



Federal Subsistence Board Fact Sheet



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

Forest Service

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Fisheries Temporary Special Action Request for Yukon River Chinook, Summer and Fall Chum, and Coho Salmon Fisheries

Background: The Yukon River drainage is the largest in the state of Alaska and provides residents from over 60 communities with fishery resources, including Chinook, summer and fall Chum, and Coho salmon, for subsistence purposes. Over the last several years, moderate to severe restrictions on subsistence harvest have been put in place to conserve Chinook, summer and fall Chum, and Coho salmon. These restrictions have impacted subsistence uses throughout the Yukon River drainage.

Question 1: What is a temporary special action and how long will it last?

Answer: A temporary special action is a temporary regulatory change made to modify harvest limits, seasons, methods or means outside of the normal regulatory cycle. Temporary special actions are responses to unusual situations, such as significant changes in fish or wildlife abundance. There must be public notice and a public hearing before the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) or Board delegated Federal managers can act on a temporary special action request. The Board (or Federal manager) must also consult with the State of Alaska and the Regional Advisory Council Chairs of the affected regions prior to acting on a temporary special action request. A temporary special action typically extends longer than 60 days but may not exceed past the end of a regulatory cycle. If permanent changes to Federal subsistence fisheries regulations are desired, a proposal must be submitted through the normal two-year regulatory process. The next fisheries regulatory cycle call for proposals will occur in early 2024.

Question 2: What is included in this request?

Answer: This special action request asks that the Federal Subsistence Board:

- Close Federal public waters of the Yukon River drainage to the harvest of Chinook, summer and fall Chum, and Coho salmon except by federally qualified subsistence users from June 1 through September 30, 2023
- Require Federal subsistence fishing schedules, openings, closures, and fishing methods to be determined by the Federal Fisheries Manager

Question 3: How can the public comment on this specific special action request?

Answer: A public hearing to receive public testimony by teleconference has been scheduled on May 4, 2023, from 4 p.m. - 6 p.m., or until the end of public participation. The public will be asked to comment on the following issues at the public hearing:

- a) Should Federal public waters be closed to the harvest of Chinook, summer and fall Chum, and Coho salmon except by federally qualified subsistence users? [See Questions 4, 5, and 6 below]
- b) Are the start and end dates for the closure (June 1 through September 30, 2023) appropriate dates for this special action?
- c) Are there any other comments or issues that may help with a decision on this special action request?

Public testimony on this special action request will be forwarded to the Federal Manager for consideration.

Question 4: What Federal public waters would be affected by this special action request?

Answer: Federal public waters in this special action request consist of all navigable and non-navigable freshwaters of the Yukon River drainage (an area consisting of all waters flowing into the Bering Sea from northwestern most point of Point Romanof extending south and west along the coast of the Yukon delta to the westernmost point of the Naskonat Peninsula) that are within and adjacent to the exterior boundaries of the Arctic, Innoko, Kanuti, Koyukuk, Nowitna, Tetlin, Yukon Delta, and Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuges, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, the Steese National Conservation Area, the White Mountains National Recreation Area, and those segments of the National Wild and Scenic River system located outside the boundaries of Federal conservation units (portions of Beaver and Birch Creeks and the Delta and Fortymile Rivers). See **Figures** below.

Question 5: Who are federally qualified subsistence users affected by this special action request?

Answer: Federally qualified subsistence users are permanent residents of a rural area or community that has a federally recognized customary and traditional use determination for that resource. For salmon, federally qualified subsistence users are permanent rural residents of the Yukon River drainage and Stebbins, which is north of the drainage. There are over 60 rural communities in the Yukon River drainage, including the coastal communities Chevak, Hooper Bay, and Scammon Bay (see **Table 1**). Residents of the Fairbanks North Star Borough, which is a Nonrural Area, are not federally qualified subsistence users.

Question 6: How will non-federally qualified users be affected?

Answer: If the temporary special action is approved, non-federally qualified users will not be allowed to take Chinook, summer and fall Chum, or Coho salmon in Federal public waters of the Yukon River drainage at any time from June 1 to September 30, 2023. In Federal regulations, taking or take means to

fish, pursue, hunt, shoot, trap, net, capture, collect, kill, harm, or attempt to engage in any such conduct (see 50 CFR 100.25(a)).

Question 7: What is the remaining process for this special action request after the public hearing?

Answer: This special action request has been administratively assigned to the Federal manager for the Yukon Area, Holly Carroll. She is currently analyzing the potential effects of this request on Chinook, summer and fall Chum, and Coho salmon populations and Federal subsistence fishing opportunities. It is anticipated that she will act on this temporary special action request in May 2023. The Federal manager will consider all information provided in the process, including public testimony, Tribal and Native corporation consultation, and the perspectives of the Chairs of the affected Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils and Federal and State managers when making a decision on this request. The Federal Manager may approve, approve with modification, reject, or defer this special action request until the next regulatory cycle that begins in 2024.

Question 8: How can I get more information on this special action request?

Answer: Please contact Scott Ayers, Fisheries Division Leader at the Office of Subsistence Management, at (907) 744-3824, (800) 478-1456, or scott_ayers@fws.gov with questions about this special action request, or visit the Federal Subsistence Management Program website (www.doi.gov/subsistence/) for more information about subsistence on Federal public lands and waters.

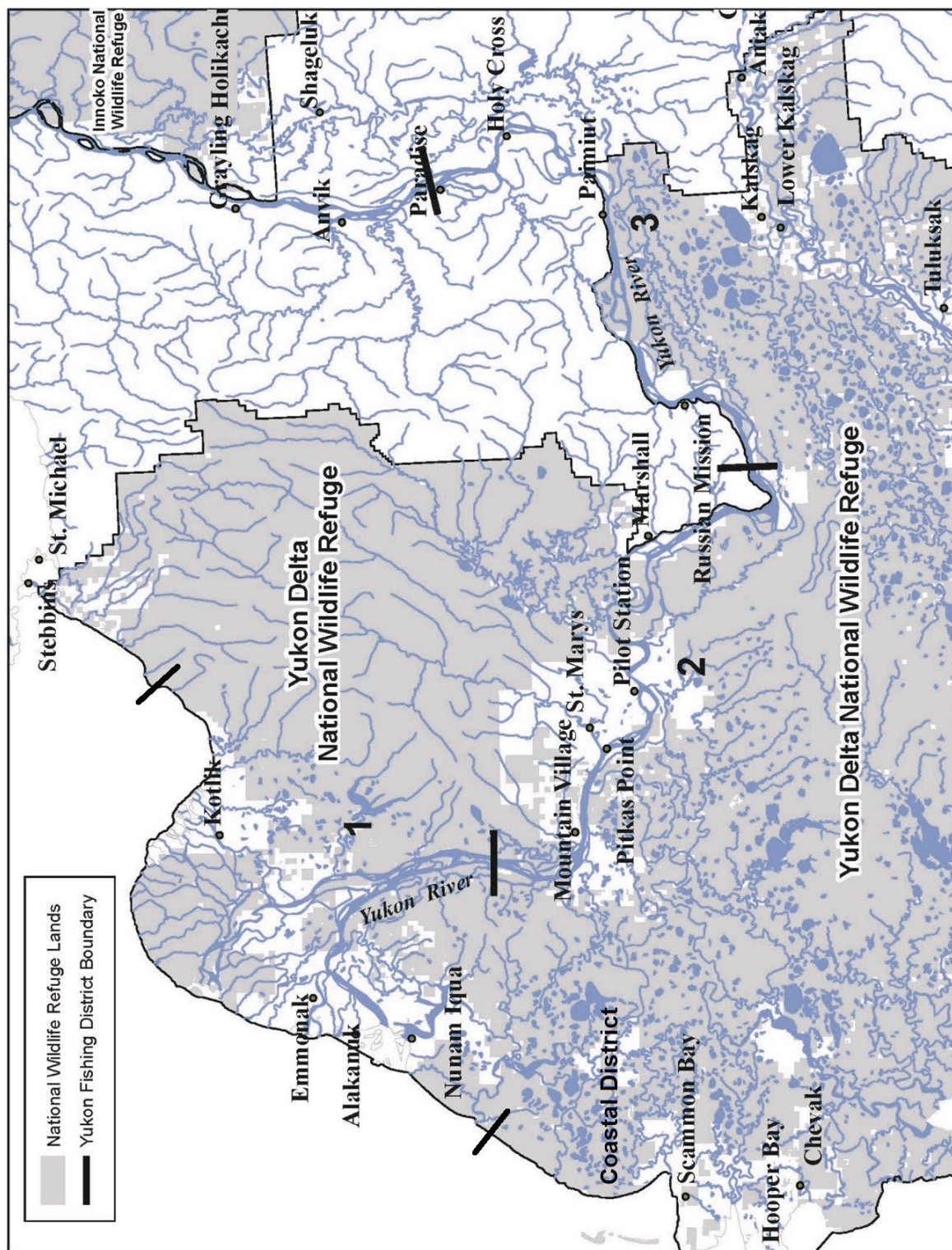


Figure 1. Map of Yukon River drainage Coastal District and Districts 1, 2, and 3.

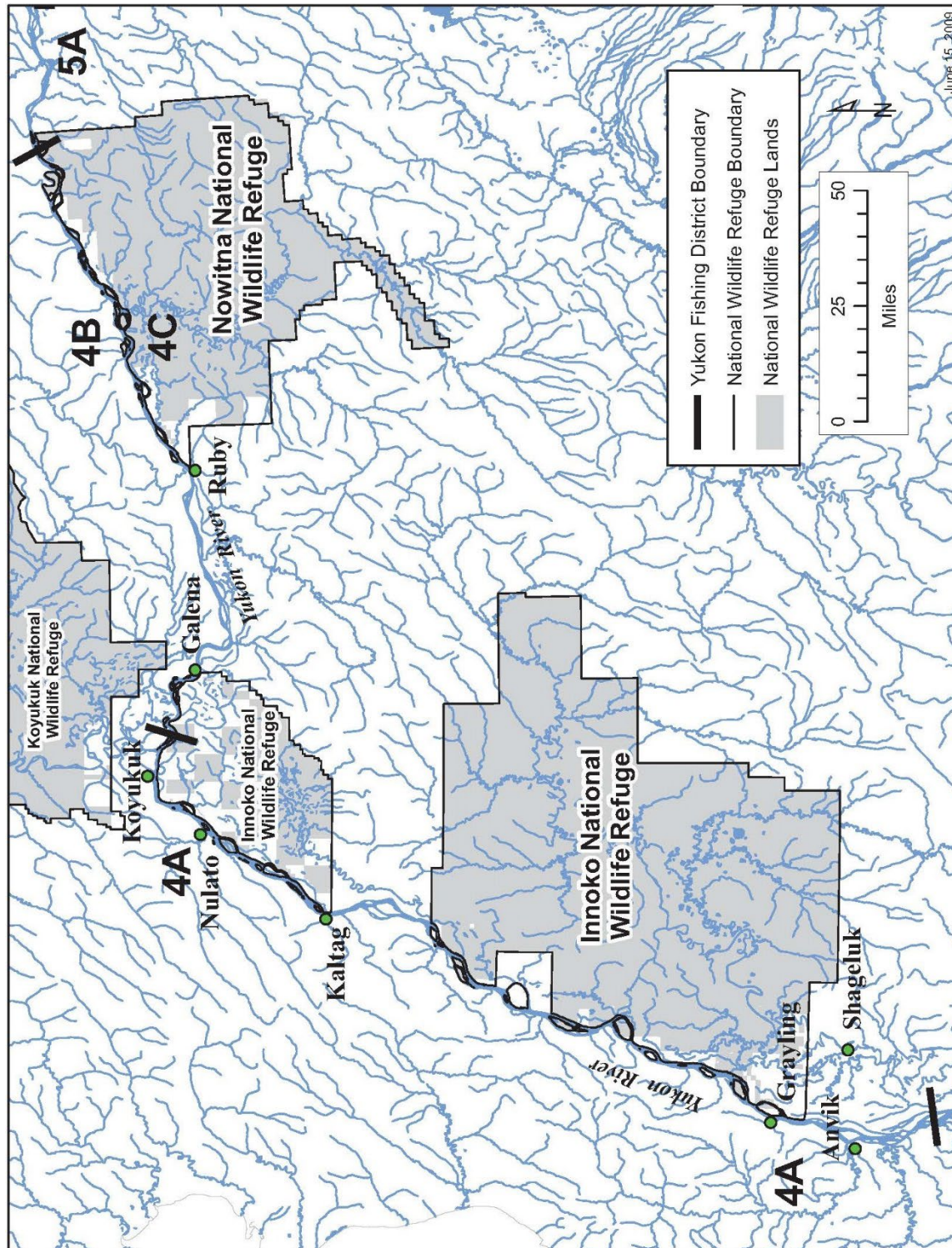


Figure 2. Map of Yukon River drainage District 4.

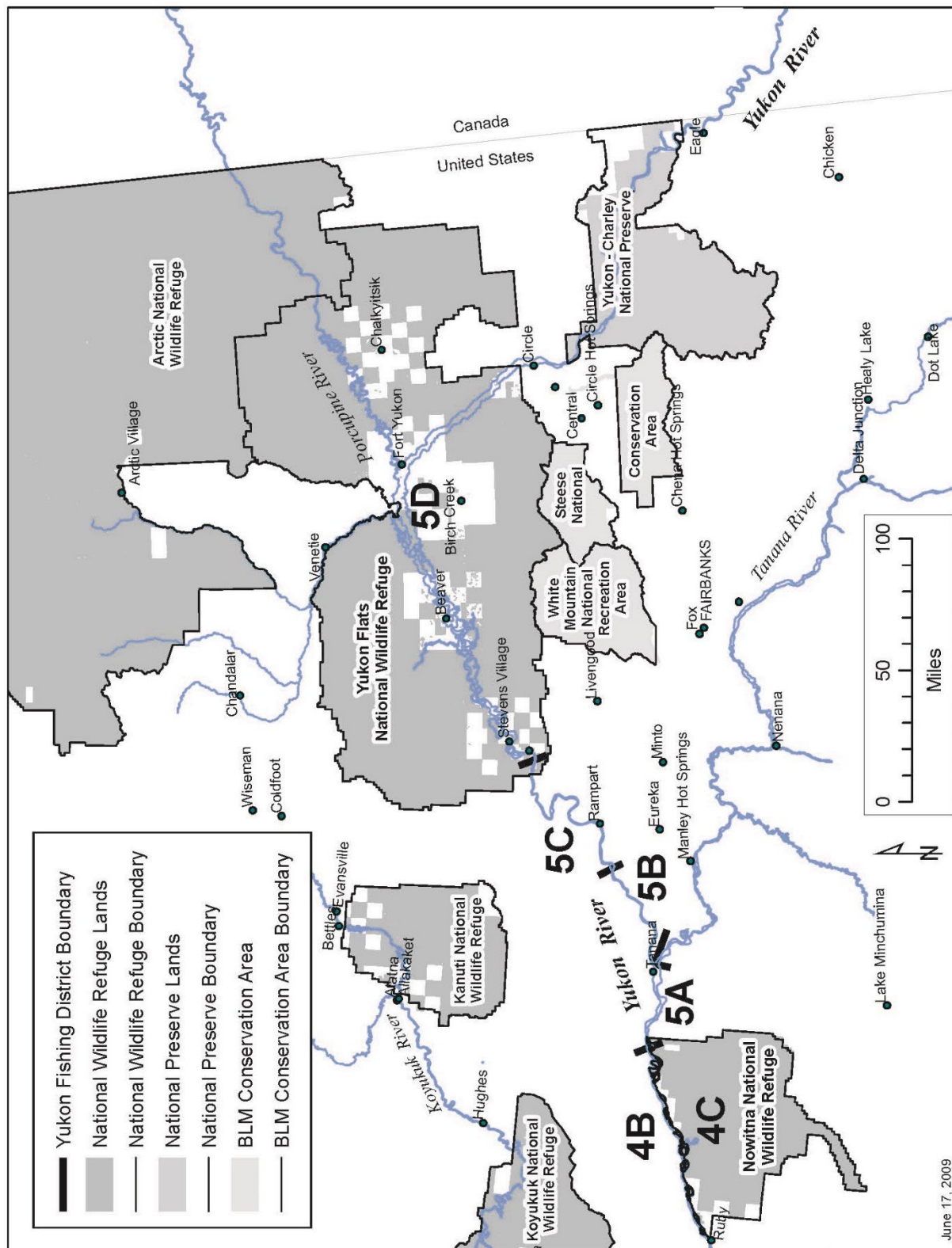


Figure 3. Map of Yukon River drainage District 5.

Table 1. Federally qualified subsistence users of salmon in the Yukon River drainage—All permanent rural residents of the Yukon River drainage (except residents of the Fairbanks North Star Borough, which is a Nonrural Area) including residents of the following rural communities:

Outside the Yukon River drainage

Stebbins

Coastal District

Scammon Bay

Hooper Bay

Chevak

District 1

Alakanuk

Nunam Iqua

Emmonak

Kotlik

District 2

Mountain Village

Pitkas Point

Saint Marys

Pilot Station

Marshall

District 3

Russian Mission

Holy Cross

Shageluk

District 4

Anvik

Grayling

Kaltag

Nulato

Koyukuk

Huslia

Hughes

Allakaket

Alatna

Bettles

Evansville

Wiseman

Coldfoot

Galena

Ruby

District 5

Tanana

Rampart

District 5 (continued)

Stevens Village

Beaver

Fort Yukon

Chalkyitsik

Arctic Village

Venetie

Birch Creek

Circle

Chicken

Central

Eagle Village

Eagle

District 6

Livengood

Manley

Minto

Whitestone

Nenana

Four Mile Road

Healy

McKinley/Denali Park

Anderson

Ferry

Lake Minchumina

Cantwell

Delta Junction

Fort Greely/Deltana

Healy Lake

Big Delta

Dry Creek

Dot Lake

Dot Lake Village

Tanacross

Tetlin

Tok

Northway Junction/Village

Alcan border

Nabesna