatory confusion. While this proposal received 25 written public comments in support of the action, the Board rejected it on the consensus agenda.

In March 2022, the BOG considered deferred Proposal 199 at their Statewide Regulations meeting. Proposal 199 requested 50-yard setbacks along certain multi-use trails and trailheads in Units 13, 14, and 16. This proposal was deferred from the January 2022 BOG meeting so a workshop could be held to reach a compromise on the proposal. The BOG attempted to modify the proposal several times with different amendments, including language created from the workshop. All versions of this proposal were rejected.

In March 2023, at the Southcentral Region BOG meeting in Soldotna, the BOG considered numerous trap setback proposals. The BOG adopted amended Proposal 145, submitted by the Alaska Wildlife Alliance, making it illegal to hunt, trap, and take game within a quarter mile of wildlife crossing structures along the Sterling Highway. The BOG felt that as more of these structures are installed statewide there needed to be protection in place to keep the unintentional choke point that is created from being targeted by hunters. The amendment to the proposal prohibited the take of game within the buffer zone by anyone outside of the buffer zone.

KNWR requires special conditions be followed while trapping on the refuge. One such condition prohibits most trapping within one mile of any public road. This is in effect along the Sterling Highway at the existing wildlife structures located within the NWR boundary. However, this condition does allow for use of smaller traps to target species such as mink and muskrat. Trapping of these two species is currently allowed in and around the wildlife structures (Eskelin 2023, pers. comm.).

Current Events Involving the Species

The two wildlife crossing structures at mileposts 57.2 and 56.3 have already been completed. The other three structures are still under construction with an anticipated completion date of 2024.

Alternative(s) Considered

Another alternative to consider is to expand the language of this proposal to cover wildlife crossing structures along all public roadways in Units 7 and 15, not just the Sterling Highway. But as there are currently no other existing or planned wildlife crossing structures in these units this would only cover future structures if there are any to be built. This alternative could be expanded even further and make protection of wildlife crossing structures a statewide regulation and therefore cover any wildlife crossing structures that may be constructed within the state of Alaska in the future.

Effects of the Proposal

If this proposal is adopted, Federal public lands within a quarter mile of wildlife crossing structures in Units 7 and 15 would be closed to the subsistence hunting, trapping, and take of wildlife. This change would align Federal regulations with State regulations, reducing complexity and confusion. Adopting this proposal is not expected to have any negative impacts on wildlife populations in the area. Rather, it could benefit wildlife populations by facilitating their use of these crossing structures in the absence of hunting and trapping pressure. Establishment of these closures would slightly reduce subsistence opportunity as the ability to target mink and muskrat within a quarter mile of the wildlife crossing structures would cease on Kenai NWR lands but would also mitigate safety concerns associated with wildlife-vehicle collisions as well as hunting and trapping near a busy highway.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Support Proposal WP24-08.

Justification

If wildlife movement is funneled toward and concentrated around these wildlife crossing structures, any trapping or hunting effort in the vicinity may have an undue impact on the wildlife and could also create public safety concerns. Adopting this proposal will reduce regulatory complexity and confusion by aligning Federal and State regulations regarding take adjacent to wildlife crossing structures.

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PUBLIC SUBMISSION

As of: April 13, 2023 Received: April 07, 2023 Status: Posted Posted: April 13, 2023 Tracking No. lg7-46iq-wsdm Comments Due: April 12, 2023 Submission Type: API
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Docket: FWS-R7-SM-2022-0105
Subsistence Management Regulations for Public Lands in Alaska—2024–25 and 2025–26 Subsistence Taking of Wildlife Regulations

Comment On: FWS-R7-SM-2022-0105-0001
Subsistence Management Regulations for Public Lands: Alaska; Taking of Wildlife

Document: FWS-R7-SM-2022-0105-0015
Comment from Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Submitter Information

Email: jessica_gill@fws.gov
Government Agency Type: Federal
Government Agency: Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

General Comment

See attached file.

Attachments

SCRAC Unit 6 proposal_March 2023

SCRAC Unit 6 proposal_March 2023

WILDLIFE PROPOSAL TO THE FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD

Name: Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

What regulation do you wish to change? To rescind the delegated authority to the Cordova District Ranger for in-season management of moose and deer in Unit 6.

Why should this regulation be changed? The original Delegation of Authority letter was born from a Wildlife Special Action and should never have become a permanent fixture. The Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council supported the action and resulting DAL contingent on a sunset clause of two years that was never incorporated into the DAL. Members of the Council feel the DAL is too broad in regulation, is not necessary due to the small amount of Federal harvest, and RAC members are left out of the consultation process when management decisions are made.

**LOWER COPPER RIVER AREA SALMON FISHERY
FULL ANALYSIS
REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION FRFR22-01**

INTRODUCTION

Ahtna, Incorporated, submitted request for reconsideration FRFR22-01 to the Federal Subsistence Management Program asking the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) to rescind its April 2022 decision on Fisheries Proposal FP21-10. Through Proposal FP21-10, the Board created a Federal dipnet and rod and reel salmon fishery one half mile above and below the highway bridge on the lower Copper River.

For the initial threshold assessment of the request, the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) reviewed the request and identified substantive claims that may meet the criteria outlined in 36 CFR 242.20(d) and 50 CFR 100.20(d). The three criteria are: (1) provides information not previously considered by the Board, (2) demonstrates that existing information used by the Board is incorrect, or (3) demonstrates that the Board's interpretation of information, applicable law, or regulations is in error or contrary to existing law.

A total of eight substantive claims from the request were assessed. Four of the claims were categorized under Criterion 1 and four claims were categorized under Criterion 3.

Board Action on Threshold Analysis

OSM staff presented the threshold analysis to the Board on February 3, 2023. The OSM conclusion was to oppose the request to reconsider Proposal FP21-10, having found no merit to any of the claims. The Board took action on the FRFR22-01 threshold analysis, taking into consideration information from the OSM threshold assessment and testimonies from the public, including proponents of FP21-10, Cordova residents Jesse Carter and Robert Jewell, and Karen Linnell, the Executive Director for Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission. The Board found potential merit with claim 4.1 and directed OSM staff to initiate a full analysis of the claim.

FULL ANALYSIS OF CLAIM 4.1

The Claim

Claim 4.1 is that the Board based its approval of FP21-10 on an erroneous interpretation of information regarding the estimated impact and popularity of/participation in a new Federal subsistence fishery. In the request for reconsideration, the proponent wrote:

The Board based its approval of FP21-10 on an erroneous interpretation of information regarding the estimated impact and popularity of a new Federal subsistence fishery. OSM's Staff Analysis projected that participation in the fishery would be minimal and that the harvest

of sockeye and Chinook salmon from the Lower Copper River dipnet fishery created by FP21-10 would also be minimal – no more than 2,000 fish. These projections are based upon faulty assumptions that limited participation in and access to a subsistence fishery (that participation in nonetheless met subsistence needs) would translate into a similarly limited participation in – and limited harvest of sockeye and Chinook salmon from – a new subsistence fishery (Anderson, 2022).

Claim 4.1 suggests the Board misinterpreted information on the projected impacts of a new Federal subsistence fishery in the lower Copper River on federally qualified subsistence users in the Upper Copper River Districts. The claim asserts the harvest projections in the analysis were based on faulty assumptions. During a public testimony when the Board acted on RFR22-01 at the 2023 Winter Board meeting, Karen Linnell, expanded on this claim. She said:

I do believe throughout this meeting we have heard that the Board was missing some information because the C&T was based on the supposed 2,000 people in Cordova that would be using this dipnet fishery but then the whole of Prince of William Sound, including Tatitlek and Chenega and other communities will also be eligible and those numbers were not put before this Board when they were considering this proposal. And when -- you know, we tried to get this -- even part of it is only just to Cordova, it was shot down and so there is information that was withheld from the Board although it might not have been in Ahtna's letter (FSB 2023:77).

Ms. Linnell's explanation suggests that harvest estimates for the Lower Copper River Area Fishery in the FP21-10 staff analysis were erroneously based on the population of Cordova rather than the population of the Prince William Sound Area, who are the residents with a customary and traditional use determination for salmon in the area under consideration - the remainder of the Prince William Sound Area. Her explanation also suggests that harvest estimates based on the population of Cordova were presented to both the Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Southcentral Council) and the Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Eastern Interior Council) when they took actions on FP21-10 at their respective fall 2020 Council meetings. This was corroborated by Eastern Interior Council Co-Chair Charlie Wright, who in response to her testimony said, "just for the record it was stated for Cordova; that's all we heard. So, I believe that she's right." The Board moved to fully analyze Claim 4.1 to explore potential inaccuracies and misinterpretations of the harvest estimates presented with FP21-10 that may have confused the Councils and the Board. In her justification for the motion for OSM to proceed with a full analysis of Claim 4.1, Board Member Creachbaum of the National Park Service stated, "[the] Justification is there was an erroneous interpretation of information regarding the scope of impacts and communities involved. This will allow for greater input and participation by public and Regional Advisory Councils."

The following analysis explores two aspects regarding Claim 4.1. The first section focuses on the projected harvest estimates in the analysis of FP21-10, and the second section focuses on the processes of communicating those estimates and associated information at the Regional Advisory Council meetings and Federal Subsistence Board meeting.

The projected harvest estimates for the Lower Copper River Area fishery

Claim 4.1 suggests the Board based its decision on faulty information from the OSM staff analysis about impacts of the proposed Lower Copper River Area fishery on federally qualified subsistence users in the Upper Copper River Districts. The claim also asserts the harvest projections in the analysis were based on incorrect assumptions.

When it approved FP21-10, the Board listed three items in its justification of the action to create the Federal subsistence fishery. First, the current Federal fisheries in the Cordova area did not constitute a reasonable Federal subsistence priority for those living there. At the Board meeting, member Dave Schmid stated, “[the current Federal subsistence fishery] leaves a significant portion of the Cordova community without a means to obtain Federal subsistence salmon” (FSB 2022: 83). Second, the new Federal subsistence fishery provided opportunity for a subset of federally qualified subsistence users who lacked access to other Federal subsistence fisheries. Board member Schmid explained, “the subsistence fishery would provide a first opportunity for federally qualified rural users that don’t have access to marine waters to obtain Copper River salmon coming out of winter when the need for salmon subsistence fish is greatest.” (FSB 2022:83)

Third, the Board stated that the impacts of harvest from the new Federal subsistence fishery on upstream users would be negligible. On this final point, the Board considered information about Copper River salmon populations and harvesting practices. The Board explained that the projected harvest from the Lower Copper River Area salmon fishery would not have significant impacts on the abundance of fish available to upstream users. Board member Schmid explained:

The proposed subsistence dipnet fishery [harvest] on the Lower Copper is very low and anticipated to be at a maximum of 2,000 sockeye salmon annually. This is less than one-tenth of one percent, .08 percent, of the total average annual Copper River sockeye salmon run and less than one percent, .63 percent, of the total annual Copper River chinook salmon run. Such low harvest levels are not likely to have a significant impact on the overall in-river salmon abundance relative to other existing fisheries (FSB 2022:84).

In the analysis of FP21-10, the harvest estimate of 2,000 Sockeye Salmon and 300 Chinook Salmon was based on harvesting success in adjacent fisheries, harvesting methods of the proposed Federal subsistence fishery, and the likely number of participants. In its analyses of proposals, OSM staff use a variety of data and other information to produce as accurate of estimates and projections as reasonably possible. The analysis of FP21-10 states, “This estimate is based on the annual State subsistence gillnet harvest in the Copper River District; taking into account the smaller pool of qualified users, and reduced efficiency of allowable gear type (dip net compared to drift gillnet). (OSM 2021: 25).

Analysts proceeded with the following two assumptions while estimating the interest and participation in the Lower Copper River dip net fishery: dip nets are less efficient than gillnets and there would be less participation in the Lower Copper River Area Federal subsistence fishery than the area State subsistence fisheries.

The first assumption about dip net efficiency, which is the most efficient legal gear in the Lower Copper River Area fishery, holds true in nearly all cases. Comparative gear efficiency depends on several factors. In large glacial river deltas like the Copper River, it is reasonable to assume that an up-to 300-foot gillnet in marine waters in front of the river mouth is considerably more efficient than a dip net in the river. The second assumption is that there would be less participation in the Lower Copper River Area fishery compared to the State subsistence gillnet fishery. Residents of the Prince William Sound Area have a customary and traditional use determination for salmon in the remainder of the Prince William Sound Area, which includes the Federal waters of the Lower Copper River Area. However, it is unlikely that residents throughout the Prince William Sound Area will use the Lower Copper River Area fishery and instead would elect to fish closer to home because it is more efficient and economical. The only reasonable access to the Lower Copper River Area is the Copper River Highway, and the only community connected to the Copper River Highway is Cordova. Those not residing in Cordova would need to first travel by air or boat to Cordova, then drive over 30 miles to access the Copper River. Air transportation to Cordova is expensive from Prince William Sound Area communities so harvesters from those communities are more likely to fish for salmon closer to home. Harvesters from Whittier, Chenega Bay, Tatitlek, and Ellamar who have boats capable of reaching Cordova could participate in the fishery. However, they would have a much higher probability of success fishing in the State fishery in marine waters at the mouth of the Copper River rather than boating to Cordova and driving to the Lower Copper River Area. Based on this, a reasonable conclusion would be that most harvesters participating in the Lower Copper River Area fishery would be residents of Cordova.

It is also unlikely that all residents of Cordova that harvest Copper River salmon would use the Lower Copper River Area fishery. First, many of the harvesters have access to more productive marine fisheries and it is unlikely that those residents would choose to participate in the Lower Copper River Area fishery instead of harvesting from more productive fisheries. The primary means for a number of Cordova residents to harvest Copper River Salmon is through homepack from commercial fisheries, which is salmon caught in the commercial fishery that is kept for personal use, or via the State subsistence fishery in the marine waters near the mouth of the Copper River. It is easier for commercial fishers to access the commercial fisheries than the Lower Copper River Area and the gear types used for commercial fishing are far more effective than dip netting in the Lower Copper River Area. After the commercial fishery, the second most productive salmon fishery near the mouth of the Copper River is the State subsistence gillnet fishery. The recent 10-year average of permits fished in this fishery is 231 with an average of 530 Chinook Salmon and 3,674 Sockeye Salmon harvested annually (Scannell et al. 2023). As already explained above, gillnets are more efficient than dip nets, and it is unlikely that participants of this State fishery would switch to a less productive fishery when they have access to boats and drift gillnets. However, like the commercial fishery, the State subsistence gillnet fishery takes place only in boat accessible marine waters in the Copper River District and is open to all Alaska residents. Therefore, it is assumed that most of those who would participate in the Lower Copper River Area salmon fishery are Cordova residents that are unable to participate in the State marine fisheries. Following this logic, reasonable estimates were made about the number of households that would participate in the Lower Copper River Area fishery. Further,

harvest from the Lower Copper River Area fishery is not additive to other Copper River salmon harvest so harvesters could not take a limit from both fisheries.

As part of its justification, the Board concluded that the projected harvest from the Lower Copper River Area Federal subsistence fishery would be “the smallest of any user group in the Copper River system” (FSB 2022). The harvest estimates outlined in the analysis have not been contested with other sources of data, and information from the first season of the new Federal subsistence fishery supports the predicted insignificant magnitude of the harvest relative to other Copper River salmon fisheries.

The Lower Copper River Area fishery commenced in 2022 and only residents of Cordova participated, with 69 household permits issued to Cordova households. Harvest reports and local accounts of the fishery indicate that the fishing was difficult and confined almost exclusively to one small portion of the Lower Copper River Area. Total reported harvest for the 2022 season was 111 Sockeye Salmon and 3 King Salmon.

The component of the Board’s justification relating to the estimated annual harvest from the Lower Copper River Area fishery was based on a reasonable interpretation of best available information contained in the OSM analysis. OSM analyses follow a lengthy process and are subjected to several reviews by a diverse group of experts. The resulting Board version of the analysis was vetted twice by the Interagency Staff Committee, who was satisfied with the quality of the analysis and the OSM conclusion and provided a comment in support of the proposal.

Aside from the reasonable estimate of potential harvest from the fishery, the Board also considered the deliberations and recommendations of the Southcentral Council, the comment of the Eastern Interior Council, the comments developed at the joint meeting of the Councils, comments provided in Tribal consultations, written public testimony, and oral public testimony provided at the Board meeting.

Communication of Eligibility, Expected Users, and Harvest Estimates

The second component of the analysis of claim 4.1 is an assessment of how well analysts communicated information regarding the projected harvest estimates at public meetings. To analyze this component, OSM staff reviewed the published FP21-10 analysis and transcripts from the Fall 2020 Eastern Interior Council meeting, the Fall 2020 Southcentral Council meeting, the 2021 Board Fisheries Regulatory meeting, the 2022 Eastern Interior Council and Southcentral Council joint meeting on FP21-10, the 2022 Board Wildlife Regulatory meeting, and the 2023 Board Fisheries Regulatory meeting. The results demonstrate that staff communicated the customary and traditional use determinations for salmon in the Lower Copper River Area fishery, the expectations that users of the Lower Copper River Area fishery would primarily be residents of Cordova, and the rationale for developing the projected harvest estimates of the Lower Copper River Area fishery. Results also suggest that this information was not confusing or a matter of concern for attendees at the meetings.

First, examination of the FP21-10 analysis shows that it contained all relevant information. OSM published the FP21-10 analysis in each of the meeting books provided to Council and Board members prior to their public meetings. OSM also published the analysis on its website

(<https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/archives>) for public access. The Customary and Traditional Use Determinations section of the analysis defines the group of eligible federally qualified subsistence users of the Lower Copper River Area fishery: “residents of the Prince William Sound Area have a customary and traditional use determination for salmon in the remainder of the Prince William Sound Area.” (OSM 2021:10). The Effects section of the proposal analysis says, “[the Lower Copper River Area fishery] would provide additional subsistence opportunities for federally qualified subsistence users living in the Prince William Sound Area, especially those in the community of Cordova.” (OSM 2021:25). As explained above, the Lower Copper River Area fishery is in Cordova and can only be accessed by residents of other communities by boat or plane. The analysts therefore reasoned that residents of Cordova would be the primary users. The Effects section of the proposal analysis explains the parameters staff used to develop the projected harvest estimates, as already stated above:

The projected harvest would be the smallest of any user group in the Copper River system, up to 2,000 Sockeye Salmon and 300 Chinook Salmon annually (Figures 4 and 5). This estimate is based on the annual State subsistence gillnet harvest in the Copper River District; taking into account the smaller pool of qualified users, and reduced efficiency of allowable gear type (dipnet compared to drift gillnet) (OSM 2021:26).

Thus, the analysis specifies all the relevant information: residents of the Prince William Sound Area have a customary and traditional use determination for salmon in the Lower Copper River Area fishery, eligible residents of Cordova are expected to be the primary users of the Lower Copper River Area fishery, and the projected harvest estimates are based on best available information including the likely number of participants.

Second, review of the transcripts of presentations of FP21-10 also demonstrates that staff communicated the relevant information at all meetings. In each of the meetings, the presenter of the analysis explained that all rural residents of Prince William Sound Area had a customary and traditional use determination for the Lower Copper River Area fishery and that it was expected that the residents of Cordova would be the primary users of the fishery. The standard statement made in most presentations was, “[the fishery] would provide additional subsistence opportunities for federally qualified subsistence users living in the Prince William Sound area, especially those in the community of Cordova” (SCRAC EIRAC FP21-10 joint-meeting, FSB 2022, FSB 2021). The presentation of the analysis at the Fall 2020 Southcentral Council meeting was the briefest, and the statement on the eligible users of the Lower Copper River Area fishery was likewise the shortest. At the Fall 2020 Southcentral Council meeting, the presenter stated, “The proposal provides an opportunity for federally qualified users in Cordova that do not have access to a saltwater capable boat and drift gillnet gear to fish for salmon in the lower Copper River” (SCRAC 2020:40). The presenter did not explicitly state that rural residents of Prince William Sound Area had a customary and traditional use determination for the Lower Copper River Area fishery. However, his statement implies that there are more federally qualified subsistence users than just those living in Cordova and explains that residents of Cordova will be the primary users. The presenter at the Fall 2020 Eastern Interior Council meeting provided a more thorough explanation about eligibility in the Lower Copper River Area fishery. He said:

For reference, residents of the Prince William Sound area have a customary and traditional use determination for salmon in the remainder of the Prince William Sound area. What this means is that all residents of the Prince William Sound area which includes the Prince William Sound and the entire Copper River drainage, even upriver, would qualify for this fishery but functionally because of restrictions and access and with the limitations in ferry service, functionally it would probably be just rural residents of Cordova that would participate in this fishery (EIRAC 2020:133).

These results show that presenters of the analysis communicated that rural residents from throughout the Prince William Sound Area were eligible to harvest salmon from the Lower Copper River Area fishery and that it's expected that the primary users would be residents of Cordova.

Third, the review of transcripts of the presentations likewise indicate that presenters clarified that the projected harvest estimates were based on the resident population of Cordova at all meetings. For the most part, presenters repeated above the statement from the analysis that explains the analyst "[took] into account the smaller pool of qualified users, and reduced efficiency of allowable gear type" to produce the harvest estimate (SCRAC 2020:40, EIRAC and SCRAC 2022:46, FSB 2022:450). At the 2021 Federal Subsistence Board Fisheries Regulatory meeting, the presenter provided the least number of details on the projected harvest estimates. He read the projected estimate of 2,000 salmon but did not explain that this estimate was partially based on a limited number of Cordova residents. The presenter at the Fall 2020 Eastern Interior Council meeting, on the other hand, provided more details than was written in the analysis. He explained:

And I made a couple assumptions in the generation of that number of 2,000 salmon and that is that a smaller user pool of people could participate in this fishery, whereas the State subsistence gillnet fishery, all State residents can participate in and whereas, you know, because of the access to Cordova being limited, it's the pool of people that are in Cordova in the summertime, but it includes a large part of the commercial fleet that don't live in Cordova year-round, and namely that's the Russian component of the fleet, they're allowed to participate in the State subsistence fishery say when there is no commercial fishery open. So it would only be year-round Cordova residents that could participate in this fishery. And also I assumed that the dipnetting, mostly from the bank would be less effective than these boats using gillnets, so that's where I arrived at roughly 2,000 fish would be projected as harvested from this fishery, which as you can see, is, you know, a very, very minor amount in comparison to other fisheries on the river and then total estimated run size and spawning escapement" (EIRAC 2020:138).

The results confirm that in nearly all cases, presenters explained to meeting attendees that the projected harvest estimate for the Lower Copper River Area fishery was based on the pool of eligible federally qualified subsistence users living in Cordova.

Lastly, review of the discussions on FP21-10 from meeting transcripts suggest that the meeting attendees were not confused about the relevant information. Throughout the discussions, no one asked the presenters questions about the customary and traditional use determinations of the Lower Copper River Area fishery, the assumption that the users of the Lower Copper River Area fishery will primarily be residents of Cordova, or the rationale used to develop the projected harvest estimates. Likewise, the Councils, the Board, and other meeting attendees did not discuss these topics during the meetings. The discussions on FP21-10 focused on the abundance of salmon in the Copper River, the recent declines in run sizes of Copper River Salmon, and the accessibility of alternative fisheries for residents of Cordova. The results therefore suggest that attendees were not concerned or confused by the information that had been written in the analysis and presented to them at the meetings on the eligibility of the Lower Copper River Area fishery, the expected users of the fishery, and the projected harvest estimates.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Oppose the request to reconsider FP21-10.

Justification

The Board's purview is to provide opportunity for federally qualified subsistence users to harvest fish and wildlife, to conserve those populations when necessary, and to uphold the Federal rural subsistence priority. FP21-10 asked to establish a Federal subsistence fishery in the Prince William Sound Area where none meaningfully existed. Through the proposal process and analysis, the Board determined there is a need for additional Federal subsistence fishing opportunities in the Prince William Sound Area. The OSM staff analysis used the best available information about current harvest levels, harvest practices, and potential participants to estimate the possible harvest from this fishery. OSM staff then presented this information at meetings and were available to answer questions. Board adoption of the proposal was not based solely on the estimated future harvest from this fishery. The Board used information from the analysis, as well as input from the Councils and public, to extend opportunity to federally qualified subsistence users. The primary reason the Board approved this fishery was the underserved Cordova residents that did not have adequate access to, or a meaningful Federal priority for, Copper River salmon.

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FISHERIES RESOURCE MONITORING PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

The Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (Monitoring Program) is a collaborative, interagency, interdisciplinary approach to enhance fisheries research and data in Alaska and effectively communicate information needed for subsistence fisheries management on Federal public lands and waters. In 1999, the Federal government assumed responsibility for management of subsistence fisheries on Federal public lands and waters in Alaska. Section 812 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) directs the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture to research fish and wildlife subsistence uses on Federal public lands and waters and to seek data from, consult with, and incorporate knowledge of rural residents engaged in subsistence. The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture are committed to increasing the quantity and quality of information available to manage subsistence fisheries; meaningful involvement by federally-recognized tribes and Alaska Native and rural organizations; and, collaboration among Federal, State, Alaska Native, and rural organizations.

Every two years, the Office of Subsistence Management announces a notice of funding opportunity for investigation plans addressing subsistence fisheries on Federal public lands. The Monitoring Program is administered through regions to align with stock, harvest, and community issues common to a geographic area. There are six distinct Monitoring Program regions (**Figure 1**) as well as a multi-region category for projects that encompass more than one region.

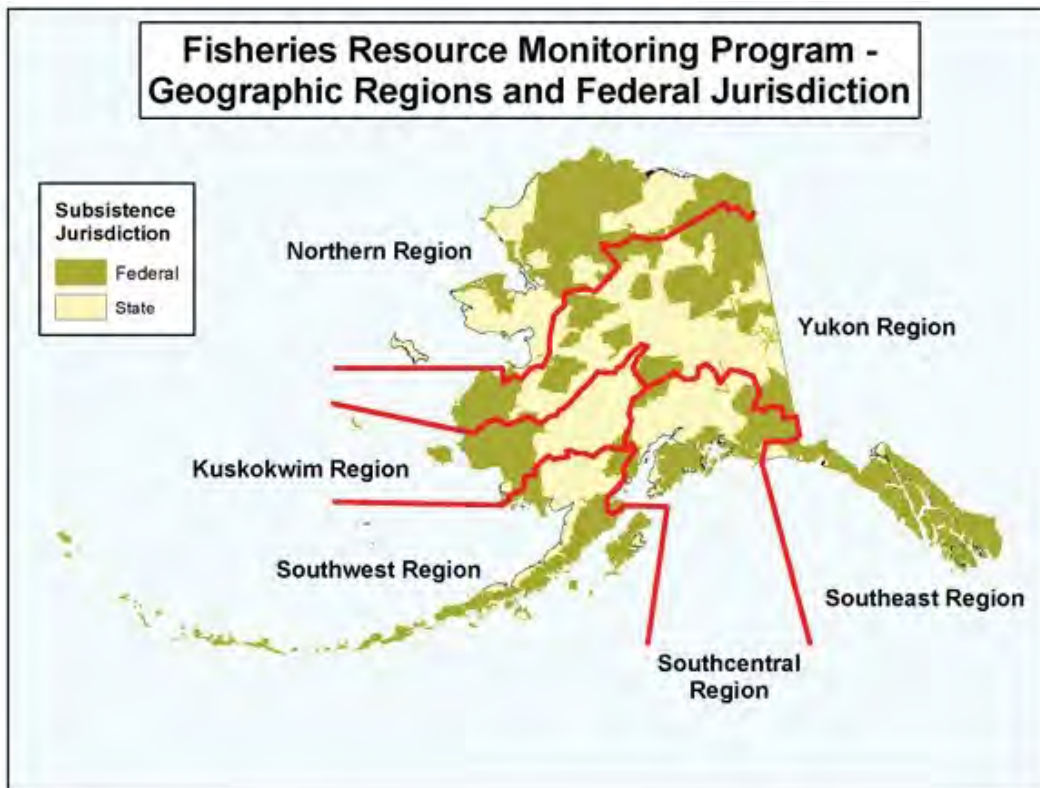


Figure 1. Geographic regions of the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program in Alaska.

During each two-year funding cycle, the Monitoring Program funds ongoing projects from the previous cycle (projects may be 1–4 years in duration) as well as new projects. Funding allocation guidelines are established by geographic region (**Table 1**). The regional guidelines were developed using six criteria that included level of risk to species, level of threat to conservation units, amount of subsistence needs not being met, amount of information available to support subsistence management, importance of a species to subsistence harvest, and level of user concerns regarding subsistence harvest. Funding allocation guidelines provide an initial target for planning; however, they are not final and are adjusted annually as needed.

Table 1. Regional allocation guideline for Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program Funds.

Region	U.S. Department of the Interior Funds	U.S. Department of Agriculture Funds
Northern Alaska	17%	0%
Yukon Drainage	29%	0%
Kuskokwim Drainage	29%	0%
Southwest Alaska	15%	0%
Southcentral Alaska	5%	33%
Southeast Alaska	0%	67%
Multi-Regional	5%	0%

The Monitoring Program was first implemented in 2000 with an initial allocation of \$5 million. Since 2000, a total of \$139.9 million has been allocated for the Monitoring Program to fund a total of 524 projects (**Figure 2** and **Figure 3**).

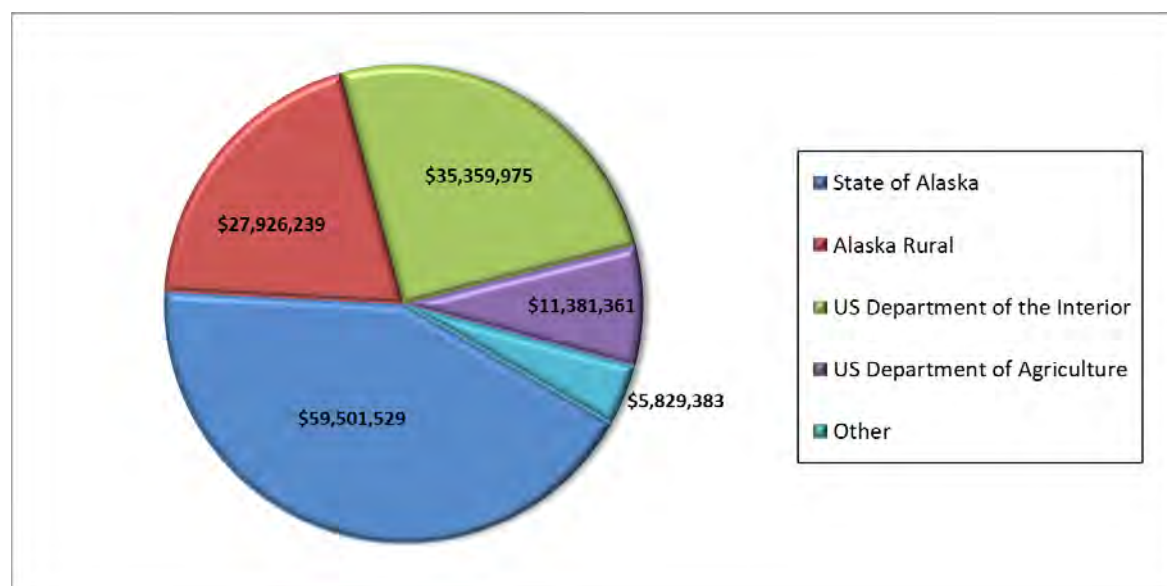


Figure 2. Monitoring Program fund distribution since 2000, identified by primary recipient organization type.

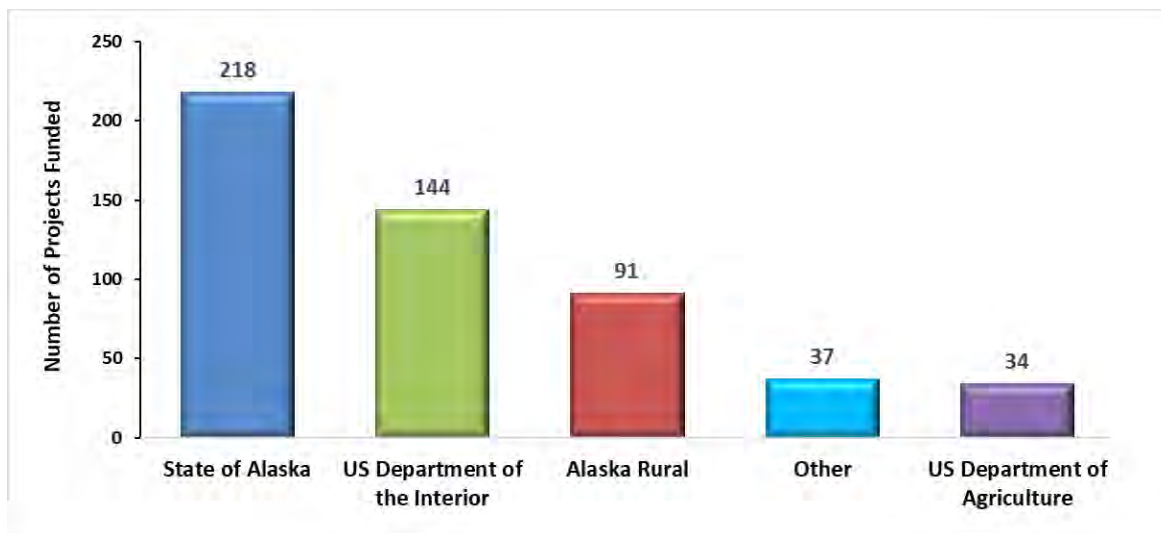


Figure 3. Number of Monitoring Program projects funded since 2000, listed by primary recipient organization type.

The three broad categories of information solicited by the Monitoring Program are (1) harvest monitoring, (2) traditional ecological knowledge, and (3) stock status and trends. Projects that combine these approaches are encouraged.

Harvest monitoring studies provide information on numbers and species of fish harvested, locations of harvests, and gear types used. Methods used to gather information on subsistence harvest patterns may include harvest calendars, mail-in questionnaires, household interviews, subsistence permit reports, and telephone interviews.

Traditional ecological knowledge studies are investigations of local knowledge directed at collecting and analyzing information on a variety of topics such as the sociocultural aspects of subsistence, fish ecology, species identification, local names, life history, taxonomy, seasonal movements, harvests, spawning and rearing areas, population trends, environmental observations, and traditional management systems. Methods used to document traditional ecological knowledge include ethnographic fieldwork, key respondent interviews with local experts, place name mapping, and open-ended surveys.

Stock status and trends studies provide information on abundance and run timing, age-sex-length composition, migration and geographic distribution, survival of juveniles or adults, stock production, genetic stock identification, and mixed stock analyses. Methods used to gather information on stock status and trends include aerial and ground surveys, test fishing, towers, weirs, sonar, video, genetics, mark-recapture, and telemetry.

PROJECT EVALUATION PROCESS

The Monitoring Program prioritizes high quality projects that address critical subsistence and conservation concerns. Projects are selected for funding through an evaluation and review process that is designed to advance projects that are strategically important for the Federal Subsistence Management Program, technically sound, administratively competent, promote partnerships and capacity building, and

are cost effective. Proposed projects are first evaluated by a panel called the Technical Review Committee. The Technical Review Committee's function is to provide evaluation, technical oversight, and strategic direction to the Monitoring Program. This committee is a standing interagency committee of senior technical experts that reviews, evaluates, and makes recommendations about proposed projects that are consistent with the mission of the Monitoring Program. Recommendations from the Technical Review Committee provide the basis for further comments from Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils, the public, the Interagency Staff Committee, and the Federal Subsistence Board, with final approval of the Monitoring Plan by the Assistant Regional Director of the Office of Subsistence Management.

To be considered for funding under the Monitoring Program, a proposed project must have a nexus to Federal subsistence fishery management. Proposed projects must have a direct association to a Federal subsistence fishery, and the subsistence fishery or fish stocks in question must occur in or pass-through waters within or adjacent to Federal public lands in Alaska (National Wildlife Refuges, National Forests, National Parks and Preserves, National Conservation Areas, National Wild and Scenic River Systems, National Petroleum Reserves, and National Recreation Areas). A complete project package must be submitted on time and must address the following five specific criteria.

1. **Strategic Priorities**—Studies should be responsive to information needs identified in the 2024 Priority Information Needs available at the Monitoring Program webpage at <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/frmp/funding>. All projects must have a direct linkage to Federal public lands and/or waters to be eligible for funding under the Monitoring Program. Projects should address the following topics to demonstrate links to strategic priorities:

- Federal jurisdiction—The extent of Federal public waters in or nearby the project area
- Direct subsistence fisheries management implications
- Conservation mandate—Threat or risk to conservation of species and populations that support subsistence fisheries
- Potential impacts on the subsistence priority—Risk that subsistence harvest users' goals will not be met
- Data gaps—Amount of information available to support subsistence management and how a project answers specific questions related to these gaps
- Role of the resource—Contribution of a species to a subsistence harvest (number of villages affected, pounds of fish harvested, miles of river) and qualitative significance (cultural value, unique seasonal role)
- Local concern—Level of user concerns over subsistence harvests (upstream vs. downstream allocation, effects of recreational use, changes in fish abundance and population characteristics)

To assist in evaluation of submittals for projects previously funded under the Monitoring Program, investigators must summarize project findings in their investigation plans. This

summary should clearly and concisely document project performance, key findings, and uses of collected information for Federal subsistence management. It should also justify the continuation of the project, placing the proposed work in context with the ongoing work being accomplished.

2. **Technical-Scientific Merit**—Technical quality of the study design must meet accepted standards for information collection, compilation, analysis, and reporting. To demonstrate technical and scientific merit, applicants should describe how projects will:

- Advance science
- Answer immediate subsistence management or conservation concerns
- Have rigorous sampling and/or research designs
- Have specific, measurable, realistic, clearly stated, and achievable (attainable within the proposed project period) objectives
- Incorporate traditional knowledge and methods

Data collection, compilation, analysis, and reporting procedures should be clearly stated. Analytical procedures should be understandable to the non-scientific community.

3. **Investigator Ability and Resources**—Investigators must show they are capable of successfully completing the proposed project by providing information on the ability (training, education, experience, and letters of support) and resources (technical and administrative) they possess to conduct the work. Investigators that have received funding in the past, via the Monitoring Program or other sources, are evaluated and scored on their past performance, including fulfillment of meeting deliverable and financial accountability deadlines. A record of failure to submit reports or delinquent submittal of reports will be considered when rating investigator ability and resources.

4. **Partnership and Capacity Building**—Investigators must demonstrate that capacity building has already reached the communication or partnership development stage during proposal development and, ideally, include a strategy to develop capacity building to higher levels, recognizing, however, that in some situations higher level involvement may not be desired or feasible by local organizations.

Investigators are requested to include a strategy for integrating local capacity development in their study plans or research designs. Investigators should inform communities and regional organizations in the area where work is to be conducted about their project plans. They should also consult and communicate with local communities to ensure that local knowledge is used and concerns are addressed. Investigators and their organizations should demonstrate their ability to maintain effective local relationships and commitment to capacity building. This includes a plan to facilitate and develop partnerships so that investigators, communities, and regional organizations can pursue and achieve the most meaningful level of involvement. Proposals

demonstrating multiple, highly collaborative efforts with rural community members or Alaska Native Organizations are encouraged.

Successful capacity building requires developing trust and dialogue among investigators, local communities, and regional organizations. Investigators need to be flexible in modifying their work plan in response to local knowledge, issues, and concerns, and must also understand that capacity building is a reciprocal process in which all participants share and gain valuable knowledge. The reciprocal nature of the capacity building component(s) should be clearly demonstrated in proposals. Investigators are encouraged to develop the highest level of community and regional collaboration that is practical including joining as co-investigators.

Capacity can be built by increasing the technical capabilities of rural communities and Alaska Native organizations. This can be accomplished via several methods, including increased technical experience for individuals and the acquisition of necessary gear and equipment. Increased technical experience would include all areas of project management including logistics, financial accountability, implementation, and administration. Other examples may include internships or providing opportunities within the project for outreach, modeling, sampling design, or project specific training. Another would be the acquisition of equipment that could be transferred to rural communities and tribal organizations upon the conclusion of the project.

A “meaningful partner” is a partner that is actively engaged in one or more aspects of project design, logistics, implementation, and reporting requirements. Someone who simply agrees with the concept or provides a cursory look at the proposal is not a meaningful partner.

5. **Cost/Benefit**—This criterion evaluates the reasonableness (what a prudent person would pay) of the funding requested to provide benefits to the Federal Subsistence Management Program. Benefits could be tangible or intangible. Examples of tangible outcomes include data sets that directly inform management decisions or fill knowledge gaps and opportunities for youth or local resident involvement in monitoring, research, and/or resource management efforts. Examples of possible intangible goals and objectives include enhanced relationships and communications between managers and communities, partnerships and collaborations on critical resource issues, and potential for increased capacity within both communities and agencies.

Applicants should be aware that the Government shall perform a “best value analysis” and the selection for award shall be made to the applicant whose proposal is most advantageous to the Government. The Office of Subsistence Management strives to maximize program efficiency by encouraging cost sharing, partnerships, and collaboration.

POLICY AND FUNDING GUIDELINES

Several policies have been developed to aid in implementing funding. These policies include:

- Projects of up to four years in duration may be considered

2024 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program Overview

- Proposals requesting Monitoring Program funding that exceeds \$235,000 in any one year are not eligible for funding
- Studies must not duplicate existing projects
- Long term projects will be considered on a case-by-case basis

Activities that are not eligible for funding include:

- Habitat protection, mitigation, restoration, and enhancement
- Hatchery propagation, restoration, enhancement, and supplementation
- Contaminant assessment, evaluation, and monitoring
- Projects where the primary or only objective is outreach and education (for example, science camps, technician training, and intern programs), rather than information collection

The rationale behind these policy and funding guidelines is to ensure that existing responsibilities and efforts by government agencies are not duplicated under the Monitoring Program. Land management or regulatory agencies already have direct responsibility, as well as specific programs, to address these activities. However, the Monitoring Program may fund research to determine how these activities affect Federal subsistence fisheries or fishery resources.

The Monitoring Program may fund assessments of key Federal subsistence fishery stocks in decline or that may decline due to climatological, environmental, habitat displacement, or other drivers; however, applicants must show how this knowledge would contribute to Federal subsistence fisheries management. Similarly, the Monitoring Program may legitimately fund projects that assess whether migratory barriers (e.g., falls, beaver dams) significantly affect spawning success or distribution; however, it would be inappropriate to fund projects to build fish passes, remove beaver dams, or otherwise alter or enhance habitat.

2024 NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

The 2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity focused on priority information needs developed by the Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils with input from subject matter specialists. Investigation plans were due in February 2023. Submitted plans were reviewed and evaluated by the Office of Subsistence Management and U.S. Forest Service staff, and then scored by the Technical Review Committee. Each investigation plan was scored on the following five criteria: strategic priority, technical and scientific merit, investigator ability and resources, partnership and capacity building, and cost/benefit.

2024 FISHERIES RESOURCE MONITORING PLAN

A Fisheries Resource Monitoring Plan is developed during each Monitoring Program cycle that provides an overview of the process, the submitted materials, and the final list of funded projects. The 2024

2024 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program Overview

Fisheries Resource Monitoring Plan will include regional overviews and comments from Regional Advisory Councils and the Interagency Staff Committee. Regional Overviews for each of the seven Monitoring Program regions contain area specific background information as well as the 2024 Technical Review Committee justifications and project executive summaries specific to those regions. The Regional Overviews are distributed for comment through Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meetings, beginning in September 2023. Regional Advisory Council comments are recorded and included in the draft 2024 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Plan that will be forwarded to the Interagency Staff Committee for their comments and finally to the Federal Subsistence Board.

The draft 2024 Fisheries Resource Monitoring plan will be presented to the Federal Subsistence Board at their January/February 2024 public meeting. The Board will review the draft plan and will forward their comments and recommendations to the Assistant Regional Director of the Office of Subsistence Management. Final project selection and funding approval lie with the Assistant Regional Director of the Office of Subsistence Management. For this funding cycle, a total of 26 investigation plans were received and 25 were considered eligible for funding. Investigators are expected to be notified in writing of the status of their proposals by late spring or early summer 2024.

FISHERIES RESOURCE MONITORING PROGRAM SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA REGION OVERVIEW

Since the inception of the Monitoring Program in 2000, a total of 54 projects have been funded in the Southcentral Region at a cost of \$16.9 million (**Figure 1**). Alaska rural organizations and U.S. Department of Interior agencies have had the most projects funded in the region, followed by the State of Alaska, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and other organizations (**Figure 2**). See **Appendix 1** for more information on Southcentral Alaska Region projects completed since 2000 and a list of all organizations that have received funding through the Monitoring Program.

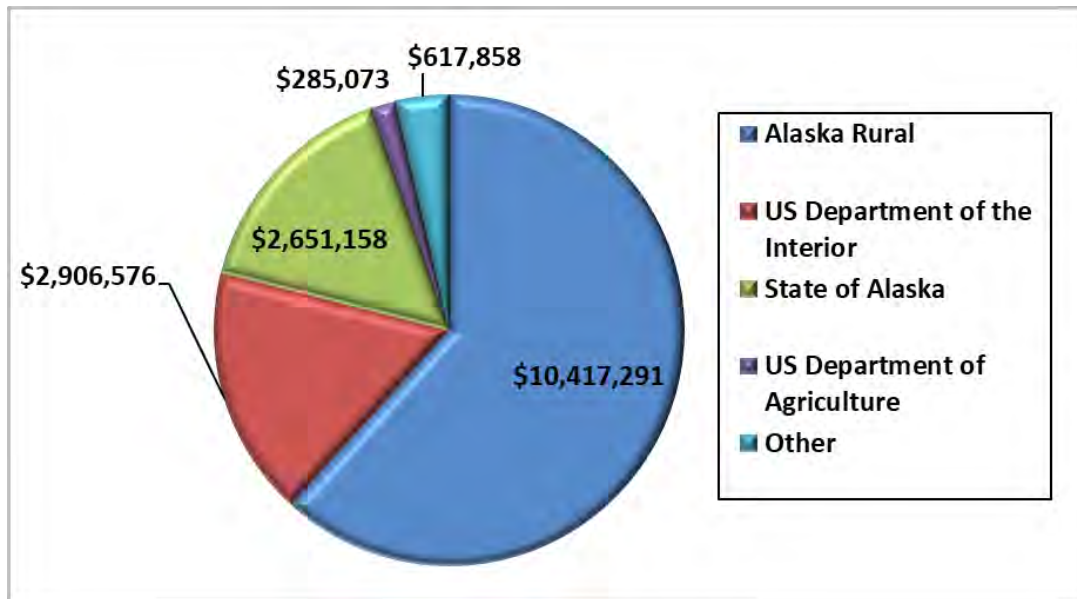


Figure 1. Monitoring Program fund distribution since 2000 in the Southcentral Region.

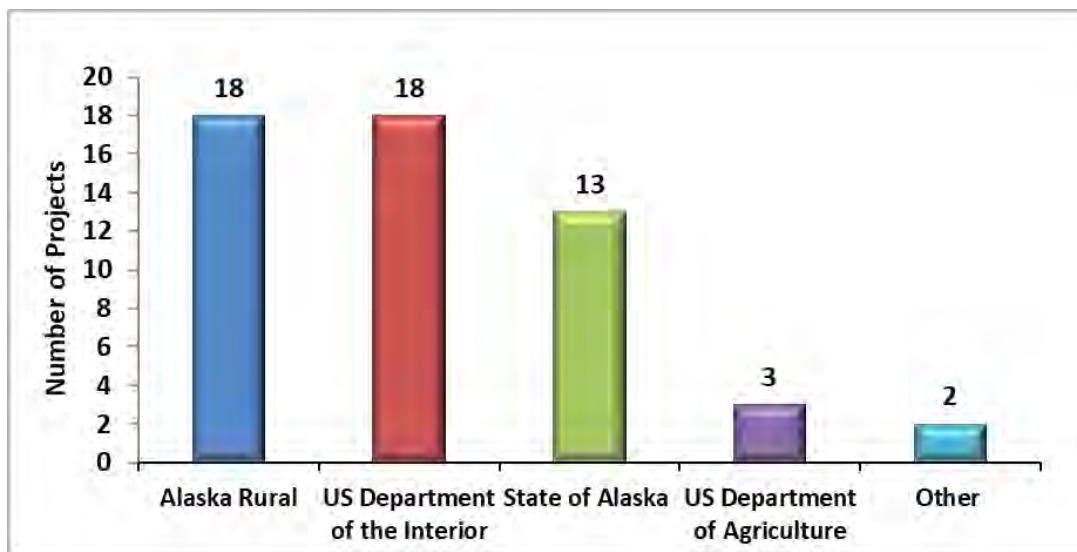


Figure 2. Number of Monitoring Program projects funded since 2000 in the Southcentral Region.

PRIORITY INFORMATION NEEDS

The 2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Southcentral Alaska Region contained the following six priority information needs developed by the Southcentral Regional Advisory Council:

- Estimate abundance, run timing, spawning site fidelity, and age, sex, and length composition for Chinook and Coho salmon that stage or spawn in waters of Kenai Peninsula drainages under Federal subsistence fishery jurisdiction.
- Estimate Chinook, Coho, and Sockeye salmon escapements into the Copper River drainage and delta systems with a high degree of certainty (for example projects utilizing weir, sonar, and/or mark-recapture methods).
- Develop, test, and implement methods for monitoring escapement and/or mortality of Sockeye Salmon in the Copper River drainage and delta systems, including assessment of predation.
- Estimate “quality of escapement” measures such as fecundity, age, sex, and size to help inform salmon management in the Copper River and Kenai Peninsula drainages.
- Understand effects of environmental and/or climate change on stock specific migration timing and abundance of adult salmon, as well as the implications for harvest management, in the Copper River and Kenai Peninsula drainages using sonars and tagging.
- Collect baseline information on juvenile Sockeye Salmon outmigration, timing, abundance, condition, and mortality across the unique sub-watersheds of the Copper River and the Kenai Peninsula drainages.

2024 MONITORING PLAN DEVELOPMENT FOR THE SOUTHCENTRAL REGION

For the 2024 Monitoring Plan, one proposal was submitted for the Southcentral Region (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Projects submitted for the Southcentral Alaska Region, 2024 Monitoring Plan, including project duration in years and total funds requested.

Project Number	Title	Project Duration (Years)	Total Project Request
24-501	Klutina River Sonar	4	\$923,610
Total			\$923,610

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE JUSTIFICATION

The following executive summary was written by the principal investigator and submitted to the Office of Subsistence Management as part of a proposal package. It may not reflect the opinions of the Office of Subsistence Management or the Technical Review Committee. The executive summary may have been altered for length.

Technical Review Committee justifications are a general description of the committee's assessment of proposals when examining them for strategic priority, technical and scientific merit, investigator ability and resources, partnership and capacity building, and cost/benefit. More in-depth reviews are provided to investigators following project selection.

Investigator Submitted Executive Summary:

Project Number:	24-501
Title:	Klutina River Salmon Monitoring Program: Estimating spawning escapement on a major salmon producing drainage of the Copper River
Geographic Region:	Southcentral Alaska
Data Types:	Stock Status and Trends
Principal Investigator:	Matt J. Piché, Department of the Environment and Natural Resources, Native Village of Eyak, Cordova, AK
Co-investigator:	Dan Gorze, Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission, Glennallen, AK
Project Request:	2024: \$234,348 2025: \$226,872 2026: \$232,925 2027: \$229,465
Total Request:	\$923,610

Issue: A decrease in Copper River salmon productivity and altered spawner-recruit relationships are a cause for concern. Sustained low salmon returns, despite achieving in-river goals in most years, and poor performance of forecast models, have resulted in an increasingly precautionary approach to Copper River fishery management. All Copper River salmon are now in a period of low abundance, which began in 2008 for Chinook Salmon *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*, 2016 for Sockeye Salmon *O. nerka*, and 2019 for Coho Salmon *O. kisutch*. Conservative management actions necessary to achieve minimum escapement goals have impacted harvest in all Copper River fisheries.

The authors of this proposal intend to increase the quality and quantity of data available for Copper River fisheries management by assessing annual spawning escapement on one of the six major salmon producing tributaries of the Copper River (see project map). The utility of tributary-based salmon monitoring data is dependent upon; 1) the potential productivity and related proportions of system-wide abundance capable returning to the area of study, and 2) the effectiveness of the monitoring effort to provide a reliable escapement estimate that is comparable across study years. These contingencies can be addressed through careful site selection and study design.

The ongoing Klutina River Sonar Pilot Study (FRMP #20-510) assessed site locations and validated high-resolution multi-beam sonar as a suitable method for monitoring salmon spawning escapement on the Klutina River. In 2022, sonar operations occurred from 16-June through 11-August at a location

approximately 9.4 river kilometers (rkm) from the confluence with the Copper River. Salmon spawning within the Klutina River occurs above this sonar study site. Sonar downtime was limited to 1.3% of total operating hours. A total of 85,092 salmon were estimated migrating within range of the single ARIS sonar on the north bank of the Klutina River and large Chinook salmon apportionment of the passage data is ongoing. Expansion of sonar operations are proposed within this funding request to include the addition of a sonar on the south bank of the Klutina River. Sonar monitoring will continue to be tested at this site in 2023 and partial funding has been obtained for 2024 operations. Feasibility data supports project development beyond the pilot study phase with full-scale high-resolution sonar operations on both banks of the Klutina River to estimate the entirety of the Klutina Sockeye Salmon and Chinook Salmon runs (2024-2027).

Objectives:

1. To estimate Klutina River spawning escapement of Sockeye Salmon and Chinook Salmon such that the estimate is within 10% of the true value 95% of the time;
2. Determine Sockeye Salmon and Chinook Salmon run timing on the lower Klutina River. Estimate the weekly sex and age composition of sockeye salmon such that simultaneous 90% confidence intervals have a maximum width of 0.20

Methods: High-resolution imaging sonars will be placed on opposite banks of the Klutina River pointing toward the thalweg at a location 9.4 river kilometers (rkm) upriver from the Klutina River's confluence with the Copper River. No Klutina River salmon have been documented spawning below this point, therefore the entirety of the Klutina salmon run will be available to count as they migrate past this location. Sonar operations will begin in early June to ensure the start of the salmon run is represented. Run timing will continue to be assessed during pilot project operations in 2023. Sonar operations will continue until passage slows and daily counts represent less than 1% of the total count for at least three consecutive days. This roughly 90-day timeframe is expected to cover the duration of the Sockeye Salmon and Chinook Salmon run. Each sonar transducer lens will be pointing toward the center of the river and angled down to ensure a viewing profile maximizing riverbed contact to ensure all fish that pass will be seen. Sonar software (ARIScope version 2.8) will be used to record data. Each recording will be sampled every hour in 10-minute increments. The 10-minute increments allow for a systematic sampling method for analysis while minimizing the data file size in the event of a corrupt file or data loss. 2022 pilot study data indicated a 10-minute per hour subsample of each non-overlapping recording range will accurately estimate salmon escapement. This assumption will continue be tested through the pilot study in 2023. Computer software (ARISFish version 2.8) will be used to analyze data. The net upriver movement of fish will be tallied during a 10-minute period per hour, and the hour-long total estimated passage will be this number expanded by a factor of six. Daily passage will be an estimate of the totaled 24-hour periods (00:00 – 23:59). Weekly passage (00:00 Sunday through Saturday 23:59) will be the combined daily passage estimates for that week. Net movement is defined as the sum of positive upstream and negative downstream fish movements. Net movement can easily be obtained given the capabilities of the multi-beam sonar. If overall passage rates are lower than anticipated, it may be statistically necessary to expand the hourly passage count from 10-minutes to 20-minutes or more. The proposed study design

accounts for this uncertainty in density dependent variability in our expansion estimates. The opportunity to adjust fish passage counts from 10 to 60-minutes per hour can be calculated at any point throughout the study. This will ensure project objectives are met regardless of run strength.

Partnerships/Collaboration: Over the past eighteen years Native Village of Eyak's Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (NVE-DENR) has pioneered a successful capacity building model utilizing consultations and partnerships between Alaska Native Organizations, Tribal Governments, ANCSA Corporations and State and Federal Agencies to conduct high quality research culminating in the development of this joint proposal between Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission (AITRC) and NVE. Our long-term goal is to develop methods to economically monitor spawning escapement on all major Copper River tributaries. This project is an important first step.

NVE has a mature fisheries research program and AITRC, although relatively new, has rapidly increased capacity in its fisheries department and proven to be a key contributor to upper Copper River fisheries research. The model of a tribe and intertribal organization partnering to build capacity through mentoring is a strength of this project. AITRC and NVE will have the opportunity gain capacity while developing and implementing a successful research project, while AITRC will incrementally gain responsibilities throughout the duration of the project. In 2026 and 2027, staffing of seasonal sonar employees and the majority of the camp operational budget will shift to AITRC, while NVE will retain the P.I. role to oversee and guide this project transition. NVE-DENR will remain responsible for general oversight in 2026 and 2027 with the goal of transitioning to AITRC as P.I. on future funding requests. This added expertise will allow AITRC to lead Copper River population monitoring and research projects in the future and help guarantee the continued success of our regional tribally based fish monitoring programs.

Technical Review Committee Justification: This project addresses a Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council priority information need. The Klutina River is a major producer of Chinook and Sockeye salmon in the Copper River drainage and federally qualified subsistence users harvest Klutina River salmon in downstream Federal fisheries. The objectives are clear, measurable, and achievable based on the results of a pilot study. The project uses proven methods and regularly cites assessment publications from the ADF&G. The proponents have outlined a clear sampling design, including quality control, which has been improved with information and knowledge gained during the pilot study. The investigators have the resources necessary to carry out the project, and specific divisions of duties and responsibilities are clearly articulated in the proposal. The proposal outlines a mentoring relationship between the two groups, whereby the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission can build capacity and learn skills from a mature fisheries research program. The funding request appears reasonable across all budget periods for the work being proposed.

APPENDIX 1
PROJECTS FUNDED IN THE SOUTHWEST ALASKA REGION SINCE 2000

Project Number	Project Title	Investigators
Copper River Salmon Projects		
00-013	Tanada Creek Salmon Escapement	NPS
00-034	Miles Lake Sonar Improvements	USFS, ADF&G
00-040	Copper River Salmon Subsistence Fishery Evaluations	ADF&G, CRNA
01-020	Copper River Chinook Feasibility of Abundance Estimate	NVE, LGL
01-021	Lower Copper River In-season Abundance Estimate	NVE, LGL, ADF&G
01-217	Copper River Groups Capacity Building Workshop	CRNA, LGL
02-015	Copper River Chinook Salmon Radio Telemetry	ADF&G, LGL
03-010	Upper Copper River C&T Fish Harvests GIS Atlas	CRNA, LGL
04-501	Long Lake Sockeye Salmon Escapement	NPS, CRWP
04-502	Tanada Creek Salmon Escapement	NPS
04-503	Copper River Chinook Salmon Abundance Estimate	NVE, LGL
04-506	Lower Copper River In-season Abundance Estimate	NVE, LGL, ADF&G
04-507	Copper River Chinook Salmon Genetics	ADF&G, NVE, NPS
04-553	Copper River Salmon Knowledge of Long-Term Changes	ADF&G, NVE
05-501	Copper River Sockeye Salmon Spawning Distribution	NVE, ADF&G
06-502	Copper River Sockeye Salmon In-river Abundance	NVE, ADF&G
07-502	Tanada Creek Salmon Weir	NPS
07-503	Copper River Chinook and Sockeye Salmon Abundance	NVE
07-505	Long Lake Salmon Weir	NPS, PWSSC
08-501	Copper River Sockeye Salmon Abundance	NVE, LGL
10-502	Tanada Creek Salmon Assessment	NPS
10-503	Copper River Chinook Salmon Assessment	NVE, LGL
10-505	Long Lake Salmon Assessment	NPS
10-552	Copper River Subsistence Harvest Validation	HDR, ECO, ADF&G
12-500	Copper River Chinook Salmon RFID Feasibility	NVE, LGL
12-550	Upper Copper R. Changing Environments & Subsistence	ECO, ADF&G
14-501	Long Lake Salmon	NPS
14-503	Tanada Creek Salmon	NPS
14-505	Copper River Chinook Salmon Fish Wheels	NVE
18-501	Gulkana River Sockeye Salmon Harvest Contribution	ADF&G, CRITR
18-504	Copper River Chinook Salmon Abundance	NVE
20-501 ^a	Klutina River Sonar Pilot Project	NVE, AITRC
20-502 ^a	Abundance and Run Timing of Salmon in Tanada	NPS
22-504 ^a	Copper River Chinook Salmon In-River Abundance	NVE

Project Number	Project Title	Investigators
Copper River Steelhead Projects		
01-035	Copper River Steelhead Harvest Monitoring	NPS, CRNA
01-148	Copper River Steelhead Stock Status	ADF&G, CRNA, USFWS
03-001	Copper River Steelhead Population Biology	ADF&G
05-502	Copper River Steelhead Abundance	ADF&G, NVE
Copper River Freshwater Species Projects		
01-110	Copper River Non-Salmon Species Harvest and Use	CRNA, ADF&G, CHVC, CNTC, Karie, MTC
02-077	Upper Copper River Increasing GIS Capabilities	CRNA
07-501	Tanada and Copper Lakes Burbot Abundance	NPS, ADF&G, MTC
Copper River Eulachon Projects		
02-075	Eulachon Subsistence Harvest Opportunities	NVE, USFS, ADF&G
Prince William Sound Salmon Projects		
00-035	Coghill Coho Salmon Weir	ADF&G, USFS
02-028	Chugach Region TEK Mapping	CRRC
03-033	Billy's Hole, PWS Salmon Stock Assessment	ADF&G, CRRC, USFS
Cook Inlet Area Projects		
00-038	Cooper Creek Dolly Varden Assessment	ADF&G
00-041	Turnagain Arm Eulachon Subsistence Use and Assessment	USFS
03-045	Cook Inlet Subsistence Fisheries Harvest Assessment	ADF&G
07-506	Tustumena Lake Coho Salmon Spawning Assessment	USFWS
07-507	Kasilof Watershed Coho Salmon Radio Telemetry	USFWS
07-509	Kasilof Watershed Steelhead Trout Radio Telemetry	USFWS
08-502	Tustumena Lake Coho Salmon Assessment	USFWS
08-503	Kasilof River Steelhead Radio Telemetry	USFWS
08-504	Crooked and Nikoli Creeks Steelhead Weirs	USFWS

a = On-going projects during 2022.

Abbreviations used for investigators are: **ADF&G** =Alaska Department of Fish and Game, **AITRC** = Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission, **CNTC** = Cheesh'na Tribal Council, **CRITR** = Copper River Intertribal Resource Commission; **CRNA** = Copper River Native Association, **CRRC** = Chugach Regional Resources Commission, **CRWP** = Copper River Watershed Project, **ECO** = Ecotrust, **USFS** = U.S. Forest Service, **Karie** = Dr. James Karie, **LGL** = LGL Ltd, **MTC** = Mentasta Tribal Council, **NPS** = National Park Service, **NVE** = Native Village of Eyak, **PWSSC** = Prince William Sound Science Center, and **USFWS** = U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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FISHERIES RESOURCE MONITORING PROGRAM MULTI-REGION OVERVIEW

Since the inception of the Monitoring Program in 2000, a total of 18 multi-Region projects have been funded at a cost of \$2.1 million (**Figure 1**). The State of Alaska has had the most multi-Region projects funded, followed by Department of the Interior agencies, other organizations, and the Department of Agriculture (**Figure 2**). See **Appendix 1** for more information on multi-Region projects completed since 2000 and a list of all organizations that have received funding through the Monitoring Program.

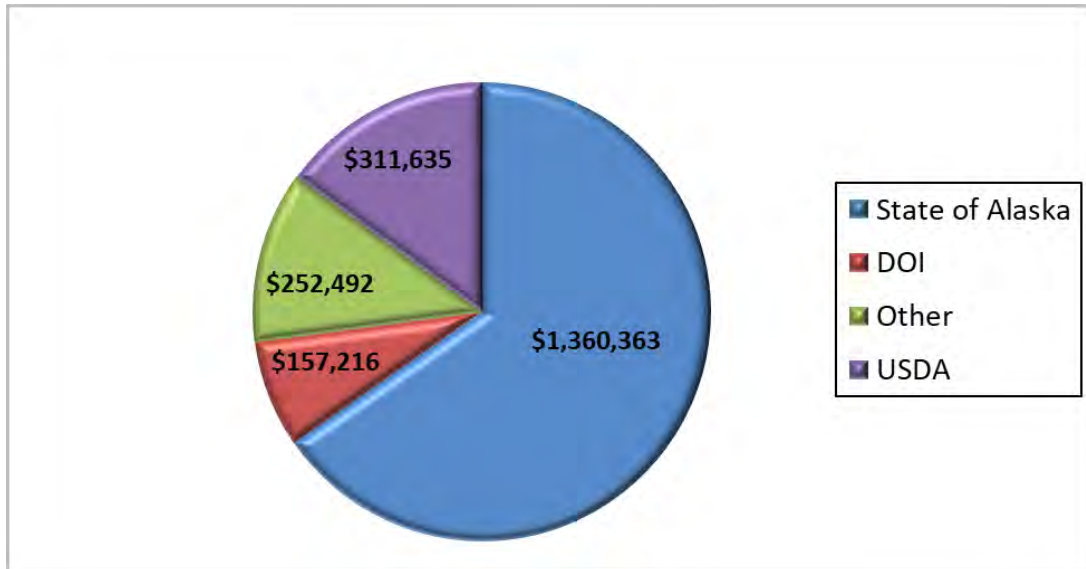


Figure 1. Monitoring Program fund distribution since 2000 for multi-Region projects.

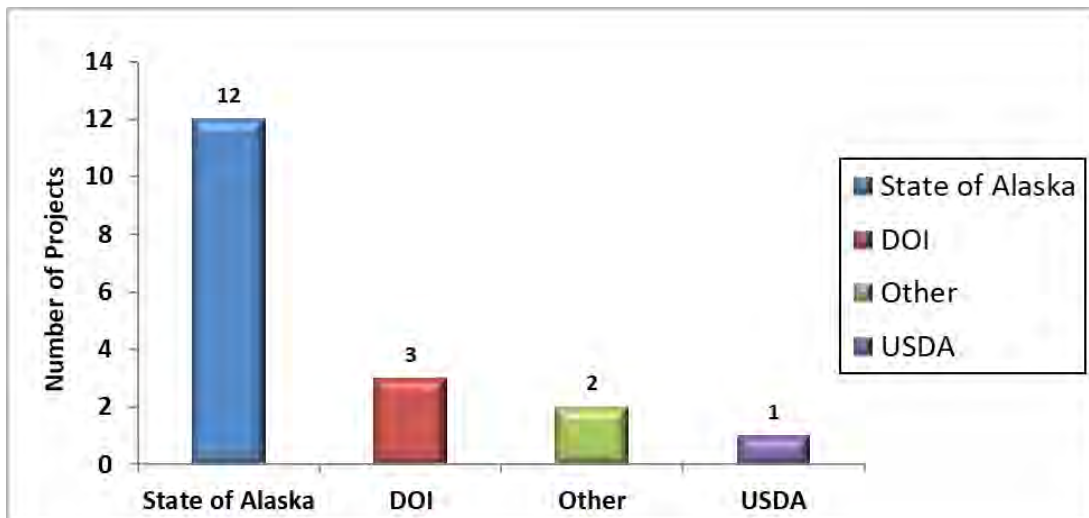


Figure 2. Number of Monitoring Program projects funded since 2000 for multi-Region projects.

PRIORITY INFORMATION NEEDS

The 2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity for multi-Region projects contained the following four priority information needs identified by Regional Advisory Councils:

- Gain a better understanding of ecosystem factors negatively impacting subsistence salmon runs and harvest practices in Alaska, including ocean conditions, freshwater conditions, and changing climate conditions.
- Changes in relative abundance and species composition of salmon species, and expansion of salmon species into new waters.
- The impact of changing weather on traditional fish processing practices and food security.
- Effects of fluctuating water levels on salmon spawning viability.

2024 MONITORING PLAN DEVELOPMENT FOR THE MULTI-REGION

For the 2024 Monitoring Plan, one multi-Region proposal was submitted (**Table 1**).

Table 1. Multi-Region projects submitted for the 2024 Monitoring Plan, including project duration and total funds requested.

Project Number	Title	Project Duration (Years)	Total Project Request
24-750	Understanding Ecosystem Change on Traditional Salmon Subsistence Practices and Community Food Security in Three Coastal Alaskan Communities	3	\$517,285
Total			\$517,285

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE JUSTIFICATION

The following executive summary was written by the principal investigator and was submitted to the Office of Subsistence Management as part of a proposal package. It may not reflect the opinions of the Office of Subsistence Management or the Technical Review Committee. The executive summary may have been altered for length.

Technical Review Committee justifications are a general description of the committee’s assessment of proposals when examining them for strategic priority, technical and scientific merit, investigator ability and resources, partnership and capacity building, and cost/benefit. More in-depth reviews are provided to investigators following project selection.

Investigator Submitted Executive Summary:

Project Number:	24-750
Title:	Evaluating Ecosystem Change on Traditional Salmon Subsistence Practices and Community Food Security in Three Coastal Alaskan Communities.
Geographic Region:	Multi-Regional
Data Types:	Harvest Monitoring (HM) and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)
Principal Investigator:	Chance Wilcox, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Co-investigator:	Jacqueline Keating, Alaska Department of Fish and Game Lauren Sill, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Project Request:	2024: \$158,771 2025: \$174,343 2026: \$184,171
Total Request:	\$517,285

Issue: This project responds to two priority information needs identified for the multi-regional category in the 2024 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program call for proposals prepared by the Office of Subsistence Management: “Gain a better understanding of ecosystem factors negatively impacting subsistence salmon runs and harvest practices in Alaska, including ocean conditions, freshwater conditions, and changing climate conditions” and “the impact of changing weather on traditional fish processing practices and food security.” This research project will collect subsistence salmon harvest data, community food security information, and harvest assessments over time by residents of Akutan, Nanwalek, and Hoonah and document their traditional and contemporary subsistence harvest and use areas and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) regarding local ecosystem changes and their effect on salmon populations and subsistence salmon harvest and processing practices. The data from this study will be useful for regulatory bodies such as the Alaska Board of Fisheries and the Federal Subsistence Board in their assessments of whether subsistence needs are being met and inform federal and state managers on subsistence regulations from the perspective of local resource users, especially considering ecosystem changes such as coastal erosion that affect fishing practices.

Pacific salmon are a fundamental subsistence resource for the communities of Akutan, Hoonah, and Nanwalek. In addition to the social, economic and cultural importance of this resource, the ability to harvest and process subsistence salmon in coastal Alaska is essential to community food security for the residents of the three communities. Both salmon spawning and rearing habitats, as well as subsistence harvest and uses of salmon by these three communities occur within some federal conservation system boundaries, where there are overlapping subsistence fishing opportunities provided by the Federal Subsistence Board (FSB). Harvest and uses of subsistence salmon by residents of Akutan occurs within the boundaries of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge. The community of Hoonah is located within the bounds of the Tongass National Forest, and residents harvest subsistence salmon through the area. Areas of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge are utilized by residents of Nanwalek for subsistence pursuits of salmon.

The most recent ADF&G Division of Subsistence surveys from Akutan (2008), Hoonah (2013), and Nanwalek (2014) documented that salmon made up the largest portion of these communities’ subsistence harvests. However, these studies did not investigate how changing ecosystem features, such as more

frequent and less predictable storms, changing wind patterns, and warmer ocean temperatures affected salmon populations, traditional salmon processing methods, and community food security.

This project will utilize face-to-face household surveys, mapping, key respondent interviews, and participant observation to investigate how ecosystem and weather changes have altered subsistence practices and community food security over time. This proposed project will: 1) update subsistence salmon harvest and use estimates in Akutan, Hoonah, and Nanwalek for the calendar year 2025; 2) document observations related to the effects of environmental change on salmon populations and subsistence pursuits by study community residents; and 3) integrate the results across the study communities to identify comparisons as well as regional trends or associations with particular environmental features. The documentation of TEK will aid in contextualizing harvest estimates and collate the observations of changes linked to climate on local salmon populations and subsistence activities. For example, studies throughout coastal Alaska have documented rapidly increasing coastal shoreline erosion and increasing ocean temperatures; these and other climate related phenomena may alter subsistence activities and cause area residents to adapt their subsistence harvest and processing practices. The results of this study will increase federal and state fisheries managers' understanding of community-based subsistence fisheries, especially considering the rapidly changing environmental conditions of coastal Alaska.

Objectives: The goal of the project is to document observations of ecosystem factors affecting salmon runs and subsistence practices in coastal Alaska communities. The project will result in a better understanding of the effects of unpredictable and changing weather patterns experienced by coastal Alaska communities as they relate to subsistence salmon harvesting and processing and community food security.

To accomplish this, the project has three objectives:

1. Document, characterize, and quantify salmon harvest and processing and changes thereto in Akutan, Nanwalek, and Hoonah to better understand impacts of ecosystem change on community subsistence practices and food security.
2. Estimate subsistence salmon harvest amounts and locations for three coastal Alaska communities for study year 2025.
3. Record the geographic extent of harvest and use areas for salmon by residents of Akutan, Nanwalek, and Hoonah during the study year and compare with areas used for salmon harvest activities over time.

Methods: This study will take place in three communities, Akutan, Nanwalek, and Hoonah, and will integrate three social science data gathering methods to estimate the harvest and use of salmon for subsistence by community residents, measure food security in each community, and document TEK related to observed effects of environmental change on salmon harvest and processing. These methods are: 1) participant observation, 2) key respondent interviews, and 3) comprehensive household harvest surveys. The data gathering methods for this project were designed to be integrated so that data collected using one method inform the development and implementation of other methods. Data from all three methods will provide quantitative and qualitative material to accomplish Objective 1. Objective 2 will be achieved using data from the household harvest surveys and accompanying geographic data. Geographical

data collected with the household harvest surveys will accomplish Objective 3, although data from interviews and participant observation will also address this objective.

Partnerships/Capacity Building: In accordance with principles for ethical research and to establish and maintain working relationships, the Hoonah Indian Association, Chugach Regional Resources Commission, and the Native Village of Akutan were consulted during the development of this proposal. Ongoing consultation with the tribal councils will occur throughout the project. Prior to the publication of the technical report, researchers will return to their research communities to disseminate study results, answer questions, and collect feedback people may have about the project and resulting data. During the project, researchers will work with local tribal councils to obtain assistance with survey development, interview protocols, and logistics. Local research assistants in each community will help coordinate local logistical support and participation in project activities. Through the surveys and interviews, community members will have the opportunity to share their knowledge of salmon used for subsistence and their experiences with these resources.

Technical Review Committee Justification: The proposed project is a compelling, multi-region study that will document and compare local observations of ecosystem factors that are impacting salmon runs and subsistence practices in coastal Alaskan communities. The project will combine participant-observation, harvest and use surveys, key respondent interviews, and mapping to better understand the impacts of unpredictable and changing weather patterns experienced by coastal Alaskan communities as they relate to subsistence salmon harvesting and processing and community food security. The project will also provide updated salmon harvest and use data for the communities of Akutan, Nanwalek, and Hoonah. The project will also document traditional and contemporary subsistence harvest and use areas and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) regarding local ecosystem changes impacting subsistence in southern coastal Alaska. Several regional priority information needs and key issues of concern are addressed that have been specifically discussed in many Regional Advisory Councils' reports to the Federal Subsistence Board for at least the past decade.

The scientific framework of the project is sound, and it displays a greater commitment to the benefits of mixed-methods research. Specifically, the project should provide for a better integration of qualitative data such as traditional ecological knowledge with quantitative harvest and use data. Still, the project would benefit from a more thorough explanation of how and why particular survey and interview numbers were chosen for each study community, and how these amounts of surveys and interviews will ensure the representativeness of the study's findings. The project has the potential to be of interest and use to public, policymakers, and scientific interests both inside and outside the realms of Alaskan subsistence. However, the project would be a stronger candidate for funding if the research communities were more directly reliant upon federal subsistence fisheries, and if the research protocol could be expanded to focus on all key subsistence fish and shellfish harvested in each proposed study community. This is particularly important considering the overall amount of funding requested for this project. The project could also make a stronger effort to forge meaningful working research partnerships with tribal organizations, rural organizations, and/or the Federal land and resource management agencies working in and around the study communities. Despite the potential of the project, it is also worth questioning the cost effectiveness of some aspects of the proposed budget.

APPENDIX 1
PROJECTS FUNDED IN THE YUKON REGION SINCE 2000

Project Number	Project Title	Investigators
00-016	Information Access of AYK Fish Data	ADF&G
00-017	Statewide Subsistence Harvest Strategy	ADF&G, AIT
01-010	Regulatory History of Alaska Salmon Regulations	ADF&G, EA
01-106	Validity and Reliability of Fisheries Harvest	ADF&G, AITC, NPS
01-107	Implementation of Statewide Fisheries Harvest Strategy	ADF&G, AITC
01-154	Project Information and Access System	ADF&G
02-043	Alaska Subsistence Fisheries Database GIS Integration	ADF&G
02-069	Shared Fishery Database	ADF&G
04-701	Develop Shared Fishery Database	ADF&G
04-751	Subsistence Harvest Database Update and Report	ADF&G
05-702	Whitefish Genetic Species Markers	USFWS
06-701	Dolly Varden Stock Composition	USFWS
08-701	Stream Temperature Monitoring	ARRI
12-700	Genetic Baseline for Inconnu from the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers	USFWS
14-701	Stream Temperature Monitoring	ARRI
16-752	Subsistence Harvest and Use Patterns of Nonsalmon by Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Coastal Communities	ADF&G
18-751	Subsistence Harvest Assessment and Stock Composition of Dolly Varden and Nonsalmon fish stocks in the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge	ADF&G

Abbreviations used: ADF&G=Alaska Department of Fish and Game, AITC=Alaska Inter-Tribal Council, ARRI=Aquatic Restoration and Research Institute, EA=Elizabeth Andrews, NPS=National Park Service, USFWS=U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Background

ANILCA established the Annual Reports as the way to bring regional subsistence uses and needs to the Secretaries' attention. The Secretaries delegated this responsibility to the Board. Section 805(c) deference includes matters brought forward in the Annual Report.

The Annual Report provides the Councils an opportunity to address the directors of each of the four Department of Interior agencies and the Department of Agriculture Forest Service in their capacity as members of the Federal Subsistence Board. The Board is required to discuss and reply to each issue in every Annual Report and to take action when within the Board's authority. In many cases, if the issue is outside of the Board's authority, the Board will provide information to the Council on how to contact personnel at the correct agency. As agency directors, the Board members have authority to implement most of the actions which would effect the changes recommended by the Councils, even those not covered in Section 805(c). The Councils are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity.

Report Content

Both Title VIII Section 805 and 50 CFR §100.11 (Subpart B of the regulations) describe what may be contained in an Annual Report from the councils to the Board. This description includes issues that are not generally addressed by the normal regulatory process:

- an identification of current and anticipated subsistence uses of fish and wildlife populations within the region;
- an evaluation of current and anticipated subsistence needs for fish and wildlife populations from the public lands within the region;
- a recommended strategy for the management of fish and wildlife populations within the region to accommodate such subsistence uses and needs related to the public lands; and
- recommendations concerning policies, standards, guidelines, and regulations to implement the strategy.

Please avoid filler or fluff language that does not specifically raise an issue of concern or information to the Board.

Report Clarity

In order for the Board to adequately respond to each Council's annual report, it is important for the annual report itself to state issues clearly.

- If addressing an existing Board policy, Councils should please state whether there is something unclear about the policy, if there is uncertainty about the reason for the policy, or if the Council needs information on how the policy is applied.
- Council members should discuss in detail at Council meetings the issues for the annual report and assist the Council Coordinator in understanding and stating the issues clearly.

- Council Coordinators and OSM staff should assist the Council members during the meeting in ensuring that the issue is stated clearly.

Thus, if the Councils can be clear about their issues of concern and ensure that the Council Coordinator is relaying them sufficiently, then the Board and OSM staff will endeavor to provide as concise and responsive of a reply as is possible.

Report Format

While no particular format is necessary for the Annual Reports, the report must clearly state the following for each item the Council wants the Board to address:

1. Numbering of the issues,
2. A description of each issue,
3. Whether the Council seeks Board action on the matter and, if so, what action the Council recommends, and
4. As much evidence or explanation as necessary to support the Council's request or statements relating to the item of interest.



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 SUBSISTENCE RESOURCE COMMISSION

The Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission (WRST SRC) provides a venue for local subsistence users to have input into the management of subsistence resources in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. Since the establishment of the Federal Subsistence Program in 1990, the nine-member commission has also been making recommendations on proposals affecting the park directly to Regional Advisory Councils and the Federal Subsistence Board.

Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) appoint three members to the SRC. These members provide an important link between the SRC and the Federal Subsistence Program. The Regional Advisory Councils that address issues in Wrangell-St. Elias include the Southcentral RAC, the Eastern Interior RAC, and the Southeast RAC. In addition to the RAC appointments, three members of the SRC are appointed by the Governor of Alaska and three members are appointed by the Secretary of the Interior.

Gloria Stickwan of Tazlina is currently the Southcentral RAC appointee to the WRST SRC. Her term on the SRC expires in November 2023.

At its October 2023 meeting, the Southcentral RAC has the opportunity to take action on its appointment to the WRST SRC. According to ANILCA Section 808(a), RAC appointees to the SRC must be a member of either the RAC or a local Fish and Game Advisory Committee (AC) within the region and also engage in subsistence uses within the park. In order to be eligible to engage in subsistence uses within the park, rural residents must make their primary permanent home in one of the park's resident zone communities, live within the park, or hold a subsistence permit issued pursuant to 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 13.440. Additional information about candidates for this appointment will be presented during the meeting.

Subsistence users who have questions about or are interested in applying for a seat on the WRST SRC should contact Barbara Cellarius at 822-7236 or barbara_cellarius@nps.gov.

Wrangell-St. Elias SRC Roster July 2023

Name	Community	Appointing Source	Expires*
Michael L. Cronk	Tok	Secretary of Interior	1/15/2024
Clint Marshall	Tazlina	Secretary of Interior	6/28/2026
Daniel E. Stevens	Chitina	Secretary of Interior	3/28/2026
Kaleb Rowland	McCarthy	Governor	12/01/2023
Suzanne McCarthy	Gakona	Governor	12/01/2024
Donald R. Horrell	Tazlina	Governor	12/01/2024
Gloria Stickwan	Tazlina	Southcentral RAC	11/04/2023
Daryl James	Yakutat	Southeast RAC	10/27/2025
Sue Entsminger	Mentasta Pass	Eastern Interior RAC	11/04/2024

* All members serve for three-year terms. According to 54 U.S. Code § 100906(c), members continue to serve until re-appointed or replaced. However, RAC appointees must be current members of a RAC or AC for their appointments to be valid.



Wrangell-St. Elias SRC meets in Copper Center, AK, October 2022.

Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
October 3-4, 2023

Bureau of Land Management, Glennallen Field Office Agency Report

Caroline Ketron, Anthropologist/Subsistence Coordinator

LeeAnn McDonald, Wildlife Biologist

I. General Updates

- Bureau of Land Management (BLM) continues to work collaboratively with Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) to monitor subsistence resource populations among BLM and State lands within Game Management Unit 13.
- The BLM Glennallen Field Office (BLM-GFO) continues to work with Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission (AITRC)'s Community Harvest System. GFO is receiving regular updates from AITRC.

Subsistence Permitting Updates

- The BLM Glennallen Field Office went back to issuing permits in-person only this year. And, as always, permittees must demonstrate Alaska residency, proof of rural residency, and an Alaska resident hunting license. We issued permits for moose and caribou from the Glennallen Field Office and travelled to Delta Junction to issue permits to qualified rural residents there from July 12-15th.

Wildlife Updates

- The BLM and ADF&G continue a multi-year cooperative agreement. The objective is to actively cooperate and monitor subsistence resource populations among BLM and State of Alaska lands within GMU13.
- The BLM initially went to bulls only for 2023 caribou in 13A and 13B, after consulting with ADF&G about the conservation concern for the Nelchina, consulting with the chairs of the Southcentral RAC and Eastern Interior RAC, and also consulting with AITRC. Determining the sex of animals to be taken in 13A and 13B for the FC1302 caribou hunt is the only delegated authority that the BLM has for this hunt at this time.
- The BLM-GFO continued to issue caribou permits since the hunt was still open, pending Wildlife Special Actions by the Federal Subsistence Board on the fall and winter portion. We told each hunter about the conservation concern and potential closures. We also added 'season may close, call before you hunt' to the back of the physical permit. And, handed out the Federal Subsistence Board media release on the emergency action to close the fall hunt, and informed hunters that action was being considered on the winter portion of the hunt too.
- Wildlife Proposal WP24-09, submitted by the BLM Glennallen Field Office, is under consideration by the RAC at this meeting and would expand the BLM's delegated authority for in-season management of the caribou hunt.

FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE MOOSE HARVEST GMU 13

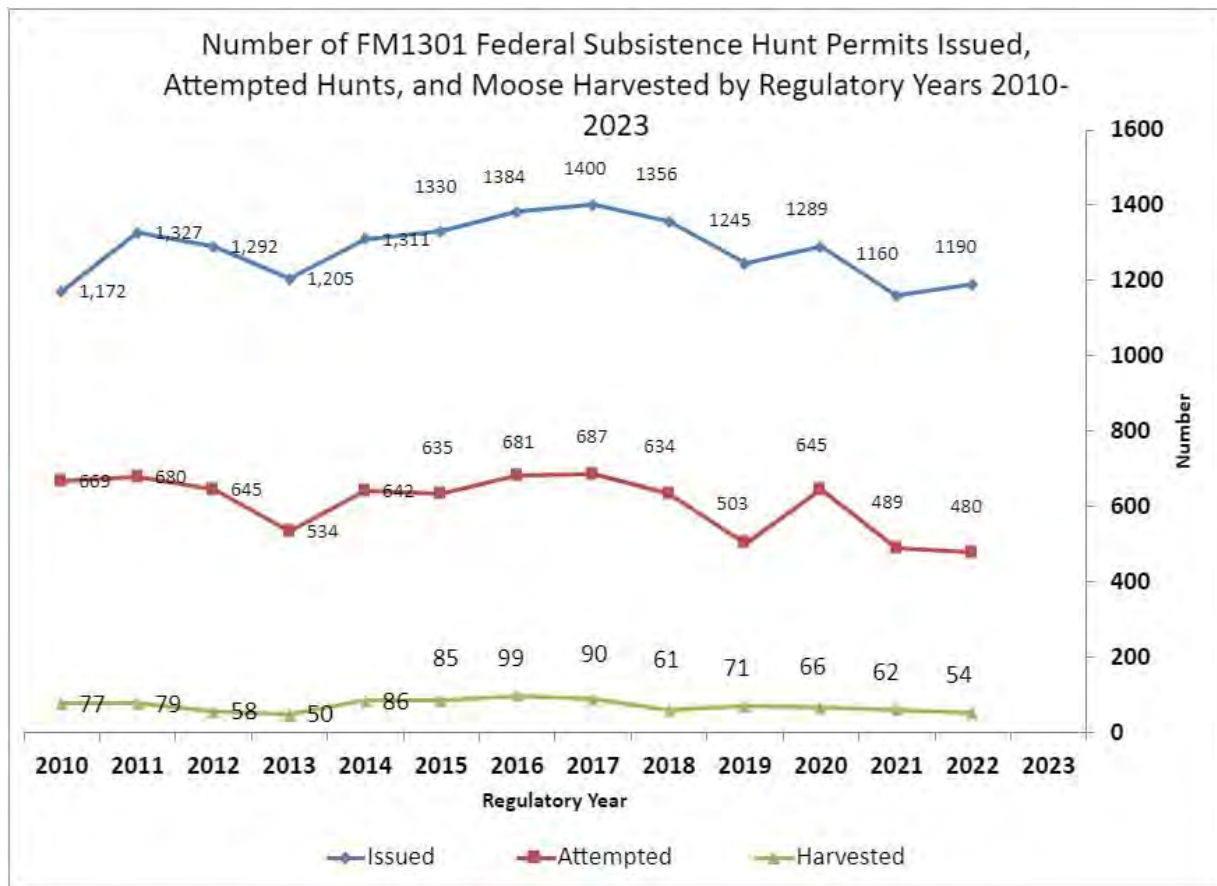
Table 1. FM1301 harvest for the 2023 moose season in GMU13

Time Frame	Permits Issued	Permits Attempted	Bulls Harvested	Hunter Success Rate
2023*				
5 Year Average**	1,290	591	69	11.9%

* Prepared August 1, 2023, updates to be given at RAC meeting.

**2018-2022

Figure 1. Federal Subsistence Moose Harvest Pattern (FM1301) from 2010 to 2023



FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE CARIBOU HARVEST GMU 13

Table 2. FC1302 caribou harvest in GMU13.

	Permits Issued*	Permits Attempted*	Bulls Harvested*	Cows Harvested*	Total Harvest*	Success Rate*
2023/24*				Bulls Only 2023		
2022/23	2,676	1,015	115	51	166	16.4%
5 Year Average**	2,813	1,097	154	78	233	20.5%

*Prepared August 1, 2023. Updates will be given at the meeting.

**2018-2022

Figure 2. Federal Subsistence Caribou Harvest Pattern (FC1302) from 2010 to 2022

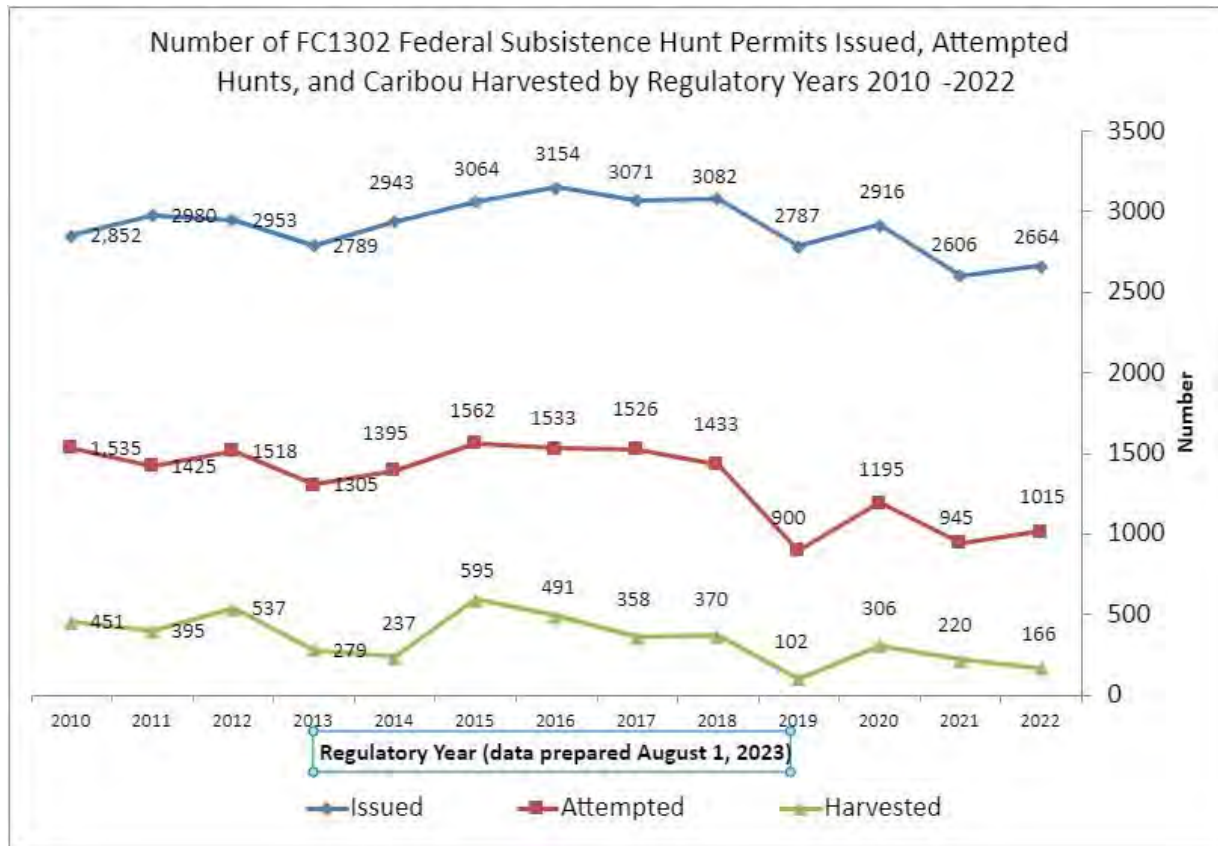


Table 3. FC1302 caribou harvest in GMUI3 2010-2023 with +/- population objective and Emergency Orders

(Federal hunt data from the Federal Subsistence database; general population estimate and E.O. history provided by AD&G personal communication 7/31/23)

Reg Year	Hunt	Permits Issued	Hunted	Total Harvest	Bull	Cow	Success %	Above/Below/Within Population Objective	State Emergency Orders
2023								Below	Closed all hunts
2022	FC1302	2,676	1,015	166	115	51	16.4	Below	Bull only; Closed hunts when quotas were met; closed all winter seasons
2021	FC1302	2,606	945	220	149	71	23.3	Within	closed hunts when quotas were met; closed all winter seasons
2020	FC1302	2,915	1,194	306	194	112	25.6	Within	EO to extend fall seasons; closed winter seasons when quotas met
2019	FC1302	2,785	898	102	81	21	11.4	Above	EO to extend fall seasons
2018	FC1302	3,082	1,433	370	235	135	25.8	Below	Bull only; Closed hunts when quotas were met
2017	FC1302	3,071	1,526	358	210	148	23.5	Above	EO to extend fall seasons
2016	FC1302	3,151	1,530	491	299	192	32.1	Above	EO to extend fall seasons; extra permit issued per household for winter season
2015	FC1302	3,061	1,560	595	448	147	38.1	Above	
2014	FC1302	2,943	1,395	237	178	59	17	no estimate	
2013	FC1302	2,781	1,303	279	211	68	21.4	Within	Bull only; Winter seasons closed by EO
2012	FC1302	2,953	1,518	537	334	203	35.4	Above	
2011	FC1302	2,980	1,425	395	282	113	27.7	Above	Winter seasons closed early by EO
2010	FC1302	2,852	1,535	451	322	129	29.4	Above	Winter season closed early by EO



Current Division of Subsistence Research in the Southcentral Region

Copper Basin Community Harvest Assessment (September 2022 – December 2025)

**National Park Service; Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission*

Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission (AITRC), Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, and the Division of Subsistence are collaborating to update subsistence harvest and use information for three Copper River Basin communities. The team conducted comprehensive household harvest surveys, mapping, and key respondent interviews in Mentasta and Chistochina in winter of 2023, and will conduct surveys for Slana/Nabesna Road in winter 2024. Community data reviews for Mentasta and Chistochina, and a community scoping meeting for Slana/Nabesna, will take place in fall of 2023.



Photo: Project team member from the ADF&G Division of Subsistence, Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, National Park Service, and Bureau of Land Management in Mentasta Lake, March 2023.

Port Graham Subsistence Harvest Assessment (October 2022 – December 2025)

**Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council; Port Graham Corporation; Paluwik Heritage Foundation*

The Division of Subsistence responded to a request from the Paluwik Heritage Foundation and Port Graham Corporation to assist with updating comprehensive subsistence harvest information in Port Graham. A community scoping meeting will take place in fall of 2023. Harvest surveys, key respondent interviews, and mapping of key search and harvest areas will take place in the winter of 2024. The Division is looking to hire Local Research Assistants to aid with the survey effort! More information will be available at the fall community scoping meeting.

Port Graham Moose (July 2023 – December 2024)

**Tribal Wildlife Grant; Chugach Regional Resources Commission*

The Port Graham Village Council has directed the Chugach Regional Resources Commission (CRRC) to help protect traditional ways of life through ensuring future opportunities to harvest and use moose. Port Graham and CRRC will assess moose populations and changes in habitat, and document traditional knowledge about moose. The Division of Subsistence will produce summaries of existing moose harvest and use data by residents of Port Graham, and conduct additional ethnographic data collection to document traditional knowledge from hunters about moose and habitat in the Port Graham area.

For more information or concerns about subsistence:

1. Contact Jackie Keating, Southcentral Subsistence Resource Specialist 3: (907) 267-2368, jacqueline.keating@alaska.gov
2. Visit the Community Subsistence Information System: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sb/CSIS/>
3. Download Subsistence Publications: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/publications/>

Winter 2024 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

Last updated 5/2/2023

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

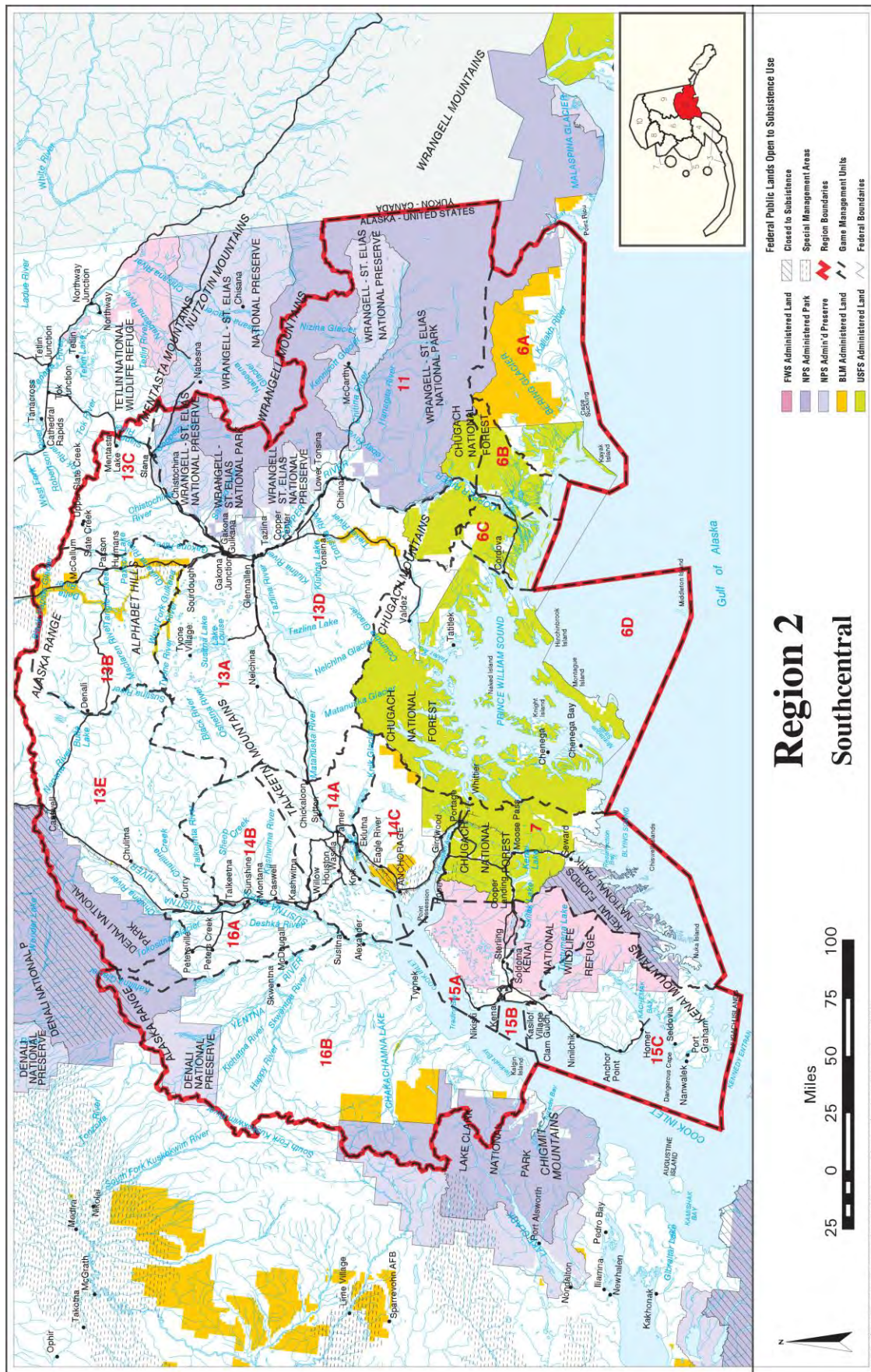
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<i>Mar. 1</i>	<i>Mar. 2</i>
<i>Mar. 3</i>	<i>Mar. 4 Window Opens</i>	<i>Mar. 5</i>	<i>Mar. 6</i>	<i>Mar. 7</i>	<i>Mar. 8</i>	<i>Mar. 9</i>
All Regions Meeting (Anchorage)						
<i>Mar. 10</i>	<i>Mar. 11</i>	<i>Mar. 12</i>	<i>Mar. 13</i>	<i>Mar. 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</i>	<i>Mar. 26</i>	<i>Mar. 27</i>	<i>Mar. 28</i>	<i>Mar. 29 Window Closes</i>	<i>Mar. 30</i>

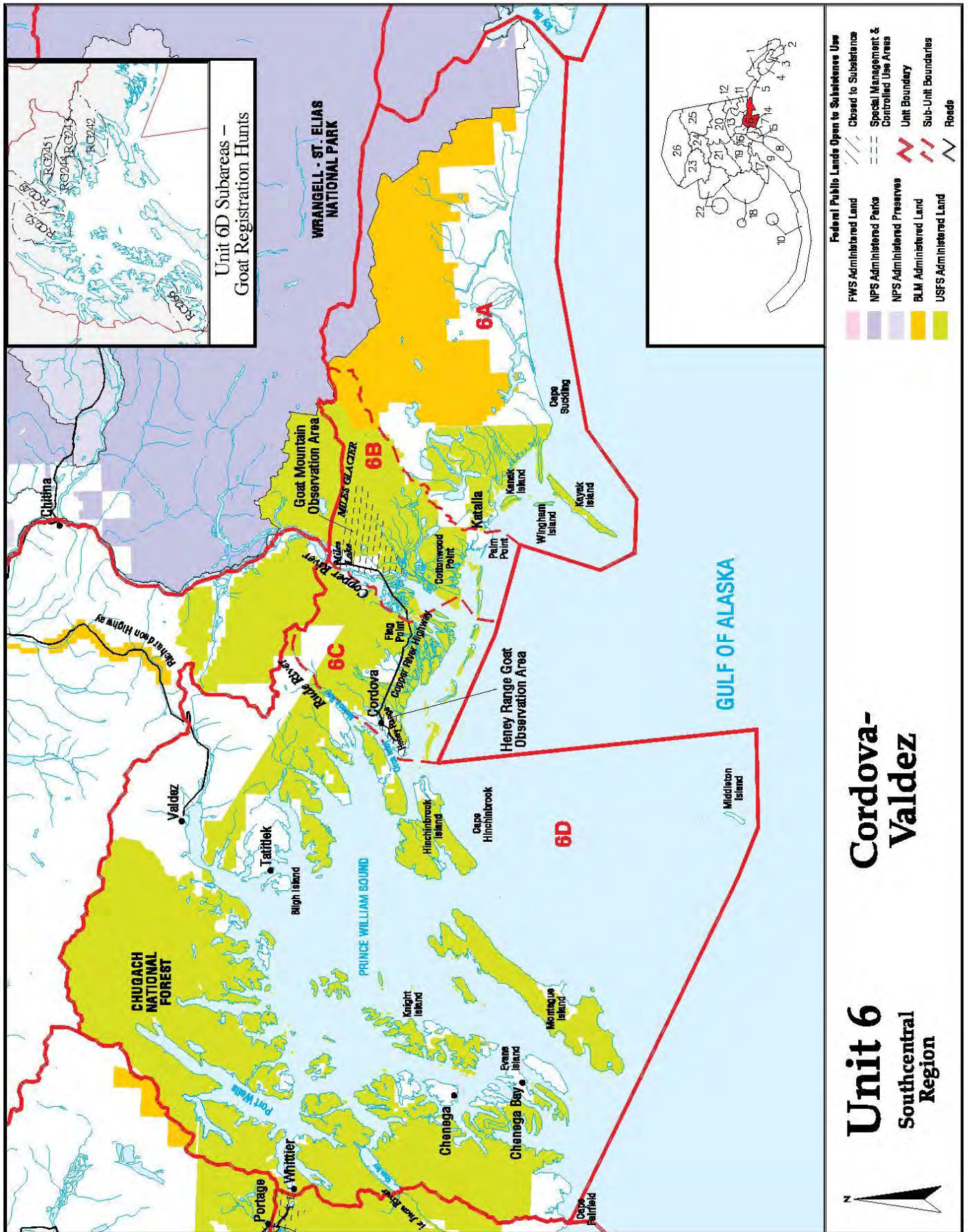
Fall 2024 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

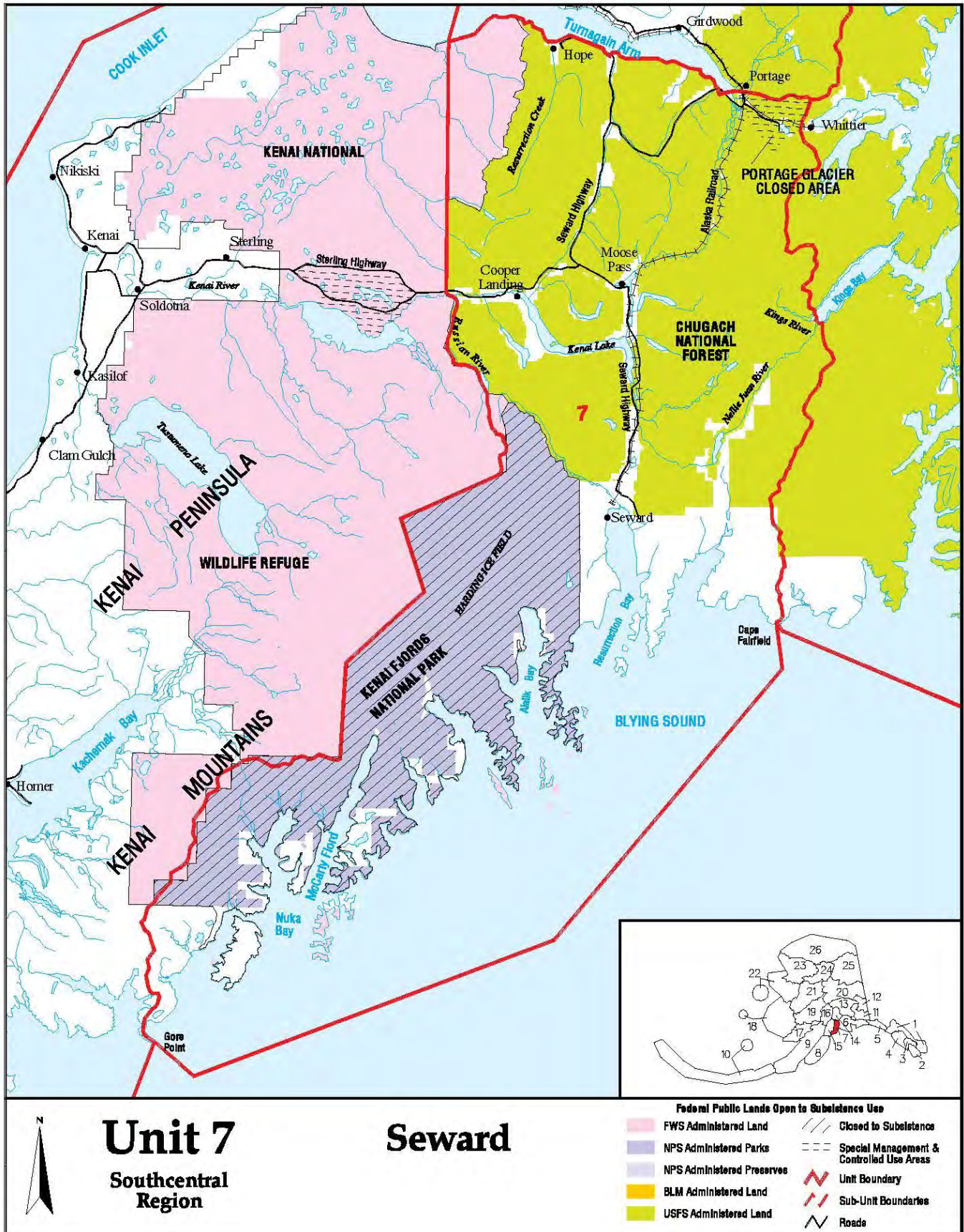
Last updated 3/3/2023

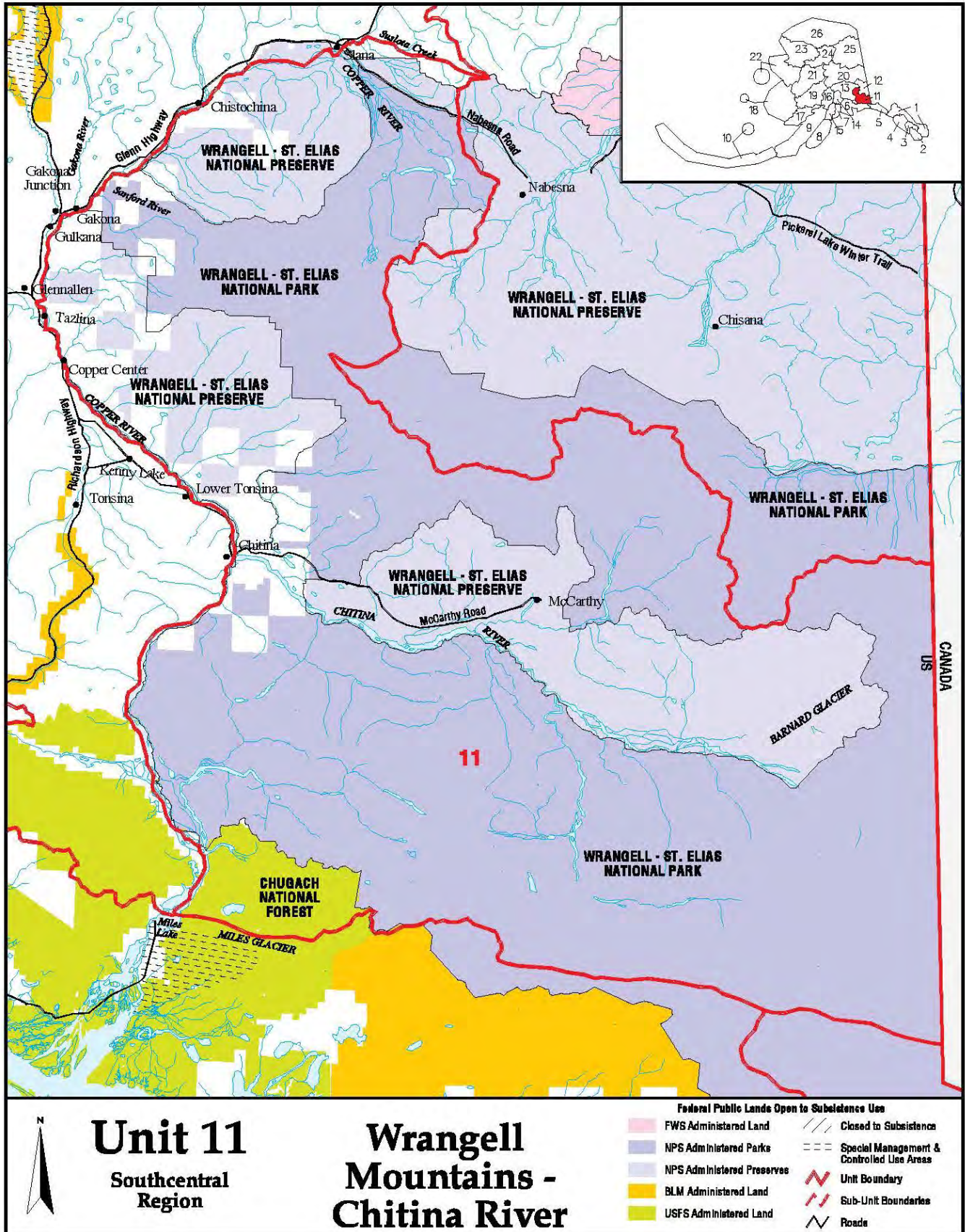
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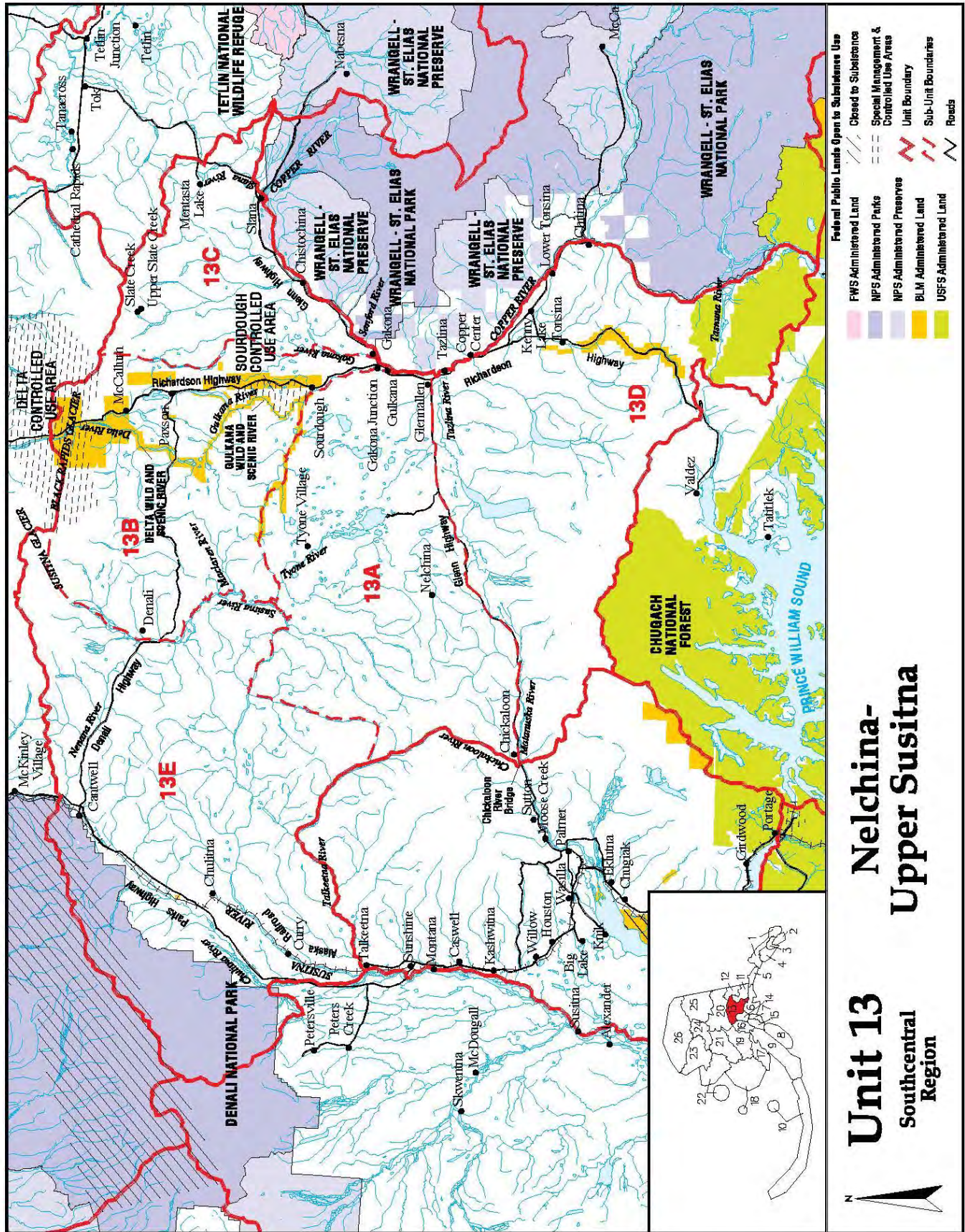
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Aug. 18	Aug. 19 Window Opens	Aug. 20	Aug. 21	Aug. 22	Aug. 23	Aug. 24
	NSRAC (Utqiagvik)					
Aug. 25	Aug. 26	Aug. 27	Aug. 28	Aug. 29	Aug. 30	Aug. 31
Sep. 1	Sep. 2 Labor Day Holiday	Sep. 3	Sep. 4	Sep. 5	Sep. 6	Sep. 7
		KARAC (Unalaska)				
Sep. 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	Oct. 3	Oct. 4	Oct. 5
		WIRAC (Aniak)				
Oct. 6	Oct. 7	Oct. 8	Oct. 9	Oct. 10	Oct. 11	Oct. 12
		EIRAC (Tanana)		SCRAC (Anchorage)		
Oct. 13	Oct. 14 Columbus Day Holiday	Oct. 15	Oct. 16	Oct. 17	Oct. 18	Oct. 19
		YKDRAC (Bethel)				
Oct. 20	Oct. 21	Oct. 22	Oct. 23	Oct. 24	Oct. 25	Oct. 26
		SEARAC (Ketchikan)			SPRAC (Nome)	
Oct. 27	Oct. 28	Oct. 29	Oct. 30	Oct. 31	Nov. 1 Window Closes	Nov. 2
		BBRAC (Dillingham)				
	NWARAC (Kotzebue)					

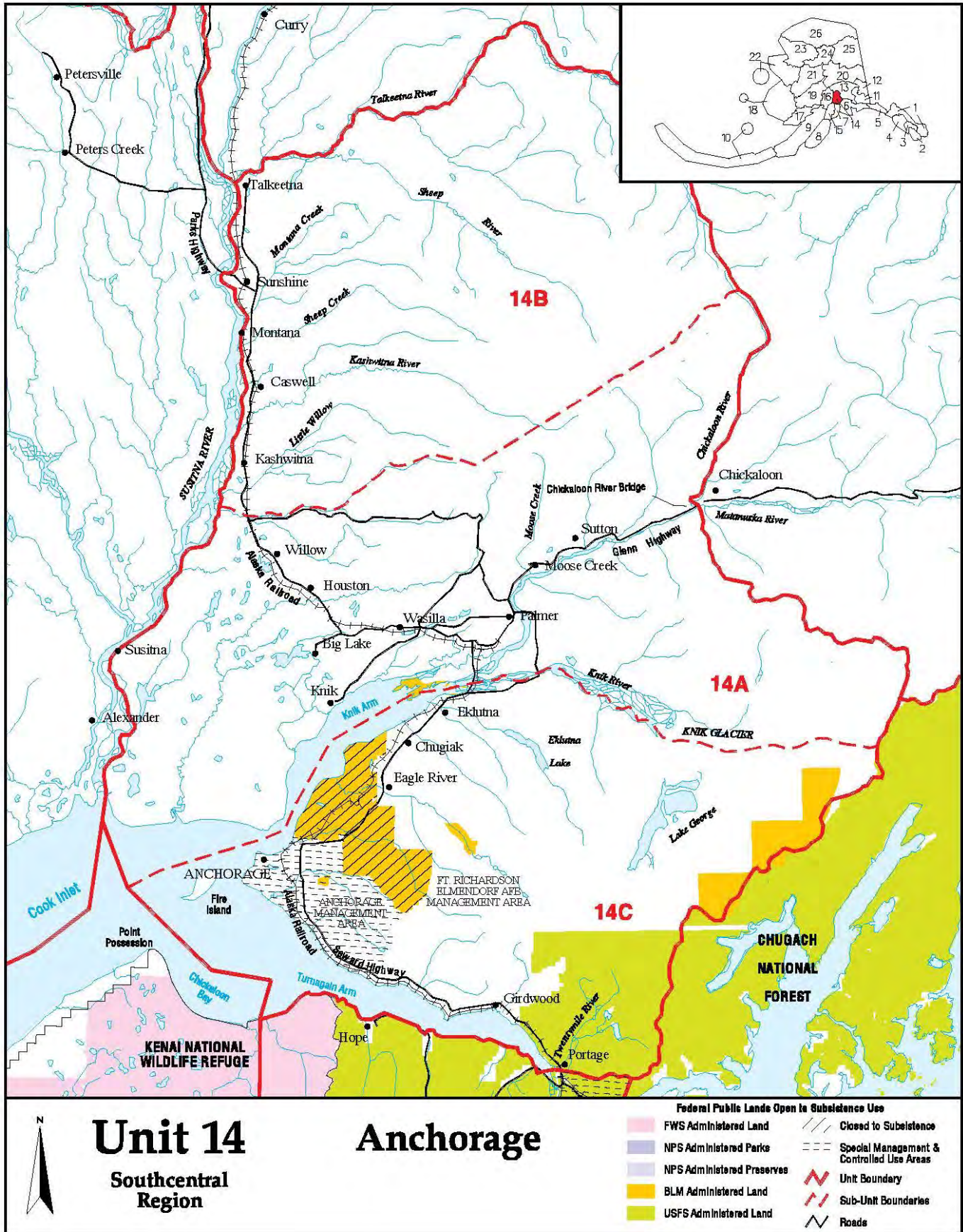


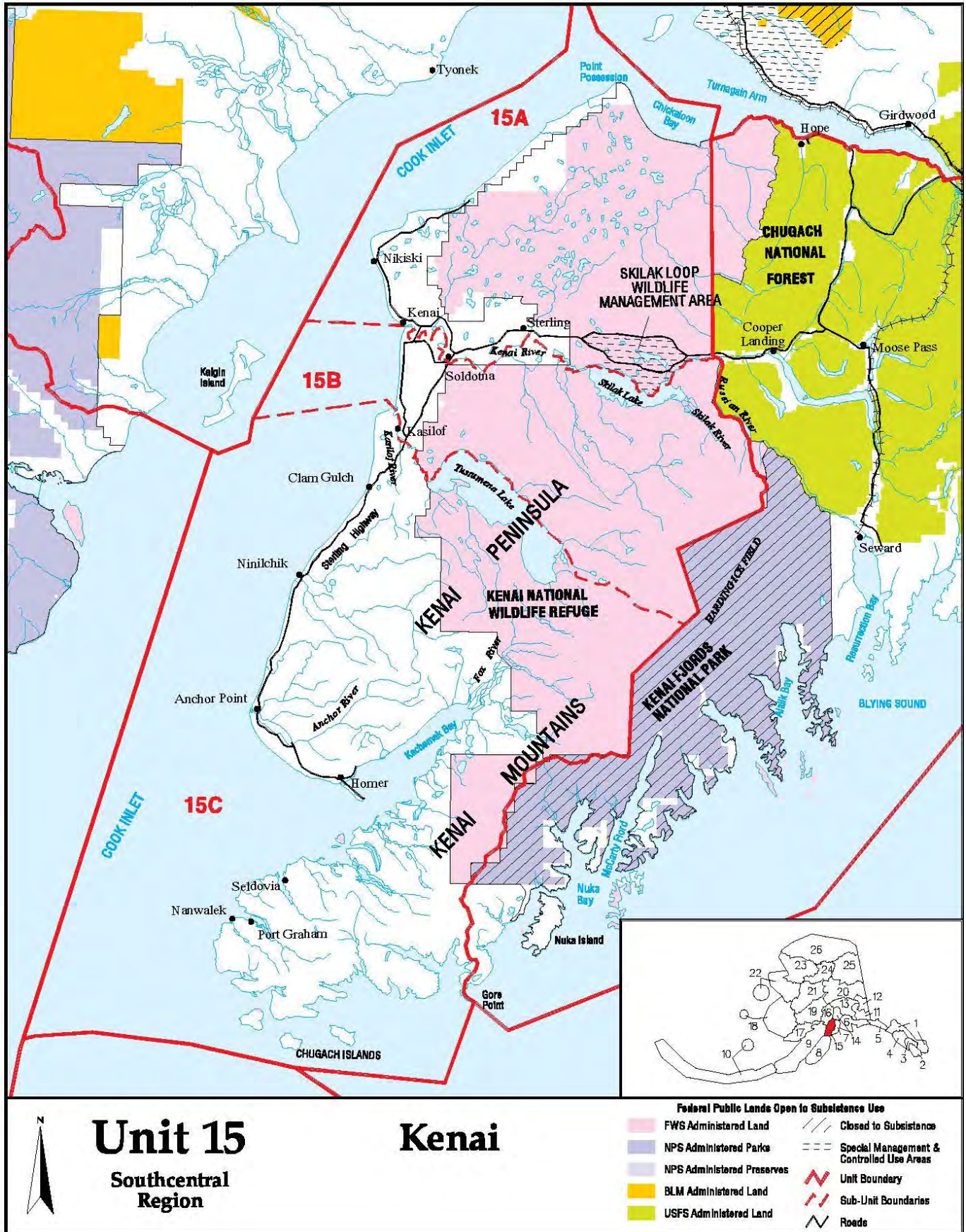


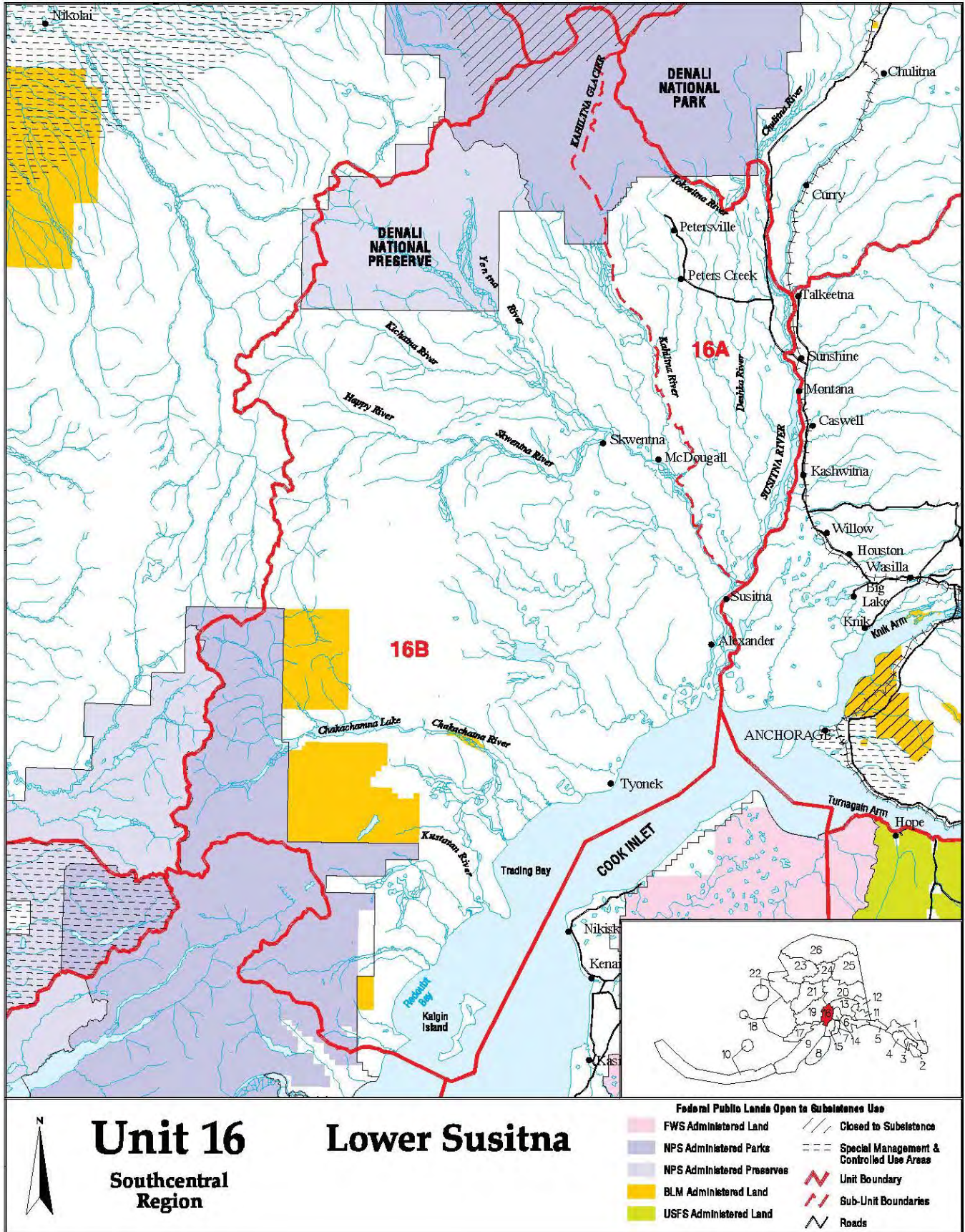






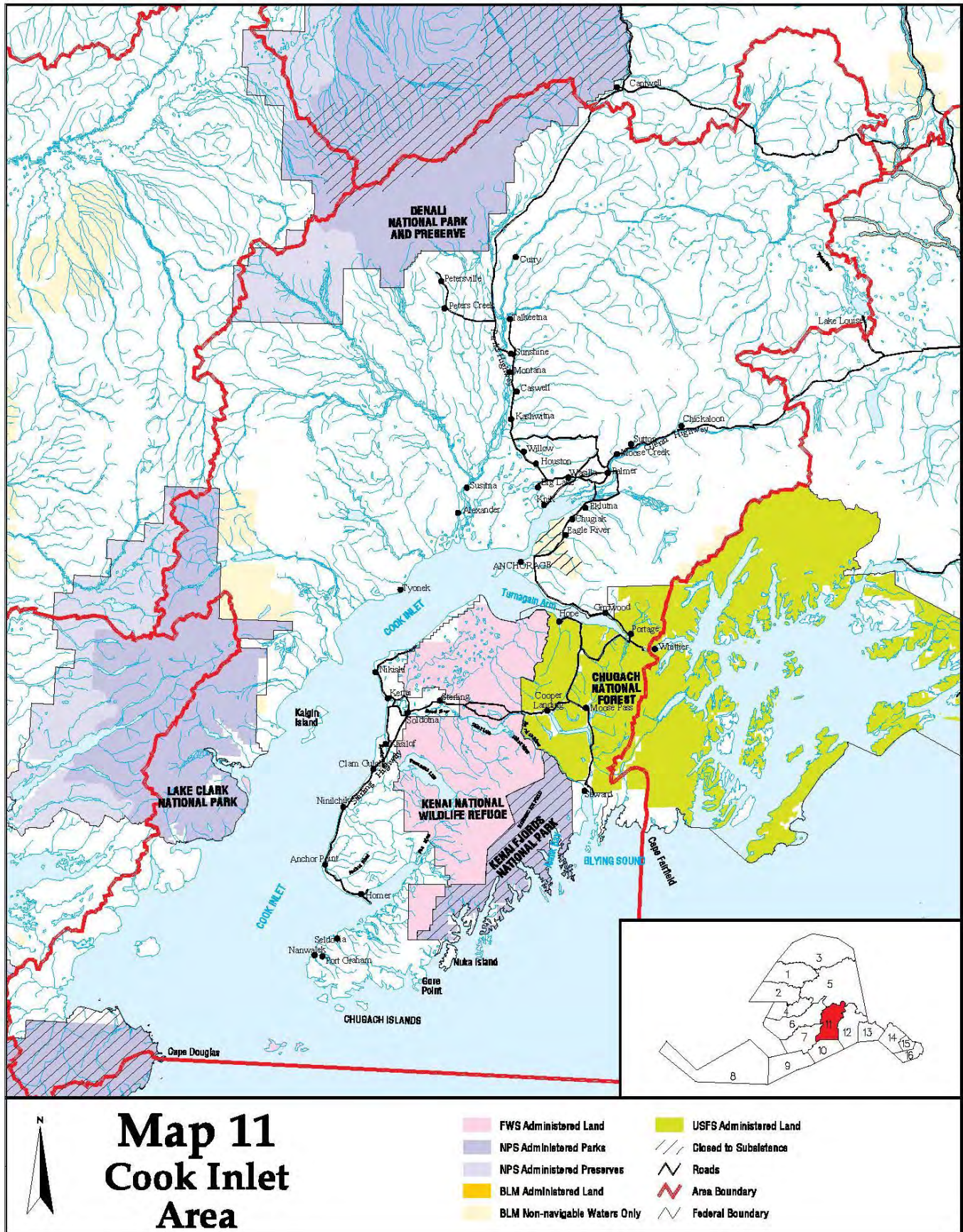


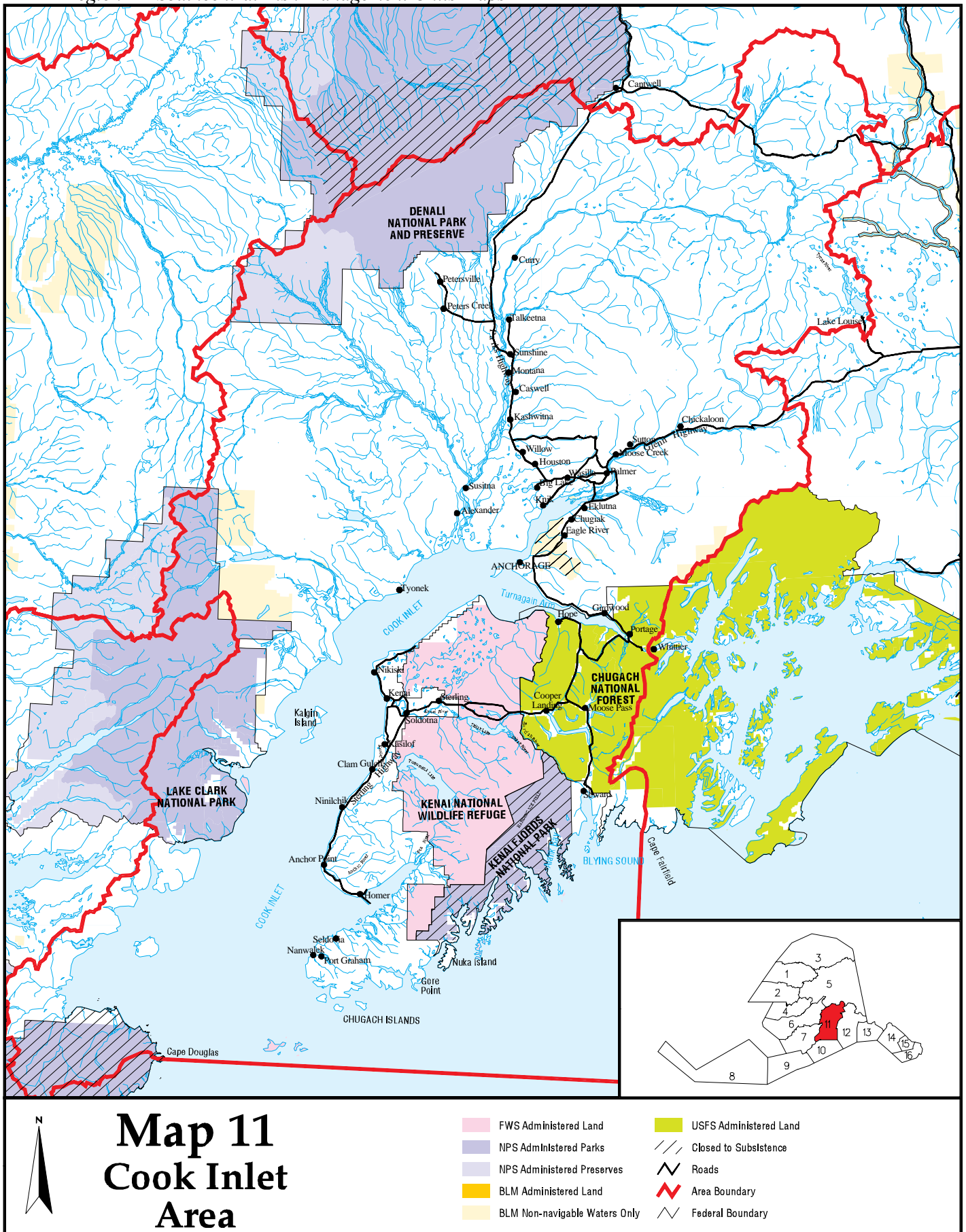


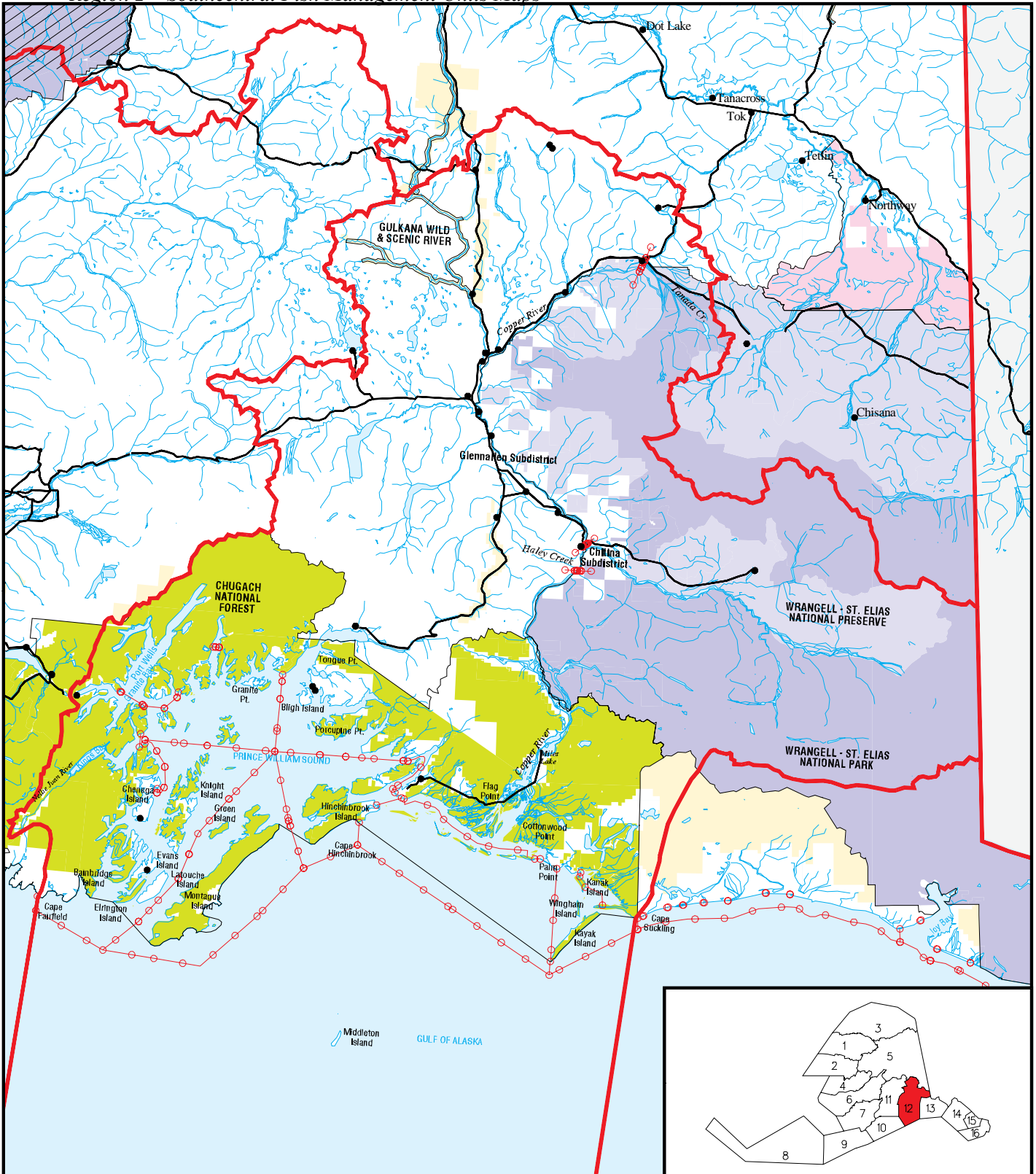


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Map 12
Prince William
Sound Area

- FWS Administered Land
 - NPS Administered Parks
 - NPS Administered Preserves
 - BLM Administered Land
 - BLM Non-navigable Waters Only
- USFS Administered Land
 - Closed to Subsistence
 - Roads
 - Area Boundary
 - Federal Boundary
 - Fishing Districts

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

Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Charter

1. **Committee's Official Designation.** The Council's official designation is the Southcentral 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)) Title VIII, 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 evaluate 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; and
 - (4) Recommendations concerning policies, standards, guidelines, and regulations to implement the strategy.
 - e. Appoint one member to the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission and two members to the Denali National Park Subsistence Resource Commission in accordance with section 808 of the ANILCA.
 - f. Make recommendations on determinations of customary and traditional use of subsistence resources.
 - g. Make recommendations on determinations of rural status.
 - h. Provide recommendations on the establishment and membership of Federal local advisory committees.
- 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 \$170,000, 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 provisions of section 14 of the FACA. The Council will not meet or take any action without a valid current charter.

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

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

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

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

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

If appointments for a given year have not yet been announced, a member may continue to serve on the Council following the expiration of his or her term until such appointments have been made. Unless reappointed, the member's service ends on the date of announcement even if that member's specific seat remains unfilled.

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 DFO’s approval, subcommittees may be formed for the purpose of compiling information or 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.** The 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).

 /signature of the filed original/
Secretary of the Interior

 Dec. 10, 2021
Date Signed

 Dec. 13, 2021
Date Filed



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