

SOUTHEAST ALASKA
SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL
ADVISORY COUNCIL

October 27-29, 2015
Yakutat, Alaska



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Sockeye salmon swim upstream to spawn.



USFWS

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SOUTHEAST ALASKA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Alaska Native Brotherhood Meeting Hall
Yakutat, Alaska
October 27-29, 2015; 9:30 a.m.

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Public comments are welcome for each agenda item and for regional concerns not included on the agenda. The Council appreciates hearing your concerns and knowledge. Please fill out a comment form to be recognized by the Council chair. Time limits may be set to provide opportunity for all to testify and keep the meeting on schedule.

PLEASE NOTE: These are estimated times and the agenda is subject to change. Contact staff for the current schedule. Evening sessions are at the call of the chair.

AGENDA

*Asterisk identifies action item.

1. Roll Call and Establish Quorum (*Harvey Kitka, Secretary*).....4

2. Invocation

3. Call to Order (*Mike Bangs, Chair*)

4. Welcome and Introductions (*Mike Bangs, Chair; Victoria Demmert; Lee Benson*)

5. Review and Adopt Agenda* (*Mike Bangs Chair*) 1

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b. Customary and Traditional Use Determination Working Group Report

11. New Business (Chair)

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c. Presentation of Length of Service Award (*FSB Member*)

d. Summary of 2015 Requests for Reconsideration (*Cal Casipit*)

e. Summary of Wildlife and Fisheries Special Actions and Harvest Reports (*Jeff Reeves*)

f. FY2015 Annual Report*146

12. Agency Reports

Tribal Governments

Native Organizations

USFS; Personnel and Budget Update (*Tom Whitford*)

NPS; Wrangell-St. Elias Backcountry and Wilderness Stewardship Plan and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve Fall 2015 Report (*Barb Cellarius*)148

BLM; Whiting Harbor Update (*Dennis Teitzel*)

ADF&G; Summary of Subsistence Division Studies (*Lauren Sill*)

OSM; Fall 2015 Report (*Chuck Ardizzone*).....152

USCG; Boating Safety (*Jason Boyle, LCDR, U. S. Coast Guard*)

13. Future Meeting Dates*

a. Winter 2016 All-Council Meeting Update (*Meeting Committee*).....155

b. Select Fall 2016 meeting date and location.....160

14. Closing Comments

15. Adjourn (*Chair*)

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

Reasonable Accommodations

The Federal Subsistence Board is committed to providing access to this meeting for all participants. Please direct all requests for sign language interpreting services, closed captioning, or other accommodation needs to Robert Larson, 907-772-5930, robertlarson@fs.fed.us, or 800-877-8339 (TTY), by close of business on October 16, 2015.

REGION 1

Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Seat	Year Appointed <i>Term Expires</i>	Member Name and Community
1	2013 2016	Arthur M. Bloom Tenakee Springs
2	2004 2016	Frank G. Wright Jr. Hoonah
3	1993 2016	Patricia A. Phillips Pelican
4	2000 2016	Michael A. Douville Craig
5	2002 2016	Harvey Kitka Sitka Secretary
6	2013 2017	Robert F. Schroeder Juneau
7	2014 2017	Albert H. Howard Angoon
8	2002 2017	Donald C. Hernandez Point Baker
9	2012 2015	Kenneth L. Jackson Kake
10	2012 2015	Mr. Aaron T. Isaacs, Jr. Klawock
11	2010 2017	John A. Yeager Wrangell
12	2003 2015	Michael D. Bangs Petersburg Acting Chair
13	2009 2015	Cathy A. Needham Juneau

MINUTES OF THE MARCH 17-19, 2015 SOUTHEAST ALASKA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

Location of Meeting:

Sitka Tribal Community House, 200 Katlian Street, Sitka, Alaska 99835

Time and Date of Meeting:

March 17, 11:00 a.m. – March 18-19, 9:00 a.m., 2015

Call to Order:

The spring, 2015 meeting of the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council was called to order Tuesday, March 17 at 11:00 a.m. Council members Phillips and Kitka were excused, Howard and Isaacs were absent. Mr. Jackson provided an invocation.

Review and Adopt Agenda:

The Council supported a motion (9-0) to accept the Agenda as a guide with the understanding that the discussion of the rural determination process would take place on Wednesday morning, Cal Casipit would provide a report on recent actions by the State Board of Fisheries, and the review of final actions would occur after Agency Reports.

Attendees:

The following persons attended some portion of the Southeast Alaska Council meeting either in person or by teleconference, in addition to the Council members.

Adelaide Johnson	Juneau	USFS-PNRS
Albert Kookesh	Angoon	Public
Barbara Cellarius	Copper Center	NPS
Bert Adams	Yakutat	Public
Bill Thomas	Haines	Public
Cal Casipit	Juneau	USFS
Chris McKee	Anchorage	OSM
Dan Monteith	Juneau	Organized Village of Saxman
Dan Sharp	Anchorage	BLM
Dennis Teitzel	Glennallen	BLM
Glenn Chen	Homer	BIA
Pat Heuer	Sitka	USFS
Jeff Feldspausch	Sitka	Sitka Tribe of Alaska
Jeff Reeves	Craig	USFS
Jennifer Yuhas	Anchorage	ADF&G
Jim Capra	Yakutat	NPS
John Duncan Sr.	Sitka	Public

Justin Koller	Sitka	USFS
Kathy Hansen	Juneau	United Fisherman's Alliance
Lauren Sill	Juneau	ADF&G
Lee Wallace	Saxman	Organized Village of Saxman
Mike Baines	Sitka	Sitka Tribe of Alaska
Paulette Moreno	Sitka	Public
Perry Edwards	Sitka	USFS
Pippa Kenner	Anchorage	OSM
Ray Nielson Jr.	Sitka	Public
Rich Lowell	Petersburg	ADF&G
Robert Larson	Petersburg	USFS
Steve Reifenstuhl	Sitka	NSRAA
Susan Oehlers	Yakutat	USFS
Terry Suminski	Sitka	USFS

Election of Officers:

Mike Bangs was elected Chair, Cathy Needham, vice-Chair and Harvey Kitka, Secretary.

Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes:

The Council supported a motion (9-0) to approve the October 21-23, 2014 Council meeting minutes.

Council Reports:

John Yeager reported that spring has come early in Wrangell and there is little snow on the hills and no ice on the Stikine River below Shakes glacier; this is very unusual for this time of year. The residents of Wrangell are very concerned with the possible negative effects of mining in Canada on Transboundary Rivers.

Cathy Needham believes that mining on Transboundary Rivers is a concern to all residents of the Region. Residents are also concerned about the continued loss of shellfish resources due to the expansion of the sea otter population. She attended the State Board of Game meeting as the Council's representative and reported the Board appreciated her presence and the input from the Council. She liked the process where the status of wildlife was reviewed for that Unit prior to consideration of proposals for that Unit.

Bob Schroeder believes the Council is maturing and is fulfilling its role as a forum for the expression of subsistence concerns. He believes the Council should pay more attention to environmental issues such as climate change and land use activities. The Council should support the continuation of data gathering activities.

Frank Wright reminded the Council that residents of Hoonah should be considered residents of Glacier Bay. Although there are many sea otters near Hoonah, there are few in Port Frederick. He is concerned about pollution of Game Creek by the new residents living there. There is a new hydroelectric plant near Hoonah but he is wondering if there will be enough water this year for operations due to the lack of snow.

Art Bloom was pleased to report that the Board of Fisheries proposal to eliminate the commercial fishery closed area for Dungeness crab near Tenakee Springs was not approved.

Mike Douville is concerned about the loss of shellfish near Craig due to the expansion of the sea otter population. Road closures are resulting in less area for people to hunt deer, less area for gathering firewood and increased competition for resources.

Don Hernandez believes there will be serious negative consequences to subsistence use of resources on North Prince of Wales Island due to passage of the Sealaska Lands Act.

Ken Jackson is pleased to see that Sitka Tribe has been successful in protecting the herring resource in Sitka Sound. Sea otters reproduce year-round and there are now thousands filling all the bays and inlets near Kake. Local residents are harvesting some but need to be able to see the hides to have any effect of the population. Moose and deer are becoming more abundant near Kake because of increased interest in trapping wolves. Sockeye salmon, harbor seals, jobs, and black seaweed are scarce near Kake. Cruise ships are continuing to dump gray-water in Frederick Sound and Chatham Strait.

Mike Bangs reported that the possible negative effect of mining in Canada on Transboundary Rivers is a big concern to the residents of the Region. The lack of snow this winter could have negative consequences for fish in streams if we have a dry summer. Deer are still scarce in the Petersburg area and the State has not started a predator control program as authorized by the Board of Game. Each Council member should have an opportunity to attend a Federal Subsistence Board meeting; that is an important educational opportunity. The State Boards of Fisheries and Game appreciated Council participation in their process and the Council should take advantage of future opportunities to interact with those groups.

Public and Tribal Comments:

Mr. Lee Wallace appreciated the Council's support in identifying Saxman as a rural community. The community has committed considerable time and expense in opposing the Board's decision to identify the community as non-rural. He believes it obvious that Saxman is a unique Tlingit Alaska Native community that is separate from Ketchikan with its own history, economy and social structure. The community is in favor of the new rural determination process proposed rule.

Dan Monteith is in favor of the proposed rule for making rural determinations. Saxman is truly a rural community and the proposed rule will allow the Board the flexibility it needs to recognize Saxman's rural nature.

Ray Nielson Jr. described the long history of use by Natives of herring and herring spawn. He does not appreciate commercial fishers harvesting eggs to give to subsistence users. That activity displaces subsistence users and disrupts the traditional methods of harvesting eggs.

Albert Kookesh thanked the Council for the kindness it showed to Floyd. It is clear that the State legislature is unwilling to amend the State's Constitution and allow the ADF&G to assume management of subsistence resources on Federal Public Land as directed in ANILCA. The subsistence use of resources is the right of all residents and the Council is the guardian of that right for all people in the Region.

Bill Thomas, a former State legislator, is in favor of amending the State of Alaska's Constitution to allow the State to assume management of subsistence. He informed the Council that there is no enforcement of the subsistence halibut fishery and private ownership of land is restricting access to subsistence resources. He believes the Council provides an important function and thanked the members for their service.

Paulette Moreno attended the recent State Board of Fisheries meeting and appreciated the more relaxed atmosphere of the Council meeting. Although commercial fishing vessels have been providing herring eggs for the community, subsistence has a spiritual component that is not satisfied by a stranger delivering that product to a dock. The Council should promote a free exchange of information and recommend rules that are less strict than many of the State's regulations. She does not believe that the Amounts Necessary for Subsistence for herring spawn is being met. She would like the Tribes to have an opportunity to review the Council's possible customary and traditional use proposal prior to being submitted.

John Duncan Sr. provided a formal welcome to the Council as a speaker of the "Clay House" in Excursion Inlet. He informed the Council that the way the State enforces subsistence regulations makes many subsistence users feel like they are stealing. Subsistence users must join together to protect their rights. People use all resources that are available to them and that use must be protected. Regulators must be aware of the Native perspective.

Bert Adams was pleased to hear that the Council may be coming to Yakutat for the fall meeting. He is also concerned that the Park Service is preventing owners of cabins in Dry Bay from using them for both commercial fishing and subsistence fishing and hunting.

Old Business:

Pippa Kenner provided a summary of the proposed rule to change the rural determination process. Based on testimony from the previous evening's public meeting and the staff analysis, the Council agreed to support the proposed rule. Their rationale was that the new rule provides flexibility to recognize characteristics particular to each community, highlights the role of Regional Councils and removes the requirement for a 10-year review. The Council drafted a letter detailing their support.

Pippa Kenner summarized the customary and traditional use determination process staff analysis that was included in the Council book. During this discussion, it was clear the Council did not want to promote more competition between users. The other Councils need additional information and the SE Council is not ready to make a formal proposal to change the customary and traditional determination process. The Council noted that the staff analysis should be strengthened by including: a discussion of determinations for a geographic area, how to maintain the current determinations, deference should be in regulation, and why the eight factors are not required by ANILCA. The Council's recommendation is to ask OSM to write an addendum to the staff analysis to address the identified concerns. Motion approved 9-0 (motion by Hernandez, seconded by Douville) to proceed with the process with an updated staff analysis and communicate this decision with the Board by letter. The Council reauthorized Cathy Needham, Patty Phillips, Don Hernandez and Mike Bangs to work together as representatives of the Council with the Office of Subsistence Management on the customary and traditional use determination issue.

Cal Casipit provided a summary of Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) actions, emphasizing those that relate to the Petition for Extraterritorial Jurisdiction in the waters of Chatham Strait near the village of Angoon.

The BOF adopted proposals that identified an Amounts Necessary for Subsistence Use for residents of Angoon, closed waters to commercial fishing, and adjusted the commercial seine fishery to pass 80% of sockeye returning to area streams. Other proposals that were adopted by the BOF closed the subsistence sockeye fishing at Klawock above the bridge. The BOF did not adopt annual limits for salmon for non-residents.

Steve Reifentuhl provided testimony regarding the Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association's answer to the Council's letter regarding enhancement opportunities at Kanalku Lake. The size of sockeye salmon smolt is an important clue to whether the lake is nutrient limited. There is an opportunity to raise coho salmon fry in nets at the lake but that technology is not available for sockeye salmon. The proportion of salmon passing the partial barrier in the outlet stream should be increased and the most reasonable way to do that is to install a fish ladder. To better identify enhancement opportunities, additional information on: the productivity of sockeye at Kanalku Lake, water chemistry and specific life history strategies is necessary.

Robert Larson reported that the provisions of the U.S./Canada Pacific Salmon Treaty that authorizes the Stikine River subsistence fishery is in the process of being renegotiated. The Subsistence Board recently approved the Council's recommendations to require fishing nets to be checked twice each day and requested that the Pacific Salmon Commission remove the guideline harvest levels from Treaty language.

New Business:

Jeff Reeves reviewed the status of wildlife populations important to subsistence users and discussed the Special Actions enacted by in-season managers. Information was summarized in two distributions.

Terry Suminski reviewed recent regulatory actions by the State Board of Game. Cathy Needham represented the Council at the Board of Game meeting and the written comments were very well received and appreciated by the Board of Game. An important result of this meeting was an agreement, based on the Council's recommendation, for management of wolves on Prince of Wales Island.

The Council agreed to submit the following proposals to change subsistence hunting and trapping regulations to the Subsistence Board.

- Remove the term "antlered" from the moose harvest regulations in 5B, and 1C remainder.
- Add a definition of "Nunatak Bench" to the Unit 5 regulations.
- Remove from regulation, in the Unit 2 deer section, the following: "The harvest limit may be reduced to 4 deer based on conservation concerns."
- Require the use of harvest ticket number five when harvesting a female deer in Unit 2. Harvest ticket number five must be used to record the harvest of a female deer but can be used to record the harvest of a male deer. Harvest tickets must be used in order except when recording a female deer on tag number five.
- Allow trappers to harvest beaver with a firearm in Units 1-5.

Terry Suminski reported that the Notice of Funding Availability for Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program proposals was announced in December 2014. The proposal period closed recently and it is unknown which proposals have been received. The proposals will be evaluated by the Technical Review

Committee. The Council will have an opportunity to consider the recommendations and prioritize the projects during the fall meeting.

The Council approved the following draft topics for inclusion in the 2014 draft Annual Report.

- The potential negative effects of mining in Canada on fisheries in Southeast Alaska, is the most pressing issue identified by the Council.
- The Council is concerned that there has been limited communication from the Board or the State on how the issues identified in the petition for extraterritorial jurisdiction are being addressed.
- There is a need for a subsistence user representative on the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council.
- Improvements are needed in the Board's Correspondence Process to better support efforts at coordination with other agencies by the Council.

The Office of Subsistence Management will recommend the new Council Charters contain the following changes:

- Members are appointed to 4-year terms
- Incumbents may continue to serve until the new appointment is made or 120 days past the expiration of the term, whichever is soonest
- A vacancy on the Council will be filled by an appointed alternate, if available

Agency Reports:

Jennifer Yuhas reported that ADF&G is committed to support the subsistence needs of Angoon residents. The end of the petition process is not the end of the State's commitment to the residents of Angoon. Sam Cotten is the new Commissioner and Charlie Swanton is the Alaska Commissioner to the Pacific Salmon Commission. The State is interested in tracking transboundary mining activity and that effort will be organized through the Department of Natural Resources. Rich Lowell, Acting Management Coordinator for Wildlife in the Southeast Region, thanked the Council for their efforts in addressing management concerns for wolves on Prince of Wales Island. The staff is working to implement the intensive management project for deer on Lindenberg Peninsula but first must have a better method of counting deer. ADF&G is in the process of conducting browse utilization studies, and deer pellet and wolf scat DNA research. There are likely a number of reasons why deer remain at such low numbers; severe winters, wolf and bear predation, and competition from moose. Lauren Sill has completed subsistence use surveys for five communities that will be published soon. The Subsistence Division is also finalizing a report on the use of salmon on the Stikine River and continuing to document the use of herring and herring spawn in the Sitka area. The next survey that is planned is to document the use of sockeye salmon at Klawock Lake.

Jim Capra, National Park Service, reported that the NPS has produced a proposed rule discussing collection of shed antlers or other animal parts or plants from park areas in Alaska. The Alaska-specific regulations are needed to overcome the general nationwide regulations which prohibit this practice. The selected alternative allows subsistence collections in the National Parks in Alaska while maintaining park values. There are no predator control issues for the parks in the SE Region.

Di (Adelaide) Johnson of the Pacific Northwest Research Station provided a report that links changes in the physical environment to changes in the use patterns of subsistence resources. Her work was detailed in a report distributed to the Council. Pat Heuer, Tongass Forest Planner, provided the Council an update on the Tongass Land Management Plan Amendment Process. This process was started in May of 2014 and will end in August 2016 with a Final Environmental Impact Study and a Record of Decision. The Tongass Advisory Committee was formed to assist the Forest Service in transitioning from old growth management to young growth management; a written summary was distributed.

Chris McKee informed the Council of several new employees at the Office of Subsistence Management, including himself as the new Chief of Wildlife. They now have two new wildlife biologists, two new council coordinators, a new Anthropology Chief and a new Native Liaison.

Dennis Teitzel works out of the BLM Glennallen Field Office and reported the BLM is prepared to begin testing methods of eliminating the invasive tunicate known as D. Vex in Sitka Sound. Treatments will be conducted in May and the evaluation in July. Complete eradication is planned for next year. The land transfer to Sealaska Corporation was completed in early March.

Future Meeting Dates

The Council approved the fall meeting for October 20-22, 2015 in Yakutat (the dates were subsequently changed to October 27-29). The Council agreed to an all-Council meeting on March 7-11, 2016 in Anchorage.

The Council meeting adjourned at noon, March 19, 2015.

I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

/s/ Robert Larson

March 19, 2015

Robert Larson, DFO, USFS Subsistence Management Program

/s/ Mike Bangs

March 19, 2015

Mike Bangs, Chair, Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These minutes will be formally considered by the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its next meeting, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes of that meeting.



FISH and WILDLIFE SERVICE
BUREAU of LAND MANAGEMENT
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
BUREAU of INDIAN AFFAIRS

Federal Subsistence Board

1011 East Tudor Road, MS121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503



FOREST SERVICE

SEP 03 2015

FWS/OSM 15040.CJ

Michael Bangs, Chair
Southeast Alaska Subsistence
Regional Advisory Council
P.O. Box 1733
Petersburg, Alaska 99833

Dear Chairman Bangs:

This letter responds to the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council's (Council) fiscal year 2014 Annual Report. The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture have delegated to the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) the responsibility to respond to these reports. The Board appreciates your effort in developing the Annual Report. Annual Reports allow the Board to become aware of the issues outside of the regulatory process that affect subsistence users in your region. We value this opportunity to review the issues concerning your region.

1. Transboundary River Mining

The potential negative effect of mining in Canada on fisheries in Southeast Alaska is one of the most pressing issues identified by the Council. There is a groundswell of concern by Tribes, fisheries stakeholders and communities within the Region. Because of the international nature of this activity, the Department of State must be informed of these concerns. The Council is troubled that there has been no response from the Secretary of Agriculture to the letter from the Council on this issue written in March 2013 (enclosed). Even though the Secretary of the Interior responded, there is no indication the issue was forwarded to the Secretary of State as requested. The Council approved a follow-up letter at its October 2014 meeting (enclosed). The residents of Canada reap the benefits of this activity and the residents of Southeast Alaska bear the brunt of the risk. The Council requests that the Board request a response from the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture regarding actions on the Council's letter. The Council would also appreciate any support the Board can provide to initiate a water quality monitoring program on the Transboundary Rivers.

Chairman Bangs

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Response:

The Board understands and appreciates the Council's concern regarding this matter. As you may know, Pat Pourchot effectively retired in December 2014 as the Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Interior for Alaska Affairs. His replacement, Michael Johnson, Senior Advisor for Alaska Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, has recently been appointed and will be brought up to speed on these issues, with a request that the matter be forwarded to the Secretary of State. However, the Department of the Interior was copied on a letter from Bruce Heyman, the U.S. Ambassador to Canada, who expressed concerns to the Canadian government over the proposed Kerr-Sulphurets-Mitchell mining project in British Columbia (enclosed).

As for the Council's request that the Board support the initiation of a water quality monitoring program on the Transboundary Rivers, the Board lacks the authority or funding to initiate such a program itself. However, the Board is willing to advocate on the Council's behalf if the Council can provide specific recommendations as to an agency or organization that would or could initiate such a program. Additionally, U.S. Forest Service regional staff are working with Alaska Lt. Governor Byron Mallot to form an Interagency Joint Boundary Commission to address the Transboundary River Mining issues. Your Council Coordinator can track the activities of that commission and inform you of its progress.

2. Petition for Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

The Council represents all subsistence users of the Region, including residents of Angoon, and is concerned that there has been limited communication from the Board or the State on how the issues identified in the petition are being addressed. The Council believes they have a role in promoting the continuation of subsistence uses by the residents of Angoon and by extension, all the qualified users of the Region. The Council requests a detailed report on the status of the petition and a suggestion on how the Council can remain involved and contribute to the resolution of the issue.

Response:

The Board transmitted a letter to the Secretaries on May 14, 2015, apprising them of the current status of the events related to the ETJ petition (enclosed). The letter details recent actions by the Alaska Board of Fisheries: (1) to revise the amounts necessary for subsistence (ANS) for salmon in the commercial fisheries districts near Angoon and Hoonah, and (2) to close various areas in Chatham Straits to commercial fishing, allowing greater than 80 percent of Kanalku Lake Sockeye Salmon to pass through the area prior to commercial fishing. When the Board receives a response from the Secretaries to its letter, it will forward that response to the Council.

Chairman Bangs

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There were significant communications and actions by the Alaska Board of Fisheries, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Kootznoowoo Inc., Angoon Community Association, the City of Angoon and the Southeast Alaska Seiners Association to develop and pass these proposals in an effort to find a local solution to this problem. The escapement of sockeye salmon into the local streams will be assessed, the passage of sockeye over the falls at Kanalku will be studied and the success of the local subsistence fishery monitored during the next few years. The Board appreciates the Council acting as a forum for local residents to discuss the effectiveness of these actions and is looking forward to regular reports in upcoming seasons.

3. Subsistence User Representation on the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council

This issue is a continuation of the concern identified in the Council's FY2013 Annual Report, which stated:

Many of the fisheries managed by the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC) have a significant effect on the abundance and availability of salmon and halibut; resources of vital importance to subsistence users of this region. The Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council recommends identifying one of the voting members of the NPFMC as a subsistence user representative. The Council will provide a letter to the Board requesting assistance in elevating this issue to the appropriate Secretaries as expeditiously as possible. The lack of representation of subsistence users on the NPFMC is an issue that affects all 10 Councils and every other Council should be made aware of the Southeast Council's concerns and be given an opportunity to provide their comments to the Board.

The issue of identifying and minimizing incidental mortalities of salmon in remote trawl fisheries is of interest to every council. The Council recommends a response from the Board summarizing the concerns and actions from the other councils on by-catch in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska trawl fisheries. One of the most obvious ways to protect the interests of subsistence users would be to have a designated seat representing subsistence users on the NPFMC. The Council would appreciate hearing of any plans or progress to making that type of appointment. In addition to increasing representation for subsistence users on the NPFMC, the Council requests the Board engage the NPFMC to reduce the incidental harvest of salmon and halibut in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea trawl fisheries.

Response:

At the request of several Councils in their FY2013 annual reports, the Board sent a letter on December 9, 2014 to the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, requesting that they submit a letter to the Secretary of Commerce and the Governor of Alaska, urging them to appoint a subsistence user to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC). Ultimately, the

Chairman Bangs

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Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere responded, noting that Alaska Governor Bill Walker had submitted a nominee – Arthur Nelson – “who has strong connections to Alaska subsistence communities.” It is worth noting that Mr. Nelson was nominated to fill a vacant sport fishing seat on the NPFMC and is the executive director of the Bering Sea Fishermen’s Association. The letters between the Board and the various secretaries are enclosed with this reply. Additionally, other Councils have raised concerns with the Board or the NPFMC regarding bycatch. Those letters are also enclosed with this reply.

One other problem related to the Council’s request is how membership seats are designated on the NPFMC. Membership on the NPFMC is determined by the U.S. Congress, not the Secretary of Commerce. The Secretary of Commerce merely appoints from a pool of nominees. It is not within the Board’s scope of authority to advocate for, or request changes to, laws passed by Congress.

The Magnuson-Stevens Act is still going through the process of reauthorization. On March 4, 2015, Congressman Don Young introduced House Bill H.R. 1335 to the Committee on Natural Resources “To amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to provide flexibility for fishery managers and stability for fishermen, and for other purposes.” For details see: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/1335/text>

The bill would also require Alaska’s governor to consult subsistence stakeholders before nominating people to the council, and it says subsistence expertise can qualify a person as a nominee. But it does not add a subsistence seat to the North Pacific Council, as some Alaska tribes requested.

There have been some recent developments with bycatch management that are worth noting. In April 2015, the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC) took significant action to reduce bycatch of salmon in the Bering Sea Pollock fishery. Most of the discussion and actions were in regards to Chinook Salmon; however, there was also positive action for Chum Salmon. Major portions of the action include:

- Incorporating chum avoidance measures into the Incentive Plan Agreements (IPA) to get comprehensive measures for both Chinook and chum salmon.

- Additional IPA requirements for Chinook Salmon including penalties to vessels with significantly higher Chinook Salmon bycatch require use of salmon excluder trawls, implementation of the Rolling Hotspot Program throughout the entire fishery, reduction of salmon savings credits to 3 years, and performance criteria to ensure that bycatch rates at the end of season in October are not significantly higher than preceding months.

Implementation of a new abundance based Hard Cap and Performance Standard in years of low Western Alaska Chinook Salmon abundance. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game will annually assess Kuskokwim, upper Yukon, and Unalakleet Chinook Salmon returns and, if at very low levels (less than 250 K), will trigger 25% reduction in Hard Cap to 45K and 33% reduction in Performance Standard to 33K. This was most controversial action. While most subsistence users were seeking larger reductions, this was still very significant and passed by the Council 10-0.

4. Improvements are needed for the Board's Correspondence Process

The Council has an opportunity to meet only twice each year. Considerable effort is expended to use those few days to develop important communications with the Board and other management agencies. Restriction on this exchange of information diminishes the effectiveness of the Council. The Council is an important component of the subsistence program and with the Office of Subsistence Management and the Board provides necessary opportunities for the public and other non-governmental groups and governmental agencies to share information. Delays in distribution of Council correspondence diminish the effectiveness of the Council's recommendations and comments. As an example the Council's comments to the State Board of Game and the State Board of Fisheries was not provided to those bodies prior to the day of the meeting. The Council recommends the Board review the internal processes used to approve and distribute Council correspondence to allow for a timely distribution.

Response:

As you know, the Federal Subsistence Board's *Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Correspondence Policy* requires review and approval of all Council correspondence prior to distribution. The Board has delegated such review to the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM), Assistant Regional Director (ARD). At present, all correspondence from the Councils is reviewed by the entire Leadership Team at OSM prior to the ARD's review and approval. However, the review process is now tracked to ensure that it is completed in a more expedited fashion. Additionally, the Board's Solicitor has been engaged to make modifications to the Correspondence Policy in order to clarify the types of correspondence that the Councils may issue.

The Board acknowledges that the Council's proposal comments to the State Boards were not submitted in time for inclusion in the respective meeting books; however, the Council's comments to both the Alaska Board of Game and the Alaska Board of Fisheries were entered into the record and were fully incorporated into the State's decision making process. Both Boards were greatly appreciative of the Council's comments.

Chairman Bangs

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In closing, I want to thank you and your Council for their continued involvement and diligence in matters regarding the Federal Subsistence Management Program. I speak for the entire Board in expressing our appreciation for your efforts and our confidence that the subsistence users of the Southeast Region are well represented through your work.

Sincerely,



Tim Towarak
Chair

cc: Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Federal Subsistence Board
Eugene R. Peltola, Jr., Assistant Regional Director, OSM
Chuck Ardizzone, Deputy Assistant Regional Director, OSM
Carl Johnson, Council Coordination Division Chief, OSM
Robert Larson, Council Coordinator, USFS
Interagency Staff Committee
Administrative Record

NOTE: Enclosures not included in meeting book due to number of pages (80).



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Land Management
National Park Service
Bureau of Indian Affairs



Forest Service

Federal Subsistence Board News Release

For Immediate Release:
July 29, 2015

Contact: Deborah Coble
(907) 786-3880 or (800) 478-1456
deborah_coble@fws.gov

Federal Subsistence Board work session summary

During its work session held on Tuesday, July 28, 2015 the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) discussed deferred Request for Reconsideration RFR14-01. The motion to accept the State's request for reconsideration failed unanimously with a vote of 0-8. The Red Sheep and Cane Creek drainages will remain closed to non-Federally qualified subsistence users during the Aug 10-Sept. 20 sheep season in the Arctic Village Sheep Management Area of Unit 25. No further public comments were received regarding the issue at this work session.

The Rural Determination Process briefing was divided into three phases. Phase I addressed the Board's recommendation on the current secretarial proposed rule. The Board voted to recommend to the Secretaries to adopt the proposed rule as written. Phase II was determining a starting point for non-rural communities/areas. The Board voted to publish a direct final rule adopting the pre-2007 non-rural determinations. Phase III was direction on future non-rural determinations. The Board voted to direct staff to develop options to determine future non-rural determination for the Board's consideration. All three requests passed unanimously (8-0). OSM staff is expected to have a draft of options for the Board by the January 2016 meeting.

The Ninilchik Traditional Council submitted requests concerning the Kenai River gillnet fishery to the Board. The Board voted 7-1 to direct USFWS to continue working with NTC on an operational plan for the fishery. The request to rescind USFWS in-season manager's delegation of authority failed unanimously in a 0-8 vote. The request to reverse the emergency special action that closed the subsistence fishery for Chinook Salmon on the Kenai River failed in a 4-4 vote. NTC's final request to remove or amend current regulatory language on the Kenai River gillnet fishery was deferred and may be addressed during the next regulatory cycle.

Also discussed today during the work session was the 10 Subsistence Regional Advisory Council's Annual Report Replies. The RAC nominations discussion will occur during a closed executive session today, July 29, 2015 and is not open to the public.

Additional information on the Federal Subsistence Management Program may be found on the web at www.doi.gov/subsistence or by visiting www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska.

Missing out on the latest Federal subsistence issues? If you'd like to receive emails and notifications on the Federal Subsistence Management Program you may subscribe for regular updates by emailing fws-fsb-subsistence-request@lists.fws.gov.

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Options for Board Recommendation on Current Secretarial Proposed Rule

The Board has four options for consideration:

1. Adopt as written;
2. Reject,
3. Adopt with Modification; or
4. Adopt and include in the preamble, direction for OSM and the ISC to develop a policy to address future nonrural determinations.

Program staff recommend the proposed rule be adopted as written. This action would be in line with the majority of the Regional Advisory Councils recommendations and public comments. It would also provide the shortest timeline and greatest opportunity for the resolution of this issue prior to the May 2017 deadline. If the Board does not take action prior to the deadline, communities that were selected to change from rural to nonrural in the 2007 final rule will become effective.

Options for Board Action to Determine Start-point for Nonrural Communities/Areas

The Board has three options to address rural determinations following action on the proposed rule. *If no action is taken, the 2007 final rule will become effective in May 2017.*

1. Initiate a direct final rule to adopt the pre-2007 rural determinations;
2. Initiate normal rulemaking to adopt an earlier rural determination;
3. Initiate rulemaking that would not address a start point and address each community individually.

Program staff recommend the Board initiate a direct final rule that would adopt the pre-2007 rural determinations. This action would resolve any current issues with communities/areas that were changed to nonrural in the 2007 final rule. If significant negative response from the public occurred, the direct final rule could be withdrawn and normal rulemaking could be undertaken. This option provides the shortest timeline and greatest opportunity for the resolution of this issue prior to the May 2017 deadline.

Options for Board to Direct Future Nonrural Determinations

To address future nonrural determinations, the Board has two options. The Board may direct staff to develop a draft nonrural determinations policy on how future determinations will be made; or, the Board may initiate rulemaking to address future determinations.

Program staff recommend the Board direct a policy to be drafted to address future nonrural determinations. This action will allow the greatest flexibility for Board action and the inclusion of regional variations. This option addresses concerns raised by some of the Councils (what the process of future nonrural determinations will be). Additionally it would require less time and the policy could be revised without formal rulemaking. Potential policy components could address nonrural characteristics with weighting potential that would accommodate regional variation and criteria for initiating a review of a community or area. The rural subcommittee, whose membership consists of program staff and ISC members, would develop the policy with input from the Councils, tribes, and public over the next 18 months with a goal of adoption by the Board in early 2017.

Rural Determination Recommendation Phases July 28, 2015

Phase I
Options for Board Recommendation on Current Secretarial Proposed Rule

Board Option	Pro	Con	Timeline	Notes
1. Adopt as written	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shortest timeline - Majority of comments support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lacks guidance on future actions 	Publish mid-August 2015 (timeline is based on how long it would take staff to process the final rule; the response time from the Secretaries will be critical in any timeline)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This option provides the greatest opportunity for the Board to resolve this issue well prior of the May 2017 deadline - Guidance for future actions could be addressed in preamble of final rule
2. Adopt with directive to develop/maintain policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would address some of the public comments - Likely will meet proposed timeline for rule completion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would probably add 60 days to the publication date - Secretaries could direct another round of public comments; adding considerable time and possibility that will not meet intended timeline for decision making 	Publish October 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This option may not meet the May 2017 deadline if the Board is directed to allow for additional public comment - The preamble could address the Board's policy making plan (if that option is selected)
3. Adopt with substantial modification (a) RAC deference (b) List nonrural criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would address some of the public/RAC comments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Goes against Secretaries' intent to simplify the process - Would likely require additional public comment period - May require additional proposed rule, which could affect ability to meet May 2017 deadline 	Publish November 2016	
4. Reject		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2007 final rule becomes effective on May 7, 2017 - Does not follow Secretarial directive to address rural issue - Does not address the majority of public comments received 	No action to be taken	

Rural Determination Recommendation Phases July 28, 2015

Phase II
Options for Board Action to Determine Start-point for Nonrural Communities/Areas

Board Option	Pro	Con	Timeline	Notes
1. Direct final rule adopting the nonrural communities pre-2007 final rule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shortest timeline - Provides foundation for nonrural 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible public disapproval due to lack of current public input 	Publish September 2015	Communities that were ruled as nonrural in 2007 final rule would become rural
2. Initiate new formal rulemaking to revert to pre-2007 rural determinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would have RAC and public comment periods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process could take up to a year to complete 	Publish July 2016	
3. Initiate new formal rulemaking with no “start point” and address each nonrural community on a case by case basis.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Process could take 2+ years to complete - 2007 final rule becomes effective on May 7, 2017 	Publish July 2017 or later	Communities selected in 2007 final rule to change status from rural to nonrural become nonrural

Phase III
Options for Board to Direct Future Nonrural Determinations

Board Option	Pro	Con	Timeline	Notes
1. Direct staff to draft policy on nonrural determinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allows greatest flexibility for Board actions and the inclusion of regional variations - Requires less time than formal rulemaking 			Would depend on Board’s direction for public, RAC and Tribal input
2. Direct staff to initiate formal rulemaking to address future nonrural determination		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any future revisions would require formal rulemaking 	Approximately 1 year	



I

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2388

To reverse the designation by the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture of certain communities in the State of Alaska as nonrural.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 15, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To reverse the designation by the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture of certain communities in the State of Alaska as nonrural.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Subsistence Access
5 Management Act of 2015”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITION OF SECRETARIES.**

7 In this Act, the term “Secretaries” means the Sec-
8 retary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture.

1 **SEC. 3. REDESIGNATION NOT AUTHORIZED.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provi-
3 sion of law, including any regulation, order, or policy, for
4 purposes of administering the Federal Subsistence Man-
5 agement Program on public lands within the State of Alas-
6 ka pursuant to the Alaska National Interest Lands Con-
7 servation Act (16 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.), with respect to
8 a community or area designated as rural by the Secre-
9 taries by regulation effective on or before May 6, 2007,
10 the Secretaries may not, except pursuant to Act of Con-
11 gress—

12 (1) redesignate the community or area as
13 nonrural; or

14 (2) adjust the boundaries of a community or
15 area to render some or all of that community or
16 area nonrural.

17 (b) REINSTATEMENT OF LIST.—

18 (1) IN GENERAL.—The list of communities and
19 areas designated rural (including the boundaries of
20 those communities and areas) in effect on May 6,
21 2007, is reinstated.

22 (2) EFFECT.—Except as modified by an Act of
23 Congress, with respect to those communities and
24 areas designated as rural, the list described in para-
25 graph (1) shall be in effect as if the final rule enti-
26 tled “Subsistence Management Regulations for Pub-

•HR 2388 IH

1 lie Lands in Alaska, Subpart C; Nonrural Deter-
2 minations” (72 Fed. Reg. 25688 (May 7, 2007))
3 had not been issued.

4 **SEC. 4. EFFECT.**

5 Nothing in this Act prohibits the Secretaries from de-
6 termining that, in accordance with regulations duly pro-
7 mulgated by the Secretaries—

8 (1) a community or area designated nonrural
9 by the Secretaries should be redesignated as rural;
10 or

11 (2) the boundaries of a community or area des-
12 igned nonrural should be adjusted by the Secre-
13 taries to render some or all of that community or
14 area rural.

15 **SEC. 5. PUBLICATION OF INTERIM FINAL RULE, LIST.**

16 (a) PUBLICATION OF INTERIM FINAL RULE.—Not
17 later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act,
18 the Secretaries shall publish an interim final rule amend-
19 ing any regulations inconsistent with this Act.

20 (b) PUBLICATION OF LIST.—Once each year after the
21 publication under subsection (a), the Secretaries shall
22 publish in the Federal Register a list of communities and
23 areas (including the boundaries of those communities and

4

1 areas) designated rural and nonrural in accordance with
2 this Act.

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•HR 2388 IH



114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1154

To reverse the designation by the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture of certain communities in the State of Alaska as nonrural.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 30, 2015

Ms. MURKOWSKI introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

A BILL

To reverse the designation by the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture of certain communities in the State of Alaska as nonrural.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Subsistence Access
5 Management Act of 2015”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITION OF SECRETARIES.**

7 In this Act, the term “Secretaries” means the Sec-
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4 purposes of administering the Federal Subsistence Man-
5 agement Program on public lands within the State of Alas-
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7 servation Act (16 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.), with respect to
8 a community or area designated as rural by the Secre-
9 taries by regulation effective on or before May 6, 2007,
10 the Secretaries may not, except pursuant to Act of Con-
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12 (1) redesignate the community or area as
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24 areas designated as rural, the list described in para-
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•S 1154 IS

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19 ing any regulations inconsistent with this Act.

20 (b) PUBLICATION OF LIST.—Once each year after the
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22 publish in the Federal Register a list of communities and
23 areas (including the boundaries of those communities and

4

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2 this Act.

○

•S 1154 IS

H.R. 2388: To reverse the designation by the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture of certain communities in the State of Alaska as nonrural.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE JOINT STATEMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR THE RECORD FOR THE HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE SUBCOMMITTEE ON INDIAN, INSULAR AND NATIVE ALASKAN AFFAIRS HEARING ON H.R. 2388, THE SUBSISTENCE ACCESS MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2015

July 22, 2015

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a statement on the Administration's views regarding H.R. 2388, the Subsistence Access Management Act of 2015 (HR 2388). The Administration has several concerns about this legislation and opposes its enactment.

H.R. 2388 would prohibit the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture from changing the status under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) of Alaskan communities from rural to nonrural and would also prohibit any regulatory changes to rural Alaskan community boundaries that would result in such a change. It would require the Secretaries to publish an interim final rule within 30 days of enactment to amend any regulations that are not consistent with the legislation, and it would require the Secretaries to annually publish a list of Alaska communities that are designated as rural and non-rural.

If enacted, this legislation would effectively undermine the expectations of the Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils (Councils) that they will be given a meaningful voice in future nonrural determinations. The Councils currently have invested and use their voice in shaping the proposed nonrural determination process. Also, permanently prohibiting the Secretaries from changing the status of affected communities from rural to non-rural status would impose permanent rural status on communities in which there is general agreement that a non-rural designation is appropriate. In a rapidly changing landscape, a statutory requirement that freezes such status to that prior to the 2007 rule could mean that access to wild food resources could be dominated by urban communities that are not in need of wild foods and are removed from traditional Alaskan culture.

The Secretaries are presently engaged in a review of changes to the rural determinations under ANILCA to make them more responsive to and less onerous for Alaskans. This has been a rigorous, two-year public process to seek comments on ways to improve the rural determination process. The Secretaries have sought and considered input from affected people across the state, including Alaska natives peoples, including Federally recognized tribes and Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act Corporations. A statutory freeze on the 2007 status of all Alaskan communities would ignore the diversity of views reflected in

comments submitted to date. While we understand there is some frustration in the length of time involved in the Federal rulemaking process, there is a wide diversity of need, values, and preferences among Alaskan communities on the rural determination process. As is occurring in the current process, these voices deserve to be heard and thoughtfully considered, and they deserve to have an ongoing role in a process that is responsive to their changing landscape and community needs.

Finally, the bill imposes an unnecessary and expensive administrative burden on the Secretaries to publish in the Federal Register, on an annual basis, a list of rural and nonrural communities. Under the present system, the rural or nonrural status of the vast majority of communities in Alaska has remained unchanged during the history of the program. Only a limited number of changes have been made to date, and if the proposed rule to eliminate the decennial rural review process is made final, then we expect even fewer such changes in the future. Moreover, when the Secretaries find that a change in status is necessary, it is currently and would continue to be our policy to publish it in the Federal Register.

Review of Rulemaking Process to Date

In 2010, the Secretary of the Interior directed the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) to conduct a public review of the rural determination process. The Board deferred the effective date of the 2007 nonrural determination list in order to provide time to reexamine the rural determination process. That deferral remains in effect today.

In 2012, the Board initiated the public review. A series of meetings and public hearings were held, during which the public was briefed on the current process and invited to provide suggestions on how to improve it. In addition, the Board conducted three consultations involving 20 Alaska Native tribes and 12 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act Corporations. Through these meetings, it became clear that the public favored removing the rigid rural determination criteria from Secretarial regulations in favor of a more flexible approach that allows the Secretaries to consider a wide range of variables. Specifically, the consensus view was to eliminate the following: population thresholds, aggregation of communities, and the mandatory decennial review.

In January of 2015, in response to this rigorous public and consultation process, the Secretaries published a proposed rule that would eliminate the existing rural determination criteria from Secretarial regulation and focus the process on making nonrural determinations, rather than rural determinations. This would greatly simplify the process and remove the need for communities to "defend" their rural status. It would also empower the public and the Councils to have a stronger role in determinations. The majority of the substantive comments we received were supportive of the proposed rule. The Board will meet in late July, when the Secretaries will consider recommendations from Board members regarding finalization of the rule.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a rural determination is at the heart of eligibility for the Federal subsistence priority under Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, and it is crucial to ensure that the public has a voice in those determinations. Establishing the determination in statute would diminish the role of rural Alaskan residents in a process that would meaningfully incorporate a diversity of stakeholder needs, values, and preferences. It would also diminish the ability of the Federal Subsistence Advisory Councils to engage in future nonrural determinations. Also, a determination in statute would not readily be responsive to changes on the Alaskan landscape over time and would undo the hard work of a rigorous, 2-year public process and the trust of the public engendered through that process.

We would welcome the opportunity to provide further information on the rulemaking process and the proposed rule to Rep. Young and the Subcommittee and staff and respond to any continued questions and concerns.

Thank you again for this opportunity to present the Administration's views on this legislation.

WP16-01 Executive Summary	
General Description	Requests limiting non-Federally qualified subsistence users to the harvest of two deer from Federal public lands in Unit 2 and extending the Unit 2 deer season ending date from December 31 to January 31. <i>Submitted by the Craig Tribal Association.</i>
Proposed Regulation	<p>Unit 2 - Deer</p> <p><i>5 deer; however, no more than one may be a female deer. Female deer may be taken only during the period Oct. 15–Jan. 31. The harvest limit may be reduced to 4 deer based on conservation concerns. The Federal public lands on Prince of Wales Island, excluding the southeastern portion (lands south of the West Arm of Cholmondeley Sound draining into Cholmondeley Sound or draining eastward into Clarence Strait), are closed to hunting of deer from Aug. 1 to Aug. 15, except by Federally qualified subsistence users hunting under these regulations.</i></p> <p><i>Federal Public Lands on Prince of Wales Island will be limited to 2 deer except by Federally qualified subsistence users hunting under these regulations.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>July 24– Jan. 31</i></p>
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	Oppose
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	None

**DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS
WP16-01**

ISSUES

Proposal WP16-01, submitted by the Craig Tribal Association (CTA), requests that non-Federally qualified subsistence users be limited to the harvest of two deer from Federal public lands in Unit 2 and the season ending date for Federally qualified subsistence users be extended from December 31 to January 31.

DISCUSSION

CTA believes these changes are vital for the health and well-being of both CTA tribal members and Federally qualified subsistence users as mandated by Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). The proposal was submitted to provide for conservation of the Unit 2 deer population by reducing the harvest by non-Federally qualified users. CTA has also asked for a season extension through January. The proponent clarified that the season extension was to include the harvest of female deer.

In regards to adjusting State harvest limits, Title VIII of ANILCA provides that Federal public lands (and water) can be closed to non-subsistence uses when it is necessary to restrict taking in order to assure the continued viability of a fish or wildlife population or the continuation of subsistence uses of such population. It is the Board's view that because it has the authority to close non-subsistence uses under these circumstances, it would have the authority to take a lesser action, such as limiting the take of fish and wildlife for non-subsistence use. However the Board has never exercised its authority in this manner.

Existing Federal Regulation

Unit 2 - Deer

*5 deer; however, no more than one may be a female deer. July 24–Dec. 31
Female deer may be taken only during the period Oct. 15–
Dec. 31. The harvest limit may be reduced to 4 deer based on
conservation concerns. The Federal public lands on Prince of
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of the West Arm of Cholmondeley Sound draining into
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Strait), are closed to hunting of deer from Aug. 1 to Aug. 15,
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Proposed Federal Regulation

Unit 2 - Deer

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July 24–~~Dec~~Jan. 31

Federal Public Lands on Prince of Wales Island will be limited to 2 deer except by Federally qualified subsistence users hunting under these regulations.

Existing State Regulation

Unit 2 - deer

Residents and non-residents: Four bucks

Aug. 1 – Dec. 31

Harvest tickets must be validated in sequential order, and unused tickets must be carried when you hunt.

Extent of Federal Public Lands

Federal public lands comprise approximately 74% of Unit 2, and consists of 73% U.S. Forest Service managed lands and <1% U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service managed lands (**see Unit 2 Map**).

Customary and Traditional Use Determinations

Rural residents of Units 1A, 2, and 3 have a customary and traditional use determination to harvest deer in Unit 2.

Regulatory History

Hunting regulations have permitted the harvest of deer in Unit 2 since 1925 (**Table 1**). During this period, season closing dates have varied between November and December, with December 31 being the common closing date since 1988. Seasons and harvest limits for subsistence users in Unit 2 are as liberal as they have been since 1925. Federal regulation has allowed the harvest of one female deer in Unit 2 since 1995 as well as the harvest of 5 deer beginning in 2006.

Table 1 - Regulatory history for Unit 2 deer.

Year	Type of Season	Season	Limit	Conditions and Limitations
1925	Open	Sep. 15–Dec. 16	3	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1925–1929	Open	Sep. 1–Nov. 30	3	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1930–1941	Open	Aug. 20–Nov. 15	2	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1942–1943	Resident	Sep. 16–Nov. 15	2	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1942–1943	Non-resident	Sep. 16–Nov. 15	1	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1944–1948	Resident	Sep. 1–Nov. 7	2	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1944–1948	Non-resident	Sep. 1–Nov. 7	1	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1949	Resident	Sep. 1–Nov. 15	2	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1949	Non-resident	Sep. 1–Nov. 15	1	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1950–1951	Resident	Aug. 20–Nov. 15	2	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1950–1951	Non-resident	Aug. 20–Nov. 15	1	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1952	Open	Aug. 20–Nov. 22	2	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1953–1954	Open	Aug. 20–Nov. 22	3	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1955	Open	Aug. 20–Nov. 22	3	3 bucks or 2 bucks and one antlerless, bucks 3" antlers or longer, antlerless may be taken Nov. 15–Nov. 22
1956	Open	Aug. 20–Nov. 26	4	3 bucks or 2 bucks and one antlerless, bucks 3" antlers or longer, antlerless may be taken Nov. 13–Nov. 26
1957–1959	Open	Aug. 20–Nov. 30	4	4 deer, does may be taken Oct. 15–Nov. 30
1960	Open	Aug. 20–Dec. 15	4	4 deer, does may be taken Oct. 1–Dec. 15
1961	Open	Aug. 1–Nov. 30	4	4 deer, antlerless deer may be taken Sep. 15–Nov. 30
1962	Open	Aug. 1–Dec. 15	4	4 deer, antlerless deer may be taken Sep. 15–Dec. 15
1963–1967	Open	Aug. 1–Dec. 31	4	4 deer, antlerless deer may be taken Sep. 15–Dec. 31
1968	Open	Aug. 1–Dec. 15	4	4 deer, antlerless deer may be taken Sep. 15–Dec. 15
1969–1971	Open	Aug. 1–Dec. 31	4	4 deer, antlerless deer may be taken Sep. 15–Dec. 31
1972	Open	Aug. 1–Dec. 31	3	3 deer, antlerless deer may be taken Nov. 1–Nov. 30
1973–1977	Open	Aug. 1–Nov. 30	3	1 antlerless deer may be taken Nov. 1–Nov. 30
1978–1984	Open	Aug. 1–Nov. 30	3	Antlered deer
1985–1986	State Subsistence/General	Aug. 1–Nov. 30	3	Antlered deer
1987	State Subsistence/General	Aug. 1–Nov. 30	3	1 antlerless deer may be taken Oct. 10–Oct. 31
1988–2013	State Subsistence/General	Aug. 1–Dec. 31	4	Antlered deer/bucks
1991–1994	Federal Subsistence	Aug. 1–Dec. 31	4	Antlered deer
1995–1997	Federal Subsistence	Aug. 1–Dec. 31	4	No more than one may be an antlerless deer, antlerless deer may be taken only during Oct. 15–Dec. 31
1998–2002	Federal Subsistence	Aug. 1–Dec. 31	4	No more than one may be an antlerless deer, antlerless deer may be taken Oct. 15–Dec. 31 by Federal registration permit only
2003–2005	Federal Subsistence	July 24–Dec. 31	4	No more than one may be an antlerless deer, antlerless deer may be taken Oct. 15–Dec. 31 by Federal registration permit only
2006–2009	Federal Subsistence	July 24–Dec. 31	5	No more than one may be an antlerless deer, antlerless deer may be taken Oct. 15–Dec. 31
2010–2014	Federal Subsistence	July 24–Dec. 31	5	No more than one may be a female deer, female deer may be taken Oct. 15–Dec. 31

While Unit 4 (Admiralty, Baranof and Chichagof Islands) has a season ending date of January 31 under Federal regulation, this is not the case for the remaining units in the Southeast Region. There are several factors in Unit 4 allowing for a January season to manage deer populations:

- 1) Unit 4 is less susceptible to extreme winter conditions than the mainland and more interior islands.
- 2) Unit 4 has very little road access, with hunting effort being boat based.
- 3) Unit 4 does not have wolves, and brown bear predation during this time is virtually non-existent.

Following years of numerous Unit 2 related deer proposals (>30) to the Federal Subsistence Board (Board), the Unit 2 Deer Planning Subcommittee (Subcommittee) was formed in 2004 to address contentious deer management issues in Unit 2. At the request of the Board, the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) established the 12-member Subcommittee to address concerns that Federally qualified subsistence users in Unit 2 were unable to harvest enough deer to meet their needs. The Subcommittee included residents of Craig, Hydaburg, Ketchikan, Petersburg, Point Baker and Wrangell, along with representatives from State and Federal wildlife management agencies to reflect the range of users of Unit 2 deer.

The Subcommittee developed management recommendations at a series of five public meetings held in communities that depend upon Unit 2 deer. Both Federally and non-Federally qualified users participated at these meetings. The Subcommittee recommended that deer harvest management tools could be applied in Unit 2 as deer population trends and hunting use patterns changed. The degree to which these tools would be employed would be decided through the established public regulatory processes (SEASRAC 2006).

In 2006, the Board implemented two major changes regarding the Unit 2 deer hunt by supporting with modification Proposals WP06-08 and WP06-09. Action on WP06-08 reopened a defined portion of Federal public lands to non-Federally qualified users on the southeast side of Prince of Wales Island. Action on WP06-09, established the current 5 deer harvest limit for Federally qualified subsistence users (FSB 2006). Two other proposals, WP06-06 and WP06-10, related to the use of harvest tickets in Unit 2 were unanimously opposed by the Council and rejected by the Board (FSB 2006).

Only three proposals related to Unit 2 deer were submitted from 2007-2012. Proposal WP07-07 requested the female deer season be closed, WP10-19 requested a change to the female deer season and WP10-20 requested the August closure to non-Federally qualified users be lifted. The Council opposed and the Board rejected these proposals (FSB 2007, 2010).

Two proposals were considered for Unit 2 in 2013. Proposal WP14-03 requested the female deer season be eliminated while WP14-04 asked for an earlier season to be established for those Federally qualified subsistence users over the age of 60 or physically disabled. The Council unanimously opposed and the Board rejected these proposals (SEASRAC 2013; FSB 2014).

Biological Background

Sitka black-tailed deer spend the winter and early spring at low elevation where there is less snow accumulation and forests provide increased foraging opportunities. Fawning occurs in late May and early June as vegetation greens-up, providing abundant forage to meet energetic needs of the lactating doe. Some deer migrate and follow the greening vegetation up to alpine for the summer while others remain at lower elevations. The breeding season, or rut, generally occurs October through November and peaks in late November (ADF&G 2009). Wolves and black bears are the primary predators present in Unit 2 and may reduce deer populations.

Deer populations in southeast Alaska fluctuate and are primarily influenced by winter snow depths (Olson 1979). Deer typically have trouble meeting their energy needs in winter (Hanley and McKendrick 1985, Parker et al. 1999) and winters with long periods of deep snow that restrict the availability of forage can result in deer depleting their energy reserves to the point of starvation (Olson 1979).

Summer nutrition is important for building body reserves for sustaining deer through the winter (Stewart et al. 2005). Few studies have been conducted on summer habitat conditions because winter habitat carrying capacity is generally considered to be the limiting factor for deer in southeast Alaska. However, deer populations at or above habitat carrying capacity are affected by intra-specific competition for food and may enter winter in reduced condition compared to deer populations below carrying capacity (Kie et al. 2003, Stewart et al. 2005). This can result in higher susceptibility to severe winters and lower productivity (Kie et al. 2003, Stewart et al. 2005). In addition, nutritionally stressed does produce smaller and fewer fawns (Olson 1979).

Maximum sustained yield (MSY) is theoretically the highest level of deer harvest that can be sustained indefinitely (**Figure 1**). At low population levels, habitat does not constrain reproductive rates but because the population is small, population increases are slow. In populations below MSY, mortality is thought to be additive (i.e., deer not harvested would have survived) and harvesting females lowers recruitment (Ballard et al. 2001, Kie et al. 2003). At moderate population densities, approximately half of habitat carrying capacity, individuals and populations are at maximum productivity. As populations grow beyond MSY and approach carrying capacity, competition between individuals for resources lowers productivity and mortality becomes compensatory (i.e., harvested deer would not have survived) (Ballard et al. 2001, Kie et al. 2003).

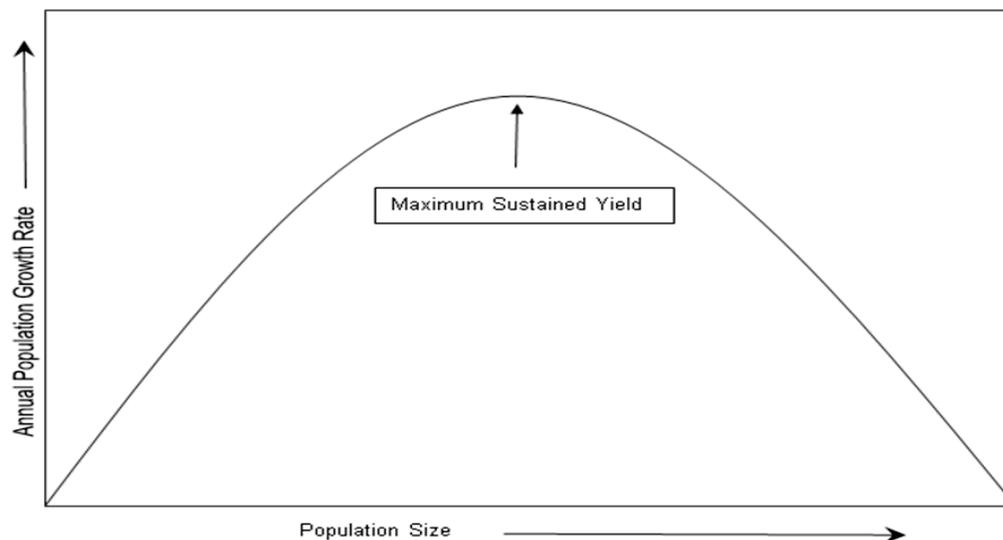


Figure 1. Hypothetical maximum sustained yield graph.

Habitat

Old-growth forests are considered primary deer winter range, in part because the complex canopy cover allows sufficient sunlight through for forage plants to grow but intercepts snow, making it easier for deer to move and forage during winters when deep snow hinders access to other habitats. Some areas of Unit 2 have been impacted by large scale changes in habitat due to timber harvest, while the habitat is largely intact in other areas. Areas with substantial timber harvest are expected to have lower long-term carrying capacity compared to pre-harvest conditions.

Recent population indices

There are no methods to directly count deer in southeast Alaska, so the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) conducts deer pellet surveys as an index to the relative abundance of the deer population. Relating pellet group data to population levels is difficult, however, because factors other than changes in deer population size can affect deer pellet-group density. Snowfall patterns influence the distribution and density of deer pellets from year to year, and snow persisting late into the spring at elevations below 1500 feet limits the ability to consistently survey the same elevation zones among years. In mild winters, deer can access forage in a greater variety of habitats, not all of which are surveyed. Conversely, in severe winters deep snow concentrates deer (McCoy 2011). Brinkman et al. (2013) questioned the value of pellet-group surveys for monitoring population trends due to the variability in the data compared to DNA based counts. Although pellet-group surveys remain the only widely available deer population data, the results should be interpreted with caution. **Figure 2** shows pellet-group survey results for Unit 2. The pellet-group data suggests a generally increasing population trend since a low during the late 1990s and early 2000s. This contrasts with Brinkman et al. (2011) who used a DNA based technique and estimated a 30% population decrease from 2006–2008 which they attributed to three consecutive deep snow winters. Brinkman's study was limited to three watersheds and the population changes during the study varied by watershed. It appears that populations increased after those severe winters and Bethune (2011) felt that by 2010 the Unit 2 deer population was healthy, stable to increasing, and at a 12 to 15 year high. No pellet surveys were completed during 2013 or 2014 (Bethune 2015).

Harvest History

Harvest data reported below are provided by ADF&G (Bethune 2015) and are gathered by several reporting systems including the Region 1 deer survey, Unit 2 deer harvest report, and the State-wide deer harvest report. The Region 1 deer survey is the most consistent report, covering the years 1997–2010 and is based on a sample of hunters. In general, 35% of hunters from each community were sampled each year and while response rates vary by community, the overall response rate across communities was approximately 60% each year. Harvest numbers were extrapolated using expansion factors that are calculated as the total number of harvest tickets issued to a community divided by the total number of survey responses for that community. If response was low from a community, an individual hunter may have a disproportionate effect on the data. As confidence intervals are not available for these data, exact numbers should be considered estimates and used with caution. Trends, however, especially at larger scales, should be fairly accurate. The Unit 2 deer report was in place from 2005–2010 and was instituted

specifically for reporting deer harvest in Unit 2. In 2011, the Statewide deer report replaced the other deer harvest reporting systems and requires reporting of harvest by all deer hunters. Different expansion factors are used for the various data sets so that total harvest estimates between years are comparable (McCoy 2011).

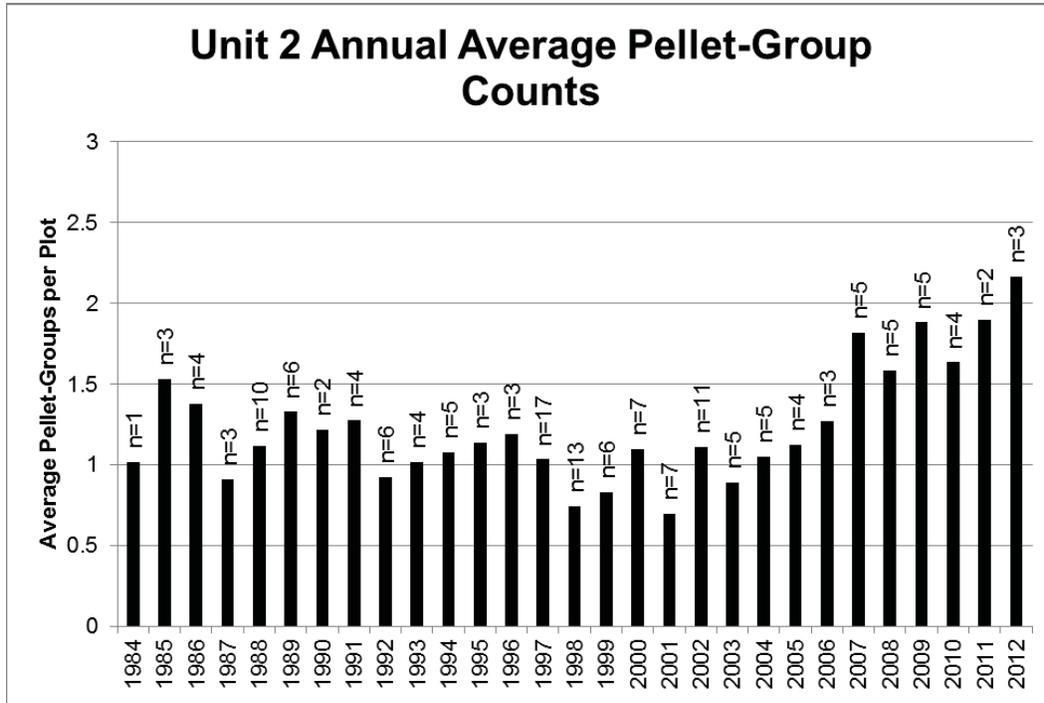


Figure 2 – Average pellet-group counts for all of Unit 2 since transects began in 1984 (McCoy 2011). Data labels represent the number of watersheds surveyed that year.

Estimated deer harvest in Unit 2 from 1997–2013 can be found in **Figure 3**, with harvest by month being found in **Table 2**. The estimated total harvest averages 2,850 deer during this period. Harvests have been increasing since 1997 and at or above ADF&G’s Unit 2 harvest objective of 2,700 deer since 2005 (Bethune 2011). Estimated female deer harvest (**Figure 4**) averages 4.2% of the total harvest. The average number of deer harvested per hunter has risen since the late 1990s and has remained stable since 2004 (**Figure 5**). The average number of days it takes to harvest a deer also appears to have been stable since 2007 and is lower than the late 1990s (**Figure 5**). The harvest data support the pellet-group data which indicate that the deer population in Unit 2 is healthy and stable to increasing.

The majority of the hunters harvesting deer in Unit 2 between 2010-2012 were residents of Unit 2. Hunters from Unit 2 communities have a higher success rate than other hunters with an average success rate of 84% during this period. Hunters residing in Unit 1A have averaged a 70% success rate during this same period, accounting for an average of 30% of the total Unit 2 harvest (**Figure 6**). Non-resident activity in the unit has been on a slight increase, which may be related to changes in black bear

hunting opportunity in Unit 2. The Craig ADF&G office has noted an increase in non-resident inquiries related to deer hunting (Bethune 2013).

Table 2 – Deer harvest by month in Unit 2, 2003-2013 (Bethune 2015).

	July	August	September	October	November	December	Totals
2003	78	284	287	357	566	49	1621
2004	68	310	240	481	811	61	1971
2005	210	485	393	503	895	76	2562
2006	192	501	459	541	1333	152	3178
2007	128	428	300	450	1217	121	2644
2008	116	494	362	522	1525	167	3186
2009	122	488	263	510	1655	183	3221
2010	156	471	281	595	1669	178	3350
2011	230	632	295	595	1932	197	3881
2012	143	460	302	556	1878	315	3654
2013	163	484	282	460	2105	174	3668

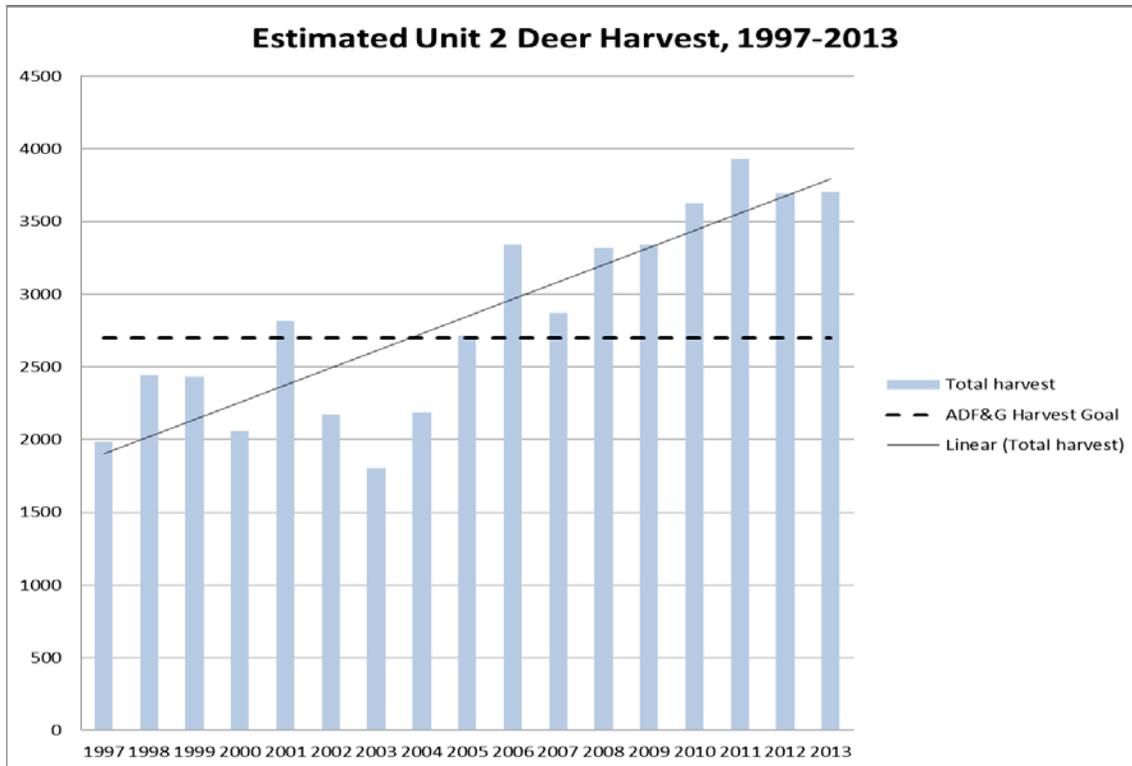


Figure 3 – Estimated deer harvest in Unit 2 from 1997-2013 (Bethune, 2015).

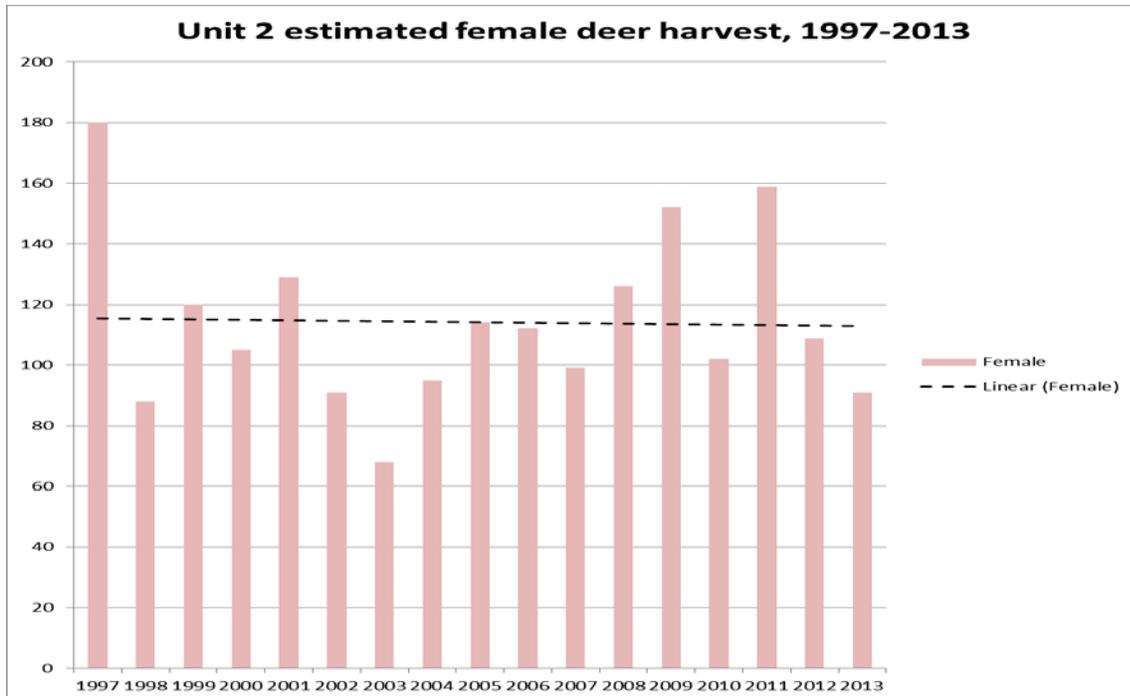


Figure 4 – Estimated female deer harvest in Unit 2 from 1997-2013 (Bethune, 2015).

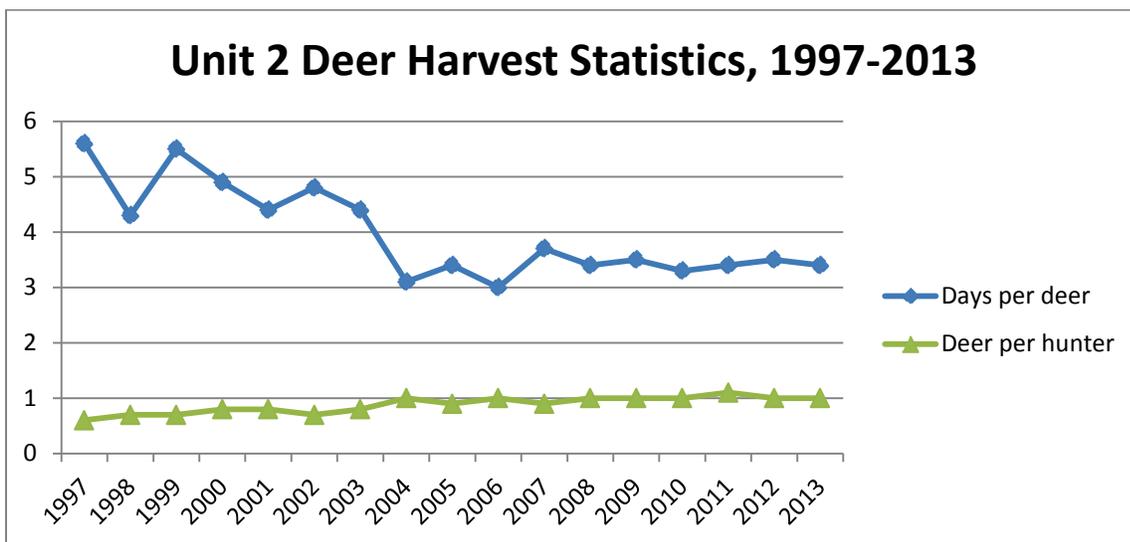


Figure 5 – Average number of days for hunters to harvest a deer and the average number of deer harvested per hunter in Unit 2 from 1997-2013 (Bethune, 2015).

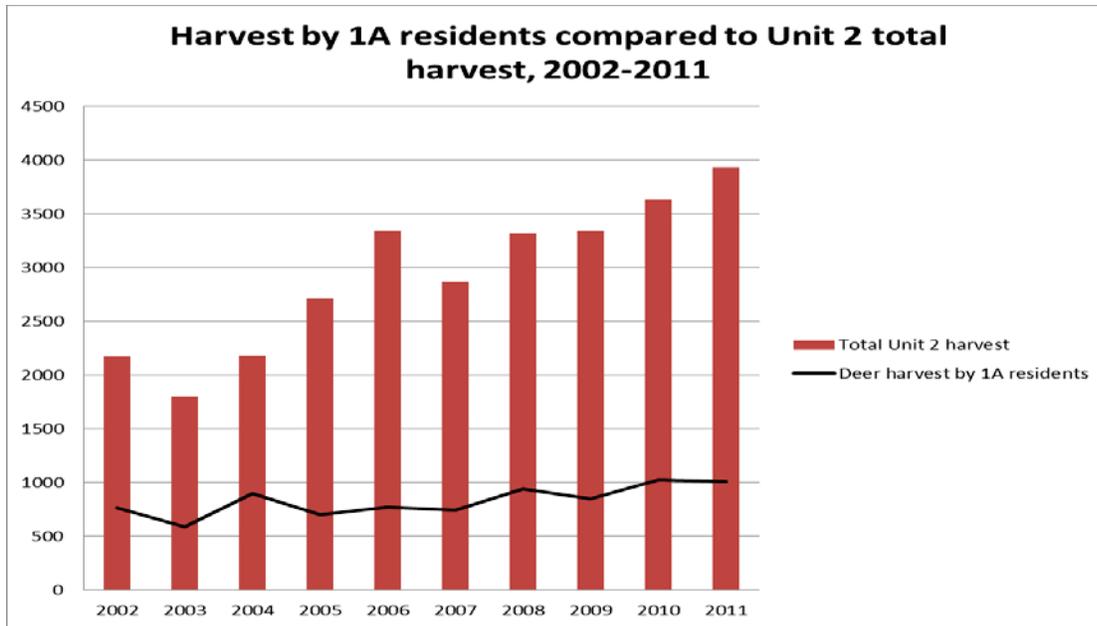


Figure 6 – Deer harvest by hunters residing in Unit 1A compared to total Unit 2 harvest from 2002-2011 (Bethune, 2013).

Despite current abundant populations, historically high harvest, liberalized seasons and harvest limits, there are continued concerns within members of the subsistence community regarding their inability to meet their subsistence needs. The biggest concern is the perception of increased hunting pressure, which may be a result of the Access Travel Management Plan (ATM) enacted by the Forest Service in 2009. The ATM reduced access for hunters by reducing miles of roads in Unit 2. The ATM may have resulted in pushing a similar “pre-ATM” number of hunters into smaller areas affirming the perception of increasingly crowded hunting conditions. In addition, as clear-cuts advance past the early seral stages, deer are less visible from the road which may also be leading to the misperception that fewer deer are available (Bethune 2013).

Effects of the Proposal

If adopted, the proposal would reduce the harvest limit for non-Federally qualified users hunting deer on Federal public lands in Unit 2. The proposal does not change the harvest limit under the State sport hunting regulation or affect harvest on State and private lands.

If adopted, the proposal would provide Federally qualified subsistence users 31 days of additional opportunity to hunt deer on Federal lands in Unit 2. The January hunt would only apply to Federal public lands. Although prior year harvest tickets can be used, Federally-qualified users will need a new State hunting license to participate in a January season.

Additional deer would be harvested with a January season, however, both State and Federal managers are unable to estimate to what degree. While potential harvest may be far lower than other months, the harvest of female deer may increase dramatically beyond current levels as females are in better physical condition than bucks during January. Lastly, differentiating between male and female deer during

January will be difficult as most bucks have shed their antlers and will have hair growth over their pedicles.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Oppose Proposal WP16-01

Justification

Although interpretation of Title VIII of ANILCA could allow the Board to adjust State harvest limits, reducing the harvest limit for non-Federally qualified users in Unit 2 as allowed under §815 (3) of ANILCA is not needed at this time for conservation. Although deer harvest in Unit 2 has been on the increase, the harvest percentage by non-rural users has not increased dramatically from previous levels. Recent increases in deer per hunter, as well as the decrease in hunt days per deer for all Unit 2 deer hunters, suggest the deer population in Unit 2 is currently stable and growing.

The Unit 2 Federal season currently provides Federally qualified subsistence users 8 additional hunting days in July ahead that offered under State regulations, a closure to non-Federally qualified users for 15 days in August on the majority of the Prince of Wales Island Federal public lands, a five deer harvest limit, and opportunity to harvest a female deer after October 15. Current harvest data suggests these priorities are benefitting Federally qualified subsistence users.

Although a January season exists in Unit 4, the addition of 31 days in Unit 2 will negatively affect the deer population. Managers believe extending the season in Unit 2 is not in the best interest of deer conservation due to ease of access through an expansive road system as well as the presence of wolves in the unit. Lastly, with male deer during January being in poorer physical condition than female deer, along with the difficulty in distinguishing between the two during this time, the harvest of female deer may substantially increase resulting in conservation concerns.

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WP16-02 Executive Summary	
General Description	Proposal WP16-02 requests that the Federal season for deer in Unit 1C be extended from Aug. 1-Dec. 31 to Aug. 1-Jan. 31, adding an additional 31 days to the season. <i>Submitted by Monte Mitchell of Gustavus.</i>
Proposed Regulation	Unit 1C — Deer <i>4 deer; however, female deer Aug. 1-Dec. 31 Jan. 31</i> <i>may be taken only from</i> <i>Sept. 15-Dec. 31 Jan. 31</i>
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	Oppose
Southeast Advisory Council Recommendation	
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	None

**DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS
WP16-02**

ISSUES

Proposal WP16-02, submitted by Monte Mitchell of Gustavus, requests that the Federal season for deer in Unit 1C be extended from Aug. 1–Dec. 31 to Aug. 1–Jan. 31, adding an additional 31 days to the season.

DISCUSSION

The proponent believes many people in the northern portion of the Southeast Region could make use of the deer in their vicinity, but because of weather cannot get the full season benefit of harvesting their deer from bordering open units. He believes adoption of this proposal will increase available Federal lands for use meeting the intent and spirit of subsistence and will not impede or change use by non-subsistence users.

Existing Federal Regulation

Unit 1C — Deer

4 deer; however, female deer may be taken only from Sept. 15-Dec. 31 Aug. 1–Dec. 31

Proposed Federal Regulation

Unit 1C — Deer

*4 deer; however, female deer may be taken only from Sept. 15-~~Dec. 31~~ Aug. 1–~~Dec.~~
~~Jan. 31~~ ~~31-Jan. 31~~*

Existing State Regulation

Unit 1C Douglas, Lincoln, Shelter and Sullivan Islands — Deer

*Residents and Nonresidents: 4 deer; female deer may be taken only Aug. 1–Dec. 31
from Sept. 15-Dec.31*

Unit 1C remainder — Deer

Residents and Nonresidents: 2 bucks Aug. 1–Dec. 31

Extent of Federal Public Lands

Federal public lands comprise approximately 95% of Unit 1C and consists of 63% U.S. Forest Service

managed lands and 32% National Park Service managed lands (**Unit 1C Map**).

Customary and Traditional Use Determinations

Residents of Units 1C, 1D, Hoonah, Kake, and Petersburg have a positive customary and traditional use determination to harvest deer in Unit 1C.

Regulatory History

Since its inception in 1990, the Federal subsistence deer season in Unit 1C has been from Aug. 1 – Dec. 31 with a four deer harvest limit. Female deer may be taken only from Sept. 15–Dec. 31. The State season has been Aug. 1–Dec. 31 since 1982. The State harvest limit has varied from one to four, but has been four for all or part of the unit since statehood in 1959. Since 1991, the State has had a two buck harvest limit on the mainland portions of the unit, with a four deer limit on the major islands of the unit (Douglas, Shelter, Lincoln, and Sullivan).

Biological Background

Sitka Black-tailed deer spend the winter and early spring at low elevation where less snow accumulates and forests provide increased foraging opportunities. Fawning occurs in late May and early June as vegetation greens-up, providing abundant forage to meet energetic needs of the lactating doe. Migratory deer follow the greening vegetation up to alpine for the summer, whereas resident deer remain at lower elevations. Summer and fall are periods of active foraging as deer accumulate fat reserves to help them through the winter and early spring. The breeding season, or rut, generally occurs in October through November and peaks in late November (ADF&G 2009). All major predators of deer (wolves, brown bears, and black bears) are present in portions of Unit 1C, and may affect deer populations. However, deer population fluctuations in the Southeast Region are primarily influenced by winter snow depths (Olson 1979).

Deer on the mainland in the Southeast Region, such as in Unit 1C, tend to be at lower densities than on adjacent islands, likely due to the deep snow and presence of additional predators such as wolves and coyotes not found on the islands (Scott 2013). Most deer in Unit 1C occur on Douglas, Shelter, and Lincoln islands; locations that do not generally support wolves (Scott 2013).

Habitat

Old-growth forests are considered primary deer winter range, in part because the complex canopy cover allows sufficient sunlight through for forage plants to grow but intercepts snow, making it easier for deer to move and forage during winters when deep snow hinders access to other habitats. Deer habitat in the mainland portions of Unit 1C is generally of lower quality than on the islands. Steep terrain, high snow levels, and limited low elevation winter habitat are limiting factors for deer in Unit 1C (Logan 2015). A recent habitat model developed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS 2015) shows a theoretical deer density (deer per square mile) of 3 in Unit 1C, which has not changed since the same value calculated for

conditions in 1954, but is much lower than any other unit with the exception of Unit 1D. For comparison, theoretical deer densities throughout the southeast region range from a low of 2 in Unit 1D to a high of 21 in Unit 2 (USFS 2015).

Recent population indices

There are no population estimates for deer in Unit 1C; however, general population trends are monitored using deer pellet and harvest report data (Scott 2013). Relating pellet group data to population levels is difficult because factors other than changes in deer population size can affect deer pellet-group density. Snowfall patterns influence the distribution and density of deer pellets from year to year, and snow persisting late into the spring at elevations below 1,500 feet limits the ability to consistently survey the same elevation zones among years. In mild winters, deer can access forage in a greater variety of habitats, not all of which are surveyed. Conversely, in severe winters deep snow concentrates deer (McCoy 2010).

Deer pellet survey data on North Douglas Island in Unit 1C indicate a cyclical pattern ranging from a recent high of 2.84 mean pellet groups per plot in 2008 to 0.83 in 2014 (McCoy 2015a). Counts on Shelter Island have ranged from 1.05 mean pellet groups per plot in 2008 to 2.14 in 2013. On Inner Point on the southwest side of Douglas Island, pellet counts have remained relatively stable in the past 5 years, ranging from 1.59 mean pellet groups per plot in 2008 to 1.55 in 2014 (McCoy 2015a). Of these, only the most recent count from Shelter Island meets the State management objective of a mean pellet density of 2.0 pellet groups per plot (Scott 2013).

Furthermore, most of these data are from islands, which lack wolves. Pellet counts are generally not conducted on the mainland areas of Unit 1C; however, transects conducted in the 1990s demonstrated lower numbers than those on the islands of Unit 1C (McCoy 2015a and Scott 2013). This is consistent with the expectation that mainland deer populations are generally lower than island populations due to lower habitat quality, higher snow loads, and the presence of all three major predators (ADF&G 2009). However, population trends are expected to be similar on the mainland and islands.

Harvest History

In Unit 1C, Federally qualified subsistence users (based on community of residence) accounted for approximately 8% of the total deer harvest between 2009 and 2013 (McCoy 2015b), with non-Federally qualified Alaska residents accounting for the majority (90%) of the harvest. Average total annual harvest (by all hunters) was 398 animals from 2009-2013. The majority of the effort (hunter days) and harvest by Federally qualified subsistence users has occurred in November (31% and 38%, respectively), followed by September (22% and 20% respectively-**Table 1**). The mainland areas of Unit 1C (Unit 1C-remainder) accounted for only a small percentage of the total Unit 1C harvest; low harvest and a high number of hunter days compared to harvest suggest a low population density (Scott 2013).

Table 1. Average total days hunted, percent effort for the season, total harvest, and percent of total harvest for the season among federally qualified subsistence users for deer in Unit 1C 2009-2013 (McCoy 2015b)

Month	Total Days Hunted	% Effort	Total Harvest	% Total Harvest
August	18.2	12	2.8	8
September	32.6	22	6.8	20
October	26.2	18	5.8	17
November	45.6	31	12.6	38
December	24.6	17	5.2	16

For comparative purposes, Unit 4 is the only area of Southeast Alaska with a January harvest season for deer. In contrast to Unit 1C, Federally qualified subsistence users account for the majority of the harvest (93%) in this unit (McCoy 2015b). Among subsistence users, approximately 5% of the hunter effort occurs in January, accounting for 6% of the total season harvest (McCoy 2015b).

Effects of the Proposal

If this proposal is adopted, it would increase opportunities for Federally qualified subsistence users to harvest deer by adding a month to the Federal subsistence season. Some Federally qualified subsistence users in Unit 1C have closer access to Unit 4 with higher deer densities (see **Unit 4 Map**); however, the intent of the proponent is to be able to harvest deer closer to home late in the season when access to more plentiful deer in adjacent open Unit 4 is hindered by weather.

Adopting this proposal would likely increase harvest in the affected area. The level of increase is unknown, although it seems unlikely that very many hunters would travel from outside of the immediate area (Unit 1C) to harvest deer due to the low deer population density. Any additional harvest would likely be attributable to residents of Unit 1C or possibly Unit 1D or Hoonah. Currently, most hunting effort occurs in November, with a decline by December. If patterns are similar to Unit 4, hunter effort and harvest in January may be minimal (5-6% of total effort and harvest); however, a season extending through January could result in more of an increase in harvest because deer would be mostly concentrated along beaches and susceptible to harvest, as well as a higher proportion of does due to energy reserves and lack of antlers on males.

The impact of increased harvest on the deer population in this area is hard to quantify. Deer populations on the mainland portion of the unit are considered to be at a low density and additional harvest could lead to a conservation concern in localized areas.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Oppose Proposal WP16-02

Justification

Extending the season is not consistent with other units of southeast Alaska encompassing the mainland, and may result in a conservation concern, particularly for the low-density mainland deer population within this unit. Sufficient opportunities are provided during the five month season, and a Federal

subsistence priority is maintained by allowing the harvest of 4 deer of either sex throughout the unit including the mainland areas, whereas harvest in Unit 1C remainder is limited to 2 bucks under State regulations.

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WP16-03 Executive Summary	
General Description	Proposal WP16–03 requests an increase to the limit of mountain goats a designated hunter may have in possession from one to three in Southeast Alaska (Units 1-5). <i>Submitted by Monte Mitchell of Gustavus.</i>
Proposed Regulation	<p>Units 1-5—Designated Hunter</p> <p><i>If you are a Federally qualified subsistence user (recipient), you may designate another Federally qualified subsistence user (designated hunter) to take deer, moose and caribou, (and goat in Units 1-5 and muskox in Unit 22) on your behalf. Designated hunters may hunt for any number of recipients, but have no more than two harvest limits in possession at any one time except for goats, where designated hunters may not have more than one harvest limit three mountain goats in possession at any one time, and unless otherwise specified in Unit-specific provisions. Any designated hunter taking wildlife on behalf of another rural Alaska resident shall deliver the wildlife promptly to that rural Alaska resident.</i></p>
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	Oppose
Southeast Advisory Council Recommendation	
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	None

**DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS
WP16-03**

ISSUES

Proposal WP16-03, submitted by Monte Mitchell, requests an increase to the limit of mountain goats a designated hunter may have in possession from one to three in Southeast Alaska (Units 1-5).

DISCUSSION

The proponent states that adoption of this proposal will allow designated hunters to harvest goats efficiently, thus being able to fulfill the intention of the Federal designated hunter program which is important for the less able-bodied hunters like children and elders. The proponent states that adoption of this proposal will not prevent other recreational, commercial, and sport hunters from pursuing animals within the quota and season. The proponent also states that the previous concern from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) that the harvest would not be controllable within the point management system should not impede the subsistence hunters' ability to fulfill their harvest.

Existing Federal Regulation

Units 1-5—Designated Hunter

_.25(e)If you are a Federally qualified subsistence user (recipient), you may designate another Federally qualified subsistence user (designated hunter) to take deer, moose and caribou, (and goat in Units 1-5and muskox in Unit 22) on your behalf. Designated hunters may hunt for any number of recipients, but have no more than two harvest limits in possession at any one time except for goats, where designated hunters may not have more than one harvest limit in possession at any one time, and unless otherwise specified in Unit-specific provisions. Any designated hunter taking wildlife on behalf of another rural Alaska resident shall deliver the wildlife promptly to that rural Alaska resident.

Proposed Federal Regulation

Units 1-5—Designated Hunter

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Existing State Regulation

Units 1-5

N/A (there is no designated hunter system under the State, and currently goats are not allowed under the proxy hunting authority)

Extent of Federal Public Lands

Federal public lands comprise approximately 88% of the Southeast Region which includes Units 1-5. In Unit 1, the U.S. Forest Service manages 80% of those lands as part of the Tongass National Forest, and the remaining 20% of those lands are managed by the National Park Service as part of Glacier Bay National Park. In Unit 2, 99% of the Federal public lands are Tongass National Forest, with the remaining 1% managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge (Forrester Island). All Federal public lands in Unit 3 (100%) are part of the Tongass National Forest. In Unit 4, 99% of the Federal public lands are Tongass National Forest, with less than 1% each managed by the National Park Service as the Sitka National Historical Park and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge (St. Lazaria Island). In Unit 5, 33% of the Federal public lands are part of the Tongass National Forest, 66% of those lands are managed by the National Park Service as parts of the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve and the Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, and The Bureau of Land Management manages 1% of the Federal public lands near Icy Bay.

There is no hunting allowed on Federal public lands in Glacier Bay National Park, Sitka National Historical Park or Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park. In order to engage in Federal subsistence activities in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, the National Park Service requires that subsistence users either live within the park's resident zone (36 CFR 13.430, 36 CFR 13.1902) or have a subsistence permit (36 CFR 13.440) issued by the park superintendent.

Customary and Traditional Use Determinations

The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) has not made a customary and traditional use determination for goat in Units 1A and 1D; therefore, all Federally qualified subsistence users may harvest this species in these units.

Rural residents of Units 1B and 3 have a customary and traditional use determination to harvest goats in Unit 1B; and residents of Haines, Kake, Klukwan, Petersburg, and Hoonah have a customary and traditional use determination to harvest goats in Unit 1C.

Residents of Sitka, Hoonah, Tenakee, Pelican, Funter Bay, Angoon, Port Alexander, and Elfin Cove have a customary and traditional use determination to harvest goats in Unit 4.

All rural residents of Unit 5A have a customary and traditional use determination to harvest goats in Unit 5. In order to engage in subsistence in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, the National Park Service requires that subsistence users either live within the park's resident zone (36 CFR 13.430, 36 CFR 13.1902) or have a subsistence permit (36 CFR 13.440) issued by the park superintendent. Yakutat, in Unit 5A, is a resident zone community for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park.

Regulatory History

In Units 1-5, ADF&G uses a weighted point system whereby males=1 point and females=2 points. General management guidelines for Units 1-5 (1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 4 and 5) are to maintain a guideline harvest not to exceed 6 points per 100 goats observed (ADF&G 2012). Hunters are encouraged to harvest males rather than females, and are prohibited from harvesting nannies with kids. Guideline harvest levels (GHLs) include harvest by Federally qualified subsistence and State users. Each hunt area is delineated into discreet geographic management areas and the GHL is established for each area. GHLs for each management area are generally low, ranging from 1-30. Recent GHLs, for example, range from 2-5 in Unit 4, 5-6 in Unit 5, and 1-10 in Unit 1D (Scott 2011). Once the GHL for an area is met, an Emergency Order and Special Action are issued to close the season in these small geographical areas while allowing for additional harvest in areas still open with points available. Most goat hunts in Units 1-5 are managed under a State registration permit open to all hunters; however, a Federal subsistence registration permit is required for the taking of a second goat in Units 1A and 1B remainder, and Federal subsistence registration permits are available for Units 5A remainder and 5B.

In 2011, Proposal WP12-11 requested that mountain goats be added to the Federal designated hunter permit. The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) adopted the proposal with modification to limit designated hunters to one mountain goat in possession, with concurrence from the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, in order to minimize over-harvest and potential waste, as well as maintain opportunities for other subsistence and non-Federally qualified subsistence users. Mountain goats were subsequently added to the Federal designated hunter permit for Units 1-5 starting in the 2012 regulatory year. The only other unit where goats are allowed under the designated hunter permit is Unit 6D, where a designated hunter may harvest a goat for another user who is blind, 65 years of age or older, at least 70% disabled, or temporary disabled; the designated hunter may hunt for any number of recipients, but may have no more than one harvest limit in their possession at any one time.

An indication of how closely goat harvest is managed is indicated by numerous Emergency Orders (State season) and Special Actions (Federal season) that have been issued in recent years, generally for early closure to seasons once the GHL (quota) has been met, and for areas of declining populations where any harvest may cause a conservation concern. **Table 1** in the appendix summarizes EOs issued by the State during 2013 and 2014. Special Actions for the Federal seasons since 2011 are shown in **Table 2** of the appendix. Additionally, the Alaska Board of Game expanded archery in Unit 1C-RG014 to include the

area from south side of Blackerby Ridge to the north side of Salmon Creek Reservoir above 1,000 foot contour and east to Observation Peak in addition to the previously designated area, starting in the 2015-16 regulatory season. The Alaska Board of Game also established a new drawing permit for goats in Unit 1C (DG 011) with a season running from Oct. 1- Nov. 30; however, this season has been closed for 2 years because of high female harvest and a decline in goat numbers in the area.

Biological Background

Goats occupy steep and rugged terrain, and occur in Alaska throughout Southeast and along the coastal mountains to Cook Inlet. In the Southeast Region, goats have been introduced to non-native range on Baranof Island (Unit 4) where the population expanded, to Chichagof Island (Unit 4) where the transplant apparently failed, and most recently on Revillagigedo Island (Unit 1A) where they have become established (ADF&G 2011). Recent genetic investigations, however, suggest that a residual population may have existed in seclusion on Baranof Island prior to the 1923 transplants from Tracy Arm (Paul 2009). Goats in coastal areas typically migrate from alpine summer ranges to winter ranges at lower elevations, typically in old-growth forest habitats (ADF&G 2011).

Males (billies) and females (nannies) are similar in appearance, except that males are ~ 40% larger than females and have differently shaped horns (ADF&G 2011). Nannies usually do not reproduce until around the age of 5 (see Festa-Bianchet and Côte 2008 for review). White et al. (2008) did not document any case where females less than four years of age had kids at heel during the summer in a Southeast Region goat population. Female goats appear to have a very conservative reproductive strategy, generally exhibiting a low reproductive effort and favoring strategies to ensure their long-term survival over any one reproductive event (Festa-Bianchet and Côte 2008). Females generally produce single kids, although twinning may be more common in introduced and rapidly growing populations than in native or established and stable populations (Côte and Festa-Bianchet 2003). Productivity varies between populations and annually. White et al. (2007), for example, observed that 57-64% of females in a Southeast Region goat population were seen with kids during the summer; however, this study did not directly monitor the initial parturition rate. White and Barten (2008) reported that younger and older females were less likely to have a kid at heel than prime-aged females (i.e. 7-9 years old).

Goat populations are extremely sensitive to adult female mortality (Gaillard et al 2000); therefore harvesting billies is generally recommended to maintain population productivity (Hebert and Turnbull 1977, Youds et al. 1980, Festa-Bianchet and Côte 2008). Indeed, harvest of nannies has led to declines in native populations (see Festa-Bianchet and Côte 2008 for reviews). Harvest of males only is not without problems, however, which could include further skewing the sex ratio and increasing the risk of inbreeding (Festa-Bianchet and Côte 2008). Either-sex harvest is generally implemented because of the difficulty of sexing animals in the field (Voyer et al. 2003, Festa-Bianchet and Côte 2008).

Population Trends

The current population estimate is 3,000-4,000 goats on the mainland in Unit 1A (Porter 2014). The current population on the Cleveland Peninsula portion of Unit 1A is 50 animals, with no noted increasing

trend (Porter 2014). Mountain goat populations appear to be stable throughout most of this Unit (Porter 2014).

Although data specific to goats in Unit 1B are scarce, available information indicates that with the exception of the Cleveland Peninsula, where populations have declined, and the Thunder Mountain area where populations have recently increased, most Unit 1B goat populations have remained relatively stable since 2000 (Lowell 2014). In Unit 1C, goat populations seem to be at medium to high densities when compared to historical data over most of the range, and generally healthy overall throughout the unit (Scott 2014a). Recent information, however, suggests that this is not necessarily the case for all of Unit 1C. Goat numbers are low in areas of Lynn Canal, and goat populations have declined in Tracy/Endicott Arm to the point where the GHs were decreased to reduce the amount of points available for harvest (Sell 2015). White et al. (2012) documented decreased survival in mountain goats in Units 1C and 1D. Aerial surveys in Unit 1D generally target areas of greatest concern due to human use and/or disturbance, so it is difficult to evaluate the population of the entire unit. However, mountain goat populations appear to be at medium to high densities in those areas routinely surveyed (Sell 2014).

The 2004 population estimate for Unit 4 (Baranof Island) was approximately 1,529 goats (Mooney 2014). Record winter snowpack during the winters of 2006 through 2008, along with 3 consecutive late and cold springs, have reduced the goat population (Mooney 2014). Survey and harvest data from 2009-2010 indicated a continuing decline with an estimated population of 700-850 goats (Mooney 2014). Surveys in 2011-2012 indicated a further decline with an estimated population of 650-750 goats and a decrease in the number of kids per 100 adults to from 23% in 2011 to 10% in 2012 (Mooney 2014). Past high harvest rates of nannies in Unit 4 have impacted recruitment of the population, and recent aging of harvested females indicates the age structure of this component increasing, which raised conservation concerns for managers (Mooney 2011).

Within Unit 5, the goat population in the Nunatak Bench area started to decline in 2000 and remains at a low density. Thirty-three goats were observed during fall aerial surveys in both 2008 and 2009 (Oehlers 2008, 2009), and only 18 goats were observed during a survey in 2011 (Scott 2014); this area has been closed under both State and Federal regulations since 2000. Recent surveys indicated a decline in mountain goat numbers within the Western Brabazon range between Harlequin Lake and Nunatak Fjord. Forty-eight and 32 goats were observed during aerial surveys in 2009 (Oehlers 2009) and 2011 (Scott 2014b), respectively, as compared to an estimated 154 goats in 2006 (Barten 2006). Goat populations in the area of Unit 5 from Harlequin Lake to the Alsek River have not been surveyed since 157 and 126 goats were observed during two separate fall surveys in 2010 (Oehlers 2010, Scott 2014b).

Harvest History

Between 2010 and 2014, a total of 593 goats were harvested in Unit 1-5 (**Table 3**, Sell 2015). Of this total, 224 (38%) were harvested by Federally qualified subsistence users. This figure is based on the harvester's community of residence, but does not necessarily reflect the regulations (State or Federal) under which the harvest took place.

Table 3. Reported harvest of goats (total and % of harvest) in Units 1-5, 2010-2014 (Sell 2015). Designation of Federally qualified subsistence user is based on harvester's community of residence.

Unit	Non-federally qualified resident user	Federally qualified subsistence user	Non-resident	Total
1A	37 (51%)	16 (22%)	20 (27%)	73
1B	17 (22%)	26 (33%)	35 (45%)	78
1C	63 (33%)	1 (1%)	126 (66%)	190
1D	11 (8%)	108 (76%)	24 (17%)	143
4	12 (12%)	70 (70%)	18 (18%)	101
5A	1 (20%)	3 (60%)	1 (20%)	5
Unknown	3 100%)	0	0	3

Since goats were added to the designated hunter permit for Units 1-5 in 2012, a total of 4 goats have been harvested by designated hunters: 2 billies were harvested in Unit 4 in 2012, 1 billy was harvested in Unit 4 in 2013, and 1 billy was harvested in Unit 1C in 2014.

Traditional harvest

The subsistence way of life is very much a part of the social fabric of Alaskan rural communities. Within Alaska Native cultures, harvesting of subsistence foods is inextricably intertwined with social interactions. Social interactions may be in the form of extended families spending time at fish camps during the summer, young hunters learning harvesting skills from their older relatives, or individuals sharing their harvest successes with community members. Subsistence includes a cultural value system of sharing, which Alaska Natives have maintained since before contact with Russians and Europeans (Wolfe and Ellana 1983).

The hunting of ungulates in the Southeast Region is a physically demanding task which not every household in a given community is able to undertake. It is common for able-bodied, younger individuals to take on the responsibility of harvesting meat for families and individuals outside of their household (i.e., the elderly and single mothers). Deer and moose are vital food staples and an important protein source for many rural Alaskans.

In 1997, the ADF&G, Division of Subsistence conducted key respondent interviews in Prince of Wales (POW) Island communities and Ketchikan regarding subsistence deer hunting on POW Island. Hunting and sharing practices are similar throughout most POW Island communities, and it was noted that some hunters regularly supply deer to other households as well as their own (Turek et. al 2004). Several individuals mentioned this pattern specifically in their responses. Regardless of the demographics and cultural histories of communities throughout POW Island, residents gave very similar answers to the questions regarding sharing and hunting practices.

Other Alternatives Considered

Several alternatives are available to mitigate any potential negative side effects of this proposal, such as over-harvest or harvesting of nannies, if designated hunters are allowed to have more than one animal in possession.

One alternative would be to allow two harvest limits in possession at any one time. Mountain goats inhabit rugged terrain, and the harvest and transport of more than one animal is challenging (the dressed weight of a 250 pound goat, for example, is approximately 150 pounds). Harvesting and transporting three animals at a time would be difficult, and may lead to unintended waste if the designated hunter is unable to remove several animals from the field. This alternative would also reduce but not eliminate some of the potentially negative effects of the initial proposal such as over-harvest or the harvesting of nannies. While adoption of this alternative would reduce some of the potential effects of the original proposal, unintended waste, exceeding the GHL, and harvesting of nannies could still occur, resulting in a conservation concern; therefore, this alternative is not recommended.

Another alternative would be to allow two or three animals in possession, but shorten the required harvest reporting time period (for example, from 5 days to 2 days), to allow for possession of more than one animal only in units with higher quotas, or to limit the number of persons for which a designated hunter may harvest goats. Shortening the required harvesting report period could be effective in units with higher quotas; however, over-harvesting could still occur in units with low quotas and is not recommended. Similarly, restricting the number of persons for which a designated hunter may harvest goats but still allowing 2 in possession would not fully address the potential issue of over-harvesting in areas with low quotas and is not recommended. Allowing for more than one animal only in units with higher quotas may address the issue of over-harvesting; however, because quotas are not static, administration of this regulation would be cumbersome and potentially confusing to the user, unintended waste and harvesting of nannies may still occur, and is therefore this alternative is not recommended.

Effects of the Proposal

It is difficult to predict the effects of the proposal; however, harvest of goats by designated hunters has been minimal and it is likely that this pattern would continue. Because the State manages mountain goat harvest in a combined State and Federal quota, the total harvest of goats is not expected to change. If, however, designated hunters are allowed to have three harvest limits in their possession at any one time they may harvest two to three animals out of one herd, potentially resulting in the harvest quota being met sooner or being exceeded in areas of low quotas before in-season closures can be implemented.

Designated hunters targeting two or three animals out of one herd may also be less selective in the sex of animals taken. A higher female harvest by designated hunters would result in the harvest quota being reached sooner, and may negatively affect the reproductive rate of that population. Mountain goats are at low densities and/or on the decline in several portions of Units 1-5, as evidenced by lowered quotas and multiple Federal subsistence and State season closures in recent years; consequently, harvesting several animals out of one of these herds may cause a conservation concern in localized areas.

While the option for designated hunters to have 3 goats in possession at any one time will benefit the recipients and allow for more effective/efficient harvest, supporting the traditional practice of hunting for others and opportunity for other users to harvest goats may be reduced

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Oppose Proposal WP16-03

Justification

Conservation concerns over goats in this region warrant rejection of this proposal. Many subunit areas in the Southeast Region have low quotas (some as low as 1 point). Mountain goats are at low densities and/or on the decline in several portions of Units 1-5, as evidenced by lowered quotas and multiple Federal and State season closures in recent years, and available survey data. Allowing designated hunters to have 3 goats in possession may concentrate harvests in localized areas, which may not be sustainable in some populations.

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Appendix

Table 1. Summary of State Emergency Orders for Mountain Goats in Units 1-5, 2013-2014

Emergency Order Number	Area	Summary of Action
01-01-13	Unit 4	Closure of the resident and nonresident mountain goat hunting season in the following portions of hunt area RG150; 1) that portion including Blue Lake, Glacier Lake drainages, 2) that portion including Medvejie Lake, Bear Lake, Indigo Lake drainages, and drainages into the east side of Silver Bay between Bear Cove and Mani Point, and 3) that portion of the south Katlian River drainage including the drainage south of the south bank of the Katlian River, and that portion south of the south bank of the main stream draining into and out of Hogan Lake on Baranof Island, effective 1159PM July 24, 2013
01-02-13	Unit 5A	Closure of the portion of the mountain goat hunting season under the state registration permit RG170 in Unit 5A: closed area begins on the west shore of Harlequin Lake and the western edge of the Yakutat Glacier; then west of Harlequin Lake and Yakutat Glacier to Yakutat Bay and Disenchantment Bay; and south of Russell and Nunatak Fiords, effective 1159PM July 31 2013
01-03-13	Unit 4	Closure of the Nakwasina River drainage portion of the Unit 4 registration goat hunt (RG150), effective 1159PM August 23, 2013
01-04-13	Unit 4	Closure of the Redoubt Bay/Necker Bay Zone of RG150 in Unit 4 to mountain goat hunting season, effective 1159PM September 11, 2013
01-05-13	Unit 1D	Closure of the 7-mile ridge/Tukgahgo Mt. area of the Takshanuk Mountains in GMU 1D mountain goat hunting season in Tukgahgo Mountain area effective 1159PM September 17, 2013
01-06-13	Unit 1C	Closure of that portion of Unit 1C mountain goat hunting season under the state registration permit hunt RG012, for that portion of Unit 1C from Eagle Glacier and Eagle River to Sawmill Creek, effective 1159pm September 30, 2013
01-08-13	Unit 1D	Early closure to mountain goat hunting season (RG023) in the Takshanuk Mountain Range, east of the Haines Highway and Chilkat River, west of Chilkoot Lake and River, and north to Goat Hollow, effective 1159PM October 4, 2013
01-09-13	Unit 1D	Closure of the mountain goat hunting season in the areas bounded by the White Pass and Yukon Railroad on the west side, the East Fork of the Skagway River on the south side, and the Canadian border to the north and east side, effective 1159PM October 5, 2013
01-11-13	Unit 1D	Closure of the mountain goat hunting season in the area bounded by the East Fork of the Skagway River on the north side, Kasidaya Creek on the south side, Taiya Inlet, and the White Pass and Yukon Railroad on the west, and the Canadian border on the east at 1159PM, November 21, 2013

01-12-13	Unit 4	Closure of the mountain goat hunting season in the North Fork of the Katalian River Area portion of the Unit 4 registration goat hunt (RG150), effective 1159PM December 24, 2013
01-02-14	Unit 4	Closure of the mountain goat hunting season in the South Katlian and blue/Medveje Lakes Drainages, effective 1159PM July 31, 2014
01-03-14	Unit 5	Closure to a portion of the mountain goat hunting season under the state registration permit hunt RG170 in Unit 5A. The closed area begins on the west shore of Harlequin Lake and the western edge of the Yakutat Glacier; then west of Harlequin Lake and Yakutat Glacier to Yakutat Bay and Disenchantment Bay; and south of Russell and Nunatak Fiords, effective 1159PM July 31, 2014
01-04-14	Unit 4	Closure of the mountain goat hunting season in the N. Fork of the Katlian River Area portion of the Unit 4 registration goat hunt (RG150), effective 1159PM August 29, 2014
01-05-14	Unit 1D	Closure of the mountain goat hunting season between Kicking Horse River and Sullivan River (RG026) in Unit 1D, effective 1159PM September 9, 2014
01-06-14	Unit 1D	Closure of the mountain goat hunting season in Tukgahgo Mountain area of Unit 1D, effective 1159PM September 18, 2014
01-07-14	Unit 1D	Closure of the mountain goat hunting season (RG024) in the area bounded by the East Fork of the Skagway River on the north side, Kasidaya Creek on the south side, Taiya Inlet, and the White Pass and Yukon Railroad on the west, and the Canadian border on the east, effective 1159pm September 24, 2014
01-08-14	Unit 1D	Closure of the mountain goat hunting season (RG024) in the areas bounded by the White Pass and Yukon Railroad on the west side, the East Fork of the Skagway River on the south side, and the Canadian border to the north and east side, effective 1159PM September 27, 2014
01-09-14	Unit 1D	Closure of the mountain goat hunting season (RG023) in the Takshanuk Mountain Range, east of the Haines Highway and Chilkat River, west of Chilkoot Lake and River, and north to Goat Hollow, effective 1159PM October 10, 2014
01-10-14	Unit 1C	Closure of the mountain goat hunting season (RG012) for that portion of unit 1C from Sawmill Creek north to the Gilkey River
01-12-14	Unit 1D	Closure of the mountain goat hunting season (RG023) along Chilkoot Lake and Lutak Inlet, from Taiyasanka Harbor to the northern end of Chilkoot Lake, effective 1159PM October 17, 2014
01-13-14	Unit 1D	Closure of the mountain goat hunting season (RG024) in the area bounded by West Creek on the north side, Taiyasanka Harbor on the south side, Ferebee River/Glacier on the west, and the Taiya Inlet and River on the east, effective 1159pm November 7, 2014
01-14-14	Unit 1D	Closure of the mountain goat hunting season (RG024) along the eastern shore of Taiya Inlet, from Dayebas Creek north to Kasidaya Creek, and east to the Canadian border, effective 1159PM November 29, 2014

Table 2. Summary of Special Actions for Mountain Goats in Units 1-5, 2011-2014

Special Action Number	Area & Species Affected	Summary of Action
WSA-13-MG-04-11	Unit 4 Baranof Island mountain goat	Closed the watersheds of Blue Lake, Medvejie Lake and the southern half of the Katlian River watershed on Baranof Island to the harvest of mountain goats from August 1 through December 31, 2011.
WSA-13-MG-08-11	Unit 4 Baranof Island mountain goat	Closed the Nakwasina River watershed on Baranof Island to the harvest of mountain goats from Aug. 12 through Dec. 31, 2011.
WSA-13-MG-10-11	Unit 4 Baranof Island mountain goat	Closed the Green Lake and Vodopad watersheds on Baranof Island to the harvest of mountain goats from Sept. 29 through Dec. 31, 2011.
WSA-13-MG-11-11	Unit 4 Baranof Island mountain goat	Closed the Redoubt Bay-Necker Bay Zone on Baranof Island to the harvest of mountain goats from Sept. 30 through Dec. 31, 2011.
WSA-13-MG-12-11	Unit 4 Baranof Island mountain goat	Closed the north fork of the Katlian River and Coxe River drainages and that portion of the unnamed drainage west of Coxe River and north of Cedar Cove that drains into Nakwasina Sound on Baranof Island to the harvest of mountain goats from Oct. 15 through Dec. 31, 2011.
WSA-13-MG-13-11	Unit 4 Baranof Island mountain goat	Closed all drainages into Baranof Warm Springs Bay, Cascade Bay, Nelson Bay, Red Bluff Bay, Falls Lake, Hoggatt Bay, Gut Bay, Yermak Lake, Patterson Bay, Deep Cove, and all un-named drainages from Baranof Warm Springs Bay south to Deep Cove that enter Chatham Strait (known as the Mt. Furuhelm - Mt. Ada Zone) on Baranof Island to the harvest of mountain goats from Dec. 15 through Dec. 31, 2011.
WSA 13-MG-04-12	Unit 4 Baranof Island mountain goat	Closed the watersheds of Blue Lake, Medvejie Lake and the southern half of the Katlian River watershed on Baranof Island to the harvest of mountain goats from August 1 through December 31, 2012.
WSA 13-MG-07-13	Unit 4 Baranof Island mountain goat	Closed the watersheds of Blue Lake, Medvejie Lake and the South Fork Katlian River watershed on Baranof Island to the harvest of mountain goats from August 1 through December 31, 2013.
WSA 13-MG-08-13	Unit 4 Baranof Island mountain goat	Closed the Federal goat hunting season within the Nakwasina River watershed on Baranof Island August 28 through October 26, 2013.
WSA 13-MG-09-13	Unit 4	Closed the Federal goat hunting season within the

	Baranof Island mountain goat	Redoubt-Necker Bay zone on Baranof Island September 12 through November 10, 2013.
WSA 13-MG-10-13	Unit 4 Baranof Island mountain goat	Extended previous Federal goat hunting closures in the watersheds of Blue Lake, Medvejie Lake, South Fork Katlian River and Nakwasina River watersheds and the Redoubt-Necker Bay zone on Baranof Island in Unit 4 from September 19 through the remainder of the 2013 season.
WSA 13-MG-13-13	Unit 4 Baranof Island mountain goat	Closed the Federal goat hunting season within the North Fork Katlian River zone on Baranof Island December 27 through December 31, 2013.
WSA 13-MG-04-14	Unit 4 Baranof Island mountain goat	Closed the Blue Lake, Medvejie Lake and the South Fork Katlian River watersheds on Baranof Island to the harvest of mountain goats from August 1 through December 31, 2014.
WSA 13-MG-05-14	Unit 4 Baranof Island mountain goat	Closed the Federal goat hunting season within the North Fork Katlian River zone on Baranof Island August 30 through December 31, 2014.

**DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS
WP16-04**

ISSUES

Proposal WP16–04, submitted by the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, requests that the term “antlered” be removed from the moose harvest regulations in Unit 5B, and Unit 1C remainder.

DISCUSSION

The proponent states that the term “antlered bull” is not effective since Federal regulations requires Federally qualified subsistence users to obtain a State registration permit and the State regulations allow any bull (less restrictive) to be taken. The proponent states that with this regulatory change, State and Federal regulations would be consistent and have no effect on the moose population because the hunt is already managed as any-bull.

Existing Federal Regulation

Unit 1C remainder—Moose

Sept. 15–Oct. 15

1 antlered bull by State registration permit only

Unit 5B - Moose

1 antlered bull by State registration permit only. The season will be closed when 25 antlered bulls have been taken from the entirety of Unit 5B

Sept. 1–Dec. 15

Proposed Federal Regulation

Unit 1C remainder—Moose

1-~~antlered~~ bull by State registration permit only

Sept. 15–Oct. 15

Unit 5B — Moose

1 ~~antlered~~ bull by State registration permit only. The season will be closed when 25 ~~antlered~~ bulls have been taken from Unit 5B

Sept. 1–Dec. 15

Existing State Regulation

Unit 1C remainder — Moose

One bull by permit available in Douglas, Ketchikan, Petersburg, Sitka, or by mail from Douglas or online at <http://hunt.alaska.gov> beginning Aug. 18 Sept. 15–Oct. 15

Unit 5B — Moose

One bull by permit, available in Douglas or Yakutat or by mail from Douglas or online at <http://hunt.alaska.gov> beginning Aug. 28 Sept. 1–Dec. 15

Extent of Federal Public Lands

Federal public lands comprise approximately 95% of Unit 1C and consists of 63% U.S. Forest Service (USFS) managed lands and 32% National Park Service (NPS) lands (**Unit 1C Map**).

Federal public lands comprise approximately 96% of Unit 5B and consists of 93% NPS managed lands, 2% Bureau of Land Management (BLM) managed lands, and 1% USFS managed lands (**Unit 5 Map**).

Customary and Traditional Use Determinations

Residents of Units 1-5 have a positive customary and traditional use determination to harvest moose harvest in Unit 1C. In order to engage in subsistence in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, the National Park Service requires that Federally qualified subsistence users either live within the park's resident zone (36 CFR 13.430, 36 CFR 13.1902) or have a subsistence permit (36 CFR 13.440) issued by the park superintendent. Yakutat, in Unit 5A, is a resident zone community for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park.

Regulatory History

Since 1978, moose hunting in Unit 5B has been managed under a State registration permit system (Scott 2012). Currently, moose harvest in Unit 5B is managed using a State registration permit (RM062).

In Unit 1C, moose harvest is managed under State drawing and registration permits. Unit 1C remainder, including the Chilkat Peninsula and Taku River, is managed under a State registration permit (RM046) with an any bull harvest limit.

In 1993, the Federal Subsistence Board adopted Proposal P93-31 with modification to establish a 25 bull moose harvest quota and extend the season from Sept. 1 – Nov. 15 to Sept. 1 – Dec. 15. in Unit 5B.

Current Events Involving Species

In 2014, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) issued 5 draw permits for any bull hunt in

Berners Bay, based on the Berners Bay moose population estimate. Four moose were harvested during the season. Five permits have also been issued for the fall 2015 season.

Biological Background

Moose were first documented along the lower Alsek River in eastern Unit 5 in the late 1920s or early 1930s. Range expansion to the west followed slowly, with animals not documented in the Malaspina Forelands (Unit 5B) west of Yakutat Bay until the 1950s (Scott 2012). It is believed that the glaciers and waters of Icy Bay curtailed westward movement of this moose population (Scott 2012).

Moose are relative newcomers to many parts of the Southeast Region, with many of the populations becoming established in the early to mid-1900s. Some areas, such as the Gustavus Forelands in Unit 1C, did not have moose until the 1960s. It is likely that coastal mountains inhibited the movement of moose into these areas. Once moose discovered these unexploited areas, the presence of high quality habitat led to rapid expansions of new populations. In Unit 1C, moose expanded their range into 3 of the 4 moose management areas naturally, while in Berner's Bay they were introduced (Scott 2014).

During a survey in Unit 5B in 2007, 82 moose were observed (Scott 2010). Portions of Unit 5B consist of dense coniferous forests that make it difficult to detect moose. Generally, it is estimated that 70% of moose present are detected during aerial surveys (Scott 2010), which needs to be considered relative to the survey results. Although 82 moose is lower than the long-term average of 105 moose (1995-2006), survey conditions and timing likely played a role in this difference (Scott 2010).

Moose surveys have not been conducted in the Chilkat Range portion of Unit 1C in recent years; however, harvest records and anecdotal observations indicate that the moose population may be stable in the Endicott River and St. James Bay areas and increasing near Homeshore and Pt. Couverdon (Scott 2012b). Similarly, there is little information regarding the moose population in the Taku River drainage; however, harvest records and anecdotal information from hunters indicates the moose population in the area may be stable (Scott 2012b).

Harvest History

The mean age of moose harvested in Unit 5B has ranged between 3.0 and 7.5 years from 1999-2009 (Scott 2010). During the State regulatory years of 2007-2008, the harvest in Unit 5B averaged 10 moose annually, with an annual average of 33 hunters, 168 hunter-days of effort, and a hunter success rate of 29% (**Table 1**, Scott 2010). Reported harvest in Unit 5B increased from previous years during the 2007-2008 reporting period, along with increased number of hunters and number of hunter days (Scott 2010). Harvest in Unit 5B decreased slightly during the latest reporting period of 2009-2011 (**Table 1**). Total harvest for this report period (15 moose) is similar to harvests in the 1990s (Scott 2012a). The number of hunters and days hunted decreased in 2010, which was reflected in a decline in the number of moose taken (**Table 1**). Access to Unit 5B is often limited by weather, and once on the ground, hunters tend to remain close to the beach. This suggests hunters may not be using much of the available moose habitat and the overall harvest may be less than it could be (Scott 2012a).

Table 1. Total harvest, number of hunters, hunter days, and percent success of all users for moose in Unit 5B, 2007-2010 (Scott 2010, 2012a)

Year	Harvest	Number of Hunters	Hunter Days	Percent success
2007	10	35	175	29
2008	9	31	161	29
2009	11	30	120	37
2010	4	12	33	33

During the 2007-2008 reporting period, Unit 5 residents took 47% of the Unit 5B moose harvest, nonresidents took 32%, and other Alaska residents accounted for the remaining 21% of the harvest (Scott 2010). During the 2009-2010 reporting period, Unit 5 residents took 33% of the Unit 5B moose harvest, nonresidents took 20%, and other Alaska residents took the remaining 47% of the harvest (Scott 2012a).

Mean annual harvest in both the Chilkat Range and Taku River portion of Unit 1C averaged 15 moose, ranging from 18 in 2009 to 11 in 2010, during the 2009-2011 reporting period (Scott 2012b).

Effects of the Proposal

If this proposal is adopted it would reduce regulatory complexity by having a harvest limit of one bull moose in State and Federal subsistence regulations for moose in Units 5B and 1C remainder. Federally qualified subsistence users are required to obtain a State registration permit which allows the harvest of any bull. Removing the term “antlered bull” from the Federal subsistence regulations improves consistency between the State and Federal regulations for moose in these units and decreases regulatory complexity for users. Adoption of this proposal is not expected to affect the moose harvest since it is already managed as an any-bull hunt and there is a harvest quota in place for Unit 5B.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Support Proposal WP16-04

Justification

Adoption of this proposal will reduce regulatory complexity moose in Units 5B and 1C remainder without resulting in any conservation concern for moose in these units.

LITERATURE CITED

Scott, R. 2010. Unit 5 moose management report. Pages 77-92 in P. Harper, editor. Moose management report of survey and inventory activities 1 July 2007-30 June 2009. ADF&G. Project 1.0. Juneau, AK.

Scott, R. 2012a. Unit 5 moose management report (pre-press). Pages 77–92 in P. Harper, editor. Moose management report of survey and inventory activities 1 July 2009–30 June 2011. ADF&G Species Management Report ADF&G/DWC/SMR-2012-4, Juneau, AK.

Scott, R. 2012b. Unit 1C moose management report (pre-press). Pages 26–52 [In] P. Harper, editor. Moose management report of survey and inventory activities 1 July 2009–30 June 2011. ADF&G. Species Management Report ADF&G/DWC-2012-5, Juneau, AK

WP16-05 Executive Summary	
General Description	Requests removing language stating the Unit 2 deer harvest limit may be reduced to four deer in times of conservation. <i>Submitted by the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.</i>
Proposed Regulation	<p><i>Unit 2—Deer</i></p> <p><i>5 deer; however, no more than one may be a female deer. Female deer may be taken only during the period Oct. 15–Dec. 31. The harvest limit may be reduced to 4 deer based on conservation concerns. The Federal public lands on Prince of Wales Island, excluding the southeastern portion (lands south of the West Arm of Cholmondeley Sound draining into Cholmondeley Sound or draining eastward into Clarence Strait), are closed to hunting of deer from Aug. 1 to Aug. 15, except by Federally qualified subsistence users hunting under these regulations.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>July 24–Dec. 31</i></p>
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	Support
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	None

DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS WP16-05

ISSUES

Proposal WP16-05, submitted by Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council), requests the language stating the Unit 2 deer harvest limit may be reduced to four deer in times of conservation be removed.

DISCUSSION

This proponent seeks to remove unnecessary regulatory language created in 2006 when the harvest limit for Federally qualified subsistence users was increased from four to five deer. The proponent believes the following language is unnecessary: *The harvest limit may be reduced to 4 deer based on conservation concerns.* This language was intended to act as a “safe guard” in case the Unit 2 deer population declined in the future.

In 2010, the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) delegated management authority to the two US Forest Service District Rangers in Unit 2. For deer, their scope of delegation allows them to set harvest quotas; to close, reopen or adjust Federal subsistence deer seasons; and to adjust harvest and possession limits. With authority delegated to the Federal In-season Managers, the “safe guard” language is no longer necessary. Removing this language gives the in-season managers more flexibility to provide subsistence opportunity and conservation of Unit 2 deer.

Existing Federal Regulation

Unit 2—Deer

5 deer; however, no more than one may be a female deer. Female deer July 24–Dec. 31 may be taken only during the period Oct. 15–Dec. 31. The harvest limit may be reduced to 4 deer based on conservation concerns. The Federal public lands on Prince of Wales Island, excluding the southeastern portion (lands south of the West Arm of Cholmondeley Sound draining into Cholmondeley Sound or draining eastward into Clarence Strait), are closed to hunting of deer from Aug. 1 to Aug. 15, except by Federally qualified subsistence users hunting under these regulations.

Proposed Federal Regulation

Unit 2—Deer

5 deer; however, no more than one may be a female deer. Female deer may be taken only during the period Oct. 15–Dec. 31. ~~The harvest limit may be reduced to 4 deer based on conservation concerns.~~ The Federal public lands on Prince of Wales Island, excluding the southeastern portion (lands south of the West Arm of Cholmondeley Sound draining into Cholmondeley Sound or draining eastward into Clarence Strait), are closed to hunting of deer from Aug. 1 to Aug. 15, except by Federally qualified subsistence users hunting under these regulations. July 24–Dec. 31

Existing State Regulation

Unit 2 - deer

Residents and non-residents: Four bucks

Aug. 1 – Dec. 31

Harvest tickets must be validated in sequential order, and unused tickets must be carried when you hunt.

Extent of Federal Public Lands

Federal public lands comprise approximately 74% of Unit 2, and consists of 73% U.S. Forest Service managed lands and <1% U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service managed lands (see **Unit 2 Map**).

Customary and Traditional Use Determinations

Rural residents of Units 1A, 2, and 3 have a customary and traditional use determination to harvest deer in Unit 2.

Regulatory History

Hunting regulations have permitted the harvest of deer in Unit 2 since 1925 (**Table 1**). During this period, season closing dates have varied between November and December, with December 31 being the common closing date since 1988. Seasons and harvest limits for subsistence users in Unit 2 are as liberal as they have been since 1925. Federal regulation has allowed the harvest of one female deer in Unit 2 since 1995.

During 2006, the Board was identified the Forest Supervisor of the Tongass National Forest in regulation as the delegated authority for deer in Unit 2 by adopting WP06-09 with modification. The modified proposal also established the current five deer harvest limit. Although the deer population was deemed stable at the time, there was concern that the overall harvest trend was in decline. As a result, Board allowed the Forest Supervisor the ability, after consultation with both the Council Chair and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), to reduce the harvest limit for conservation quickly without having to require notice and public hearing (FSB 2006).

Table 1 - Regulatory history for Unit 2 deer.

Year	Type of Season	Season	Limit	Conditions and Limitations
1925	Open	Sep. 15–Dec. 16	3	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1925–1929	Open	Sep. 1–Nov. 30	3	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1930–1941	Open	Aug. 20–Nov. 15	2	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1942–1943	Resident	Sep. 16–Nov. 15	2	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1942–1943	Non-resident	Sep. 16–Nov. 15	1	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1944–1948	Resident	Sep. 1–Nov. 7	2	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1944–1948	Non-resident	Sep. 1–Nov. 7	1	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1949	Resident	Sep. 1–Nov. 15	2	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1949	Non-resident	Sep. 1–Nov. 15	1	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1950–1951	Resident	Aug. 20–Nov. 15	2	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1950–1951	Non-resident	Aug. 20–Nov. 15	1	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1952	Open	Aug. 20–Nov. 22	2	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1953–1954	Open	Aug. 20–Nov. 22	3	Bucks, 3" antlers or longer
1955	Open	Aug. 20–Nov. 22	3	3 bucks or 2 bucks and one antlerless, bucks 3" antlers or longer, antlerless may be taken Nov. 15–Nov. 22
1956	Open	Aug. 20–Nov. 26	4	3 bucks or 2 bucks and one antlerless, bucks 3" antlers or longer, antlerless may be taken Nov. 13–Nov. 26
1957–1959	Open	Aug. 20–Nov. 30	4	4 deer, does may be taken Oct. 15–Nov. 30
1960	Open	Aug. 20–Dec. 15	4	4 deer, does may be taken Oct. 1–Dec. 15
1961	Open	Aug. 1–Nov. 30	4	4 deer, antlerless deer may be taken Sep. 15–Nov. 30
1962	Open	Aug. 1–Dec. 15	4	4 deer, antlerless deer may be taken Sep. 15–Dec. 15
1963–1967	Open	Aug. 1–Dec. 31	4	4 deer, antlerless deer may be taken Sep. 15–Dec. 31
1968	Open	Aug. 1–Dec. 15	4	4 deer, antlerless deer may be taken Sep. 15–Dec. 15
1969–1971	Open	Aug. 1–Dec. 31	4	4 deer, antlerless deer may be taken Sep. 15–Dec. 31
1972	Open	Aug. 1–Dec. 31	3	3 deer, antlerless deer may be taken Nov. 1–Nov. 30
1973–1977	Open	Aug. 1–Nov. 30	3	1 antlerless deer may be taken Nov. 1–Nov. 30
1978–1984	Open	Aug. 1–Nov. 30	3	Antlered deer
1985–1986	State Subsistence/General	Aug. 1–Nov. 30	3	Antlered deer
1987	State Subsistence/General	Aug. 1–Nov. 30	3	1 antlerless deer may be taken Oct. 10–Oct. 31
1988–2013	State Subsistence/General	Aug. 1–Dec. 31	4	Antlered deer/bucks
1991–1994	Federal Subsistence	Aug. 1–Dec. 31	4	Antlered deer
1995–1997	Federal Subsistence	Aug. 1–Dec. 31	4	No more than one may be an antlerless deer, antlerless deer may be taken only during Oct. 15–Dec. 31
1998–2002	Federal Subsistence	Aug. 1–Dec. 31	4	No more than one may be an antlerless deer, antlerless deer may be taken Oct. 15–Dec. 31 by Federal registration permit only
2003–2005	Federal Subsistence	July 24–Dec. 31	4	No more than one may be an antlerless deer, antlerless deer may be taken Oct. 15–Dec. 31 by Federal registration permit only
2006–2009	Federal Subsistence	July 24–Dec. 31	5	No more than one may be an antlerless deer, antlerless deer may be taken Oct. 15–Dec. 31
2010–2014	Federal Subsistence	July 24–Dec. 31	5	No more than one may be a female deer, female deer may be taken Oct. 15–Dec. 31

In 2010, the Board adopted WP10-22 with modification delegating management authority for wildlife by letter to the ten District Rangers located in Units 1-5. As a result, the delegated authority in Unit 2 changed from the Forest Supervisor to the District Rangers of both the Craig and Thorne Bay Ranger Districts. Action on the proposal also removed the requirement for consultation with the both Council Chair and ADF&G, as this was already defined protocol within the Special Action process (FSB 2010).

The Craig and Thorne Bay District Rangers have been delegated by letter management authority by the Board regarding deer and wolf in Unit 2 (Towarak 2015). For deer, their scope of delegation allows them to set harvest quotas; to close, reopen or adjust Federal subsistence deer seasons; and to adjust harvest and possession limits for that species. Most likely, this type of action would occur prior to the season. Any action greater than 60 days in length requires a public hearing before implementation. They may also close Federal Public lands to the take of this species to all users. This type of action would most likely take place during the season.

Biological Background

Sitka black-tailed deer spend the winter and early spring at low elevation where there is less snow accumulation and forests provide increased foraging opportunities. Fawning occurs in late May and early June as vegetation greens-up, providing abundant forage to meet energetic needs of the lactating doe. Some deer migrate and follow the greening vegetation up to alpine for the summer while others remain at lower elevations. The breeding season, or rut, generally occurs October through November and peaks in late November (ADF&G 2009). Wolves and black bears are the primary predators present in Unit 2 and may reduce deer populations.

Deer populations in southeast Alaska fluctuate and are primarily influenced by winter snow depths (Olson 1979). Deer typically have trouble meeting their energy needs in winter (Hanley and McKendrick 1985, Parker et al. 1999) and winters with long periods of deep snow that restrict the availability of forage can result in deer depleting their energy reserves to the point of starvation (Olson 1979).

Summer nutrition is important for building body reserves for sustaining deer through the winter (Stewart et al. 2005). Few studies have been conducted on summer habitat conditions because winter habitat carrying capacity is generally considered to be the limiting factor for deer in southeast Alaska. However, deer populations at or above habitat carrying capacity are affected by intra-specific competition for food and may enter winter in reduced condition compared to deer populations below carrying capacity (Kie et al. 2003, Stewart et al. 2005). This can result in higher susceptibility to severe winters and lower productivity (Kie et al. 2003, Stewart et al. 2005). In addition, nutritionally stressed does produce smaller and fewer fawns (Olson 1979).

Maximum sustained yield (MSY) is theoretically the highest level of deer harvest that can be sustained indefinitely (**Figure 1**). At low population levels, habitat does not constrain reproductive rates but because the population is small, population increases are slow. In populations below MSY, mortality is thought to be additive (i.e., deer not harvested would have survived) and harvesting females lowers recruitment (Ballard et al. 2001, Kie et al. 2003). At moderate population densities, approximately half of habitat carrying capacity, individuals and populations are at maximum productivity. As populations grow beyond MSY and approach carrying capacity, competition between individuals for resources lowers productivity and mortality becomes compensatory (i.e., harvested deer would not have survived) (Ballard et al. 2001, Kie et al. 2003).

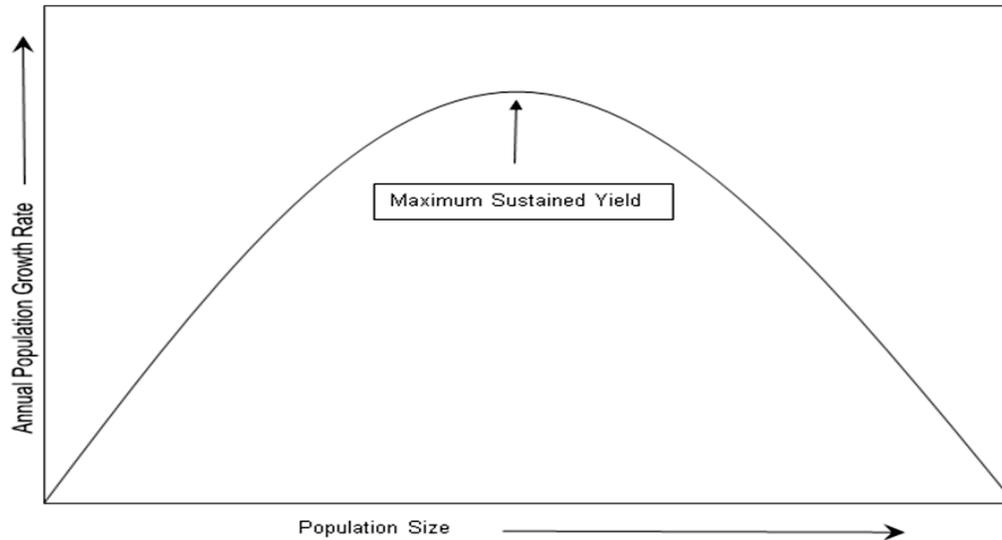


Figure 1. Hypothetical maximum sustained yield graph.

Habitat

Old-growth forests are considered primary deer winter range, in part because the complex canopy cover allows sufficient sunlight through for forage plants to grow but intercepts snow, making it easier for deer to move and forage during winters when deep snow hinders access to other habitats. Some areas of Unit 2 have been impacted by large scale changes in habitat due to timber harvest, while the habitat is largely intact in other areas. Areas with substantial timber harvest are expected to have lower long-term carrying capacity compared to pre-harvest conditions.

Recent population indices

There are no methods to directly count deer in southeast Alaska, so the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) conducts deer pellet surveys as an index to the relative abundance of the deer population. Relating pellet group data to population levels is difficult, however, because factors other than changes in deer population size can affect deer pellet-group density. Snowfall patterns influence the distribution and density of deer pellets from year to year, and snow persisting late into the spring at elevations below 1500 feet limits the ability to consistently survey the same elevation zones among years. In mild winters, deer can access forage in a greater variety of habitats, not all of which are surveyed. Conversely, in severe winters deep snow concentrates deer (McCoy 2011). Brinkman et al. (2013) questioned the value of pellet-group surveys for monitoring population trends due to the variability in the data compared to DNA based counts. Although pellet-group surveys remain the only widely available deer population data, the results should be interpreted with caution. **Figure 2** shows pellet-group survey results for Unit 2. The pellet-group data suggests a generally increasing population trend since a low during the late 1990s and early 2000s. This contrasts with Brinkman et al. (2011) who used a DNA based technique and estimated a 30% population decrease from 2006–2008 which they attributed to three consecutive deep snow winters. Brinkman's study was limited to three watersheds and the population changes during the study varied by watershed. It appears that populations increased after those severe

winters and Bethune (2011) felt that by 2010 the Unit 2 deer population was healthy, stable to increasing, and at a 12 to 15 year high. No pellet surveys were completed during 2013 or 2014 (Bethune 2015).

Harvest History

Harvest data reported below are provided by ADF&G (Bethune 2015) and are gathered by several reporting systems including the Region 1 deer survey, Unit 2 deer harvest report, and the State-wide deer harvest report. The Region 1 deer survey is the most consistent report, covering the years 1997–2010 and is based on a sample of hunters. In general, 35% of hunters from each community were sampled each year and while response rates vary by community, the overall response rate across communities was approximately 60% each year. Harvest numbers were extrapolated using expansion factors that are calculated as the total number of harvest tickets issued to a community divided by the total number of survey responses for that community. If response was low from a community, an individual hunter may have a disproportionate effect on the data. As confidence intervals are not available for these data, exact numbers should be considered estimates and used with caution. Trends, however, especially at larger scales, should be fairly accurate. The Unit 2 deer report was in place from 2005–2010 and was instituted specifically for reporting deer harvest in Unit 2. In 2011, the Statewide deer report replaced the other deer harvest reporting systems and requires reporting of harvest by all deer hunters. Different expansion factors are used for the various data sets so that total harvest estimates between years are comparable (McCoy 2011).

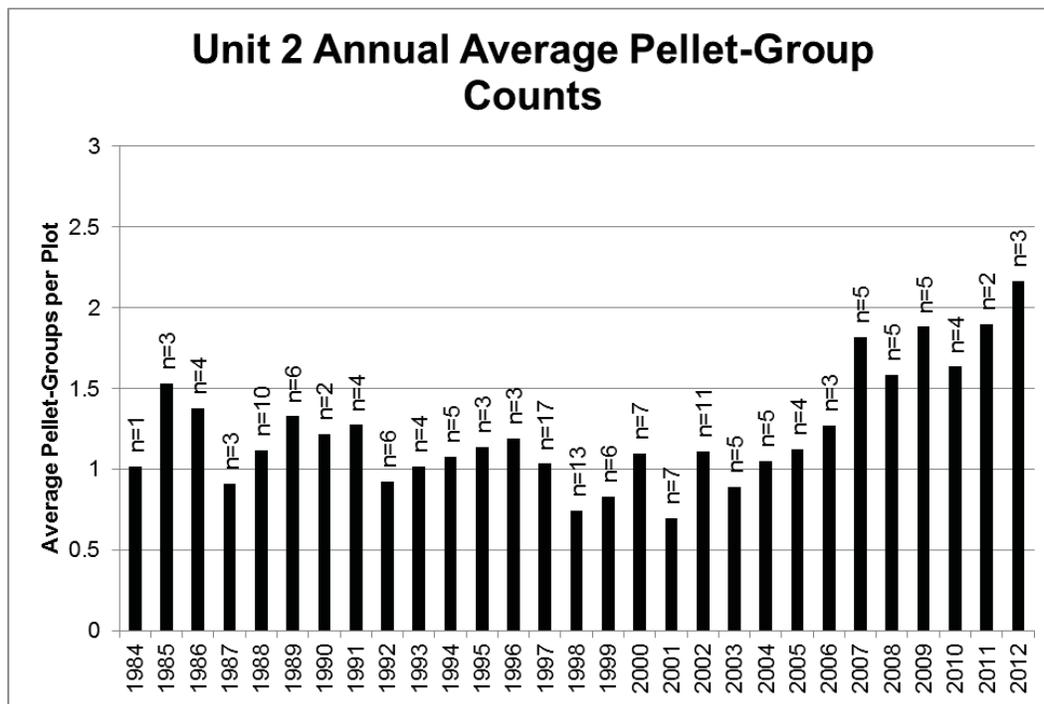


Figure 2 – Average pellet-group counts for all of Unit 2 since transects began in 1984 (McCoy 2011). Data labels represent the number of watersheds surveyed that year.

Estimated deer harvest in Unit 2 from 1997–2013 can be found in **Figure 3**, with harvest by month being found in **Table 2**. The estimated total harvest averages 2,850 deer during this period. Harvests have been increasing since 1997 and at or above ADF&G’s Unit 2 harvest objective of 2,700 deer since 2005 (Bethune 2011). Estimated female deer harvest (**Figure 4**) averages 4.2% of the total harvest. The average number of deer harvested per hunter has risen since the late 1990s and has remained stable since 2004 (**Figure 5**). The average number of days it takes to harvest a deer also appears to have been stable since 2007 and is lower than the late 1990s (**Figure 5**). The harvest data support the pellet-group data which indicate that the deer population in Unit 2 is healthy and stable to increasing.

The majority of the hunters harvesting deer in Unit 2 between 2010-2012 were residents of Unit 2. Hunters from Unit 2 communities have a higher success rate than other hunters with an average success rate of 84% during this period. Hunters residing in Unit 1A have averaged a 70% success rate during this same period, accounting for an average of 30% of the total Unit 2 harvest (Figure 6). Non-resident activity in the unit has been on a slight increase, which may be related to changes in black bear hunting opportunity in Unit 2. The Craig ADF&G office has noted an increase in non-resident inquiries related to deer hunting (Bethune 2013).

Table 2 – Deer harvest by month in Unit 2, 2003-2013 (Bethune 2015).

	July	August	September	October	November	December	Totals
2003	78	284	287	357	566	49	1621
2004	68	310	240	481	811	61	1971
2005	210	485	393	503	895	76	2562
2006	192	501	459	541	1333	152	3178
2007	128	428	300	450	1217	121	2644
2008	116	494	362	522	1525	167	3186
2009	122	488	263	510	1655	183	3221
2010	156	471	281	595	1669	178	3350
2011	230	632	295	595	1932	197	3881
2012	143	460	302	556	1878	315	3654
2013	163	484	282	460	2105	174	3668

Despite current abundant populations, historically high harvest, liberalized seasons and harvest limits, there are continued concerns within members of the subsistence community regarding their inability to meet their subsistence needs. The biggest concern is the perception of increased hunting pressure, which may be a result of the Access Travel Management Plan (ATM) enacted by the Forest Service in 2009. The ATM reduced access for hunters by reducing miles of roads in Unit 2. The ATM may have resulted in pushing a similar “pre-ATM” number of hunters into smaller areas affirming the perception of increasingly crowded hunting conditions. In addition, as clear-cuts advance past the early seral stages, deer are less visible from the road which may also be leading to the misperception that fewer deer are available (Bethune 2013).

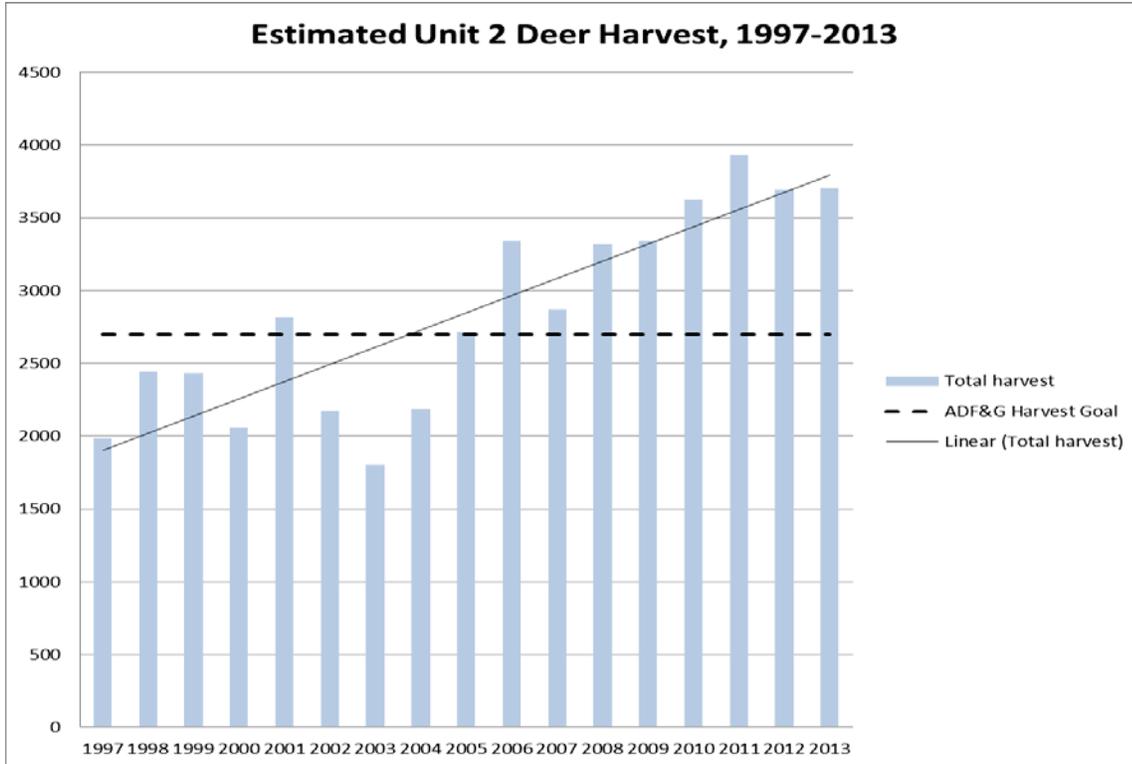


Figure 3 – Estimated deer harvest in Unit 2 from 1997-2013 (Bethune, 2015).

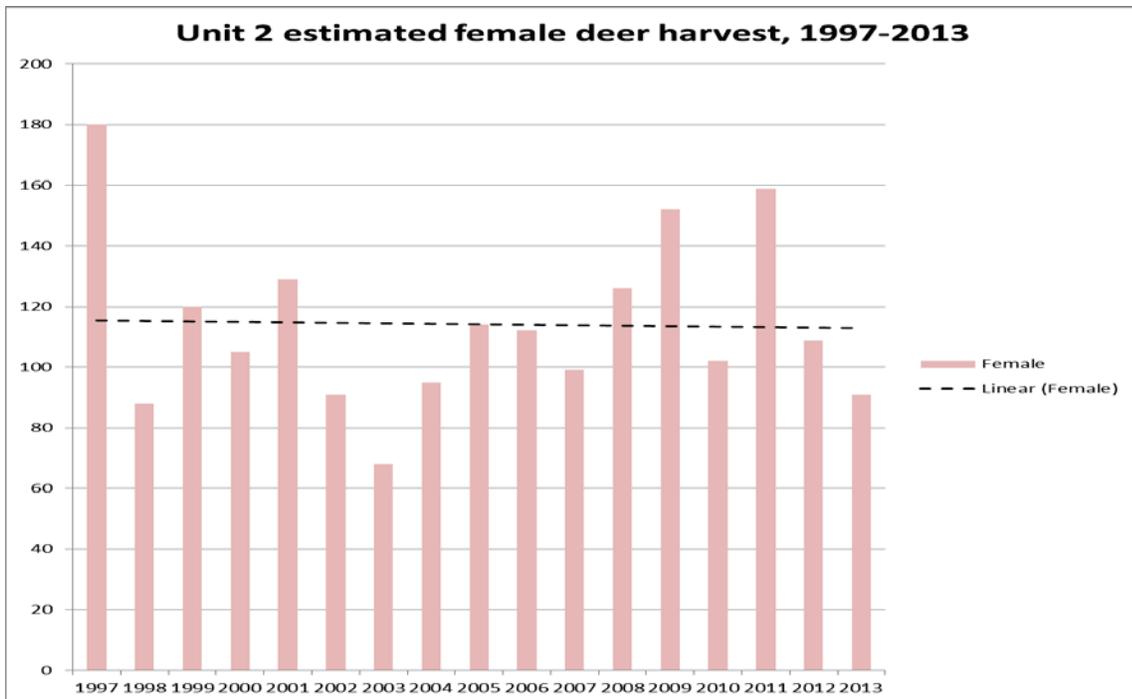


Figure 4 – Estimated female deer harvest in Unit 2 from 1997-2013 (Bethune, 2015).

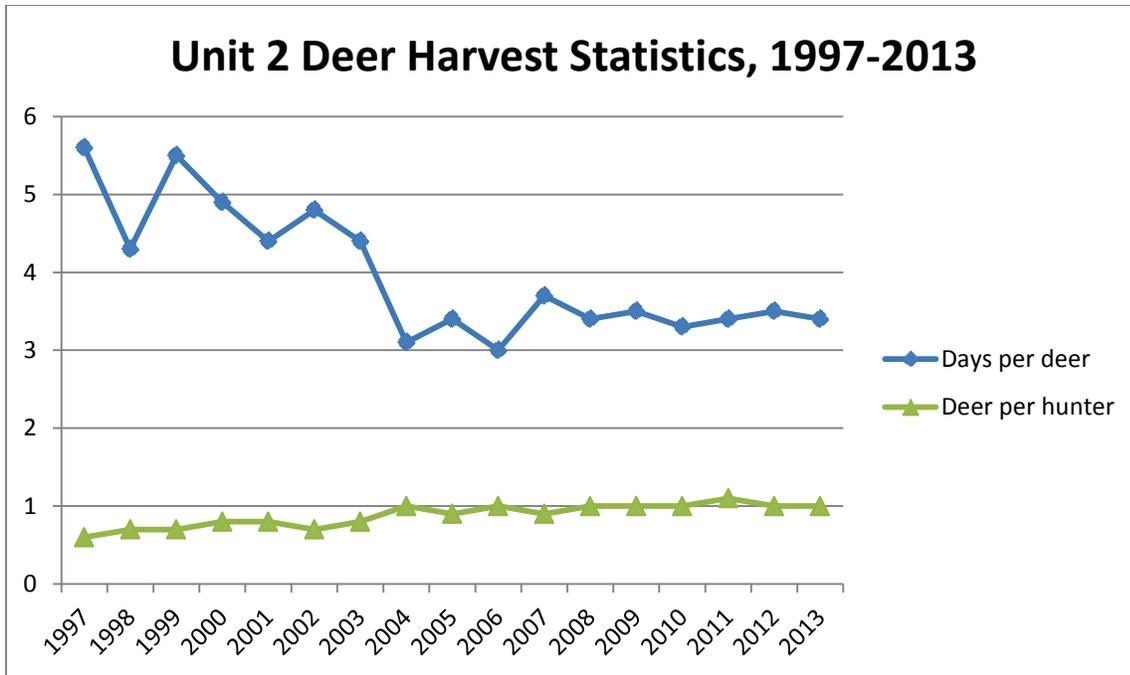


Figure 5 – Average number of days for hunters to harvest a deer and the average number of deer harvested per hunter in Unit 2 from 1997-2013 (Bethune, 2015).

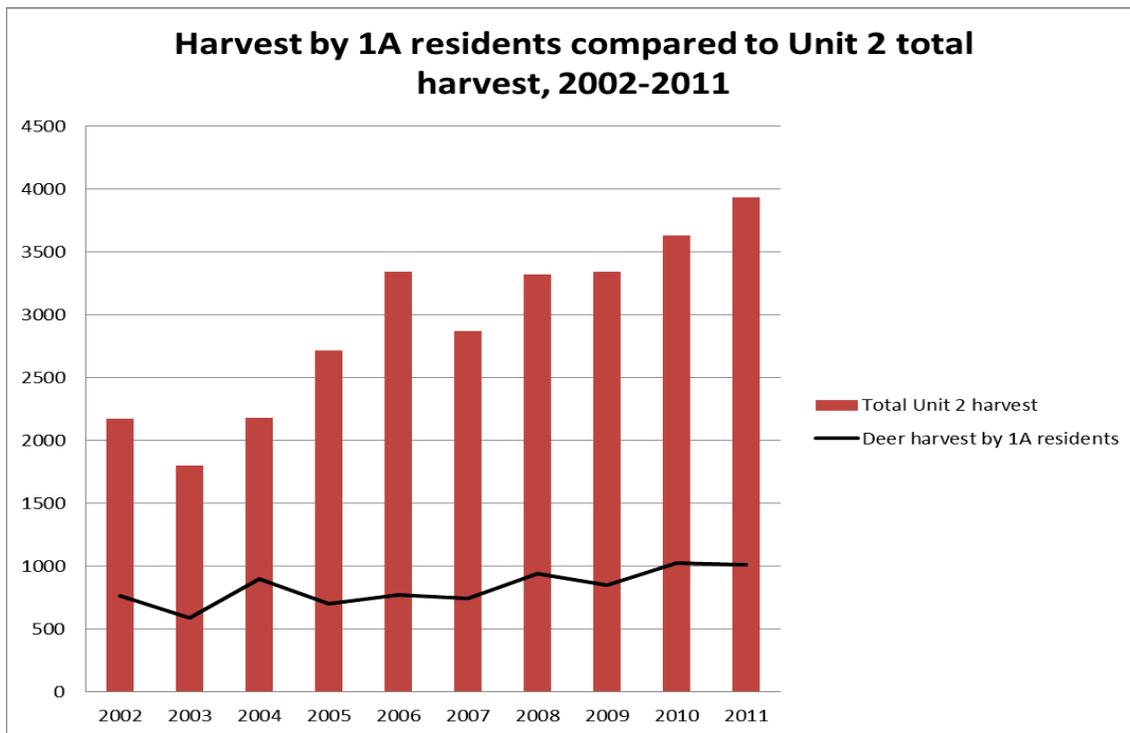


Figure 6 – Deer harvest by hunters residing in Unit 1A compared to total Unit 2 harvest from 2002-2011 (Bethune, 2013).

Effects of the Proposal

The current Unit 2 deer regulation only allows Federal managers to reduce the deer harvest limit from five deer to either four or zero in times of conservation. Adopting the proposal would increase flexibility and options for Federal managers in selecting appropriate harvest limits for conservation of Unit 2 deer should a need arise. The proposal would eliminate confusion in management during times of conservation for the Unit 2 in-season managers and removes unnecessary regulatory language. The proposal would have no effect on non-Federally qualified subsistence users.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Support Proposal WP16-05

Justification

Adopting the proposal is consistent with the flexibility intended in the 2010 delegation of authority from the Board, eliminates any confusion in conservation management of Unit 2 deer and removes regulatory language not needed in Federal regulation.

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WP16-06 Executive Summary	
General Description	Proposal WP16–06 requests adding a definition of “Nunatak Bench” to the Unit 5 Federal subsistence regulations. <i>Submitted by the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.</i>
Proposed Regulation	<p>Unit 5</p> <p><i>Unit 5A consists of all drainages east of Yakutat Bay, Disenchantment Bay, and the eastern edge of Hubbard Glacier; and includes the islands of Yakutat and Disenchantment Bays. In Unit 5A, Nunatak Bench is defined as that area east of the Hubbard Glacier, north of Nunatak fiord, and north and east of the East Nunatak Glacier to the Canadian Border.</i></p>
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	Support
ADF&G Comments	
Southeast Advisory Council Recommendation	
Interagency Staff Committee Comments	
Written Public Comments	None

**DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS
WP16-06**

ISSUES

Proposal WP16-06, submitted by the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, requests adding a definition of “Nunatak Bench” to the Unit 5 Federal subsistence regulations.

DISCUSSION

The proponent states that there are 2 regulations in Unit 5 that refer to the Nunatak Bench, but that area is not defined. The definition would read: In unit 5A, Nunatak Bench is defined as that area east of the Hubbard Glacier, north of Nunatak fiord, and north and east of the East Nunatak Glacier to the Canadian Border (Map 1). This definition would be added to the unit descriptor for Unit 5A.

This is a purely administrative proposal and not related to any particular wildlife population. As such, this analysis will not present any biological or harvest analysis.

Existing Federal Regulation

Unit 5

Unit 5A consists of all drainages east of Yakutat Bay, Disenchantment Bay, and the eastern edge of Hubbard Glacier; and includes the islands of Yakutat and Disenchantment Bays.

Proposed Federal Regulation

Unit 5

*Unit 5A consists of all drainages east of Yakutat Bay, Disenchantment Bay, and the eastern edge of Hubbard Glacier; and includes the islands of Yakutat and Disenchantment Bays. **In Unit 5A, Nunatak Bench is defined as that area east of the Hubbard Glacier, north of Nunatak fiord, and north and east of the East Nunatak Glacier to the Canadian Border.***

Existing State Regulation

Unit 5

Unit 5A: all drainages east of Yakutat Bay, Disenchantment Bay, and eastern edge of Hubbard Glacier, and includes the islands of Yakutat and Disenchantment Bays.

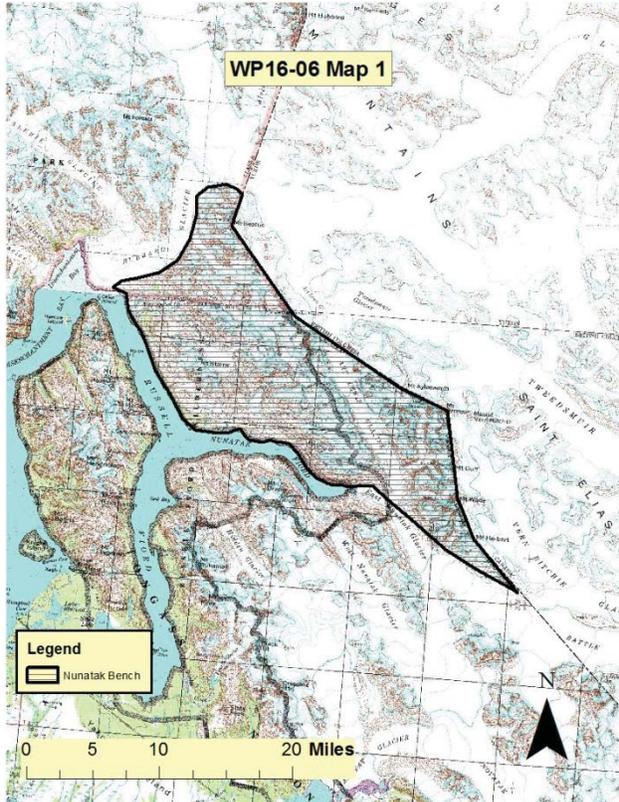
The Nunatak Bench area is referenced and described under the Unit 5A moose regulations as follows:

That portion south of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, north and east of Russell and Nunatak Fiords, and east of the east side of East Nunatak Glacier to the Canadian border (Nunatak Bench)

Extent of Federal Public Lands

The Nunatak Bench area is contained within Unit 5A. Federal public lands comprise approximately 96% of Unit 5A and consist of 67% U.S. Forest Service (USFS) managed lands and 33% National Park Service (NPS) managed lands.

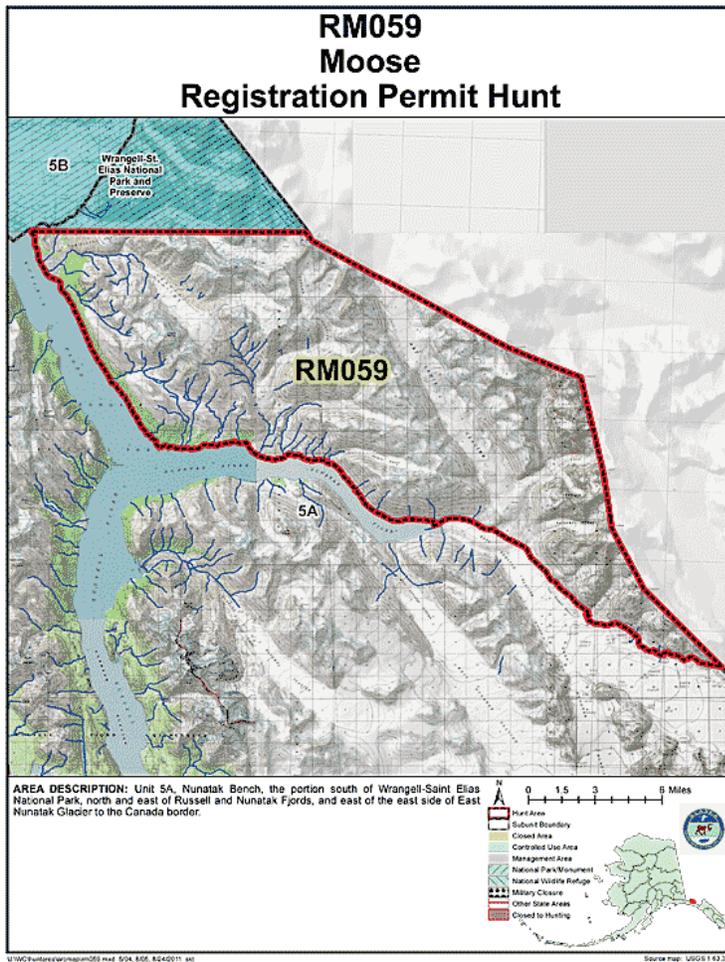
Map 1. The Nunatak Bench area proposed for definition.



Regulatory History

Moose are managed within the proposed area under State registration permits RM059 (**Map 2**).

Map 2. RM059 Moose registration permit hunt (Nunatak Bench).



Effects of the Proposal

If this proposal is adopted it will define Nunatak Bench, an area currently included in the regulations but without a corresponding description. Including a definition of the Nunatak Bench clarifies the boundaries of the area and eliminates regulatory complexity for Federally qualified subsistence users while providing clarity to law enforcement. The Federal and State definitions would be slightly different, since hunting under State regulation is not allowed in the Wrangell-St Elias National Park. There should not be any effects on harvest of any species in this area; therefore there should be no conservation concerns associated with adoption of this proposal.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Support Proposal WP16-06

Justification

Adoption of this proposal will provide a definition of an area currently included in regulations but without a corresponding description, allowing Federally qualified subsistence users to better understand harvest area boundaries. Thus, it will enhance regulatory compliance by Federally qualified subsistence users and provide clarity to law enforcement. The purely administrative nature of this proposal in addition to the lack of conservation concerns associated with this proposal further supports its adoption.

WP16-07 Executive Summary	
General Description	Requests that firearms be allowed to harvesting beaver in Units 1-5. <i>Submitted by the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.</i>
Proposed Regulation	<i>In Units 1-5, a firearm may be used to take beaver under a trapping license during an open beaver season.</i>
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	Support with modification. The modified language specifies that firearms may not be used on National Park Service lands. The modified regulation would read: <i>In Units 1-5, a firearm may be used to take beaver under a trapping license during an open beaver season, except on National Park Service lands.</i>
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	None

**DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS
WP16-07**

ISSUES

Proposal WP16-07, submitted by the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council), requests that firearms be allowed for harvesting beaver in Units 1-5 under Federal subsistence trapping regulations.

DISCUSSION

In January 2015, the Alaska Board of Game considered Proposal 15 to allow beaver to be taken with a firearm under the terms of a State trapping license in Unit 2 which the proponent submitted a comment in support of the proposal. The Alaska Board of Game amended and adopted Proposal 15 to apply to Units 1–5. The proponent stated the following reasons of why a similar change should be made in Federal regulations: the proposal provides consistency in State and Federal regulations; taking beaver with a firearm under trapping license is allowed in other parts of the state; beaver are often used for food; there are no conservation issues with beaver in Units 1-5 and any harvesting of beaver with a firearm by trappers is not likely to substantially increase the overall harvest.

Existing Federal Regulation

§242.26(d) *The following methods and means of trapping furbearers for subsistence uses pursuant to the requirements of a trapping license are prohibited, in addition to the prohibitions listed at paragraph (b) of this section:*

(3) Taking beaver by any means other than a steel trap or snare, except that you may use firearms in certain Units with established seasons as identified in Unit-specific regulations found in this subpart;

Units 1, 2, 3 except Mitkof Island and Unit 4 – Beaver (trapping)

No limit

Dec. 1 – May 15

Unit 3 Mitkof Island – Beaver (trapping)

No limit

Dec. 1 – Apr. 15

Units 5 – Beaver (trapping)

No limit

Nov. 10 – May 15

When taking wildlife for subsistence purposes, trappers may not:

Under a trapping license, take a free-ranging furbearer with a firearm on NPS lands.

Proposed Federal Regulation

§242.26(d) *The following methods and means of trapping furbearers for subsistence uses pursuant to the requirements of a trapping license are prohibited, in addition to the prohibitions listed at paragraph (b) of this section:*

(3) Taking beaver by any means other than a steel trap or snare, except that you may use firearms in certain Units with established seasons as identified in Unit-specific regulations found in this subpart;

Units 1, 2, 3 except Mitkof Island and Unit 4 – Beaver (trapping)

No limit

Dec. 1 – May 15

Unit 3 Mitkof Island – Beaver (trapping)

No limit

Dec. 1 – Apr. 15

Units 5 – Beaver (trapping)

No limit

Nov. 10 – May 15

When taking wildlife for subsistence purposes, trappers may not:

Under a trapping license, take a free-ranging furbearer with a firearm on NPS lands.

In Units 1-5, a firearm may be used to take beaver under a trapping license during an open beaver season.

Existing State Regulation

Beaver must be sealed within 30 days of the close of the season.

Unit 1-5 – Beaver (trapping)

No limit

Nov. 10 – Apr. 30

Extent of Federal Public Lands

Federal public lands comprise approximately 88% of the Southeast Region which includes Units 1-5. The Forest Service manages the Tongass National Forest. The National Park Service manages the Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, Sitka National Historical Park, Klondike Gold Rush National Historical

Park and the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. There is no hunting allowed, on Federal public lands, in Glacier Bay National Park, Sitka National Historical Park or Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park. In order to engage in subsistence in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, the National Park Service requires that subsistence users either live within the park's resident zone (36 CFR 13.430, 36 CFR 13.1902) or have a subsistence permit (36 CFR 13.440) issued by the park superintendent. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge.

Customary and Traditional Use Determinations

The Board has not made a customary and traditional use determination to harvest beaver in Units 1-5. Therefore, all Federally qualified subsistence users may harvest this species in these units.

Regulatory History

Federal trapping regulations in Units 1-5 were adopted from the State trapping regulations at the time Federal management began. Although trapping regulations typically allow trappers to harvest furbearers with a firearm, harvesting beaver in southeast Alaska with this method has been prohibited. In January 2015, the Alaska Board of Game approved the use of a firearm in Units 1-5 to take beaver under trapping regulations.

The National Park Service prohibits the use of firearms to take free-ranging furbearers under a trapping license. This practice is prohibited in Alaskan national parks, monuments and preserves as a result of two sets of regulations: June 1981 final regulations that defined a trap as "*a snare, trap, mesh, or other implement designed to entrap animals others than fish,*" and June 1983 NPS-wide regulations that defined trapping as "*taking or attempting to take wildlife with a trap.*"

In 2007, the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) submitted proposals WP07-09 and WP07-10 to establish and/or realign open trapping seasons in Units 1D and 4 for beaver following Alaska Board of Game action in November 2006. The Council supported WP07-09 with modification and WP07-10 as written (SEASRAC 2007). The Board adopted both proposals as consensus agenda items (FSB 2007).

Biological Background

Beaver occur in the forested wetland areas of Alaska (ADF&G 2015). Beaver populations in Units 1-5 have increased following large scale timber harvest that began in the 1950's and are considered healthy (Bethune 2015, pers. comm.).

Harvest History

Any beaver harvested under trapping regulations in southeast Alaska must be sealed within 30 days of the close of the season. Reported harvest in Units 1-5 has ranged from 106 to 515 beaver annually since 2000. Harvest in Unit 2 has averaged around 61% of the entire annual Southeast Alaska harvest (**Table 1**). Harvests are more a function of trapper interest and fur prices rather than abundance.

Table 1 – Beaver harvest in Units 1-5 from 2000-2013 (Bethune 2015, pers. comm.)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Total
Unit 1	67	21	55	44	55	55	36	60	54	98	49	60	100	74	828
Unit 2	302	221	144	345	214	182	53	309	113	249	177	195	189	178	2871
Unit 3	139	110	86	43	61	43	16	11	27	41	17	11	55	77	737
Unit 4		14	1	4	5	2	1	12	18	7	19	15	26	33	157
Unit 5	7		17	7	9	8			4	7	3	3	8	5	78
Total	515	366	303	443	344	290	106	392	216	402	265	284	378	367	4671

Effects of the Proposal

If the proposal were adopted, Federally qualified subsistence users would be able to harvest beaver on Federal lands with a firearm under Federal trapping regulations. Although adopting the proposal aligns State and Federal regulations, and provides Federally qualified users an additional method to harvest beaver, the proposal will not apply to National Park Service lands, as a separate provision currently restricts firearm use on lands within their jurisdiction. Allowing the take of beaver with a firearm should not dramatically increase beaver harvest or create conservation issues in Units 1-5.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Support Proposal WP16-07 with modification. The modified language specifies that firearms may not be used on National Park Service lands. The modified regulation would read:

In Units 1-5, a firearm may be used to take beaver under a trapping license during an open beaver season, except on National Park Service lands.

Justification

Allowing firearms to take beaver provides for better quality when taking beaver for food, and is allowed in other areas of the State. If adopted as modified, the proposal does not create conservation issues as beaver populations in these units are healthy, provides additional means to harvest beaver, and aligns State and Federal regulations while maintaining the prohibition of firearm use on National Park Service lands.

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SEASRAC (Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council). 2007. Transcripts of the Southeast Subsistence Regional Advisory Council, February 28, 2007 in Kake, Alaska. Office of Subsistence Management, FWS. Anchorage, AK.

WP16-08 Executive Summary	
General Description	Requests deer harvest ticket #5 be validated out of sequence to record female deer taken in Unit 2. <i>Submitted by the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.</i>
Proposed Regulation	<p><i>Unit 2—Deer</i></p> <p><i>5 deer; however, no more than one may be a female deer. Female deer may be taken only during the period Oct. 15–Dec. 31. Harvest ticket number five must be used when recording the harvest of a female deer, but may be used for recording the harvest of a male deer. Harvest tickets must be used in order except when recording a female deer on tag number five. The harvest limit may be reduced to 4 deer based on conservation concerns. The Federal public lands on Prince of Wales Island, excluding the southeastern portion (lands south of the West Arm of Cholmondeley Sound draining into Cholmondeley Sound or draining eastward into Clarence Strait), are closed to hunting of deer from Aug. 1 to Aug. 15, except by Federally qualified subsistence users hunting under these regulations.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>July 24–Dec. 31</i></p>
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	Support
ADF&G Comments	
Written Public Comments	None

**DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS
WP16-08**

ISSUES

Proposal WP16-08, submitted by the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council), requests deer harvest ticket #5 be validated out of sequence to record female deer taken in Unit 2.

DISCUSSION

The proposal was submitted following concerns brought forth to the Council identifying a perceived lack of “accountability” regarding the take of female deer in Unit 2. Federal regulation allows subsistence users to harvest one female deer from Federal lands after October 15. Concern exists that some subsistence users are harvesting more than one female deer since deer harvest tickets only require that the month and day of harvest be recorded, but not the sex of the deer.

Existing Federal Regulation

§242.6 Licenses, permits, harvest tickets, tags, and reports.

(a) If you wish to take fish and wildlife on public lands for subsistence uses, you must be an eligible rural Alaska resident and:

(1) Possess the pertinent valid Alaska resident hunting and trapping licenses (no license required to take fish or shellfish, but you must be an Alaska resident) unless Federal licenses are required or unless otherwise provided for in subpart D of this part;

(2) Possess and comply with the provisions of any pertinent Federal permits (Federal Subsistence Registration Permit or Federal Designated Harvester Permit) required by subpart D of this part; and

(3) Possess and comply with the provisions of any pertinent permits, harvest tickets, or tags required by the State unless any of these documents or individual provisions in them are superseded by the requirements in subpart D of this part.

Unit 2 - Deer

*5 deer; however, no more than one may be a female deer. July 24–Dec. 31
Female deer may be taken only during the period Oct. 15–
Dec. 31. The harvest limit may be reduced to 4 deer based on
conservation concerns. The Federal public lands on Prince of
Wales Island, excluding the southeastern portion (lands south
of the West Arm of Cholmondeley Sound draining into
Cholmondeley Sound or draining eastward into Clarence*

Strait), are closed to hunting of deer from Aug. 1 to Aug. 15, except by Federally qualified subsistence users hunting under these regulations

Proposed Federal Regulation

§242.6 *Licenses, permits, harvest tickets, tags, and reports.*

(a) If you wish to take fish and wildlife on public lands for subsistence uses, you must be an eligible rural Alaska resident and:

(1) Possess the pertinent valid Alaska resident hunting and trapping licenses (no license required to take fish or shellfish, but you must be an Alaska resident) unless Federal licenses are required or unless otherwise provided for in subpart D of this part;

(2) Possess and comply with the provisions of any pertinent Federal permits (Federal Subsistence Registration Permit or Federal Designated Harvester Permit) required by subpart D of this part; and

(3) Possess and comply with the provisions of any pertinent permits, harvest tickets, or tags required by the State unless any of these documents or individual provisions in them are superseded by the requirements in subpart D of this part.

Unit 2 - Deer

*5 deer; however, no more than one may be a female deer. Female deer may be taken only during the period Oct. 15–Dec. 31. **Harvest ticket number five must be used when recording the harvest of a female deer, but may be used for recording the harvest of a male deer. Harvest tickets must be used in order except when recording a female deer on tag number five.** The harvest limit may be reduced to 4 deer based on conservation concerns. The Federal public lands on Prince of Wales Island, excluding the southeastern portion (lands south of the West Arm of Cholmondeley Sound draining into Cholmondeley Sound or draining eastward into Clarence Strait), are closed to hunting of deer from Aug. 1 to Aug. 15, except by Federally qualified subsistence users hunting under these regulations.*

July 24–Dec. 31

Existing State Regulation

Unit 2 - deer

Residents and non-residents: Four bucks

Aug. 1 – Dec. 31

Harvest tickets must be validated in sequential order, and unused tickets must be carried when you hunt.

Extent of Federal Public Lands

Federal public lands comprise approximately 74% of Unit 2, and consists of 73% U.S. Forest Service managed lands and <1% U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service managed lands (**see Unit 2 Map**).

Customary and Traditional Use Determinations

Rural residents of Units 1A, 2, and 3 have a customary and traditional use determination to harvest deer in Unit 2.

Regulatory History

Federal harvest of antlerless deer in Unit 2 began in 1995. Between 1995 and 2002, a Federal permit was required to harvest an antlerless deer. To better quantify subsistence deer harvest during the 2003 & 2004 seasons, four Federal permits were issued to subsistence users (one deer per permit) hunting Federal lands in Unit 2, where one of the four permits could be used for an antlerless deer.

In 2005, the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) submitted WP05-04 requesting that all deer hunters obtain Federal registration permits to hunt in Unit 2 to better track Unit 2 harvest between user groups. Since the Council desired one harvest reporting means, they also submitted a proposal to the Alaska Board of Game to require State issued registration permits for all Unit 2 deer hunters. The Council intended that the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) would only act on WP05-04 should the Alaska Board of Game choose to not act on the proposal before them. With the Alaska Board of Game choosing to not take action, the Council supported the WP05-04 with modification changing the requirements for Unit 2 hunters from a registration permit to using State harvest tickets and the joint State/Federal Unit 2 harvest report as recommended by the Unit 2 Deer Planning Subcommittee (SEASRAC 2005). The Board adopted this proposal as modified under its consensus agenda (FSB 2005).

During 2006, the Craig Community Association submitted WP06-06 to remove the requirement that deer harvest tickets must be used in sequential order and that all unused harvest tickets must be in the hunter's possession while hunting. The Council opposed the proposal to protect deer populations and subsistence hunting opportunity in areas where harvest limits were lower than Unit 2 (SEASRAC 2006a).

Also in 2006, Ernest Stiller submitted WP06-10 requesting validation of harvest ticket #1 when an antlerless deer was taken. The Council opposed this proposal as female deer harvest would be accounted for on the joint harvest report. Although the proponent suggested as an alternative that any other harvest

ticket could be used, the Council commented that requiring tag #1 would force hunters choosing to harvest a female deer to not be able to start hunting until October 15 (SEASRAC 2006b). Prior to final Council action in opposition, one member stated on the record:

I'm not in favor of this proposal, but it does identify a loophole which has been there for two or three years now. We have another system that does not address it, so at some point somebody is going to have to address this so we can adequately deal with it so the loophole is closed and everybody is happy. I'm not convinced that there's a high number of people using this loophole, but it's evident that some are. I've had a couple people come to me and pointed this out and it's a concern of theirs. But how to fix it, I don't know.

The Board rejected both WP06-06 and WP06-10 as a consensus agenda items (FSB 2006).

In 2011, when the Alaska Board of Game adopted Proposal 41 replacing the State mail-out deer survey with a deer harvest report card for Units 1-5, the joint harvest report for Unit 2 was no longer necessary. As a result, the Council submitted WP12-08 to rescinding the requirement that Federally qualified subsistence users complete the joint State/Federal harvest report for Unit 2. The Council unanimously supported the proposal (SEASRAC 2011). The Board adopted this proposal as recommended by the Council (FSB 2012).

Biological Background

Sitka black-tailed deer spend the winter and early spring at low elevation where there is less snow accumulation and forests provide increased foraging opportunities. Fawning occurs in late May and early June as vegetation greens-up, providing abundant forage to meet energetic needs of the lactating doe. Some deer migrate and follow the greening vegetation up to alpine for the summer while others remain at lower elevations. The breeding season, or rut, generally occurs October through November and peaks in late November (ADF&G 2009). Wolves and black bears are the primary predators present in Unit 2 and may reduce deer populations.

Deer populations in southeast Alaska fluctuate and are primarily influenced by winter snow depths (Olson 1979). Deer typically have trouble meeting their energy needs in winter (Hanley and McKendrick 1985, Parker et al. 1999) and winters with long periods of deep snow that restrict the availability of forage can result in deer depleting their energy reserves to the point of starvation (Olson 1979).

Summer nutrition is important for building body reserves for sustaining deer through the winter (Stewart et al. 2005). Few studies have been conducted on summer habitat conditions because winter habitat carrying capacity is generally considered to be the limiting factor for deer in southeast Alaska. However, deer populations at or above habitat carrying capacity are affected by intra-specific competition for food and may enter winter in reduced condition compared to deer populations below carrying capacity (Kie et al. 2003, Stewart et al. 2005). This can result in higher susceptibility to severe winters and lower productivity (Kie et al. 2003, Stewart et al. 2005). In addition, nutritionally stressed does produce smaller and fewer fawns (Olson 1979).

Maximum sustained yield (MSY) is theoretically the highest level of deer harvest that can be sustained indefinitely (**Figure 1**). At low population levels, habitat does not constrain reproductive rates but because the population is small, population increases are slow. In populations below MSY, mortality is thought to be additive (i.e., deer not harvested would have survived) and harvesting females lowers recruitment (Ballard et al. 2001, Kie et al. 2003). At moderate population densities, approximately half of habitat carrying capacity, individuals and populations are at maximum productivity. As populations grow beyond MSY and approach carrying capacity, competition between individuals for resources lowers productivity and mortality becomes compensatory (i.e., harvested deer would not have survived) (Ballard et al. 2001, Kie et al. 2003).

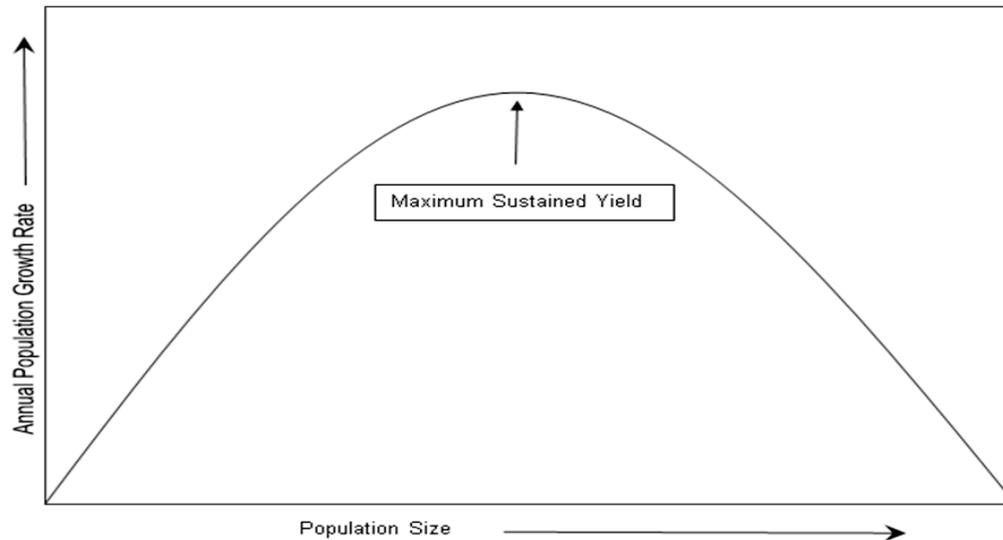


Figure 1. Hypothetical maximum sustained yield graph.

Habitat

Old-growth forests are considered primary deer winter range, in part because the complex canopy cover allows sufficient sunlight through for forage plants to grow but intercepts snow, making it easier for deer to move and forage during winters when deep snow hinders access to other habitats. Some areas of Unit 2 have been impacted by large scale changes in habitat due to timber harvest, while the habitat is largely intact in other areas. Areas with substantial timber harvest are expected to have lower long-term carrying capacity compared to pre-harvest conditions.

Recent population indices

There are no methods to directly count deer in southeast Alaska, so the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) conducts deer pellet surveys as an index to the relative abundance of the deer population. Relating pellet group data to population levels is difficult, however, because factors other than changes in deer population size can affect deer pellet-group density. Snowfall patterns influence the distribution and density of deer pellets from year to year, and snow persisting late into the spring at elevations below 1500 feet limits the ability to consistently survey the same elevation zones among years. In mild winters, deer can access forage in a greater variety of habitats, not all of which are surveyed.

Conversely, in severe winters deep snow concentrates deer (McCoy 2011). Brinkman et al. (2013) questioned the value of pellet-group surveys for monitoring population trends due to the variability in the data compared to DNA based counts. Although pellet-group surveys remain the only widely available deer population data, the results should be interpreted with caution. **Figure 2** shows pellet-group survey results for Unit 2. The pellet-group data suggests a generally increasing population trend since a low during the late 1990s and early 2000s. This contrasts with Brinkman et al. (2011) who used a DNA based technique and estimated a 30% population decrease from 2006–2008 which they attributed to three consecutive deep snow winters. Brinkman's study was limited to three watersheds and the population changes during the study varied by watershed. It appears that populations increased after those severe winters and Bethune (2011) felt that by 2010 the Unit 2 deer population was healthy, stable to increasing, and at a 12 to 15 year high. No pellet surveys were completed during 2013 or 2014 (Bethune 2015).

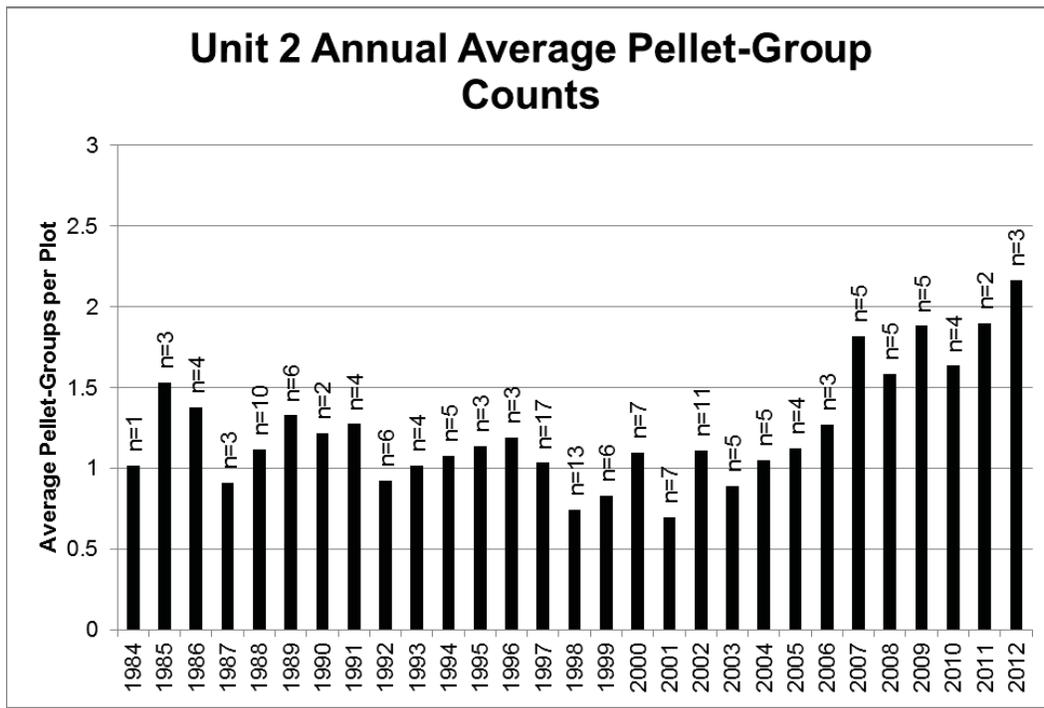


Figure 2 – Average pellet-group counts for all of Unit 2 since transects began in 1984 (McCoy 2011). Data labels represent the number of watersheds surveyed that year.

Harvest History

Harvest data reported below are provided by ADF&G (Bethune 2015) and are gathered by several reporting systems including the Region 1 deer survey, Unit 2 deer harvest report, and the State-wide deer harvest report. The Region 1 deer survey is the most consistent report, covering the years 1997–2010 and is based on a sample of hunters. In general, 35% of hunters from each community were sampled each year and while response rates vary by community, the overall response rate across communities was approximately 60% each year. Harvest numbers were extrapolated using expansion factors that are calculated as the total number of harvest tickets issued to a community divided by the total number of survey responses for that community. If response was low from a community, an individual hunter may

have a disproportionate effect on the data. As confidence intervals are not available for these data, exact numbers should be considered estimates and used with caution. Trends, however, especially at larger scales, should be fairly accurate. The Unit 2 deer report was in place from 2005–2010 and was instituted specifically for reporting deer harvest in Unit 2. In 2011, the Statewide deer report replaced the other deer harvest reporting systems and requires reporting of harvest by all deer hunters. Different expansion factors are used for the various data sets so that total harvest estimates between years are comparable (McCoy 2011). Estimated female deer harvest (**Figure 3**) averages 4.2% of the total estimated harvest for Unit 2 (**Figure 4**).

Effects of the Proposal

State regulation requires that harvest tickets for deer be used in sequence and Federal hunters are bound by State harvest recording requirements unless otherwise specified in Federal regulation. This proposal would provide that exception for Federally qualified subsistence users recording the harvest of female deer out of sequence in Unit 2 and provide better control of the female deer harvest. Requiring the use of a specific harvest ticket for the harvest of a female deer should not cause undue burden for Federally qualified subsistence users and may assist law enforcement in monitoring the female deer harvest.

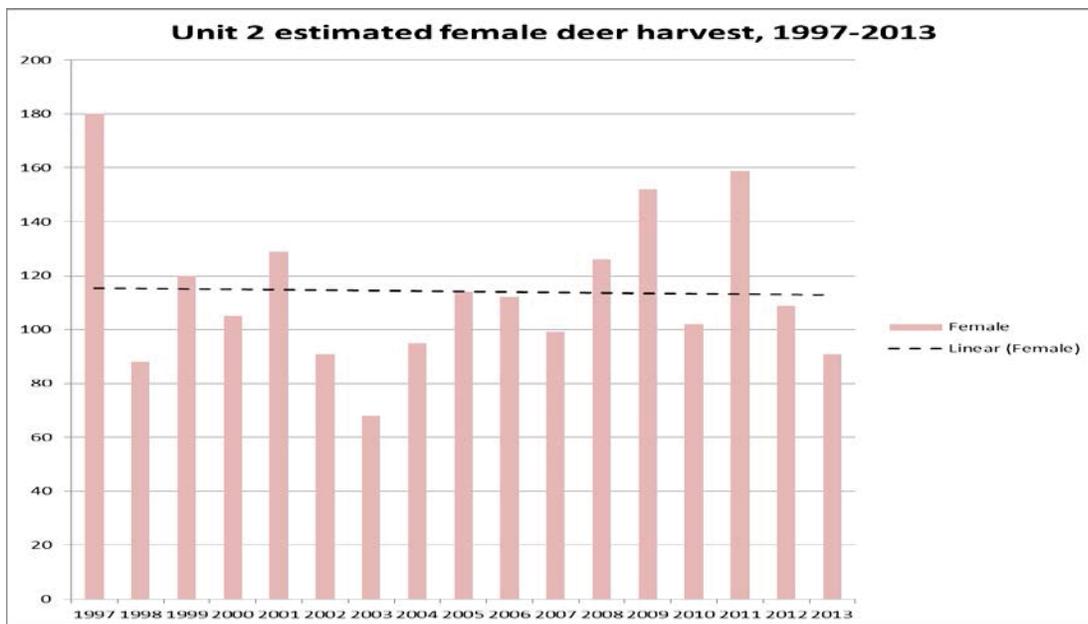


Figure 3 – Estimated female deer harvest in Unit 2 from 1997-2013 (Bethune, 2015).

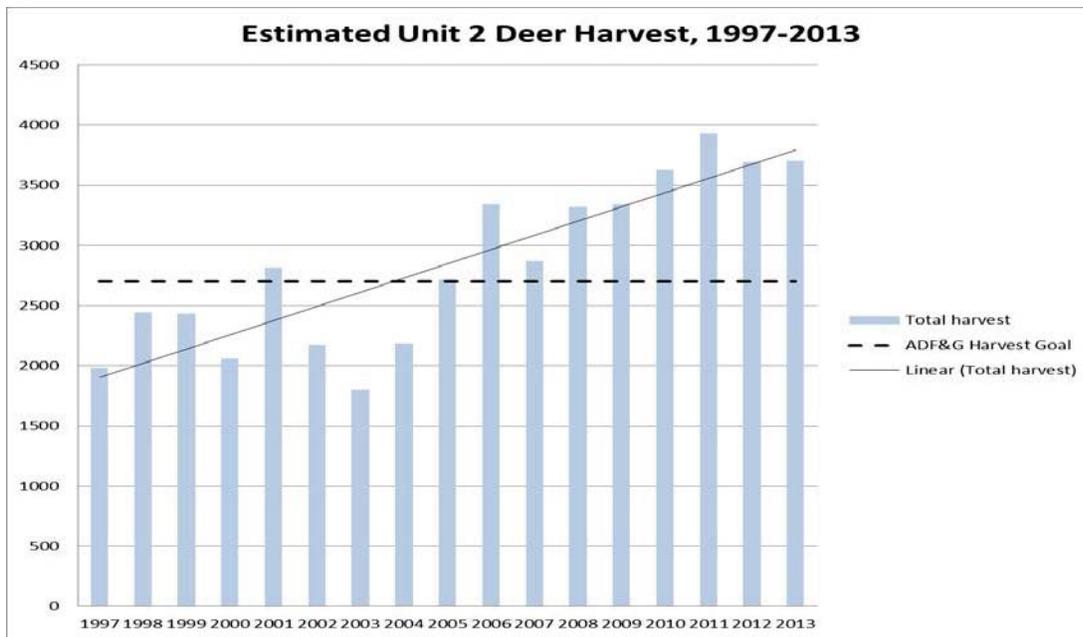


Figure 4 – Estimated deer harvest in Unit 2 from 1997-2013 (Bethune, 2015).

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Support Proposal WP16-08

Justification

This proposal may provide for better tracking of female deer harvested in Unit 2. Requiring the use of a specific harvest ticket for the harvest of a female deer should not cause undue burden for Federally qualified subsistence users and may assist law enforcement in monitoring the female deer harvest.

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WP16-09 Executive Summary													
General Description	Proposal WP16-09 requests that the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) close the Federal subsistence marten trapping season on Kuiu Island in Unit 3. <i>Submitted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.</i>												
Proposed Regulation	<p>§ __.26(n)(3)(iii)</p> <p><i>Units 1, 2, 3 (except Kuiu Island), and 4 – Marten (Trapping)</i> <i>Dec. 1-Feb. 15</i> <i>No limit</i></p> <p><i>Kuiu Island portion of Unit 3</i> <i>No open season</i></p>												
OSM Preliminary Conclusion	<p>Support with modification to reduce the length of the marten trapping season on Kuiu Island to Dec. 1-Dec. 31.</p> <p>The modified regulation would read:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;"><i>Units 1, 2, 3 (except Kuiu Island),</i></td> <td style="width: 30%;"><i>Dec. 1-Feb.</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>and 4 – Marten (Trapping)</i></td> <td><i>15</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>No limit</i></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Kuiu Island portion of Unit 3</i></td> <td><i>Dec. 1-Dec.</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>No limit</i></td> <td><i>31</i></td> </tr> </table>	<i>Units 1, 2, 3 (except Kuiu Island),</i>	<i>Dec. 1-Feb.</i>	<i>and 4 – Marten (Trapping)</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>No limit</i>		 		<i>Kuiu Island portion of Unit 3</i>	<i>Dec. 1-Dec.</i>	<i>No limit</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Units 1, 2, 3 (except Kuiu Island),</i>	<i>Dec. 1-Feb.</i>												
<i>and 4 – Marten (Trapping)</i>	<i>15</i>												
<i>No limit</i>													
<i>Kuiu Island portion of Unit 3</i>	<i>Dec. 1-Dec.</i>												
<i>No limit</i>	<i>31</i>												
Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Recommendation													
Interagency Staff Committee Comments													
ADF&G Comments													
Written Public Comments	None												

**DRAFT STAFF ANALYSIS
WP16-09**

ISSUES

Proposal WP16-09, submitted by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), requests that the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) close the Federal subsistence marten trapping season on Kuiu Island in Unit 3.

DISCUSSION

Beginning in 2008, there have been a number of regulatory actions by both State and Federal authorities to either close or restrict the marten trapping season on Kuiu Island. The actions were the result of a seven-year marten research project on Kuiu Island that concluded the marten population on Kuiu Island is at a low level. The Kuiu Island marten population is somewhat isolated from other marten populations and includes both marten subspecies (*Martes americana* and *M. caurina*). The proponent believes there are compelling conservation concerns with regard to marten on Kuiu Island and that the trapping season should be closed.

Existing Federal Regulation

Units 1, 2, 3, and 4—Marten (Trapping)

No limit

Dec. 1–Feb. 15

Proposed Federal Regulation

Units 1, 2, 3 (except Kuiu Island), and 4 – Marten (Trapping)

Dec. 1–Feb. 15

No limit

Kuiu Island portion of Unit 3

No open season

Existing State Regulation

Units 1-3 (except Kuiu Island)-Marten (Trapping)

No limit

Dec. 1–Feb. 15

Unit 3, Kuiu Island

No open season

Extent of Federal Public Lands

Federal public managed lands comprise over 95% of the Kuiu Island portion of Unit 3 and are managed by the United States Forest Service (USFS) (**Map 1**).

Customary and Traditional Use Determinations

The Board has not made a customary and traditional use determination for marten in Unit 3. Therefore, all Federally qualified users may harvest this species in this unit.



Map 1. Kuiu Island, including open logging roads. (figure courtesy ADF&G)

Regulatory History

Historically, marten trapping seasons and harvest limits in Unit 3 were liberal, and State and Federal regulations were aligned. Season dates were from December 1–February 15, with no harvest limits. However, because of conservation concerns, the Alaska Board of Game adopted a proposal submitted by ADF&G to permanently close marten trapping on Kuiu Island during its November 2008 meeting, effective for the 2009 season. Because of the delayed implementation, ADF&G issued Emergency Order 01-11-08, effective November 30, 2008, to close marten trapping on Kuiu Island for the 2008 season.

The Board approved Special Action Request WSA08-11, submitted by ADF&G, which closed the marten trapping season on Kuiu Island for 60 days, beginning December 11, 2008. The Board approved Special Action Request WSA09-03 which closed the subsistence marten trapping season on Kuiu Island during the 2009 season.

As recommended by the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council), the Board adopted Proposal WP10-07 as modified to close the 2010 and 2011 Federal subsistence marten trapping seasons on Kuiu Island; with a sunset clause that would reopen the season in 2012. When the Board made its decision, it was not known if there would be funding available for research on marten on Kuiu Island and the Board felt that if no research was forthcoming, a sunset clause would provide a mechanism to re-open the area after the marten population had a chance to recover. Harvest patterns, as referenced below, indicate that 42% of the total marten harvest occurs in December. Closing the January-February portion of the season would likely reduce the potential harvest by 58%. There would likely be some harvest during the December season and because of the fur sealing requirement; a time-series of information important to management (catch per unit effort, sex and age, etc.) could be obtained (FSB 2010).

In November 2012, ADF&G submitted Special Action Request WSA12-09 to close the Federal subsistence marten trapping season on Kuiu Island in Unit 3 for the 2012 season. ADF&G was concerned that the marten population on Kuiu Island was at a very low level, recruitment was poor and marten continued to experience a high degree of natural mortality. The marten study was ongoing and a trapping season could compromise the successful conclusion of the study. After a public hearing in Petersburg, with teleconferencing to include residents of Kake, the Board approved the Temporary Special Action on November 29, 2012 to close the marten season on the Kuiu Island portion of Unit 3.

ADF&G submitted Special Action Request WSA13-08 to close Federal subsistence marten trapping season on Kuiu Island in Unit 3 for the 2013 season (December 1, 2013 – February 15, 2014). A public meeting was held in Petersburg on December 6 with teleconferencing for residents of Kake. The Board closed the Jan. 1 – Feb. 15 portion of the 2013 season. The Board noted the low marten population on Kuiu Island and the continued low recruitment and high mortality rate. It also noted the low participation by Federally qualified subsistence users. The Board reasoned that reducing the trapping season to one month i.e., December 2013, would provide an opportunity for the continuation of subsistence use while providing adequate protection for conservation. In addition, because furs must be sealed, a limited

harvest would provide a mechanism for the collection of biological samples that could be used for management of this population.

Biological Background

In North America, marten range from Alaska to the southern Sierra Nevada and to New Mexico (Powell et al. 2003). Both sexes reach sexual maturity by age one, although effective breeding may not occur before age two. Alaska marten give birth in April or early May (Shepherd and Melchior 1994). Breeding occurs shortly after parturition; however, implantation is delayed. Males are polygynous, and females may be both polyandrous and selective (Powell et al. 2003). Average litter size is three in Alaska (Shepherd and Melchior 1994).

Although only one species of marten is formally recognized in Southeast Alaska, two distinct lineages exist, including the coastal form *caurina* and the continental form *americana*. Based on recent molecular analyses, it appears there are very different evolutionary histories (Carr and Hicks 1997, Cook et al. 2006, Dawson 2008). A 2002 genetic study by the University of Alaska Fairbanks documented that both lineages occur in Southeast Alaska, and that the *caurina* form inhabits only two islands within the Archipelago, Admiralty and Kuiu Islands, and should be considered endemic (Dawson 2008). Hybridization between the two forms has been documented on Kuiu Island (Cook et al. 2006).

Marten populations fluctuate greatly in response to food availability, habitat conditions, and trapping pressure (Powell 1994 in Powell et al. 2003, Shepherd and Melchior 1994, USFS 2008). In Southeast Alaska, based on recent studies, marten abundance and densities are largely determined by the abundance and biomass of their mammalian prey (Flynn et al. 2013). Voles are the dominant prey of marten across their range (Powell et al. 2003), including Southeast Alaska (Flynn and Schumacher 1999, Shepherd and Melchior 1994). Other small mammals, berries, small birds, eggs, salmon, carrion and vegetation are also food sources for marten in Alaska (Flynn and Schumacher 1999, Shepherd and Melchior 1994). The role of ungulate carrion in the ecology of Southeast Alaska marten populations is unclear. Flynn et al. (2004) documented that ungulate density was a significant predictor of marten catch rate, but did not document ungulates in the diet. Ungulates may be a more important component of marten diets in the later winter and early spring when winter-killed carcasses become available. Kuiu Island has among the lowest deer density in Southeast Alaska (Lowell 2008); therefore, deer carcass availability may be limited.

Based on diversity in individual diets, marten are opportunistic predators, influenced by the type and quantity of local prey species (Ben-David et al. 1997). Flynn et al. (2004) documented seasonal variation in marten diet on Kuiu Island between 2001 and 2002. Although the composition of food sources was the same between years and included salmon, long-tailed voles, deer mice, red squirrels, and berries, the proportion of each food in the marten diet differed between the two years. Based on a recent study on northern Kuiu Island, small mammal abundance was lower in 2007 than during previous studies in 2002 and 2003 (Flynn et al. 2004, Flynn and Dawson 2008). Similar low abundance of small mammals was documented in other Southeast Alaska locations in 2007, which was predicted to result in a decline in the marten population (Ben-David 2007).

Marten are subject to high natural mortality rates, particularly from predation (Hodgman et al. 1997, Bull and Heater 2001). Bull and Heater (2001) reported that the probability of survival of marten >9 months old was 56% for 1 year old, 38% for 2 years old, 22% for 3 years old, and 16% for 4 years old, which equates to an average annual survival rate of approximately 65% per year over 4 years. The overall survival rate for the study period was estimated at 44%, with most mortalities occurring between January and March. On Chichagof Island, average survival rates for radio collared marten were estimated at about 75% considering only natural mortality, and 66% with trapping mortality included (ADF&G unpublished data). Between 2008 and 2012, the estimated natural annual mortality on Kuiu Island ranged from 12 to 63% (Flynn et al. 2013).

Marten are easily trapped, which can lead to overharvest (Powell et al. 2003, USFS 2008). Habitat quality must be considered when managing marten harvests. A management strategy incorporating areas closed to trapping is one option to maintain viable populations of marten to act as a source for adjacent trapped areas, although in areas with high road densities and high trapping pressure, closed areas alone may not be sufficient (Hodgman et al. 1997, Powell et al. 2003).

Density estimates for Kuiu Island ranged from 0.25-0.70 martens/ mi² over the course of the study, with poor juvenile recruitment (Flynn et al. 2013). By comparison, marten densities between 0.44/mi² and 1.42/mi² have been observed on Chichagof Island (Flynn et al. 2013.). Marten are easily caught by trappers and allowing trapping along roads is known to result in high catch rates (Flynn and Schumacher 1999). The road system on the northern end of Kuiu Island makes the marten population vulnerable to trapping in that area (Flynn et al. 2013).

Habitat

Marten are wide-ranging and require large tracts of contiguous habitat to move across the landscape, as well as habitats capable of supporting an adequate prey-base of small mammals. Marten are strongly associated with late seral and old-growth forests below 1,500 feet in elevation. One of the most important factors related to viability of the marten populations on the Tongass National Forest is the amount of habitat in Old Growth Reserves and non-development Land Use Designations (USFS 2008). Recent timber harvest activities have been restricted to the northern portions of Kuiu Island (the same area as the marten research study). Within that area (Wildlife Analysis Area 5012) high value marten habitat has been reduced by 29 % since 1954 (USFS 2007).

Radio-telemetry data was collected from 2007-2013 and showed more than 80% of the martens were located at some point within 250m of the shoreline (Flynn et al. 2013). Previous information indicated that Kuiu Island marten tend to concentrate near the beaches during winter (Flynn and Dawson 2008). It is not clear if winter concentration of marten on beaches occurs during all winters or during severe winters like those experienced in 2007-2008. Use of beach fringe may coincide with winter killed deer carrion availability, which is an important component of marten diets (Buskirk and Ruggiero 1994).

Harvest History

Generally, marten harvest levels are directly related to fur prices and winter weather conditions during the trapping season (Lowell 2007). Fluctuations in the number of marten taken annually are related to management actions restricting the season, or trappers avoiding Kuiu Island because of low marten population densities. The number of marten taken by fur trappers on Kuiu Island has ranged from 0 to 51 per year between 1984 and 2014, averaging 12 martens per season since the 1995 season, including only the years when the season was open (Lowell 2015, pers. comm.) (Figure 1). The number of individuals trapping marten on Kuiu Island ranged from 0-3 per year between 1995-2014 (Lowell 2015, pers. comm.). The majority of the marten harvest occurred during December (42%) and February (41%), whereas only 17% of the harvest has occurred in January (Lowell 2008). Kuiu Island has a land area of approximately 379.15 mi². Using the most recent estimate of marten density (0.70/mi²), there was an estimated 265 martens living on Kuiu Island in 2012.

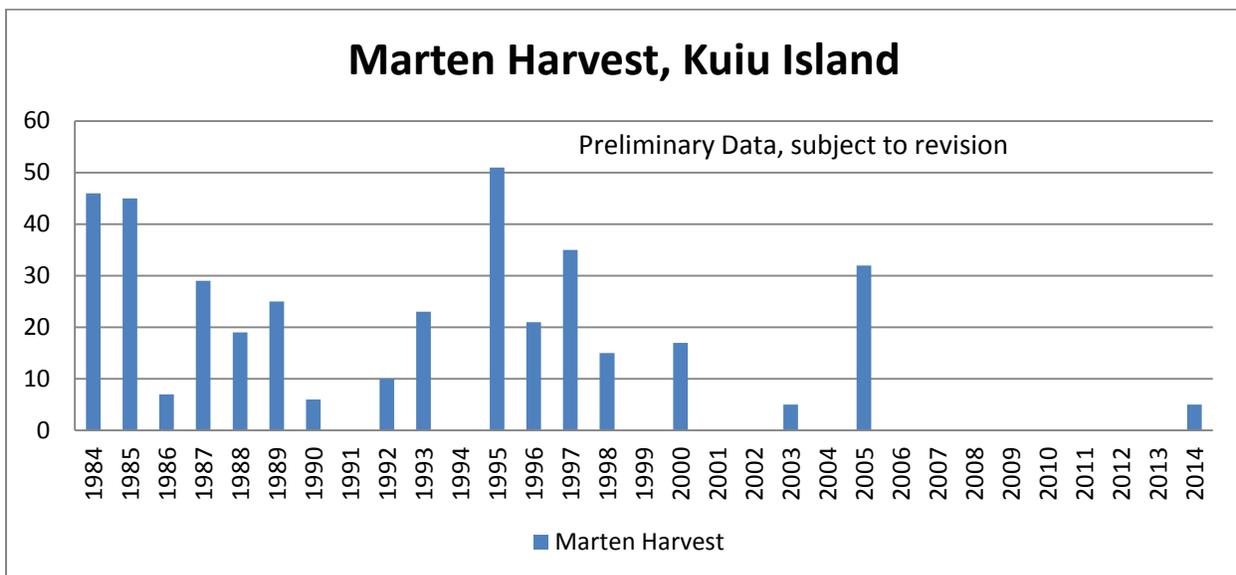


Figure 1. Marten harvest on Kuiu Island, 1984-2014 seasons.

Other Alternative(s) Considered

The alternative selected by the Board in 2010 was to close the Kuiu Island trapping season for two years to allow time for the marten population to recover. The fault with closing the season, with a sunset clause to re-open, is that there will be no new information to guide the Board in how to determine an appropriate closed period prior to re-opening. The marten study has concluded and there are no plans for future studies to determine marten densities on Kuiu Island.

Another alternative is to close marten trapping from the road system (i.e., allow boat-based trapping only). As discussed in the habitat section of this report, this option may be ineffective in reducing marten harvests because more than 80% of the collared martens were located at some point within 250 m of the shoreline. There is a tendency for martens to become concentrated near the beach line during the late

winter, at least in some years. The road system on Kuiu Island is not connected to any community and is unmaintained in winter and often impassable except by snow machine.

Effects of the Proposal

If Proposal WP16-09 were adopted, the Federal marten trapping season on Kuiu Island would be closed. There has been little trapping on the island in recent years and this closure would have minimal effects on Federally qualified subsistence users other than the loss of potential opportunity. Since studies have indicated that marten survival and abundance is positively correlated to abundance of food and the number of trappers and the resulting harvest is currently at low levels, a complete closure would not likely assist in increasing the marten population. The number of trappers that have used this area is very low at 0-3 in those years when the trapping season was opened; of which no more than one trapper each year has been Federally qualified (Lowell 2015, pers. comm.). Trapping on Kuiu Island is costly because of its remote location and trapping pressure is expected to remain at minimal levels until the marten numbers increase and trapping becomes economically justifiable.

OSM PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

Support Proposal WP16-09 **with modification** to reduce the length of the marten trapping season on Kuiu Island to Dec. 1-Dec. 31.

The modified regulation would read:

Units 1, 2, 3 (except Kuiu Island), and 4 – Marten (Trapping) Dec. 1-Feb. 15

No limit

Kuiu Island portion of Unit 3 Dec. 1-Dec. 31

No limit

Justification

This recommended modification was the solution adopted by the Board for the 2013 season. Harvest patterns, as referenced above, indicate that 42% of the total marten harvest occurs in December. The result of closing the January-February portion of the season would likely reduce the potential harvest by 58%. Additionally, sealing of marten is required and allowing some harvest would facilitate collection of harvest statistics and biological samples for use by managers in monitoring this population. A December only season provides an opportunity for the continuation of subsistence in addition to adequate protections for conservation of marten on Kuiu Island.

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FISHERIES RESOURCE MONITORING PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

Beginning in 1999, the Federal government assumed expanded management responsibility for subsistence fisheries on Federal public lands in Alaska under the authority of Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). Expanded subsistence fisheries management introduced substantial new informational needs for the Federal system. Section 812 of ANILCA directs the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture, cooperating with the State of Alaska and other Federal agencies, to undertake research on fish and wildlife and subsistence uses on Federal public lands. To increase the quantity and quality of information available for management of subsistence fisheries, the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (Monitoring Program) was established within the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM). The Monitoring Program was envisioned as a collaborative interagency, interdisciplinary approach to enhance existing fisheries research, and effectively communicate information needed for subsistence fisheries management on Federal public lands.

Biennially, the Office of Subsistence Management announces a funding opportunity for investigation plans addressing subsistence fisheries on Federal public lands. The 2016 Notice of Funding Availability focused on priority information needs developed either by strategic planning efforts or subject matter specialist input, followed by review and comment by the Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils. 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. The six Monitoring Program regions are shown in **Figure 1**.

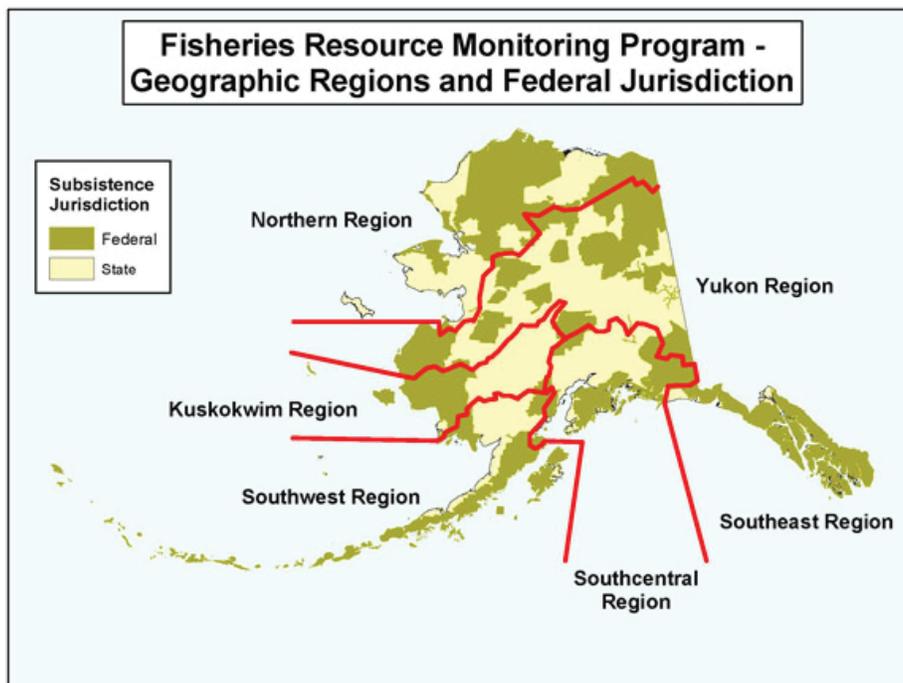


Figure 1. Geographic Regions for the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program.

To implement the Monitoring Program, a collaborative approach is utilized in which five Federal agencies (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and U.S. Forest Service) work with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Regional Advisory Councils, Alaska Native Organizations, and other organizations. An interagency Technical Review Committee provides scientific evaluation of investigation plans submitted for funding consideration. The Regional Advisory Councils provide review and recommendations, and public comment is invited. The Interagency Staff Committee also provides recommendations. The Federal Subsistence Board takes into consideration recommendations and comments from the process, and forwards a Monitoring Plan to the Assistant Regional Director of OSM for final approval.

Strategic plans sponsored by the Monitoring Program have been developed by workgroups of fisheries managers, researchers, Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils, and by other stakeholders for three of the six regions: Southeast, Southcentral (excluding Cook Inlet Area), and Southwest Alaska. These plans identify prioritized information needs for each major subsistence fishery and are available for viewing on the Federal Subsistence Management, Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program website (<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/index.cfm>). Individual copies of plans are available by placing a request to the Office of Subsistence Management. Independent strategic plans were completed for the Yukon and Kuskokwim regions for salmon in 2005. For the Northern Region and the Cook Inlet Area, assessments of priority information needs were developed from experts on the Regional Advisory Councils, the Technical Review Committee, Federal and State managers, and staff from the Office of Subsistence Management. Finally, a strategic plan specifically for research on whitefish species in the Yukon and Kuskokwim River drainages was completed in spring 2011 as a result of efforts supported through Monitoring Program project 08-206 (Yukon and Kuskokwim Coregonid Strategic Plan). Currently, all regional strategic plans need to be updated. The OSM, in collaboration with Regional Advisory Councils and agency partners, will be exploring methods to update these plans, develop a schedule into the future and ensure they are current and represent the most up-to-date information about subsistence needs and concerns throughout the state.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Monitoring Program was first implemented in 2000, with an initial allocation of \$5 million. Since 2001, a total of \$103.6 million has been allocated for the Monitoring Program to fund a total of 431 projects (**Figure 2; Figure 3**).

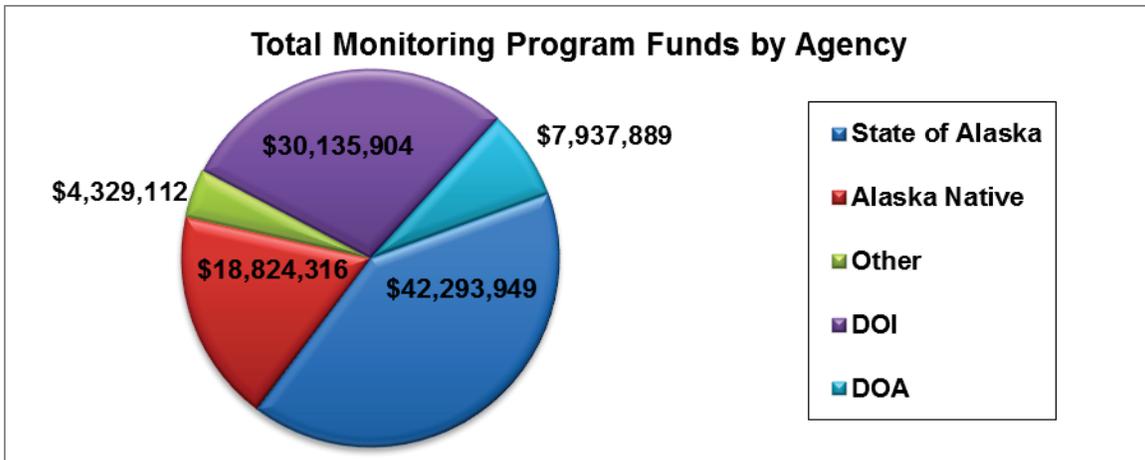


Figure 2. Total Project funds through the Monitoring Program from 2000 through 2014 listed by the organization of the Principal Investigator for projects funded. The funds listed are the total approved funds from 2000 to 2014. DOI = Department of Interior and DOA = Department of Agriculture.

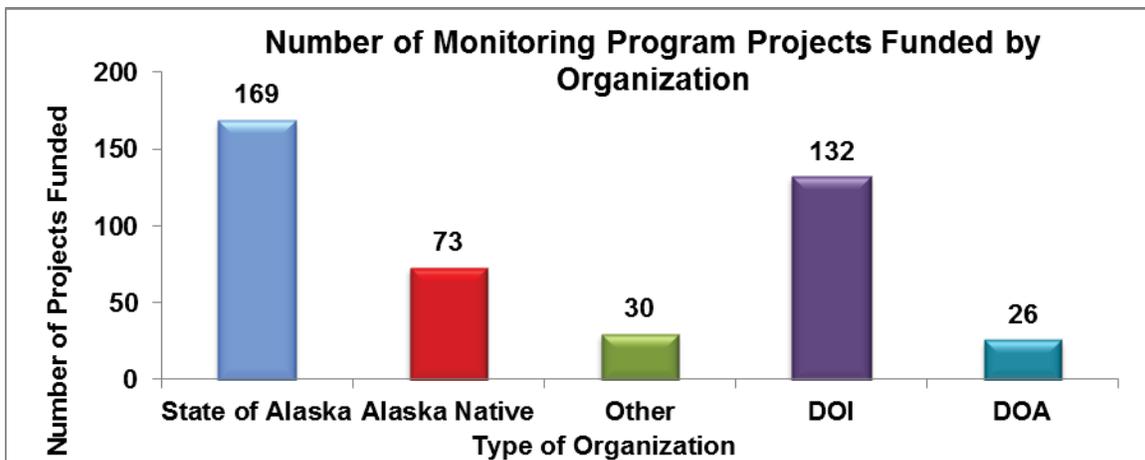


Figure 3. The total number of projects funded through the Monitoring Program from 2000 through 2014 listed by the organization of Principal Investigator. DOI = Department of Interior and DOA = Department of Agriculture.

During each biennial funding cycle, the Monitoring Program budget funds ongoing multi-year projects (2, 3 or 4 years) as well as new projects. Budget guidelines are established by geographic region (**Table 1**) and data type. The regional guidelines were developed using six criteria that included level of risk to species, level of threat to conservation units, amount of subsistence needs not being met, amount of information available to support subsistence management, importance of a species to subsistence harvest and level of user concerns with subsistence harvest. Budget guidelines provide an initial target for planning; however they are not final allocations and will be adjusted annually as needed (**Figure 5**; **Figure 6**).

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

Region	Department of Interior Funds	Department of Agriculture Funds
Northern	17%	0%
Yukon	29%	0%
Kuskokwim	29%	0%
Southwest	15%	0%
Southcentral	5%	33%
Southeast	0%	67%
Inter-regional	5%	0%

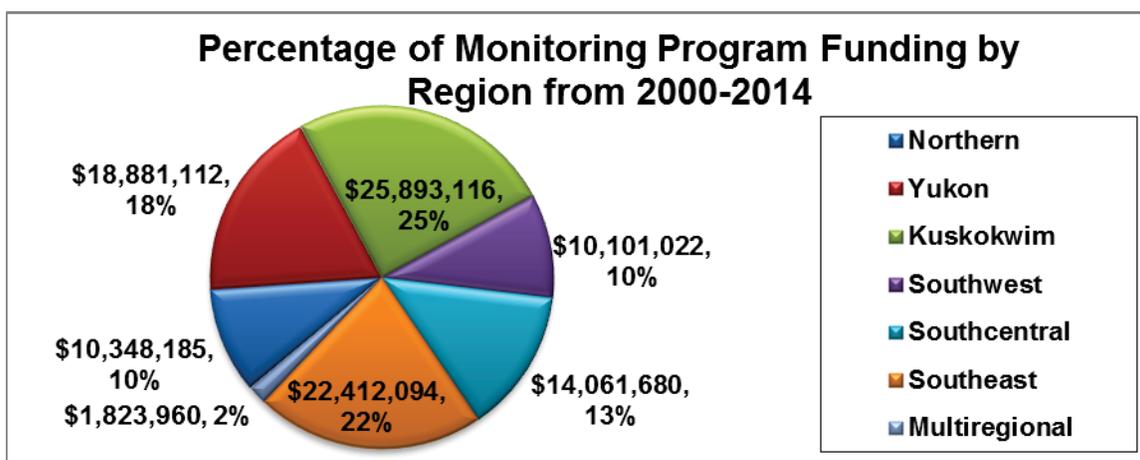


Figure 4. Total Project funding by Geographic Region from 2000 through 2014.

Two primary types of research projects are solicited for the Monitoring Program including Harvest Monitoring/Traditional Ecological Knowledge (HMTEK) and Stock, Status and Trends (SST), although projects that combine these approaches are also encouraged. Project funding by type is shown in **Figure 5**. Definitions of the two project types are listed below:

- **Stock Status and Trends Studies (SST)** - These projects address abundance, composition, timing, behavior, or status of fish populations that sustain subsistence fisheries with linkage to Federal public lands.
- **Harvest Monitoring and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (HMTEK)** -These projects address assessment of subsistence fisheries including quantification of harvest and effort, and description and assessment of fishing and use patterns.

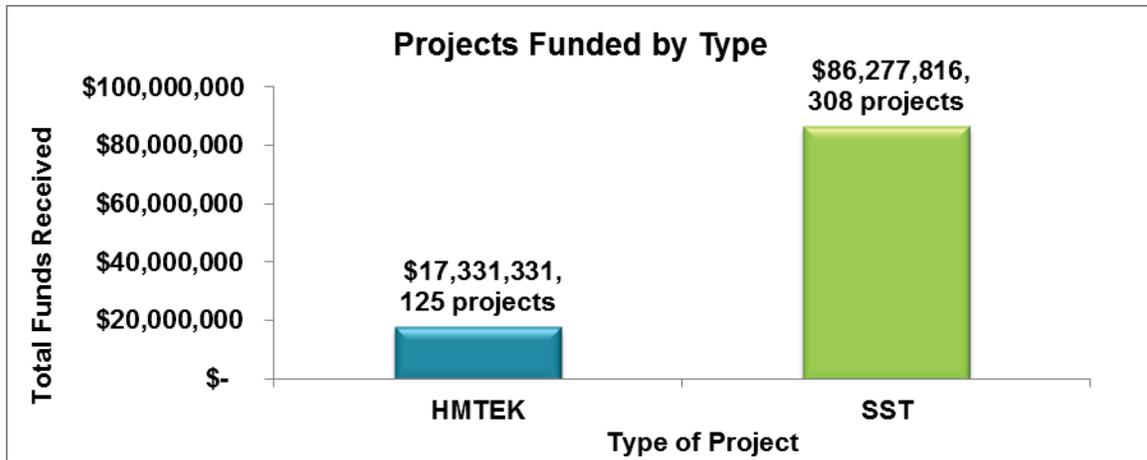


Figure 5. Total Project funding by type from 2000 through 2014. HMTEK = Harvest Monitoring/Traditional Ecological Knowledge and SST = Stock, Status and Trends.

PROJECT EVALUATION PROCESS

In the current climate of increasing conservation concerns and subsistence needs, it is imperative that the Monitoring Program prioritizes high quality projects that address critical subsistence questions. Several changes were implemented in the 2016 Monitoring Program to address the challenges facing Federal subsistence users across the state. These changes will enhance the Monitoring Program by increasing overall program transparency, identifying and funding high quality and high priority research projects and maximizing funding opportunities. This will allow the Monitoring Program to make substantial contributions to Federal subsistence users and to the Federal Subsistence Management Program.

Projects are selected for funding through an evaluation and review process that is designed to advance projects that are strategically important for the Federal Subsistence Program, technically sound, administratively competent, promote partnerships and capacity building, and are cost effective. Projects are evaluated by a panel called the Technical Review Committee (TRC). This committee is a standing interagency committee of senior technical experts that is foundational to the credibility and scientific integrity of the evaluation process for projects funded by the Monitoring Program. The TRC reviews, evaluates, and make recommendations about proposed projects, consistent with the mission of the Monitoring Program. Fisheries and Anthropology staff from the OSM provide support for the TRC. Recommendations from the TRC provide the basis for further comments from Councils, the public, the Interagency Staff Committee (ISC), and the Federal Subsistence Board, with final approval of the Monitoring Plan by the Assistant Regional Director of OSM.

The 2016 Monitoring Program changes involve how projects are submitted and also how they are reviewed. To be considered for funding under the Monitoring Program, a proposed project must have a linkage to Federal subsistence fishery management. This means that a proposed project must have a direct association to a Federal subsistence fishery, and that either the subsistence fishery or fish stocks in question must occur in or pass through waters within or adjacent to Federal public lands. Complete project packages need to be submitted on time and must address five specific criteria (see below) in order to be considered a high quality project. Addressing only some of the criteria will not guarantee a

successful project submission. Additionally, project review has been changed to aid transparency and consistency throughout the process. Key modifications include specific guidelines for assessing how and whether a proposed project has addressed each of the five criteria, receiving a single consolidated review from each participating agency, and requiring that agencies recuse themselves from providing reviews for projects involving their agency.

Five criteria are used to evaluate project proposals:

1. **Strategic Priority** - 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 include a synthesis of project findings in their investigation plans. This synthesis should clearly and concisely document project performance, key findings, and uses of collected information for Federal subsistence management.
 - a. *Federal linkage* – Study must have a direct association to a subsistence fishery within Federal Subsistence Management Program jurisdiction. That is, the subsistence fishery or stocks in question must occur in waters within or adjacent to Federal public lands (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).
 - b. *Conservation Mandate* – Risk to the conservation of species and populations that support subsistence fisheries and risk to public lands purposes.
 - c. *Allocation Priority* – Risk of failure to provide for Federal subsistence uses.
 - d. *Data Gaps* – Amount of information available to support Federal subsistence management. A higher priority is given where a lack of information exists.
 - e. *Management Application* – The application of proposed project data must be clearly explained and linked to current Federal management strategies and needs.
 - f. *Role of Resource* – Importance of a species or a population to a Federal subsistence harvest (e.g. number of subsistence users affected, quantity of subsistence harvest), and qualitative significance (e.g. cultural value, unique seasonal role).
 - g. *Local Concern* – Level of user concern over Federal subsistence harvests (e.g., allocation, competing uses, changes in populations).
2. **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.

3. **Investigator Ability and Resources** - Investigators must demonstrate that 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 who have received funding in the past will be evaluated and ranked on their past performance, including meeting deliverable deadlines. A record of failure to submit reports or delinquent submittal of reports will be taken into account when rating investigator ability and resources.
4. **Partnership-Capacity Building** - Partnerships and capacity building are priorities of the Monitoring Program. ANILCA mandates that rural residents be afforded a meaningful role in the management of Federal subsistence fisheries, and the Monitoring Program offers opportunities for partnerships and participation to 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 organizations add to the strength of a proposal. Investigators and their organizations should demonstrate their ability to maintain effective local relationships and commitment to capacity building. This includes a plan to facilitate and develop partnerships so that investigators, communities, and regional organizations can pursue and achieve the most meaningful level of involvement.

Investigators are encouraged to develop the highest level of tribal, community and regional involvement that is practical. Investigators must demonstrate that capacity building has already reached the communication or partnership development stage during proposal development. Ideally, a strategy to increase capacity to higher levels will be provided in the project proposal, recognizing, however, that in some situations sustainable or higher level involvement may not be desired or feasible by the local organizations. Successful capacity building requires developing trust and dialogue among investigators, tribes, 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 should emphasize reciprocity and sharing of knowledge and information.

5. **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. Matching funds will be factored into the review process based on overall value to the government.

POLICY AND FUNDING GUIDELINES

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

1. Projects of up to four years duration may be considered in any year’s monitoring plan.
2. Studies must not duplicate existing projects.
3. A majority of Monitoring Program funding will be dedicated to non-Federal agencies.
4. Long term projects will be considered on a case by case basis.
5. Activities that are not eligible for funding include:
 - a) habitat protection, mitigation, restoration, and enhancement;
 - b) hatchery propagation, restoration, enhancement, and supplementation;
 - c) contaminant assessment, evaluation, and monitoring; and
 - d) projects where the primary or only objective is outreach and education (for example, science camps, technician training, and intern programs), rather than information collection, are not eligible for funding under the Monitoring Program.

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

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

2016 FISHERIES RESOURCE MONITORING PLAN

For 2016, a total of 46 investigation plans were received and 45 are considered eligible for funding (**Table 1**). One project was not eligible for funding because the project falls under habitat mitigation,

restoration, and enhancement. Of the projects that are considered for funding, 33 are SST projects and 13 are HMTEK projects.

In 2016, the Department of the Interior, through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will provide up to \$2.0 million in funding and up to \$2.7 million for ongoing projects that were initially funded in 2014. The Department of Agriculture, through the U.S. Forest Service, has historically provided \$1.8 million annually, but the amount of 2016 funds available projects is uncertain. If the Department of Agriculture funding is not provided, none of the proposed projects submitted for the Southeast Region will be funded.

FISHERIES RESOURCE MONITORING PROGRAM SOUTHEAST REGION OVERVIEW

Since the inception of the Monitoring Program in 2000, 72 projects have been undertaken in the Southeast Alaska Region for a total of \$22.7 million (**Figure 1**). Of these, the State of Alaska conducted 29 projects, the Department of Interior conducted one project, the Department of Agriculture conducted 21 projects, and Alaska Native organizations conducted 21 projects (**Figure 2**). Fifty-six projects were Stock, Status, and Trends (SST), and 16 projects were Harvest Monitoring and Traditional Ecological Knowledge (HMTEK).

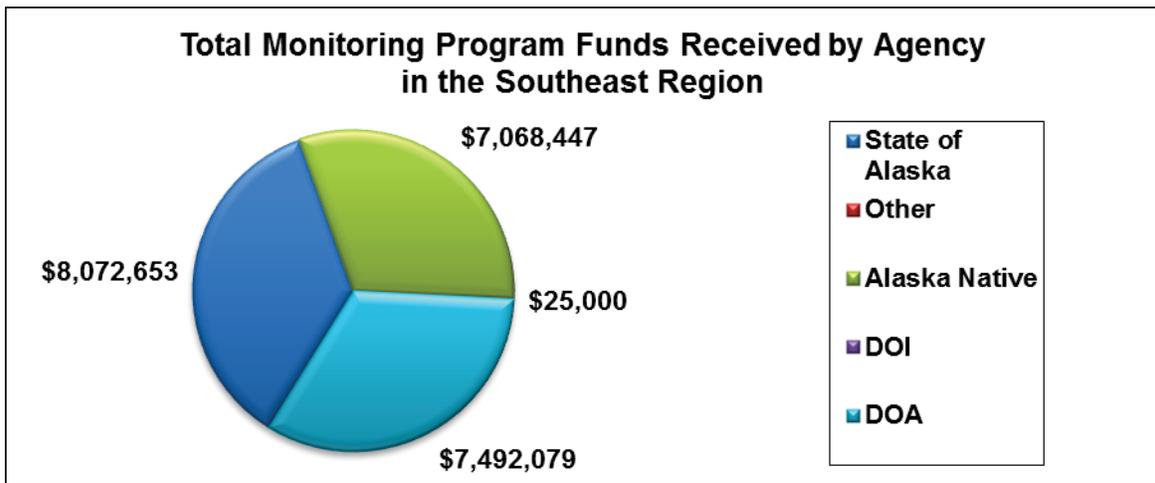


Figure 1. Monitoring Program funds received by agencies for projects in the Southeast Alaska Region. The funds listed are the total approved funds from 2000 to 2014. DOI = Department of Interior and DOA = Department of Agriculture.

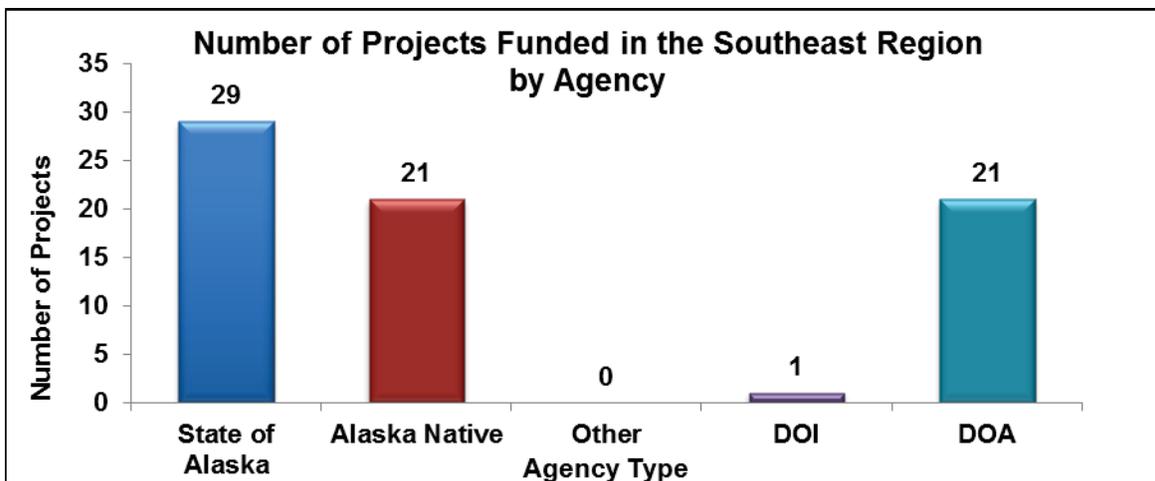


Figure 2. Total number of Monitoring Program projects funded, by agency, in the Southeast Alaska Region from 2000 to 2014. DOI = Department of Interior and DOA = Department of Agriculture.

2016 DRAFT SOUTHEAST FISHERIES RESOURCE MONITORING PLAN

OVERVIEW

Priority Information Needs

The 2016 Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Southeast Alaska Region identified three priority information needs:

- Reliable estimates of sockeye salmon escapement. Stocks of interest include: Gut Bay, Red, Kah Sheets, Karta, Salmon Bay, Sarkar, Hoktaheen, Klawock, Eek, Kutlaku, Port Houghton, Kasook, Hunter Bay and Manhattan Lake.
- In-season subsistence harvest of sockeye salmon. Stocks of interest include: Hatchery Creek, Gut Bay, Red, Kah Sheets, Salmon Bay, Sarkar, Kanalku, Hoktaheen, Eek, Kutlaku, Port Houghton, Kasook, Hunter Bay and Manhattan Lake.
- Escapement index for Yakutat Forelands eulachon (continuation).

Technical Review Committee Proposal Ranking

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. It is the responsibility of the Technical Review Committee to develop the strongest possible Monitoring Plan for each region and across the entire state.

For the 2016 Monitoring Program, five proposals were submitted for the Southeast Alaska Region. The Technical Review Committee evaluated and scored each proposal for Strategic Priority, Technical and Scientific Merit, Investigator Ability and Resources, Partnership and Capacity Building, and Cost/Benefit. The final score determined the ranking of each proposal within the region (**Table 1**). Projects that rate higher comprise a strong Monitoring Plan for the region by addressing strategically important information needs based on sound science and promote cooperative partnerships and capacity building. The projects listed are currently being considered for Funding in the 2016 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. Projects which were not eligible due to the nature of the activity are not included. For more information on projects submitted to the 2016 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program please see the Executive Summaries in **Appendix A**.

Table 1. Technical Review Committee (TRC) ranking for projects in the Southeast Region. Projects are listed by TRC ranking and include total matching funds, total funds requested, and the average annual request for each project submitted to the 2016 Monitoring Program within the Southeast Region. The projects listed are currently being considered for Funding in the 2016 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. Projects which were not eligible due to the nature of the activity are not included.

TRC Ranking	Project Number	Title	Total Matching Funds	Total Project Request	Average Annual Request
1	16-604	Eek Lake Subsistence Sockeye Salmon Project	\$0	\$266,448	\$66,612
2	16-606	Sarkar Creek Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	\$140,817	\$356,343	\$89,086
3	16-601	Hatchery Creek Sockeye Salmon Population Assessment	\$0	\$545,917	\$136,479
4	16-602	Virginia Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	\$0	\$743,084	\$185,771
5	16-605	Stikine Eulachon Stock Assessment	\$0	\$170,000	\$42,500

2016 PROJECT SUMMARY AND TRC JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT RANKING

TRC Ranking: 1
Project Number: 16-604
Project Title: Eek Lake Subsistence Sockeye Salmon Project

Project Summary: The investigators plan to estimate Sockeye Salmon escapement into Eek Lake using two underwater-video equipped net weirs. Personnel will be housed on site where they can review video footage daily and sample sockeye twice weekly for age, sex, and length. Subsistence harvest will be estimated in conjunction with the Hetta Lake harvest estimate objective.

Justification: This project will build on existing sockeye stock and harvest information which will aid in managing resources important to residents of Hydaburg. Eek Lake Sockeye Salmon stock and harvest was listed in the priority information needs for the 2016 cycle. Concern regarding below average escapement at Hetta Lake has recently caused the shifting of some subsistence sockeye effort to the Eek Lake stock. The current stock status of Sockeye Salmon returning to Eek Lake is unknown and there is concern about the sustainability of the fishery due to shifted effort from the Hetta Lake stock. The investigators have significant expertise and ability regarding sockeye stock and harvest assessments with satisfactory past performance on other projects funded through the Monitoring Program. They have developed a budget which is closely tied to the Hetta Lake project resulting in considerable cost savings. This project will generate new information about sockeye stock and harvest at Eek Lake that will be useful in managing the resource. We have identified some concerns in the technical and scientific merit section. However, the investigators have already addressed these issues by modifying the project for the 2015 season and will carry the changes over to future years.

TRC Ranking: 2
Project Number: 16-606
Project Title: Sarkar Creek Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment

Project Summary: The investigators plan to estimate the escapement of Sockeye Salmon into the upper Sarkar watershed with two video equipped net weirs. Age, sex, and length samples will be taken from 100 Sockeye Salmon captured with dip nets and beach seines at spawning and/or staging areas. Escapement data on this system is scarce. A weir was operated in 1982 and 1983 at the main outlet which generated unvalidated sockeye counts.

Justification: This cooperative project between the Craig Tribal Association and the U.S. Forest Service will provide new information on the status of the Sarkar Sockeye Salmon stock which is important to Federally qualified subsistence users on Prince of Wales Island. This is a high priority project in the Southeast Alaska region due to the scarcity of data coupled with the possibility of higher future effort shifted from the Klawock Lake fishery due to stock decline and management restrictions. Also, subsistence Sockeye Salmon harvest from the Sarkar stock reported to the State has declined dramatically

since 2012. A stock assessment can provide information to address this decline in subsistence harvest. The cost is reasonable compared to similar, funded Monitoring Program projects. As a first-time principal investigator, Craig Tribal Association Fisheries Coordinator will be responsible for implementing this project with guidance of U.S. Forest Service biologists. Local residents will be targeted when filling four fisheries positions responsible for execution of the field component. These field technicians will be trained by the investigators and develop valuable skills that could be used on future Monitoring Program projects.

TRC Ranking: 3
Project Number: 16-601
Project Title: Hatchery Creek Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment

Project Summary: The investigators are proposing to continue the Sockeye Salmon stock assessment at Hatchery Creek. Adult and jack sockeye will be counted through a picket weir while age, sex, and length data will be collected in proportion to the run with a trap integrated into the picket weir. Extremely low escapement in 2008 (238) and 2009 (667) resulted in a series of state and/or federal closures in those and subsequent years. A fish pass was installed in 2010 at a partial barrier falls below the weir site to aid sockeye migration. Since 2010 the sockeye counts at the weir above this fish pass were at least 6,000 with a high of over 10,000 in 2010. This is a continuation of Monitoring Program project 14-605.

Justification: This cooperative project between the U.S. Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kasaan will be a continuation of Monitoring Program Project 14-605. The Organized Village of Kasaan will continue to assist in the implementation of this project with a locally hired crew leader and field technicians. An escapement estimate of Hatchery Creek sockeye was not included in the 2016 Notification of Funding Availability; however, it was listed on the 2014 Notification of Funding Availability and was subsequently funded through 2017. The intent of this proposal is to gain approval for funding in 2018 and 2019. The Hatchery Creek Sockeye Salmon fishery has been subjected to State and Federal fishery closures in several years beginning in 2008. However, recent escapement levels of at least 6,000, with a high of over 10,000 in 2010, suggest that the fish pass is effectively aiding Sockeye Salmon migration to spawning areas resulting in fewer closures and liberalization of harvest limits. There has not been substantial sockeye harvest reported at Hatchery Creek since 2003 when 853 were reported harvested. An average harvest of 86 sockeye has been reported here annually since 2003.

TRC Ranking: 4
Project Number: 16-602
Project Title: Virginia Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment

Project Summary: Sockeye Salmon returning to Virginia Lake will be counted using double-redundant open net weirs and underwater digital video recorders. These weirs and cameras will be operated continuously from late-June through mid-September. The design and operation of the video/mini-DVR fish counting system is described in Van Alen (2008). Age, sex and length data for Sockeye Salmon will be gathered on the spawning grounds using a beach seine. The escapement of Sockeye Salmon into

Virginia Lake was estimated through the Monitoring Program in 2001 (1,003 sockeye) and 2002 (2,073). Sockeye Salmon returns to Virginia Lake have long been an important subsistence resource for residents of Wrangell.

Justification: There is clear Federal linkage since sockeye are harvested and spawn in waters under Federal jurisdiction and the primary users of the resource are Federally qualified subsistence users from Wrangell. The need for escapement estimates of Sockeye Salmon at Virginia Lake was listed as a priority in the 2006 Southeast Alaska Strategic Plan; however, it was rated as a low priority. Virginia Lake was not included as a priority information need in the 2016 notice of Funding Availability. The investigations did not provide a compelling reason why this project should be a priority information need other than subsistence use. There is a high likelihood that the objectives will be achieved; however, there are concerns about validation of the weir count and age/sex/length sampling in proportion to the run. The budget is high compared to other weir projects in the region especially since the system is close to Wrangell and is boat accessible. The principle investigator has 24 years of experience with hatchery operations. One of the co investigators, Ben Van Alen, has completed numerous Monitoring Program projects in Southeast Alaska. Capacity building is high with the Wrangell Cooperative Association taking the lead role in all aspects of this project with technical support from the U.S. Forest Service and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

TRC Ranking: 5

Project Number: 16-605

Project Title: Stikine River Eulachon Stock Assessment

Project Summary: This project will estimate timing, distribution, and relative abundance of Eulachon returning to the lower Stikine River from mid-March through mid-May using aerial surveys and remote video monitoring. The project will increase the understanding of coast-wide declines in Eulachon stocks. This information is needed to better provide for the continuation of subsistence take by Federally qualified subsistence users in the Stikine River.

Justification: Eulachon are harvested in waters under Federal jurisdiction and are widely used by residents of Wrangell and Petersburg. Information on Eulachon stocks in the Stikine River was not identified as a priority in the 2006 Southeast Region Strategic Plan or in the 2016 Notice of Funding Availability. There was no compelling evidence in the investigation plan of a conservation concern or a problem with subsistence harvest of Eulachon in the Stikine River. However, there are general concerns with Eulachon abundance south of the Stikine River in the Unuk River near Ketchikan and in British Columbia, Canada. The budget seems reasonable. While all but one of the investigators are new to the Monitoring Program, a co-investigator and his agency have successfully conducted numerous projects funded through the Monitoring Program. There is very little involvement with cooperators outside the U.S. Forest Service.

APPENDIX A

The following Executive Summaries were written by the Principle Investigators and submitted to the Office of Subsistence Management as part of the proposal package. The statements and information contained in the Executive Summaries were not altered and they may not reflect the opinions of the Office of Subsistence Management or the Technical Review Committee. The Executive Summaries listed are for projects that are currently being considered for Funding the 2016 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program. Projects which were not considered for funding were not eligible due to the nature of the activity and are not included in this appendix.

Project Number: 16-601
Project Title: Hatchery Creek Sockeye Salmon Population Assessment
Geographic Area: Southeast Alaska
Data Type: Stock Status and Trends
Principal Investigator: Jeff Reeves, Craig Ranger District, U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
Co-Investigators: Jeff Bell and Paula Peterson, Organized Village of Kasaan (OVK)

Project Cost	2016: \$133,963	2017: \$135,574	2018: \$137,290	2019: \$139,090
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Total Cost: \$ 545,917

Issue: Sockeye salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*) comprise the most important subsistence fishery resource for rural residents in the Southeast Alaska region. The Hatchery Creek drainage on Prince of Wales Island (PWI) has supported extensive subsistence and sport harvests by both Alaska resident and non-resident anglers. This proposed project addresses a critical Southeast Alaska subsistence fishery concern that has been repeatedly identified as a monitoring need by the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council and the Southeast Alaska Fisheries Information Service Strategic Plan. Both the USFS and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game also consider the management of the Hatchery Creek sockeye salmon population to be a key subsistence issue for Prince of Wales Island due to the early run timing and uniqueness of this sockeye population.

Objectives:

1. Estimate the total escapement of adult and jack sockeye salmon that pass above the upper falls on Hatchery Creek with a weir project such that the estimated coefficient of variation is less than 15%.
2. Estimate the age, length, and sex composition of the Hatchery Creek system sockeye escapement so that the estimated coefficient of variation for the dominant age class is less than 10%.

Methods: (1) A channel-spanning aluminum and steel bipod weir will be employed to census the early run sockeye population in Hatchery Creek. The weir will be installed at a location above the falls, and will be operated continuously from the 1st of June until August 30th during each of the study years.

(2) The age, sex, and length (ASL) composition of the early run Hatchery Creek sockeye salmon sub-population will be assessed from *in-situ* sampling of returning adult fish captured at the weir. ASL information will be collected during each year of the proposed study. Individuals will be sampled at systematic intervals, corresponding to frequencies that are designed to obtain a minimum total annual N of 400.

Products: Results of the study will be available as annual progress and final reports submitted to FIS-OSM; via papers submitted for publication through scientific fisheries journals and ADF&G Technical Reports; and as formal presentations provided at SERAC, Federal/State agency, and professional society meetings.

Investigators Ability and Resources: Jeff Reeves, Subsistence Fisheries Biologist will be responsible for overall project administration, coordination with OSM/FIS staff, development of the study design and operation plan, on-site technical assistance to tribal and state/federal agency staff, data analysis/interpretation, and editing/delivery of progress and final reports. Jeff Bell, Fisheries Coordinator for OVK, responsibilities will include hiring and supervision of the project's field technicians, acquisition and management of all field research equipment, coordination with OSM/FIS staff, development of the study design and operation plan, on-site technical assistance to tribal and state/federal agency staff, data analysis/interpretation, and editing/delivery of progress and final reports. Paula Peterson is the Tribal Administrator of OVK having extensive expertise and experience in administering grants and contracts with Native organizations, private entities, and the federal government.

Partnership and Capacity Building: This proposed project has substantial capacity development aspects associated with it. Both the USFS and OVK will be provided funds to compensate the lead field fisheries biologist and hire the field technicians needed for this study; local hiring priority will be given to qualified personnel from the PWI Native organizations and Island's rural communities to fill these positions. This proposal represents the results of extensive interagency cooperation between fisheries and subsistence program personnel from the OVK and the USFS. Sharing of data among all of the agencies involved in this subsistence fishery will provide better information to improve management of Hatchery Creek sockeye salmon for all users.

Project Number: 16-602
Title: Virginia Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment Project
Geographical Region: Southeast Alaska
Data Type: Stock Status and Trends
Principal Investigator: Brian Ashton, Wrangell Cooperative Association, Wrangell
Co-Investigators: Ben Van Alen, U.S. Forest Service, Juneau
 Dennis Reed, Fisheries Biologist, U.S. Forest Service, Wrangell
 Martin Hutten, PhD, U.S. Forest Service, Wrangell

Project Cost:	2016: \$183,590	2017: \$183,784	2018: \$186,494	2019: \$189,216
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Total: \$743,084

Issue: Sockeye Salmon returns to Virginia Lake and its outlet stream, Mill Creek, have long been an important subsistence resource for Tlingit families living in the Wrangell area. Reportedly, Mill Creek was the location of the first village of the Stikine Tlingit as well as the first winter village for the Kiksadi and the Katcadi (United States Department of Agriculture, Wrangell Ranger District, unpublished data). At seven miles, from Wrangell, Virginia Lake/Mill Creek is the closest subsistence resource to the community. Since the 1980's multiple projects have been undertaken to increase productivity of Sockeye in this watershed, to include: preliminary limnological survey (1986), stream channel modification (1988), 7.6 million (approx.) fry plants (1989-1995), nutrient enrichment, and adult escapement evaluations. After the fish pass was complete in 1980 and augmented with fry plants, returns were projected to increase to 60,000 adult returns. This has not come to pass. EV (Euphotic Volume) modeling subsequently suggested a projected return sustainability of 26,000-37,000 Sockeye. In the late 90's, adoption of ZB-EZD (Zooplankton Biomass-Euphotic Zone Depth) modeling suggests a sustainable return of 10,000 -17,000 Sockeye. With funding from the Federal Subsistence Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program, the latest escapement monitoring in 2001 – 2002 counted 1003 and 2073 Sockeye past the ladder at the lower falls. Of the fish counted in 2001-2002, it is estimated that less than 10% successfully spawned in the lake and upper watersheds. In 2003, the US Forest Service tracked adult escapement via radio-tagging to determine the ultimate fate of returning spawning adults. It took an average of 4.1 days to migrate up 1.2 km with four falls. Of the 100 adults tracked, 78 successfully migrated into Virginia Lake with 60% spawning in the lake and only 15% divided between the lower reaches of Porterfield and Glacier Creeks. Only 63 were believed to be successful spawners, and 8 were unverified. This estimates successful spawning no greater than 63% and could be lower considering the 26% that were unverified. At the end of the most recent research (2001-2003), the following recommendations were made by US Forest Service Biologists:

1. Fertilization treatments cease (ceased in 2002)
2. Data gaps need to be identified and prioritized
3. Consideration of physical manipulation of second upstream waterfall
4. Genetics study to assess stock heterogeneity (due to McDonald lake stock introduction)
5. Realistic management goals be established
6. Subsistence harvest should consider modification

Subsistence harvests continue at Virginia Lake with mediocre results (12 fish per permit). Only the most diligent subsistence users make an effort to catch Sockeye at the mouth of Mill Creek and many choose to travel to much farther locations to be assured of a successful harvest. In 2014, the Wrangell Cooperative Association initiated a fisheries management program to address diminished subsistence fisheries within their historical boundaries and identified Virginia Lake/Mill Creek as the first resource to address. This is also a modest project, with highly capable advisors assist in building capacity within the new fisheries program. After researching past efforts, Ben VanAlen and Dennis Reed (US Forest Service) were approached in late 2014 by WCA council and staff for assistance and recommendations. On March 7, 2015, Dennis Reed, Ben VanAlen, Martin Hutten (US Forest Service Fisheries Biologists), Ken Lewis (WCA council member) and Brian Ashton (WCA Fisheries Program Manager) walked Mill Creek up to Virginia Lake and finalized the first step in a plan to fill data gaps, in an effort to address adult passage issues through Mill Creek. It was agreed that the most relevant data would be achieved with a net weir at the mouth of the lake outlet and remote cameras to monitor fish passage past the three upper falls.

Objectives:

1. Count (census) the annual escapement of adult and jack sockeye salmon into Virginia Lake using double-redundant video weirs.
2. Estimate the age, sex, and length composition of the sockeye escapement into Virginia Lake with a precision of $\pm 10\%$, 95% of the time.
3. Monitor passage of adults past Mill Creek Falls #2 (and possibly #3 and #4) with remote cameras.

Methods: Project personnel will count and validate the daily and annual escapement of sockeye salmon into the lake using double-redundant lake net weirs and underwater video cameras. Both lake net weirs will be fished between the shores. Project personnel will review the video files each day and record the fish counts by hour for each camera in a bound data notebook and computer database. These weirs and video/mini-DVRs (digital video recorders) will be operated continuously from Mid-June through mid-September in 2016, 2017, 2018 & 2019. Upstream migrating fish will not be stopped at the video weirs and will be able to migrate freely into the lake at any time. The only fish that need to be handled are the ones sampled for age, sex, length, and genetic data, and those fish will be caught with beach seines off the mouth of the main inlet stream in August and on the beach spawning areas in September. Remote cameras will be set up at the three upper waterfalls in Mill Creek to monitor fish passage. Exchange of batteries and data storage will be conducted as necessary. A four person crew will be divided into two, two person teams. Each team will work 10-days-on and 10-days-off, and they will live on-site in a floating wall tent fitted with propane appliances. If approved by ADF&G, remote monitoring of weirs will be implemented, once remote monitoring is tested and a rapid-response plan has been proven.

Partnerships/Capacity Building: The Wrangell Cooperative Association (WCA) and USDA Forest Service cooperated on the 2011-2012 stock assessment of Virginia Lake sockeye salmon. This project will provide June through September employment for WCA members. The WCA has successfully filled past crew positions with local hires and will likely hire locally for this project as well. The WCA will seek to fill a project biologist position with a local hire. Field personnel participate in USFS safety training.

Project Number: 16-604
Title: Eek Lake Subsistence Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment Project
Geographic Region: Southeast Alaska
Data Type: Stock Status Trends
Principal Investigator: Anthony Christianson, Hydaburg Cooperative Association, Hydaburg
Co-Investigator: Cathy Needham, Kai Environmental Consulting Services, Juneau

Project Cost	2016: \$79,253	2017: \$61,932	2018: \$62,397	2019: \$62,866
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Total Cost: \$266,448

Issue: Hydaburg Cooperative Association (HCA) is proposing to conduct a stock assessment on sockeye salmon returning to Eek Lake, an important subsistence system to the community of Hydaburg. The information will allow HCA and state and federal resource management agencies to more accurately manage sockeye salmon returning to Hetta and Eek Lakes through Hetta Inlet. This project address' the Strategic Plan for the Subsistence Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (2006) by addressing the highest priority species (sockeye salmon) and information need (estimate of current escapement). Over the past few years, HCA has been managing Hydaburg's subsistence harvest in-season, and in many cases they divert harvest to Eek Lake when sockeye salmon returns at Hetta Lake are low or delayed. Given there have not been recently stock assessments projects at Eek Lake, this proposed project fills an important data gap for Hydaburg's management of their subsistence sockeye fishery.

Objectives:

1. Estimate escapement of sockeye salmon adults into Eek Lake using a two net weir, four camera system.
2. Estimate the age, sex and length composition of the sockeye salmon spawning in Eek Lake with a coefficient of variation less than 20% for the principle age class.

Note that a concurrent objective of estimating the annual harvest of sockeye salmon from Eek Lake is covered in a project proposal for the continuation of the Hetta Lake Subsistence Sockeye Salmon Assessment Project

Methods: Sockeye salmon escapement into Eek Lake will be estimated through use of a double redundant video lake net weir system. Two lake net weirs will be installed at the outlet creek at Eek Lake each season and an underwater video camera system will record returning sockeye salmon from mid-June through mid-August. The field crew will review video footage to count all species of fish that pass through the system. Approximately 600 fish will be captured in a floating trap attached the lower net weir, and will be sampled for age, sex and length data. Fish will be measured and sexed on site. Scales will be removed and sent to Alaska Department of Fish and Game to be read to determine age. Weekly in-season reports for weir counts will be shared with federal and state agencies. Annual reports will be

produced after each field season, and a final report including all four seasons will be produced at the end of the project.

Partnership/Capacity Building: HCA has been building their capacity to manage and operate a fisheries program under the Fisheries Resource Management Program since 2001. They have successfully become the Principal investigator on the Hetta Lake Subsistence Sockeye Assessment project, starting in 2010. The success of the program has led to other fisheries projects important to understanding and managing subsistence resources on behalf of the Hydaburg community. This proposed project will produce significant cost savings by using field equipment already owned by HCA, but using the Hetta Lake project's contracted biologist, and by having the Hetta Lake crew available and close to lend logistical support. HCA's ability to operate this proposed project relies on the partnering support of the U.S. Forest Service, who will assist in modifying a double redundant video lake net weir system design for Eek Lake, who will assist in training a new fish crew on these new methods, and who will give technical assistance in season as needed. In addition, ADFG will continue to support the project by providing scale reading services and working with HCA on habitat and fish handling permits.

Project Number: 16-605
Title: Stikine River Eulachon Stock Assessment
Geographic Region: Southeast Alaska
Data Type: Stock Status and Trends
Principal Investigator: Martin Hutten, Fish, Wildlife, Ecology, Soils & Subsistence Staff Officer
 USDA Forest Service, Wrangell Ranger District
Co-Investigator(s): Dennis Reed, Fish Biologist USDA Forest Service, Wrangell Ranger District
 Ben Van Alen, Fish Biologist USDA Forest Service, Juneau Ranger District
 Robert Larson, Fish Biologist USDA Forest Service, Petersburg Ranger District

Project Cost:	2016: \$47,000	2017: \$41,000	2018: \$41,000	2019: \$41,000
Total Cost: \$170,000				

Issue: The Stikine River is the largest mainland river bisecting the Coast Mountains that link Southeast Alaska to the interior of Canada. The Stikine is of international importance for resident and migratory wildlife and fish but little is known, and less is written, about the annual distribution, timing, and relative abundance of the eulachon run to the Stikine River (Willson et al. 2006). This project will provide monitoring of eulachon and eulachon predators in the lower Stikine River area using time-lapse video from underwater and above water cameras and aerial surveys. This baseline information is needed to better understand when and where eulachon are present, annual abundance trends, and the status of this stock. This information is needed to better provide for the continuation of subsistence take by Federally qualified subsistence users. Monitoring the health of Stikine eulachon is particularly important since the Unuk River eulachon stock declined below fishable levels in the early 2000s as has other eulachon stocks in British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and California area.

Objectives: Estimate the timing (1), distribution (2), and relative abundance (3) of eulachon spawning in the lower Stikine.

Methods: Fixed wing flights will be flown on or near specific dates, on a specific route, to visually and photographically document the distribution and relative abundance of eulachon and eulachon predators in the lower Stikine River area during the mid-March to mid-May spawning period. The abundance and distribution of eagles, gulls, terns, mergansers, seals, and sea lions preying on eulachon are visible indicator of the eulachon that are difficult or impossible to see in the silty and glacially occluded waters of the lower Stikine River. Where possible, observers will record presence/absence of eulachon, and, if present, abundance (some, few, moderate, or lots). Along with these qualitative measures, observers will map eulachon observations, record observed predators such as birds and mammals and record survey conditions. These observations will be maintained in a database that is easily shared.

Time lapse cameras and video cameras with microphones will be used to monitor the timing and relative abundance of eulachon and birds and marine mammals targeting eulachon in the area. Underwater time-

lapse cameras will be deployed in locations where there are plumes of clear water flowing from side channel tributaries into the Stikine River.

Project personnel will seek to remotely monitor the project site(s) using IP cameras and a wireless bridge link to the web (see Van Alen and Musslewhite 2014). In-camera and in-app time-lapse and motion triggered sending of images is possible. Recorded video and pictures will be archived for future analysis and run documentation. Data loggers will be deployed in a mid-intertidal area to get hourly readings of the water and air temperatures and river/tide depth. Project personnel will look at relationships between eulachon timing, water/air temperatures, tide stage, and river flows.

Partnerships/Capacity Building: With the decline of nearly all eulachon runs south of the Stikine River, the proposed project directly addresses local concerns regarding the fate and stability of the Stikine River eulachon run and its associated local subsistence fishery. The Stikine River at nearly 400 miles long and 16 mile wide delta is the life blood of the Wrangell Community and is used for recreation and subsistence. It was also an ancient trading route used by Alaskan Natives, in Tlingit translation of the Stikine is “Great River”. Wrangell Ranger District biologists, interpreters and hydrologist are actively engaged with the local community through several activities that occur on the Stikine River. This project would provide a variety of new technologies and opportunities that would be well suited for community and scholastic participation. The District has 8 recreation cabins located throughout the river delta that can be used to accommodate volunteers and students involved with this project. Wrangell is also home to the annual Stikine River Birding festival which coincides with the eulachon run and shorebird migration and with this project would provide several new elements that would further enrich this community event.

Project Number: 16-606
Project Title: Sarkar Creek Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment
Geographic Area: Southeast Alaska
Principal Investigator: Stefanie Thomas-Fox, Craig Tribal Association (CTA), Craig
Co-Investigators: Jeff Reeves, USFS Craig Ranger District Subsistence Fisheries Biologist, Craig
 Ben Van Alen, USFS Juneau Ranger District Fisheries Biologist, Juneau

Project Cost:	2016: \$139,341	2017: \$72,334	2018: \$72,334	2019: \$72,334
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Total Cost: \$356,343

Issue: Sockeye salmon (*Oncorhynchus nerka*) comprise the most important subsistence fishery resource for rural residents in the Southeast Alaska region. The Sarkar Lake system on Prince of Wales Island (PWI) has supported extensive customary and traditional use and subsistence harvests by Alaska residents. This proposed project addresses a critical Southeast Alaska subsistence fishery concern that has been repeatedly identified as a monitoring need by the Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council and the Southeast Alaska Fisheries Information Service Strategic Plan. Both the USFS and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game also consider the management of the Sarkar Lake sockeye salmon population to be a key subsistence issue for Prince of Wales Island due to the early run timing and uniqueness of this sockeye population.

Objectives:

1. Estimate the annual escapement of sockeye salmon into the upper Sarkar Lake system with a pair of video net weirs.
2. Estimate the proportion of age 2 sockeye salmon escaping into the Sarkar Lake system with a precision of +/- 10%, 90% of the time.

Methods:

1. Estimate the annual escapement of sockeye salmon into Sarkar Lake using a video weir system from May 1 through August 31.
2. Estimate the age, sex, and length composition of age 2 sockeye salmon into Sarkar Lake with a precision of +/- 10%, 90% of the time.

Products: Results of the study will be available as annual progress and final reports submitted to FIS-OSM and as formal presentations provided at SERAC, Federal/State agency, and professional society meetings.

Investigators Ability and Resources: Stefanie Thomas-Fox will be the Fisheries Coordinator with CTA. Ms. Thomas-Fox’s responsibilities include hiring and supervision of the project’s crew leader and technicians, acquisition and management of all field research equipment, coordination with USFS staff, development of the study design and operation plan, on-site technical assistance to tribal and state/federal agency staff, data analysis/interpretation, and editing/delivery of progress and final reports. Ms. Anna Guthrie, CTA Tribal Administrator, will provide contract, financial, field crew hiring, and other

administration services for the project. Co-Investigator USFS Subsistence Fisheries Biologist Jeff Reeves will help with project administration, project logistics, writing and editing of progress and final reports. Ben Van Alen, USFS Fisheries Biologist will help with logistics and the technical aspect of the overall project.

Partnership and Capacity Building: This proposed project has substantial capacity development aspects associated with it. The USFS staff guidance and expertise will be match while CTA will be provided funds to compensate the lead field fisheries biologist and hire the field technicians needed for this study; local hiring priority will be given to qualified personnel from the PWI Native organizations and Island's rural communities to fill these positions. This proposal represents the results of extensive interagency cooperation between fisheries and subsistence program personnel from the CTA and the USFS. Sharing of data among all of the agencies involved in this subsistence fishery will provide better information to improve management of Sarkar Creek sockeye salmon for all users.

APPENDIX B

Table B. 1. Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program projects funded in the Southeast Region from 2000 to 2014.

Project Number	Project Title	Investigators
<i>Estimation of Sockeye Salmon Escapement</i>		
00-043	Klawock Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	ADF&G, KCA
00-044	Falls Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	ADF&G, OVK
00-045	SE Tribes Traditional Subsistence Territory Mapping	USFS
01-125	Gut Bay, Kook, and Hoktaheen L Sockeye Salmon Escapement Index	ADF&G, OVK
01-126	Kanalku, Hasselborg and Sitkoh Lakes Sockeye Stock Assessement	ADF&G
01-127	Thoms, Salmon Bay, Luck Lakes Sockeye Salmon Esc Index	ADF&G, WCA
01-128	Klag Bay Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	ADF&G, STA, USFS
01-130	Hetta Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	ADF&G, HCA
01-175	Salmon Lake Sockeye and Coho Salmon Stock Assessment	ADF&G, STA, NSRAA, USFS
01-179	Virginia Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	USFS
02-012	Neva and Pavlof Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	USFS, HIA
02-017	Redfish Bay Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	STA, ADF&G, USFS
03-007	Eek Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	HCA, ADF&G
04-604	Klawock Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	ADF&G, KCA
04-605	Kanalku, Sitkoh Lakes Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	ADF&G, ACA
04-606	Hetta Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	ADF&G, HCA
04-607	Falls, Gut, Kutlaku Subsistence Sockeye Stock Assessment	AD&F&G, OVK
04-608	Salmon Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	STA
04-609	Klag Bay Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	STA, ADF&G, USFS
05-601	Kook Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	ADF&G, ACA, USFS
05-603	Klawock Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	ADF&G, USFS
06-601	Neva Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	USFS
06-602	Kutlaku Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	ADF&G, OVK
07-601	Hatchery Creek Sockeye Salmon Assessment	OVK, USFS
07-604	Klag Bay Sockeye Salmon Assessment	STA
07-606	Hetta Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	ADFG
07-607	Kanalku Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	ADF&G, ACA
07-608	Klawock Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	ADF&G, KCA
07-609	Falls Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	ADF&G, OVK
08-600	Karta River Sockeye Salmon Assessment	OVKa, ADF&G, USFS, BIA
10-600 ^a	Karta River Sockeye Salmon Assessment	OVKa, BIA, USFS, ADF&G
10-601	Hatchery Creek Sockeye Salmon Assessment	USFS, OVKa, BIA
10-603 ^a	Yakutat Eulachon Surveys	USFS, YSB, ADF&G
10-604 ^a	Klag Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	STA, USFS
10-605	Sitkoh Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	USFS, ACA, ADF&G,

Continued on next page

Table B.1 continued

Project Number	Project Title	Investigators
Estimation of Sockeye Salmon Escapement		
10-606 ^a	Hetta Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	HCA, KECS
10-607 ^a	Kanalku Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	ADF&G, ACA
10-609	Falls Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	USFS, OVK
10-610	Kook Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	USFS, ACA
10-611	Redoubt Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	USFS, ADF&G,
10-612	Neva Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	USFS, HIA
14-601 ^b	Redoubt Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	USFS, ADF&G
14-602 ^b	Falls Lake Subsistence Sockeye Salmon Stock and Harvest Assessment	USFS, OVK
14-603 ^b	Hetta Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	HCA, KECS
14-605 ^b	Hatchery Creek Sockeye Salmon Assessment	USFS, OVKa
14-606 ^b	Klawock Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	USFS, KCA, POWHA
14-608 ^b	Kanalku L Subsistence Sockeye Salmon Assessment	ADF&G, ACA, USFWS
14-609 ^b	Klag Lake Sockeye Salmon Assessment	STA
14-610 ^b	Kook Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	USFS, ACA
14-611 ^b	Sitkoh Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	USFS, ACA
14-612 ^b	Neva Lake Sockeye Salmon Stock Assessment	USFS, HIA
Documentation of Subsistence Use Patterns for Salmon		
00-015	SE Alaska Subsistence Fisheries Database Development	ADF&G
00-045	SE Tribes Traditional Subsistence Territory Mapping	USFS, OVK, ACA, HIA
01-091	East Alsek River Salmon Historical Use and TEK	YTT
01-103	SE Subsistence Fisheries GIS Database	ADF&G
01-104	Kake Sockeye Salmon Subsistence Harvest Use Pattern	ADF&G, OVK
01-105	Klawock River and Sarkar L Sockeye Salmon Harvest Use Patterns	ADF&G, KCA
02-038	SE Subsistence Fisheries GIS Database Development	ADF&G, CCTHITA, TST
02-049	Wrangell Salmon Subsistence Harvest Use Pattern	ADF&G, WCA, USFS
02-104	Hoonah and Klawock Salmon Survey	ADF&G, CCTHITA, TST
03-651	Klawock River Subsistence Steelhead Harvest and Use Pattern	ADF&G,
04-651	SE Alaska Salmon TEK and Subsistence Monitoring	STA, ADF&G,
04-652 ^a	Subsistence TEK Database	ADF&G, STA
06-651	Southeast Alaska Survey of Customary Trade in Seafood a	CCTHITA
07-651	Hydaburg Sockeye Salmon Customary and Traditional System	HCA, UAA
08-651	Maknahti Island Subsistence Herring Fishery Assessment	STA, PSU
Prince of Wales Island Steelhead		
01-105	POW Island Steelhead/Rainbow Trout Harvest Use Pattern	ADF&G,
05-604	Prince of Wales Steelhead Assessment	ADF&G, OVKa
08-650	POW Island Steelhead Trout Subsistence Harvest Survey	OVKa, HCA, BIA, USFWS

Continued on next page

Table B.1 continued

Project Number	Project Title	Investigators
Estimation of Non-salmon Species		
07-610	Behm Canal Eulachon Genetics	USFWS
08-607	Unuk River Eulachon Assessment	USFS
14-607 ^b	Unuk River Eulachon	USFS

^a = Final report in preparation

^b = Ongoing project during 2016

Abbreviations used are: **ACA** = Angoon Community Association, **ADF&G** = Alaska Department of Fish and Game, **BIA** = Bureau of Indian Affairs, **CCTHITA** = Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, **HCA** = Hydaburg Cooperative Association, **HIA** = Hoonah Indian Association, **KCA** = Klawock Cooperative Association, **KECS** = Kai Environmental Consulting Services, **NSRAA** = Northern Southeast Aquaculture Association, **OVK** = Organized Village of Kake, **OVKa** = Organized Village of Kasaan, **POWHA** = Prince of Wales Hatchery Association, **PSU** = Portland State University, **STA** = Sitka Tribe of Alaska, **TST** = Third Sector Technologies, **UAA** = University of Alaska Anchorage, **USFS** = USDA Forest Service, **USFWS** = USDOI Fish and Wildlife Service, **WCA** = Wrangell Cooperative Association, **YSB** = Yakutat Salmon Board, and **YTT** = Yakutat Tlingit Tribe.

ANNUAL REPORTS

Background

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

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

Report Content

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

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

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

Report Clarity

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

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

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

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

Report Format

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

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



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve
Mile 106.8 Richardson Hwy. P.O. Box 439
Copper Center, AK 99573-0439
907 822 5234 Fax 907 822 3281
<http://www.nps.gov/wrst>



FALL 2015 REPORT TO THE SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Prepared by Barbara Cellarius (barbara_cellarius@nps.gov)

August 13, 2015

Marine Debris Clean-up on the Malaspina Forelands

During a 10-day stretch in June 2015, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve partnered with the Yakutat Tlingit Tribe, the Alaska SeaLife Center, Gulf of Alaska Keeper, and Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve to remove marine debris from the Malaspina Forelands. This was the first time that this area of the park – which is only accessible via plane or boat – has been accessed for such a clean-up. This project was part of a larger effort across Alaska to clean-up marine debris. With the help of our Youth Conservation Corps crew, Yakutat youth hired by the tribe with funding through the Public Lands Corps, and other park staff and partners, we collected more than 3 tons of debris. Some of the debris originated in Japan and the Far East, but there was also debris from closer to Alaska, including a buoy from a fisherman's net in Washington State. All of this debris was placed in garbage bags and later into "Super Sacks," which each hold about 12-17 garbage bags. Later in the summer, the debris was transferred by helicopter to a barge stationed off the coast, and it -- along with debris from other marine clean-up projects in Alaska -- was barged to Lower 48 for disposal. (For more information, contact Miranda Terwilliger, Ecologist, at 822-7232 or miranda_terwilliger@nps.gov.)

Harbor Seals Study to Begin in 2016

A study was initiated in 2000 by NOAA's National Marine Mammal Laboratory (NMML) in response to concerns by the Yakutat Tlingit Tribe over perceived reductions in abundances of harbor seals available during tradition hunts. Recently published results of that study demonstrated that (a) 85% of ships flushed seals from their ice haul outs; (b) seals flushed at distances as great as 500 meters, with more than 90% being flushed by the time the ships approached to within 100 meters; (c) a single ship can flush up to 16% of all seals present, and that up to 5 ships may visit on a given day; and (d) seals redistributed within the bay in response to ships. NOAA's Office of Protected Resources endorsed follow-up studies to better understand the effects of these disturbance events on the seal population.

Funding has been obtained for a 3-year follow-up study to begin in 2016. Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve will partner with biologists, Scott Gende and Jamie Womble, from Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, and John Jansen and Dr. Peter Boveng of the NMML to conduct the study. The objective of this study is to quantify the time-activity budgets (or more specifically the percent of time that seals spend in the water) of harbor seals as a function of cruise ship disturbance. Seals will be captured in two areas of the park's coast with contrasting levels of cruise ship traffic: Disenchantment Bay (about 130-150 cruise ships entering annually) and in nearby Icy Bay (no large cruise ships) over 2 years. Time-activity budgets of seals will be determined by attaching satellite-linked transmitters to a sample of seals in Disenchantment Bay and in Icy Bay. (For more information, contact Scott Gende, Senior Science Advisor, Glacier Bay Field Station at (907) 364-2622 or scott_gende@nps.gov.)

Yakutat Tlingit Ethnographic Overview and Assessment

The goal of the Yakutat Tlingit Ethnographic Overview and Assessment is to provide a broad synthesis of Yakutat Tlingit and Eyak cultural history, traditional territory, socio-political organization and cultural change over the last 100 years in the northern Gulf of Alaska, with particular emphasis on the relationship between the communities and lands within Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. Although a few new interviews were conducted for this project in order to fill data gaps, this report is primarily a literature review based on ethnographic literature and other previously collected material. The project was conducted by researchers from Portland State University in cooperation with NPS staff. The collected information will help to inform park management decisions, identify places and resources of particular importance to peoples traditionally associated with the southern flank of Wrangell-St. Elias, orient new park staff to the cultural context of the park, and provide interpretive materials for the park's use. The project was recently completed, and copies of the final report and associated annotated bibliography are available upon request. (For more information, contact Barbara Cellarius, Cultural Anthropologist, (907) 822-7236 or barbara_cellarius@nps.gov.)

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission

The Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission (WRST SRC) provides a venue for local subsistence users to have input into the management of subsistence resources in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. Since the establishment of the Federal subsistence program in 1990, the nine-member commission has also been making recommendations on proposals affecting the park directly to Regional Advisory Councils and the Federal Subsistence Board. At its spring 2013 meeting, the SRC elected Karen Linnell of Kenny Lake as its new chair, and she continues to hold that position.

Federal Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) appoint three members to the SRC. These members provide an important link between the SRC and the Federal Subsistence Board. According to ANILCA Section 808(a), RAC appointees to the SRC must be a member of either the regional advisory council or a local advisory committee within the region and also engage in subsistence uses within the park.

The Regional Advisory Councils who address issues in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve include the Southcentral RAC, the Eastern Interior RAC, and the Southeast RAC. The Southeast RAC position is currently vacant. Gloria Stickwan is the Southcentral RAC appointee to the WRST SRC. Her term expires in November 2017. Sue Entsminger is the Eastern Interior RAC appointee to the WRST SRC. Her term expires in November 2015.

In addition to the RAC appointments, three members of the SRC are appointed by the Governor of Alaska and three members are appointed by the Secretary of the Interior.

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

Wrangell-St. Elias SRC meeting at the Buster Gene Memorial Facility in Gakona, AK, February 2015.



Backcountry and Wilderness Stewardship Plan

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Public involvement information • Summer 2015



Purpose of the plan

This Backcountry and Wilderness Stewardship Plan is being developed to guide the preservation, management, and use of the largest designated wilderness in the National Wilderness Preservation System into the future. The purpose of this plan is to preserve the area's backcountry and wilderness character while allowing for exceptions provided under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA).

Need for the plan

Since the park and preserve were established in 1980 and the original General Management Plan completed in 1986, much has changed. The General Management Plan is now outdated and does not adequately address the protection and stewardship of backcountry and wilderness. There is a need to develop the plan to accomplish the following:

- Identify actions that will enable us to continue to provide an outstanding visitor experience in the face of increasing backcountry and wilderness use in some areas.
- Provide consistent guidance for dealing with difficult backcountry and wilderness issues such as cabin and airstrip management and appropriate levels of commercial use.

Scope of the plan

This plan will identify desired future conditions for the backcountry and wilderness, provide management actions that work towards desired conditions, identify management tools to address recreational and commercial uses, and provide for customary and traditional subsistence activities. This plan is not a wilderness eligibility assessment and will not evaluate additional lands to be recommended or designated as wilderness.

9.4 million acres of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve is managed as "wilderness" under the Wilderness Act of 1964 and as provided under ANILCA. As a congressionally designated wilderness area, the Wrangell-St. Elias Wilderness is managed to preserve its wilderness character and maintains some restrictions over what uses can, and cannot, occur there. Uses provided for under ANILCA include provisions relating to subsistence use, cabins and other structures, certain means of motorized access, among others. More information on the Wilderness Act and ANILCA can be found at: <http://nps.gov/wrst/>

Anticipated management challenges

The management framework of Wrangell-St. Elias is complex. As a result, this plan will address a number of issues with the goal of providing long-term guidance to preserve backcountry and wilderness resources and character while providing for uses allowed under ANILCA. A few of the management challenges that have already been identified and will be addressed within this plan are:

- Visitor use and impacts
- Motorized use (including snowmachines and off-road vehicles)
- Cabin management
- Airstrip management and maintenance
- Commercial use and services
- Cumulative effects of use

One of the purposes of public scoping is to identify additional issues and challenges the park can address in this plan. We invite you to share your thoughts about these issues or other topics that you feel should be considered as part of this planning effort.

Share your thoughts

Public scoping for the Backcountry and Wilderness Stewardship Plan will extend through November 2015. This is an ideal time for you to share your thoughts, concerns, and vision for the future of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve's wilderness and backcountry areas. Your input will help guide the planning team in developing the Backcountry and Wilderness Stewardship Plan, including the consideration of various alternatives for managing the park's backcountry and wilderness into the future. Additional opportunities for public input will be announced as the planning process progresses. We look forward to hearing from you.

Questions to consider

1. When you visit the Wrangell-St. Elias backcountry and wilderness, what activities and experiences are most important to you?
2. What factors have influenced your backcountry and wilderness experience here?
3. What issues in the Wrangell-St. Elias backcountry and wilderness are concerning to you, and what do you see as possible avenues to resolve them?
4. What do you value about this backcountry and wilderness?
5. Imagine you are visiting the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve backcountry and wilderness area 20 years from now. What conditions, experiences, visitor services, and facilities would you like to see?

How to comment

Comment online at:
<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=44299>

Mail comments to:
Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve
ATTN: Bruce Rogers
P.O. Box 439
Copper Center, AK 99573

Call us at: (907) 822-7213 or (907) 822-7240

Office of Subsistence Management

Fall 2015 Regional Advisory Council Report

Staffing Update

Robbin La Vine joined the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) in October 2014. She is an anthropologist with extensive experience conducting subsistence research and building collaborative partnerships with Alaska Tribal, State, and Federal entities since 2002. Before joining OSM, she worked as a researcher for the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge, served as Social Scientist for the Bristol Bay Native Association Partners Program in Dillingham, and was a Subsistence Resource Specialist for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence. Robbin is delighted to serve rural Alaskans while strengthening partnerships to ensure the continuation of the subsistence way of life.

Amee Howard joined OSM as the new Subsistence Policy Coordinator in July 2015. Prior to OSM, she worked as an Environmental Protection Specialist for the Pacific West Region of the National Park Service in Boulder City, Nevada. Previously, she worked for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries, as a Fish and Game Program Technician in Sitka. Ameen also spent time working as the Coastal Monitoring Coordinator for the Sitka Tribe of Alaska. She earned her Bachelors of Science in Natural Sciences, with minors in Environmental Studies and Geology, from the University of Alaska, Anchorage. Ameen possesses a well-rounded background gained from previous work experience and is a valuable addition to the OSM team.

Efforts are currently underway to hire the following positions: Council Coordinator, Anthropologist, Anthropologist (Pathways), Fisheries Biometrician, Fisheries Biologist (2), Fisheries (Pathways) Grants Management Specialist, IT Specialist, and Administrative Assistant.

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council adopts measures to reduce Chinook Salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea Pollock fishery

At its April 2015 meeting in Anchorage, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) took action to reduce bycatch of both Chinook and Chum Salmon in the Bering Sea commercial Pollock fishery. Recognizing the precarious state of Western Alaska's Chinook Salmon stocks, the NPFMC took a combination of actions which lower the caps in times of low abundance, combine Chinook and Chum Salmon bycatch management, place additional requirements on industry incentive plans and reapportion the Pollock catch between seasons. Taken together, these actions are anticipated to reduce bycatch of both Chinook and Chum Salmon, and ensure that additional measures, including lower caps, are in place in years of low Chinook Salmon abundance.

Much of the attention from stakeholders from both Western Alaska and the Pollock fishery focused on the option of lowering the Chinook Salmon bycatch hard cap and the performance standard, currently 60,000 and 47,591 fish, respectively. Western Alaskan stakeholders asked for a 60% reduction in both the hard cap and performance standard during testimony at the meeting and in several hundred letters and resolutions submitted prior to the meeting. The

Pollock industry advocated that no reductions be enacted. The State of Alaska led the effort to provide protections for Western Alaska Salmon stocks. Newly-appointed Alaska Department of Fish and Game Commissioner Sam Cotten introduced a motion calling for a 35% reduction in the performance standard and a 33% reduction in the hard cap. Commissioner Cotten's motion was amended by the Bill Tweit, NPFMC representative from Washington State, to a 25% reduction in the hard cap and a 30% reduction in the performance standard. This lesser reduction was passed by the NPFMC unanimously (10-0).

The results of the NPFMC action are as follows: In years of low Chinook Salmon abundance (defined as years in which the cumulative total Chinook Salmon runs of the Kuskokwim, Upper Yukon and Unalakleet Rivers is at or below 250,000 fish), the hard cap will be 45,000 and the performance standard will be 33,318 Chinook Salmon. The Pollock fishery manages to the performance standard, so the reduction in this number is important. The Council also made it very clear that they expect bycatch to remain well below the caps, and would take additional action if warranted. It should be noted that, in recent years, bycatch has averaged around 15,000 Chinook Salmon.

In addition to the reductions in the cap levels, the NPFMC's action contains several other, important measures. The other pieces of the motion apply in all years – not just when Salmon abundance is low. Alternative 2 combines Chinook and Chum Salmon bycatch management programs, ensuring a coordinated approach. It also requires information sharing with Western Alaska groups. Alternative 3 adds five new requirements for the industry Incentive Plan Agreements (IPA) to meet, including requiring Salmon excluders, restrictions on bycatch rates in October (a time of historically high bycatch) and significant penalties (no fishing) for boats with repeatedly bad bycatch performance. The options the Council selected under Alternative 4 provide the Pollock fishery with the flexibility to catch more of its harvest in the late A season, potentially shifting harvest effort away from the high bycatch times later in the year.

In summary, the NPFMC's action puts in place measures to further reduce bycatch in all times of abundance, and to ensure that in periods of low Chinook Salmon abundance the Pollock fishery would be limited to a lower level of bycatch.

Bridging the Gap between Native Communities, Conservation, and Natural Resource Management: Grant Update

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP) were awarded a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant to help re-establish a lost connection between Federal resource managers and rural communities in the Yukon-Kuskokwim and Doyon Regions. Members of these communities rely on subsistence resources within six National Wildlife Refuges for both cultural and nutritional needs. Continued resource declines in both the Yukon and Kuskokwim River drainages have led to immense hardships for local residents as well as numerous challenges for resource managers to provide sufficient subsistence harvest opportunities, while ensuring adequate conservation efforts.

Funds from this grant are used to increase outreach opportunities and foster collaborative solutions by expanding the Refuge Information Technician (RIT) Program. Outreach and education contribute significantly to the overall success of resource management. Language barriers and cultural obstacles often stand in the way of achieving effective communication. The RIT program employs Alaska Native residents to serve as liaisons between the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge and local communities. The RITs' regional experience, traditional ecological knowledge, Yup'ik language skills, and cultural sensitivity enhance their role as intermediaries. Expanding the capabilities of the RIT program will significantly increase and improve important connections between the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge and local communities. These relationships are fundamental for local residents to become more involved in the management and conservation of the resources on which they depend.

Funds from this grant are also supporting ANSEP students participating in biological internships within the Yukon-Kuskokwim and Doyon Regions. ANSEP strives to increase the number of Alaska Natives employed in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) by increasing the number of individuals on a career path to leadership in STEM fields. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is partnering with ANSEP to provide meaningful summer internships that expose students to careers in resources management. These internships provide an opportunity for students to experience resource monitoring and management while developing knowledge and skills allowing them to succeed in professional resource management positions.

Changes to Council Member Appointment Process

The Office of Subsistence Management has submitted requests to the Secretary of the Interior to make the following changes to the Council member appointment process: shift from 3-year to 4-year appointment terms, allow for appointment of alternates, and provide for a 120-day carryover term for incumbents in the event that appointment letters are not timely issued. Dan Ashe, Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, has provided his support of these changes. As of the writing of this report, OSM is waiting to hear back from the Secretary's office to initiate the direct final rule making that would be necessary to change the appointment terms to 4 years. The new Senior Advisor for Alaska Affairs, Michael Johnson, will be assisting in moving this through the Secretary's office. OSM is moving ahead with plans to implement all changes for the current appointment cycle.

In order to switch from 3-year to 4-year appointment terms, as well as switch from having one-third of Council seats up for appointment each year to one-fourth of the seats being up for appointment, appointment terms will be staggered in order to complete the transition by the 2019 appointment cycle. This means that some Council members, even incumbents, may receive 2, 3 or 4-year appointments in the next few years. By 2019, however, all Council appointments will be for 4-year terms. If you have any questions, contact Carl Johnson, Council Coordination Division Chief, at (907) 786-3676 or carl_johnson@fws.gov.

All-Council Meeting
Anchorage, Alaska – Egan Center
March 7-11, 2016

Meeting Committee: RAC Chairs, Council Coordinators, Orville Lind (Native Liaison), Deborah Coble (Subsistence Outreach Specialist)

Joint Session

Monday, March 7, 2015

Invocation

Keynote Speaker:

Joint Agenda Items: Common issues from annual reports (i.e., bycatch, budget, other agency actions that impact subsistence, food security, climate change)

Concurrent Sessions

One full day for each of the Councils to address their regional issues

Tuesday – three Councils

Wednesday – three Councils

Thursday – three Councils

Friday – one Council

Training

Sessions repeat throughout the week to allow all Council members opportunity to attend.

- Title VIII of ANILCA
- Robert's Rules of Order
- Federal Indian Law (with ANCSA implications)
- Cross-Cultural communication
- C&T versus 804
- Regulatory Process (State and Federal)

Reports and Panels

- Western Arctic Caribou Herd
- Yukon River salmon
- Kuskokwim River salmon
- Public Processes for Fish & Wildlife Management (RAC, SRC, AC, AMBCC)
- Holistic management – discussion and explanation of how agencies manage resources (BLM, USFWS, NPS, USFS)
- Tribal Consultation
- Different Federal Subsistence Programs (Migratory Birds, Marine Mammals, Halibut)
- Understanding Dual Management

Important to note: this one meeting will encompass the entire meeting cycle for winter 2016

JOINT FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCILS

Egan Center
Anchorage, Alaska
March 7, 2016
8:30 a.m.

TELECONFERENCE: call the toll free number: 1-866-[number], then when prompted enter the passcode: [number]

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Public comments are welcome for each agenda item and for regional concerns not included on the agenda. The Council appreciates hearing your concerns and knowledge. Please fill out a comment form to be recognized by the Council chair. Time limits may be set to provide opportunity for all to testify and keep the meeting on schedule.

PLEASE NOTE: These are estimated times and the agenda is subject to change. Contact staff for the current schedule. Evening sessions are at the call of the chair.

AGENDA

*Asterisk identifies action item.

- 1. **Invocation**
- 2. **Keynote Address**
- 3. **Roll Call and Establish Quorum** *(Council Coordination Division Chief)*.....
- 4. **Call to Order** *(Chair)*
- 5. **Welcome and Introductions** *(Chair)*
- 6. **Review and Adopt Agenda*** *(Chair)*
- 7. **Regional Reports**
- 8. **Business** *(Chair)*
 - a. Climate Change
 - b. Food Security
 - c. Federal Subsistence Budget.....
 - d. Revisions to FRMP
 - e. Hunter Education.....
 - f. Youth Engagement.....
- 9. **Agency Reports**

- a. **NPFMC** – Pollock Bycatch Update.....
- b. Status on Magnuson-Stevens Act Renewal.....
- c. Fisheries Management Overview
- d. **OSM** – Processes

Closing Comments

10. Adjourn (*Chair*)

To teleconference into the meeting, call the toll free number: 1-866-[number], then when prompted enter the passcode: [number]

Reasonable Accommodations

The Federal Subsistence Board is committed to providing access to this meeting for all participants. Please direct all requests for sign language interpreting services, closed captioning, or other accommodation needs to [name], 907-786-XXXX, [email], or 800-877-8339 (TTY), by close of business on [date].



All-Council Meeting Schedule

	Monday 3/7	Tuesday 3/8	Wednesday 3/9	Thursday 3/10	Friday 3/11
Main Room	<u>All day</u> Joint Session of the Councils	<u>Morning</u> Training: Title VIII of ANILCA <u>Afternoon</u> Training: Cross-cultural communication	<u>Morning</u> Training: Regulatory Process <u>Afternoon:</u> Training: Federal Indian Law	<u>Morning</u> Report: Yukon River Salmon <u>Afternoon</u> Panel: Tribal Consultation	<u>Morning</u> Training: Robert's Rules of Order <u>Afternoon</u> Panel: Understanding Dual Management
Small Room 1	All day RAC 1 – Concurrent Session YKDRAC	All day RAC 4 – Concurrent Session EIRAC	All day RAC 7 – Concurrent Session SEFRAC	All day RAC 10 – Concurrent Session KARAC	All day RAC 10 – Concurrent Session KARAC
Small Room 2	All day RAC 2 – Concurrent Session WIRAC	All day RAC 5 – Concurrent Session SCRAC	All day RAC 8 – Concurrent Session BBRAC	<u>Morning</u> RAC 8 – Concurrent Session BBRAC	<u>Morning</u> RAC 8 – Concurrent Session BBRAC
Small Room 3	All day RAC 3 – Concurrent Session SPRAC	All day RAC 6 – Concurrent Session NWARAC	All day RAC 9 – Concurrent Session NSRAC	All day RAC 9 – Concurrent Session NSRAC	All day SERAC Day 2 (if needed)
Small Room 4	<u>Morning</u> Training: Robert's Rules of Order <u>Afternoon</u> Panel: Public Processes for Fish & Wildlife Management	<u>Morning</u> Training: C&T versus Section 804 <u>Afternoon</u> Training: Cross-Cultural Communication	<u>Morning</u> Panel: Understanding Dual Management <u>Afternoon</u> Training: C&T versus Section 804	<u>Morning</u> Panel: Understanding Dual Management <u>Afternoon</u> Training: C&T versus Section 804	<u>Morning</u> Training: C&T versus Section 804 <u>Afternoon</u> Panel: Public Processes for Fish & Wildlife Management
Small Room 5	<u>Morning</u> Panel: Holistic management	<u>Morning</u> Training: Title VIII of ANILCA <u>Afternoon</u> Panel: Public Processes for Fish & Wildlife Management	<u>Morning</u> Training: Title VIII of ANILCA <u>Afternoon</u> Panel: Public Processes for Fish & Wildlife Management	<u>Morning</u> Training: Cross-Cultural Communication <u>Afternoon</u> Panel: Holistic management	<u>Morning</u> Report: WACH <u>Afternoon</u> Training: Title VIII of ANILCA
Small Room 6	<u>Morning</u> Training: Regulatory Process <u>Afternoon</u> Panel: Different Federal Subsistence Programs	<u>Morning</u> Training: Robert's Rules of Order <u>Afternoon</u> Panel: Different Federal Subsistence Programs	<u>Morning</u> Training: Robert's Rules of Order <u>Afternoon</u> Panel: Different Federal Subsistence Programs	<u>Morning</u> Training: Federal Indian Law <u>Afternoon</u> Report: Kuskokwim Salmon	<u>Morning</u> Training: Regulatory Process <u>Afternoon</u> Panel: Different Federal Subsistence Programs

TRAINING	PANELS	REPORTS (ONCE EACH)
<p>Title VIII of ANILCA (x3) Provide an overview of Title VIII and key provisions that govern Federal subsistence management.</p>	<p>Public Process for Fish & Wildlife Management (AC, RAC, SRC, AMBCC) (x3) Panel consisting of one member of an AC, RAC, SRC and AMBCC to explain how each of their processes work and how public can participate.</p>	<p>Western Arctic Caribou Herd Report from State and Federal managers on status of herd and current management objectives and approaches.</p>
<p>Cross-Cultural Communication (x3) Training to help State and Federal staff improve communication with Alaska Natives.</p>	<p>Holistic Management (x2) Conceptual panel to discuss how fish and wildlife among various agencies can be managed in a more holistic way.</p>	<p>Yukon Salmon Report from State and Federal managers on status of salmon stocks and current management objectives and approaches.</p>
<p>Robert's Rules of Order (x3) Training to benefit RAC members in the conduct of their meetings under Robert's Rules.</p>	<p>Tribal Consultation (x2) Panel consisting of Native Liaisons from R7 and OSM and Tribal leaders to discuss current consultation process and how it should work. Emphasis on what consultation means from Tribal perspective.</p>	<p>Kuskokwim Salmon Report from State and Federal managers on status of salmon stocks and current management objectives and approaches.</p>
<p>Regulatory Process (x3) Explain the regulatory process under both State and Federal systems and provide information on how to submit proposals.</p>	<p>Different Federal Subsistence Programs (Halibut, Marine Mammals, Mig Birds, OSM) (x2) Panel consisting of representatives from the various Federal programs that regulate certain subsistence activities to discuss their jurisdiction, legal authority, and approach to management.</p>	
<p>Federal Indian Law (x2) Basic principles of Federal Indian law including how it is affected by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and related case law in State and Federal courts.</p>	<p>Understanding Dual Management (x2) State and Federal managers explain their jurisdictional role in managing fish and wildlife resources, how the two sometimes work together and sometimes separately.</p>	
<p>C&T versus Section 804 (x3) Provide instruction on how C&T determinations and Section 804 determinations are made, how applied, where they differ.</p>		

Winter 2016 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

March 2016 current as of 3/24/2015

Meeting dates and locations are subject to change.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Feb. 7</i>	<i>Feb. 8</i> <i>Window Opens</i>	<i>Feb. 9</i>	<i>Feb. 10</i>	<i>Feb. 11</i>	<i>Feb. 12</i>	<i>Feb. 13</i>
<i>Feb. 14</i>	PRESIDENT'S DAY HOLIDAY	<i>Feb. 16</i>	<i>Feb. 17</i>	<i>Feb. 18</i>	<i>Feb. 19</i>	<i>Feb. 20</i>
<i>Feb. 21</i>	<i>Feb. 22</i>	<i>Feb. 23</i>	<i>Feb. 24</i>	<i>Feb. 25</i>	<i>Feb. 26</i>	<i>Feb. 27</i>
<i>Feb. 28</i>	<i>Feb. 29</i>	<i>Mar. 1</i>	<i>Mar. 2</i>	<i>Mar. 3</i>	<i>Mar. 4</i>	<i>Mar. 5</i>
<i>Mar. 6</i>	<i>Mar. 7</i>	<i>Mar. 8</i>	<i>Mar. 9</i>	<i>Mar. 10</i>	<i>Mar. 11</i>	<i>Mar. 12</i>
	All Council Meeting - Anchorage					
<i>Mar. 13</i>	<i>Mar. 14</i>	<i>Mar. 15</i>	<i>Mar. 16</i>	<i>Mar. 17</i>	<i>Mar. 18</i> <i>Window Closes</i>	<i>Mar. 20</i>

Fall 2016 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

August–November 2016

Meeting dates and locations are subject to change.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Aug. 21</i>	<i>Aug. 22</i> WINDOW OPENS	<i>Aug. 23</i>	<i>Aug. 24</i>	<i>Aug. 25</i>	<i>Aug. 26</i>	<i>Aug. 27</i>
<i>Aug. 28</i>	<i>Aug. 29</i>	<i>Aug. 30</i>	<i>Aug. 31</i>	<i>Sept. 1</i>	<i>Sept. 2</i>	<i>Sept. 3</i>
<i>Sept. 4</i>	<i>Sept. 5</i> HOLIDAY	<i>Sept. 6</i>	<i>Sept. 7</i>	<i>Sept. 8</i>	<i>Sept. 9</i>	<i>Sept. 10</i>
<i>Sept. 11</i>	<i>Sept. 12</i>	<i>Sept. 13</i>	<i>Sept. 14</i>	<i>Sept. 15</i>	<i>Sept. 16</i>	<i>Sept. 17</i>
<i>Sept. 18</i>	<i>Sept. 19</i>	<i>Sept. 20</i>	<i>Sept. 21</i>	<i>Sept. 22</i>	<i>Sept. 23</i>	<i>Sept. 24</i>
<i>Sept. 25</i>	<i>Sept. 26</i>	<i>Sept. 27</i>	<i>Sept. 28</i>	<i>Sept. 29</i>	<i>Sept. 30</i>	<i>Oct. 1</i>
<i>Oct. 2</i>	<i>Oct. 3</i>	<i>Oct. 4</i>	<i>Oct. 5</i>	<i>Oct. 6</i>	<i>Oct. 7</i>	<i>Oct. 8</i>
<i>Oct. 9</i>	<i>Oct. 10</i>	<i>Oct. 11</i>	<i>Oct. 12</i>	<i>Oct. 13</i>	<i>Oct. 14</i>	<i>Oct. 15</i>
<i>Oct. 16</i>	<i>Oct. 17</i>	<i>Oct. 18</i>	<i>Oct. 19</i>	<i>Oct. 20</i>	<i>Oct. 21</i>	<i>Oct. 22</i>
<i>Oct. 23</i>	<i>Oct. 24</i>	<i>Oct. 25</i>	<i>Oct. 26</i>	<i>Oct. 27</i>	<i>Oct. 28</i>	<i>Oct. 29</i>
<i>Oct. 30</i>	<i>Oct. 31</i>	<i>Nov. 1</i>	<i>Nov. 2</i>	<i>Nov. 3</i>	<i>Nov. 4</i> WINDOW CLOSSES	<i>Nov. 5</i>

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

Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Charter

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

- (3) A recommended strategy for the management of fish and wildlife populations within the Region to accommodate such subsistence uses and needs.
 - (4) Recommendations concerning policies, standards, guidelines, and regulations to implement the strategy.
- e. Appoint one member to the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission in accordance with Section 808 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA).
 - f. Make recommendations on determinations of customary and traditional use of subsistence resources.
 - g. Make recommendations on determinations of rural status.
 - h. Provide recommendations on the establishment and membership of Federal local advisory committees.
5. **Agency or Official to Whom the Council Reports.** The Council reports to the Federal Subsistence Board Chair, who is appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.
 6. **Support.** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will provide administrative support for the activities of the Council through the Office of Subsistence Management.
 7. **Estimated Annual Operating Costs and Staff Years.** The annual operating costs associated with supporting the Council's functions are estimated to be \$175,000, including all direct and indirect expenses and 1.15 staff years.
 8. **Designated Federal Officer.** The DFO is the Subsistence Council Coordinator for the Region or such other Federal employee as may be designated by the Assistant Regional Director – Subsistence, Region 7, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The DFO is a full-time Federal employee appointed in accordance with Agency procedures. The DFO will:
 - Approve or call all of the advisory committee's and subcommittees' meetings,
 - Prepare and approve all meeting agendas,
 - Attend all committee and subcommittee meetings,
 - Adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines adjournment to be in the public interest, and
 - Chair meetings when directed to do so by the official to whom the advisory committee reports.

9. **Estimated Number and Frequency of Meetings.** The Council will meet 1-2 times per year, and at such times as designated by the Federal Subsistence Board Chair or the DFO.
10. **Duration.** Continuing.
11. **Termination.** The Council is subject to biennial review and will terminate 2 years from the date the charter is filed, unless prior to that date, the Charter is renewed in accordance with the provisions of Section 14 of the FACA. The Council will not meet or take any action without a valid current charter.
12. **Membership and Designation.** The Council's membership is composed of representative members as follows:

Thirteen members who are knowledgeable and experienced in matters relating to subsistence uses of fish and wildlife and who are residents of the Region represented by the Council. To ensure that each Council represents a diversity of interests, the Federal Subsistence Board in their nomination recommendations to the Secretary will strive to ensure that nine of the members (70 percent) represent subsistence interests within the Region and four of the members (30 percent) represent commercial and sport interests within the Region. The portion of membership representing commercial and sport interests must include, where possible, at least one representative from the sport community and one representative from the commercial community.

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

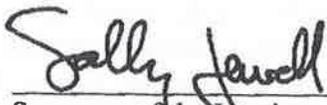
Members will be appointed for 3-year terms. A vacancy on the Council will be filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was made. Members serve at the discretion of the Secretary.

Council members will elect a Chair, a Vice-Chair, and a Secretary for a 1-year term.

Members of the Council will serve without compensation. However, while away from their homes or regular places of business, Council and subcommittee members engaged in Council, or subcommittee business, approved by the DFO, may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in the same manner as persons employed intermittently in Government service under Section 5703 of Title 5 of the United States Code.

13. **Ethics Responsibilities of Members.** No Council or subcommittee member will participate in any specific party matter in which the member has a direct financial interest in a lease, license, permit, contract, claim, agreement, or related litigation with the Department.

14. **Subcommittees.** Subject to the DFO's approval, subcommittees may be formed for the purpose of compiling information and conducting research. However, such subcommittees must act only under the direction of the DFO and must report their recommendations to the full Council for consideration. Subcommittees must not provide advice or work products directly to the Agency. The Council Chair, with the approval of the DFO, will appoint subcommittee members. Subcommittees will meet as necessary to accomplish their assignments, subject to the approval of the DFO and the availability of resources.
15. **Recordkeeping.** Records of the Council, and formally and informally established subcommittees or other subgroups of the Council, shall be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 26, Item 2, and other approved Agency records disposition schedule. These records shall be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552.


Secretary of the Interior

NOV 25 2013

Date Signed

DEC 03 2013

Date Filed



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