



NORTHWEST ARCTIC SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Materials

October 5-6, 2016

Selawik, Alaska



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Sunset in Kotzebue Sound

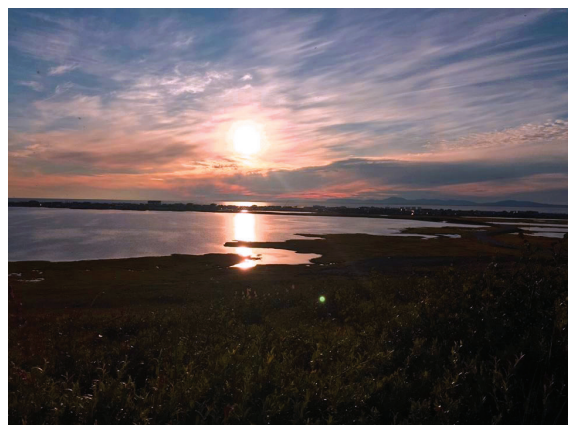


photo by Zach Stevenson, OSM, USFWS

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NORTHWEST ARCTIC SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Selawik Community Hall
Selawik, Alaska

October 5 – 6, 2016 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

TELECONFERENCE: call the toll free number: 1-877-638-8165 , then when prompted enter the passcode: 9060609.

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. **Call to Order** (*Chair*)
- 2. **Invocation**
- 3. **Roll Call and Establish Quorum** (*Secretary*)..... 3
- 4. **Welcome and Introductions** (*Chair*)
- 5. **Review and Adopt Agenda*** (*Chair*) 1
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- 7. **Reports**
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 - Chair’s Report
- 8. **Public and Tribal Comment on Non-Agenda Items** (available each morning)
- 9. **Old Business** (*Chair*)
 - a. Draft Nonrural Determination Policy* 13
- 10. **New Business** (*Chair*)
 - a. Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP) Updates*
 - b. FRMP Priority Information Needs* (Karen Hyer, USFWS OSM) 31
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d. Identify Issues for Annual Report*42

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g. Feedback on All Council Meeting

12. Agency Reports

(Time limit of 15 minutes unless approved in advance)

- Tribal Governments
- Native Organizations
- USFWS
- USFS
- BLM
- ADF&G
- OSM

13. Future Meeting Dates*

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14. Closing Comments

15. Adjourn (Chair)

To teleconference into the meeting, call the toll free number: 1-877-638-8165, then when prompted enter the passcode: 9060609.

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 Zach Stevenson, 907-786-3674, zachary_stevenson@fws.gov, or 800-877-8339 (TTY), by close of business on September 26, 2016.

REGION 8
Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Seat	Year Appointed <i>Term Expires</i>	Member Name and Community
1	2010 2016	Raymond Stoney Kiana Chair
2	2014 2016	Austin Swan Kivalina
3	2011 2016	Hannah P. Loon Kotzebue Secretary
4	2010 2016	Michael C. Kramer Kotzebue
5	2008 2017	Percy C. Ballot Sr. Buckland
6	2011 2017	Vern J. Cleveland, Sr. Noorvik
7	2015 2017	Louie A. Commack, Jr. Ambler
8	1999 2018	Enoch A. Shiedt Sr. Kotzebue Vice-Chair
9	2014 2018	Enoch L. Mitchell Noatak
10	2012 2018	Calvin D. Moto, Sr. Deering

**SUMMARY OF THE MARCH 10, 2016
NORTHWEST ARCTIC WESTERN SUBSISTENCE
REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING**

Location of Meeting

William A. Egan Civic and Convention Center, Anchorage Alaska

Time and Date of Meeting

Thursday, March 10, 2016, 1:30 PM AKST

Call to Order

The winter meeting of the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council was called to order on Thursday, March 10, 2016 at 1:30 PM AKST. The following nine (9) Council Members were present:

Name, Title	Location
Hannah Paniyavluk Loon, Secretary	Selawik, Alaska
Raymond Stoney, Chair	Kiana, Alaska
Michael Kramer	Kotzebue, Alaska
Percy C. Ballot, Sr.	Buckland, Alaska
Vern J. Cleveland, Sr.	Noorvik, Alaska
Louie A. Commack, Jr.	Ambler, Alaska
Enoch A. Shiedt, Sr., Vice-Chair	Kotzebue, Alaska
Calvin D. Moto, Sr.	Deering, Alaska
Enoch Mitchell, Noatak Community Advisory Chair	Noatak, Alaska

Council Member Austin Swan (Kivalina, Alaska) was not present for the meeting. Council Secretary Loon provided the invocation.

Review and Adopt Agenda

The Council unanimously approved a motion (9-0) to adopt the Agenda as read with the following additions:

- Council Chair Shiedt requested to recognize Percy Ballot for his 25 years of service to the Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Council.
- Zach Stevenson, Subsistence Council Coordinator, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management conveyed a staff request to add the topic of the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program to the agenda.
- Carl Johnson, Council Coordination Division Chief, Office of Subsistence Management, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service requested the consideration of a letter prepared by the Southeast Council with some common themes of concern. Mr. Johnson also requested presenting a motion adopted by the Yukon-Kuskokwim Council regarding the Refuge's proposed rule. Mr. Johnson noted both items could be considered under New Business.

Election of Officers

The Council unanimously approved a motion electing Council Member Stoney as Chair, Council Member Shiedt as Vice-Chair, and reappointing Member Loon as Secretary.

Attendees

In addition to the nine (9) participating Council Members listed above, twenty-seven (27) representatives from State Government, Federal Government, North Slope Regional Advisory Council, Northwest Arctic

Borough, other members of the public, and private sector attended some portion of the of the Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Council meeting either in person, or by teleconference (indicated with an asterix “*”). These attendees included:

Affiliation		Name, Title	Location	
State Government Representatives	Alaska Department of Fish and Game	Brandon Saito, Area Biologist	Kotzebue, Alaska	
		Brendan Scanlon, Fishery Biologist	Fairbanks, Alaska	
		Drew Crawford, Federal Subsistence Liaison	Anchorage, Alaska	
Federal Government Representatives	Bureau of Land Management	Dan Sharp, Interagency Staff Committee	Anchorage, Alaska	
	National Park Service	Bert Frost, Regional Director, Alaska Region and Representative on the Federal Subsistence Board	Anchorage, Alaska	
		Hannah Atkinson, Cultural Resource Specialist, Western Arctic National Parklands	Kotzebue, Alaska	
		Hilary Robinson, Wildlife Biologist, Western Arctic National Parklands	Kotzebue, Alaska	
		Ken Atkinson, Bering Land Bridge Parklands	Nome, Alaska	
		Marci Johnson, Wildlife Biologist, Western Arctic National Parklands*	Kotzebue, Alaska	
		Mary McBurney, Subsistence Team Manager, Alaska Region and Representative on the Interagency Staff Committee	Anchorage, Alaska	
		United States Fish and Wildlife Service	Brittany Sweeney, Outreach Specialist, Selawik National Wildlife Refuge	Kotzebue, Alaska
	United States Fish and Wildlife Service	Carl Johnson, Council Coordination Division Chief, Office of Subsistence Management	Anchorage, Alaska	
		Chris McKee, Wildlife Division Chief, Office of Subsistence Management		
		Lisa Maas, Wildlife Biologist, Office of Subsistence Management		
		Karen Hyer, Office of Subsistence Management		
		Susan Georgette, Refuge Manager, Selawik National Wildlife Refuge		Kotzebue, Alaska
	North Slope Regional Advisory Council Representatives	Gordon Brower, Council Member	Zach Stevenson, Subsistence Council Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management	Anchorage, Alaska
			Harry Brower, Council Chair	Barrow, Alaska
Northwest Arctic Borough Representatives	Clement Richards, Mayor	Kotzebue, Alaska		
	Lucy Nelson, Assembly Member			
	Patrick Savok, Director of Government Affairs			
Other Members of the Public	Jim Magdanz, University of Alaska and Retired from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Subsistence Division	Kotzebue, Alaska		
	Neil Dewitt, Member of the Public, Anchorage Advisory Committee, and Chair, Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group	Anchorage, Alaska		
Private Sector	Jeff Nelson, NANA Corporation	Anchorage, Alaska		
	Lance Kramer, NANA Regional Corporation*	Kotzebue, Alaska		

	Penny Reagle-Smith, Court Recorder Computer Matrix Court Reporters LLC	Anchorage, Alaska
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Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

The council unanimously supported a motion (9-0) to approve the minutes with the following modification:

- Council Member Mitchell emphasized the need for clarification regarding limited hunter success when harvesting caribou mentioned at the October 2016 Northwest Arctic RAC meeting in Buckland. Council Member Mitchell noted that out of 44 boats that hunted from Noatak, 21 boats harvested caribou and only two boats got their quota of 5 caribou while the rest averaged three caribou. The cost of fuel (\$10.99/gallon) and long distance required for travel caused many families to pool resources to enable the hunt.

Council Member Reports

The following Council Member reports were provided:

- Council Member Moto reported on unusual winter climate and weather conditions observed in Deering. Mr. Moto explained the unseasonably warm winter conditions delayed the caribou hunt until December. Mr. Moto added the unusual winter climate and weather included delayed snow, arriving in January, flooding, and then freezing. Mr. Moto acknowledged the diversity of the RAC members and the common, shared need among all RAC members for subsistence resources. Mr. Moto thanked Council Member Ballot for a productive October meeting in Buckland and recognized the participation of students from Buckland.
- Council Member Ballot acknowledged the contributions of his mother, Bonita Ballot, and father, James Ballot, who influenced his education and inspired him to serve his region. Mr. Ballot noted hunting has been good this year, specifically wolves, moose, and caribou.
- Council Secretary Loon thanked Council Member Ballot for hosting the October meeting in Buckland. Ms. Loon also thanked Council Member Shiedt for his service as Chair and recognized Mr. Shiedt’s deep concern for the people of the Northwest Arctic. Ms. Loon noted a lake freeze-up, good spring caribou season, and unusual winter weather and climate conditions in Selawik. Ms. Loon noted many hunters pooling their resources to enable the hunting of caribou after freeze-up. Ms. Loon also noted the winter harvest of Broad whitefish (*Coregonus nasus*) occurred later and in less abundance than usual.
- Council Chair Stoney reported winter conditions are very different from those of the past 25 years. Mr. Stoney explained that ice conditions have changed dramatically, once four feet thick and now one-to-two feet thick. Mr. Stoney explained these changes in ice thickness have made winter overland travel very difficult. Mr. Stoney also reported on the decline of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd from 490,000 down to 230,000 caribou. Mr. Stoney asked what happened to the caribou, expressing concern for the herd, and emphasized the desire for more information to inform management of the herd. Carl Johnson, Council Coordination Division Chief, Office of Subsistence Management, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service added a presentation was scheduled for the next day dedicated to the status of the Western Arctic and Teshepuk Caribou Herds, including State and Federal biologists involved in the discussion.
- Council Vice-Chair Shiedt reported on 100,000 caribou observed migrating in the vicinity of Kotzebue. Mr. Shiedt explained that unusually thin ice conditions had many residents concerned the migrating caribou may fall through the ice and drown while crossing the Kotzebue Sound. Mr. Shiedt noted this didn’t happen. Mr. Shiedt reported there was a plentiful harvest of tomcod. Mr. Shiedt noted there were a large number of wolves in Noatak River area and throughout the region, preying on both caribou and moose. Mr. Shiedt expressed concern about the lack of winter nearshore sea ice; unusually thin ice conditions; the unusually late formation of sea ice; and unusual winter open water conditions. Mr. Shiedt noted that sheefish (*Stenodus nelma*) are

now being caught at an unusually large size, raising concern for subsistence resources. Mr. Shiedt emphasized the importance of subsistence resources to meeting the nutritional needs of the people of the Northwest Arctic.

- Council Member Kramer reported caribou were observed migrating in the vicinity of Kotzebue, noting people harvested a lot of caribou, and the animals were healthy. Mr. Kramer added the effects of climate change now impact the region; specifically sea ice conditions are thinner and timing of animal migrations is earlier. Mr. Kramer noted a report from a friend that whales were observed passing Point Hope. Mr. Kramer emphasized the need to monitor the region's Dall sheep population. Mr. Kramer noted the importance of conserving subsistence resources for future generations; the importance of mentoring young leaders to serve on the RAC; and acknowledged the leadership shown by his peers, elder RAC members.
- Council Member Commack reported on successful fall hunting this season in the Upper Kobuk. Mr. Commack noted the successful harvest of caribou, bear, fish, berry picking, and under-the-ice fishing. However, Mr. Commack noted the community of Kobuk did not harvest enough caribou this fall, with some residents hoping for better hunting success with the arrival of the spring caribou migration.
- Council Member Cleveland reported the caribou migration was late, and is getting later and later. Mr. Cleveland reported the climate is becoming warmer as shown by the reduced amount of fuel he burned this past winter. Mr. Cleveland added that ice conditions are becoming thinner and pose a hazard for winter overland travel, with two men having died by falling through the ice. Mr. Cleveland noted caribou from the Teshepuk Herd were seen near Kotzebue and previously (two years ago?) behind Noorvik. Though the caribou were healthy, they traveled back north. Mr. Cleveland noted there was an abundance of caribou, moose, bear, and fish. Mr. Cleveland thanked Attamuk (Council Vice-Chair Shiedt) for his service as former Chair.
- Council Member Mitchell noted that ANILCA Title VIII and Alaska Constitution have provisions to prevent the circumstances now seen in Noatak. Mr. Mitchell reiterated that in Noatak, of 44 boats that went out to hunt caribou, less than half were successful (21 boats were successful and 23 boats were not successful). Mr. Mitchell noted these conditions raise concern for the wellness of elders and youth in the region, emphasizing that the health of the region's caribou directly impacts the wellness of the region's people. Mr. Mitchell added that in 2008 the Native Village of Noatak signed a resolution addressing the issue of too many transporters and too much activity from transporters on the Noatak River. Mr. Mitchell added he testified before the Board of Game many times on this issue, and has raised concern regarding the impact of transporters on caribou for 10 years and yet the problem persists.

Public and Tribal Comments

The following public and tribal comments were addressed:

- Carl Johnson, Council Coordination Division Chief, Office of Subsistence Management announced a three-hour scheduled for March 11, 2016 addressing the status of the Western Arctic and Teshepuk Caribou herds.
- Clement Richards, Mayor Northwest Arctic Borough, congratulated Council Chair Stoney for his appointment and thanked Council Vice-Chair Shiedt for his service as the former Chair. Mayor Richards emphasized the importance of documenting the work of the Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Council and sharing this information with people in the Northwest Arctic Borough. Mayor Richards expressed the commitment of the Northwest Arctic Borough of helping share this message with the people of the region and the importance of providing an opportunity for public testimony so Federal agencies can hear and respond to questions from local residents.
- Gordon Brower, North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council shared information of interest to the Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Council regarding Unit 23 caribou population status. Mr. Brower noted the reduction in bag limit from 10 to 5 caribou. Mr. Brower also noted

the change in the bull hunt from October 10 to December 6 with a conservation measure of no bulls. Mr. Brower noted efforts to develop a proposal to affect the State Board of Game and the method used for calculating the herd, describing concern regarding the potential miscalculation resulting from the combination of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd and the Teshekpuk Herd together, when determining the harvestable surplus and estimate for the amount necessary for subsistence. Mr. Brower noted that combining the two herds could mistakenly inflate the ANS, which when calculated independently, would not support a non-resident hunt given the declining status of the caribou herd. Mr. Brower commended the Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Council for taking initiative its proposal (to close Federal public lands in Unit 23 to caribou hunting by non-federally qualified users).

- Jim Magdanz, presently a graduate student at the University of Washington who served for 30 years with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game Division of Subsistence (Kotzebue, Alaska) delivered a presentation addressing how caribou harvests are occurring in the villages in the range of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd (WACH). Mr. Magdanz illustrated how the caribou herd population decline isn't affecting the harvest yet as shown through survey data, noting the importance of considering how you manage caribou in a time of declining population. Mr. Magdanz added the average caribou harvested per household is about 3.6 caribou. Mr. Magdanz emphasized that 4% of the households are harvesting about 31% of the caribou. Mr. Magdanz described these hunters as "super harvesters" who play an important role in sharing their harvest with others.

New Business

The following new business was addressed:

- Carl Johnson, Council Coordination Division Chief addressed Items E on the agenda (the all Council letter written by the Southeast Council) and Item F on the agenda (Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta RAC's motion). The all council letter addressed matters of common concern among all the RACs including:
 - Need for increased funding (e.g. to better enable participating at the RAC level to continue their participation in the process and to support wildlife research – an issue of concern noted during Secretarial review that remains unaddressed.)
 - Need for better communication and enhanced consultation
 - Seek an avenue for a having a designated subsistence seat on the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council.
 - Develop a mechanism for the 10 Councils to engage youth in the subsistence regulatory process.
 - Identification of priority information needs as the basis for soliciting fisheries projects for the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program.
 - Councils request the Board engage the Office of Subsistence Management to allow the periodic planning of another joint Council meeting.

An expression of support for these themes is needed. Carl Johnson clarified that other Councils have supported the key themes. Council Member Kramer made a motion to support the letter with modification according to the needs of the Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Council. The motion was seconded by Council Secretary Loon. Council Chair Stoney called the question in favor of the supported the letter. The Council voted unanimously (9-0) in favor of supporting the letter. Additionally, Carl Johnson addressed a letter prepared by the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta RAC regarding the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's proposed rule for predator management on Refuges that includes a request that the Federal Subsistence Board advocate on behalf of the Councils for withdrawal of the proposed rule.

- 2015 Annual Report – The Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Council chose not to submit an annual report to the Federal Subsistence Board.

Agency Reports

The following agency reports were provided:

- Karen Hyer, Office of Subsistence Management, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service addressed the call for proposals for changes to the Federal fish and shellfish regulations, noting the call is open and closes April 1st and offering assistance with developing regulatory proposals.
 - Council Vice-Chair Shiedt questioned whether Karen Hyer was inviting proposals and expressed interest in studying trout. Karen Hyer clarified she was addressing regulatory changes to the regulations and would be addressing monitoring next.
 - Council Member Mitchell asked about the Kotzebue proposed rod and reel (regulation?) before the Board of Fish, asking whether there was a similar proposal impacting Federal waters for rod and reel fishing. Council Chair Stoney responded, explaining that was done by the State of Alaska (Kotzebue AC).
 - Council Secretary Loon expressed the importance of slough whitefish and pike to residents of Selawik, and the abundance of black seashells eaten long ago. Karen Hyer responded, asking whether Council Secretary Loon was addressing clams and attempting to clarify whether Council Member Mitchell was addressing a regulatory proposal.
 - Council Member Mitchell noted the proposal was put forward by residents from Kotzebue and Noatak seeking to allow subsistence rod and reel fishing of whitefish.
 - Council Member Moto expressed the desire for more notice to recommend regulatory proposals, noting that industry and Federal agencies often fail to provide adequate notice for meaningful public engagement.
 - Karen Hyer responded to Council Member Mitchell's question, noting that rod and reel is a method that can be used in the north (Northwest Arctic), and that the Federal Subsistence regulations already align with what the State has done. Karen Hyer then addressed the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP), inviting proposals to address subsistence fisheries research in the region.
 - Brendan Scanlon, Fishery Biologist with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game clarified that the State proposal regarding rod and reel fishing did pass for the Northwest Arctic, noting that the regulation, adopted by the Board, applies to all State residents, and there is no rural priority. Brendan Scanlon noted the limits of 10 sheefish per day in the lower rivers and 10 trout a day for subsistence fishers using rod and reel in open waters.
 - Brendan Scanlon described three FRMP projects including:
 - ✓ A study addressing Dolly Varden on the Noatak River. The project seeks to determine summer migration patterns and feeding areas using radio tags and sonar equipment. The information gathered through the project will help to inform management of the fishery and potential natural resource development.
 - ✓ A study on the Kobuk River scheduled for the summer 2016 season. The study will gather baseline genetic information on fishery spawning stocks to better understand the stock makeup of harvested fish. The information gathered through the study will help identify where the spawn. A student from the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program will help with fieldwork and laboratory genetic analysis.
 - ✓ A study scheduled for the summer 2016 season addressing the abundance of sheefish out-migrating from their spawning areas on the Kobuk River using sonar.
 - Council Member Ballot asked if any fisheries studies have been done in the Buckland area. Brendan Scanlon responded he was not aware of any studies in the Buckland area, likely due to the lack of adjacent Federal lands along the Buckland River.
 - Council Secretary Loon noted the importance of healthy fisheries and asked whether blood samples are taken to assess whether fish contain any chemicals and whether fish travel out into the ocean to feed and return to their spawning area. Brendan Scanlon

- responded, describing an ongoing water quality and fish tissue-monitoring program on the Wulik River conducted in partnership with the Red Dog Mine.
- Council Chair Stoney asked about fish satellite tag studies and how far fish travel. Brendan Scanlon noted that fish tagged on the Wulik River has been documented traveling through the Russian Chukchi Sea, as far as the Amgwema River in Siberia.
 - Council Member Moto asked whether there was any monitoring of the herring fishery, Council Member Moto noted increased shipping traffic in the Bering and Chukchi Seas and decreased harvest levels of herring and trout, ordinarily harvested during the spring ice break up. Brendan Scanlon responded, noting that herring harvest research is limited because once the South central, Southeast, and Togiak herring fisheries are over, there is no market anymore. Council Member Moto emphasized the importance of the spring Kotzebue Sound subsistence herring fishery and recommended monitoring this fishery. Brendan Scanlon offered to mention this recommendation to the Commercial Fish Division in Nome.
 - Council Member Kramer asked whether the northward encroachment of beaver activity and beaver lodges has affected trout spawning areas. Brendan Scanlon responded, noting that he doesn't have much information on beavers, though beaver lodges do not have a negative impact on juvenile trout.
 - Karen Hyer invited the Council to participate in developing priority information needs for the 2018 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP), explaining the goal is to have the list finalized by November. Karen Hyer recommended developing a working group to refine a list of FRMP priorities. The Council motioned to establish a working group to refine a list of FRMP priorities, voting unanimously (9-0) in favor of establishing the working group to refine FRMP research priorities for the region.
- Susan Georgette, Refuge Manager, Selawik National Wildlife Refuge, provided an update on the proposed Refuge rule that would prohibit most predator control on Alaska's national wildlife refuges. Susan Georgette explained the United States Fish and Wildlife Service is required to manage its lands for natural diversity and biological integrity. Susan Georgette explained this prohibits predator control in the Selawik National Wildlife Refuge and federal public lands in Unit 23 defined as the taking of bear cubs or sows with cubs, taking bears using traps or snares, same day airborne hunting of bears, taking wolves during the denning season, and taking brown bears with bait. Susan Georgette explained this regulation would apply only to Refuges, does not apply to the hunting of predators for subsistence. Susan Georgette explained public meetings have been held in Kotzebue, four people testified, and a public comment period is open until April 7th. Several related points were addressed.
 - Carl Johnson, Council Coordination Division Chief noted additional information can be found on page 210 in the RAC Member information book.
 - Council Member Mitchell asked when an environmental assessment would be completed. Susan Georgette noted an environmental assessment is available now and would provide a copy to the Council Coordinator for circulation to the Northwest Arctic Regional Advisory Council.
 - Bert Frost, Regional Director, National Park Service Alaska Region and National Park Service representative on the Federal Subsistence Board addressed the proposed rule on subsistence collections, noting the three pieces of the proposed regulation including:
 - Allowing qualified subsistence users to collect and use non-edible fish and wildlife parts and plants, (and) materials to create handicraft for use in barter or sale. Users would be required to have a Federal Subsistence Board customary and traditional use determination for the animal species, which parts that would be collected and that determination must be specific to an area where that collection would occur. This could require an individual permit, an area-wide authorization for residents' own communities, an annual

- authorization, or approval for a geographic location through the annual compendia process
- Clarify that collecting or possessing living wildlife is prohibited. Communicating that any collection of living wildlife or eggs is prohibited. This includes a prohibition on collecting hawks or hawk chicks.
 - Limit the types of bait that may be used to take bears for subsistence uses. Limit the types of bait that can be used to take bears under the Federal subsistence regulation. Approved baits would include parts of legally taken Native fish or wildlife not requiring salvage or the remains of Native fish and wildlife that died of natural causes. Prohibited baits would include the use of dog food, grease, bread, popcorn and doughnuts for taking bears. The proposed rule was published on January 13th and is open for 90 days.
- Council Secretary Loon thanked Bert Frost for his report and emphasizing subsistence hunters use almost every part of the animal, sometimes leaving horns in the field as a marker for future subsistence activities or distance between locations. Council Secretary Loon asked about the intent of the proposed rule, specifically whether the Park Service was trying to protect subsistence users from looters. Bert Frost responded, noting that isn't the intent of the rule, though it may be a favorable unintended benefit.
 - Zach Stevenson, Subsistence Council Coordinator asked whether the Council wished to take any action on the proposed rule. Council Member Commack motioned to accept the proposed rule. Council Member Moto noted the requirement for subsistence hunters to remove muskox horns and add some type of design before being allowed to trade the horns, while sport hunters may collect for the horns as trophies. Bert Frost responded, noting this point warranted clarification, so as not to penalize youth that may be collecting horns for elders or artists to use. Council Member Moto called question and motion passed unanimously (9-0) in favor of the proposed rule.
 - Zach Stevenson, Subsistence Council Coordinator mentioned agenda item 10C, the Board non-rural policy timeline. A supplemental handout was included in the RAC Member binders. Carl Johnson, Council Coordination Division Chief, Office of Subsistence Management provided the following information on the Board non-rural policy timeline:
 - Last year RAC Members expressed opinions on a proposed regulation that would go into the Secretarial regulations about rural determinations. The timeline reflects those discussions. The Board was briefed on this matter at their January work session and approved the development of a draft policy. The draft policy will be available for review by RAC Members at the fall meeting in Selawik. The draft policy will be presented, noting the process for making determinations, specifically how people could submit proposals and the proposals for analyzing the proposals.
 - Hannah Atkinson, Cultural Resource Specialist, National Park Service Western Arctic National Parklands addressed agenda item 11D, the Cape Krusenstern and Kobuk Valley Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) appointments. Hannah Atkinson noted there were some resignations in February and filling these vacancies was needed to enable the SRC to continue its work. Addressing the Kobuk Valley National Park SRC, Hannah Atkinson recommended and the reappointment of Louie Commack who served as Chair of the SRC in 2014 and is a resident of Ambler. Hannah Atkinson motioned to reappoint Louie Commack for the Kobuk SRC. Council Member Ballot moved for reappointing Louie Commack for the Kobuk SRC. Council Chair Stoney called the question and the Council voted unanimously in favor of reappointing Louie Commack for the Kobuk SRC. Hannah Atkinson explained there were two vacancies for the RAC to fill for the Kobuk Valley SRC, noting that John Goodwin is no longer available and Elmer Ward has resigned from his appointment. There were three candidates for consideration including Murphy Custer, Rosa Horna, and Karmen Monigold. Murphy Custer does his subsistence activities upriver from Kobuk Valley National Park and in the area near the Selawik Hot springs. Rosa Horna has an allotment in the Parklands and does subsistence activities at

Onion Portage. Karmen Monigold also does subsistence activities in the Parklands and travels upriver into the Kobuk to hunt caribou. A secret ballot was taken by the RAC Members. Rose Custer received six votes, Henry Horna received six votes, and Karmen Monigold received three votes. Mr. Custer and Ms. Horna received the most votes, with a tie of 6 votes each. Additionally Hannah Atkinson mentioned there is one vacancy for the Cape Krusenstern SRC due to Virgil Adams having resigned from his position there was one eligible applicant, Cyrus Harris of Kotzebue, for this position. Council Member Ballot moved to appoint Cyrus Harris to the Cape Krusenstern SRC. The motion was seconded by Council Secretary Loon.

- Susan Georgette, Refuge Manager, Selawik National Wildlife Refuge provided an addressed a letter regarding the predator control policy mentioned earlier. Susan Georgette explained the topic has been addressed at four or five public meetings and noted that the Council hasn't taken a position on the issue.

Follow-up Action Items

The follow-up actions items are provided below:

- Circulation of the Proposed Refuge Rule Environmental Assessment to be provided by Susan Georgette, Refuge Manager, Selawik National Wildlife Refuge.
- Circulate the draft all council letter addressing matters of common concern among all the RACs.

Future Meeting Date

The future meeting dates are provided below:

- The Council approved the Fall 2016 meeting date of October 5-6 in Selawik, Alaska and the Winter 2017 Meeting date of March 1-2 in Kotzebue.

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

Zach Stevenson, Subsistence Council Coordinator *Date*

Raymond Stoney, Chair, Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council *Date*

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

POLICY ON NONRURAL DETERMINATIONS

FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD

Adopted _____, 2017

PURPOSE

This policy clarifies the internal management of the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) and provides transparency to the public regarding the process of making or changing nonrural determinations of areas or communities for the purpose of identifying rural residents who may harvest fish and wildlife for subsistence uses on Federal public lands in Alaska. This policy is intended to clarify existing practices under the current statute and regulations. It does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, against the United States, its agencies, officers, or employees, or any other person.

INTRODUCTION

Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) declares that, “the continuation of the opportunity for subsistence uses by rural residents of Alaska, including both Natives and non-Natives, on the public lands and by Alaska Natives on Native lands is essential to Native physical, economic, traditional, and cultural existence and to non-Native physical, economic, traditional, and social existence; the situation in Alaska is unique in that, in most cases, no practical alternative means are available to replace the food supplies and other items gathered from fish and wildlife which supply rural residents dependent on subsistence uses” (ANILCA Section 801). Rural status provides the foundation for the subsistence priority on Federal public lands to help ensure the continuation of the subsistence way of life in Alaska. Prior to 2015, implementation of this section and making rural determinations was based on criteria set forth in Subpart B of the Federal subsistence regulations.

In October 2009, the Secretary of the Interior, with the concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture, directed the Board to review the process of rural determinations. On December 31, 2012, the Board initiated a public review of the rural determination process. That public process lasted nearly a year, producing 278 comments from individuals, 137 comments from members of Regional Advisory Councils, 37 comments from Alaska Native entities, and 25 comments from other entities (e.g., city and borough governments). Additionally, the Board engaged in government-to-government consultation with tribes and consultation with Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) corporations. In general, the comments received indicated a broad dissatisfaction with the rural determination process. Among other comments, respondents indicated the aggregation criteria were perceived as arbitrary, the population thresholds were seen as inadequate to capture the reality of rural Alaska, and the decennial review was widely viewed to be unnecessary.

Based on this information, the Board held a public meeting on April 17, 2014 and decided to recommend a simplification of the process to the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture (Secretaries) to address rural status in the Federal Subsistence Management Program. The Board's recommended simplified process would eliminate the criteria from regulation and allow the Board to determine which areas or communities are nonrural in Alaska. All other communities or areas would, therefore, be considered "rural" in relation to the Federal subsistence priority in Alaska.

The Secretaries accepted the Board recommendation and published a Final Rule on November 4, 2015, revising the regulations governing the rural determination process for the Federal Subsistence Management Program in Alaska. The Secretaries removed specific rural determination guidelines and criteria, including requirements regarding population data, the aggregation of communities, and a decennial review. The Board will now make nonrural determinations using a comprehensive approach that may consider such factors as population size and density, economic indicators, military presence, industrial facilities, use of fish and wildlife, degree of remoteness and isolation, and any other relevant material including information provided by the public.

By using a comprehensive approach and not relying on set guidelines and criteria, this new process will enable the Board to be more flexible in making decisions that take into account regional differences found throughout the State. This will also allow for greater input from the Councils, Federally recognized Tribes of Alaska, Alaska Native Corporations, and the public in making nonrural determinations by incorporating the nonrural determination process into the subsistence regulatory schedule which has established comment periods and will allow for multiple opportunities for input. Simultaneously with the Final Rule, the Board published a Direct Final Rule (80 FR 68245; Nov. 4, 2015) (**Appendix B**) establishing the list of nonrural communities, those communities not subject to the Federal subsistence priority on Federal public lands, based on the list of rural communities that predated the 2007 Final Rule (72 FR 25688; May 7, 2007).

As of November 4, 2015, the Board determined all communities and areas in Alaska to be rural in accordance with 36 CFR 242.15 and 50 CFR 100.15 except for the following: Fairbanks North Star Borough; Homer area – including Homer, Anchor Point, Kachemak City, and Fritz Creek; Juneau area – including Juneau, West Juneau, and Douglas; Kenai area – including Kenai, Soldotna, Sterling, Nikiski, Salamatof, Kalifornsky, Kasilof, and Clam Gulch; Ketchikan area – including Ketchikan City, Clover Pass, North Tongass Highway, Ketchikan East, Mountain Point, Herring Cove, Saxman East, Pennock Island, and parts of Gravina Island; Municipality of Anchorage; Seward area – including Seward and Moose Pass; Valdez; and Wasilla/Palmer area – including Wasilla, Palmer, Sutton, Big Lake, Houston, and Bodenbergs Butte (36 CFR 242.23 and 50 CFR 100.23).

BOARD AUTHORITIES

- ANILCA 16 U.S.C. 3101, 3126.
- Administrative Procedures Act (APA), 5 U.S.C. 551-559
- 36 CFR 242.15; 50 CFR 100.15
- 36 CFR 242.18(a); 50 CFR 100.18(a)
- 36 CFR 242.23; 50 CFR 100.23

POLICY

The Board will only address changes to the nonrural status of communities or areas when requested in a proposal. Any individual, organization, or community may submit a proposal to designate a community or area as nonrural. Additionally, any individual, organization, or community may request to change an existing nonrural determination by submitting a proposal to the Board to change the status of a community or area back to rural. This policy will outline what will be required of the proponent in the submission of a proposal, the administrative process to address a proposal, a general schedule or timeline, and the public process involved in acting on such proposals.

Process

Making a Nonrural Determination

For proposals seeking a nonrural determination for a community or area, it is the proponent's responsibility to provide the Board with substantive narrative evidence to support their rationale of why the proposed nonrural determination should be considered.

Submitting a Proposal

To file a request, you must submit a written proposal in accordance with the guidance provided in the Federal Register with a call for proposals to revise subsistence taking of fish and shellfish regulations and nonrural determinations. In addition to the threshold requirements set forth below, all proposals must contain the following baseline information:

- Full name and mailing address.
- A statement describing the proposed nonrural determination action requested.
- A detailed description of the community or area to be considered nonrural, including any current boundaries, borders, or distinguishing landmarks, so as to identify what Alaska residents would be affected by the change in rural status;
- Rationale (law, policy, factors, or guidance) for the Board to consider in determining the nonrural status of a community or area;
- A detailed statement of the facts that illustrate that the community or area is nonrural using the rationale stated above; and
- Any additional information supporting the proposed change.

Threshold Requirements

The Board will accept a proposal to designate a community or area as nonrural only if the Board determines that the proposal meets the following threshold requirements:

- Based upon information not previously considered by the Board;
- Provides substantive rationale for determining the nonrural status of a community or area that takes into consideration the unique qualities of the region; and
- Provides substantive information that supports the provided rationale that a community or area is nonrural instead of rural.

Upon receipt of a proposal to designate a community or area as nonrural, the Board shall determine whether the proposal satisfied the threshold requirements outlined above. If the proposal does not, the proponent will be notified in writing. If the proposal does, it will be considered in accordance with the timeline set forth below.

Rescinding a Nonrural Determination

For proposals seeking to have the Board rescind a nonrural determination, a proposal will be accepted if it is:

- Based upon information not previously considered by the Board; or
- Demonstrates that the information used and interpreted by the Board in designating the community as nonrural has changed since the original determination was made.

Proposals seeking to have the Board rescind a nonrural determination must also include the baseline information and meet the threshold requirements outlined above for nonrural proposals.

Limitation on Submission of Proposals to Change from Rural to Nonrural

The Board is aware of the burden placed on rural communities and areas in defending their rural status. If, under this new process, a community's status is maintained as rural after a proposal to change its status to nonrural is either rejected for (i) failure to comply with these guidelines or (ii) is rejected after careful consideration by the Board, no proposals to change that community's or area's status as nonrural shall be accepted until there has been a demonstrated change in that community's rural identity.

Whether or not there has been a "demonstrated change" to the rural identity of an area or community is the burden of the proponent to show by a preponderance of the evidence.

Process Schedule

As authorized in 36 CFR 242.18(a) and 50 CFR 100.18(a), "The Board may establish a rotating schedule for accepting proposals on various sections of subpart C or D regulations over a period of years." To ensure meaningful input from the Councils and allow opportunities for public comment, the Board will only accept nonrural

determination proposals every other year in conjunction with the call for proposals to revise subsistence taking of fish and shellfish regulations and nonrural determinations. If accepted, the proposal will be deliberated during the regulatory Board meeting in the next Fisheries Regulatory cycle. This schedule thus creates a three- year period for proposal review, analysis, Regional Advisory Council input, tribal and ANCSA corporation consultation, public comment, and Board deliberation and decision.

Decision Making

When acting upon proposals to change the nonrural status of a community or area, the Board will:

- Proceed on a case-by-case basis to address each proposal regarding nonrural determinations.
- Base its determination or changes to a determination on information of a reasonable and defensible nature contained within the administrative record.
- Make nonrural determinations based on a comprehensive application of considerations presented in the proposal that have been verified by the Board as accurate.
- Consider recommendations of the appropriate Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.
- Consider comments from the public, including the State of Alaska.
- Engage in government-to-government consultation with affected tribes or consultation with affected ANCSA corporations.
- Implement a final decision on a nonrural determination after compliance with the APA, if the determination is supported and valid.

As part of its decision-making process, the Board may compare information from other, similarly-situated communities or areas if limited information exists for a certain community or area. The Board also has discretion to clarify the geographical extent of the area relevant to the nonrural determination. The Board will look to the Regional Advisory Councils for confirmation that any relevant information brought forth during the nonrural determination process accurately describes the unique characteristics of the affected region. However, deference to the Councils does not apply.

General Process Timeline

Outlined in Table 1 and Table 2

Table 1. General Process Timeline

<p>1. January to March (Even Year) – A proposed rule is published in the Federal Register with the call for proposals to revise subsistence taking of fish and shellfish regulations and nonrural determinations.</p>
<p>2. April to July (Even Year) – Proposals for nonrural determinations are validated by staff. If the proposal is not valid, the proponent will be notified in writing.</p>
<p>3. August to November (Even Year) –Affected Regional Advisory Council(s) reviews the validated proposals and provides their initial recommendations, which should include relevant regional characteristics, at their fall meeting on the record.</p>
<p>4. November to December (Even Year) – Staff will organize Nonrural Determination proposal presentations.</p>
<p>5. January (Odd Year) – At the Board’s Fishery Regulatory meeting, Board will determine if the threshold requirements have been met. If the proposal does not meet the threshold requirements, the proponent will be notified in writing. If the proposal does, it will be considered in accordance with the timeline set forth here.</p>
<p>6. February (Odd Year) to July (Even Year) (18 months) – For proposals that have been determined by the Board to meet the Threshold Requirements, the Board will conduct public hearings in the communities that will be affected by the validated proposals. During this time period, independent of the fall Council meetings, Tribes/ANCSA Corporations may also request formal consultation on the nonrural determination proposals. Following the Council meeting cycle, public hearings, and tribal/ANCSA consultations, staff will prepare a written analysis for each nonrural determination proposal following established guidelines.</p>
<p>7. August to November (Even Year) –The Council(s) will provide recommendations on the draft Nonrural Determination Analyses.</p>
<p>8. November 2018 to December (Even Year) – Staff incorporates Council recommendations and comments into the draft Nonrural Determination Analyses for the Board.</p>
<p>9. January (Odd Year) – At the Board’s Fisheries Regulatory meeting, Staff present the Nonrural Determination Analyses to the Board. The Board makes a final decision on the Nonrural Determination proposals.</p>

Wildlife & FRMP Cycle	Fishery Cycle	Dates	FSB or Activity	Proposed Nonrural Determination Cycle				
		Council Cycle		Even Years				
Wildlife & FRMP Review Cycle	Fishery Review Cycle	January	FSB FRMP Work Session	1	Nonrural Proposed Rule Jan 2016			
		February	Fishery Proposed Rule Jan- Mar					
		March						
		April	FSB Meeting	2	Proposal Validation			
		July						
		August	Fishery Proposal Review	3	Nonrural Proposal Review by Councils			
		September						
		October						
	November							
	December			Finalize Proposal Presentations for the Board				
	January	FSB Meeting	5	Odd Years - Board determines which proposals meet the Threshold requirements				
	Fishery Review Cycle	Wildlife Review Cycle	February	Wildlife Proposed Rule Jan - Mar	6	Odd to Even Years (18 months) - Public Hearings, tribal/ANCSA Corporation Consultation, and Writing of Nonrural Determination Analyses for proposals that meet the threshold requirements as determined by the Board		
			March					
			April					
			July					
		August	Wildlife Proposal & FRMP Project Review	6				
		September						
		October						
November								
December								
January	FSB FRMP Work Session							
February	Fishery Proposed Rule Jan- Mar			1	Nonrural Proposed Rule			
March				2	Proposal Validation			
April	FSB Meeting							
July								
Fishery Review Cycle	Wildlife Review Cycle	August	Fishery Proposal Review	7	Even Years Analysis Review	3	Proposal review by Councils	
		September						
		October						
		November						
	December		8	Finalize Nonrural Determination Analyses	4	Finalize Threshold Reports		
January	FSB Meeting	9	Odd Years – Final Board Decision	5	Odd Years – See 5 above			

Table 2. General Process Timeline Comparison with other Cycles

Appendix A – Final Rule – Rural Determination Process

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Forest Service****36 CFR Part 242****DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR****Fish and Wildlife Service****50 CFR Part 100**

[Docket No. FWS–R7–SM–2014–0063;
FXRS12610700000–156–FF07J00000;
FBMS# 4500086287]

RIN 1018–BA62

**Subsistence Management Regulations
for Public Lands in Alaska; Rural
Determination Process**

AGENCIES: Forest Service, Agriculture;
Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior are revising the regulations governing the rural determination process for the Federal Subsistence Management Program in Alaska. The Secretaries have removed specific guidelines, including requirements regarding population data, the aggregation of communities, and a decennial review. This change will allow the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) to define which communities or areas of Alaska are nonrural (all other communities and areas would, therefore, be rural). This new process will enable the Board to be more flexible in making decisions and to take into account regional differences found throughout the State. The new process will also allow for greater input from the Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils (Councils), Federally recognized Tribes of Alaska, Alaska Native Corporations, and the public.

DATES: This rule is effective November 4, 2015.

ADDRESSES: This rule and public comments received on the proposed rule may be found on the Internet at www.regulations.gov at Docket No. FWS–R7–SM–2014–0063. Board meeting transcripts are available for review at the Office of Subsistence Management, 1011 East Tudor Road, Mail Stop 121, Anchorage, AK 99503, or on the Office of Subsistence Management Web site (<https://www.doi.gov/subsistence>).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Chair, Federal Subsistence Board, c/o U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Attention: Eugene R. Peltola, Jr., Office of Subsistence Management; (907) 786–3888 or subsistence@fws.gov. For

questions specific to National Forest System lands, contact Thomas Whitford, Regional Subsistence Program Leader, USDA, Forest Service, Alaska Region; (907) 743–9461 or twhitford@fs.fed.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background**

Under Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) (16 U.S.C. 3111–3126), the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture (Secretaries) jointly implement the Federal Subsistence Management Program. This program provides a preference for take of fish and wildlife resources for subsistence uses on Federal public lands and waters in Alaska. The Secretaries published temporary regulations to carry out this program in the **Federal Register** on June 29, 1990 (55 FR 27114), and published final regulations in the **Federal Register** on May 29, 1992 (57 FR 22940). The program regulations have subsequently been amended a number of times. Because this program is a joint effort between Interior and Agriculture, these regulations are located in two titles of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR): Title 36, “Parks, Forests, and Public Property,” and Title 50, “Wildlife and Fisheries,” at 36 CFR 242.1–242.28 and 50 CFR 100.1–100.28, respectively. The regulations contain subparts as follows: Subpart A, General Provisions; Subpart B, Program Structure; Subpart C, Board Determinations; and Subpart D, Subsistence Taking of Fish and Wildlife.

Consistent with Subpart B of these regulations, the Secretaries established a Federal Subsistence Board to administer the Federal Subsistence Management Program. The Board comprises:

- A Chair appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture;
- The Alaska Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- The Alaska Regional Director, U.S. National Park Service;
- The Alaska State Director, U.S. Bureau of Land Management;
- The Alaska Regional Director, U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs;
- The Alaska Regional Forester, U.S. Forest Service; and
- Two public members appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.

Through the Board, these agencies and members participate in the development of regulations for subparts C and D, which, among other things, set forth program eligibility and specific harvest seasons and limits.

In administering the program, the Secretaries divided Alaska into 10 subsistence resource regions, each of which is represented by a Regional Advisory Council. The Councils provide a forum for rural residents with personal knowledge of local conditions and resource requirements to have a meaningful role in the subsistence management of fish and wildlife on Federal public lands in Alaska. The Council members represent varied geographical, cultural, and user interests within each region.

Prior Rulemaking

On November 23, 1990 (55 FR 48877), the Board published a notice in the **Federal Register** explaining the proposed Federal process for making rural determinations, the criteria to be used, and the application of those criteria in preliminary determinations. On December 17, 1990, the Board adopted final rural and nonrural determinations, which were published on January 3, 1991 (56 FR 236). Final programmatic regulations were published on May 29, 1992, with only slight variations in the rural determination process (57 FR 22940). As a result of this rulemaking, Federal subsistence regulations at 36 CFR 242.15 and 50 CFR 100.15 require that the rural or nonrural status of communities or areas be reviewed every 10 years, beginning with the availability of the 2000 census data.

Because some data from the 2000 census was not compiled and available until 2005, the Board published a proposed rule in 2006 to revise the list of nonrural areas recognized by the Board (71 FR 46416, August 14, 2006). The final rule published in the **Federal Register** on May 7, 2007 (72 FR 25688).

Secretarial Review

On October 23, 2009, Secretary of the Interior Salazar announced the initiation of a Departmental review of the Federal Subsistence Management Program in Alaska; Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack later concurred with this course of action. The review focused on how the Program is meeting the purposes and subsistence provisions of Title VIII of ANILCA, and if the Program is serving rural subsistence users as envisioned when it began in the early 1990s.

On August 31, 2010, the Secretaries announced the findings of the review, which included several proposed administrative and regulatory reviews and/or revisions to strengthen the Program and make it more responsive to those who rely on it for their subsistence uses. One proposal called

for a review, with Council input, of the rural determination process and, if needed, recommendations for regulatory changes.

The Board met on January 20, 2012, to consider the Secretarial directive and the Councils' recommendations and review all public, Tribal, and Alaska Native Corporation comments on the initial review of the rural determination process. After discussion and deliberation, the Board voted unanimously to initiate a review of the rural determination process and the 2010 decennial review. Consequently, the Board found that it was in the public's best interest to extend the compliance date of its 2007 final rule (72 FR 25688; May 7, 2007) on rural determinations until after the review of the rural determination process and the decennial review were completed or in 5 years, whichever comes first. The Board published a final rule on March 1, 2012 (77 FR 12477), extending the compliance date.

The Board followed this action with a request for comments and announcement of public meetings (77 FR 77005; December 31, 2012) to receive public, Tribal, and Alaska Native Corporations input on the rural determination process.

Due to a lapse in appropriations on October 1, 2013, and the subsequent closure of the Federal Government, some of the preannounced public meetings and Tribal consultations to receive comments on the rural determination process during the closure were cancelled. The Board decided to extend the comment period to allow for the complete participation from the Councils, public, Tribes, and Corporations to address this issue (78 FR 66885; November 7, 2013).

The Councils were briefed on the Board's **Federal Register** documents during their winter 2013 meetings. At their fall 2013 meetings, the Councils provided a public forum to hear from residents of their regions, deliberate on the rural determination process, and provide recommendations for changes to the Board.

The Secretaries, through the Board, also held hearings in Barrow, Ketchikan, Sitka, Kodiak, Bethel, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Kotzebue, Nome, and Dillingham to solicit comments on the rural determination process. Public testimony was recorded during these hearings. Government-to-government tribal consultations on the rural determination process were held between members of the Board and Federally recognized Tribes of Alaska. Additional consultations were held

between members of the Board and Alaska Native Corporations.

Altogether, the Board received 475 substantive comments from various sources, including individuals, members of the Councils, and other entities or organizations, such as Alaska Native Corporations and borough governments. In general, this information indicated a broad dissatisfaction with the current rural determination process. The aggregation criteria were perceived as arbitrary. The current population thresholds were seen as inadequate to capture the reality of rural Alaska. Additionally, the decennial review was widely viewed to be unnecessary.

Based on this information, the Board at their public meeting held on April 17, 2014, elected to recommend a simplification of the process by determining which areas or communities are nonrural in Alaska; all other communities or areas would, therefore, be rural. The Board would make nonrural determinations using a comprehensive approach that considers population size and density, economic indicators, military presence, industrial facilities, use of fish and wildlife, degree of remoteness and isolation, and any other relevant material, including information provided by the public. The Board would rely heavily on the recommendations of the Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils.

In summary, based on Council and public comments, Tribal and Alaska Native Corporation consultations, and briefing materials from the Office of Subsistence Management, the Board developed a proposal that simplifies the process of rural determinations and submitted its recommendation to the Secretaries on August 15, 2014.

On November 24, 2014, the Secretaries requested that the Board initiate rulemaking to pursue the regulatory changes recommended by the Board. The Secretaries also requested that the Board obtain Council recommendations and public input, and conduct Tribal and Alaska Native Corporation consultation on the proposed changes. If adopted through the rulemaking process, the current regulations would be revised to remove specific guidelines, including requirements regarding population data, the aggregation of communities, and the decennial review, for making rural determinations.

Public Review and Comment

The Departments published a proposed rule on January 28, 2015 (80 FR 4521), to revise the regulations governing the rural determination

process in subpart B of 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100. The proposed rule opened a public comment period, which closed on April 1, 2015. The Departments advertised the proposed rule by mail, radio, newspaper, and social media; comments were submitted via *www.regulations.gov* to Docket No. FWS-R7-SM-2014-0063. During that period, the Councils received public comments on the proposed rule and formulated recommendations to the Board for their respective regions. In addition, 10 separate public meetings were held throughout the State to receive public comments, and several government-to-government consultations addressed the proposed rule. The Councils had a substantial role in reviewing the proposed rule and making recommendations for the final rule. Moreover, a Council Chair, or a designated representative, presented each Council's recommendations at the Board's public work session of July, 28, 2015.

The 10 Councils provided the following comments and recommendations to the Board on the proposed rule:

Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council—unanimously supported the proposed rule.

Seward Peninsula Subsistence Regional Advisory Council—unanimously supported the proposed rule.

Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council—unanimously supported the proposed rule.

Western Interior Alaska Regional Advisory Council—supported the proposed rule.

North Slope Subsistence Regional Advisory Council—unanimously supported the proposed rule as written. The Council stated the proposed rule will improve the process and fully supported an expanded role and inclusion of recommendations of the Councils when the Board makes nonrural determinations. The Council wants to be closely involved with the Board when the Board sets policies and criteria for how it makes nonrural determinations under the proposed rule if the rule is approved, and the Council passed a motion to write a letter requesting that the Board involve and consult with the Councils when developing criteria to make nonrural determinations, especially in subject matter that pertains to their specific rural characteristics and personality.

Bristol Bay Subsistence Regional Advisory Council—supported switching the focus of the process from rural to

nonrural determinations. They indicated there should be criteria for establishing what is nonrural to make determinations defensible and justifiable, including determinations of the carrying capacity of the area for sustainable harvest, and governmental entities should not determine what is spiritually and culturally important for a community. They supported eliminating the mandatory decennial; however, they requested a minimum time limit between requests (at least 3 years). They discussed deference and supported the idea but felt it did not go far enough.

Southcentral Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council—supported the proposed rule with modification. They recommended deference be given to the Councils on the nonrural determinations.

Southeast Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council—supported the proposed rule with modification. The Council recommended a modification to the language of the proposed rule: “The Board determines, after considering the report and recommendations of the applicable regional advisory council, which areas or communities in Alaska are non-rural” The Council stated that this modification is necessary to prevent the Board from adopting proposals contrary to the recommendation(s) of a Council and that this change would increase transparency and prevent rural communities from being subject to the whims of proponents.

Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council—is generally appreciative that the Board has recommended changes to the rural determination process and supported elimination of the decennial review. The Council recommended that the Board implement definitive guidelines for how the Board will make nonrural determinations to avoid subjective interpretations and determinations; that the language of the proposed rule be modified to require the Board to defer to the Councils and to base its justification for not giving deference on defined criteria to avoid ambiguous decisions; that the Board provide program staff with succinct direction for conducting analyses on any proposals to change a community’s status from rural to nonrural; and that the Board develop written policies and guidelines for making nonrural determinations even if there is a lack of criteria in the regulations. The Council is concerned that proposals to change rural status in the region will be frequently submitted from people or entities from outside the region; the Council is opposed to

proposals of this nature from outside its region and recommends that the Board develop guidelines and restrictions for the proposal process that the Board uses to reassess nonrural status.

Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council—opposed the proposed rule due to the lack of any guiding criteria to determine what is rural or nonrural. They stated the lack of criteria could serve to weaken the rural determination process. They supported greater involvement of the Councils in the Board’s process to make rural/nonrural determinations. This Council was concerned about changes including increasing developments, access pressure on rural subsistence communities and resources, and social conflicts in the Eastern Interior region.

A total of 90 substantive comments were submitted from public meetings, letters, deliberations of the Councils, and those submitted via www.regulations.gov.

- 54 supported the proposed rule;
- 16 neither supported nor opposed the proposed rule;
- 7 supported the proposed rule with modifications;
- 7 neither supported nor opposed the proposed rule and suggested modifications; and
- 6 opposed the proposed rule.

Major comments from all sources are addressed below:

Comment: The Board should provide, in regulatory language, objective criteria, methods, or guidelines for making nonrural determinations.

Response: During the request for public comment (77 FR 77005; December 31, 2012), the overwhelming response from the public was dissatisfaction with the list of regulatory guidelines used to make rural determinations. The Board, at their April 17, 2014, public meeting, stated that if the Secretaries approved the recommended simplification of the rural determination process, the Board would make nonrural determinations using a comprehensive approach that considers, but is not limited to, population size and density, economic indicators, military presence, industrial facilities, use of fish and wildlife, degree of remoteness and isolation, and any other relevant material, including information provided by the public. The Board also indicated that they would rely heavily on the recommendations of the Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils. The Board, at their July 28, 2015, public work session, directed that a subcommittee be established to draft options (policy or rulemaking) to address future rural determinations. The subcommittee options, once reviewed

by the Board at their January 12, 2016, public meeting will be presented to the Councils for their review and recommendations.

Comment: The Board should give deference to the Regional Advisory Councils on nonrural determinations and place this provision in regulatory language.

Response: The Board expressed during its April 2014 and July 2015 meetings that it intends to rely heavily on the recommendations of the Councils and that Council input will be critical in addressing regional differences in the rural determination process. Because the Board has confirmed that Councils will have a meaningful and important role in the process, a change to the regulatory language is neither warranted nor necessary at the present time.

Comment: Establish a timeframe for how often proposed changes may be submitted.

Response: During previous public comment periods, the decennial review was widely viewed to be unnecessary, and the majority of comments expressed the opinion that there should not be a set timeframe used in this process. The Board has been supportive of eliminating a set timeframe to conduct nonrural determinations. However, this issue may be readdressed in the future if a majority of the Councils support the need to reestablish a nonrural review period.

Comment: Redefine “rural” to allow nonrural residents originally from rural areas to come home and participate in subsistence activities.

Response: ANILCA and its enacting regulations clearly state that you must be an Alaska resident of a rural area or community to take fish or wildlife on public lands. Any change to that definition is beyond the scope of this rulemaking.

Comment: Develop a policy for making nonrural determinations, including guidance on how to analyze proposed changes.

Response: The Board, at their July 28, 2015, public work session, directed that a subcommittee be established to draft options (policy or rulemaking) to address future rural determinations that, once completed, will be presented to the Councils for their review and recommendations.

Comment: Allow rural residents to harvest outside of the areas or communities of residence.

Response: All rural Alaskans may harvest fish and wildlife on public lands unless there is a customary and traditional use determination that identifies the specific community’s or area’s use of particular fish stocks or

wildlife populations or if there is a closure.

Rule Promulgation Process and Related Rulemaking

These final regulations reflect Secretarial review and consideration of Board and Council recommendations, Tribal and Alaska Native Corporations government-to-government tribal consultations, and public comments. The public received extensive opportunity to review and comment on all changes.

Because this rule concerns public lands managed by an agency or agencies in both the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior, identical text will be incorporated into 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100.

Elsewhere in today's **Federal Register** is a direct final rule by which the Board is revising the list of rural determinations in subpart C of 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100. See "Subsistence Management Regulations for Public Lands in Alaska; Rural Determinations, Nonrural List" in Rules and Regulations.

Conformance With Statutory and Regulatory Authorities

Administrative Procedure Act Compliance

The Board has provided extensive opportunity for public input and involvement in compliance with Administrative Procedure Act requirements, including publishing a proposed rule in the **Federal Register**, participation in multiple Council meetings, and opportunity for additional public comment during the Board meeting prior to deliberation. Additionally, an administrative mechanism exists (and has been used by the public) to request reconsideration of the Secretaries' decision on any particular proposal for regulatory change (36 CFR 242.18(b) and 50 CFR 100.18(b)). Therefore, the Secretaries believe that sufficient public notice and opportunity for involvement have been given to affected persons regarding this decision. In addition, because the direct final rule that is mentioned above and is related to this final rule relieves restrictions for many Alaskans by allowing them to participate in the subsistence program activities, we believe that we have good cause, as required by 5 U.S.C. 553(d), to make this rule effective upon publication.

National Environmental Policy Act Compliance

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement that described four

alternatives for developing a Federal Subsistence Management Program was distributed for public comment on October 7, 1991. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was published on February 28, 1992. The Record of Decision (ROD) on Subsistence Management for Federal Public Lands in Alaska was signed April 6, 1992. The selected alternative in the FEIS (Alternative IV) defined the administrative framework of an annual regulatory cycle for subsistence regulations.

A 1997 environmental assessment dealt with the expansion of Federal jurisdiction over fisheries. The Secretary of the Interior, with concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture, determined that expansion of Federal jurisdiction does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the human environment and, therefore, signed a Finding of No Significant Impact.

Section 810 of ANILCA

An ANILCA section 810 analysis was completed as part of the FEIS process on the Federal Subsistence Management Program. The intent of all Federal subsistence regulations is to accord subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on public lands a priority over the taking of fish and wildlife on such lands for other purposes, unless restriction is necessary to conserve healthy fish and wildlife populations. The final section 810 analysis determination appeared in the April 6, 1992, ROD and concluded that the Program, under Alternative IV with an annual process for setting subsistence regulations, may have some local impacts on subsistence uses, but will not likely restrict subsistence uses significantly.

Paperwork Reduction Act

An agency may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. This rule does not contain any new collections of information that require OMB approval. OMB has reviewed and approved the collections of information associated with the subsistence regulations at 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100, and assigned OMB Control Number 1018-0075, which expires February 29, 2016.

Regulatory Planning and Review (Executive Orders 12866 and 13563)

Executive Order 12866 provides that the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) in the Office of Management and Budget will review all

significant rules. OIRA has determined that this rule is not significant.

Executive Order 13563 reaffirms the principles of E.O. 12866 while calling for improvements in the nation's regulatory system to promote predictability, to reduce uncertainty, and to use the best, most innovative, and least burdensome tools for achieving regulatory ends. The executive order directs agencies to consider regulatory approaches that reduce burdens and maintain flexibility and freedom of choice for the public where these approaches are relevant, feasible, and consistent with regulatory objectives. E.O. 13563 emphasizes further that regulations must be based on the best available science and that the rulemaking process must allow for public participation and an open exchange of ideas. We have developed this rule in a manner consistent with these requirements.

Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980 (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*) requires preparation of flexibility analyses for rules that will have a significant effect on a substantial number of small entities, which include small businesses, organizations, or governmental jurisdictions. In general, the resources to be harvested under this rule are already being harvested and consumed by the local harvester and do not result in an additional dollar benefit to the economy. However, we estimate that two million pounds of meat are harvested by subsistence users annually and, if given an estimated dollar value of \$3.00 per pound, this amount would equate to about \$6 million in food value Statewide. Based upon the amounts and values cited above, the Departments certify that this rulemaking will not have a significant economic effect on a substantial number of small entities within the meaning of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act

Under the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (5 U.S.C. 801 *et seq.*), this rule is not a major rule. It does not have an effect on the economy of \$100 million or more, will not cause a major increase in costs or prices for consumers, and does not have significant adverse effects on competition, employment, investment, productivity, innovation, or the ability of U.S.-based enterprises to compete with foreign-based enterprises.

Executive Order 12630

Title VIII of ANILCA requires the Secretaries to administer a subsistence priority on public lands. The scope of this Program is limited by definition to certain public lands. Likewise, these regulations have no potential takings of private property implications as defined by Executive Order 12630.

Unfunded Mandates Reform Act

The Secretaries have determined and certify pursuant to the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act, 2 U.S.C. 1502 *et seq.*, that this rulemaking will not impose a cost of \$100 million or more in any given year on local or State governments or private entities. The implementation of this rule is by Federal agencies, and there is no cost imposed on any State or local entities or tribal governments.

Executive Order 12988

The Secretaries have determined that these regulations meet the applicable standards provided in sections 3(a) and 3(b)(2) of Executive Order 12988, regarding civil justice reform.

Executive Order 13132

In accordance with Executive Order 13132, the rule does not have sufficient Federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism summary impact statement. Title VIII of ANILCA precludes the State from exercising subsistence management authority over fish and wildlife resources on Federal lands unless it meets certain requirements.

Executive Order 13175

Title VIII of ANILCA does not provide specific rights to tribes for the subsistence taking of wildlife, fish, and shellfish. However, the Secretaries, through the Board, provided Federally recognized Tribes and Alaska Native corporations opportunities to consult on this rule. Consultation with Alaska Native corporations are based on Public Law 108–199, div. H, Sec. 161, Jan. 23, 2004, 118 Stat. 452, as amended by Public Law 108–447, div. H, title V, Sec. 518, Dec. 8, 2004, 118 Stat. 3267, which provides that: “The Director of the Office of Management and Budget and all Federal agencies shall hereafter consult with Alaska Native corporations on the same basis as Indian tribes under Executive Order No. 13175.”

The Secretaries, through the Board, provided a variety of opportunities for consultation: Commenting on proposed changes to the existing rule; engaging in dialogue at the Council meetings; engaging in dialogue at the Board’s meetings; and providing input in

person, by mail, email, or phone at any time during the rulemaking process.

On March 23 and 24, 2015, the Board provided Federally recognized Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations a specific opportunity to consult on this rule. Federally recognized Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations were notified by mail and telephone and were given the opportunity to attend in person or via teleconference.

Executive Order 13211

This Executive Order requires agencies to prepare Statements of Energy Effects when undertaking certain actions. However, this rule is not a significant regulatory action under E.O. 13211, affecting energy supply, distribution, or use, and no Statement of Energy Effects is required.

Drafting Information

Theo Matuskowitz drafted these regulations under the guidance of Eugene R. Peltola, Jr. of the Office of Subsistence Management, Alaska Regional Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage, Alaska. Additional assistance was provided by

- Daniel Sharp, Alaska State Office, Bureau of Land Management;
- Mary McBurney, Alaska Regional Office, National Park Service;
- Dr. Glenn Chen, Alaska Regional Office, Bureau of Indian Affairs;
- Trevor T. Fox, Alaska Regional Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and
- Thomas Whitford, Alaska Regional Office, U.S. Forest Service.

Authority

This rule is issued under the authority of Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) (16 U.S.C. 3111–3126).

List of Subjects*36 CFR Part 242*

Administrative practice and procedure, Alaska, Fish, National forests, Public lands, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Wildlife.

50 CFR Part 100

Administrative practice and procedure, Alaska, Fish, National forests, Public lands, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Wildlife.

Regulation Promulgation

For the reasons set out in the preamble, the Secretaries amend 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100 as set forth below.

PART II—SUBSISTENCE MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS FOR PUBLIC LANDS IN ALASKA

■ 1. The authority citation for both 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 3, 472, 551, 668dd, 3101–3126; 18 U.S.C. 3551–3586; 43 U.S.C. 1733.

Subpart B—Program Structure

■ 2. In subpart B of 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100, § 11.15 is revised to read as follows:

§ 11.15 Rural determination process.

(a) The Board determines which areas or communities in Alaska are nonrural. Current determinations are listed at § 11.23.

(b) All other communities and areas are, therefore, rural.

Dated: Oct. 28, 2015.

Sally Jewell,
Secretary of the Interior.

Dated: Sept. 30, 2015.

Beth G. Pendleton,
Regional Forester, USDA – Forest Service.
[FR Doc. 2015–27994 Filed 10–30–15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–11–4333–15–P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**40 CFR Parts 52 and 81**

[EPA–R04–OAR–2014–0904; FRL–9936–55–Region 4]

Air Plan Approval and Air Quality Designation; TN; Reasonably Available Control Measures and Redesignation for the TN Portion of the Chattanooga 1997 Annual PM_{2.5} Nonattainment Area

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is approving the portion of a State Implementation Plan (SIP) revision submitted by the State of Tennessee, through the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), on October 15, 2009, that addresses reasonably available control measures (RACM), including reasonably available control technology (RACT), for the Tennessee portion of the Chattanooga, TN-GA-AL nonattainment area for the 1997 fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) (hereinafter referred to as the “Chattanooga TN-GA-AL Area” or

Appendix B – Direct Final Rule – Nonrural List

Need for Correction

As published, the final regulations (TD 9728) contain errors that may prove to be misleading and are in need of clarification.

Correction of Publication

Accordingly, the final regulations (TD 9728), that are subject to FR Doc. 2015-18816, are corrected as follows:

1. On page 45866, in the preamble, third column, last sentence of first full paragraph, the language “rules, including section 706(d)(2) and section 706(d)(3).” is corrected to read “rules, including section 704(c), § 1.704-3(a)(6) (reverse section 704(c)), section 706(d)(2), and section 706(d)(3).”

2. On page 45868, in the preamble, first column, fourth line from the bottom of the column, the language “interim closings of its books except at” is corrected to read “interim closing of its books except at”.

3. On page 45871, in the preamble, second column, third line from the bottom of the column, under paragraph heading “*v. Deemed Timing of Variations*,” the language “taxable year was deemed to close at the” is corrected to read “taxable year was deemed to occur at the”.

4. On page 45873, in the preamble, third column, eighth line from the bottom of the column, the language “taxable as of which the recipients of a” is corrected to read “taxable year as of which the recipients of a”.

5. On page 45874, second column, eight lines from the bottom of the column, the following sentence is added to the end of the paragraph: “These final regulations do not override the application of section 704(c), including reverse section 704(c), and therefore the final regulations provide that the rules of section 706 do not apply in making allocations of book items upon a partnership revaluation.”

6. On page 45876, in the preamble, second column, under paragraph heading “*Effective/Applicability Dates*”, fifth line of the first paragraph, the language “of a special rule applicable to § 1.704-” is corrected to read “of a special rule applicable to § 1.706-”.

7. On page 45876, in the preamble, second column, under paragraph heading “*Effective/Applicability Dates*”, third line of the second paragraph, the language “regulations apply to the partnership” is corrected to read “regulations apply to partnership”.

8. On page 45876, in the preamble, third column, fourth line from the top of the column, the language “that was formed prior to April 19, 2009.” is corrected to read “that was formed prior to April 14, 2009.”

9. On page 45877, first column, under paragraph heading “*List of Subjects*,” the fourth line, the language “26 CFR part 2” is corrected to read “26 CFR part 602”.

10. On page 45883, third column, the first line of the signature block, the language “Karen L. Schiller,” is corrected to read “Karen M. Schiller,”.

Martin V. Franks,

Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Legal Processing Division, Associate Chief Counsel (Procedure and Administration).

[FR Doc. 2015-28014 Filed 11-3-15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4830-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Forest Service****36 CFR Part 242****DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR****Fish and Wildlife Service****50 CFR Part 100**

[Docket No. FWS-R7-SM-2015-0156; FXRS12610700000-156-FF07J00000; FBMS#4500086366]

RIN 1018-BA82

Subsistence Management Regulations for Public Lands in Alaska; Rural Determinations, Nonrural List

AGENCY: Forest Service, Agriculture; Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Direct final rule.

SUMMARY: This rule revises the list of nonrural areas in Alaska identified by the Federal Subsistence Board (Board). Only residents of areas that are rural are eligible to participate in the Federal Subsistence Management Program on public lands in Alaska. Based on a Secretarial review of the rural determination process, and the subsequent change in the regulations governing this process, the Board is revising the current nonrural determinations to the list that existed prior to 2007. Accordingly, the community of Saxman and the area of Prudhoe Bay will be removed from the nonrural list. The following areas continue to be nonrural, but their boundaries will return to their original borders: the Kenai Area; the Wasilla/Palmer area; the Homer area; and the Ketchikan area.

DATES: This rule is effective on December 21, 2015 unless we receive significant adverse comments on or before December 4, 2015.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by one of the following methods:

- *Electronically:* Go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov> and search for FWS-R7-SM-2015-0156, which is the docket number for this rulemaking.

- *By hard copy:* U.S. mail or hand-delivery to: USFWS, Office of Subsistence Management, 1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121, Attn: Theo Matuskowitz, Anchorage, AK 99503-6199

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Chair, Federal Subsistence Board, c/o U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,

Attention: Eugene R. Peltola, Jr., Office of Subsistence Management; (907) 786-3888 or subsistence@fws.gov. For questions specific to National Forest System lands, contact Thomas Whitford, Regional Subsistence Program Leader, USDA, Forest Service, Alaska Region; (907) 743-9461 or twhitford@fs.fed.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background**

Under Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) (16 U.S.C. 3111-3126), the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture (Secretaries) jointly implement the Federal Subsistence Management Program (Program). This program provides a preference for take of fish and wildlife resources for subsistence uses on Federal public lands and waters in Alaska. Only residents of areas identified as rural are eligible to participate in the Program on Federal public lands in Alaska. Because this program is a joint effort between Interior and Agriculture, these regulations are located in two titles of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR): Title 36, “Parks, Forests, and Public Property,” and Title 50, “Wildlife and Fisheries,” at 36 CFR 242.1-242.28 and 50 CFR 100.1-100.28, respectively.

Consistent with these regulations, the Secretaries established a Federal Subsistence Board (Board) comprising Federal officials and public members to administer the Program. One of the Board’s responsibilities is to determine which communities or areas of the State are rural or nonrural. The Secretaries also divided Alaska into 10 subsistence resource regions, each of which is represented by a Regional Advisory Council (Council). The Council members represent varied geographical, cultural, and user interests within each region. The Councils provide a forum for rural residents with personal knowledge of local conditions and resource requirements to have a

meaningful role in the subsistence management of fish and wildlife on Federal public lands in Alaska.

Related Rulemaking

Elsewhere in today's **Federal Register** is a final rule that sets forth a new process by which the Board will make rural determinations ("Subsistence Management Regulations for Public Lands in Alaska; Rural Determination Process"). Please see that rule for background information on how this new process was developed and the extensive Council and public input that was considered. A summary of that information follows:

Until promulgation of the rule mentioned above, Federal subsistence regulations at 36 CFR 242.15 and 50 CFR 100.15 had required that the rural or nonrural status of communities or areas be reviewed every 10 years, beginning with the availability of the 2000 census data. Some data from the 2000 census was not compiled and available until 2005, so the Board published a proposed rule in 2006 to revise the list of nonrural areas recognized by the Board (71 FR 46416, August 14, 2006). The final rule published in the **Federal Register** on May 7, 2007 (72 FR 25688), and changed the rural determination for several communities or areas in Alaska. These communities had 5 years following the date of publication to come into compliance.

The Board met on January 20, 2012, and, among other things, decided to extend the compliance date of its 2007 final rule on rural determinations. A final rule published March 1, 2012 (77 FR 12477), that extended the compliance date until either the rural determination process and findings review were completed or 5 years, whichever came first. The 2007 regulations have remained in titles 36 and 50 of the CFR unchanged since their effective date.

The Board followed that action with a request for comments and announcement of public meetings (77 FR 77005; December 31, 2012) to receive public, Tribal, and Alaska Native Corporations input on the rural determination process. At their fall 2013 meetings, the Councils provided a public forum to hear from residents of their regions, deliberate on the rural determination process, and provide recommendations for changes to the Board. The Board also held hearings in Barrow, Ketchikan, Sitka, Kodiak, Bethel, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Kotzebue, Nome, and Dillingham to solicit comments on the rural determination process, and public testimony was

recorded. Government-to-government tribal consultations on the rural determination process were held between members of the Board and Federally recognized Tribes of Alaska. Additional consultations were held between members of the Board and Alaska Native Corporations.

Altogether, the Board received 475 substantive comments from various sources, including individuals, members of the Councils, and other entities or organizations, such as Alaska Native Corporations and borough governments. In general, this information indicated a broad dissatisfaction with the current rural determination process.

Based on this information, the Board at their public meeting held on April 17, 2014, elected to recommend a simplification of the process by determining which areas or communities are nonrural in Alaska; all other communities or areas would, therefore, be rural. The Board would make nonrural determinations using a comprehensive approach that considers population size and density, economic indicators, military presence, industrial facilities, use of fish and wildlife, degree of remoteness and isolation, and any other relevant material, including information provided by the public. The Board would rely heavily on the recommendations of the Councils. The Board developed a proposal that simplifies the process of rural determinations and submitted its recommendation to the Secretaries on August 15, 2014.

On November 24, 2014, the Secretaries requested that the Board initiate rulemaking to pursue the regulatory changes recommended by the Board. The Secretaries also requested that the Board obtain Council recommendations and public input, and conduct Tribal and Alaska Native Corporation consultation on the proposed changes.

The Departments published a proposed rule on January 28, 2015 (80 FR 4521), to revise the regulations governing the rural determination process in subpart B of 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100. Following a process that involved substantial Council and public input, the Departments published the final rule that may be found elsewhere in today's **Federal Register**.

Direct Final Rule

During that process, the Board went on to address a starting point for nonrural communities and areas. The May 7, 2007 (72 FR 25688), final rule was justified by the Board's January 3,

1991, notice (56 FR 236) adopting final rural and nonrural determinations and the final rule of May 7, 2002 (67 FR 30559), amending 36 CFR 242.23(a) and 50 CFR 100.23(a) to add the Kenai Peninsula communities (Kenai, Soldotna, Sterling, Nikiski, Salamatof, Kalifornsky, Kasilof, Clam Gulch, Anchor Point, Homer, Kachemak City, Fritz Creek, Moose Pass, and Seward) to the list of areas determined to be nonrural. The 2007 rule added the village of Saxman and the area of Prudhoe Bay to the nonrural list and expanded the nonrural boundaries of the Kenai Area; the Wasilla/Palmer area; the Homer area; and the Ketchikan Area.

Since the 2007 final rule (72 FR 25688; May 7, 2007) was contentious, and so many comments were received objecting to the changes imposed by that rule, the Board has decided to return to the rural determinations prior to the 2007 final rule. The Board further decided that the most expedient method to enact their decisions was to publish this direct final rule adopting the pre-2007 nonrural determinations. As a result, the Board has determined the following areas to be nonrural: Fairbanks North Star Borough; Homer area—including Homer, Anchor Point, Kachemak City, and Fritz Creek; Juneau area—including Juneau, West Juneau, and Douglas; Kenai area—including Kenai, Soldotna, Sterling, Nikiski, Salamatof, Kalifornsky, Kasilof, and Clam Gulch; Ketchikan area—including Ketchikan City, Clover Pass, North Tongass Highway, Ketchikan East, Mountain Point, Herring Cove, Saxman East, Pennock Island, and parts of Gravina Island; Municipality of Anchorage; Seward area—including Seward and Moose Pass, Valdez, and Wasilla area—including Palmer, Wasilla, Sutton, Big Lake, Houston, and Bodenbergs Butte.

These final regulations reflect Board review and consideration of Council recommendations, Tribal and Alaska Native Corporations government-to-government tribal consultations, and public comments. Based on concerns expressed by some of the Councils and members of the public, the Board went on to direct staff to develop options for the Board to consider and for presentation to the Councils, to address future nonrural determinations. These options will be presented to the Board and Chairs of each Council at the January 12, 2016, public meeting.

We are publishing this rule without a prior proposal because we view this action as an administrative action by the Federal Subsistence Board. This rule will be effective, as specified above in DATES, unless we receive significant

adverse comments on or before the deadline set forth in DATES. Significant adverse comments are comments that provide strong justifications why the rule should not be adopted or for changing the rule. If we receive significant adverse comments, we will publish a notice in the **Federal Register** withdrawing this rule before the effective date. If no significant adverse comments are received, we will publish a document in the **Federal Register** confirming the effective date.

Because this rule concerns public lands managed by an agency or agencies in both the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior, identical text will be incorporated into 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100.

Conformance With Statutory and Regulatory Authorities

Administrative Procedure Act Compliance

In compliance with Administrative Procedure Act, the Board has provided extensive opportunity for public input and involvement in its efforts to improve the rural determination process as described in the related final rule published elsewhere in today's **Federal Register**. In addition, anyone with concerns about this rulemaking action may submit comments as specified in **DATES** and **ADDRESSES**.

National Environmental Policy Act Compliance

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement that described four alternatives for developing a Federal Subsistence Management Program was distributed for public comment on October 7, 1991. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was published on February 28, 1992. The Record of Decision (ROD) on Subsistence Management for Federal Public Lands in Alaska was signed April 6, 1992. The selected alternative in the FEIS (Alternative IV) defined the administrative framework of an annual regulatory cycle for subsistence regulations.

A 1997 environmental assessment dealt with the expansion of Federal jurisdiction over fisheries and is available at the office listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. The Secretary of the Interior, with concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture, determined that expansion of Federal jurisdiction does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the human environment and, therefore, signed a Finding of No Significant Impact.

Section 810 of ANILCA

An ANILCA section 810 analysis was completed as part of the FEIS process on the Federal Subsistence Management Program. The intent of all Federal subsistence regulations is to accord subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on public lands a priority over the taking of fish and wildlife on such lands for other purposes, unless restriction is necessary to conserve healthy fish and wildlife populations. The final section 810 analysis determination appeared in the April 6, 1992, ROD and concluded that the Program, under Alternative IV with an annual process for setting subsistence regulations, may have some local impacts on subsistence uses, but will not likely restrict subsistence uses significantly.

During the subsequent environmental assessment process for extending fisheries jurisdiction, an evaluation of the effects of this rule was conducted in accordance with section 810. That evaluation also supported the Secretaries' determination that the rule will not reach the "may significantly restrict" threshold that would require notice and hearings under ANILCA section 810(a).

Paperwork Reduction Act

An agency may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. This rule does not contain any new collections of information that require OMB approval. OMB has reviewed and approved the collections of information associated with the subsistence regulations at 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100, and assigned OMB Control Number 1018-0075, which expires February 29, 2016.

Regulatory Planning and Review (Executive Orders 12866 and 13563)

Executive Order 12866 provides that the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) in the Office of Management and Budget will review all significant rules. OIRA has determined that this rule is not significant.

Executive Order 13563 reaffirms the principles of E.O. 12866 while calling for improvements in the nation's regulatory system to promote predictability, to reduce uncertainty, and to use the best, most innovative, and least burdensome tools for achieving regulatory ends. The executive order directs agencies to consider regulatory approaches that reduce burdens and maintain flexibility and freedom of choice for the public

where these approaches are relevant, feasible, and consistent with regulatory objectives. E.O. 13563 emphasizes further that regulations must be based on the best available science and that the rulemaking process must allow for public participation and an open exchange of ideas. We have developed this rule in a manner consistent with these requirements.

Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980 (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*) requires preparation of flexibility analyses for rules that will have a significant effect on a substantial number of small entities, which include small businesses, organizations, or governmental jurisdictions. In general, the resources to be harvested under this rule are already being harvested and consumed by the local harvester and do not result in an additional dollar benefit to the economy. However, we estimate that two million pounds of meat are harvested by subsistence users annually and, if given an estimated dollar value of \$3.00 per pound, this amount would equate to about \$6 million in food value Statewide. Based upon the amounts and values cited above, the Departments certify that this rulemaking will not have a significant economic effect on a substantial number of small entities within the meaning of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act

Under the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (5 U.S.C. 801 *et seq.*), this rule is not a major rule. It does not have an effect on the economy of \$100 million or more, will not cause a major increase in costs or prices for consumers, and does not have significant adverse effects on competition, employment, investment, productivity, innovation, or the ability of U.S.-based enterprises to compete with foreign-based enterprises.

Executive Order 12630

Title VIII of ANILCA requires the Secretaries to administer a subsistence priority on public lands. The scope of this Program is limited by definition to certain public lands. Likewise, these regulations have no potential takings of private property implications as defined by Executive Order 12630.

Unfunded Mandates Reform Act

The Secretaries have determined and certify pursuant to the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act, 2 U.S.C. 1502 *et seq.*, that this rulemaking will not impose a cost of \$100 million or more

in any given year on local or State governments or private entities. The implementation of this rule is by Federal agencies and there is no cost imposed on any State or local entities or tribal governments.

Executive Order 12988

The Secretaries have determined that these regulations meet the applicable standards provided in sections 3(a) and 3(b)(2) of Executive Order 12988, regarding civil justice reform.

Executive Order 13132

In accordance with Executive Order 13132, the rule does not have sufficient Federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism summary impact statement. Title VIII of ANILCA precludes the State from exercising subsistence management authority over fish and wildlife resources on Federal lands unless it meets certain requirements.

Executive Order 13175

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Title VIII, does not provide specific rights to tribes for the subsistence taking of wildlife, fish, and shellfish. However, the Secretaries, through the Board, provided Federally recognized Tribes and Alaska Native corporations opportunities to consult on this rule. Consultation with Alaska Native corporations are based on Public Law 108–199, div. H, Sec. 161, Jan. 23, 2004, 118 Stat. 452, as amended by Public Law 108–447, div. H, title V, Sec. 518, Dec. 8, 2004, 118 Stat. 3267, which provides that: “The Director of the Office of Management and Budget and all Federal agencies shall hereafter consult with Alaska Native corporations on the same basis as Indian tribes under Executive Order No. 13175.”

The Secretaries, through the Board, provided a variety of opportunities for consultation on the rural determination process: commenting on changes under consideration for the existing regulations; engaging in dialogue at the Council meetings; engaging in dialogue at the Board’s meetings; and providing input in person, by mail, email, or phone at any time during the rulemaking process.

Since 2007 multiple opportunities were provided by the Board for Federally recognized Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations to consult on the subject of rural determinations. Federally recognized Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations were notified by mail and telephone and were given the opportunity to attend in person or via teleconference.

Executive Order 13211

This Executive Order requires agencies to prepare Statements of Energy Effects when undertaking certain actions. However, this rule is not a significant regulatory action under E.O. 13211, affecting energy supply, distribution, or use, and no Statement of Energy Effects is required.

Drafting Information

Theo Matuskowitz drafted these regulations under the guidance of Eugene R. Peltola, Jr. of the Office of Subsistence Management, Alaska Regional Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage, Alaska. Additional assistance was provided by

- Daniel Sharp, Alaska State Office, Bureau of Land Management;
- Mary McBurney, Alaska Regional Office, National Park Service;
- Dr. Glenn Chen, Alaska Regional Office, Bureau of Indian Affairs;
- Trevor T. Fox, Alaska Regional Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and
- Thomas Whitford, Alaska Regional Office, U.S. Forest Service.

Authority

This rule is issued under the authority of Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) (16 U.S.C. 3111–3126).

List of Subjects

36 CFR Part 242

Administrative practice and procedure, Alaska, Fish, National forests, Public lands, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Wildlife.

50 CFR Part 100

Administrative practice and procedure, Alaska, Fish, National forests, Public lands, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Wildlife.

Regulation Promulgation

For the reasons set out in the preamble, the Secretaries amend 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100 as set forth below.

PART—SUBSISTENCE MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS FOR PUBLIC LANDS IN ALASKA

■ 1. The authority citation for both 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 3, 472, 551, 668dd, 3101–3126; 18 U.S.C. 3551–3586; 43 U.S.C. 1733.

Subpart C—Board Determinations

■ 2. In subpart C of 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100, § 1.23 is revised to read as follows:

§ 1.23 Rural determinations.

(a) The Board has determined all communities and areas to be rural in accordance with § .15 except the following: Fairbanks North Star Borough; Homer area—including Homer, Anchor Point, Kachemak City, and Fritz Creek; Juneau area—including Juneau, West Juneau, and Douglas; Kenai area—including Kenai, Soldotna, Sterling, Nikiski, Salamatof, Kalifornsky, Kasilof, and Clam Gulch; Ketchikan area—including Ketchikan City, Clover Pass, North Tongass Highway, Ketchikan East, Mountain Point, Herring Cove, Saxman East, Pennock Island, and parts of Gravina Island; Municipality of Anchorage; Seward area—including Seward and Moose Pass, Valdez, and Wasilla/Palmer area—including Wasilla, Palmer, Sutton, Big Lake, Houston, and Bodenberg Butte.

(b) You may obtain maps delineating the boundaries of nonrural areas from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the Alaska Regional Office address provided at 50 CFR 2.2(g), or on the Web at <https://www.doi.gov/subsistence>.

Dated: September 30, 2015.

Eugene R. Peltola, Jr.,

Assistant Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Acting Chair, Federal Subsistence Board.

Dated: September 30, 2015.

Thomas Whitford,

Subsistence Program Leader, USDA – Forest Service.

[FR Doc. 2015–27996 Filed 10–30–15; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–11–4333–15–P

FISHERIES RESOURCE MONITORING PROGRAM NORTHWEST ARCTIC ALASKA OVERVIEW

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 monitoring, and effectively communicate information needed for subsistence fisheries management on Federal public lands.

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 project proposals submitted for funding consideration. The Regional Advisory Councils provide strategic priorities 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 the successful proposals on to the Assistant Regional Director of OSM for final approval and funding.

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**). The regional guidelines were developed by the Federal Subsistence Board 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.

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%

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. 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.

PRIORITY INFORMATION NEEDS

OSM staff works with the Regional Advisory Councils, Federal and State fishery managers and land managers to ensure the Monitoring Program focuses on the highest priority information needs for management of Federal subsistence fisheries. Input from the Regional Advisory Councils is used to develop the Priority Information Needs by identify issues of local concerns and knowledge gaps related to subsistence fisheries. The Priority Information Needs provide a framework for evaluating and selecting project proposal. Successful projects proposal selection may not be limited to the identified Priority Information Needs but project proposals not addressing a priority information need must include compelling justification with respect to strategic importance.

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. 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.

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.
2. **Technical-Scientific Merit** - Technical quality of the study design must meet accepted standards for information collection, compilation, analysis, and reporting.

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.
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. Investigators are requested to include a strategy for integrating local capacity development in their investigation plans.
5. **Cost Benefit** – Each proposal is evaluated for “best value” and overall project costs.

PROJECTS FUNDED UNDER THE MONITORING PROGRAM

Since the inception of the Monitoring Program in 2000, 25 projects have been funded in the Northwest Arctic Area including three new projects operating during 2016 (**Table 2**).

Table 2. Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program projects funded in the Northwest Arctic Region from 2000 to 2016

Project Number	Project Title	Project Cost
00-001	Northwestern Dolly Varden and Arctic Char Stock Identification	\$91,000
00-002	Hotham Inlet Kotzebue Winter Subsistence Sheefish Harvest	\$41,500
01-136	Northwestern Alaska Dolly Varden Genetic Diversity	\$198,000
01-137	Northwestern Alaska Dolly Varden Spawning Stock Assessment	\$737,800
02-023	Qaluich Nigingnaqtuat: Fish That We Eat	\$48,027
02-040	Kotzebue Sound Whitefish Traditional Knowledge	\$56,003
03-016	Selawik River Harvest ID, Spring and Fall Subsistence Fisheries	\$43,628
04-101	Selawik River Inconnu Spawning Abundance	\$432,016
04-102	Selawik Refuge Whitefish Migration and Habitat Use	\$222,500
04-109	Wulik River Dolly Varden Wintering Stocks	\$115,272
04-157	Exploring Approaches to Sustainable Fisheries Harvest Assessment	\$127,300

FRMP Priority Information Needs

07-151	Northwest Alaska Subsistence Fish Harvest Patterns and Trends	\$340,363
08-103	Kobuk River Sheefish Spawning and Run Timing	\$199,855
10-100	Selawik Drainage Sheefish Winter Movement Patterns	\$569,819
10-104	Selawik Lake and Hotham Inlet Sheefish Genetic Analysis	\$328,565
10-151	Bering Strait Non-Salmon Fish Local Ecological Knowledge	\$427,751
10-152	Northwest Alaska Climate Change and Subsistence Fisheries	\$54,000
12-100	Selawik River Sheefish Age Structure and Spawning Abundance	\$307,797
12-103	Spawning location and run timing and Kobuk River Sheefish Assessment	\$41,400
12-104	Evaluation of the Overwintering Noatak River Dolly Varden	\$223,321
12-153	Northwest Alaska Fisheries Harvest Surveys	\$442,129
14-104	Selawik River Sheefish Age Structure and Spawning Abundance	\$290,798
16-103	Genetic Diversity of Dolly Varden the Kobuk River	\$21,500
16-104	Selawik River Sheefish Age Structure and Spawning Abundance	\$390,560
16-105	Spawning Abundance of Kobuk River Sheefish Abundance	\$183,592
Total		\$5,934,496

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(11 Aug 2016)

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
For
Coordinated Interagency Fish and Wildlife Management for Subsistence Uses on Federal
Public Lands in Alaska

between the

Federal Subsistence Board
(U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of
Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Secretarial Appointees)

and

State of Alaska
(Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and Alaska Board of Fisheries and
Alaska Board of Game (State Boards))

I. PREAMBLE

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Federal Subsistence Board and the State of Alaska establishes guidelines to coordinate management of subsistence uses of fish and wildlife resources on Federal public lands in Alaska.

WHEREAS, the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior (Secretaries), by authority of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) and other laws of Congress, regulations, and policies, are responsible for ensuring that the taking of fish and wildlife for nonwasteful subsistence uses on Federal public lands, as discussed in ANILCA §802(2) and defined in ANILCA §803, shall be accorded priority over the taking on such lands of fish and wildlife for other purposes as provided for in ANILCA §804; and that the Secretaries are responsible for protecting and providing the opportunity for rural residents of Alaska to engage in a subsistence way of life on Federal public lands in Alaska, consistent with the conservation of healthy populations of fish and wildlife and recognized scientific principles; and that these lands are defined in ANILCA §102 and Federal regulation (36 CFR Part 242 and 50 CFR Part 100); and that the Secretaries primarily implement this priority through the Federal Subsistence Board, providing for public participation through Regional Advisory Councils and Subsistence Resource Commissions as authorized by ANILCA §805 and §808 and Federal regulations (above); and,

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska, under its laws and regulations, is responsible for the management, protection, maintenance, enhancement, rehabilitation, and extension of the fish and wildlife resources of the State of Alaska on the sustained yield principle, subject to preferences among beneficial uses, such as providing a priority for subsistence harvest and use of fish and wildlife (where such uses are customary and traditional), and implements its program through the State Boards and the ADF&G, providing for public participation

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through Advisory Committees authorized in the State's laws and regulations (Alaska Statutes Title 16; Alaska Administrative Code Title 5) and through Alaska Administrative Procedure Act; and,

WHEREAS, ANILCA, Title VIII, authorizes the Secretaries to enter into cooperative agreements in order to accomplish the purposes and policies of Title VIII, and the Federal Subsistence Board and the State of Alaska believe it is in the best interests of the fish and wildlife resources and the public to enter into this Memorandum of Understanding;

THEREFORE, the signatories endorse coordination of Federal and State regulatory processes and the collection and exchange of data and information relative to fish and wildlife populations and their use necessary for subsistence management on Federal public lands. This MOU forms the basis for such cooperation and coordination among the parties with regard to subsistence management of fish and wildlife resources on Federal public lands.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this MOU is to provide a foundation and direction for coordinated interagency fish and wildlife management for subsistence uses on Federal public lands, consistent with specific Federal and State authorities as stated above, that will protect and promote the sustained health of fish and wildlife populations, ensure conservation of healthy populations and stability in fish and wildlife management, and include meaningful public involvement. The signatories hereby enter this MOU to accomplish this purpose and to establish guidelines for subsequent agreements and protocols to implement coordinated management of fish and wildlife resources used for subsistence purposes on Federal public lands in Alaska.

III. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1) Ensure conservation of fish and wildlife resources while providing for continued uses of fish and wildlife, including a priority for subsistence uses, through interagency subsistence management and regulatory programs that promote coordination, cooperation, and exchange of information between Federal and State agencies, regulatory bodies, Regional Advisory Councils, Subsistence Resource Commissions, State Advisory Committees, state and local organizations, tribes and/or other Alaska Native organizations, and other entities;
- 2) Recognize that wildlife management activities on Federal public lands, other than the subsistence take and use of fish and wildlife remain within the authority of the individual land management agencies.
- 3) Use the best available information, including scientific, cultural and local knowledge and knowledge of customary and traditional uses, for decisions regarding fish and wildlife management for subsistence uses on Federal public lands;

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- 4) Avoid duplication in research, monitoring, and management;
- 5) Involve subsistence and other users in the fisheries and wildlife management planning processes;
- 6) Promote stability in fish and wildlife management and minimize unnecessary disruption to subsistence and other uses of fish and wildlife resources; and
- 7) Promote clear and enforceable hunting, fishing, and trapping regulations.

**IV. THE FEDERAL SUBSISTENCE BOARD AND STATE OF ALASKA
MUTUALLY AGREE**

- 1) To cooperate and coordinate their respective research, monitoring, regulatory, and management actions to help ensure the conservation of fish and wildlife populations for subsistence use on Federal public lands.
- 2) To recognize that fish and wildlife population data and information, including local knowledge of customary and traditional uses, are important components of successful implementation of Federal responsibilities under ANILCA Title VIII.
- 3) To recognize a Federal priority for rural residents on Federal public lands for subsistence uses of fish and wildlife resources. Additionally, to allow for other uses of fish and wildlife resources when harvestable surpluses are sufficient, consistent with ANILCA and Alaska Statute 16.05.
- 4) To recognize that cooperative funding agreements implementing the provisions of this MOU be negotiated when necessary and as authorized by ANILCA §809 and other appropriate statutory authorities. Federal funding agreements for cooperative research and monitoring studies of subsistence resources with organizations representing local subsistence users and others are, and will continue to be, an important component of information gathering and management programs.
- 5) To recognize that Federal and State scientific standards for conservation of fish and wildlife populations are generally compatible. When differences interpreting data are identified, the involved agencies should appoint representatives to seek resolution of the differences.
- 6) To cooperatively pursue the development of information to clarify Federal and State regulations for the public.
- 7) To recognize that the signatories establish protocols or other procedures that address data collection and information management, data analysis and review, in-season fisheries and wildlife management, and other key activities and issues jointly agreed upon that affect subsistence uses on Federal public lands. (See Appendix)

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- 8) To have Federal and State staff work cooperatively with Regional Advisory Councils, Subsistence Resource Commissions, State Advisory Committees, tribes and other stakeholders, as appropriate, to review data analyses associated with regulatory proposals, harvest assessment and monitoring studies, and subsistence resource management.
- 9) To designate liaisons for policy and program communications and coordination between the Federal and State programs.
- 10) To provide adequate opportunity for the appropriate Federal and State agencies to review analyses and justifications associated with special actions and emergency orders affecting subsistence uses on Federal public lands, prior to implementing such actions. Where possible and as required, Federal and State agencies will provide advance notice to Regional Advisory Council, Subsistence Resource Commission, and/or State Advisory Committee representatives, tribes and other interested members of the public before issuing special actions or emergency orders. Where conservation of the resource or continuation of subsistence uses is of immediate concern, the review shall not delay timely management action.
- 11) To cooperatively review existing, and develop as needed, Federal subsistence management plans and State fish and wildlife management plans that affect subsistence uses on Federal public lands. Provide an opportunity for Regional Advisory Council, Subsistence Resource Commission and/or State Advisory Committee representatives, tribes and other public to participate in the review. Consider Federal, State and cooperative fish and wildlife management plans as the initial basis for any management actions so long as they provide for subsistence priorities. Procedures for management plan reviews and revisions will be developed by the respective Federal and State Boards in a protocol.
- 12) To use the State's harvest reporting and assessment systems supplemented by information from other sources to monitor subsistence uses of fish and wildlife resources on Federal public lands. In some cases, Federal subsistence seasons, harvest limits, or data needs necessitate separate Federal subsistence permits and harvest reports.
- 13) To ensure that local residents, tribes and other users will have meaningful involvement in subsistence wildlife and fisheries regulatory processes that affect subsistence uses on Federal public lands.

V. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- 1) No member of, or Delegate to, Congress shall be admitted to any share or part of this document, or to any benefit that may arise from it.
- 2) This MOU is complementary to and is not intended to replace the Master Memoranda of Understanding between the individual Federal agencies and ADF&G, with the exception of specific Federal responsibilities for subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on

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Federal public lands. Supplemental protocols to this document may be developed to promote further interaction and coordination among the parties.

- 3) Nothing herein is intended to conflict with Federal, State, or local laws or regulations.
- 4) Nothing in this MOU enlarges or diminishes each party's existing responsibilities and authorities.
- 5) Upon signing, the parties shall each designate an individual and an alternate to serve as the principal contact or liaison for implementation of this MOU.
- 6) This MOU becomes effective upon signing by all signatories and will remain in force until such time as the Secretary of the Interior determines that the State of Alaska has implemented a subsistence management program in compliance with Title VIII of ANILCA, or, signatories terminate their participation in this MOU by providing 60 days written notice. Termination of participation by one signatory has no impact on this MOU's effectiveness between the remaining signatories.
- 7) Regional Advisory Councils, Subsistence Resource Commissions and State Advisory Committees will be asked annually to provide comments to the signatories concerning Federal/State coordination. The signatories will meet annually or more frequently if necessary, to review coordinated programs established under this MOU, to consider Regional Advisory Council, Subsistence Resource Commission and State Advisory Committee comments, and to consider modifications to this MOU that would further improve interagency working relationships. Any modifications of this MOU shall be made by mutual consent of the signatories, in writing, signed and dated by all parties.
- 8) Nothing in this document shall be construed as obligating the signatories to expend funds or involving the United States or the State of Alaska in any contract or other obligations for the future payment of money, except as may be negotiated in future cooperative funding agreements.
- 9) This MOU establishes guidelines and mutual management goals by which the signatories shall coordinate, but does not create legally enforceable obligations or rights.
- 10) This MOU does not restrict the signatories from participating in similar agreements with other public or private agencies, tribes, organizations, and individuals.

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SIGNATORIES

In WITNESS THEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this MOU as of the last date written bellow.

Commissioner
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Date:

Chair of the Federal Subsistence Board
Date:

Chair
Alaska Board of Fisheries
Date:

Regional Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Date:

Chair
Alaska Board of Game
Date:

Regional Forester
USDA Forest Service
Date:

Regional Director
National Park Service
Date:

State Director
Bureau of Land Management
Date:

Regional Director
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Date:

Member of the Federal Subsistence Board
Date:

Member of the Federal Subsistence Board
Date:

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APPENDIX

SCOPE FOR PROTOCOLS AND/OR PROCEDURES

- 1) Joint technical committees or workgroups may be appointed to develop protocols and/or procedures.
- 2) Individual protocols and/or procedures should:
 - a. Be developed by an interagency committee. The committee shall involve, as appropriate, Regional Advisory Council, Subsistence Resource Commissions and/or State Advisory Committee representatives and other Federal/State regional or technical experts.
 - b. Identify the subject or topic of the protocol and provide justification.
 - c. Identify the parties to the protocol.
 - d. Identify the process to be used for implementing the protocol.
 - e. Provide for appropriate involvement of Regional Advisory Councils, Subsistence Resource Commissions and/or State Advisory Committees, tribes and/or other Alaska Native organizations, governmental organizations, and other affected members of the public when implementing protocols.
 - f. Specify technical committee or workgroup memberships.
 - g. Develop a timeline to complete tasks.
 - h. Identify funding obligations of the parties.
 - i. Define the mechanism to be used for review and evaluation.
- 3) Protocols or procedures require concurrence by the land agencies party to the specific protocols as appropriate and prior to implementation.

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.



applicants by the proposed priority would be limited to paperwork burden related to preparing an application for a discretionary grant program that is using the priority in its competition. Because the costs of carrying out activities would be paid for with program funds, the costs of implementation would not be a burden for any eligible applicants, including small entities.

Regulatory Flexibility Act Certification: For these reasons as well, the Secretary certifies that these proposed regulations would not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

Intergovernmental Review: Some of the programs affected by this proposed priority are subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. One of the objectives of the Executive order is to foster an intergovernmental partnership and a strengthened federalism. The Executive order relies on processes developed by State and local governments for coordination and review of proposed Federal financial assistance.

This document provides early notification of our specific plans and actions for these programs.

Accessible Format: Individuals with disabilities can obtain this document in an accessible format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc) on request to the program contact person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

Electronic Access to This Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the **Federal Register**. Free Internet access to the official edition of the **Federal Register** and the Code of Federal Regulations is available via the Federal Digital System at: www.gpo.gov/fdsys. At this site you can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the **Federal Register**, in text or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF). To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at the site.

You may also access documents of the Department published in the **Federal Register** by using the article search feature at: www.federalregister.gov. Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

John B. King, Jr.,

Secretary of Education.

[FR Doc. 2016-13456 Filed 6-7-16; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

36 CFR Part 242

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 100

[Docket No. FWS-R7-SM-2015-0159; FXRS1261070000167-FF07J00000; FBMS# 4500088147]

RIN 1018-BB22

Subsistence Management Regulations for Public Lands in Alaska—Applicability and Scope; Tongass National Forest Submerged Lands

AGENCY: Forest Service, Agriculture; Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: The U.S. District Court for Alaska in its October 17, 2011, order in *Peratrovich et al. v. United States and the State of Alaska*, 3:92-cv-0734-HRH (D. Alaska), enjoined the United States “to promptly initiate regulatory proceedings for the purpose of implementing the subsistence provisions in Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) with respect to submerged public lands within Tongass National Forest” and directed entry of judgment. To comply with the order, the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) must initiate a regulatory proceeding to identify those submerged lands within the Tongass National Forest that did not pass to the State of Alaska at statehood and, therefore, remain Federal public lands subject to the subsistence provisions of ANILCA.

Following the Court’s decision, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the USDA–Forest Service (USDA–FS) started a review of hundreds of potential pre-statehood (January 3, 1959) withdrawals in the marine waters of the Tongass National Forest. In April and October of 2015, BLM submitted initial lists of submerged public lands to the Board. This proposed rule would add those submerged parcels to the subsistence regulations to ensure compliance with the Court order. Additional listings will be published as BLM and the USDA–FS continue their review of pre-statehood withdrawals.

DATES: *Public comments:* Comments on this proposed rule must be received or postmarked by August 8, 2016.

Public meetings: The Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils

(Councils) will hold public meetings to receive comments on this proposed rule on several dates between September 28 and November 2, 2016, and make recommendations to the Federal Subsistence Board. The Board will discuss and evaluate proposed regulatory changes during a public meeting in Anchorage, AK, in January 2017. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific information on dates and locations of the public meetings.

ADDRESSES: *Public meetings:* The Federal Subsistence Board and the Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils’ public meetings will be held at various locations in Alaska. See **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** for specific information on dates and locations of the public meetings.

Public comments: You may submit comments by one of the following methods:

- *Electronically:* Go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov> and search for FWS-R7-SM-2015-0159, which is the docket number for this rulemaking.
- *By hard copy:* U.S. mail or hand-delivery to: USFWS, Office of Subsistence Management, 1011 East Tudor Road, MS 121, Attn: Theo Matuskowitz, Anchorage, AK 99503–6199.

We will post all comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>. This generally means that we will post any personal information you provide us (see the Public Review Process section below for more information).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Chair, Federal Subsistence Board, c/o U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Attention: Eugene R. Peltola, Jr., Office of Subsistence Management; (907) 786–3888 or subsistence@fws.gov. For questions specific to National Forest System lands, contact Thomas Whitford, Regional Subsistence Program Leader, USDA, Forest Service, Alaska Region; (907) 743–9461 or twhitford@fs.fed.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Under Title VIII of ANILCA (16 U.S.C. 3111–3126), the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture (Secretaries) jointly implement the Federal Subsistence Management Program. This program provides a preference for take of fish and wildlife resources for subsistence uses on Federal public lands and waters in Alaska. The Secretaries published temporary regulations to carry out this program in the **Federal Register** on June 29, 1990 (55 FR 27114), and published final regulations in the **Federal Register**

on May 29, 1992 (57 FR 22940). The program regulations have subsequently been amended a number of times. Because this program is a joint effort between Interior and Agriculture, these regulations are located in two titles of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR): Title 36, "Parks, Forests, and Public Property," and Title 50, "Wildlife and Fisheries," at 36 CFR 242.1–242.28 and 50 CFR 100.1–100.28, respectively. The regulations contain subparts as follows: Subpart A, General Provisions; Subpart B, Program Structure; Subpart C, Board Determinations; and Subpart D, Subsistence Taking of Fish and Wildlife. Consistent with subpart B of these regulations, the Secretaries established a Federal Subsistence Board to administer the Federal Subsistence Management Program (Program). The Board comprises:

- A Chair appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture;
- The Alaska Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service;
- The Alaska Regional Director, National Park Service;
- The Alaska State Director, Bureau of Land Management;
- The Alaska Regional Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs;
- The Alaska Regional Forester, U.S. Forest Service; and
- Two public members appointed by the Secretary of the Interior with concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture.

Through the Board, these agencies and public members participate in the development of regulations for subparts C and D, which, among other things, set forth program eligibility and specific harvest seasons and limits.

In administering the program, the Secretaries divided Alaska into 10 subsistence resource regions, each of which is represented by a Regional Advisory Council (Council). The Councils provide a forum for rural residents with personal knowledge of local conditions and resource requirements to have a meaningful role in the subsistence management of fish and wildlife on Federal public lands in Alaska. The Council members represent varied geographical, cultural, and user interests within each region.

Public Review Process—Comments and Public Meetings

The Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils have a substantial role in reviewing this proposed rule and making recommendations for the final rule. The Federal Subsistence Board, through the Councils, will hold public meetings on this proposed rule at the

following locations in Alaska, on the following dates:

- Region 1—Southeast Regional Council, Petersburg, October 4, 2016
- Region 2—Southcentral Regional Council, Anchorage, October 18, 2016
- Region 3—Kodiak/Aleutians Regional Council, Cold Bay, September 28, 2016
- Region 4—Bristol Bay Regional Council, Dillingham, October 26, 2016
- Region 5—Yukon–Kuskokwim Delta Regional Council, Bethel, October 12, 2016
- Region 6—Western Interior Regional Council, McGrath, October 11, 2016
- Region 7—Seward Peninsula Regional Council, Nome, November 1, 2016
- Region 8—Northwest Arctic Regional Council, Selawik, October 5, 2016
- Region 9—Eastern Interior Regional Council, Fort Yukon, October 25, 2016
- Region 10—North Slope Regional Council, Barrow, November 1, 2016

A public notice of specific dates, times, and meeting locations will be published in local and statewide newspapers prior to each meeting. Locations and dates may change based on weather or local circumstances. The Regional Advisory Council's agenda determines the length of each Council meeting based on workload.

The Board will discuss and evaluate submitted comments and public testimony on this proposed rule during a public meeting scheduled for January 2017 in Anchorage, Alaska. The Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Chairs, or their designated representatives, will present their respective Councils' recommendations at the Board meeting. Additional public testimony may be provided to the Board on this proposed rule at that time. At that public meeting, the Board will deliberate and make final recommendations to the Secretaries on this proposed rule.

You may submit written comments and materials concerning this proposed rule by one of the methods listed in **ADDRESSES**. If you submit a comment via <http://www.regulations.gov>, your entire comment, including any personal identifying information, will be posted on the Web site. If you submit a hardcopy comment that includes personal identifying information, you may request at the top of your document that we withhold this information from public review. However, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. We will post all hardcopy comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>.

Comments and materials we receive, as well as supporting documentation we

used in preparing this proposed rule, will be available for public inspection on <http://www.regulations.gov>, or by appointment, between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays, at: USFWS, Office of Subsistence Management, 1011 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, AK 99503.

Reasonable Accommodations

The Federal Subsistence Board is committed to providing access to these meetings for all participants. Please direct all requests for sign language interpreting services, closed captioning, or other accommodation needs to Deborah Coble, 907–786–3880, subsistence@fws.gov, or 800–877–8339 (TTY), seven business days prior to the meeting you would like to attend.

Tribal Consultation and Comment

As expressed in Executive Order 13175, "Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments," the Federal officials that have been delegated authority by the Secretaries are committed to honoring the unique government-to-government political relationship that exists between the Federal Government and Federally Recognized Indian Tribes (Tribes) as listed in 75 FR 60810 (October 1, 2010). Consultation with Alaska Native corporations is based on Public Law 108–199, div. H, Sec. 161, Jan. 23, 2004, 118 Stat. 452, as amended by Public Law 108–447, div. H, title V, Sec. 518, Dec. 8, 2004, 118 Stat. 3267, which provides that: "The Director of the Office of Management and Budget and all Federal agencies shall hereafter consult with Alaska Native corporations on the same basis as Indian tribes under Executive Order No. 13175."

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act does not provide specific rights to Tribes for the subsistence taking of wildlife, fish, and shellfish. However, because tribal members are affected by subsistence fishing, hunting, and trapping regulations, the Secretaries, through the Board, will provide Federally recognized Tribes and Alaska Native corporations an opportunity to consult on this proposed rule.

The Board will engage in outreach efforts for this proposed rule, including a notification letter, to ensure that Tribes and Alaska Native corporations are advised of the mechanisms by which they can participate. The Board provides a variety of opportunities for consultation: Proposing changes to the existing rule; commenting on proposed changes to the existing rule; engaging in dialogue at the Regional Advisory Council meetings; engaging in dialogue

at the Board's meetings; and providing input in person, by mail, email, or phone at any time during the rulemaking process. The Board will commit to efficiently and adequately providing an opportunity to Tribes and Alaska Native corporations for consultation in regard to subsistence rulemaking.

The Board will consider Tribes' and Alaska Native corporations' information, input, and recommendations, and address their concerns as much as practicable.

Jurisdictional Background and Perspective

The *Peratrovich* case dates back to 1992 and has a long and involved procedural history. The plaintiffs in that litigation raised the question of which marine waters in the Tongass National Forest, if any, are subject to the jurisdiction of the Federal Subsistence Management Program. In its May 31, 2011, order, the U.S. District Court for Alaska (Court) stated that "it is the duty of the Secretaries [Agriculture & Interior] to identify any submerged lands (and the marine waters overlying them) within the Tongass National Forest to which the United States holds title." It also stated that, if such title exists, it "creates an interest in [the overlying] waters sufficient to make those marine waters public lands for purposes of [the subsistence provisions] of ANILCA."

Most of the marine waters within the Tongass National Forest were not initially identified in the regulations as public lands subject to the subsistence priority based upon a determination that the submerged lands were State lands, and later through reliance upon a disclaimer of interest filed by the United States in *Alaska v. United States*, No. 128 Orig., 546 U.S. 413 (2006). In that case, the State of Alaska had sought to quiet title to all lands underlying marine waters in southeast Alaska, which includes most of the Tongass National Forest. Ultimately, the United States disclaimed ownership to most of the submerged lands in the Tongass National Forest. The Supreme Court accepted the disclaimer by the United States to title to the marine waters within the Tongass National Forest, excepting from that disclaimer several classes of submerged public lands that generally involve small tracts. *Alaska v. United States*, 546 U.S. at 415.

When the United States took over the subsistence program in Alaska in 1990, the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture stated in response to comments on the scope of the program during promulgation of the interim

regulations that "the United States generally does not hold title to navigable waters and thus navigable waters generally are not included within the definition of public lands" (55 FR 27115; June 29, 1990). That position was changed in 1999 when the subsistence priority was extended to waters subject to a Federal reserved water right following the *Katie John* litigation. The Board identified certain submerged marine lands that did not pass to the State and, therefore, where the subsistence priority applied. However, the Board did not attempt to identify each and every small parcel of submerged public lands and thereby marine water possibly subject to the Federal Subsistence Management Program because of the potentially overwhelming administrative burden. Instead the Board invited the public to petition to have submerged marine lands included. Over the years, several small areas of submerged marine lands in the Tongass National Forest have been identified as public lands subject to the subsistence priority.

In its May 31, 2011, order, the Court stated that the petition process was not sufficient and found that "concerns about costs and management problems simply cannot trump the congressional policy that the subsistence lifestyle of rural Alaskans be preserved as to public lands." The Court acknowledged in its order that inventorying all these lands could be an expensive undertaking, but that it is a burden "necessitated by the 'complicated regulatory scheme' which has resulted from the inability of the State of Alaska to implement Title VIII of ANILCA." The Court then "enjoined" the United States "to promptly initiate regulatory proceedings for the purpose of implementing the subsistence provisions in Title VIII of ANILCA with respect to submerged public lands within Tongass National Forest" and directed entry of judgment.

The BLM and USDA-FS started a time- and resource-consuming review of hundreds of potential pre-statehood (January 3, 1959) withdrawals in the marine waters of the Tongass National Forest. Both agencies are reviewing their records to identify dock sites, log transfer sites, and other areas that may not have passed to the State at statehood. The review process is ongoing and expected to take quite some time.

Developing the Applicability and Scope; Tongass National Forest Submerged Lands Proposed Regulations

In April and October of 2015, BLM submitted initial listings of parcels of

submerged public lands to the Board. This proposed rule will add those listings to the subsistence regulations to ensure compliance with the Court's order. Additional listings will be published as BLM and USDA-FS continue their reviews of pre-statehood withdrawals. In addition, this proposed rule would make nonsubstantive changes to 36 CFR 242.3 and 50 CFR 100.3 to correct errors, such as misspellings and punctuation errors, which occur in the existing regulations.

Because this proposed rule concerns public lands managed by an agency or agencies in both the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior, identical text will be incorporated into 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100.

Compliance With Statutory and Regulatory Authorities

National Environmental Policy Act

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement that described four alternatives for developing a Federal Subsistence Management Program was distributed for public comment on October 7, 1991. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was published on February 28, 1992. The Record of Decision (ROD) on Subsistence Management for Federal Public Lands in Alaska was signed April 6, 1992. The selected alternative in the FEIS (Alternative IV) defined the administrative framework of an annual regulatory cycle for subsistence regulations.

A 1997 environmental assessment dealt with the expansion of Federal jurisdiction over fisheries and is available at the office listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**. The Secretary of the Interior, with concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture, determined that expansion of Federal jurisdiction does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the human environment and, therefore, signed a Finding of No Significant Impact.

Section 810 of ANILCA

An ANILCA § 810 analysis was completed as part of the FEIS process on the Federal Subsistence Management Program. The intent of all Federal subsistence regulations is to accord subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on public lands a priority over the taking of fish and wildlife on such lands for other purposes, unless restriction is necessary to conserve healthy fish and wildlife populations. The final § 810 analysis determination appeared in the April 6, 1992, ROD and concluded that the Federal Subsistence Management

Program, under Alternative IV with an annual process for setting subsistence regulations, may have some local impacts on subsistence uses, but will not likely restrict subsistence uses significantly.

During the subsequent environmental assessment process for extending fisheries jurisdiction, an evaluation of the effects of the subsistence program regulations was conducted in accordance with § 810. This evaluation also supported the Secretaries' determination that the regulations will not reach the "may significantly restrict" threshold that would require notice and hearings under ANILCA § 810(a).

Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA)

This proposed rule does not contain any new collections of information that require Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval under the PRA (44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*) OMB has reviewed and approved the collections of information associated with the subsistence regulations at 36 CFR 242 and 50 CFR 100, and assigned OMB Control Number 1018-0075. We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Regulatory Planning and Review (Executive Order 12866)

Executive Order 12866 provides that the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) in the Office of Management and Budget will review all significant rules. OIRA has determined that this proposed rule is not significant.

Executive Order 13563 reaffirms the principles of E.O. 12866 while calling for improvements in the nation's regulatory system to promote predictability, to reduce uncertainty, and to use the best, most innovative, and least burdensome tools for achieving regulatory ends. The executive order directs agencies to consider regulatory approaches that reduce burdens and maintain flexibility and freedom of choice for the public where these approaches are relevant, feasible, and consistent with regulatory objectives. E.O. 13563 emphasizes further that regulations must be based on the best available science and that the rulemaking process must allow for public participation and an open exchange of ideas. We have developed this proposed rule in a manner consistent with these requirements.

Regulatory Flexibility Act

The Regulatory Flexibility Act of 1980 (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*) requires

preparation of flexibility analyses for rules that will have a significant effect on a substantial number of small entities, which include small businesses, organizations, or governmental jurisdictions. In general, the resources to be harvested under this proposed rule are already being harvested and consumed by the local harvester and do not result in an additional dollar benefit to the economy. However, we estimate that two million pounds of meat are harvested by subsistence users annually and, if given an estimated dollar value of \$3.00 per pound, this amount would equate to about \$6 million in food value statewide. Based upon the amounts and values cited above, the Departments certify that this rulemaking will not have a significant economic effect on a substantial number of small entities within the meaning of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act

Under the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (5 U.S.C. 801 *et seq.*), this proposed rule is not a major rule. It will not have an effect on the economy of \$100 million or more, will not cause a major increase in costs or prices for consumers, and will not have significant adverse effects on competition, employment, investment, productivity, innovation, or the ability of U.S.-based enterprises to compete with foreign-based enterprises.

Executive Order 12630

Title VIII of ANILCA requires the Secretaries to administer a subsistence priority on public lands. The scope of this program is limited by definition to certain public lands. Likewise, these proposed regulations have no potential takings of private property implications as defined by Executive Order 12630.

Unfunded Mandates Reform Act

The Secretaries have determined and certify pursuant to the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act, 2 U.S.C. 1502 *et seq.*, that this proposed rulemaking will not impose a cost of \$100 million or more in any given year on local or State governments or private entities. The implementation of this rule is by Federal agencies and there is no cost imposed on any State or local entities or tribal governments.

Executive Order 12988

The Secretaries have determined that these proposed regulations meet the applicable standards provided in §§ 3(a) and 3(b)(2) of Executive Order 12988, regarding civil justice reform.

Executive Order 13132

In accordance with Executive Order 13132, the proposed rule does not have sufficient Federalism implications to warrant the preparation of a Federalism Assessment. Title VIII of ANILCA precludes the State from exercising subsistence management authority over fish and wildlife resources on Federal lands unless it meets certain requirements.

Executive Order 13175

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Title VIII, does not provide specific rights to tribes for the subsistence taking of wildlife, fish, and shellfish. However, the Secretaries, through the Board, will provide Federally recognized Tribes and Alaska Native corporations an opportunity to consult on this proposed rule. Consultation with Alaska Native corporations are based on Public Law 108-199, div. H, Sec. 161, Jan. 23, 2004, 118 Stat. 452, as amended by Public Law 108-447, div. H, title V, Sec. 518, Dec. 8, 2004, 118 Stat. 3267, which provides that: "The Director of the Office of Management and Budget and all Federal agencies shall hereafter consult with Alaska Native corporations on the same basis as Indian tribes under Executive Order No. 13175."

The Secretaries, through the Board, will provide a variety of opportunities for consultation: commenting on proposed changes to the existing rule; engaging in dialogue at the Regional Council meetings; engaging in dialogue at the Board's meetings; and providing input in person, by mail, email, or phone at any time during the rulemaking process.

Executive Order 13211

This Executive Order requires agencies to prepare Statements of Energy Effects when undertaking certain actions. However, this proposed rule is not a significant regulatory action under E.O. 13211, affecting energy supply, distribution, or use, and no Statement of Energy Effects is required.

Drafting Information

Theo Matuskowitz drafted these proposed regulations under the guidance of Gene Peltola of the Office of Subsistence Management, Alaska Regional Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage, Alaska. Additional assistance was provided by:

- Daniel Sharp, Alaska State Office, Bureau of Land Management;
- Mary McBurney, Alaska Regional Office, National Park Service;
- Dr. Glenn Chen, Alaska Regional Office, Bureau of Indian Affairs;

- Trevor Fox, Alaska Regional Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and
- Thomas Whitford, Alaska Regional Office, USDA—Forest Service.

List of Subjects

36 CFR Part 242

Administrative practice and procedure, Alaska, Fish, National forests, Public lands, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Wildlife.

50 CFR Part 100

Administrative practice and procedure, Alaska, Fish, National forests, Public lands, Reporting and recordkeeping requirements, Wildlife.

Proposed Regulation Promulgation

For the reasons set out in the preamble, the Secretaries propose to amend 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100 as set forth below.

PART—SUBSISTENCE MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS FOR PUBLIC LANDS IN ALASKA

■ 1. The authority citation for both 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 3, 472, 551, 668dd, 3101–3126; 18 U.S.C. 3551–3586; 43 U.S.C. 1733.

Subpart A—General Provisions

- 2. In subpart A of 36 CFR part 242 and 50 CFR part 100, amend § 3 as follows:
- a. In paragraph (a), remove the word “or” and in its place add the word “of” and remove the word “poortion” and in its place add the word “portion”;
 - b. In paragraph (b)(1)(iii), remove the word “A” and in its place add the word “All”;
 - c. In paragraph (b)(1)(v), remove the word “Latitude” and in its place add the word “Latitude”;
 - d. In paragraph (b)(2), remove “70 10’” and in its place add “70°10’” and remove “145 51’” and in its place add “145°51’”;
 - e. In paragraph (b)(3), remove the word “cape” and in its place add the word “Cape”, and remove the word “Latitude” and in its place add the word “Latitude”, and remove “161 46’” and in its place add “161°46’”;
 - f. Revise paragraph (b)(5) to read as set forth below:

§ 3 Applicability and scope.

* * * * *

(5) Southeastern Alaska, including the:

(i) Makhnati Island Area: Land and waters beginning at the southern point of Fruit Island, 57°02'35" north latitude, 135°21'07" west longitude as shown on

United States Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 8244, May 21, 1941; from the point of beginning, by metes and bounds; S. 58° W., 2,500 feet, to the southern point of Nepovorotni Rocks; S. 83° W., 5,600 feet, on a line passing through the southern point of a small island lying about 150 feet south of Makhnati Island; N. 6° W., 4,200 feet, on a line passing through the western point of a small island lying about 150 feet west of Makhnati Island, to the northwestern point of Signal Island; N. 24° E., 3,000 feet, to a point, 57°03'15" north latitude, 134°23'07" west longitude; East, 2,900 feet, to a point in course No. 45 in meanders of U.S. Survey No. 1496, on west side of Japonski Island; southeasterly, with the meanders of Japonski Island, U.S. Survey No. 1,496 to angle point No. 35, on the southwestern point of Japonski Island; S. 60° E., 3,300 feet, along the boundary line of Naval reservation described in Executive Order No. 8216, July 25, 1939, to the point of beginning, and that part of Sitka Bay lying south of Japonski Island and west of the main channel, but not including Aleutski Island as revoked in Public Land Order 925, October 27, 1953, described by metes and bounds as follows: Beginning at the southeast point of Japonski Island at angle point No. 7 of the meanders of U.S. Survey No. 1496; thence east approximately 12.00 chains to the center of the main channel; thence S. 45° E. along the main channel approximately 20.00 chains; thence S. 45° W. approximately 9.00 chains to the southeastern point of Aleutski Island; thence S. 79° W. approximately 40.00 chains to the southern point of Fruit Island; thence N. 60° W. approximately 50.00 chains to the southwestern point of Japonski Island at angle point No. 35 of U.S. Survey No. 1496; thence easterly with the meanders of Japonski Island to the point of beginning including Charcoal, Harbor, Alice, Love, and Fruit islands and a number of smaller unnamed islands.

(ii) Tongass National Forest:

(A) Beacon Point, Frederick Sound, and Kupreanof Island are shown on the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 8210—Sheet No. 16. The reference location is marked as 57 south, 79 east, CRM, SEC 8, U.S. Survey No. 1604. The point begins on the low-water line at N. 63° W., true and approximately 1,520 feet from Beacon Point beacon; thence due south true 1,520 feet; thence true East 1,800 feet, more or less to an intersection with a low-water line; thence following, is the low-water line round the point to point of the beginning (Approx. Long. 133°00' W. Lat. 56°56¼' N.).

(B) Bushy Island and Snow Passage are shown on the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart, labeled No. 8160—Sheet No. 12. The reference location is marked as 64 south, 80 east, CRM, SEC. 31/32 on the map labeled, USS 1607. The point begins on a low-water line about ¼ nautical miles and southwesterly from the northwest point of the island, from which a left tangent to an island that is 300 yards in diameter and 100 yards offshore, bears the location—N. 60° W., true; thence S. 60° E., true and more or less 2,000 feet to an intersection with a low-water line on the easterly side of the island; thence forward along the winding of the low-water line northwesterly and southwesterly to the point of the beginning, including all adjacent rocks and reefs not covered at low water (Approx. Long. 132°58' W. Lat. 56°16½' N.).

(C) Cape Strait, Frederick Sound, and Kupreanof Island are shown on the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 8210—Sheet No. 16. The reference location is marked as 56 south, 77478 east, CRM, on the map labeled as USS 1011. It begins at a point on a low-water line that is westerly from the lighthouse and distant 1,520 feet in a direct line from the center of the concrete pier upon which the light tower is erected; thence South 45° E., true by 1,520 feet; thence east true by 1,520 feet, more or less to an intersection with the low-water line; thence north-westerly and westerly, following the windings of the low-water line to the point of beginning (Approx. Long. 133°05' W. Lat. 57°00' N.).

(D) Point Colpoys and Sumner Strait are shown on the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 8160—Prince of Wales Island—Sheet No. 12. The reference location is marked as 64 south, 78 east, CRM, SECs. 10, 11, 12 on the map labeled as USS 1634. Location is north of a true east-and-west line running across the point to 1,520 feet true south from the high-water line at the northernmost extremity. Map includes all adjacent rocks and ledges not covered at low water and also includes two rocks awash about 1¼ nautical miles east and South and 75° East, respectively, from the aforementioned point (Approx. Long. 133°12' W. Lat. 56°20' N.).

(E) Vank Island and Stikine Strait are shown on the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 8160—Sheet No. 18. Located at 62 south, 82 east, CRM, SEC 34, on the map labeled as USS 1648. This part of the island is lying south of a true east-and-west line that is drawn across the island from low water to low water. Island is 760 feet due North from

the center of the concrete pier upon which the structure for the light is erected (Approx. Long. 132°35' W. Lat. 56°27' N.).

(F) High Point, and Woronkofski Island, Alaska, are shown on the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 8160—Sheet No. 18. The location begins at a point on low water at the head of the first bight easterly of the point and about 1/8 nautical mile distant therefrom; thence south true 1,520 feet; thence west true 1,100 feet, more or less to an intersection with the low-water line; thence northerly and easterly, following the windings of the low-water line to point of the beginning (Approx. Long. 132°33' W. Lat. 56°24' N.).

(G) Key Reef and Clarence Strait are shown on the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 8160—Sheet No. 11. The reef lies 1 3/4 miles S. 80° E., true, from Bluff Island and becomes awash at extreme high water. Chart includes all adjacent ledges and rocks not covered at low water (Approx. Long. 132°50' W. Lat. 56°10' N.).

(H) Low Point and Zarembo Island, Alaska, are shown on U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 8160—Sheet No. 22. The location begins at a point on a low-water line that is 760 feet in a direct line, easterly, from the center of Low Point Beacon. The position is located on a point of shoreline about 1 mile easterly from Low Point; thence S. 35°, W true 760 feet; thence N. 800 feet and W. 760 feet, more or less, to an intersection with the low-water line to the point of beginning (Approx. Long. 132°55 1/2' W. Lat. 56°27 1/2' N.).

(I) McNamara Point and Zarembo Island, Alaska, are shown on U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 8160—Sheet No. 25. Location begins at a point on a low-water line that is 1,520 feet in a direct line, northerly, from McNamara Point Beacon—a slatted tripod structure; thence true east 1,520 feet; thence true south, more or less, 2,500 feet to an intersection with the low-water line; thence northwesterly and northerly following the windings of the low-water line to the point of the beginning (Approx. Long. 133°04' W. Lat. 56°20' N.).

(J) Mountain Point and Wrangell Narrows, Alaska, are shown on the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 8170—Sheet No. 27. The location begins at a point on a low-water line southerly from the center of Mountain Point Beacon and distant there from 1,520 feet in a direct line; thence true west 1,520 feet; thence true north, more or less, 3,480 feet to an intersection with the low-water line; thence southeasterly and southerly following the windings of the low-water line to the point of the

beginning (Approx. Long. 132°57 1/2' W. Lat. 56°44' N.).

(K) Angle Point, Revillagigedo Channel, and Bold Island are shown on the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 8075—Sheet No. 3. The reference location is marked as 76 south, 92 east, CRM, USS 1603. The location begins at a point on a low-water line abreast of the lighthouse on Angle Point, the southwestern extremity of Bold Island; thence easterly along the low-water line to a point that is 3,040 feet in a straight line from the beginning point; thence N. 30° W. True 3,040 feet; thence true west to an intersection with the low-water line, 3,000 feet, more or less; thence southeasterly along the low-water line to the point of the beginning (Approx. Long. 131°26' W. Lat. 55°14' N.).

(L) Cape Chacon, Dixon Entrance, and Prince of Wales Island are shown on the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 8074—Sheet No. 29. The reference location is marked as 83 south, 89 and 90 east, CRM, USS 1608. The location begins at a point at the low-water mark on the shore line of Dixon Entrance from which the southern extremity of Cape Chacon bears south 64° true East and approximately 3/4 nautical miles; thence N. 45° true East and about 1 nautical mile, more or less, to an intersection with a low-water line on the shore of Clarence Strait; thence southerly, following the meanderings of the low-water line of the shore, to and around Cape Chacon, and continuing to the point of the beginning. Reference includes all adjacent islands, islets, rocks, and reefs that are not covered at the low-water line (Approx. Long. 132° W. Lat. 54°42' N.).

(M) Lewis Reef and Tongass Narrows are shown on the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 8094—Sheet No. 71. The reference location is marked as 75 south, 90 east, CRM, SEC 9. The area point begins at the reef off of Lewis Point and partly bare at low water. This part of the reef is not covered at low water and lies on the northeast side of a true northwest-and-southeast line that is located 300 feet true southwest from the center of the concrete pier of Lewis Reef Light (Approx. Long. 131°44 1/2' W. Lat. 55°22'25" N.).

(N) Lyman Point and Clarence Strait are shown on the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, Chart No. 8076—Sheet No. 8. The reference location is marked as 73 south, 86 east, CRM, SEC 13, on a map labeled as USS 2174 TRC. It begins at a point at the low-water mark. The aforementioned point is 300 feet in a direct line easterly from Lyman Point light; thence due south 300 feet; thence due west to a low-water mark 400 feet,

more or less; thence following the winding of the low-water mark to place of beginning (Approx. Long. 132°18' W. Lat. 35°35' N.).

(O) Narrow Point, Clarence Strait, and Prince of Wales Island are shown on the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 8100—Sheet No. 9. The reference location is marked as 70 south, 84 east, CRM, on a map labeled as USS 1628. The point begins at a point on a low-water line about 1 nautical mile southerly from Narrow Point Light, from which point a left tangent to a high-water line of an islet about 500 yards in diameter and about 300 yards off shore, bears south 30° true East; thence north 30° W., true 7,600 feet; thence N. 60° E., 3,200 feet, more or less to an intersection with a low-water line; thence southeasterly, southerly, and southwesterly, following the winding of the low-water line to the point of the beginning. The map includes all adjacent rocks not covered at low water (Approx. Long. 132°28' W. Lat. 55°47 1/2' N.).

(P) Niblack Point, Cleveland Peninsula, and Clarence Strait, Alaska, are shown on the U.S. coast and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 8102—Sheet No. 6, which is the same sheet used for Caamano Point. The location begins at a point on a low-water line from which Niblack Point Beacon, a tripod anchored to three concrete piers, bears southeasterly and is 1,520 feet in a direct line; thence true northeast 1,520 feet; thence true southeast 3,040 feet; thence true southwest at 600 feet, more or less, to an intersection with a low-water line; thence northwesterly following the windings of the low-water line to the point of the beginning (Approx. Long. 132°07' W. Lat. 55°33' N.).

(Q) Rosa Reef and Tongass Narrows are shown on the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 8094—Sheet No. 71. The reference location is marked as 74 south, 90 east, CRM, SEC 31. That part of the reef is not covered at low water and lies east of a true north-and-south line, located 600 feet true west from the center of the concrete pier of Rosa Reef Light. The reef is covered at high water (Approx. Long. 131°48' W. Lat. 55°24'15" N.).

(R) Ship Island and Clarence Strait are shown on the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 8100—Sheet No. 9. The reference location is marked as south, 8 east, CRM, SEC 27. The point begins as a small island on the northwesterly side of the Clarence Strait, about 10 nautical miles northwesterly from Caamano Point and 1/4 mile off the shore of Cleveland Peninsula. The sheet includes all

adjacent islets and rocks not connected to the main shore and not covered at low water (Approx. Long. 132°12' W. Lat. 55°36' N.).

(S) Spire Island Reef and Revillagigedo Channel are shown on the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 8075—Sheet No. 3. The reference location is marked as 76 south, 92 east, CRM, SEC 19. The detached reef, covered at high water and partly bare at low water, is located northeast of Spire Island. Spire Island Light is located on the reef and consists of small houses and lanterns surmounting a concrete pier. See chart for “Angle Pt.” (Approx. Long. 131°30' W. Lat. 55°16' N.).

(T) Surprise Point and Nakat Inlet are shown on the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 8051—Sheet No. 1. The reference location is marked as 80 south, 89 east, CRM. This point lies north of a true east-and-west line. The true east-and-west line lies 3,040 feet true south from the northernmost extremity of the point together with adjacent rocks and islets (Approx. Long. 130°44' W. Lat. 54°49' N.).

(U) Caamano Point, Cleveland Peninsula, and Clarence Strait, Alaska, are shown on the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 8102—Sheet No. 6. Location consists of everything apart of the extreme south end of the Cleveland Peninsula lying on a south side of a true east-and-west line that is drawn across the point at a distance of 800 feet true north from the southernmost point of the low-water line. This includes off-lying rocks and islets that are not covered at low water (Approx. Long. 131°59' W. Lat. 55°30' N.).

(V) Meyers Chuck and Clarence Strait, Alaska, are shown on the U.S. and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 8124—Sheet No. 26. The small island is about 150 yards in diameter and located about 200 yards northwest of Meyers Island (Approx. Long. 132°16' W. Lat. 55°44½' N.).

(W) Round Island and Cordova Bay, Alaska, are shown on the U.S. coast and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 8145—Sheet No. 36. The Southwestern Island of the group is about 700 yards long, including off-lying rocks and reefs that are not covered at low water (Approx. Long. 132°30½' W. Lat. 54°46½' N.).

(X) Mary Island begins at a point that is placed at a low-water mark. The aforementioned point is southward 500 feet from a crosscut on the side of a large rock on the second point below Point Winslow and Mary Island; thence due west ¾ mile, statute; thence due north to a low-water mark; thence following the winding of the low water

to the place of the beginning (Approx. Long. 131°11'00" W. Lat. 55°05'55" N.).

(Y) Tree Point starts at a point of a low-water mark. The aforementioned point is southerly ½ mile from extreme westerly point of a low-water mark on Tree Point, on the Alaska Mainland; thence due true east, ¾ mile; thence due north 1 mile; thence due west to a low-water mark; thence following the winding of the low-water mark to the place of the beginning (Approx. Long. 130°57'44" W. Lat. 54°48'27" N.).

* * * * *

Dated: May 31, 2016.

Dated: February 17, 2016.

Sally Jewell,

Secretary of the Interior.

Beth G. Pendleton,

Regional Forester USDA—Forest Service.

[FR Doc. 2016–13374 Filed 6–7–16; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–11–4333–15–P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

40 CFR Part 52

[EPA–R04–OAR–2016–0247; FRL–9947–40–Region 4]

Air Plan Approval; South Carolina; Prong 4—2008 Ozone, 2010 NO₂, SO₂, and 2012 PM_{2.5}

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing to conditionally approve the portions of revisions to the South Carolina State Implementation Plan (SIP), submitted by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC), addressing the Clean Air Act (CAA or Act) visibility transport (prong 4) infrastructure SIP requirements for the 2008 8-hour Ozone, 2010 1-hour Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), 2010 1-hour Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂), and 2012 annual Fine Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}) National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The CAA requires that each state adopt and submit a SIP for the implementation, maintenance, and enforcement of each NAAQS promulgated by EPA, commonly referred to as an “infrastructure SIP.” Specifically, EPA is proposing to conditionally approve the prong 4 portions of South Carolina’s July 17, 2008, 8-hour Ozone infrastructure SIP submission; April 30, 2014, 2010 1-hour NO₂ infrastructure SIP submission; May 8, 2014, 2010 1-hour SO₂ infrastructure SIP submission; and December 18, 2015,

2012 annual PM_{2.5} infrastructure SIP submission. All other applicable infrastructure requirements for these SIP submissions have been or will be addressed in separate rulemakings.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before July 8, 2016.

ADDRESSES: Submit your comments, identified by Docket ID No EPA–R04–OAR–2016–0247 at <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments. Once submitted, comments cannot be edited or removed from *Regulations.gov*. EPA may publish any comment received to its public docket. Do not submit electronically any information you consider to be Confidential Business Information (CBI) or other information whose disclosure is restricted by statute. Multimedia submissions (audio, video, etc.) must be accompanied by a written comment. The written comment is considered the official comment and should include discussion of all points you wish to make. EPA will generally not consider comments or comment contents located outside of the primary submission (*i.e.* on the web, cloud, or other file sharing system). For additional submission methods, the full EPA public comment policy, information about CBI or multimedia submissions, and general guidance on making effective comments, please visit <http://www2.epa.gov/dockets/commenting-epa-dockets>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Sean Lakeman of the Air Regulatory Management Section, Air Planning and Implementation Branch, Air, Pesticides and Toxics Management Division, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4, 61 Forsyth Street SW., Atlanta, Georgia 30303–8960. Mr. Lakeman can be reached by telephone at (404) 562–9043 or via electronic mail at lakeman.sean@epa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

By statute, SIPs meeting the requirements of sections 110(a)(1) and (2) of the CAA are to be submitted by states within three years after promulgation of a new or revised NAAQS to provide for the implementation, maintenance, and enforcement of the new or revised NAAQS. EPA has historically referred to these SIP submissions made for the purpose of satisfying the requirements of sections 110(a)(1) and 110(a)(2) as “infrastructure SIP” submissions. Sections 110(a)(1) and (2) require states to address basic SIP elements such as the requirements for monitoring, basic program requirements, and legal



THE STATE
of ALASKA
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of Natural Resources

DIVISION OF MINING, LAND AND WATER

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1070

Anchorage, AK 99501-3576

Man: 907.269.8600

Fax: 907.269.8904

August 8, 2016

US Fish and Wildlife Service
Office of Subsistence Management
1011 East Tudor Road
MS 121
Attn: Theo Matuskowitz
Anchorage, AK 99503-6199

VIA ELECTRONICALLY & US MAIL

Re: Docket No. FWS-R7-SM-2015-0159

Dear Mr. Matuskowitz:

The State of Alaska reviewed the June 8, 2016 Federal Register Notice regarding the proposed rule to add certain submerged parcels of land to the subsistence management regulations for public lands in Alaska as indicated by the above-mentioned docket number. The proposed rule intends to identify and add the following submerged lands as "lands within the Tongass National Forest that did not pass to the State of Alaska at Statehood" and, therefore, are subject to the subsistence provisions of ANILCA:

(5) Southeastern Alaska, including the:

(i) Makhnati Island Area: Land and waters beginning at the southern point of Fruit Island, 57°02'35" north latitude, 135°21'07" west longitude as shown on United States Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart No. 8244, May 21, 1941; from the point of beginning, by metes and bounds; S. 58° W., 2,500 feet, to the southern point of Nepovorotni Rocks; S. 83° W., 5,600 feet, on a line passing through the southern point of a small island lying about 150 feet south of Makhnati Island; N. 6° W., 4,200 feet, on a line passing through the western point of a small island lying about 150 feet west of Makhnati Island, to the northwestern point of Signal Island; N. 24° E., 3,000 feet, to a point, 57°03'15" north latitude, 134°23'07" west longitude; East, 2,900 feet, to a point in course No. 45 in meanders of U.S. Survey No. 1496, on west side of Japonski Island; southeasterly, with the meanders of Japonski Island, U.S. Survey No. 1,496 to angle point No. 35, on the southwestern point of Japonski Island; S. 60° E., 3,300 feet, along the boundary line of Naval reservation described in Executive Order No. 8216, July 25, 1939, to the point of beginning, and that part of Sitka Bay lying south of Japonski Island and west of the main channel, but not including Aleutski Island as revoked in Public Land Order 925, October 27, 1953, described by metes and bounds as follows: Beginning at the southeast point of Japonski Island at angle point No. 7 of the meanders of U.S. Survey No. 1496; thence east approximately 12.00 chains to the center of the main channel; thence S. 45° E. along the main channel approximately 20.00 chains; thence S. 45° W. approximately 9.00 chains to the southeastern point of Aleutski Island; thence S. 79° W. approximately 40.00 chains to the southern point of Fruit Island; thence N. 60° W. approximately 50.00 chains to the southwestern point of Japonski Island at angle point No. 35 of U.S. Survey No.

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USFWS Letter of Objection
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Page 2

1496; thence easterly with the meanders of Japonski Island to the point of beginning including Charcoal, Harbor, Alice, Love, and Fruit islands and a number of smaller unnamed islands.

The State of Alaska objects to the inclusion of these above-described lands as being identified as remaining in Federal public ownership. Title to the above-described lands has already passed to and is held by the State of Alaska by virtue of the Patent issued February 15, 1968 as Patent No. 50-68-0194 and by virtue of the Patent issued May 11, 1990 as Patent No. 50-90-0267. These lands are no longer part of the federal public domain. Rather, they are state-owned lands, managed and controlled by the State of Alaska.

The State of Alaska does not oppose or object to the inclusion of the remainder of lands identified as Federal public lands subject to the subsistence provisions of ANILCA.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Kristin A. Hess
Division Operations Manager
State of Alaska
Department of Natural Resources
Division of Mining, Land & Water

Winter 2017 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

February-March 2017

Meeting dates and locations are subject to change.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Feb. 5	Feb. 6 <i>Window Opens</i>	Feb. 7	Feb. 8 NS — Barrow	Feb. 9	Feb. 10	Feb. 11 EI — Fairbanks
Feb. 12	Feb. 13	Feb. 14	Feb. 15 YKD — Bethel	Feb. 16	Feb. 17	Feb. 18 SC — Anchorage
Feb. 19	Feb. 20 PRESIDENT'S DAY HOLIDAY	Feb. 21 WI — Fairbanks	Feb. 22 K/A — Kodiak	Feb. 23	Feb. 24	Feb. 25
Feb. 26	Feb. 27	Feb. 28 BB — Naknek	Mar. 1	Mar. 2 NWA — Kotzebue	Mar. 3	Mar. 4
Mar. 5	Mar. 6 SP — Nome	Mar. 7	Mar. 8	Mar. 9	Mar. 10	Mar. 11
Mar. 12	Mar. 13	Mar. 14 SE — Saxman	Mar. 15	Mar. 16	Mar. 17 <i>Window Closes</i>	Mar. 18

Fall 2017 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

August - November 2017

Meeting dates and locations are subject to change.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<i>Aug. 20</i>	<i>Aug. 21</i> <i>Window Opens</i>	<i>Aug. 22</i>	<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> LABOR DAY HOLIDAY	<i>Sept. 5</i>	<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> COLUMBUS DAY HOLIDAY	<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>
<i>Nov. 5</i>	<i>Nov. 6</i>	<i>Nov. 7</i>	<i>Nov. 8</i>	<i>Nov. 9</i>	<i>Nov. 10</i> <i>Window Closes</i> VETERANS DAY HOLIDAY	<i>Nov. 11</i>

AFN - Anchorage

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

Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Charter

1. **Committee's Official Designation.** The Council's official designation is the Northwest Arctic Subsistence Regional Advisory (Council).
2. **Authority.** The Council is renewed by virtue of the authority set out in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (16 U.S.C. 3115 (1988)), and under the authority of the Secretary of the Interior, in furtherance of 16 U.S.C. 410hh-2. The Council is regulated by the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, 5 U.S.C. Appendix 2.
3. **Objectives and Scope of Activities.** The objective of the Council is to provide a forum for the residents of the Region with personal knowledge of local conditions and resource requirements to have a meaningful role in the subsistence management of fish and wildlife on Federal lands and waters in the Region.
4. **Description of Duties.** The Council has 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 three members to each of the Cape Krusenstern National Monument and the Kobuk Valley National Park Subsistence Resource Commissions and one member to the Gates of the Arctic National Park Subsistence Resource Commission in accordance with Section 808 of 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 \$130,000, including all direct and indirect expenses and 0.9 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 will be inactive 2 years from the date the Charter is filed, unless prior to that date it 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:

Ten 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 seven of the members (70 percent) represent subsistence interests within the Region and three 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, Vice-Chair, and Secretary for a 1-year term.

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

13. **Ethics Responsibilities of Members.** No Council or subcommittee member will participate in any 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 6.2, 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 20 2015

Date Signed

DEC 03 2015

Date Filed

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