

REVIEW OF THE 2018 FISHERIES RESOURCE MONITORING PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

Section 812 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) directs the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture, cooperating with other Federal agencies, the State of Alaska, and Alaska Native and other rural organizations, to research fish and wildlife subsistence uses on Federal public lands; and to seek data from, consult with, and make use of the knowledge of local residents engaged in subsistence. When the Federal government assumed responsibility for management of subsistence fisheries on Federal public lands and waters in Alaska in 1999, the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture made a commitment to increase the quantity and quality of information available to manage subsistence fisheries, to increase quality and quantity of meaningful involvement by Alaska Native and other rural organizations, and to increase collaboration among Federal, State, Alaska Native, and rural organizations (Fox et al. 1999:14 and 16, Kruger et al. 1999:6 and 39, FWS 2000, Norris 2002:259). 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.

The mission of the Monitoring Program is to identify and provide information needed to sustain subsistence fisheries on Federal public lands, for rural Alaskans, through a multidisciplinary, collaborative program (Southcentral Region Planning Workgroup 2005).

At its work session on February 22, 2018, the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) requested the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) conduct an after action review of the 2018 Monitoring Program funding cycle (FSB 2018). Board members' questions about the 2018 Monitoring Program funding cycle have been organized under the following four topics (per meeting transcripts):

1. Should geographic distribution of funding guidelines be modified or eliminated?
2. Should one or more evaluation criteria be weighted more than others?
3. Who can evaluate funding proposals and access proposal scores?
4. What is the role of Regional Advisory Councils in the award selection process?

On July 20, 2018, the Monitoring Program's Technical Review Committee (TRC) met for its biennial review of the funding program. During the review, the TRC discussed the Board's concerns and developed recommendations for the 2020 funding cycle, which will be initiated in November 2018.

This report contains the results of the TRC's biennial review, with a specific focus on addressing the Board's concerns.

This report provides a short background to the Monitoring Program, describes revisions to the proposal evaluation process that were implemented in 2016 and 2018, addresses each of the four topical questions posed by the Board and the TRCs recommendations, and other topics.

BACKGROUND

The Monitoring Program is administered by OSM. Biennially, OSM announces a funding opportunity for project proposals addressing subsistence fisheries on Federal public lands. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) provides directions to applicants on how to submit proposals, proposal topics that are sought, and descriptions of the five criteria upon which proposal evaluations are based. The 2018 NOFO is included in **Appendix A**.

Proposal's that are submitted for funding consideration are evaluated by the TRC. The TRC is a key component in the Monitoring Program's organizational structure. In addition, the TRC, was founded to provide technical oversight and strategic direction to the Monitoring Program (Fox et al. 1999:12, Kruger et al. 1999:31). It is a standing interagency and interdisciplinary committee of senior technical experts that is foundational to the credibility and scientific integrity of the evaluation process for projects funded through the Monitoring Program. The TRC is empowered to review and evaluate project proposals and make recommendations for project selection consistent with the mission of the Monitoring Program. A list of TRC members, their titles, and their professional affiliations is included in **Appendix B**.

The TRC is composed of representatives from Federal and State agencies. Members are selected on the basis of their education, training, and experience with field investigations in fisheries stock status and trends assessment, subsistence harvest monitoring, sociocultural research, traditional ecological knowledge, and other subsistence-related topics, as well as their understanding of fisheries management issues. Agencies nominate candidates to serve on the TRC. The TRC consists of representatives from the following agencies/programs:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Land Management
- National Park Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- ADF&G Commercial Fisheries Division
- ADF&G Sport Fisheries Division
- ADF&G Subsistence Division
- OSM Fisheries Division
- OSM Anthropology Division

The Monitoring Program's project selection process is guided by policy and funding guidelines. These are listed in the Monitoring Plan and the NOFO for each funding cycle, and consist of the following elements:

- Projects of up to four years duration may be considered.
- Projects will be funded for a maximum \$215,000 per year.
- Projects must not duplicate existing projects.
- A majority of Monitoring Program funding will be dedicated to non-Federal agencies.
- Long-term projects will be considered on a case by case basis.

- All projects must have a direct linkage to a subsistence fishery within a Federal conservation unit.
- 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; and
 - 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 Monitoring Program is administered through regions, which were developed to match subsistence management regulations as well as stock, harvest, and community issues common to a geographic area (Kruger et al. 1999:26). There are six Monitoring Program regions (**Figure 1**).

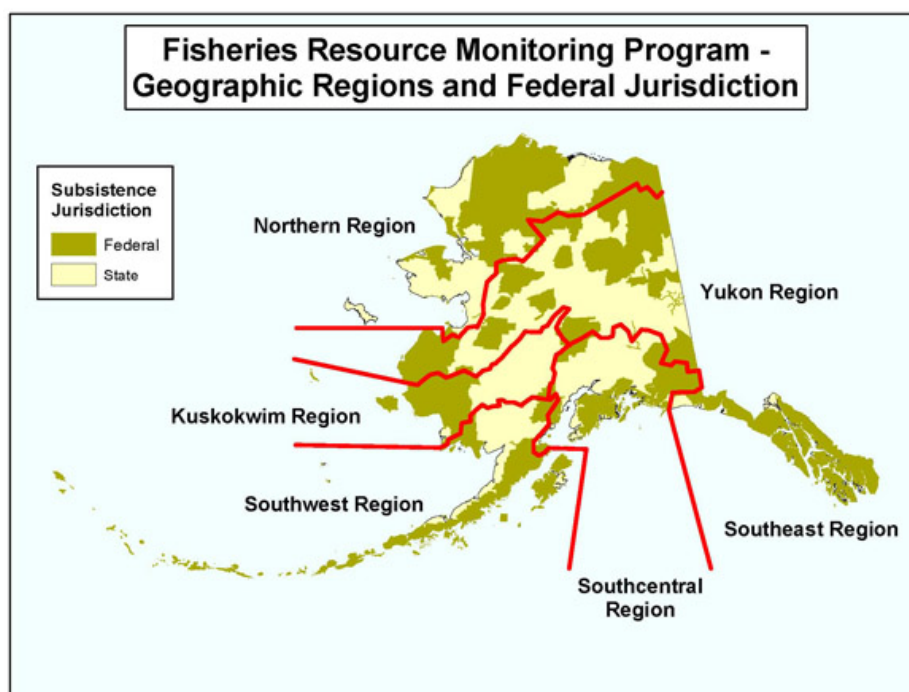


Figure 1. Monitoring Program geographic regions.

The project selection process is guided by geographic funding guidelines (**Table 1**), which were designed to ensure that funding is distributed to address fisheries issues statewide.

Three broad categories of information are solicited by the Monitoring Program (Kruger et al. 1999:14–18). These are (1) harvest monitoring, (2) traditional ecological knowledge, and (3) stock status and trends.

The TRC evaluates project proposals using five, equally weighted criteria: (1) strategic priority, (2) technical and scientific merit, (3) investigator ability and resources, (4) partnership-capacity building, and (5) cost/benefit.

Table 1. Monitoring Program geographic funding guidelines (Southcentral Regional Planning Workgroup 2005).

Region	Department of the Interior guidelines	Department of Agriculture guidelines
Northern	17%	
Yukon River	29%	
Kuskokwim River	29%	
Southwest	15%	
Southcentral	5%	32.5%
Southeast		62.5%
Multi-regional	5%	5%

PROCESS MODIFICATIONS IN 2016 AND 2018

In 2015, the Office of Subsistence Management began a review of the Monitoring Program funding process to ensure that, after 15 years, it remained of high quality. In addition, the Monitoring Program has experienced budget declines, which has led to increased competition for funding. Therefore, OSM staff recommended and implemented (with concurrence from the Board) revisions to the proposal evaluation process (FSB 2016:3–44). The overall aim of these revisions was to focus funding on projects with the best chance for success. Proposal evaluation process changes were implemented beginning with the 2016 funding cycle and were intended to ensure the following:

- Proposal review process is objective and transparent as possible. Applicants should know exactly how their projects are going to be evaluated and have trust in the process.
- Programmatic decisions are applied consistently. This increases credibility and trust.
- Best projects are funded. The best projects are those that meet the highest benchmarks of the criteria outlined in the notice of funding opportunity.
- Guidance is provided to potential research and monitoring partners through increased outreach activities, such as communications, advanced notifications, and trainings.

The most significant modification in 2016 concerns how projects are scored and ranked by the TRC. Prior to 2016, TRC members ranked proposals as high, medium, or low in each criterion and then made an assessment whether or not a project should be funded or not funded. As competition increased with declining budgets, it became evident that this approach could be open to individual subjectivity. To increase consistency and objectivity in the proposal evaluation process, each of the five equally weighted criteria (strategic priority, technical and scientific merit, investigator ability and resources, partnership-capacity building, and cost/benefit) are now assessed by applying a numeric scoring system. Another significant modification was that each agency represented on the TRC provides only a single score for each project proposal. In addition, agencies cannot score proposals in which their agency staff are involved, although they are free to answer questions raised about the project proposals. A proposal's final score determines its overall ranking. The TRC is the only entity that scores proposals, as only the TRC is authorized to review complete proposal packages due to confidentiality requirements in the competitive

proposal process (DOI 2008:10, 2014b). The TRC receives instructions on the evaluation process prior to the start of each round of evaluations.

For the 2018 funding cycle, the approach to scoring the cost/benefit criterion was modified from being based solely on each proposal's average annual funding request to also consider how well costs are justified in relation to anticipated outputs.

2018 MONITORING PROGRAM REVIEW

On July 20, 2018, the TRC met for its biennial review of the Monitoring Program and to address concerns raised by the Board. Each Board concern is described below, followed by the TRC's recommended modifications to the proposal evaluation process in preparation for the 2020 funding cycle.

Question 1: Should geographic distribution of funding guidelines be modified or eliminated?

Board Member Owen asked if geographic funding guidelines should be eliminated and funding applied to statewide priorities instead (FSB 2018:2–29). Chairman Christianson asked whether, as a consequence of eliminating geographic funding guidelines, most funding would go to one area of the state (2018:30). Board Member Brower observed that salmon seem to be a major priority in the funding process. He was concerned that although Broad Whitefish, Grayling, Cisco, and Dolly Varden are more important than salmon to subsistence users in some areas of the state, project proposals for nonsalmon fish species may not be selected for funding if guidelines are not in place (2018:31). Board Member Frost suggested that geographic funding guidelines be reviewed for possible modification (2018:32). (Transcripts of the Board meeting are included in **Appendix C**.)

Relevant Background

The Monitoring Program's approach to geographic regions and funding is fully described in one of the founding documents, "Federal Subsistence Fisheries Management: Operational Strategy for Information Management" (Kruger et al. 1999). The document was authored by a Board subcommittee, and recommended six geographic regions organized to encompass Federal fisheries management areas that generally correspond to stock, harvest, and community issues held in common. The subcommittee developed six criteria to help establish information priorities both geographically among regions as well as for specific projects within a regions, and to guide statewide allocation of funds (Kruger et al. 1999:7–8):

1. level of risk to species,
2. level of threat to conservation units,
3. amount of unmet subsistence needs,
4. amount of information available to support subsistence management,
5. importance of a species to subsistence harvest, and
6. level of user concerns with subsistence harvest.

There was agreement amongst subcommittee members on regional funding guidelines. According to the subcommittee, proposed regional allocation guidelines represented various tradeoffs or interactions

among these criteria. The high percentage of funding dedicated to projects in the Yukon and Kuskokwim regions was due to widespread declines of salmon stocks in these regions, the failure to meet subsistence needs, the number of villages affected, and high levels of user concern. However, the subcommittee envisioned a “balanced program that addresses statewide needs not just those of the Yukon and Kuskokwim regions” (1999:35). This has remained a foundational aspect of the Monitoring Program in recognition of the varied subsistence resources and critical subsistence needs of rural residents throughout the state.

TRC Review of the 2018 Monitoring Program Funding Cycle

Following TRC scoring of proposals, each proposal was listed in ranked order within individual regions (plus a multi-regional category). First, proposals from the same region were listed in ranked order. Selection for funding was based on first year costs per project up to the funding guideline target. This exercise was conducted for all seven regions. Remaining funds were distributed to the next highest ranking proposals statewide.

TRC Recommendations for 2020 cycle

The TRC affirms that the current regional funding guidelines are appropriate and does not recommend any additional modifications for the 2020 funding cycle.

Question 2: Should one or more evaluation criteria be weighted more than others?

Board members noted that several proposals had tied scores. Board Member Siekaniec suggested achieving additional separation between proposals by reconsidering how evaluation criteria are weighted (FSB 2018:15). For example, Board Member Frost suggested that the Strategic Priority criterion having a higher weight than the Partnership-Capacity Building criterion may be appropriate (2018:20). Board Member Pitka said that the partnership component of the Monitoring Program needs emphasis (2018:32).

Relevant Background

Since the inception of the Monitoring Program in 2000, criteria used to evaluate funding proposals have been weighted equally. However, all projects must have a direct linkage to a subsistence fishery within a Federal conservation unit under the Strategic Priority criterion to be eligible for funding. These organizational approaches are fully described in the founding documents mentioned above (Kruger et al. 1999). The subcommittee developed the following 11 key attributes that the Monitoring Program should reflect (Kruger et al. 1999:22):

1. be complimentary to existing information gathering activities and not duplicative,
2. be cost effective,
3. be scientifically sound and statistically correct in providing information,
4. provide an information base that is easily and freely accessible to all in a timely manner for analysis and interpretation while maintaining quality,
5. provide for technical analysis of data that is independent of, and prior to, policy interpretation,
6. be balanced in consideration of biological and sociocultural informational types,

7. be interactive with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game,
8. seek opportunities for rural resident involvement in information gathering through local hires and cooperative agreements,
9. have the flexibility to use a variety of sources to gain information and to expand and contract based on program needs,
10. use a blend of field and centralized functions as required to accomplish above principles, and
11. provide for each agency's information needs and be accountable to those Federal agencies responsible for subsistence fisheries management.

To encompass and balance these key attributes, OSM developed four proposal evaluation criteria: (1) strategic priorities, (2) technical-scientific merit, (3) investigator ability and resources, and (4) partnership-capacity building. A fifth criterion, cost/benefit, was added in 2016 to make applicants aware that the TRC performs a “best value analysis” as part of its scoring process. Attribute No. 6 “balancing biological and sociocultural information types and attributes” and attribute No. 8 “seeking opportunities for rural resident involvement in information gathering through local hires and cooperative agreements” are goals of the Monitoring Program and are captured in Criterion 4: partnership-capacity building. Partnerships with other groups are a foundational feature of the Monitoring Program. However, the TRC understands that these partnerships should not occur at the expense of a scientifically sound program focused on important information needs. All of these features are believed to be integral to the success of the program and therefore have been equally weighted.

TRC Review of the 2018 Monitoring Program Funding Cycle

The TRC recognized that tied scores can complicate the funding process. For the 2018 funding cycle, proposals in the same region that were tied with one another were ranked based on average annual cost, with lower cost proposals ranked ahead of other proposals in the tie. However, in the final funding selection process, strong consideration also was given to Regional Advisory Council (Council) comments that addressed the comparative value of tied proposals to their respective Monitoring Program region.

TRC Recommendations for 2020 Cycle

To address Board concerns about the number of proposals in 2018 that resulted in tied scores, the TRC recommended changing from scoring in five point increments (i.e., 0, 5, 10, 15, or 20) to single point increments beginning in the 2020 funding cycle. The TRC believes that this change will reduce or eliminate occurrences of tied scores. It does not recommend any further changes for the upcoming funding cycle.

Question 3: Who can evaluate funding proposals and access proposal scores?

Board members discussed the appropriate level of “transparency” in the funding process relating to who can evaluate funding proposals and who can access proposal scores. Board Member Siekaniec suggested that expanding the Interagency Staff Committee’s (ISC’s) role to reviewing scores given to project proposals by the TRC may add objectivity to the funding process (FSB 2018:27). He also suggested adding Federal in-season fishery managers and their perspectives to the TRC may improve the funding process.

Relevant Background

Federal agencies nominate candidates to serve on the TRC who they determine to be the best fit for their agencies' needs. Project proposals remain confidential and are only available to the TRC and OSM staff (Fisheries and Anthropology division employees) with signed Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Certifications on file (DOI 2014a). Financial Assistance rules and regulations allow only the TRC to score proposals in accordance with the evaluation criteria identified in the funding announcement (DOI 2008:10, 2014b). Councils, the ISC, and the Board cannot participate in technical review and evaluation of proposals. They may only provide comments. A Monitoring Plan is published each cycle that includes only information about proposals that is not confidential or propriety for review and comment by Councils, the ISC, and the Board. A proposal's overall score can be shared with advisory groups, but the Office of Contracting and General Services advises not to do this to avoid any possible conflict or undue influence on the scoring or ranking process (Primmer 2018, pers. comm.). Also, only TRC members and OSM staff with signed Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Certifications on file may have access to the numerical scores of individual criteria resulting from the TRC evaluation (Primmer 2018, pers. comm.).

TRC Review of the 2018 Monitoring Program Funding Cycle

For the 2018 funding cycle, the Monitoring Program followed Office of Contracting and General Services regulations and guidance as described above.

TRC Recommendations for 2020 Cycle

The TRC concluded the current proposal evaluation process is appropriate and made no recommendations for modifications for the 2020 funding cycle.

Question 4: What is the role of Regional Advisory Councils in the award selection process?

Regional Advisory Councils' role in the funding process is not clear to Board members. For example, Board Member Siekaniec asked why the 2018 Monitoring Plan didn't reflect Councils' recommendations for ranking project proposals, and shouldn't deference be provided Councils in the funding process (FSB 2018:14). Board Member Mouritsen also asked how Council comments are addressed in the funding process (2018:25).

Relevant Background

The Board gives deference to Councils' recommendations only on issues concerning the take of fish and wildlife.¹ Councils are not provided deference on funding issues and are discouraged from prioritizing or ranking proposals because that is the role of the TRC. All individuals who participate in the scoring process sign Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Certifications. This is a requirement of cooperative agreement and contracting rules (DOI 2014a). Council members review information in proposal packages that is not considered confidential or propriety, and which is provided in a Monitoring Plan each funding cycle.

¹ The Solicitor affirmed this at the February 22, 2018, Federal Subsistence Board work session (FSB 2018:14).

In the past, Councils were asked to prioritize project proposals approved for funding by the TRC. Beginning with the 2016 funding cycle, the TRC scores project proposals based solely on evaluation of the five criteria. Councils are not asked to prioritize or rank proposals, because they do not have access to complete proposal packages (see above). However, Councils (and the ISC) are asked to provide comments about proposals and how they align with priority information needs for the region based on information from project summaries and TRC justifications.

Comments provided by Councils and the ISC are considered in the award selection process. When there is a tie between proposals, the Assistant Regional Director for OSM considers comments when making final funding decisions.

TRC Review of the 2018 Monitoring Program Funding Cycle

Beginning with the 2016 funding cycle, Councils have the primary role in developing Priority Information Needs for their regions. These Priority Information Needs set the parameters for the topics of proposals sought for the current funding cycle. Beginning in 2018, five of the ten Councils participated in working groups with representation from one or more Councils to gather information about priority information needs in their regions fishery. The results from these working groups were presented to full Councils for their deliberation and final action at public meetings. For the 2020 funding cycle, all but one Council had formed a working group to gather information on priority information needs.

TRC Recommendations for 2020 Cycle

The TRC concluded that the current process is appropriate and conforms to legal standards for competitive proposal processes in the Federal government. The TRC did not offer any recommendations for modifications to this portion of the proposal evaluation process for the 2020 funding cycle.

TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The majority of the TRC's recommendations focus on modifications to the 2020 Notice of Funding Opportunity. Their recommendations include the following:

1. The focus on collaboration and the interdisciplinary nature of traditional ecological knowledge should be strengthened. Interdisciplinary research is part of the mission of the Monitoring Program.
2. Request a description of how investigators arrive at sample sizes, including references to literature and other studies using similar methods.
3. Request that applicants discuss how results will be disseminated such as through public presentations and local newspaper articles.
4. Inform applicants each criterion is worth up to 20 points.
5. Criteria will be modified to include "and/or" statements to clarify if the criteria requirements mean all or nothing.

6. Clarify what should be submitted through separate documents and what should be included in the investigation plan document. Clarify budget justification and curricula vitae requirements.
6. Provide examples of past “meaningful involvement” in a project proposal.
8. Clarify the requirements for resume submission.
9. Request that applicants include a study design and references.
10. Add examples of project elements that may contribute to higher score.

CONCLUSION

In accordance with Section 812 of ANILCA, the Monitoring Program focuses on collaboration with the State of Alaska, Alaska Native and other rural organizations and other Federal agencies to carry out research and monitoring about fish subsistence uses on Federal public lands; and to seek data from, consult with and make use of the knowledge of local residents engaged in subsistence. The Monitoring Program is a collaborative interagency, interdisciplinary approach to enhancing fisheries research and data in Alaska and effectively communicate information needed for subsistence fisheries management on Federal public lands and waters. The Board requested a review of the 2018 Monitoring Program funding cycle. The Monitoring Program proposal evaluation process was significantly modified in preparation for the 2016 and 2018 funding cycles. These changes were directed specifically at making the funding process more transparent and objective.

This review is an opportunity to communicate the significance of modifications made to the Monitoring Program proposal evaluation process in 2016 and 2018. Most significantly, the revisions to the proposal evaluation process are consistent with Department of the Interior Office of Contracting and General Services regulations and guidance and are supported by the TRC. Councils continue to play a central role in the process by having the primary responsibility for developing Priority Information Needs that define the topics of proposals that are sought as part the Monitoring Program.

The TRC conducted its biennial review of the proposal evaluation process in July 2018 and also addressed questions posed by the Board. Members engaged in robust discussions about these questions and other issues such as the concept of transparency in a competitive proposal process. The TRC agreed on recommendations for some modifications to the 2020 funding cycle that it felt would best address concerns and improve the process. While the TRC discussed geographic funding guidelines and weighting of criteria, the group concluded that these areas are functioning as intended and are consistent with the mission of the Monitoring Program.

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APPENDIX B

2018 NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

FISHERIES RESOURCE MONITORING PROGRAM

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Office of Subsistence Management**

2018 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA): 15.636
Alaska Subsistence Management

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number: F17AS00028

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: February 20, 2017; 5:00PM Alaska Standard Time

Notice of Funding Opportunity

I. Description of Funding Opportunity

The Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) administers the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (Monitoring Program). OSM is seeking technically sound projects for the Monitoring Program that gather information to manage and conserve subsistence fishery resources in Alaska. The Monitoring Program is also directed at supporting meaningful involvement in fisheries management by Alaska Native and rural organizations and promoting collaboration among Federal, State, Alaska Native and local organizations. The Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program funding awards are made through Federal financial assistance under the authority of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, 16 USC 661 to 667 (d), and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), 16 USC 3101-3233. This Funding Opportunity, number F17AS00028, is the single designated biennial competition through which multiple awards will be made.

Only studies that gather, analyze, and report on information needed for subsistence fisheries management on 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) will be considered.

All proposals and required information listed in the Checklist in the Application Instructions are to be submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by February 20, 2017, 5:00PM Alaska Standard Time to: fw7_fa_cgs@fws.gov (see Section V, **Submission Instructions for further details**). Applicants are encouraged to submit complete proposal packages early. In order to be considered for funding, all documents must be received by the deadline. If you have any issues submitting your proposal through electronic format, please contact the OSM Grants Management Specialist at 907-786-3691.

II. Federal Award Information

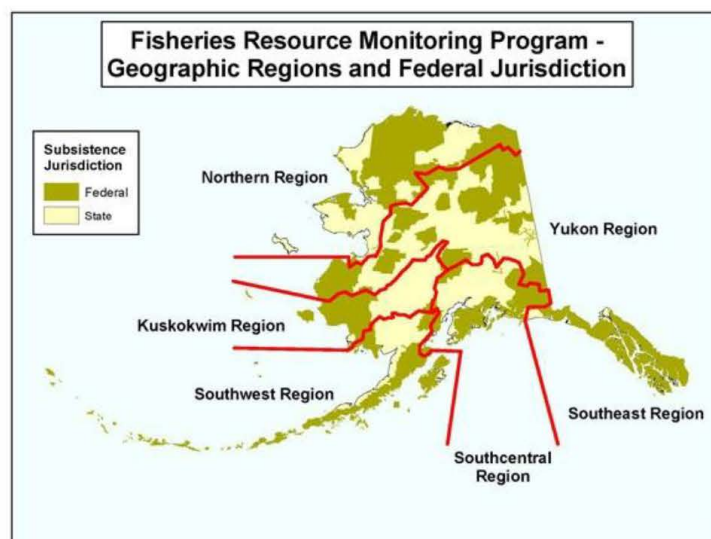
The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) has established guidelines for writing Investigation Plans/Project Narratives (see Section IV, C, for further details). Activities that fall outside the scope of the Monitoring Program and will not be considered include: habitat protection, mitigation, restoration and enhancement, hatchery propagation and contaminant assessment. These activities are most appropriately addressed by the responsible land management or regulatory agency, not the Monitoring Program. In addition, projects for which the primary objective is education/outreach (e.g., science camps, technician training, intern programs), are not eligible for funding under the Monitoring Program.

The Monitoring Program biannually funds research and monitoring of Federal subsistence fisheries in Alaska. The funding commitments to multiple year projects influence the amount of funding available for new projects. For 2018, we anticipate availability of funds for new projects that provide information needed to manage subsistence fisheries for rural Alaskans on Federal lands, but funding will not be as significant as in previous years. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Forest Service may award multiple cooperative agreements for selected fisheries projects. Continuation of funding for years two,

three or four of multiple-year projects is contingent upon attainment of the study objectives and availability of future government funding. Based on projections of the funding available for the 2018 research cycle and the needs of ongoing Monitoring Program projects, an annual funding cap is being instituted for the program. For the 2018 Notice of Funding Opportunity, the funding cap is \$215,000.00 per year. Proposals requesting Monitoring Program funding that exceeds \$215,000.00 per year will not be considered.

Although all Investigation Plans addressing Federal subsistence fisheries will be considered, the Office of Subsistence Management is targeting this Funding Opportunity towards projects that address specific priority information needs identified either by strategic planning efforts or by expert opinion from Regional Advisory Councils, fisheries managers, the Technical Review Committee, and Office of Subsistence Management staff. The 2018 list of priority information needs and other supplemental materials may be accessed at <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/frmp/funding>. Investigators wishing to address information needs other than those identified in the attached list must include a compelling rationale regarding strategic importance and application to Federal subsistence management.

Geographic Regions: Investigation Plans should address one of six geographic regions. If the issue of concern covers more than one region, the proposal should be classified as multi-regional.



Data Types: Three broad categories of information will be considered: 1) harvest monitoring (HM), 2) traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), and 3) stock status and trends (SST).

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 studies of local knowledge directed at collecting and analyzing information on a variety of topics, including: 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. Some methods used to document traditional ecological knowledge include ethnographic fieldwork, key informant interviews with local experts, place name mapping, and open-ended surveys.

Stock status and trends studies provide information on abundance and run timing; age, size and sex 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

OSM Involvement: Proposals are awarded through cooperative agreements which require substantial involvement on the part of the OSM. The OSM anticipates being involved and responsible for the following, however specific aspects of participation will be determined collaboratively by OSM and awardees and outlined in the Notice of Award Letter:

1. Participate and collaborate jointly with the recipient principal investigator in carrying out the scope of work.
2. Assist with data analysis and interpretation as needed.
3. Provide written guidelines for producing Performance and Technical (annual and final) reports.
4. Provide a review of all draft Technical reports to the Recipient's investigators and ensure that needed modifications are made before accepting reports as finished products.
5. Share in responsibility to communicate and distribute project results to federal fishery managers, Federal Regional Advisory Councils, the Federal Subsistence Board, and the general public.
6. Review and approve any proposed modifications to the Investigation Plan by the Recipient prior to their adoption or use and the award of subsequent funds.
7. Direct or redirect the work because of interrelationships with other projects.
8. Halt one or more project activities at any time, if performance specifications are not being met.

III. Eligibility Information

Eligible Applicants:

Individuals and organizations submitting Investigation Plans should have the necessary technical and administrative abilities and resources to ensure successful completion of studies. Entities submitting Investigation Plans may be of Commercial, Foreign, Individuals, Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, Other Non-Profit Organizations, State Government, Local Government, Federally-Recognized Indian Tribal Governments, Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) Network and/or Federal Entities.

Monitoring Program funding is intended to provide new and improved information for management of subsistence fisheries on Federal public lands. Monitoring Program funding is not intended to duplicate existing programs. Agencies are discouraged from shifting existing projects to the Monitoring Program.

For ongoing projects in the Monitoring Program for which additional years of funding is being proposed, investigators should justify continuation, placing the proposed work in context with the ongoing work being accomplished.

U.S. non-profit, non-governmental organizations **must** provide a copy of their Section 501(c)(3) or (4) status determination letter received from the Internal Revenue Service.

Federal law mandates that all entities applying for Federal financial assistance must have a valid Dun & Bradstreet Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number and have a current registration in the System for Award Management (SAM). See Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 25 (2 CFR 25) for more information. Exemptions: The SAM registration requirement does not apply to individuals submitting an application on their own behalf and not on behalf of a company or other for-profit entity, state, local or Tribal government, academia or other type of organization.

Federal Award may not be made to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements. Additionally, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Service is ready to make the award, the Service may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

A. DUNS Registration

Request a DUNS number online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. U.S.-based entities may also request a DUNS number by telephone by calling the Dun & Bradstreet Government Customer Response Center, Monday – Friday, 7 AM to 8 PM CST at the following numbers:

U.S. and U.S Virgin Islands: 1-866-705-5711

Alaska and Puerto Rico: 1-800-234-3867 (Select Option 2, then Option 1)

For Hearing Impaired Customers Only call: 1-877-807-1679 (TTY Line)

Once assigned a DUNS number, entities are responsible for maintaining up-to-date information with Dun & Bradstreet.

B. Entity Registration in SAM

All applicants (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is exempt from those requirements under 2 CFR §25.110(b) or (c) or has an exemption approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR §25.110(d) is required to:

- i. Be registered in SAM before submitting its application;
- ii. Provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and
- iii. Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

Register in SAM online at <http://www.sam.gov/>. Once registered in SAM, entities must renew and revalidate their SAM registration at least every 12 months from the date previously registered.

Entities are strongly urged to revalidate their registration as often as needed to ensure that their information is up to date and in synch with changes that may have been made to DUNS and IRS information. Foreign entities who wish to be paid directly to a United States bank account must enter and maintain valid and current banking information in SAM.

C. Excluded Entities

Applicant entities identified in the SAM.gov Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or excluded from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits will not be considered for Federal funding, as applicable to the funding being requested under this Federal program.

D. Cost Sharing or Matching:

For new projects with broad overlap of Federal and State management authority, matching funds are encouraged and should be included with all proposals. The OSM encourages a match for all proposals and applicants should document matching contributions.

E. Independent project submission:

Submissions should be for a single project and not joint or combined projects. An example would be for weir projects, each weir is a single project and two weirs should not be combined into one project

submission. Each weir should be an independent project submission.

IV. Application Requirements

To be considered for funding under this opportunity, a complete application package must contain:

A. Application for Federal Assistance form

A completed, signed and dated Application for Federal Assistance form SF-424 is required and can be found at <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/frmp/funding> or <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>. Do not include other Federal sources of funding, requested or approved, in the total entered in the “Federal” funding box on the Application for Federal Assistance form. Enter only the amount being requested under this program in the “Federal” funding box. Include any other Federal sources of funding in the total funding entered in the “Other” box.

B. Project Abstract

Briefly summarize the project, in one page or less. Include the title of the project, geographic location, and a brief overview of the need for the project. Goal(s), objectives, specific project activities, anticipated outputs and outcomes may also be included in this section. See <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/frmp/funding> for investigation plan, project abstract, and project budget guidelines.

C. Project Narrative (each of the following topics must be addressed) See

<https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/frmp/funding> for investigation plan, project abstract, and project budget guidelines.

1. **Statement of Need:** Describe why this project is necessary (significance/value) and include supporting information. Summarize previous or on-going efforts (of you/your organization, and other organizations or individuals) that are relevant to the proposed work. Explain the successes or failures of past efforts and how your proposed project builds on them. If you have received funding previously (from the Service or any other donor) for this specific project work or site, provide a summary of the funding, associated activities and products/outcomes.
2. **Relevance to Federal Subsistence Management:** All Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program Proposals must clearly articulate the relevance to Federal subsistence management. Proposals that do not demonstrate a clear link to Federal subsistence management will not be considered.
3. **Project Goals and Objectives:** State the long-term, overarching goal(s) of the project. State the objectives of the project. Objectives are the specific outcomes to be accomplished in order to reach the stated goal(s). The project objectives must be specific, measurable, and realistic (attainable within the project’s proposed project period).
4. **Project Activities, Methods and Timetable:** List the proposed project activities and describe how they relate to the stated objectives. Activities are the specific actions to be undertaken to fulfill the project objectives and reach the project goal(s). The proposed project activities narrative must be detailed enough for reviewers to make a clear connection between the activities and the proposed project costs. For projects being conducted within the United States, the narrative must provide enough detail so that reviewers are able to determine project compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. For projects being conducted on the high seas, the narrative should provide enough detail so that reviewers are able to determine project

5. compliance with Section 7 of Endangered Species Act. Provide a detailed description of the method(s) to be used to carry out each activity. Provide a timetable indicating roughly when
6. activities or project milestones are to be accomplished. Include any resulting tables, spreadsheets or flow charts within the body of the project narrative (**do not include as separate attachments**). The timetable should not propose specific dates but instead group activities by month for each month over the entire proposed project period.
7. **Stakeholder Coordination/Involvement:** Describe how you/your organization has coordinated with and involved other relevant organizations or individuals in planning the project, and detail if/how they will be involved in conducting project activities, disseminating project results and/or incorporating your results/products into their activities. Letters of support from participating communities and/or partners are strongly encouraged to demonstrate that outreach has already occurred.
8. **Project Monitoring and Evaluation:** Detail the monitoring and evaluation plan for the project. Building on the stated project objectives, which must be specific and measurable, identify what you will measure and how you will measure. Reference the stated project timetable and budget information. Identify the products/services to be delivered and how/to whom they will be delivered. Detail the expected direct effect(s) of the project on beneficiaries. Include any available questionnaires, surveys, curricula, exams/tests or other assessment tools to be used for project evaluation. Describe the resources and organizational structure available for gathering, analyzing and reporting monitoring and evaluation data. If applicable, describe how project participants and beneficiaries will participate in monitoring and evaluation activities. Describe how findings will be fed back into decision making and project activities throughout the project period.
9. **Description of Entities Undertaking the Project:** Provide a brief description of the applicant organization and all participating entities and/or individuals. Identify which of the proposed activities each agency, organization, group, or individual is responsible for conducting or managing. Provide complete contact information for the individual within the organization that will oversee/manage the project activities on a day-to-day basis. Provide resumes or abbreviated CVs of no more than 5 pages for Principal Investigators (PI) and key personnel, and a brief (1-2 pages) but descriptive overview of their education, experience and other skills that make them qualified to carry out the proposed project. To prevent unnecessary transmission of Personally Identifiable Information, **do not include Social Security numbers, the names of family members, or any other personal or sensitive information including marital status, religion or physical characteristics on the description of key personnel qualifications.**
10. **Sustainability:** As applicable, describe which project activities will continue beyond the proposed project period, who will continue the work or act on the results achieved, and how and at what level you expect these future activities will be funded or if not applicable to your proposal please mark this as Not Applicable.
11. **Literature Cited:** If not applicable to your proposal please mark this as Not Applicable.
12. **Map of Project Area:** Maps should clearly delineate the project area and be large enough to be legible. Preferably, two maps should be included; 1) a State map that highlights the location, and 2) a second map that provides an overview of the study location. Label any sites referenced in the project narrative or if not applicable to your proposal please mark this as Not Applicable.
13. **Statement(s) Regarding Single Audit Reporting:** Input the applicable statement from Section F. Single Audit Reporting Statements of this document.

D. Budget Form

Complete the **Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)** or **Budget Information for Construction Programs (SF-424C)** form. Use the SF-424A if your project does not include construction and the SF-424C if the project includes construction or land acquisition. The budget forms are available online at <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/frmp/funding> or <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>. When developing your budget, keep in mind that financial assistance awards and sub-awards are subject to the cost principles in the following Federal regulations, as applicable to the recipient organization type.

Links to the full text of the Federal cost principles are available on the Internet at <http://www.ecfr.gov/>

Multiple Federal Funding Sources: If the project budget includes multiple Federal funding sources, you must show the funds being requested from this Federal program *separately* from any other requested/secured Federal sources of funding on the budget form. For example, enter the funds being requested from this Federal program in the first row of the Budget Summary section of the form and then enter funding related to other Federal programs in the subsequent row(s). Be sure to enter each Federal program's CFDA number in the corresponding fields on the form. The CFDA number for this Federal program appears on the first page of this funding opportunity.

E. Budget Justification

Submit a detailed budget table(s). A budget table template is provided at: <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/frmp/funding>. In a separate narrative titled "**Budget Justification**", explain and justify all requested budget items/costs for each project year. Detail and justify if some or all of the first project year will be dedicated to field preparation and/or equipment acquisition. Detail how the Budget Object Class Category totals on the SF-424A were determined and demonstrate a clear connection between costs and the proposed project activities. For personnel salary costs, include the base-line salary figures and the estimates of time (as percentages) to be directly charged to the project. Describe any item that under the applicable Federal Cost Principles requires the Service's approval and estimate its cost.

If Federally-funded equipment will be used for the project, provide a list of that equipment including the Federal funding source.

Required Indirect Cost Statement: All applicants, except individuals applying for funds separate from a business or non-profit organization he/she may operate, **must** include in the budget justification narrative one of the following statements and attach to their application any required documentation identified in the applicable statement:

"We are:

1. A U.S. state or local government entity receiving more than \$35 million in direct Federal funding each year with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We submit our indirect cost rate proposals to our cognizant agency. A copy of our most recently approved rate agreement/certification is attached.
2. A U.S. state or local government entity receiving less than \$35 million in direct Federal funding with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We are required to prepare and retain for audit an indirect cost rate proposal and related documentation to support those costs.
3. A [insert your organization type; U.S. states and local governments, please use one of the statements above or below] that has previously negotiated or currently has an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. A copy of our most

recently approved rate agreement is attached.

4. A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. In the event an award is made, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award is made.
5. A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. However, in the event an award is made, we will not be able to meet the requirement to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after award. We request as a condition of award to charge a flat de minimus indirect cost rate of 10% of modified total direct costs as defined in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 200, section 200.68. We understand that the 10% de minimus rate will apply for the life of the award, including any future extensions for time, and that the rate cannot be changed even if we do establish an approved rate with our cognizant agency at any point during the award period.
6. A [insert your organization type] that is submitting this proposal for consideration under the [insert either "Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit Program" or "Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Network"], which has a Department of the Interior-approved indirect cost rate cap of [insert program rate]. If we have an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency, we understand that we must apply this reduced rate against the same direct cost base as identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement. If we do not have an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency, we understand that the basis for direct costs will be the modified total direct cost base defined in 2 CFR 200.68 "Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)". We understand that we must request prior approval from the Service to use the MTDC base instead of the base identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement, and that Service approval of such a request will be based on: 1) a determination that our approved base is only a subset of the MTDC (such as salaries and wages); and 2) that use of the MTDC base will still result in a reduction of the total indirect costs to be charged to the award.
7. A [insert your organization type] that will charge all costs directly.

All applicants are hereby notified of the following:

- Recipients without an approved indirect cost rate are prohibited from charging indirect costs to a Federal award. Accepting the 10% *de minimus* rate as a condition of award is an approved rate.
- Failure to establish an approved rate during the award period renders all costs otherwise allocable as indirect costs unallowable under the award.
- Only the indirect costs calculated against the Federal portion of the total direct costs may be charged to the Federal award. Recipients may not charge to their Service award any indirect costs calculated against the portion of total direct costs charged to themselves or charged to any other project partner, Federal and non-Federal alike.
- Recipients must have prior written approval from the Service to transfer unallowable indirect costs to amounts budgeted for direct costs or to satisfy cost-sharing or matching requirements under the award.
- Recipients are prohibited from shifting unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation."

Applicants who are individuals applying for funds separate from a business or non-profit organization he/she may operate are not eligible to charge indirect costs to their award. If you are an individual applying for funding, do not include any indirect costs in your proposed budget.

For more information on indirect cost rates, see the Service's **Indirect Costs and Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements** guidance document on the Internet at: <http://www.fws.gov/grants/> under the "Resources" tab.

Negotiating an Indirect Cost Rate with the Department of the Interior:

Entities that do not have a NICRA, must have an open, active Federal award to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to your cognizant agency. The Federal awarding agency that provides the largest amount of direct funding to your organization is your cognizant agency, unless otherwise assigned by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). If the Department of the Interior is your cognizant agency, your indirect cost rate will be negotiated by the Interior Business Center (IBC). For more information, contact the IBC at:

Indirect Cost Services
Acquisition Services Directorate, Interior Business Center
U.S. Department of the Interior
2180 Harvard Street, Suite 430
Sacramento, CA 95815
Phone: 916-566-7111- Fax: 916-566-7110
Email: ics@ibc.gov
Internet address: <https://www.doi.gov/ibc/services/finance/indirect-cost-services>

- F. Single Audit Reporting Statements:** As required in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 200, Subpart F, Audit Requirements, all U.S. states, local governments, federally-recognized Indian tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending \$750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in a fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System.

All U.S. state, local government, Federally-recognized Indian tribal government and non-profit applicants **must** provide a statement regarding if your organization was or was not required to submit a Single Audit report for the organization's most recently closed fiscal year. If required, state that the report is available on the Federal Audit Clearinghouse Single Audit Database website (<https://harvester.census.gov/facweb/>) and provide the EIN under which that report was submitted.

See the following statements and include all applicable statements at the end of the Project Narrative in number 10, titled: Statement(s) Regarding Single Audit Reporting.

Single Audit Report was required:

My organization was required to submit a Single Audit report last year. The reporting period covered was from (insert date) to (insert date). This report, filed under EIN #(insert EIN), is available on the Federal Audit Clearinghouse Single Audit Database website (<https://harvester.census.gov/facweb/>) or will be by (insert date).

OR

Single Audit Report was not required:

My organization was not required to submit a Single Audit report last year.

G. Assurances

Include the appropriate signed and dated Assurances form available online at <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/frmp/funding> or <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>. Use the Assurances for Construction

Programs (SF-424D) for construction and land acquisition projects. Use the **Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)** for all other types of projects. Signing this form does not mean that all items on the form are applicable. The form contains language that states that some of the assurances may not be applicable to your organization and/or your project or program.

H. Certification and Disclosure of Lobbying Activities:

Under Title 31 of the United States Code, Section 1352, an applicant or recipient must not use any Federally appropriated funds (both annually appropriated and continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a grant or cooperative agreement award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is defined as influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress connection with the award. Submission of an application also represents the applicant's Certification Regarding Lobbying. If you/your organization have/has made or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with this project AND the project budget exceeds \$100,000, complete and submit the SF LLL, **Disclosure of Lobbying Activities** form. See 2 CFR 200.245, Lobbying and 2 FR 200.415, Certifications, for additional information.

Application Checklist A: Non-Federal Entities

(Federal Entities see Checklist B)

- ☐ **DUNS Registration** (see requirement in Section III Basic Eligibility Requirements, A Duns Registration)
- ☐ **SAM active registration** (see requirement in Section III Basic Eligibility Requirements, B Entity Registration in SAM)
- ☐ **Evidence of non-profit status:** If a non-profit organization, a copy of their Section 501(c)(3) or (4) status determination letter received from the Internal Revenue Service.
- ☐ **SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance:** A complete, signed and dated SF-424, SF-424 Mandatory, or SF-424 Individual form.
- ☐ **SF-424 Budget form:** A complete SF 424A or SF 424C Budget Information form.
- ☐ **SF-424 Assurances form:** Signed and dated SF-424B or SF-424D Assurances form.
- ☐ **Project Abstract**
- ☐ **Project Narrative/Investigation Plan** (including Letters of Support from participating communities or entities, when applicable)
- ☐ **Timetable** (should be included in the Project Narrative)
- ☐ **Description of Entities** undertaking the project
- ☐ **Resumes** for key personnel tailored to address experience and skills relevant to projects (5 pages maximum)
- ☐ **Single Audit Reporting statement:** If a U.S. state, local government, federally-recognized Indian tribal government, or non-profit organization, statements regarding applicability of and compliance with 2 CFR 200, Subpart F, Audit Requirement.
- ☐ **Budget Justification** with a detailed budget table
- ☐ **Federally-funded equipment list:** If Federally-funded equipment will be used for the project, a list of that equipment.
- ☐ **NICRA:** When applicable, a copy of the organization's current Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement.

- ☐ **Conflict of Interest Disclosures:** When applicable, written notification of any actual or potential conflicts of interest that may arise during the life of this award.
- ☐ **SF-LLL form:** If applicable, completed SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form.

Application Checklist B: Federal Entities

- ☐ **Project Abstract**, if applicable
- ☐ **Project Narrative/Investigation Plan** (including Letters of Support from participating communities or entities, when applicable)
- ☐ **Timetable**
- ☐ **Description of Entities** undertaking the project
- ☐ **Resumes** for key personnel tailored to address experience and skills relevant to projects (5 pages maximum)
- ☐ **Budget Justification** and a detailed budget table
- ☐ **Federally-funded equipment list:** If Federally-funded equipment will be used for the project, a list of that equipment
- ☐ **Conflict of Interest Disclosures:** When applicable, written notification of any actual or potential conflicts of interest that may arise during the life of this award.

In order to be considered, all documents must be received by the deadline.

V. Submission Instructions

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: All proposals and required information from the Application Checklist, are to be submitted to the Office of Contracting and General Services by February 20, 2017 by 5:00 PM Alaska Standard Time. Applicants are encouraged to submit their packages well before the submission deadline. If you have any questions prior to the submission deadline, contact the OSM Grants Management Specialist at (907) 786-3691.

Intergovernmental Review: Before submitting an application, U.S. state and local government applicants should visit the following website (http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc/) to determine whether their application is subject to the state intergovernmental review process under Executive Order (E.O.) 12372 "Intergovernmental review of Federal Programs." E.O. 12372 was issued to foster the intergovernmental partnership and strengthen federalism by relying on state and local processes for the coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance and direct Federal development. The E.O. allows each state to designate an entity to perform this function. The official list of designated entities is posted on the website. Contact your state's designated entity for more information on the process the state requires to be followed when applying for assistance. States that do not have a designated entity listed on the website have chosen not to participate in the review process.

Funding Cap: \$215,000.00. Cooperative agreements which exceed \$215,000.00 per year will not be awarded.

Download the Application Package linked to this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov to begin the application process. The application package may also be accessed on the web at <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence/frmp/funding>. Downloading and saving the Application Package to your computer makes the required government-wide standard forms fillable and printable. Completed applications may be submitted by email, electronically through Grants.gov, or as otherwise described in the Grants.gov funding opportunity. Please select **ONE** of the submission options:

To submit an application by e-mail: Format all of your documents to print on Letter size (8 ½" x 11") paper. Format all pages to display and print page numbers. Scanned documents should be scanned in Letter format, as black and white images only. Where possible, save scanned documents in .pdf format. Email your submission package to: fw7_fa_cgs@fws.gov with the subject line "PROPOSAL for NOFO F17AS00028". If you have any issues submitting your proposal through electronic format, please contact the OSM Grants Management Specialist at 907-786-3691.

The required SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance and Assurances forms and any other required standard forms MUST be signed by your organization's authorized official. The Signature and Date fields on the standard forms downloaded from Grants.gov are pre-populated with the text "Completed by Grants.gov upon submission" or "Completed on submission to Grants.gov". **Remove this text (manually or digitally) before signing the forms.**

To submit an application through Grants.gov:

Go to the Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/home.html>) and search for the Funding Opportunity number F17AS00028. You/your organization must complete the Grants.gov registration process before submitting an application. Registration can take between three to five business days, or as long as two weeks if all steps are not completed in a timely manner.

Important note on Grants.gov application attachment file names: Please do not assign application attachments file names longer than 20 characters, including spaces. Assigning file names longer than 20 characters will create issues in the automatic interface between Grants.gov and the Service's financial assistance management system.

Federal Agency Applicants may submit proposals for funding under this NOFO as authorized under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) of 1980, Title VIII, Public Law 96-487, 16 U.S.C. 3101-3233, Section 809, and must submit their proposals directly to the granting agency point of contact identified in Section VIII *Agency Contacts*. Submission must be by email as described above (*Federal agencies will be rated using the same merit review process as all other applicants*).

NOTE: *In the event a Fish and Wildlife Service Program submits a proposal and is awarded funding, if they intend to issue a subaward or contract, they MUST go through the applicable standard procurement process. They CANNOT use this announcement for the purpose of awarding a separate contract or financial assistance award.*

VI. APPLICATION REVIEW

Criteria: All projects must have a direct linkage to a subsistence fishery within a Federal conservation unit to be eligible for funding under the Monitoring Program and are evaluated using the following five, equally weighted criteria:

- **Strategic Priorities:** Studies must be responsive to identified issues and priority information needs. All projects must have a direct linkage to Federal public lands and/or waters to be eligible for funding under the Monitoring Program. 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. Projects should address the following topics to demonstrate links to strategic priorities:
 - Federal jurisdiction,
 - Conservation mandate,
 - Potential impacts on the subsistence priority,
 - Role of the resource, and

- Local concern.
- Technical-Scientific Merit- Technical quality of the study design must meet accepted standards for information collection, compilation, analysis, and reporting. Studies must have clear objectives, appropriate sampling design, correct analytical procedures, and specified progress, annual, and final reports.
- Investigator Ability and Resources- Investigators must show they are capable of successfully completing the proposed study by providing information on the ability (training, education, and experience) and resources (technical and administrative) they possess to conduct the work. Applicants that have received funding in the past will be evaluated and ranked on their past performance, including fulfillment of meeting deliverable deadlines as outlined in Section VI. Award Administration Information under “Reporting”. A record of failure to submit reports or delinquent submittal of reports will be taken into account when rating investigator ability and resources.
- Partnership-Capacity Building- Collaborative partnerships and capacity building are priorities of the Monitoring Program. ANILCA Title VIII mandates that rural residents be afforded a meaningful role in the management of subsistence fisheries, and the Monitoring Program offers opportunities for partnerships and participation of local residents in monitoring and research. Investigators are requested to include a strategy for integrating local capacity development in their Investigation Plans. Investigators must not only inform communities and regional organizations in the area where work is to be conducted about their project plans, but must also consult and communicate with local communities to ensure that local knowledge is utilized and concerns are addressed. Letters of support from local communities or organizations that will collaborate on the proposed project add to the strength of a proposal. Investigators and their organizations must 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.

Investigators are encouraged to develop the highest level of community and regional collaboration that is practical. 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. 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) must be clearly demonstrated in proposals.

➤ Cost Benefit

Cost/Price Factors

Applicant’s cost/price proposal will be evaluated for reasonableness. For a price to be reasonable, it must represent a price to the government that a prudent person would pay when consideration is given to prices in the market. Normally, price reasonableness is established through adequate price competition, but may also be determined through cost and price analysis techniques.

Selection for Award

Applicant 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, taking into consideration the technical factors listed above and the total proposed price across all agreement periods.

Review and Selection Process:

Investigation Plans will be reviewed and evaluated by Office of Subsistence Management and Forest Service staff, and then by the Technical Review Committee. This committee is comprised of representatives from each of five Federal agencies involved with subsistence management, and relevant experts from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Their function is to provide evaluation, technical oversight, and strategic direction to the Monitoring Program. Each proposal will be rated based on the above criteria.

Project Abstracts and associated Technical Review Committee proposal ratings will be assembled into a draft 2018 Fisheries Resources Monitoring Plan. The draft plan will be distributed for public review and comment through Regional Advisory Council meetings, beginning in August 2017. The Federal Subsistence Board will review the draft plan and will accept additional written and oral comments at its January 2018 meeting. At that time, the Federal Subsistence Board will make a recommendation to the ARD OSM on the suite of projects to include within the final 2018 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Plan. Investigators will subsequently be notified in writing of the status of their proposal.

Risk Assessment:

As part of the review process, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is required in accordance with the Department of Interior Guidance (DIG 2011-03), to conduct a risk assessment prior to the award of an Financial Assistance Agreements or a revision to increase funding. The requirement states that once a Fiscal Year (FY) each recipient, who will be awarded one or more grant or cooperative agreement award(s), will have a risk assessment conducted. The risk assessment will include, but is not limited to the following areas:

- Potential for Implementation problems
- Financial Management Systems and Funds Management Records
- Performance Track Record
- Staff Level and Key Qualifications
- Project Delivery Experience
- Award Administration and Reporting Compliance
- Single Audit Submissions and Results
- Other Factors that may Impact Risk Level

The results of the assessment will determine the appropriate level of monitoring activities that the Service will require for successful project/award completion. If you are selected for award under this NOFO, all applicable monitoring protocols will be incorporated into your Notice of Award Letter (NOAL).

VII. Federal Award Administration

Federal Award Notices: Following review, applicants may be requested to revise the project scope and/or budget before an award is made. Successful applicants will receive written notice in the form of a notice of award document. Notices of award are typically sent to recipients by e-mail. If e-mail notification is unsuccessful, the documents will be sent by courier mail (e.g., FedEx, DHL or UPS). Award recipients are not required to sign/return the Notice of Award document. Acceptance of an award is defined as starting work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means. Awards are based on the application submitted to, and as approved by, the Service. The notice of award document will include instructions specific to each recipient on how to request payment. If applicable, the

instructions will detail any additional information/forms required and where to submit payment requests. Applicants whose projects are not selected for funding will receive written notice, most often by e-mail, within 30 days of the final review decision.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

- i. **Domestic Recipient Payments:** Prior to award, the Service program office will contact you/your organization to either enroll in the U.S. Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) system or, if eligible, obtain approval from the Department of the Interior to be waived from using ASAP.

Domestic applicants subject to the SAM registration requirement (see Section III B.) who receive a waiver from receiving funds through ASAP must maintain current banking information in SAM. Domestic applicants exempt from the SAM registration requirement who receive a waiver from receiving funds through ASAP will be required to submit their banking information directly to the Service program. However, ***do NOT submit any banking information to the Service until it is requested from you by the Service program!***

Foreign Recipient Payments: Foreign recipients receiving funds to a bank outside of the United States will be paid electronically through U.S. Treasury's International Treasury Services (ITS) system.

Foreign recipients receiving funds electronically to a bank in the United States will be paid by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) through the Automated Clearing House network. Foreign recipients who wish to be paid to a bank account in the United States must enter and maintain current banking information in SAM (see Section III).

The Notice of Award document from the Service will include instructions specific to each recipient on how to request payment. If applicable, the instructions will detail any additional information/forms required and where to submit payment requests.

- ii. **Transmittal of Sensitive Data:** Recipients are responsible for ensuring any sensitive data being sent to the Service is protected during its transmission/delivery. The Service strongly recommends that recipients use the most secure transmission/delivery method available. The Service recommends the following digital transmission methods: secure digital faxing; encrypted emails; emailing a password protected zipped/compressed file attachment in one email followed by the password in a second email; or emailing a zipped/compressed file attachment. The Service strongly encourages recipients sending sensitive data in paper copy to use a courier mail service. Recipients may also contact their Service Project Officer and provide any sensitive data over the telephone.
- iii. **Award Terms and Conditions:** Acceptance of a financial assistance award (i.e., grant or cooperative agreement) from the Service carries with it the responsibility to be aware of and comply with the terms and conditions applicable to the award. Acceptance is defined as the start of work, drawing down funds, or accepting the award via electronic means. Awards are based on the application submitted to and approved by the Service and are subject to the terms and conditions incorporated into the notice of award either by direct citation or by reference to the following: Federal regulations; program legislation or regulation; and special award terms and conditions. The Federal regulations applicable to Service awards are available on the Internet at <http://www.fws.gov/grants/>. If you do not have access to the Internet and require a full text copy of the award terms and conditions, contact the Service point of contact identified in the Agency Contacts section below.
- iv. By submission of an application, the applicant represents that it does not require employees or contractors seeking to report fraud, waste, or abuse to sign internal confidentiality agreements or

- v. statements prohibiting or otherwise restricting such employees or contractors from lawfully reporting such waste, fraud, or abuse to a designated investigative or law enforcement representative of a Federal department or agency authorized to receive such information. Applicants out of compliance with this condition are ineligible to compete for or receive an award.

Recipient Reporting Requirements:

- i. **Financial and Performance Reports:** Interim financial reports and performance reports may be required. Interim reports will be required no more frequently than quarterly, and no less frequently than annually. A final financial report and a final performance report will be required and are due within 90 calendar days of the end date of the award. Performance reports must contain: 1) a comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals and objectives of the award as detailed in the approved scope of work; 2) a description of reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate; and 3) any other pertinent information relevant to the project results.
- ii. **Significant Development Reports (SDR):**
Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates that have significant impact upon the supported activity. In such cases, recipients are required to notify the Service in writing as soon as the following types of conditions become known:
 - Problems, delays, or adverse conditions that will materially impair the ability to meet the objective of the Federal award. This disclosure must include a statement of any corrective action(s) taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation.
 - Favorable developments that enable meeting time schedules and objectives sooner or at less cost than anticipated or producing more or different beneficial results than originally planned.

The Service will specify in the notice of award document the reporting and reporting frequency applicable to the award.

- iii. **Conflict of Interest Disclosures (COD):**
The recipient must establish safeguards to prohibit its employees and subrecipients from using their positions for purposes that constitute or present the appearance of a personal or organizational conflict of interest. The recipient is responsible for notifying the Grants Officer in writing of any actual or potential conflicts of interest that may arise during the life of this award. Conflicts of interest include any relationship or matter which might place the recipient or its employees in a position of conflict, real or apparent, between their responsibilities under the agreement and any other outside interests. Conflicts of interest may also include, but are not limited to, direct or indirect financial interests, close personal relationships, positions of trust in outside organizations, consideration of future employment arrangements with a different organization, or decision-making affecting the award that would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question the impartiality of the recipient and/or recipient's employees and subrecipients in the matter.

The Grants Officer and the servicing Ethics Counselor will determine if a conflict of interest exists. If a conflict of interest exists, the Grants Officer will determine whether a mitigation plan is feasible. Mitigation plans must be approved by the Grants Officer in writing. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the government may be cause for termination of the award.

Failure to make required disclosures may result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338; including suspension or debarment (see also 2 CFR part 180).

- iv. **Other Mandatory Disclosures:**
Recipients and their subrecipients must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the Service or

pass-through entity all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting this award. Non-Federal entities that have received a Federal award including the term and condition outlined in 2 CFR 200, Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters are required to report certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings to SAM. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338, Remedies for noncompliance, including suspension or debarment (See 2 CFR 200.113, 2 CFR Part 180, 31 U.S.C. 3321, and 41 U.S.C. 2313).

VIII. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

Rich Primmer, Grant Officer, Office of Contracting and General Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1011 East Tudor Road, MS 171, Anchorage, Alaska 99503, phone: 907-786-3611, fax: 907-786-3923 or Katherine Smiley, Grant Officer, Office of Contracting and General Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1011 East Tudor Road, MS 171, Anchorage, Alaska 99503, phone: 907-786-3412, fax: 907-786-3923. CGS email: fw7_fa_cgs@fws.gov

APPENDIX B

TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

August 2, 2018

Ms. Amy Craver	Cultural Resources and Subsistence Program Manager, Denali National Park and Preserve, National Park Service Alaska Regional Office, Anchorage
Dr. James Fall	Statewide Subsistence Program Manager, Subsistence Division, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Anchorage
Mr. Frank Harris	Fisheries Division Supervisor (acting), Office of Subsistence Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Office, Anchorage
Mr. James Hasbrouck	Chief Fisheries Scientist, Sport Fish Division, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Anchorage
Ms. Philippa Kenner	Anthropologist, Anthropology Division, Office of Subsistence Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Alaska Regional Office, Anchorage
Dr. Linda Kruger	Research Social Scientist, Pacific Northwest Research Station, Juneau Forestry Sciences Laboratory, U.S Forest Service, Juneau
Mr. Aaron Martin	Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program Coordinator, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Alaska Regional Office, Anchorage
Dr. Rachel Mason	Senior Cultural Anthropologist, National Park Service Alaska Regional Office, Anchorage
Ms. Patricia Petrivelli	Subsistence Anthropologist, Bureau of Indian Affairs Alaska Regional Office, Anchorage
Mr. Daniel Sharp	Subsistence Coordinator, Bureau of Land Management Alaska State Office, Anchorage
Mr. Terry Suminski	Subsistence Program Manager, Tongass National Forest, Sitka Supervisor's Office, U.S. Forest Service, Sitka
Mr. William Templin	Chief Fisheries Scientist, Commercial Fisheries Division, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Anchorage

APPENDIX C

FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD WORK SESSION FEBRUARY 22, 2018

PAGES 6 TO 35 OF TRANSCRIPTS

1 be removed and put in cue for further consideration.
2 This is the result of decisions made at the Southeast
3 RAC a couple of weeks ago.

4
5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Okay.

6
7 MR. OWEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

8
9 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Any other
10 additional information.

11
12 (No comments)

13
14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: All right.
15 We'll move into review and adopt the agenda. If
16 there's any changes, additions, deletions, we'll need a
17 motion to accept the agenda.

18
19 MR. BROWER: So moved, Mr. Chair.

20
21 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: There's a
22 motion to accept the agenda as presented.

23
24 MR. OWEN: Second.

25
26 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Second. Any
27 discussion.

28
29 (No comments)

30
31 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the
32 question. All in favor signify by saying aye.

33
34 IN UNISON: Aye.

35
36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed same
37 sign.

38
39 (No opposing votes)

40
41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries
42 unanimously. So we've already done information
43 exchange. If there's no other anything anybody wants
44 to share, we'll go ahead and move on to number 3, which
45 is recommendations on the 2018 Fisheries Resource
46 Monitoring Program. If we can have Jennifer and Karen
47 Hyer come up and present, please.

48
49 MS. HYER: Good morning, Mr. Chairman

50

1 and Board members. For the record my name is Karen
2 Hyer and I'm a fisheries biologist with the Office of
3 Subsistence Management.

4
5 MS. HARDIN: Good morning, Mr. Chair
6 and members of the Board. My name is Jennifer Hardin
7 and I'm the subsistence policy coordinator for the
8 Office of Subsistence Management.

9
10 MS. HYER: So today we're going to talk
11 about the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program and the
12 Fisheries Resource Plan within that program, but before
13 we launch into that discussion I just wanted to point
14 out in your cover you'll see a copy of
15 Oncorhynchus. Another part of the Fisheries Resource
16 Monitoring Program is our Partners for Fisheries
17 Monitoring and these are two of our partners that ran a
18 summer camp out of Bethel this summer. So please, when
19 you have a moment, just have a look at their
20 accomplishments.

21
22 When the Federal government assumed
23 responsibility for management on Federal public lands,
24 the Department of the Interior and the Department of
25 Agriculture made a commitment to increase the quantity
26 and quality of information available for management of
27 subsistence fisheries on Federal public lands. The
28 Resource Monitoring Program was created in 2000. This
29 program was to identify and provide information needed
30 to sustain subsistence fisheries on Federal public
31 lands.

32
33 The Fisheries Resource Monitoring
34 Program is organized around six regions that correspond
35 to fish stock, harvest and community issues held in
36 common within an area. One of the main functions of
37 the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program is to develop
38 the biannual Fisheries Resource Monitoring Plan. This
39 plan consists of fisheries research and monitoring
40 projects that provide information to manage subsistence
41 fisheries on Federal public lands.

42
43 Since its inception the Fisheries
44 Resource Monitoring Plan has funded \$117 million worth
45 of projects. The funds have supported projects
46 administered by the Federal and State government, rural
47 Alaskan organizations, non-profits and universities.
48 These projects have been spread through the six regions
49 of Alaska. When a project spans more than one region,
50

1 it is considered multi-regional.

2
3 Submitted proposals are reviewed for
4 their technical merit and scored by the Technical
5 Review Committee. The Technical Review Committee
6 members are the only ones that see the whole project
7 proposal. The proposals are then reviewed by the
8 Regional Advisory Council for their application to
9 important regional subsistence issues. Finally, the
10 Interagency Staff Committee provides comment concerning
11 the projects and then the Federal Subsistence Board
12 provides its recommendation about the plan.

13
14 The Technical Review Committee was
15 foundational to ensure the credibility and the
16 scientific integrity of the proposed evaluation
17 process. The Technical Review Committee consists of
18 senior technical experts from Federal and State
19 agencies. The Office of Subsistence Management's ARD
20 makes the Technical Review Committee appointments.

21
22 The current members consist of the
23 Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Land
24 Management, the National Park Service, Fish and
25 Wildlife Service, the Forest Service and the Alaska
26 Department of Fish and Game with the Office of
27 Subsistence Management as the co-chairs.

28
29 The Technical Review Committee reviews
30 and scores every submitted proposal. They are
31 committed to an interdisciplinary approach striving for
32 a 50/50 split between biologists and anthropologists.

33
34 Some of the program's major policies
35 and funding guidelines are outlined on this slide.
36 Projects may be funded for up to four years. Studies
37 shouldn't be duplicate of existing projects. Whenever
38 possible Monitoring Program funding will be dedicated
39 to non-Federal agencies. Long-term projects are
40 currently considered on a case-by-case basis. In this
41 climate of declining Federal funds, it is imperative
42 that we are making the best decisions with the funding
43 that we have.

44
45 There are some activities that are not
46 eligible for funding and they include hatchery
47 propagation, mitigation, restoration and enhancement,
48 habitat protection, contaminant assessment evaluation
49 and monitoring, projects where the primary objective is

50

1 outreach or education such as science camps, technician
2 training, intern programs.

3
4 Five criteria are used for evaluation
5 of the projects. Strategic priority. Studies must have
6 a Federal nexus and be responsive to identified issues
7 and priority information needs. Technical quality of
8 the study design must meet acceptable standards for
9 information collection, analysis and reporting.
10 Investigators must show they are capable of
11 successfully completing the proposed study.

12
13 Collaborative partnerships and capacity
14 building are priorities of the Fisheries Resource
15 Monitoring Program. ANILCA Title VIII mandates that
16 rural residents be afforded a meaningful role in
17 management of subsistence fisheries. The Fisheries
18 Resource Monitoring Program offers that opportunity for
19 partnership and participation of local residents in the
20 monitoring research. The final one is application cost
21 of the proposal will be evaluated for reasonableness.

22
23 General budget guidelines are
24 established by geographic region. These are listed on
25 the slide. The budget guidelines provide an initial
26 target for planning; however, they are not final
27 allocations. They are adjusted annually as needed to
28 ensure quality projects are funded.

29
30 In 2018, 53 projects were submitted for
31 consideration totaling \$5.9 million based on the
32 average annual cost. Of these, the Technical Review
33 Committee recommended for funding 38 projects, totaling
34 \$4.68 million. We're going to switch to the slide that
35 has Table A and it will show you the projects that were
36 submitted. So these are the projects that were
37 submitted. They're also in the back of Tab 1.
38 Everything in green is what the TRC recommended for
39 funding.

40
41 In 2018, the Department of the Interior
42 is allocating \$1.5 million for the Fisheries Resource
43 Monitoring Plan and the U.S. Forest Service is
44 allocating \$616,000 for a total of \$2.1 million. This
45 slide shows the Department of Interior's allocation by
46 region for 2018. There's a table we'll show you after
47 this. The slide shows you the U.S. Forest Service
48 allocation by region.

1 This is the final projects in order
2 that we are recommending for funding. This is also in
3 the back of your book. That ends my presentation.

4
5 Any questions.

6
7 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
8 Karen.

9
10 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, if I may.
11 With regard to FRMP, it's not a requirement of the
12 funding process, but also there's a couple other
13 considerations with regard to potential final
14 allocation of funds with regard to FRMP. One, these
15 are all considered new starts in this fiscal year and
16 we're under a continuing resolution. We cannot make
17 final decisions until we get a budget.

18
19 Secondly, this is a granting process
20 and grants have to be reviewed and approved for
21 anything over \$50,000 per year, which the majority of
22 ours are. So those are two additional steps we have to
23 take into consideration before we finalize the list on
24 what potentially will be funded.

25
26 In addition to during the presentation,
27 of the money that comes through the Department of
28 Interior we're comfortable with stipulating up to \$1.5
29 million for new starts. Although that overall figure
30 could vary by the time we make a final decision and get
31 through the process as a whole.

32
33 The reason being is that at times we
34 have salary savings. They'll pay for a PCS or another
35 project does not run as much. So there may be a little
36 bit more funding available than I originally committed
37 \$1.5 million. Although prior to this point we weren't
38 comfortable making a firm commitment at a higher dollar
39 figure.

40
41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg.

42
43 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
44 Through the Chair, Gene. Something you said about the
45 continuing resolution. We know it won't be before
46 March 23rd. Does that put any projects in jeopardy of
47 being too late to start?

48
49 MR. PELTOLA: If I may, Mr. Chair. It
50

1 has been a continual and rightfully so appropriate
2 question coming to OSM, are we potentially going to get
3 funded, because a lot of these projects have to start
4 seasonally.

5
6 MR. SIEKANIEC: Yeah.

7
8 MR. PELTOLA: And within some regions
9 that season is a lot earlier than other regions. So
10 that could potentially be challenge.

11
12 MR. BROWER: Mr. Chair.

13
14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Charlie.

15
16 MR. BROWER: So there are 53 proposals
17 and 29 of them were continuous projects that were
18 funded before or they had a timeframe or their funding
19 was expiring or there's just continuation of more
20 funding?

21
22 MS. HYER: We do have projects in the
23 water. I don't know the exact number, but those are
24 funded for four years, so funding goes to those. The
25 53 projects were what were submitted for consideration
26 and of those, based on the five criteria, TRC
27 recommended 38 of those for funding. Unfortunately,
28 that total funding then is \$4.6 million and we don't
29 have \$4.6 million to fund all the projects. It's \$4.6
30 million for total funding and we have about \$2.1
31 million. So we can fund about half of them.

32
33 MR. BROWER: So what happened to the
34 other 24 that weren't budgeted or funded?

35
36 MS. HYER: These are for new starts,
37 projects that are new. The other projects are funded
38 for their duration from -- some projects are only for
39 two years, some are for four. It depends on what the
40 investigator has requested. But the ongoing projects
41 are funded with a different pot of money. It's the
42 same pot of money, but the money is allocated -- the
43 FRMP is allocated to the continuation projects first.

44
45 MR. BROWER: So some of the projects
46 that were funded with a timeframe of four years or more
47 and they continue over four years, do you continue to
48 fund them until they're completed?

49
50

1 MS. HYER: Excuse me. Can you repeat
2 that.

3
4 MR. BROWER: Out of these funded
5 projects that you have on a four year cycle, when their
6 term elapses and they're still not finished with the
7 proposal, do you continue funding them?

8
9 MS. HYER: Mr. Brower. When projects
10 are submitted, we fund up to four years. So if a
11 project is ongoing beyond four years, then they have to
12 resubmit. Of the 29 -- Jennifer just pointed out, the
13 29 projects -- of all the projects that were submitted
14 there were 29 that had finished their four-year funding
15 cycle and they're applying for continued funding, but
16 every four years they have to submit a new proposal to
17 us.

18
19 MR. BROWER: Do they still rank high
20 after some of those other proposals were ranking low
21 where maybe had the option to bring those lower ranking
22 proposals up and not continue with a previous project?

23
24 MS. HYER: The proposals -- the mere
25 fact that they're a continuation does not make them
26 rank higher than other proposals. Each proposal is
27 evaluated on the five criteria. So a continuing
28 proposal has the advantage that if an investigator has
29 been successful in the past, it's easy to point to the
30 last four years of success, but some of our
31 investigators have been very successful in other arenas
32 collecting funding that they can point to, their
33 success there or they run other projects in our
34 program.

35
36 So they can say, well, this is a new
37 project but I have the ability because I ran this other
38 project for four years or eight years or two years. So
39 they have that opportunity. But each project is judged
40 on its own merits and it's judged on the project
41 proposal that is submitted to us. It is not judged
42 higher because it's a continuing project.

43
44 MR. BROWER: Okay. Thank you. I was
45 just curious because some of the other proposals are in
46 need of a study, but due to lack of ranking they're
47 never seen. I believe some of our constituents out
48 there want to get something out of these projects to
49 see what's happening with the changing climate and
50

1 changing environment with the water and so on.

2

3 I noticed that Southcentral and
4 Southeast get a pretty big portion of the funding. Do
5 they have a project partnership or something in line
6 with those and the others that don't get the ranking
7 don't have that quality of partnership in place?

8

9 MS. HYER: Southeast is funded through
10 DOA funding, so that is a different pot of money than
11 the DOI funding. So the other regions are funded from
12 the DOI pot of money. Southcentral has a contribution
13 of both DOA and DOI money, so that's something to keep
14 in mind.

15

16 The other thing to keep in mind is that
17 once a proposal is submitted to us and the TRC reviews
18 it, those comments go back to the investigator
19 eventually and we often will say this is a good idea,
20 it's important to our RACs, but this proposal falls
21 short in these areas, so please beef up the proposal
22 and resubmit it.

23

24 We have had situations where
25 investigators have taken that and they have changed
26 their proposals and resubmitted to our program
27 successfully. We even have situations where the
28 investigators have taken our comments, upgraded their
29 proposal and submitted to other funding sources
30 successfully. So there is a feedback loop in the
31 process.

32

33 MR. BROWER: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
34 Thank you.

35

36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Good question.
37 Any other questions for the Staff. I've got two here.

38

39 Bert first.

40

41 MR. FROST: So you've got \$4.6 million
42 requested, \$2.1 million available. So these 18
43 projects here are these the ones that are being
44 forwarded for approval today out of the 39 that
45 passed the Technical Review Committee?

46

47 MS. HYER: Yes. Those are the projects
48 based on the \$1.5 million and then the \$600,000 from
49 the Forest Service. So that is where we'd start

50

1 funding.

2

3 MR. FROST: So this is basically the
4 cut line out of the 39 projects that were passed.

5

6 MS. HYER: That's correct.

7

8 MR. FROST: I assume those other ones
9 are in ranked priority too. So if other funds became
10 available or one of these dropped out you just keep
11 working down the list, is that right?

12

13 MS. HYER: That is correct.
14 Historically we have added projects as we know our
15 budget is more final or we have money because we
16 haven't spent it in other places, yes.

17

18 MR. FROST: Okay.

19

20 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Greg.

21

22 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
23 Karen, Jennifer. For starters, I'd like to say thank
24 you. This took a lot of work. It takes a lot of
25 engagement by a lot of people to sort of develop a
26 process and then move your way through it and get to a
27 final recommendation. So for that I'd say thank you
28 and well done.

29

30 I do have some questions that seemed to
31 come up when I was reading through the information that
32 was provided. One of them in particular is along the
33 lines of the Regional Advisory Committee comments.
34 There seemed to be a fair number that were making
35 recommendations that were different than what the
36 Technical Review Committee had perhaps made. I did not
37 see any places that really were obvious where that
38 influenced anything.

39

40 Is that not intended to be an
41 engagement that has the opportunity for influencing the
42 outcomes? I'm thinking because of the deference that
43 goes to Regional Advisory Committees and how we might
44 think about that in this process.

45

46 MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman. Board
47 members. I do not think -- as far as deference, I
48 don't think the RACs have deference in the FRMP. I
49 thought that was the regulatory arena. I'm looking at

50

1 Ken for confirmation.

2

3

MR. LORD: That is correct.

4

5

MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you. So the
6 sense I got from that writing was maybe that wasn't
7 real clear. Maybe that's one of those areas then we
8 need to sort of really add some clarity around when we
9 do go back to the Regional Advisory Committees because
10 they were very much making recommendations in there,
11 but there was no formal process for them to make a
12 motion on the record and to move it forward. So I
13 think that's a consideration.

14

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I also noticed that there were quite a
number that ended up being tied, same scores. We don't
get the scoring to see what the other ones look like.
So my question or maybe a thought is have we weighted
our criteria appropriately. If you're getting
everything jammed up and really, really tight scores,
you might need some additional separation by
reconsidering how you're weighing the criteria to help
you get more definition around the different projects.

I don't know if you have any thoughts
on that or not.

MS. HYER: I think the scores being
tied is reflective of how important the projects are
and that there were a lot of good projects submitted.
I think it's worth taking note how many projects the
TRC recommended for funding. So those are all good,
sound projects. If they're not, they wouldn't be
recommended for funding. So that is the case.

When we put the notice of funding award
out, we said that we would be -- I can't remember the
exact wording, but we would consider in the case of a
tie the actual cost of the project and lean towards the
cheaper project. So that was stated in our notice of
funding.

But in the North Slope for example, the
Regional Advisory Council was very interested in the
Nuiqsut project and they spoke to that. There were
three tied projects there and that is not the cheapest
project. We did reorder those projects because of that
RAC input. So that is one place that the RAC input
comes in very handy.

1 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you. So I also
2 noticed -- I understood this was the table that's being
3 recommended, but I also see in the Interagency Staff
4 comments associated with -- well, it's Project No. 18-
5 252. In the write-up, it says it's recommended that
6 it's not ready for funding, but yet it's in the list.
7 Is that just something that needs to be corrected?
8 Maybe it's just a process question.

9
10 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, if I may.

11
12 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yes.

13
14 MR. PELTOLA: If you look at what comes
15 out of the TRC, under the old system it used to be like
16 a red light/green light, recommended or not recommended
17 for funding. The product of the TRC is a ranking
18 associated based on the criteria. That establishes the
19 order so to speak that all the projects are placed on.
20 There are individual comments coming from the ISC when
21 they're conducted in their review and those are also
22 taken into consideration. Where those comments may
23 come into a more significant role is that especially if
24 there's a tie between projects.

25
26 If you look at the regions that we have
27 with regard to FRMP, each of those regions via the
28 program has been established with a certain percentage
29 of funding targeted to that specific region. Those
30 comments, whether it be from ISC or the RAC, those
31 become significant in the sense that -- if we go to
32 region X and we have \$400,000 and say there's three
33 projects which are -- in this case, like the list of
34 18, we can go down there and there's \$50,000 left.
35 That goes off to the side.

36
37 Once we get through all the regions,
38 then there's a pool of money so to speak that is not
39 allocated to a specific region. In those instances, we
40 go back to the overall list and take the highest ranked
41 project and if we have the next highest ranked project
42 or three or four of them on the same plane, then the
43 comments from the Regional Advisory Council plays a
44 significant role in addition to the comments from other
45 entities such as the Board and ISC could play a factor
46 there as well.

47
48 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Gene. So I
49 guess I'm still not certain. So 18-252 being
50

1 recognized as not ready to be funded, does it need to
2 remain on there or is what you said, does that clear up
3 some money to potentially reallocate for a different
4 project?

5
6 MR. PELTOLA: With this specific
7 example, I'm not sure what 18-252 is, but the ISC
8 comment, that it's not ready to go to the public per
9 se, is taken into consideration just like any other
10 comment is. Although the efforts of the TRC with
11 regard to the overall order of the projects within that
12 pool of 18 in this case has a lot more weight.

13
14 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Jennifer.

15
16 MS. HARDIN: Through the Chair, Mr.
17 Siekaniec. I just want to note that the ISC, like the
18 RACs, are not privy to the full proposal package, so
19 they are making comments based on a review of the
20 Technical Review Committee's justification and an
21 abstract. The Technical Review Committee is the only
22 group that is able to evaluate the proposal packets in
23 their entirety.

24
25 MR. SIEKANIEC: Thank you, Jennifer. I
26 guess that just raises another question on kind of the
27 transparency of it. Why the Technical Review Committee
28 is the only one on there. You chair the ISC. Do you
29 also chair the TRC or are you on the TRC?

30
31 MS. HARDIN: Through the Chair. For
32 this round and the previous round I was co-chair of the
33 TRC because I was at that time the anthropology
34 supervisor and the co-chairs of the TRC are the
35 supervisor of the Anthropology Division and the
36 supervisor of the Fisheries Division of OSM. With the
37 change in staffing, that's why I was doing double duty.

38
39 Also regarding your first question,
40 because it's a competitive proposal process, the
41 proposal packets are confidential and they're not
42 shared outside of the TRC and the staff that do the
43 initial review of the packets for completeness. All of
44 the individuals who participate in that process sign
45 non-disclosure agreements and confidentiality
46 agreements. This is a requirement of our cooperative
47 agreement and contracting rules that we have to follow.

48
49 MR. SIEKANIEC: Okay. I appreciate
50

1 that. It seems like it just gets complicated when you
2 go to the ISC members, which represent Board members
3 here, for them to have the full understanding of how to
4 have the dialogue if they're not seeing the scoring as
5 well.

6
7 And as I already said, the scoring
8 related to what's causing all of those ties and
9 everything being really tightly lumped, which is an
10 indication of maybe very good projects. It may be also
11 an indication that that's why you might need to weight
12 things a little bit differently to give you some of
13 that clearer separation.

14
15 Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

16
17 I appreciate the opportunity.

18
19 MR. LORD: The Chairman had to step out
20 to take care of some business, so I'm going to take
21 over leading the meeting. So lucky you guys.

22
23 (Laughter)

24
25 MR. LORD: So any other.....

26
27 MS. MOURITSEN: Mr. Chair.

28
29 MR. LORD: Yeah, please. You had a
30 question.

31
32 MS. MOURITSEN: Mr. Chair. Can I
33 follow up on Greg's question?

34
35 MR. LORD: Please do.

36
37 MS. MOURITSEN: Okay. Mr. Chair. I
38 had noticed the same project that Mr. Siekaniec brought
39 up, 252, and I had noted in the summary part for that
40 group of projects it said something like this project
41 is not ready to be funded, but it's kind of midway in
42 the ranking and it's on this table. But in the
43 individual little summary writeup it described the
44 project as being really strong and having a good
45 investigator and a method and it seemed like the only
46 thing the little summary said is that they didn't have
47 rural support for it. So I don't know if maybe the --
48 so maybe you have some -- I noticed that.

49
50

1 MS. PITKA: I have some insight.

2
3 MR. LORD: Rhonda, please.

4
5 MS. PITKA: I may have some insight on
6 that and I may be able to educate a little bit on this.
7 In those three communities you are not allowed to do
8 any research without the tribal council involvement.
9 Whether or not there was an actual formal letter of
10 support -- you know, one of the communities is Beaver
11 and another is Nulato and I'm familiar with both of
12 those communities pretty well. So in order to do
13 research in those communities, you would need to work
14 with the tribal council and work with them pretty
15 intimately. They may not have given a letter of
16 support.

17
18 MS. MOURITSEN: Thank you.

19
20 MS. HYER: Mr. Chairman/Solicitor, may
21 I add something?

22
23 MR. LORD: Please do, Karen.

24
25 MS. HYER: I work in the north and so
26 that's where I'm most familiar. We have a project up
27 there, the Nuiqsut project, and it's a cooperative, but
28 the State is the lead on it. They made initial
29 contact, but until a project is funded it's hard to
30 engage communities because you don't want to give them
31 the impression that you're actually going to have this
32 project in their area.

33
34 So sometimes initial contact is made
35 and a discussion takes place with the knowledge that
36 more discussion -- if the project is funded, more
37 discussion is going to have to take place. That may be
38 the case in this project too.

39
40 But it's a lot of time and a lot of
41 money going to those communities and engaging those
42 people and a lot of investigators are unwilling to do
43 that until they know they actually have -- that the
44 project actually is going to go because it's
45 everybody's time and they don't -- they're very
46 conscientious of the relationships they have with these
47 people and they don't want to appear to be misleading
48 them.

49
50

1 So sometimes the TRC will come back and
2 say this needs to -- and Nuiqsut is one too where they
3 need a lot more outreach and they know that and they
4 will do that if the project is funded, but if it's not
5 funded they're going to move on and do some other
6 things. I don't know if that clarifies or not, but
7 that is one situation in another region that we have.

8
9 MR. LORD: Bert.

10
11 MR. FROST: Two comments unrelated to
12 each other, but just to follow up on this. So this
13 begs the question, as I understand it, in the five
14 criteria strategic importance is rated at something and
15 partnerships are weighted equally. Based on what you
16 just said, to me that seems exactly why they should not
17 be weighted the same.

18
19 Because if you don't want to go out and
20 put out those expectations, you have to have some
21 conversations I understand, but it goes back to the
22 conversation that the strategic priority may need a
23 higher weight over the partnership piece. The
24 partnership piece is important, but it may not be as
25 important as the strategic piece.

26
27 So I would just sort of throw that out
28 there to think about how those criteria are written and
29 how they're weighted potentially in the future. Not so
30 much for these projects. These projects -- I'm not
31 going to take issue with what's already been done, but
32 sort of in the future we should maybe look at the
33 process and see if there's a better way as Greg has
34 sort of indicated to maybe get the clumping undone. So
35 that's just a comment.

36
37 MS. HYER: I just want to follow up on
38 the particular project I was talking about because I
39 don't want to confuse community outreach with
40 partnership and capacity building because the
41 investigators help participate in partner and capacity
42 building and they have contacted local people that will
43 be working on the project.

44
45 They have also contacted students from
46 the area and they have made efforts to involve them in
47 the planning process, involve them in the execution of
48 the project, have them do some of their school work in
49 execution of the project and then bring them back to

50

1 the communities to report to them as they did on other
2 projects that we have up on the North Slope and that's
3 entirely different than engaging the communities in
4 discussions. So they have done a lot of partnership
5 and capacity building too along with initial contacts
6 of the communities.

7
8 That's all I had.

9
10 Thank you.

11
12 MR. FROST: I have a third question.

13
14 MR. LORD: Go ahead.

15
16 MR. FROST: So going back to my
17 original question about the project. So we have these
18 18 projects which are funded. I assume these are in
19 rank order from the best to the worst -- I mean the
20 best to the -- I mean there are 39 projects that have
21 all been forwarded to funding, so they're all great
22 projects, all right, but they're in rank order, right,
23 on this sheet for the 18 that are moving forward.

24
25 There are other ones that are still
26 available for funding, but we don't know what the next
27 one in line is. Do you have the 39 ranked from one to
28 the bottom so that the Board can see what projects are
29 next in the cue if funding becomes available?

30
31 MS. HYER: When it gets beyond the 1.5
32 I just look at Gene.

33
34 (Laughter)

35
36 MR. LORD: Good answer.

37
38 MR. PELTOLA: Yes, and we do have a
39 list from 1 to 39. If additional funds from Interior
40 that come through OSM are made available to support a
41 project for the two or the four year term as stipulated
42 for the project, then we do go further down that list.

43
44 The challenge that as a program that we
45 are faced is that -- I'd like to go back just a little
46 historically here. The last round we had -- in the
47 typical round we'll have closer to that 2 to 2.5
48 million dollar range for fresh starts. A byproduct of
49 having that list available is that the Board directed

50

1 us the last time around when we were under a different
2 FRMP structure to continue to fund down the list.

3
4 One of those byproducts is that we're
5 on a two-year FRMP proposal cycle. The projects are
6 typically two or four years or longer. Hence, this
7 round we have roughly \$700,000 or \$1 million less than
8 we typically would have because the Board chose to go
9 further down that list.

10
11 What we do is that with regard to --
12 and I stipulated earlier we do have that 1 to 39 list
13 available. As the ARD, when we have that list and,
14 say, if we get a phone call that says you actually have
15 an additional 300,000 for this year, then we look at
16 how far we can go down that list and continue to
17 support that project in the future and we make phone
18 calls based on that. Are you at the point where you
19 can still execute the roles and meet the objectives of
20 your proposal if we were to fund you. That does occur
21 on a fairly regular basis but not all the time.

22
23 In addition to -- another thing I just
24 want to bring to the Board's attention. At times say
25 we have -- let me think of a generic project. The
26 effects of carp on the Black River. I just made that
27 up so I don't put anybody on the spot. If we get a
28 proposal for that and it's slated to be \$80,000 a year,
29 if we have \$65,000 a year, we've done this in the past,
30 I call up the principal investigator because it
31 happened to be the next one on the list and say we have
32 an additional \$65,000 we're comfortable on putting out,
33 would you be able to execute your project as designed
34 with that amount of money. Typically we get a lot of
35 yeses, so then we go further down the list like that
36 when we can.

37
38 MR. FROST: Sorry, but my question is
39 can the Board see the list from 1 to 39 so that --
40 because we're being asked to approve this list, 1 to
41 18, but we don't know what's below. If you have to
42 make decisions below, the Board is not weighing in on
43 those 19 to 35. From my perspective, I can't speak for
44 the Board as a whole, but as for me I would like to see
45 the entire list so I can see how they're ranked in
46 order and so what the next projects -- with the caveat
47 that there may be some -- in terms of funding levels
48 and things like that, they may not be exactly right
49 down the list, but I don't know what those are right
50

1 now.

2

3 MR. PELTOLA: And we can make that list
4 available and apologize for not including you on the
5 booklet.

6

7 MR. FROST: All right.

8

9 MR. LORD: Jennifer.

10

11 MS. HARDIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I
12 just wanted to circle back to your comments, Mr. Frost,
13 about the criteria and thank you for those comments.
14 When Stewart Cogswell and I were before you in 2016
15 introducing this process, we said at that time that
16 this is a new process and we expect it to be improved
17 over time as it comes to life. So thank you for those
18 comments.

19

20 I do also just want to mention just as
21 a reminder that in the Fisheries Resource Monitoring
22 Program one of the objectives is to make sure that
23 these funds are distributed statewide, so there is a
24 geographic component to the ranking list. When you're
25 looking at the list of projects, you see them in ranked
26 order, but also there are geographic considerations.

27

28 The five criteria are weighted equally
29 and some projects do well and some did well in some
30 criteria and less well in others, so we're not able to
31 answer specific questions about the scoring, but there
32 are a number of considerations when you're looking at
33 the ranked list to keep in mind.

34

35 MR. LORD: Karen.

36

37 MS. MOURITSEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
38 And thank you for that Jennifer and Karen. I can see
39 this is a very complicated process, but very well
40 thought out and I was impressed when I was reading the
41 materials. I do have some questions kind of following
42 up on Bert.

43

44 So I like having these ranked lists in
45 case we get more money, in case we get less money, I
46 hope not, but I took the list of the 18 and then I
47 tried to mark them on the longer list. So I was able
48 to see -- I don't know if you can see my markings, but
49 it is geographically because there's projects for each

50

1 of these areas.

2

3 I was wondering how do you decide the
4 order? And maybe I shouldn't be focused on the order,
5 but I'm focused on the order in case -- like other
6 places I've worked, I hope this doesn't happen, but in
7 case we have to cut a couple off at the bottom. And
8 also we have Forest Service money versus DOI money.

9

10 So I was wondering how you decided what
11 areas to pull them from and then I would be interested
12 in what Bert is saying about -- I guess this is the
13 whole list -- how it would go order-wise while you keep
14 the geographic and other considerations in play.

15

16 Anyway, how did you decide how to
17 divide them up by area and which area to go to first?
18 Because I noticed some areas had three or four
19 projects. Some areas the amount would be smaller, but
20 they only have like two projects.

21

22 MS. HYER: The guide for the areas is
23 that table I showed you. And that's how we decide
24 percentages for the areas and that is -- that
25 allocation came when the original FRMP was decided. So
26 it is entirely possible to have a project that has a
27 score of -- because the scores were based 1 to 100, so
28 let's say one could have -- in the Yukon it could have
29 100 percent and in the northern region maybe an 85, but
30 that would be the top ranking in the northern.

31

32 So we take that and we take the top
33 ranking in the Yukon and we just start at the top and
34 move down based on the score and then we know how much
35 money we have and we know what percentage goes to each
36 region. For example, just to make things simple, let's
37 say we're putting 100,000 into northern, maybe we have
38 two projects and they total 95,000, then we'll take
39 that extra 5,000 and put it in the kitty because we
40 don't have a \$5,000 project.

41

42 MS. MOURITSEN: Okay.

43

44 MS. HYER: Of course all my numbers are
45 totally artificial.

46

47 MS. MOURITSEN: Sure, sure.

48

49 MS. HYER: But if something is on the

50

1 line and maybe it's \$10,000 more and we think we can
2 absorb that in that region, we'll move it in. Last
3 time Southcentral didn't have any good projects and we
4 didn't put any projects in Southcentral because there
5 was nothing that the TRC felt met their criteria, so
6 that does happen too. This go around we had good
7 projects in every region. So we have to adjust as we
8 see what projects we have to work with.

9
10 MS. MOURITSEN: Thank you for that. A
11 question I was thinking about earlier when Mr. Brower
12 asked one of his questions. I saw a couple places in
13 here where there were ties and both the RACs and the
14 ISC were saying if there's a tie and push came to
15 shove, they recommended a certain one of them. I think
16 the ones I remember they both agreed on the one.

17
18 Then there was another one in here
19 where the top ranking one the RAC was making comments
20 because it was one of these projects that had been, I
21 guess, reapplied for a number of times and they'd been
22 doing it for a number of years. Evidently very
23 successfully. But a RAC comment was maybe we should
24 think about not doing that one for a while.

25
26 So I was just wondering how as you go
27 through this list like this and you're looking at the
28 amount of money in every region and the rankings, are
29 you also considering what those comments that either
30 the RAC or the ISC's made.

31
32 MS. HYER: The Regional Advisory
33 Councils engage very early on in this process and they
34 help direct the priorities. That's really where their
35 strength of recommendation comes in is with the
36 priorities. But we do consider that and we have had
37 situations where the Regional Advisory Councils have
38 said we feel like we've been over-surveyed here and we
39 don't want this project and we have pulled projects.

40
41 It is a little bit difficult because
42 it's not a motion and so it may be one RAC member
43 expressing his own opinion and not all the RAC members.
44 I don't attend every RAC meeting, so I don't exactly
45 know what was said for individual projects, but that
46 does happen. We do try to accommodate our RACs.

47
48 Mr. Brower's comment earlier was about
49 a specific project that the RAC has continued to
50

1 express concern about. We have worked with an
2 investigator. They have submitted twice. They haven't
3 been successful. And we are looking at other ways to
4 approach that issue because we know that it is very
5 important to the North Slope RAC and every time we go
6 up there we talk about it.

7
8 So not every project is meant to be an
9 FRMP project, but we do take very seriously the
10 concerns of our RACs.

11
12 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, if I may. In
13 addition to Charlie's question about a particular
14 project, we have a lot of long-term, long-running
15 projects that compete every four years. At times those
16 proposals evolve over time and they change. Sometimes
17 they come up with a higher rank and also at times they
18 come up with a lower rank even if it's a very similar
19 project and that's based on the five criteria which
20 were first presented to the Board when we initiated the
21 discussion.

22
23 Board Member Frost's comments is that
24 the advantage of a two-year cycle is that we have an
25 opportunity to learn from their experience and we can
26 modify the criteria if it still meets the regional
27 intent of the design of the program. So there is an
28 opportunity to do that.

29
30 The FRMP process now is different than
31 it was two years ago, which is different than it was
32 two years prior to that. So there is an opportunity
33 for the program to evolve. The challenge that we are
34 faced with by our involvement, that's OSM's involvement
35 in the process is to ensure that evolution of the
36 program still meets the original intent of the funding
37 source, which was stipulated when the program was
38 created.

39
40 MR. SIEKANIEC: Mr. Chair. Thanks,
41 Gene. I think Jennifer also kind of reiterated that
42 this is a new process and again I want to compliment
43 everyone. New processes are hard to get figured out so
44 they're operational as well as you want them.

45
46 I think there was another statement
47 that was made in the information that was provided that
48 I just want to follow up a little bit on. There was a
49 statement by the ISC committee that because of a
50

1 continued reduced Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program
2 project funding, allocative decisions may necessarily
3 result in increasingly conservative management of
4 important subsistence resources.

5
6 That's a big deal. I think that needs
7 to be sort of in our consideration of getting the
8 projects in place that really influence the ability to
9 make sure that we are providing the best opportunity
10 for subsistence that we can.

11
12 So, in line with that, I think
13 Jennifer's note that this new process needs to be
14 looked at, I think I would recommend at this point --
15 we talked a little bit yesterday about it. Maybe it's
16 time that we do an after-action review or make sure we
17 really understand what's coming out of this.

18
19 So that we approve these rounds today,
20 we get these in play, but we really take a look at does
21 the criteria need to be adjusted. Are we communicating
22 with the RACs in the appropriate way to give them the
23 understanding of how they actually interface with this.
24 Can we add any additional transparency. Because it
25 does still seem a little bit awkward to me that the ISC
26 is not fully privileged to what scoring is because
27 everything gets subjective at some point in time.

28
29 So that would just be my
30 recommendation. I don't know if that takes a
31 subcommittee of a mix of individuals. You know, I
32 think the in-season managers might be a great -- or an
33 addition to a review panel that has at least one in-
34 season manager so that you can ask the questions of did
35 this influence your decision-making and did you have to
36 become or restrict on allocative subsistence resources
37 because you didn't have information that was needed?

38
39 I think those are all very valid
40 questions and need to be given some consideration.

41
42 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, if I may. I
43 think this is the third FRMP round I've been exposed to
44 since coming to the program. We do go through the
45 agencies and we do go through other entities on how to
46 revamp the program.

47
48 As far as in-season managers, the
49 majority of our in-season managers are with the Fish
50

1 and Wildlife Service and I think to a lesser degree but
2 still a significant part is the National Park Service.

3
4 When this program, as we see it today,
5 was reviewed, Fisheries Ecological Service, who is
6 housed within the Fish and Wildlife Service, that house
7 the majority of our in-season managers in the Fish and
8 Wildlife Service, gave us six recommendations that they
9 wanted to see involved in this which you see before us
10 today. Five of those recommendations were accepted and
11 implemented into the program, so we do extensive
12 engagement when we look at structuring the program.

13
14 Honestly, the challenge we are seeing
15 today with regard to the FRMP is that years ago this
16 program used to have a significant higher funding level
17 with regard to FRMP and programmatically. It used to
18 be where the program used to fund a lot of projects
19 which did not even submit a project proposal. It was
20 non-competitive, discretionary at the will of the ARD.
21 We're not in that budgetary environment anymore and,
22 understandably, it's getting a lot more competitive
23 with regard to the dollars that we have available to
24 distribute.

25
26 It's not only with the FRMP. The other
27 aspect of our outflow coming from OSM on behalf of the
28 program is we have the Partners for Fisheries Program
29 and with that particular program -- it used to be a
30 \$2.5 million program prior to my arrival. We're now at
31 about the \$800-900,000 level with regard to that
32 program as well.

33
34 That is getting even more so
35 competitive with that particular program, which we're
36 seeing some similar things here with FRMP, that we used
37 to not have enough projects under that program. The
38 last round we were in, I guess for some, not a good
39 position, but for the program we had a lot of interest
40 in going after those dollars just like we do have with
41 FRMP here today.

42
43 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

44
45 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you.

46
47 Wayne.

48
49 MR. OWEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I

50

1 wonder, from the previous discussion, if it is now or
2 if we are coming close to the time when we should break
3 barriers between regions and fund rather the top
4 priorities for the entire state instead of one project
5 for Southwest and however many for Yukon. I just have
6 to wonder that when it gets to that point or are we
7 nearing that point.

8
9 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, if I may. One
10 thing that's specific about -- I mean you might hear
11 Staff talk about the blue book now and then. The blue
12 book is basically the direction for what the fund was
13 created for. Within that, with regard to the regions,
14 because we have a diminishing dollar to give out so to
15 speak, yes, we are funding less projects per region.
16 Although as specifically mentioned in the blue book
17 there are certain -- the program is not intended to be
18 a funding source specifically if you're one or two
19 regions. So that is specifically outlined.

20
21 My comment earlier about the beauty of
22 this program is that every two years we can evaluate
23 and look at the criteria and how we adjust things but
24 still try to maintain the intent of the creation of the
25 program itself. But that is definitely something we
26 can look at as long as we address the concerns and the
27 original funding source would be a comment I made.

28
29 We may be approaching that point where
30 even harder decisions have to be made about what gets
31 funded and what gets not funded with regard to the
32 requirements and needs of the Federal Subsistence
33 Program. I would say that, you know, we're going to
34 have a lot of people that are happy that get the letter
35 or the call saying we are going to fund your program or
36 we're going to have people that are upset.

37
38 I mean right now if you look at 39,
39 that means there's 21 projects and principal
40 investigators and regions that may not get a funding
41 dollar coming from this program. So, in a sense, that
42 competitiveness can increase the quality of the
43 projects that we're seeing in the long term.

44
45 It's definitely not one particular
46 segment of our applicants that have been beneficial.
47 We go through different cycles. For a period of time
48 we may have one particular department, agency or bureau
49 that is very successful in receiving fundings. Five,
50

1 six, seven years later it may change, but the changes
2 in principal investigators or potential support in the
3 region are not.

4

5 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Lynn.

6

7 MR. POLACCA: I think Greg did bring up
8 a valid point. Now is kind of the time where we really
9 need to go back and actually take a look at our
10 guidance, our protocols as far as how we're actually
11 taking a look at the whole entire process for funding
12 and I think we're at that point now where we need to
13 figure out how to split these hairs now and where we're
14 starting to get these ties coming up and all and I
15 think we do need to sit down and come up with better
16 guidance.

17

18 I don't know where that lies, if that's
19 going to be another -- you know, referring back down to
20 the ISC or over to the office of OSM and having them
21 create guidance for us so that we can take a look at
22 and make a decision and say, okay, this is what we're
23 going to do and do that a lot more sooner than later
24 because we're starting to come into another funding
25 cycle now.

26

27 I'd rather see us at least get that
28 straightened out right now and that way we know we can
29 get that information out to all the people that are
30 requesting for funds so that they have clear guidance
31 on what they need to submit.

32

33 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Just food for
34 thought for my idea. What do we do if one region gets
35 all the money? I mean I think that's why we've kind of
36 looked at it and as far as we know all across the
37 region there's needs for information. Subsistence
38 users are all across the state and we're chewing up a
39 process I've watched change since I've been here three
40 times.

41

42 I'd just like to take my hat off to the
43 Staff, you know, and that they've done I think the best
44 job with the tools that they have in the box to come up
45 with fundable projects.

46

47 Again, everything has room for
48 improvement and maybe we can give that guidance here
49 from this Board on how we'd like to see some of those
50

1 improvements and set a little -- I mean like I stated
2 yesterday maybe the Board has a couple priorities we'd
3 like to fund and the office staff has some priorities
4 that they could fund with the relationships they build.
5 But when we come to the Board at this stage of the
6 game, I'm going to have to trust the Staff

7
8 MR. BROWER: Mr. Chair. Just a
9 comment. I notice in reading through these proposals I
10 know we have six regions that we have funds for and
11 projects. In one, I want to take your country there,
12 Mr. Chairman, the Heidi Lake Sockeye Salmon Project
13 that's been funded since 2001 and it's been continuous
14 ever since this. And you have these other projects.

15
16 You know, salmon is not the only
17 subsistence source of fish throughout each region.
18 There's different species. And there's other folks in
19 each different regions that has a concern with their
20 fisheries that are coming to a change and they need
21 help too to understand what's happening, but they still
22 rank way low because there's no investigators, there's
23 no partnerships or whatever.

24
25 It seems to be like the majority, I'll
26 use salmon, when you have to look at all six regions.
27 Not all fisheries are salmon. There's broad fish,
28 grayling, cisco, Dolly Varden and so on. A major
29 concern to my reading is salmon so far.

30
31 I just wanted to make that known.

32
33 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

34
35 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Bert.

36
37 MR. FROST: Do we need to make a motion
38 to move forward?

39
40 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Yeah. Rhonda.

41
42 MS. PITKA: I do have a comment. I've
43 got several. I feel like some of these projects
44 probably -- because of the importance to the management
45 of this resource could perhaps be funded in a different
46 manner versus being in a competitive manner. It
47 sometimes seems that we have several projects that are
48 so important to in-season management that perhaps there
49 may be a different process for that.

50

1 And I also think that because of the
2 importance we're attaching to the ISC recommendations
3 that me and Charlie Brower need ISC members in that
4 room. We currently have no one in that room except for
5 Orville and as wonderful and knowledgeable as Orville
6 is, that's quite important.

7
8 I also think that this discussion we
9 had over the last two days and I've made several of my
10 comments already well known. I really, really believe
11 that the FRMP partnership component of that program is
12 crucial. I have actually been involved with several
13 projects where there was no partnership with local
14 tribes that was meaningful at all and they were able to
15 come in and say they had a partnership because we
16 delivered gasoline in a boat.

17
18 So I truly, truly love the spirit of
19 this program and I'm fully in support of the
20 partnership component. Thank you.

21
22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Thank you,
23 Rhonda. Greg, you had one more. Bert, I mean.

24
25 MR. FROST: Well, I was going to make a
26 motion.

27
28 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The floor is
29 open.

30
31 MR. FROST: I don't know if I can do
32 this right. I'm not very good at this. A motion to --
33 after the approval of this cycle is done is to do an
34 after-action or a review process. I wrote down three
35 things that we might want to look at. You know, how
36 the priorities are set. I mean review how the criteria
37 are, the five criteria are and how they're weighted in
38 relation to not only priorities but the partnerships,
39 the whole 10 yards. Look at how the five criteria are
40 evaluated.

41
42 Greater transparency in terms of both
43 for the RACs and the ISC. And then on Wayne's point,
44 maybe re-looking at the geographic distribution. Are
45 there different models that could take place so that
46 whether you change the percentages or you get rid of
47 the percentage? I think that's up for the review
48 committee to sort of decide. I think there's lots of
49 ideas out there that you could do that with.

50

1 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: That's a
2 motion.

3
4 MR. BROWER: Was that a motion or just
5 a recommendation?

6
7 MR. FROST: I don't know. I probably
8 made the motion incorrectly.

9
10 MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair. What I'd
11 recommend, just for ease and clarity in the
12 administrative record, if you would make a motion to
13 address this particular plan. After that is adopted,
14 disapproved, modified, whatever it may be, then make a
15 second motion to direct OSM to work with the affected
16 bureaus to review the criteria.

17
18 What we normally do anyway after a FRMP
19 round, to incorporate a look at the criteria and how
20 they're established and all the recommendations made.
21 So I would recommend that you split the motions up
22 into two segments. One, address, potentially approve.
23 Two, post-completion of the round and then direct OSM
24 in cooperation with the bureaus and affected party
25 members to look at those criteria and make
26 recommendations for consideration.

27
28 MR. OWEN: Mr. Chair.

29
30 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Wayne.

31
32 MR. OWEN: I move that the Board accept
33 the recommendations of the 2018 Fisheries Resource
34 Monitoring Program as presented by unanimous consent.

35
36 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We have an open
37 motion here. Is that a second to your original motion?

38
39 MR. FROST: Yes.

40
41 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: As stated by
42 Wayne. The original motion is to accept the 2018 FRMP
43 project list as presented by Staff. Any objections to
44 the motion.

45
46 MS. MOURITSEN: I have a question about
47 the motion. Do we need to either add to it or have a
48 different motion to ask OSM to show us the list of the
49 projects that are at the bottom going down from this
50

1 list?

2

3

MR. BROWER: A different motion.

4

5

6

MS. MOURITSEN: Is that a different motion? Okay.

7

8

9

MR. LORD: I don't think that's a motion at all. I think you just ask.

10

11

12

MS. MOURITSEN: Okay. Okay. Okay.

13

14

MR. PELTOLA: Mr. Chair, if I may.

15

16

17

Once again I apologize that was not included. We have a printout and it is available and we'll distribute it to the Board members.

18

19

20

21

22

23

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: So we do have a motion on the floor that's been seconded to accept the FRMP 2018 Monitoring Program. It's been presented with unanimous consent. Any objections to the motion as presented.

24

25

(No objections)

26

27

28

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Hearing none. The motion carries unanimously.

29

30

MR. FROST: Now.

31

32

(Laughter)

33

34

35

36

37

38

39

MR. FROST: Make a second motion. So I move that we instruct OSM to work closely with ISC to do an after-action review of FRMP process, looking specifically at priorities, transparency, geographic distribution or any other things that they may deem necessary to help improve the process.

40

41

MR. SIEKANIEC: Second.

42

43

44

CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The motion has been made and seconded. Discussion.

45

46

47

48

49

MS. HARDIN: I'm very sorry to interrupt, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to ask if it would be worthwhile to include the Technical Review Committee in that after-action review since they have direct

50

1 knowledge with how the ranking process has gone for the
2 last two cycles.

3
4 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Noted.
5 Concurrence on that.

6
7 MS. PITKA: I just have a quick note.
8 When you second a motion, can you please say I second
9 the motion.

10
11 MR. PELTOLA: We need to receive a
12 motion, Mr. Chair, from Greg Siekaniec.

13
14 MR. SIEKANIEC: I second the motion.
15 Thanks, Rhonda.

16
17 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Call for the
18 question.

19
20 MR. BROWER: Question.

21
22 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: The question
23 has been called. All in favor signify by saying aye.

24
25 IN UNISON: Aye.

26
27 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Opposed same
28 sign.

29
30 (No opposing votes)

31
32 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: Motion carries.
33 We will review the process this coming year. With that
34 we'll break for lunch. 1:30.

35
36 Thank you guys for your help.

37
38 (Off record)

39
40 (On record)

41
42 CHAIRMAN CHRISTIANSON: We'll go ahead
43 and reconvene. I truly apologize for being a little
44 bit late this afternoon. I'm dealing with some
45 personal stuff. We're again back on track. Before we
46 do get started today, this morning I kind of overlooked
47 a pretty serious situation and would like to take this
48 time to recognize Mike Bangs and his recent passing as
49 a Regional Chair for Southeast. I think there was

50