



Federal Subsistence Board News Release



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

Forest Service

For Immediate Release:
May 12, 2022

Contact: Kayla McKinney
(907) 786-3888
kayla_mckinney@fws.gov

Proposed Federal Subsistence Management Regulations for Tongass National Forest Submerged Lands published in Federal Register

On May 12, 2022, the Departments of Agriculture and Interior (Departments) published a proposed rule in the *Federal Register* (87 FR 29061). The purpose of this proposed rule is to complete regulatory proceedings addressing submerged public lands within the Tongass National Forest as directed by the U.S. District Court for Alaska.

To comply with a court order, the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) initiated regulatory proceedings 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 Federal subsistence hunting, trapping, and fishing provisions.

Following the Court's decision, the Departments published a notice in the *Federal Register* (77 FR 33391; June 6, 2012) announcing the initiation of reviews of pre-statehood withdrawals and reservation in the Tongass National Forest. The Bureau of Land Management 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. On June 8, 2016, the Departments published a proposed rule in the *Federal Register* (81 FR 36836) that listed the initial findings identifying pre-statehood withdrawals, and on May 23, 2018, the Departments published a final rule (83 FR 23813) to revise the subsistence management regulations to add those submerged parcels.

This proposed rule would add to the list of submerged parcels in the Federal subsistence hunting, trapping, and fishing regulations that have been identified through agency review to the Federal subsistence regulations.

Public meeting: The Board will discuss and evaluate proposed regulatory changes during a public meeting in Anchorage, AK, on January 31 – February 2, 2023. **Note:** the proposed rule listed the meeting date as taking place in April 2022, however, since the proposed rule was not yet published this action by the Board could not take place. A correction will be published in the *Federal Register*. Additional meeting information will be released through news releases, television, radio, and newspaper ads, along with that information being posted to the Federal Subsistence Management Program's webpage and Facebook page (www.doi.gov/subsistence and www.facebook.com/subsistencealaska).

Public comments: Comments on this proposed rule must be received or postmarked by August 10, 2022.

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

- *Electronically:* Go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <https://www.regulations.gov>. In the Search box, enter the docket number or RIN for this rulemaking (**Docket No. FWS–R7–SM–2018–0013** or **RIN 1018–BC96**). For best results, do not copy and paste either number; instead, type the docket number or RIN into the Search box using hyphens. Then, click on the Search button. On the resulting page, in the Search panel on the left side of the screen, under the Document Type heading, check the Proposed Rule box to locate this document. You may submit a comment by clicking on “Comment.”
- *By hard copy:* Submit by U.S. mail or hand delivery: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS–R7–SM–2018–0013; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 5275 Leesburg Pike, MS: PRB (JAO/3W); Falls Church VA 22041–3803.

We will not accept comments by email, faxes, or telephone. We will post all comments on <https://www.regulations.gov>. This generally means that we will post any personal information you provide us.

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

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

-###-