



WESTERN INTERIOR ALASKA
SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL
ADVISORY COUNCIL
Meeting Materials

February 17-18, 2021



REGION 6
Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Seat	Year Appointed <i>Term Expires</i>	Member Name and Community
1	2019	<i>VACANT</i>
2	2004 2022	Donald V. Honea Jr. Ruby
3	1993 2022	Pollock Simon Sr. Allakaket
4	2020	<i>VACANT</i>
5	1993 2020	<i>VACANT</i>
6	2017 2020	<i>VACANT</i>
7	2008 2020	<i>VACANT</i>
8	2021	<i>VACANT</i>
9	2006 2021	Jenny K. Pelkola Galena Vice-Chair
10	2018 2021	Goodwin G. Semaken Kaltag

WESTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Via Teleconference
February 17-18, 2021, convening at 9:00 a.m. daily

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

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

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

AGENDA

*Asterisk identifies action item.

- 1. Invocation**
- 2. Call to Order** (*Chair*)
- 3. Roll Call and Establish Quorum** (*Secretary*) 1
- 4. Welcome and Introductions** (*Chair*)
- 5. Review and Adopt Agenda*** (*Chair*) 2
- 6. Election of Officers***
 - Chair (*DFO*)
 - Vice-Chair (*New Chair*)
 - Secretary (*New Chair*)
- 7. Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes*** (*Chair*).....5
- 8. Reports**
 - Council Member Reports
 - Chair’s Report
- 9. Public and Tribal Comment on Non-Agenda Items** (available each morning)
- 10. Old Business** (*Chair*)
- 11. New Business** (*Chair*)

Call for Federal Wildlife Proposals*
 Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) Wildlife Updates
 Council Charter Review*17
 Review and approve FY2020 Annual Report*26

12. Agency Reports

(Time limit of 15 minutes unless approved in advance)

Tribal Governments

Native Organizations

- Tanana Chiefs Conference
- Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
- Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association

National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration

- Bycatch Update (Diana Stram, NOAA)
- Eastern Bering Sea Research (Ellen Yasumiichi, NOAA)

US Fish and Wildlife Service

- 2021 Yukon River Pre-season Salmon Outlook (USFWS/ADF&G)
- Nowitna/Innoko/Koyukuk National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Update39
- Kanuti NWR Update
- Yukon Delta NWR Update
- Subsistence Update

National Park Service

- Gates of the Arctic National Park & Preserve (GAAR) Update
- GAAR Subsistence Resource Commission

Bureau of Land Management

- Central Yukon Field Office Hunting Guide Permit Update
- Central Yukon Resource Management Plan Update28-34

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

- Subsistence Update

Office of Subsistence Management

13. Future Meeting Dates*

Confirm Fall 2021 meeting date and location51
 Select Winter 2022 meeting date and location52

14. Closing Comments

15. Adjourn (Chair)

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

Reasonable Accommodations

The Federal Subsistence Board is committed to providing access to this meeting for all participants. Please direct all requests for special accommodation needs to Karen Deatherage, 907-474-2270, karen_deatherage@fws.gov, or 800-877-8339 (TTY) by close of business on February 12, 2021.

WESTERN INTERIOR ALASKA SUBSISTENCE REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Via Teleconference Due to Covid-19
October 14-15, 2020

Invocation

Jenny Pelkola gave an invocation.

Call to Order, Roll Call and Quorum Establishment

The meeting was called to order on Wednesday, October 14, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. Council members Jack Reakoff, Jenny Pelkola, Timothy Gervais, Donald Honea, Jr., Tommy Kriska, and Goodwin Semaken were on teleconference. Absent: Pollock Simon, Jr. (excused). A quorum was established with 6 out of 7 seated Council members participating by phone. (Council has three vacant seats).

Attendees:

Via teleconference

Karen Deatherage, Fairbanks, Office of Subsistence Management (OSM)
Greg Risdahl, Orville Lind, Hannah Voorhees, Robbin LaVine, Jarred Stone, Lisa Maas, George Pappas, Anchorage, OSM
Patricia Petrivelli, Anchorage, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Carol Damburg, Anchorage, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
Matt Keyes, Gerald Maschmann, Fairbanks, USFWS
Bob Rebarchik, Wyatt Snodgrass, Galena, Innoko/Nowitna/Koyukuk National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)
Tina Moran, Joanna Fox, Chris Harwood, Vince Mathews, Fairbanks, Kanuti NWR
Boyd Blihovde, Aaron Moses, Ray Born, Gary DeCossas, Bethel, Yukon Delta NWR
Frank Harris, Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, Soldotna
Bonnie Million, Bruce Seppi, Walker Gusse, Anchorage, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Tim LaMarr, Jen McMillan, Fairbanks, BLM
Joshua Ream, Anchorage, National Park Service (NPS)
Marcy Okada, Kyle Joly, Fairbanks, Gates of the Arctic National Park & Preserve (GAAR)
Eric Row, Fairbanks, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC)
Serena Pitka, Catherine Moncrieff, Anchorage, Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFA)
Deena Jallen, Jeff Estensen, Nick Smith, Anchorage, ADF&G
Christy Gleason, Alida Trainor, Chris McDevitt, Fairbanks, ADF&G
Joshua Peirce, McGrath, ADF&G
Susi Sam, Galena, Loudon Tribal Council
Mary Peltola, Terese Schomogyi, Bethel, Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (KRITFC)

Kevin Whitworth, McGrath, KRITFC
Laramie Maxwell, Fairbanks, Northern Alaska Environmental Center
Mary Martinez, Anchorage, Calista Corporation

Review and Adopt Agenda

Motion by Mr. Honea, seconded by Mrs. Pelkola, to adopt the agenda as read with the following changes:

- Add: Mulchatna Caribou Herd (ADF&G)
- Add: BLM: Ambler Road & Dalton Highway Corridor Hunting (recent surveys update and guide permits)
- Add: Kanuti, Innoko/Nowitna/Koyukuk and Yukon Delta NWR Reports
- Add: USFWS Subsistence Division Update
- Remove Service Awards
- Move YRDFA, KRITFC and USFWS/ADF&G reports prior to Fishery Proposal Deliberation
- Move BLM to an earlier position on agenda.

The motion passed unanimously.

Review and Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion by Mrs. Pelkola, seconded by Mr. Gervais, to approve the winter 2020 meeting minutes as with the following modifications:

Mrs. Pelkola asked to be referred to as Mrs. Pelkola in minutes, not Ms.

The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member and Chair Reports

Jenny Pelkola of Galena reported her continued concern over the vacancies on the Council and the need to get these seats filled. She stated that fishing was very poor this last summer, with high water, lots of drift and multiple fishing closures. Mrs. Pelkola shared that local community members were very happy with the opportunity to get their moose permit in Galena. There were lots of cows and calves, and they looked healthy. She didn't notice many non-local hunters in boats and believes this allowed for more locals to get their harvests for the winter. Mrs. Pelkola reported seeing very few birds compared to previous years, including ducks and geese. Mrs. Pelkola also shared she had observed more grizzly bears and fewer low bush cranberries this summer and fall.

Timothy Gervais of Ruby reported on his summer fishing experiences, including the need for subsistence users to adjust to changing climates, different species and animal behaviors. This includes switching from drift to set nets to improve success, and the importance of being prepared. The Village of Newtok lost fish this summer due to power outages. Mr. Gervais reported that Sockeye Salmon runs were low in

the Copper River, and extremely low in Chignik. Kotzebue and Southeast Alaska had weak Chum Salmon runs, and Prince William Sound and Southeast Alaska had weak Pink Salmon runs. Kodiak had an excellent Pink Salmon run and commercial harvest, and Chignik had a good Pink Salmon run but no harvest due to closures to protect Sockeye Salmon. Mr. Gervais continued to express concerns over Chinook and Sockeye Salmon bycatch. He also mentioned that many fish are much smaller, resulting in younger and smaller fish on the spawning grounds. This will most likely contribute to smaller fish in the near future. Mr. Gervais called on the State of Alaska to work on reversing this smaller fish trend. Mr. Gervais also remarked that the large number of state and foreign hatchery production is likely causing big starvation events, such as those experienced in 2014-2016, for wild stocks. He stressed the need for more information on the food supply in the marine environment to understand why there is bad survivability for salmon in the rivers. Mr. Gervais did state that there was good moose hunting which helped to make up for the lack of fish.

Mr. Gervais also commented on the Council membership and stressed his concern over Tommy Kriska's application. He stated that Mr. Kriska had insured him that he handed his application in to OSM. Mr. Gervais suggested the Council write a letter to the Federal Subsistence Board asking for an exception, in part due to the Covid-19 issue, for Mr. Kriska's appointment to the Council in 2021. Mr. Gervais stated that the Council is already facing multiple seat vacancies, and Mr. Kriska's participation was imperative to the Council's success.

Donald Honea, Jr., of Ruby appreciated hearing about waterfowl observations. Mr. Honea sits on the Tanana Chiefs Conference Migratory Bird Committee, and will pass these observations forward. Mr. Honea agreed with other Council members that this season's fishing was poor. High water was problematic and prevented subsistence users from getting to some of the sloughs. The hunting was good, however, and most of his community got a moose. Mr. Honea believes that the lack of a check station on the Nowitna River this year allowed for abuse to occur. Mr. Honea stressed the need for Council representation from the Kuskokwim area.

Tom Kriska of Koyukuk reported that although the water was high in the rivers, the fish were there. Mr. Kriska switched from drift nets to set nets, and was much more successful. Mr. Kriska also believes that high water drives the waterfowl further inland to the willows and alders where they feed. He observed ducks back off the Koyukuk River, swans and cranes in flight but few geese. The moose season was good with many moose along the Koyukuk for miles. Mr. Kriska recommends a check station on the Koyukuk River as there were high numbers of hunters, particularly on the upper river. Mr. Kriska understood there would only be 5-10 permits, but saw over a 100 hunters along the Koyukuk River. Mr. Kriska did feel confident that he submitted his application for the 2021 Council appointments and was frustrated that it had not been received. He wants to encourage more participation on the Council from the lower Yukon River.

Goodwin Semakan of Kaltag reported that everyone got their moose because no hunters came into the area due to Covid-19. Fishing was low on the creeks and the Council needs more representation from the

Kuskokwim area to help understand the issues there. Mr. Semakan also reported that he heard wolves howling along the rivers.

Jack Reakoff Wiseman delivered the Chair's report. Mr. Reakoff reported that the Council's input for the Board of Game proposals went well. He specifically noted the success of the proposal to lengthen the moose hunting season in Unit 24B from September 25 to October 1. Moose are migrating later in the season, so this extension is important for subsistence opportunity. The BOG lengthened the sheep season on the Dalton Highway, however, by over two weeks. The proposal passed despite the fact that there has been an 80% reduction in sheep population in this area. Further, there was no survey and no data to support this extension. Sheep and moose populations continue to be low in the Brooks Range due to deep snow or rain on snow events. There are more guides operating than ever, with multiple guides operating off the same permit. Guides are taking sublegal rams, and recruitment was at 3 lambs for 31 ewes. There are lots of wolves and lynx, which both prey on Dall's sheep. Both BLM and the State of Alaska are increasing guide use during this critical period, which presents a significant impact to the resource. Mr. Reakoff participated in the Kuskokwim River Working Group for in-season management of salmon, which had weak runs this summer. He noted that he saw several Facebook posts of fish caught during closures. The Covid-19 issue is very challenging for subsistence users. There is very little work and villages are relying heavily on subsistence resources. Mr. Reakoff reiterated frustration over the decreased Council membership and lack of appointments. Mr. Reakoff believes that the Department of Interior is trying to reduce Council participation, which goes against Section 805 of ANILCA requiring meaningful participation.

Motion by Mrs. Pelkola, seconded by Mr. Honea, to send a letter to the Federal Subsistence Board regarding both the timing and number of Council membership appointments. The Council is requesting a full complement of membership on the Regional Advisory Councils, which is imperative to adopting subsistence regulations, and fulfilling the statutory requirements under Section 805 of ANILCA

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Motion by Mr. Gervais, seconded by Mr. Honea, to send a letter to the Board and Solicitor requesting that the Board take a non-customary action, and submit Tommy Kriska's application for service on the Council in 2021. Mr. Kriska's application was misplaced and his participation on the Council is critical to the Western Interior Alaska Region. The Council believes that the regulation framework is currently strained due to the high seat vacancy on Regional Councils. The Council cannot afford to lose a seat over an administrative issue.

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Old Business

- Ms. Deatherage presented the 805c report from the Board to the Council.

New Business

Fisheries Proposals and Closure Reviews

Regional:

FCR21-04: Yukon Drainage/Jim River Closure – All Fish

Motion by Mr. Gervais, seconded by Mrs. Pelkola to support elimination of the closure per the OSM recommendation with the following modification: Allow a bag/possession limit of 10 grayling per day by rod and reel in the Jim River, including Douglas and Prospect Creeks.

This closure was authorized to minimize the disruption of the State's continuing fish and game management of subsistence, while at the same time fulfilling the requirements of ANILCA. The Jim River is currently excluded from the list of rivers where subsistence use is permitted along the Dalton Highway Corridor. Under this regulation, use has been closed to Federally qualified subsistence users but open to sport fishing under State regulations. The Council believes there is verifiable traditional use of salmon in this river and a limited harvest by rod and reel should be allowed to occur. The Council also believes that if subsistence users are going to travel down the river for grayling, the bag limit should be increased to justify time and expense. Allowing for a small traditional harvest of salmon, along with a reasonable harvest of grayling would re-establish a subsistence priority use of this resource.

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Crossover:

FP21-01: Repeal Subsistence Closure, Kuskokwim River Salmon

Motion by Mr. Gervais, seconded by Mr. Semaken to adopt FP21-01 repealing the subsistence closure for Kuskokwim River salmon.

The Council believes this is a housekeeping issue. Adopting this proposal will allow alignment with current management practices that have been in place on the Kuskokwim River since 2003.

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

FP21-02: Modify Set Gillnet Spacing, Kuskokwim River Tributaries - All Fish

Motion by Mr. Honea, seconded by Mrs. Pelkola to adopt FP21-02, which would modify set gillnet spacing on Kuskokwim River tributaries for all fish species.

The Council was very concerned with the high potential of nets being very close together under this regulation. This would not only create crowding in traditional fishing areas but also have the potential to

increase harvest. Salmon can be sucked into eddies on the river and be easily caught. This is especially challenging right now due to recent low Chum Salmon runs. The Council agrees with the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Subsistence Regional Advisory Council that this regulation would not protect the resource, would create crowding, and reduce in-season management capacities.

The motion failed on a unanimous vote.

FP21-03: Clarify Set Gillnet Orientation, Kuskokwim River - All Fish

Motion by Mr. Gervais, seconded by Mr. Honea to adopt FP21-03 clarifying set gillnet orientation on the Kuskokwim River for all fish species.

The Council believes this is a housekeeping issue validating that set drift nets represent a customary and traditional fishing method in the tributary streams of the Kuskokwim River. Adoption of this proposal will clarify this use under current Federal subsistence regulations.

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

FCR21-06: Toklat River Closure – All Fish

Motion by Mr. Gervais, seconded by Mrs. Pelkola to support eliminating the closure for the Toklat River.

The Council is in agreement with the Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council that this closure should be eliminated. The Council also recognizes that two communities within the Western Interior Region have Customary and Traditional Use in this drainage and may benefit from additional traditional subsistence fishing opportunities in the Toklat River.

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

FCR21-07: Yukon Drainage/Nome Creek Closure – Grayling

Motion by Mr. Gervais, seconded by Mr. Semaken, to defer action to the Eastern Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.

The Council defers action to the EIRAC due to the fact that Nome Creek lies deep within the Eastern Interior region. The Council believes the communities within this region will have the knowledge and resources needed to make the best decision regarding this current closure.

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

2022 Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program

Ms. Robbin LaVine with OSM presented the Council with the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program (FRMP) Priority Information Needs (PINs) working group discussion results. Mr. Jarred Stone of OSM responded to inquiries regarding the FRMP program.

Motion by Mr. Honea, seconded by Mrs. Pelkola to adopt the fifteen (15) PINs for the Kuskokwim River.

The Council agreed that all PINs should remain on the list as they are all very important to the region. Council members stressed, however, that those PINs focusing on incidental Chinook Salmon mortality and drop-out rates with gillnets were critical. There is also concern with the lack of information for stressors such as heat, mortality during migration, water velocity, and gear entanglement, all of which can negatively affect salmon spawning. The Council considers both of these research needs as high priorities for the Kuskokwim River region. The Council is also requesting that OSM allow for ranking of PINs for the next cycle, as some needs are clearly greater than others.

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Motion by Mrs. Pelkola, seconded by Mr. Gervais, to adopt the twelve (12) PINs for the Yukon River, and add an additional PIN for research on distribution, abundance, condition and survival of juvenile and out-migrating salmon in the Yukon River drainage.

The Council agreed that all PINs, including the above addition, should be listed as they are all very important to the region. The Council would again like to emphasize, however, a priority for those PINs focusing on incidental Chinook Salmon mortality and drop-out rates with gillnets, as well as stressors on salmon such as heat, mortality during migration, water velocity, and gear entanglement, all of which can negatively affect spawning abilities.

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Identifying Issues for FY2020 Annual Report

The Council identified the following topics for inclusion into the FY20 Annual Report:

- Board definition for ordinary mean high water mark
- Council member appointments and continuing incumbent terms due to late appointments
- BLM guide use permitting process

Proposed Review Processes for NPS Individual Customary and Traditional Use Determinations

Joshua Ream, NPS, presented proposed changes to the NPS individual customary and traditional use determinations review process, and requested the Council's action on the changes.

Motion by Mr. Honea, seconded by Mrs. Pelkola, to adopt the NPS's proposed changes to the Subsistence Eligibility Permits and Individual Customary and Traditional Use Determinations process.

The Council supports the NPS' proposed permitting changes for National Parks in Alaska. The Board would grant delegation of authority to the NPS Regional Director to issue individual customary and traditional use permits for parklands in Alaska. The Council believes that utilizing the Subsistence Resource Commissions will provide a beneficial interface with the users in their respective Park units. The Council recognizes that should an individual feel that the Regional Director acted inappropriately with the issuance of these permits, the individual could submit a proposal to the Board to rescind the delegation of authority to the NPS Regional Director.

The motion passed on a unanimous vote.

Agency/Tribal/Organization Reports:

- Gerald Mashmann, USFWS, 2020 Preliminary Yukon River Summer Season Summary
- Deena Jallen and Jeff Estensen, ADF&G, 2020 Preliminary Yukon River Summer Season Summary
- Serena Fitka and Catherine Moncrieff, YRDFA Update
- Kevin Whitworth, KRITFC Update
- Ray Born and Gary Decosass, Yukon Delta NWR, In-season Management
- Eric Row, TCC 2020 Update
- Tim LaMarr, Jennifer McMillan, BLM, Ambler Road, Central Yukon Resource Management Plan, Dalton Highway Corridor Guided Hunting Updates
- Tina Moran, Chris Harwood, Kanuti NWR Update
- Bob Rebarchik, Innoko/Nowitna/Koyukuk NWR Update
- Aaron Moses, Yukon Delta NWR Update
- Vince Mathews, USFWS, Refuge Subsistence Program Update
- Alida Trainer, Chris McDevitt, ADF&G, Subsistence Division Update
- Todd Rinaldi, ADF&G, Mulchatna Caribou Herd Update
- Marcy Okada, Kyle Joly, NPS, GAAR and SRC Report
- Orville Lind, OSM, Tribal Guidelines
- Greg Risdahl, OSM, Office Update

Future Meeting Dates:

Winter 2021 meeting to be held February 17-18, in Fairbanks

Fall 2021 meeting to be held October 13-14, in Anchorage

Karen Deatherage, Designated Federal Officer

USFWS Office of Subsistence Management

Jack Reakoff, Chair

Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

These minutes will be formally considered by the Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council at its winter 2021 meeting, and any corrections or notations will be incorporated in the minutes at that meeting.

A more detailed report of this meeting, copies of the transcript, and meeting handouts are available upon request. Call Karen Deatherage at 1-800-478-1456 or 907-474-2203, email karen_deatherage@fws.gov



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

Federal Subsistence Board Informational Flyer



Forest Service

Contact: Regulatory Affairs Division Chief
(907) 786-3888 or (800) 478-1456
subsistence@fws.gov

How to Submit a Proposal to Change Federal Subsistence Regulations

Alaska residents and subsistence users are an integral part of the Federal regulatory process. Any person or group can submit proposals to change Federal subsistence regulations, comment on proposals, or testify at meetings. By becoming involved in the process, subsistence users assist with effective management of subsistence activities and ensure consideration of traditional and local knowledge in subsistence management decisions. Subsistence users also provide valuable wildlife harvest information.

A call for proposals to change Federal subsistence fishing regulations is issued in January of even-numbered years and odd-numbered years for wildlife. The period during which proposals are accepted is no less than 30 calendar days. Proposals must be submitted in writing within this time frame.

You may propose changes to Federal subsistence season dates, harvest limits, methods and means of harvest, and customary and traditional use determinations.

What your proposal should contain:

There is no form to submit your proposal to change Federal subsistence regulations. Include the following information in your proposal submission (you may submit as many as you like):

- Your name and contact information (address, phone, fax, or E-mail address)
- Your organization (if applicable).
- What regulations you wish to change. Include management unit number and species. Quote the current regulation if known. If you are proposing a new regulation, please state, “new regulation.”
- Write the regulation the way you would like to see it written in the regulations.
- Explain why this regulation change should be made.
- You should provide any additional information that you believe will help the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) in evaluating the proposed change.

You may submit your proposals by:

1. By mail or hand delivery to:
Federal Subsistence Board
Office of Subsistence Management
Attn: Theo Matuskowitz
1011 E. Tudor Rd., MS-121
Anchorage, AK 99503
2. At any Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council meeting (A schedule will be published in the Federal Register and be announced statewide, bi-annually, prior to the meeting cycles)
3. On the Web at <http://www.regulations.gov>

Submit a separate proposal for each proposed change; however, do not submit the same proposal by different accepted methods listed above. To cite which regulation(s) you want to change, you may reference [50 CFR 100](#) or [36 CFR 242](#) or the proposed regulations published in the Federal Register: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/fr/index.html>. All proposals and comments, including personal information, are posted on the Web at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

For the proposal processing timeline and additional information contact the Office of Subsistence Management at (800) 478-1456/ (907) 786-3888 or go to <http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/proposal/submit.cfm>.

How a proposal to change Federal subsistence regulations is processed:

1. Once a proposal to change Federal subsistence regulations is received by the Board, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) validates the proposal, assigns a proposal number and lead analyst.
2. The proposals are compiled into a book for statewide distribution and posted online at the Program website. The proposals are also sent out the applicable Councils and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and the Interagency Staff Committee (ISC) for review. The period during which comments are accepted is no less than 45 calendar days. Comments must be submitted within this time frame.
3. The lead analyst works with appropriate agencies and proponents to develop an analysis on the proposal.
4. The analysis is sent to the Councils, ADF&G and the ISC for comments and recommendations to the Board. The public is welcome and encouraged to provide comments directly to the Councils and the Board at their meetings. The final analysis contains all of the comments and recommendations received by interested/affected parties. This packet of information is then presented to the Board for action.
5. The decision to adopt, adopt with modification, defer or reject the proposal is then made by the Board. The public is provided the opportunity to provide comment directly to the Board prior to the Board's final decision.
6. The final rule is published in the Federal Register and a public regulations booklet is created and distributed statewide and on the Program's website.

A step-by-step guide to submitting your proposal on www.regulations.gov:

1. Connect to www.regulations.gov – there is no password or username required.
2. In the white space provided in the large blue box, type in the document number listed in the news release or available on the program webpage, (for example: FWS-R7-SM2014-0062) and select the light blue “Search” button to the right.

3. Search results will populate and may have more than one result. Make sure the Proposed Rule you select is by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and **not** by the U.S. Forest Service (FS).
4. Select the proposed rule and in the upper right select the blue box that says, “Comment Now!”
5. Enter your comments in the “Comment” box.
6. Upload your files by selecting “Choose files” (this is optional).
7. Enter your first and last name in the spaces provided.
8. Select the appropriate checkbox stating whether or not you are providing the information directly or submitting on behalf of a third party.
9. Fill out the contact information in the drop down section as requested.
10. Select, “Continue.” You will be given an opportunity to review your submission.
11. If everything appears correct, click the box at the bottom that states, “I read and understand the statement above,” and select the box, “Submit Comment.” A receipt will be provided to you. Keep this as proof of submission.
12. If everything does not appear as you would like it to, select, “Edit” to make any necessary changes and then go through the previous step again to “Submit Comment.”

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

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

Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

Charter

1. **Committee's Official Designation.** The Council's official designation is the Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council (Council).
2. **Authority.** The Council is renewed by virtue of the authority set out in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) (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.** Council duties and responsibilities, where applicable, are as follows:
 - a. Recommend the initiation, review, and evaluation of 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 decision-making process affecting the taking of fish and wildlife on the public lands within the Region for subsistence uses.
 - d. Prepare an annual report to the Secretary containing the following:
 - (1) An identification of current and anticipated subsistence uses of fish and wildlife populations within the Region.
 - (2) An evaluation of current and anticipated subsistence needs for fish and wildlife populations within the Region.
 - (3) A recommended strategy for the management of fish and wildlife populations within the Region to accommodate such subsistence uses and needs.

- (4) Recommendations concerning policies, standards, guidelines, and regulations to implement the strategy.
- e. Appoint one member to the 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.
- i. Provide recommendations for implementation of Secretary's Order 3347: Conservation Stewardship and Outdoor Recreation, and Secretary's Order 3356: Hunting, Fishing, Recreational Shooting, and Wildlife Conservation Opportunities and Coordination with States, Tribes, and Territories. Recommendations shall include, but are not limited to:
 - (1) Assessing and quantifying implementation of the Secretary's Orders, and recommendations to enhance and expand their implementation as identified;
 - (2) Policies and programs that:
 - (a) increase outdoor recreation opportunities for all Americans, with a focus on engaging youth, veterans, minorities, and other communities that traditionally have low participation in outdoor recreation;
 - (b) expand access for hunting and fishing on Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service lands in a manner that respects the rights and privacy of the owners of non-public lands;
 - (c) increase energy, transmission, infrastructure, or other relevant projects while avoiding or minimizing potential negative impacts on wildlife; and
 - (d) create greater collaboration with States, Tribes, and/or Territories.
- j. Provide recommendations for implementation of the regulatory reform initiatives and policies specified in section 2 of Executive Order 13777: Reducing Regulation and Controlling Regulatory Costs; Executive Order 12866: Regulatory Planning and Review, as amended; and section 6 of Executive Order

13563: Improving Regulation and Regulatory Review. Recommendations shall include, but are not limited to:

Identifying regulations for repeal, replacement, or modification considering, at a minimum, those regulations that:

- (1) eliminate jobs, or inhibit job creation;
- (2) are outdated, unnecessary, or ineffective;
- (3) impose costs that exceed benefits;
- (4) create a serious inconsistency or otherwise interfere with regulatory reform initiative and policies;
- (5) rely, in part or in whole, on data or methods that are not publicly available or insufficiently transparent to meet the standard for reproducibility; or
- (6) derive from or implement Executive Orders or other Presidential and Secretarial directives that have been subsequently rescinded or substantially modified.

Alternate members may be appointed to the Council to fill vacancies if they occur out of cycle. An alternate member must be approved and appointed by the Secretary before attending the meeting as a representative. At the conclusion of each meeting or shortly thereafter, provide a detailed recommendation meeting report, including meeting minutes, to the Designated Federal Officer (DFO).

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 \$180,000, including all direct and indirect expenses and 1.15 Federal 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 11, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The DFO is a full-time Federal employee appointed in accordance with Agency procedures. The DFO will:
 - (a) Approve or call all Council and subcommittee meetings;

- (b) Prepare and approve all meeting agenda;
 - (c) Attend all committee and subcommittee meetings;
 - (d) Adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines adjournment to be in the public interest; and
 - (e) 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, the charter is renewed in accordance with the provisions of section 14 of the FACA. The Council will not meet or take any action without a valid current charter.
12. **Membership and Designation.** The Council's membership is composed of representative members as follows:

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.

For geographic membership balance, it is a Council goal to seat three members who reside in the Northern Koyukuk area (Unit 24), three members who reside in the Middle Yukon (Unit 21A-D), three members who reside in the Upper Kuskokwim area (Unit 19), and one member who resides in the Grayling/Anvik/Shageluk/Holy Cross area (GASH-Unit 21E).

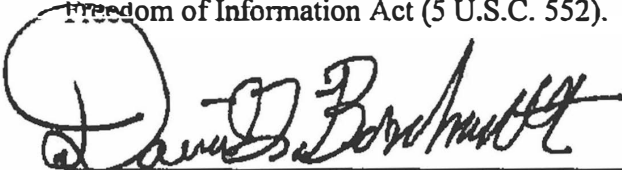
Members will be appointed for 3-year terms. Members serve at the discretion of the Secretary.

Alternate members may be appointed to the Council to fill vacancies if they occur out of cycle. An alternate member must be approved and appointed by the Secretary before attending the meeting as a representative. The term for an appointed alternate member will be the same as the term of the member whose vacancy is being filled.

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 Council or subcommittee deliberations or votes relating to a specific party matter before the Department or its bureaus and offices including a lease, license, permit, contract, grant, claim, agreement, or litigation in which the member or the entity the member represents has a direct financial interest.
- 14. **Subcommittees.** Subject to the DFOs 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. 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, must be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 6.2, and other approved Agency records disposition schedule. These records must be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552).



Secretary of the Interior

DEC 12 2019

Date Signed

DEC 13 2019

Date Filed

Subsistence Regional Advisory Council Correspondence Policy

The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) recognizes the value of the Regional Advisory Councils' role in the Federal Subsistence Management Program. The Board realizes that the Councils must interact with fish and wildlife resource agencies, organizations, and the public as part of their official duties, and that this interaction may include correspondence. Since the beginning of the Federal Subsistence Program, Regional Advisory Councils have prepared correspondence to entities other than the Board. Informally, Councils were asked to provide drafts of correspondence to the Office of Subsistence Management (OSM) for review prior to mailing. Recently, the Board was asked to clarify its position regarding Council correspondence. This policy is intended to formalize guidance from the Board to the Regional Advisory Councils in preparing correspondence.

The Board is mindful of its obligation to provide the Regional Advisory Councils with clear operating guidelines and policies, and has approved the correspondence policy set out below. The intent of the Regional Advisory Council correspondence policy is to ensure that Councils are able to correspond appropriately with other entities. In addition, the correspondence policy will assist Councils in directing their concerns to others most effectively and forestall any breach of department policy.

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Title VIII required the creation of Alaska's Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils to serve as advisors to the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture and to provide meaningful local participation in the management of fish and wildlife resources on Federal public lands. Within the framework of Title VIII and the Federal Advisory Committee Act, Congress assigned specific powers and duties to the Regional Advisory Councils. These are also reflected in the Councils' charters. (*Reference: ANILCA Title VIII §805, §808, and §810; Implementing regulations for Title VIII, 50 CFR 100 __.11 and 36 CFR 242 __.11; Implementing regulations for FACA, 41 CFR Part 102-3.70 and 3.75*)

The Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture created the Federal Subsistence Board and delegated to it the responsibility for managing fish and wildlife resources on Federal public lands. The Board was also given the duty of establishing rules and procedures for the operation of the Regional Advisory Councils. The Office of Subsistence Management was established within the Federal Subsistence Management Program's lead agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to administer the Program. (*Reference: 36 CFR Part 242 and 50 CFR Part 100 Subparts C and D*)

Policy

1. The subject matter of Council correspondence shall be limited to matters over which the Council has authority under §805(a)(3), §808, §810 of Title VIII, Subpart B §____.11(c) of regulation, and as described in the Council charters.
2. Councils may, and are encouraged to, correspond directly with the Board. The Councils are advisors to the Board.
3. Councils are urged to also make use of the annual report process to bring matters to the Board's attention.

4. As a general rule, Councils discuss and agree upon proposed correspondence during a public meeting. Occasionally, a Council chair may be requested to write a letter when it is not feasible to wait until a public Council meeting. In such cases, the content of the letter shall be limited to the known position of the Council as discussed in previous Council meetings.
5. Except as noted in Items 6, 7, and 8 of this policy, Councils will transmit all correspondence to the Assistant Regional Director (ARD) of OSM for review prior to mailing. This includes, but is not limited to, letters of support, resolutions, letters offering comment or recommendations, and any other correspondence to any government agency or any tribal or private organization or individual.
 - a. Recognizing that such correspondence is the result of an official Council action and may be urgent, the ARD will respond in a timely manner.
 - b. Modifications identified as necessary by the ARD will be discussed with the Council chair. Councils will make the modifications before sending out the correspondence.
6. Councils may submit written comments requested by Federal land management agencies under ANILCA §810 or requested by regional Subsistence Resource Commissions (SRC) under §808 directly to the requesting agency. Section 808 correspondence includes comments and information solicited by the SRCs and notification of appointment by the Council to an SRC.
7. Councils may submit proposed regulatory changes or written comments regarding proposed regulatory changes affecting subsistence uses within their regions to the Alaska Board of Fisheries or the Alaska Board of Game directly. A copy of any comments or proposals will be forwarded to the ARD when the original is submitted.
8. Administrative correspondence such as letters of appreciation, requests for agency reports at Council meetings, and cover letters for meeting agendas will go through the Council's regional coordinator to the appropriate OSM division chief for review.
9. Councils will submit copies of all correspondence generated by and received by them to OSM to be filed in the administrative record system.
10. Except as noted in Items 6, 7, and 8, Councils or individual Council members acting on behalf of or as representative of the Council may not, through correspondence or any other means of communication, attempt to persuade any elected or appointed political officials, any government agency, or any tribal or private organization or individual to take a particular action on an issue. This does not prohibit Council members from acting in their capacity as private citizens or through other organizations with which they are affiliated.

Approved by the Federal Subsistence Board on June 15, 2004.

Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

c/o Office of Subsistence Management
1011 E. Tudor Road, MS 121
Anchorage, AK 99503-6199
Phone: (907) 786-3888, Fax: (907) 786-3989
Toll Free: 1-800-478-1456

RAC/XXXXX.KD

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

Dear Chairman Christianson:

The Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council submits this FY-2020 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 meeting via teleconference, on October 14-15, 2020, the Council identified concerns and recommendations for this report. *(It approved this report at its winter 2021 meeting held February 17-18 via teleconference.)* The Council wishes to share information and raise a number of concerns aligned with the implementation of Title VIII of ANILCA and the continuation of subsistence uses in the Western Interior Region.

1. Mean High Water Mark Definition

The Council appreciates that the Board responded to this concern in our 2019 Annual Report. As cited in your reply, the Army Corp of Engineers define the term “ordinary high water mark” for purposes of the CWA lateral jurisdiction at 33 CFR 328.3(e), which states: “The term *ordinary high water mark* means that line on the shore established by the fluctuations of water and indicated by physical characteristics such as a clear, natural line impressed on the bank, shelving, changes in the character of soil, destruction of terrestrial vegetation, the presence of litter and debris, or other appropriate means that consider the characteristics of the surrounding areas.”

The Council believes this definition is inadequate, particularly for Federally-qualified subsistence users who must hunt during the winter months to feed their families. The characteristics described above delineate the ordinary high water mark for bare ground and are not visible during the winter months. Subsistence hunters are therefore vulnerable to illegally harvesting an animal during the winter months when the boundary is not visible based on the

Chairman Christianson

current definition. The regulation is therefore inadequate and needs further clarification to encompass seasonal variability.

Recommendation:

The Council is recommending that during winter months with snow cover, the “ordinary high water mark” be defined as the brush line, where willow and other vegetation occur above the snow column. This will enable a user to have a clear delineation of the brush line, and know whether they are on State or Federal lands for legal subsistence harvest.

2. Council Membership

The Council continues to be extremely frustrated with the lack of both timely member appointments and fully seated Councils. The Council submitted detailed concerns in a letter to the Board dated December 8, 2020; notably unacceptable delays in appointments for seats expiring each year on December 2, and continued high vacancy rates on all Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils, which greatly diminish the abilities of the Councils to accomplish the statutory requirements under Section 805 of Title VIII in ANILCA. The Councils cannot be expected to meet the statutory requirement for a “meaningful role in fish and wildlife management” with decreased memberships and inexcusable delays in member appointments. The Council believes that this “de facto” reduction of Council seats has not been justified, and is in fact a violation of the Council’s charter and ANILCA. The Council has copied all Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils on its December 8, 2020 letter to ensure there is a collective voice with these concerns, as the continued mishandling of member appointments is adversely affecting all ten Subsistence Council regions in Alaska.

Recommendation:

As stated in our letter to the Board, the Council is requesting that the Board contact the Secretary of the Interior’s office and call for the immediate relief with timely appointments for both incumbent and new members for Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils in Alaska.

3. Bureau of Land Management Guide Use Permitting Process

At its meeting held October 14-15 via teleconference, the Council queried representatives from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) about the number of hunting guides permitted in the Brooks Range, and specifically along the Dalton Highway Corridor. Multiple factors have contributed to low populations of sheep and moose, including increased guiding pressure. These activities are threatening subsistence resources and the subsistence priority for Federally-qualified users in this region.

Chairman Christianson

3

Moose and sheep populations have been depleted along the Dalton Highway Corridor due to harsh winters and low recruitment. This past year, only seven rams were observed in the Dalton Highway Corridor, south of Atigun Pass. Most of the rams seen were sub-legal, but will become legal size in two years and likely harvested. This could result in full reproductive failure in a population of sheep that is already suffering. Of the 31 ewes observed in this area, only three had lambs. Large populations of both wolves and lynx exist, both of which predate on sheep.

In addition to this conservation concern, there are increasing numbers of hunting guides and assistant guides in the area, some operating under one permit. The COVID-19 restrictions in Canada have pushed more guiding operations into the Brooks Range of Alaska. These guides are equipped with multiple aircraft, giving them clear advantages over subsistence users who depend on the resources. There appears to be little control of the potential for overharvest, and possible extirpation of sheep populations in the region. The lack of a guide-use permitting process with clear area delineations and limited harvest allocation exasperates this situation.

Recommendation:

The Council is requesting a guide-use permit program that ensures a priority for subsistence uses in the Brooks Range and along the Dalton Highway Corridor. In 2004, BLM promised a guide-use permitting process to select guides on BLM lands, if the State of Alaska failed to implement a guide use permitting process for these lands. The State has not done this. Therefore, the Council is requesting that BLM develop a guide-use permitting process similar to the National Park Service's preserve guide permitting process, and the National Wildlife Refuge permitting process. Guide use areas would be delineated, guides would compete for those permits, guides would not be permitted to hunt "over" one another, and guides would be held under specific allocation standards for resources in their areas. The Council believes its request is justified, as the State has not fulfilled its duty to subsistence users.

Thank you for the opportunity for this Council 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. We look forward to continuing discussions about the issues and concerns of subsistence users of the Western Interior Alaska Region. If you have questions about this report, please contact me via Karen Deatherage, Subsistence Council Coordinator, Office of Subsistence Management, at karen_deatherage@fws.gov, or 1-800-478-1456 or 907-474-2270.

Sincerely,

Chair

cc Federal Subsistence Board
Assistant Regional Director, Office of Subsistence Management

Acting Subsistence Policy Coordinator,
Office of Subsistence Management
Wildlife Division Supervisor, Office of Subsistence Management
Council Coordination Supervisor, Office of Subsistence Management
Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Council Coordinator, Office of Subsistence
Management
Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Special Projects Coordinator, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
Interagency Staff Committee
Administrative Record



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Central Yukon Field Office
222 University Avenue
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709-3816
www.blm.gov/alaska

In Reply Refer To:
1610 (030)
LLAKF03000

ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION : December 22, 2020

Karen Deatherage
Subsistence Council Coordinator
USFWS- Alaska Region
Office of Subsistence Management
222 University Avenue
Fairbanks, AK 99709

Dear Karen:

The BLM's Notice of Availability, published in the Federal Register on December 11, 2020, serves to announce the release of the Draft Central Yukon RMP/EIS for the 90-day public comment period. This public comment period will end on March 11, 2021.

The Draft RMP/EIS is available on the Department of Interior's ePlanning website at: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/35315/510> . The Notice of Availability also releases the draft analysis and findings of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) Section 810 Evaluation. Section 810 requires the BLM to evaluate the effects of proposed actions in the draft Central Yukon RMP/EIS on subsistence uses in the planning area, and to hold public hearings if it is found that these uses would be significantly restricted. BLM will host a series of six virtual meetings via Zoom planned for January 26, 27, 28 and February 2, 3, 4. We will hold ANILCA 810 hearings on the January 28 and February 2 meetings for the communities of Bettles, Evansville, Coldfoot, Wiseman, Allakaket, Alatna and Anaktuvuk Pass. Registration to provide public comments at the virtual meetings will be available through the project website on ePlanning. More specific information on the public meetings will be forthcoming in early 2021.

Public comments on the Draft RMP/EIS can be made through the ePlanning website, by email, mail, fax or during public meetings.

If you need additional information or clarification regarding the Draft RMP/EIS or the planning process, please contact Chel Ethun, Planning and Environmental Coordinator at (907)474-2253 or Tim La Marr, Central Yukon Field Manager at (907) 474-2356.

INTERIOR REGION 11 • ALASKA

Sincerely,

/s/ Timothy J. La Marr

Timothy La Marr
Central Yukon Field Manager

Enclosure(s): 1

1. Notice of Availability, FRN 2020-2753

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR****Bureau of Land Management****[20X.LLAKF03000 L16100000.PN0000]****Notice of Availability for the Central Yukon Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement, Alaska****AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.**ACTION:** Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) releases the Central Yukon Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) for public review and comment. The BLM will hold virtual public meetings and Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) Section 810 subsistence-related hearings regarding the Central Yukon Draft RMP/EIS. Copies or notification of the electronic availability for the Central Yukon Draft RMP/EIS are being sent to affected federal, state, tribal, and local government agencies and to other stakeholders.

DATES: To ensure that comments will be considered, the BLM must receive written comments on the Draft EIS within 90 days following the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes its Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register*. The BLM will announce virtual public meetings, subsistence-related hearings, and any other public participation activities at least 15 days in advance on the NEPA Register program page, <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/35315/510>, as well as through public notices, press releases, social media posts, and/or mailings.

ADDRESSES: You can review and download the Central Yukon Draft RMP/EIS online from the BLM's NEPA Register at <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning->

ui/project/35315/510. Select the “Documents” tab to find the electronic version of this material. Hard copies of the Draft RMP/EIS are also available for public inspection at the offices listed in this section in compliance with current COVID-19 protocols.

You may provide comments by mail, fax, email, or in person. Mail comments to: BLM Central Yukon Field Office, Attention: Central Yukon Draft RMP/EIS, 222 University Avenue, Fairbanks, AK 99709. Fax comments to (907) 474-2282 or email comments to CentralYukon@blm.gov. Hand-deliver comments to any of the locations listed in this section in compliance with current COVID-19 protocols.

Please contact each of the following facilities before visiting to determine their specific COVID-19 protocols, which might include needing an appointment and face mask to enter:

BLM Fairbanks District Office

222 University Avenue

Fairbanks, AK 99709

(907) 474-2200

BLM Alaska Public Information Center

James M. Fitzgerald Federal Building

222 West 7th Avenue

Anchorage, AK 99513

(907) 271-5960

Alaska Resources Library & Information Services

3211 Providence Drive, Suite 111

Anchorage, AK 99508

(907) 272-7547

Alaska Public Lands Information Center

101 Dunkel Street Suite 110

Fairbanks, AK 99701

(907) 459-3730

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michelle Ethun, BLM Central Yukon Field Office, at (907) 474-2253 or methun@blm.gov. People who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1-800-877-8339 to contact the above individual during normal business hours. The FRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question with the above individual. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Central Yukon Draft RMP/EIS is a comprehensive framework for future public land management actions in the Central Yukon region of Alaska. The planning area consists of about 55.7 million acres of land, including approximately 13.3 million acres of public lands managed by the BLM Central Yukon Field Office.

The Record of Decision for the Central Yukon RMP/EIS will guide management of these public lands for the next 15 to 20 years for the benefit of current and future generations as part of BLM's multiple-use mission. This planning effort is updating management decisions for public land uses and resources, including subsistence resources, mineral exploration and development, and recreation. When complete, the updated Central Yukon RMP will replace the Utility Corridor RMP (1991), the original Central Yukon RMP (1986), and portions of the Southwest Management Framework Plan (1981), as well as provide RMP-level decisions for unplanned lands west of Fairbanks. Although still draft, it provides:

- Consolidated direction under one resource management plan to address land and resource use and development on BLM-managed public lands within the planning area.
- An analysis of the environmental effects that could result from implementing the alternatives proposed in the Central Yukon Draft RMP/EIS. This Central Yukon Draft

RMP/EIS evaluates five alternatives for managing the planning area. Alternative A, the no action alternative, represents existing management described by current land use plans and provides the benchmark against which to compare the other alternatives. Alternative B emphasizes reducing the potential for competition between development uses and subsistence resources by identifying key areas for additional management actions. Alternative C1 emphasizes a blend of resource protection and development at the planning level to maintain the long-term sustainability of resources while providing for multiple resource uses. Alternative C2, which is the agency preferred alternative, emphasizes management to facilitate resource development while applying habitat management and administrative designations to accommodate multiple uses. Alternative D focuses on maximizing BLM-managed public lands for development potential with fewer management restrictions at the planning level. Alternatives B, C1, C2, and D were developed using input from the public, tribes, stakeholders, and cooperating agencies. Major planning issues addressed include subsistence resources, water resources, fisheries, and wildlife; forestry; minerals and mining; recreation; travel management and access; and areas of critical environmental concern. Section 810 of ANILCA requires the BLM to evaluate the effects of all alternatives presented in the Draft EIS on subsistence resources and activities, as well as hold public hearings if it finds that any alternative may significantly restrict subsistence uses. The preliminary evaluation of impacts analyzed in the Central Yukon Draft RMP/EIS found that associated impacts may significantly restrict subsistence uses. Therefore, the BLM will hold virtual public hearings on subsistence resources and activities in conjunction with the Central Yukon Draft RMP/EIS virtual public meetings for potentially affected communities.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personally identifying information in your comment, be aware that your entire comment — including your personally identifying information — may be made publicly available at

any time. While you can ask the BLM in your comment to withhold your personally identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

(Authority: 16 U.S.C. 3120(a); 40 CFR 1506.6(b))

Chad B. Padgett,

State Director, Alaska.

[FR Doc. 2020-27253 Filed: 12/10/2020 8:45 am; Publication Date: 12/11/2020]

Comparison of Current and Proposed Review Processes for National Park Service Individual Customary and Traditional Use Determinations

Step in process	Current Process	Proposed Process
Application window	Narrow window during call for regulatory proposals every two years	Open continuously
Application review	Proposals may be invalidated if incomplete or 13.440 permit is needed	NPS staff interview the applicant to ensure that all information regarding 8 factors is documented and process 13.440 permit application if needed
Proposal analysis	Follows standard format for C&T proposals using 8 factors. Analysis is prepared by NPS staff in combination with OSM staff	Follows standard format for C&T proposals using 8 factors. Analysis is prepared NPS staff
Advisory committee review	Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council	National Park Service Subsistence Resource Commission
Decisionmaker	Federal Subsistence Board	NPS Alaska Regional Director
Decision timeline	Fixed schedule -- at annual regulatory meeting	Flexible schedule -- following receipt of SRC recommendation



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Contact: Kenton Moos
(907) 842-1063 or 1-800-817-2538
kenton_moos@fws.gov

For Immediate Release:
December 3, 2020

REMINDER: MULCHATNA CARIBOU SEASONS IS CLOSED ON FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS THROUGHOUT RANGE OF THE MULCHATNA CARIBOU HERD FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE SEASON

The Togiak National Wildlife Refuge Manager, under authority delegated by the Federal Subsistence Board, has closed the caribou season, on Federal public lands until further notice. The closure will remain in effect in the following areas:

Units 9A, 9B, Units 9A, 9B, also Unit 9C, that portion within the Alagnak River drainage and DAL is only for portions of Units 17A and 17C – specifically: Unit 17A-all drainages west of Right Hand Point and 17C-that portion of 17C east of the Wood River and Wood River Lakes, 18, 19A, and 19B.

Justification:

The summer 2020 population estimate of the Mulchatna Caribou Herd is approximately 13,500 which is about half of the estimated herd size from 2014-2018, and similar to the 2019 estimate. This population estimate is well below the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's minimum population objective of 30,000. As a result of this decline, conservation measures were implemented during the 2019-2020 season including an early closure of the season by both State and Federal managers. Togiak Refuge staff and Federal managers, working with staff from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, have determined there is no harvestable surplus that would allow herd growth. Thus, in the interest of allowing herd recovery, no harvest is warranted the remainder of this season. The federal in-season manager consulted with and has concurrence from affected Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils and other federal land managers.

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United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Koyukuk/Nowitna/ Innoko NWR
P.O. Box 287
Galena, AK 99741
(907) 656-1231



Koyukuk/Nowitna/Innoko Refuge Update February 17-18, 2020 WIRAC Meeting

Management

Bob Rebarchik was selected as our new refuge manager in June of 2020. Bob had been serving as the assistant refuge manager since 2014. Prior to becoming an assistant, Bob was originally stationed in Galena back in the Mid 90's as the refuge Fire Management Officer (FMO). Bob has a lot of experience and knowledge of the Koyukuk/Nowitna/Innoko refuges and will make a great fit as refuge manager.

In August, 2019, Wyatt Snodgrass was selected as our fisheries biologist. Wyatt has a Bachelor of Science in wildlife conservation from the University of Rio Grande. He also has an Associate's degree in fisheries management and aquaculture from Hocking College, School of Natural Resources. Wyatt has Alaska experience from his time working at a fish hatchery in SE Alaska working with a sockeye escapement weir. He also has experience working with silver and bighead carp in the Midwest working out of the Carterville Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office in Southern Illinois. We are excited to welcome Wyatt to our staff.

In November of 2020 we filled our assistant manager position. For that position we selected David Zabriskie. David Zabriskie, has worked for the USFWS for 18 years. He has worked at several locations around the country including 4 years at Selawik NWR in Kotzebue, Alaska. His time in Kotzebue, working with the Inupiaq, he considers the most rewarding of his career. David enjoys hunting, fishing, and photography, especially traveling the world to photograph reptiles!

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, our office in Galena and McGrath are currently closed to the public until further notice. We are working with local tribal governments prior to conducting projects in an effort to help prevent the spread of the virus.

Fire

General Overview:

A higher than average number of wildfires burned a smaller than average number of acres in the Northwest Alaska Zone in 2020.

Northwest Alaska Refuges experienced 24 wildfires totaling 4533.5 acres. Selawik had 12 fires for 1740.4 acres. Innoko had 3 fires totaling 47.1 acres. Koyukuk had 6 fires totaling 2323.4 acres. Nowitna had 3 fires totaling 422.6 acres.

Subsistence

Wildlife Special Action Request WSA 19-15

The village of Koyukuk submitted Wildlife Special Action Request (WSA)19-15 to harvest 3 bull moose in GMU 21D on Federal lands within the Northern Unit Innoko NWR. This was an emergency request due to a food shortage as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Federal Subsistence Board (Board) created a delegation of authority letter to refuge managers for WSA requests related to food security due to the current pandemic. Refuge staff completed put together a full analysis, completed consultation, and were prepared to make an announcement on this request. The Alaska Unified Command Mass Care Group did not confirm the need for this special action, so the request was deferred back to the Board as specified by the delegation of authority letter. The Board took action on this request on 7/30/2020. The Board voted to defer WSA19-15 until well-defined criteria and guidance are developed to determine how and when food security concerns become a demonstrable and imminent threat to public safety. Federal subsistence regulations authorize the Board, in emergency situations, to open public lands for the taking of wildlife for subsistence uses, under certain circumstances, including for public safety reasons. The Board stated that consistent, responsive guidance is needed to help the Board, and in-season managers with delegated authority, properly assess emergency pandemic-related special action requests relative to legal obligations set forth by Title VIII of the Alaska National Interests Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). The Board has asked that the Interagency Staff Committee, which advises and supports the Board, develop this guidance on behalf of the Board as soon as possible.

Federal Winter Moose Hunt FM2104/2105 GMU 21E

A Federal subsistence winter hunt took place from Feb 15- March 15 on Federal lands in GMU 21E. Our RIT Ken Chase visited the GASH villages to issue out permits. Refuge staff also visited Aniak to issue permits out for the villages of Aniak, Chuathbaluk, Lower Kalskag, and Upper Kalskag. For FM2104 there were 4 permits issued and 3 bull moose harvested. For FM2105 there were 9 permits issued and 2 bull moose harvested.

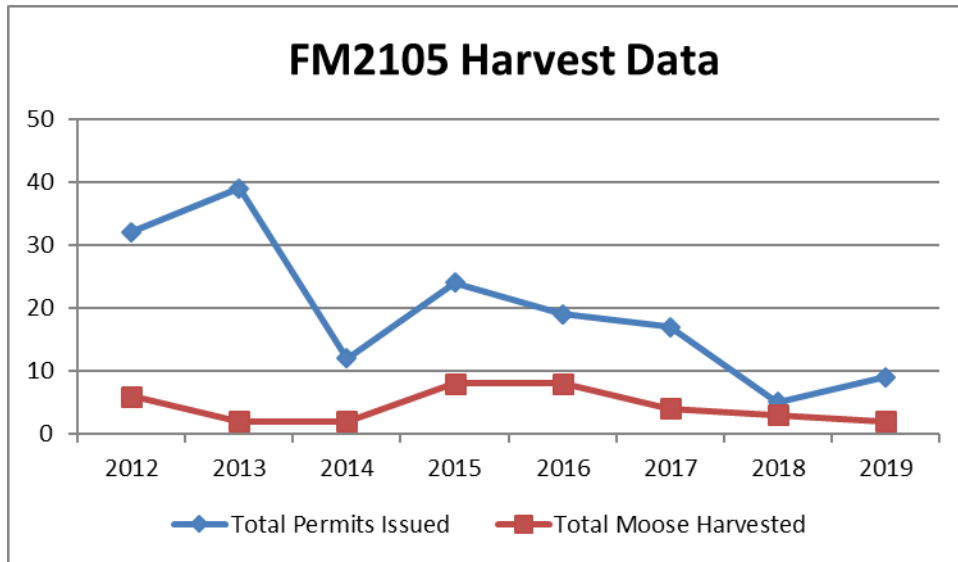


Figure 1: Harvest and permit data for Federal moose hunt FM2105

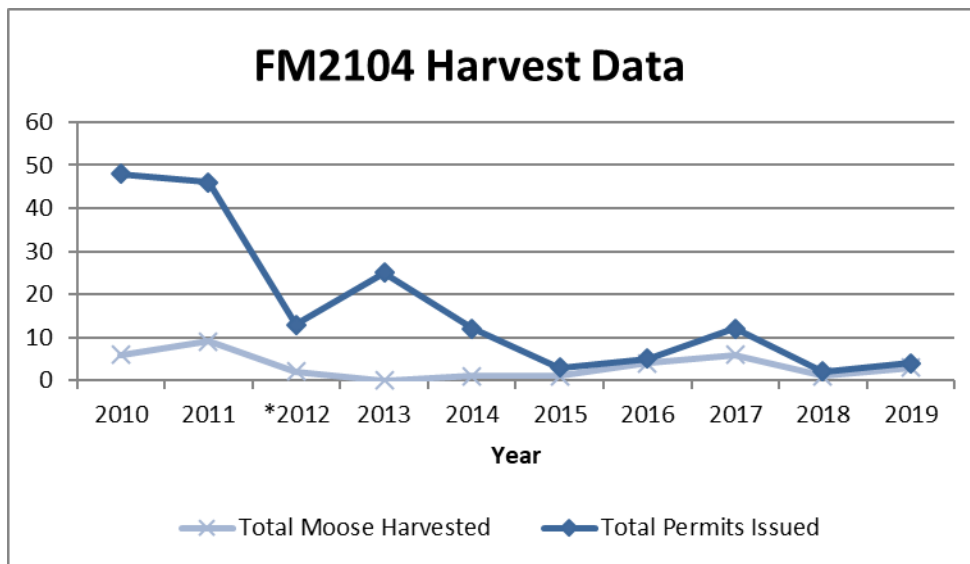


Figure 2: Harvest and permit data for Federal moose hunt FM2104

For the 2021 season, there is a newly created winter state registration hunt that exactly matches the Federal moose hunt FM2104/2105. It is from Feb 15- March 15 and open in all of GMU21 E. We are going to strongly encourage subsistence users to get this permit as the state registration hunt has more opportunity. Subsistence users hunting under the state registration hunt can hunt on all land in GMU 21E as compared to only Federal lands under the Federal permit. There will also be a permit vendor in each village and permits will also be available online. Federal permits will still be available if requested.

Federal Moose Hunt FM2101, GMU 21B

A Federal subsistence moose hunt took place in GMU 21B on the Nowitna Refuge from Sept 26-Oct 1. Due to Covid-19, we issued permits out to subsistence hunters over the phone. This year there were 12 permits issued and 5 bull moose were harvested.

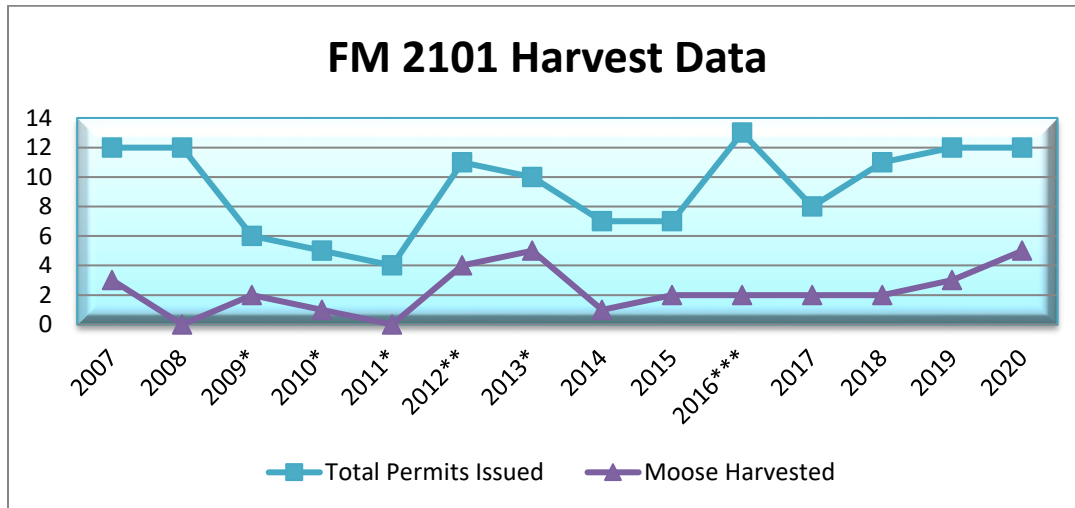


Figure 3: Harvest and permit data for Federal moose hunt FM2101

Nowitna Moose Hunter Check Station

Due to Covid-19 we did not operate the Nowitna moose hunter check station in the fall of 2020. We worked closely with ADF&G to get information sent out to hunters. We are currently planning to operate a check station for the Fall of 2021.

AMBCC Migratory Bird Household Harvest Surveys

Refuge staff including our Refuge Information Technician Ken Chase assisted the AMBCC in household surveys in this region prior to the pandemic beginning. Surveys were completed in McGrath and Galena over the 2019-2020 winter. This was the first survey conducted in Galena so there was a lot of groundwork completed in order to conduct the survey including approval from the Louden Tribal Council and completing a household list.

Biology

KOYUKUK/NOWITNA/INNOKO/NORTHERN INNOKO NWR BIOLOGICAL SUMMARY 2020

Despite the challenges presented due to Covid19 this year, we were able to continue many of our biological

surveys. We did not conduct White Fronted Goose banding on the Innoko this year, nor duck banding on the Koyukuk. Other than those two projects, most of the surveys in our Inventory and Monitoring plan were conducted.

Snow Surveys: All of our snowmarker data was recorded last winter. Average snow depth on the Koyukuk Refuge from Dec-April was 29". Snow depths in March and April were over 40" at some sites. This was the most severe winter recorded across our complex since 2011-2012.

Lynx Project: We participated in the regional lynx research project again this spring for the 3rd year of the project. Field activities were curtailed due to Covid-19 shutdown issues in late March. We still managed to live capture and collar 8 new lynx and monitor others previously collared. Since 2018 we have collared 35 Lynx in the Galena area area. Twenty two of these are still alive and reporting GPS locations. Five are known to have died, and 4 others are presumed dead. Six others have gone off the air due to batteries expiring. At least 9 lynx have dispersed in various directions, some traveling well over 1000 km and setting up home ranges in other areas of the state. We intend to live capture lynx again this spring as part of this statewide effort.

Moose Twinning:

Survey flights were conducted this spring from May 23 to May 27. Twinning rates on the Northern Innoko were lower than average this spring, with only 18% twins. This area has consistently had 30-40% twinning since 2003. The area just North of Galena had 26% twins, which is closer to the long term average for this area. Age structure on the Kaiyuh may explain the lower twinning rate there this year, as many of the cows in that expanding population are still young.

Galena Mountain Herd Caribou Telemetry: Only three full flights were made this year to monitor the collared caribou. Fifteen caribou have been wearing collars, and the first flight this spring revealed 6 of them had died over the winter. The remaining 9 are still alive and several had calves this spring. Sixty seven caribou were counted during a telemetry flight in September. The deep snow last winter may have impacted this small herd significantly.

Breeding Bird Surveys: Four of the six Breeding Bird Survey Routes were successfully conducted in June 2020; Galena Road, Nicholai Slough, Mud River, and Hather Creek BBSs. The Ruby Road BBS route was not completed because of a combination of poor weather conditions and impassable road conditions. The Tatalina BBS route was not conducted because of Covid-19 pandemic travel restrictions.

White-Fronted Goose Aerial Molting Surveys and River Float Production Surveys: Aerial molting goose surveys were flown on the Koyukuk NWR on June 29-July 1, 2020. The Koyukuk survey contains three areas; Three Day Slough, Dulbi River, and Dulbi Slough. Spring conditions in the Koyukuk survey areas were early, mild, and warm. Break-up water levels on the Koyukuk River in mid-May were high average with some flooding, but most significant was extensive standing water in all lakes and grasslakes, even those not connected to the river, due to high snow levels over the winter. After break-up, water levels dropped for a few days, but then rose steadily from additional Brooks Range and tributary runoff caused by a deep snow pack, creating major flooding from the Koyukuk River backing up into the survey area tributaries. By survey time on June 29, we were just able to survey as the upper Dulbi River was dropping, though the lower river was still right at the top of the banks. The concurrent Dulbi River Goose Production float survey was postponed until the week of July 6. Dulbi Slough was still extremely flooded from the middle to Willow Lake, but flown even though Willow Lake water was still high and in the grass and willows. Because of the high water, we expected to see fewer geese, especially young, but were surprised to observe higher than average numbers of adults and right around average numbers of young. The float survey showed way above average number of adults and average numbers of young

observed.

Swan Production Surveys: We flew the surveys from August 10-19, 2020. The 2020 survey results show improved production on the Koyukuk, average production on the Kaiyuh and Innoko, and above average production on the Nowitna. Despite annual variations in production of young and flocked and single birds, all four refuges have shown steady increases in the overall swan population with the Kaiyuh exhibiting the most dramatic annual increases (~7%). Most recently, there seems to be a levelling off of the consistent growth, possibly indicating habitat saturation.

Beaver Cache Surveys: In 2020, we flew beaver cache trend surveys from October 5-23 on the Nowitna Refuge. We were able to complete all sixteen of the original trend survey townships. The number of observed beaver caches has been relatively stable in the Nowitna trend survey area since 2006. There was a slight increase in numbers in 2014, followed by a decrease in 2017. Large swaths of the southern half of the trend area burned in 2015, which may have affected the 2017 results. In 2020, we see an increase in observations, possibly indicating a robust recovery after the fires of 2015 and possible successional boost to the area.

MOOSE TREND SURVEY SUMMARY 2020

Koyukuk/Nowitna/Innoko NWR Complex

We conducted aerial moose trend surveys on the Koyukuk/Nowitna/Innoko NWR from November 13-27, 2020. We completed four Trend Count Areas (TCAs) on the Koyukuk, one TCA on Innoko, and three TCAs on the Kaiyuh (Northern Innoko). The State survey crew flew two TCAs on the Nowitna and one TCA on the Koyukuk. Snow conditions this year were excellent (6"-8" on lakes and 12" in woods) everywhere in the northern TCAs. There was slightly less snow down on the Innoko TCA (some low grass showing), conditions were still considered good however. Temperatures were mostly average (-17 to 15°F) throughout the survey. Sighting was good or excellent most days because of high overcast and adequate snow cover, though heavy frost created a "canopy" in dense brush and forested areas.

The population in the Pilot Mt/Galena/Koyukuk River Mouth area remains healthy, though we observed lower numbers for both adult and yearling bulls and lower calf production. Conversely, the number of cows increased, which drove the ratios for bulls, calves, and yearling bulls per hundred cows even lower.

The Kaiyuh moose population (between Nulato and Kaltag) seems to be slowing or flattening out from the steady growth observed in the last five years. Though numbers are still above the long-term average for cows and bulls, yearling recruitment and calf production/survival to fall declined this year.

We recorded another low in the overall number of moose observed in the Nowitna River TCAs this survey season. Cow numbers were again below the long-term average, though the number did increase slightly from last year. Overall bull numbers declined to the second lowest on record. Calf production also declined and was also the second lowest observed. Yearling bull recruitment declined and was the third lowest number on record. Overall, the continued lower observations on the Nowitna is concerning. Last year we flew the adjacent trend count area at Deep Creek to make sure movement in and out of the river corridor toward the mouth wasn't responsible for the lower counts in the TCAs and found the observations in Deep Creek TCA were also low.

The Innoko River (between the lower Dishna and Grouch Creek) appears to be a healthy, low density population. This year we saw a slight decrease in cows and bulls observed and no calves. You read that correctly, zero calves. Yearling bull observations decreased from last year's high, but was still average. Yearling bull recruitment was lower and calf production was zero.

6

The northern Koyukuk (Treat Island and Huslia Flats) adult cow numbers have been inching back up to the long-term averages (800) in recent years, though observations decreased slightly this year and are just below the average. Calf production is again below the long-term average. Bulls increased slightly from last year and are above the long-term average, though yearling bull numbers decreased and are below average (medium and large bulls are both above average).

The middle Koyukuk (3-Day Slough and Dulbi River) saw increases in both adult bull and cow numbers, which are finally back up to the long-term averages, Calf numbers remain pretty much the same as last year and just below the long-term average, while yearling bulls increased to just about average.

A final version of the moose survey trend report will be available in January 2021.

Environmental Monitoring

- Monthly ice thickness measurements in Galena on the Yukon River at Galena for submission to the National Weather Service and Fresh Eyes on Ice.
- Monthly snow depth and water content measurements at Galena for USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS).
- Documentation of spring breakup conditions and migratory bird arrivals. Three new phenology routes established in Galena to document native plant growth and development (e.g. green-up, flowering, seed dispersal) reported monthly to the National Phenology Network.
- Invasive plant surveys and monitoring (both land- and water-plants). Work was limited to the Galena area this year because of Covid-19 restrictions and season-long high water conditions. No new species were found, but white sweet clover continues to spread. We removed bird vetch by pulling at two sites. No elodea was found at Alexander Lake in Galena.

*Invasive white sweetclover
growing along the Galena
runway*



Environmental Education/Outreach

Fresh Eyes on Ice:

We are partnering with the University of Alaska Fairbanks and students and community members across interior Alaska in this lake and river ice monitoring project. The project includes:

- education about ice safety and ice science (including extensive teacher training and high-quality survey equipment for school groups)
- local ice measurements by teachers/students/community members/scientists
- remote sensing buoys and cameras

- a photo portal for public submission of information about local conditions, especially during breakup and freezeup
- an active Facebook page

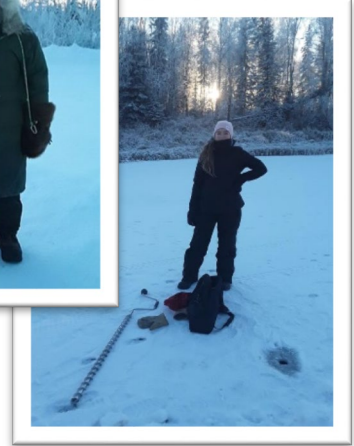
You can learn more at the project's website:

<http://fresheyesonice.org/>

Schools in Shageluk, Galena and McGrath are already participating. Folks in many communities contributed observations during breakup this year, especially through the Facebook page, which was very valuable given this year's concerning conditions.

Other outreach activities:

- Refuge Facebook page
- Work toward development of new websites and brochures for Refuges in the Complex
- Development of new artwork and Refuge-specific products for sale through Alaska Geographic beginning in 2021 (proceeds benefit outreach programs at our refuges)
- Alaska Migratory Bird Calendar (art and literature contest, calendar distribution)
- Elementary Spring-out Program, Science Camp, other school/community visits and outreach all were limited by Covid-19 restrictions. Planning and purchases were made, and we are hoping for a more normal year in 2021.



Volunteers measure ice thickness on Alexander Lake in Galena.

Some of the local winning art entries from the 2020 Alaska Migratory Bird Contest (Zachary Moore, Galena Interior Learning Academy; Eva Welch, McGrath)

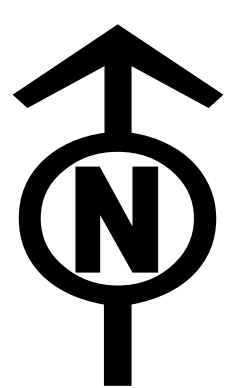
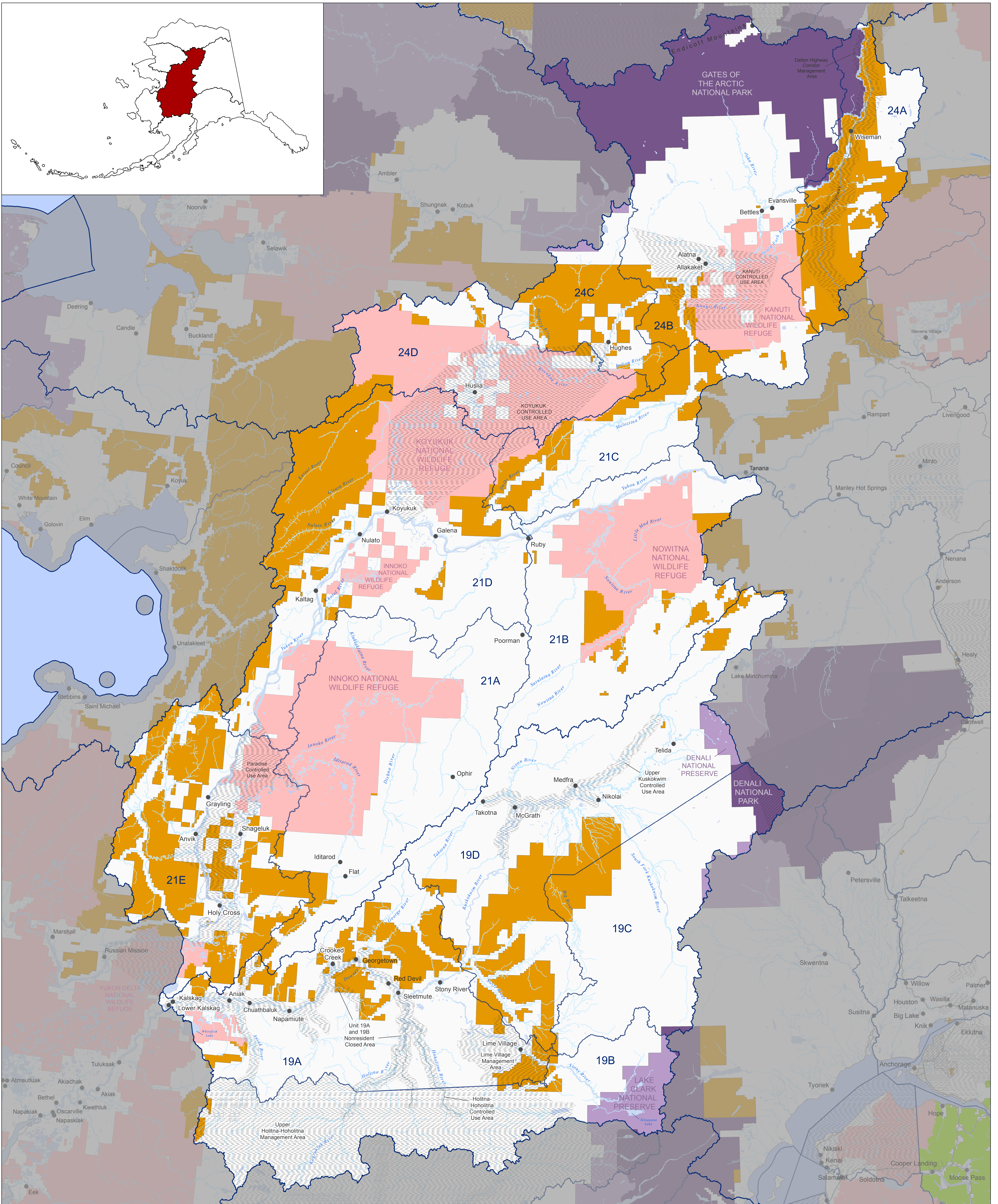
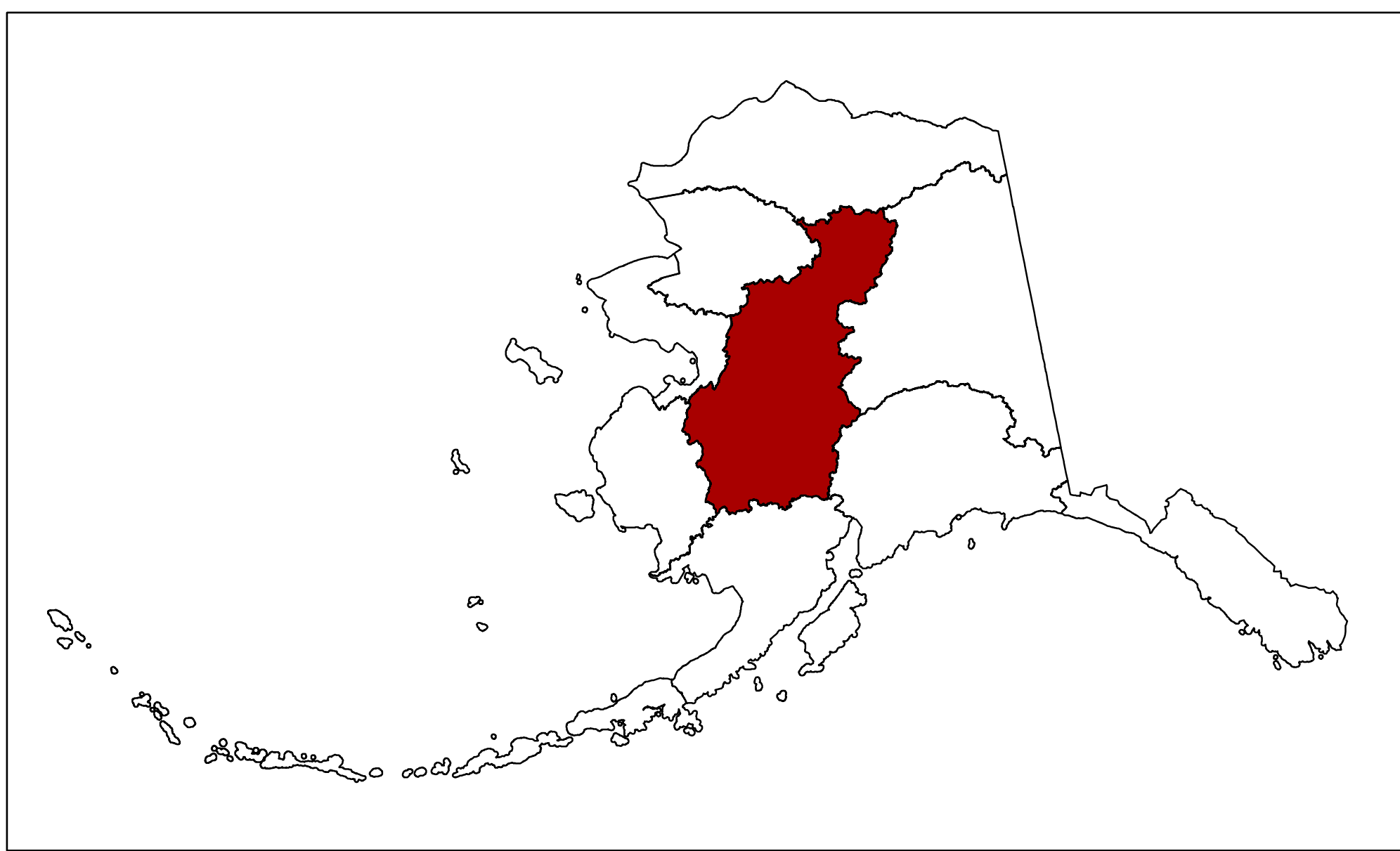


Innoko Science/culture camp

An “at home” science camp was hosted in by Park Ranger Kellie Peirce out of McGrath. Multiple villages participated including McGrath, Nikolai, Takotna, Grayling, Anvik, Shageluk, and Holy Cross. This year, we did “Innoko NWR science camp in a box kits”. Students received kits that included various cultural, fish and wildlife and fishing/hunting resources. A STEM project was included and a swallow nesting box kit along with refuge brochures and environmental materials on the USFWS and NWR refuge system. To encourage participation and engagement, we held 4 contests and offered awards as incentives. Students could choose to enter/not enter. The contests included: stem project, wildlife survey contest, jam/jelly contest and ivory soap carving contest. These increased awareness of the Refuge system and conservation.

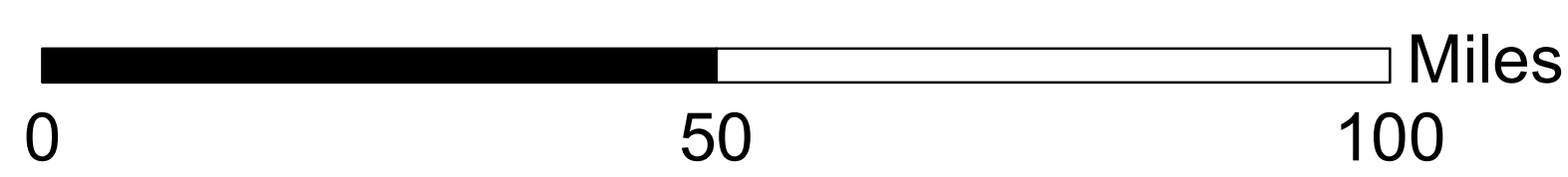
*Materials for the Innoko
Science/Culture Camp*





Region 6

Northwest Arctic Region



Federal Public Lands Open to Subsistence Use

- Unit Boundaries
- Special Use Areas
- Closed to Subsistence
- NPS Administered Preserves
- USFWS Administered Lands
- BLM Administered Lands
- NPS Administered Parks
- USFS Administered Lands

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Bureau of Land Management – Anchorage Field Office

Updates to the Western Interior Subsistence Regional Advisory Council
February 17-18, 2021

WILDLIFE

Moose Count – BLM assisted ADF&G with a fall classification count for moose in GMU 22A in late November. BLM was not able to participate in the field due to COVID-19 restrictions, but instead purchased aviation fuel for the survey.

Moose Population Estimate – ADF&G and BLM will conduct a geospatial population estimate in GMU 22A in February and March. The survey will be conducted from Unalakleet. BLM will provide a plane, pilot, and observer for the survey, depending on COVID-19 restrictions.

WATER RIGHTS

Unalakleet Wild and Scenic River – BLM Aquatic staff will continue efforts to reestablish a stream gage at the location of the previous USGS gage on the Unalakleet River. Data gathered from the gage will be used in support of future adjudication of instream water rights applications that have been filed for protection of fisheries resources. In 2021 telemetry equipment will be installed on the BLM gage to allow near real-time data communication via satellite. Aquatics staff plan to make three summer and one winter trip to the gage to reestablish a rating curve for the site by measuring water depth and discharge. Water quality will be monitored with instruments recording continuous hourly measurements throughout the summer of turbidity, dissolved oxygen, acidity, temperature, and electrical conductivity.

Big River near McGrath – Aquatics staff will continue efforts to measure stream discharge and water quality in the Big River and its tributaries in support of preparation of an instream water right application to protect flows for critical Sheefish spawning habitat. Aquatics staff plan to make three summer and one winter trip to the gage to further refine a gage rating curve for the site by measuring water depth and discharge. Water quality will be monitored with instruments recording continuous hourly measurements throughout the summer season.

ASSESSMENT INVENTORY AND MONITORING (AIM) SURVEYS

Stream sampling – BLM Aquatics staff will conduct 20 days of helicopter-supported Aquatic AIM data collection out of Galena and Aniak. These efforts will complete a sample of 50 points throughout the area to establish baseline conditions for stream resources.

PERMAFROST AND CLIMATE MONITORING

Iditarod National Historic Trail near Nikolai – BLM Aquatics and Ecology staff will be installing two permafrost soil temperature monitoring stations along the Iditarod National Historic Trail to collect baseline data on permafrost characteristics in the Farewell Burn area. The data will help scientists understand how the soil temperature regime in the trail treadway differs from that of adjacent undisturbed areas and provide real-time weather information for that area. These data will be used by the UAF Permafrost Laboratory for large scale permafrost modeling efforts to characterize soil moisture response to a warming climate. Efforts are being made with BLM Campbell Creek Science Center to do outreach education with the local communities of McGrath and Nikolai to engage local school aged children in the monitoring efforts and the unique characteristics of permafrost soils.

MINE SITE MONITORING/RECLAMATION

Nixon Fork Mine Site – Aquatics and Mine Compliance staff will make two visits to the Nixon Fork Mine site to continue water quality monitoring efforts in Ruby Creek. Samples will be collected for testing for heavy metals including Mercury on Ruby Creek below the historic mine facility and the waste rock/tailings storage area. Staff will deploy an instrument at the site to continuously measure and record six water quality parameters hourly throughout the field season.

Red Devil Mine Cleanup – The public comment period on the Proposed Plan for the cleanup of the Red Devil Mine site closed on Dec. 18, 2020. Next steps include responding to comments and drafting a Record of Decision. The BLM expects to release the Record of Decision by late 2021. Project updates can be found at www.blm.gov/alaska/red-devil-mine

RECREATION

Recreation Permits – The BLM will conduct Special Recreation Permit compliance checks in the Nulato Hills northeast and south of Unalakleet, in the Squirrel River area northeast of Kotzebue; and south of McGrath in the Alaska Range in summer 2021. The permits are related to Iditarod National Historic Trail events and outfitter and guide permits.

Guides – Two new Special Recreation Permits (SRP) were authorized for hunting guides near Lake Iliamna. One previously held an SRP from the BLM Fairbanks office. The other holds a National Park Service permit in Katmai National Park and wanted to be able to hunt the adjoining BLM land.

REALTY

ANCSA D1 Withdrawal Revocations – The Realty staff is wrapping up recommendations on the revocation of Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act D1

Withdrawals. For more information on the history and purpose of D1 withdrawals and the revocation process visit https://www.blm.gov/programs/lands-and-realty/regional-information/alaska/d-1_withdrawals

Alaska Native Vietnam Veterans Allotments – Applications are being accepted through Dec. 29, 2025 for the Alaska Native Vietnam-era Veterans Land Allotment Program of 2019. The program provides the opportunity for eligible Vietnam-era veterans or their heirs to select 2.5 to 160 acres of Federal land. For more information visit <https://www.blm.gov/alaska/2019AKNativeVetsLand>

COLLABORATIVE CAMPBELL TRACT EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

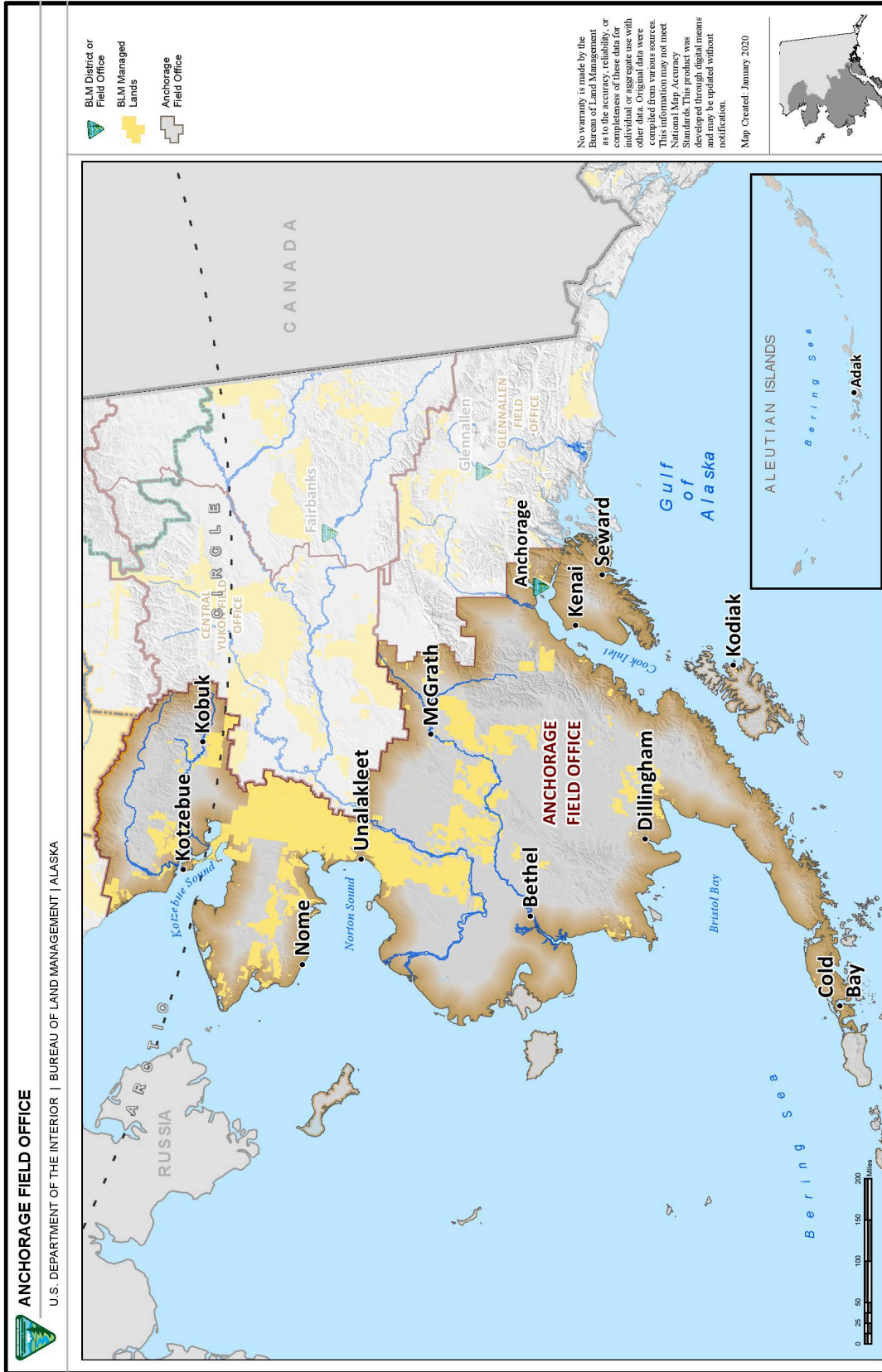
Campbell Creek Monitoring – Aquatics staff will resurvey and analyze 33 cross sections on Campbell Creek to characterize the creek's response to natural and recreational stressors by comparing them to measurements made by the USGS in 2001.

Curriculum Midsummer Night's Science Series – Aquatics staff will lead a discussion with the public during one of the Campbell Creek Science Center's Summer Science Series. The presentation will focus on efforts to characterize how the form and function of Campbell Creek are changing in response to natural and recreational stressors.

Development – Aquatics staff is working with Campbell Creek Science Center staff in developing a stream hydrology curriculum for primary school students.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

COVID-19 – BLM Law Enforcement conducted patrols in accordance with village requests to limit travel in and out of the villages due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Fall 2021 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

Last updated 11/4/2020

Due to travel budget limitations placed by Department of the Interior on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Office of Subsistence Management, the dates and locations of these meetings will be subject to change.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday-	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Aug. 15	Aug. 8 Window Opens	Aug. 9	Aug. 10	Aug. 11	Aug. 12	Aug. 13
Aug. 14	Aug. 15	Aug. 16	Aug. 17	Aug. 18	Aug. 19	Aug. 20
Aug. 21	Aug. 22	Aug. 23	Sep. 1	Sep. 2	Sep. 3	Sep. 4
Sep. 5	Sep. 6 Labor Day Holiday	Sep. 7	Sep. 8	Sep. 9	Sep. 10	Sep. 11
Sep. 12	Sep. 13	Sep. 14	Sep. 15	Sep. 16	Sep. 17	Sep. 18
Sep. 19	Sep. 20	Sep. 21	Sep. 22	Sep. 23	Sep. 24	Sep. 25
Sep. 26	Sep. 27	Sep. 28	Sep. 29	Sep. 30	Oct. 1	Oct. 2
	KA - Unalaska					
Oct. 3	Oct. 4	Oct. 5	Oct. 6	Oct. 7	Oct. 8	Oct. 9
				EIRAC - Fairbanks		
			YKD			
Oct. 10	Oct. 11 Columbus Day Holiday	Oct. 12	Oct. 13	Oct. 14	Oct. 15	Oct. 16
			WIRAC - Anchorage			
			SC - Anchorage			
Oct. 17	Oct. 18	Oct. 19	Oct. 20	Oct. 21	Oct. 22	Oct. 23
		SEA - Craig				
		EIRAC - alternate dates				
Oct. 24	Oct. 25	Oct. 26	Oct. 27	Oct. 28	Oct. 29	Oct. 30
		SPRAC - Nome				
			BBRAC - Dilligham			
Oct. 31	Nov. 1	Nov. 2	Nov. 3	Nov. 4	Nov. 5 Window Closes	Nov. 6
	NWARAC - Kotzebue					

Winter 2022 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Calendar

Last updated 12/8/2020

Due to travel budget limitations placed by Department of the Interior on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Office of Subsistence Management, the dates and locations of these meetings will be subject to change.

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

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