2024 Current Fiscal Year Report: Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council

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1. Department or Agency	2. Fiscal Year
Department of the Interior	2024

3. Committee or Subcommittee	3b. GSA Committee No.
Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council	1528

4. Is this New During Fiscal Year?	5. Current Charter	6. Expected Renewal Date	7. Expected Term Date
No	01/18/2024	01/18/2026	

8a. Was Terminated During FiscalYear?	8b. Specific Termination Authority	8c. Actual Term Date
No		

9. Agency Recommendation for Next FiscalYear	10a. Legislation Req to Terminate?	10b. Legislation Pending?
Continue	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

11. Establishment Authority Statutory (Congress Created)

12. Specific Establishment Authority	13. Effective Date	14. Commitee Type	14c. Presidential?
16 U.S.C. 3115 (1988)	12/02/1980	Continuing	No

15. Description of Committee Non Scientific Program Advisory Board

16a. Total Number of Reports	No Reports for this FiscalYear

17a. Open	17b. Closed	17c. Partially Closed	Other Activities	17d. Total
3	0	0	0	3

Meetings and Dates

Purpose	Start	End

The purpose of this meeting was for the Council to make recommendations on several wildlife regulatory proposals and wildlife closure reviews. The Council heard from several agencies on related matters and conducted other necessary business.	10/11/2023 - 10/12/2023
The purpose of this joint, all-council meeting was to bring the ten subsistence Regional Advisory Councils together to discuss issues that are relevant to them all. Discussions and presentations included information from the Federal Subsistence Board and the Secretary of the Interior's office, the councils' regional reports, co-stewardship, and other issues affecting all of the councils, such as salmon and caribou critical decline and youth leaders in subsistence management, among other topics. Council members also received length of service awards and recognition. The all-council meeting was followed by several training sessions and administrative presentations.	03/05/2024 - 03/06/2024
The Council met to develop proposals to change fisheries regulations for Federal public waters in Alaska, and to review and finalize the FY23 Council's report to the Board.	03/07/2024 - 03/07/2024

Number of Committee Meetings Listed: 3

	Current FY	Next FY
18a(1). Personnel Pmts to Non-Federal Members	$0.00	$0.00
18a(2). Personnel Pmts to Federal Members	$0.00	$0.00
18a(3). Personnel Pmts to Federal Staff	$0.00	$0.00
18a(4). Personnel Pmts to Non-Member Consultants	$0.00	$0.00
18b(1). Travel and Per Diem to Non-Federal Members	$0.00	$0.00
18b(2). Travel and Per Diem to Federal Members	$0.00	$0.00
18b(3). Travel and Per Diem to Federal Staff	$0.00	$0.00
18b(4). Travel and Per Diem to Non-member Consultants	$0.00	$0.00

18c. Other(rents,user charges, graphics, printing, mail, etc.)	$0.00	$0.00
18d. Total	$0.00	$0.00
19. Federal Staff Support Years (FTE)	0.00	0.00

20a. How does the Committee accomplish its purpose?

All meetings are open to the public and provide opportunity for members of the public, Tribes, organizations, and agency representatives to participate in discussions and share information relevant to Federal subsistence management. At these public meetings the Council receives public comments and considers technical information on fish and wildlife populations and subsequently makes recommendations to the Federal Subsistence Board encompassing consideration of the scientific data, local knowledge, and experience of subsistence hunters and fishers in the region. The Council drafts correspondence to the Federal Subsistence Board in the form of an Annual Report to bring awareness to subsistence and fish and wildlife conservation concerns in the region. The Council continues to track and participate in subsistence fish and wildlife management issues on the Federal lands within their region, which includes Koyukuk, Innoko, Nowitna, Kanuti, and Yukon Kuskokwim National Wildlife Refuge, Gates of the Arctic National Park, Denali and Lake Clark National National Park and Preserve, and extensive Bureau of Land Management lands in the Western Interior and Central Yukon regions

20b. How does the Committee balance its membership?

Members broadly represent geographic, cultural, user, and gender diversity present within the

region. This is ensured through a rigorous outreach/recruitment effort and a thorough evaluation and recommendation process. Applicants are evaluated according to the following criteria: they must be a resident of the region in which they applied; have extensive knowledge of the region's fish and wildlife resources; have extensive knowledge of the region's subsistence uses, customs, and traditions; have extensive knowledge of the region's sport, commercial, and other nonsubsistence uses; and have evident leadership and communication skills. The applicants, their references, and key contacts within the region are interviewed by panels of Federal agency staff. These panels meet to rate and rank the applicants. This information is considered by the Interagency Staff Committee which makes its recommendation to the Federal Subsistence Board. The Board then meets to review the applicants and make their recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture. The Board recommendations balance points of view represented on the Council with the Council's function, which is to advise the Board on matters pertaining to subsistence. The Board also considers other factors such as geographic representation within the region. The Secretaries must concur regarding appointments. The entire process requires approximately 15 months to complete.

20c. How frequent and relevant are the Committee Meetings?

The Western Interior Alaska Subsistence Regional Advisory Council generally meets twice each fiscal year. The Council's recommendations to the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) are not only relevant, but have significant impact on regional

residents, because, while the Board may decide not to adopt a Council recommendation regarding the taking of fish and wildlife, it can do so only if such a recommendation fails to meet one or more of the three criteria in Title VIII, Section 805(c) of ANILCA. As much as possible, meetings are held in rural communities to provide the opportunity for personal involvement by those most directly impacted by Federal subsistence management. In FY 2023, the Council met twice , once in Fairbanks, and once in Anchorage. The Council had been scheduled to meet in Aniak, but was unable to do so due to mechanical issues with an aircraft transporting staff to the meeting.

20d. Why can't the advice or information this committee provides be obtained elsewhere?
The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act established the regional Councils as the public forum for the expression of views and information originating from the local communities of the region, and to provide recommendations to the Federal Subsistence Board regarding management of fish and wildlife resources for subsistence on Federal public lands. The members of the Council and the public participants provide the expertise of subsistence people to the process of forming regulations that govern their lives and to the management of Federal public lands they use for subsistence purposes. The Council is a vital link between the Federal Subsistence Board and the rural residents whose lives the Board's decisions affect.

20e. Why is it necessary to close and/or partially closed committee meetings?
Not applicable - all meetings are open to the public.

21. Remarks

The Council had six recommendations in FY 2023.

Designated Federal Officer

Nissa Bates Pilcher Subsistence Council Coordinator

Committee Members	Start	End	Occupation	Member Designation
Gervais, Timothy	03/08/2021	12/02/2026	Commercial/sport User	Representative Member
Honea, Donald	01/18/2024	12/02/2026	Subsistence User	Representative Member
Kriska, Tommy	01/26/2022	12/02/2024	Subsistence User	Representative Member
Pelkola, Jenny	12/03/2006	12/02/2024	Subsistence User	Representative Member
Reakoff, Jack	03/08/2021	12/02/2026	Subsistence User	Representative Member
Simon, Pollock	12/03/2010	12/02/2025	Subsistence User	Representative Member
Vent, Darrell	01/26/2022	12/02/2024	Subsistence User	Representative Member
Walker, Robert	01/18/2024	12/02/2026	Subsistence User	Representative Member
Whitworth, Kevin	03/08/2021	12/02/2026	Subsistence User	Representative Member

Number of Committee Members Listed: 9

Narrative Description

Since Congress passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act in 1980, Title VIII has provided for the continuation of subsistence uses of fish and wildlife resources on Federal public lands by rural residents in Alaska. Title VIII required the creation of Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils to enable rural residents to have a meaningful role in Federal subsistence management. The Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture subsequently established the Federal Subsistence Management Program. The Program is a multi-agency effort that includes the DOI U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the USDA Forest Service. These agencies manage the Federal public lands where subsistence activities take place, including waters running through or next to Federal public lands and limited marine jurisdiction. The Secretaries delegated management authority for

subsistence uses in Alaska to the Federal Subsistence Board (Board), which is comprised of the regional directors of the five Federal public land managers in Alaska and a representative appointed by the Secretaries to serve as Chair as well as two public member representatives. The Board is the decision-making body that oversees the Federal Subsistence Management Program. The ten Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils provide recommendations and information to the Board, review policies and management plans, provide a public forum, develop proposals, evaluate current and anticipated subsistence needs, and perform other duties required by the Board. The Councils make recommendations to the Board regarding proposed changes to fish and wildlife regulations; management plans; policies, standards, and guidelines; determinations of customary and traditional use of subsistence resources; fisheries research projects; determinations of rural status; subsistence use allocations; and other matters related to subsistence take of fish and wildlife. The Councils meet at least twice a year. Council chairs attend at least two Board meetings a year to present the recommendations of their Councils and provide knowledge and advice to the Board.

What are the most significant program outcomes associated with this committee?

	Checked if Applies
Improvements to health or safety	☐
Trust in government	☑
Major policy changes	☐
Advance in scientific research	☑
Effective grant making	☐
Improved service delivery	☐
Increased customer satisfaction	☑
Implementation of laws or regulatory requirements	☑
Other	☑

Outcome Comments

The Council provides recommendations and information to the Federal Subsistence Board (Board), reviews policies and management plans, provides a public forum,

develops proposals, evaluates current and anticipated subsistence needs, appoints members to the National Park Service subsistence resource commissions, and performs other duties required by the Board. The Council makes recommendations to the Board regarding proposed changes to fish and wildlife regulations; management plans, policies, standards, and guidelines; determinations of customary and traditional use of subsistence resources; fisheries research projects; determinations of communities rural status; subsistence use allocations; and other matters related to subsistence take of fish and wildlife.

What are the cost savings associated with this committee?

	Checked if Applies
None	☐
Unable to Determine	☑
Under $100,000	☐
$100,000 - $500,000	☐
$500,001 - $1,000,000	☐
$1,000,001 - $5,000,000	☐
$5,000,001 - $10,000,000	☐
Over $10,000,000	☐
Cost Savings Other	☐

Cost Savings Comments

Regional Advisory Council members are all volunteers. They provide expert knowledge and advice to the Federal Subsistence Board (Board), which the Board cannot otherwise obtain. Without the Council, the program would need to greatly increase staff and research funding. The researchers would then need to seek information from the very people, or similar people, who now make up the Council. The Board adopts a preponderance of the Council's recommendations, which may lower resource management costs.

What is the approximate Number of recommendations produced by this committee for the life of the committee?

202

Number of Recommendations Comments

In FY 2023, the Council made recommendations on three fisheries closure reviews, two fisheries Federal subsistence proposals for 2022-2024, and one wildlife Federal subsistence proposal to the Federal Subsistence Board. The Council voted to support their regional fisheries proposal FP23-01, the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta regional proposal

FP23-02, and Bristol Bay regional proposal WP22-40. The Council also voted to support with modification their regional fisheries closure review FCR23-02, FCR23-03, and voted to defer action to the affected Council on FCR23-05.

What is the approximate Percentage of these recommendations that have been or will be Fully implemented by the agency?
83%

% of Recommendations Fully Implemented Comments
ANILCA, Title VIII, Section 805(c) requires the Federal Subsistence Board to consider and adopt the report and recommendations of the Regional Advisory Council concerning the taking of fish and wildlife on the public lands within the region for subsistence uses. The Board may choose not to follow a recommendation only if it determines the recommendation is not supported by substantial evidence, violates recognized principles of fish and wildlife conservation, or would be detrimental to the satisfaction of subsistence needs. Under these criteria, the Board generally adopts the majority of Council's recommendations.

What is the approximate Percentage of these recommendations that have been or will be Partially implemented by the agency?
17%

% of Recommendations Partially Implemented Comments
In some cases, the Federal Subsistence Board deferred to another Council's recommendation on a regulatory proposal from the region affected if there was a difference in a recommendation made by two or more Regional Advisory Councils.

Does the agency provide the committee with feedback regarding actions taken to implement recommendations or advice offered?
Yes ☑ No ☐ Not Applicable ☐

Agency Feedback Comments
ANILCA, Title VIII, Section 805(c) requires the Federal Subsistence Board (Board) (acting for the Secretary) to inform the Regional Advisory Council when the Board chooses not to adopt a Council recommendation concerning the taking of fish and wildlife on the public lands within the region for subsistence uses. The Board has expanded this to include reporting on those Council recommendations it does adopt and those it adopts with modification. These actions and their justifications are written in what is referred to as the 805(c) Letter and Report. Board decisions regarding other matters, such as the rural

determinations, for which the Council makes recommendations are reported to the Council in a less formal manner by the Council Coordinator or the Council Chair.

What other actions has the agency taken as a result of the committee's advice or recommendation?

	Checked if Applies
Reorganized Priorities	✓
Reallocated resources	✓
Issued new regulation	✓
Proposed legislation	
Approved grants or other payments	
Other	✓

Action Comments

New subsistence regulations frequently require the managing agencies to reprioritize staff and other resources. Other recommendations accepted by the Federal Subsistence Board may also require reallocation of agency funds. The Council also makes recommendations regarding fisheries research priority information needs within the region and for annual funding for fisheries research projects related to those needs.

Is the Committee engaged in the review of applications for grants?

No

Grant Review Comments

NA

How is access provided to the information for the Committee's documentation?

	Checked if Applies
Contact DFO	✓
Online Agency Web Site	✓
Online Committee Web Site	✓
Online GSA FACA Web Site	✓
Publications	✓
Other	✓

Access Comments

There is an extensive effort to announce the public meetings of the Regional Advisory Council via news releases, radio public service announcements, website postings,

Facebook postings, and newspaper ads. The agenda, meeting materials, and meeting transcripts are available on the Federal Subsistence Management Program website and are mailed or emailed upon request to the communities within the region and interested organizations and agencies. The Council Coordinator has a toll free telephone number to provide easier access for the public to call into the meetings and to disseminate the actions of the Council. There are various publications produced to share the actions of the Council. These include, but are not limited to, meeting booklets for their semiannual meetings, topic-specific informational letters, brochures, and public handouts.