

Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

c/o Office of Subsistence Management
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FEB 22 2022

Anthony Christianson, Chair
Federal Subsistence Board
c/o Office of Subsistence Management
1011 E. Tudor Road, MS 121
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-6199

Dear Chairman Christianson:

The Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council) appreciates the opportunity to submit its FY-2021 Annual Report to the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) under the provisions of Section 805(a)(3)(D) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). At its public meetings held via teleconference on September 27-28, 2021, the Council identified concerns and recommendations for this report. The Council approved this annual report at its February 22-23, 2022 meeting. The Council wishes to share information and raise a number of concerns dealing with implementation of Title VIII of ANILCA and the continuation of subsistence uses in the Kodiak/Aleutians Region.

1. Level of staffing at the Refuges in our Region and at the Office of Subsistence Management

Increased staffing at the Kodiak, Izembek, and Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is needed to address caribou issues in Units 9 and 10 and other subsistence projects that the refuges are addressing in our region. We have been aware of vacant positions at the Refuges in our region and at OSM. Not having these position results in not having any outreach and no visiting of the communities. In the past, when the Refuge Information Technicians (RIT) was staffed at the Kodiak NWR, excellent outreach across the communities occurred, and we hope that the staffing levels increase across the region will result in improved community outreach in collaboration with Council members. We encourage the respective agencies work to fill these positions to address important issues facing our region. In Units 9 and 10, there have been Federal special actions recently and the caribou populations and subsistence uses should be closely monitored so that this important resource and other subsistence resources can be sustained and subsistence uses can be maintained. The Council would like to bring to the Board's attention that staff shortages also impacted the caribou population annual surveys completion.

2. Lack of applicants for Council vacancies

The Council is concerned that there are vacancies on the Council that cause a lack of adequate representation throughout a diverse and widely dispersed region. As noted above, we have expressed concern about staffing shortages affecting subsistence activities and the level of vacancies on the Council is evidence of a need in our region. The Council requests that Office of Subsistence Management notifies Council members prior to the Council membership application deadline if enough of applications were received for their region, which would help the Council to conduct outreach in their communities.

3. Food Security

Unfortunately, COVID-19 restrictions continue to affect food security in the entire Kodiak/Aleutian Region particularly because of supply chain challenges. These challenges underscore the importance of having reliable and adequate access to subsistence resources for our communities to ensure food security by enabling them secure as much food locally as possible. We hope that the Board and the program can keep these considerations in mind by remaining flexible and responsive in addressing future requests for subsistence uses.

4. Invasive Species: Crayfish

We want to express our appreciation and support of the crayfish research projects conducted by the Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak. We appreciate the documentation of the increasing level of crayfish in the Buskin River drainage. It could be that crayfish may be a major factor in crash of the salmon run and hopefully we'll find out with future intensive scale analysis. We appreciate that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs have provided funding and technical support to continue researching the crayfish issue in the Buskin River drainage. While mentioning invasive species, we would also like to express appreciation to the USFWS for their help in eradicating rats in other areas of the Aleutians.

5. Invasive Species: FRMP support for eradication

We understand that the FRMP mainly has fish stock monitoring, harvest reporting and Traditional Knowledge programs but we would like to see them support some more efforts in eradication of invasive species. The Kodiak Refuge has worked with Sun'aq Tribe, and in going forward we like to see FRMP projects to eradicate the crayfish that have been documented as being present in the Buskin River.

6. Appreciation for the support shown relating to the Unimak caribou and the sea otter issues.

We want to express our great appreciation to the staff that helped us undertake the regulatory process that resulted in a limited harvest of Unimak caribou for the nearby subsistence users. Additionally we want to sincerely thank OSM and USFWS staff for helping us gain information relating to sea otter management. Both of these issues seriously effect subsistence harvest and are complicated by multiple levels of regulations and management.

The Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council appreciates the Board's attention to these matters and the opportunity to assist the Federal Subsistence Management Program in meeting its charge of protecting subsistence resources and uses of these resources on Federal public lands and waters. The Council looks forward to continuing discussions about the issues and concerns of subsistence users in the Kodiak/Aleutians Region. If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact me via Katerina Wessels, Council Coordination Division Supervisor, Office of Subsistence Management, at katerina_wessels@fws.gov, or 1-800-478-1456 or 1-907-786-3885.

Sincerely,



Della Trumble
Chair

cc Federal Subsistence Board
Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Office of Subsistence Management
Interagency Staff Committee
Benjamin Mulligan, Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Mark Burch, Special Projects Coordinator, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Administrative Record